

# Introduction to Special Edition on Covenant University's Perspectives on Nigeria Demography and Achievement of SDGs-2030

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## Abstract

This special edition of African Population Studies (*Etude de la Population Africaine*) is the initiative of the Programme of Demography and Social Statistics, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria, to harvest in a single compendium, the various research outputs that could provide insightful understanding and enhancement of the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 (SDGs-2030) as it relates to Nigeria. The theme is Covenant University's Perspectives on Nigeria Demography and Achievement of SDGs-2030. This expository compilation covers certain salient challenges of Nigeria, ranging from family breakdowns and wellbeing, Boko Haram insurgency, environment and climate change, effects of smoking, child mortality, agricultural output, human capital and inclusive growth, unsuspected self-help medical knowledge, and best approach to health-aid. The findings presented in this edition are ground breaking qualitative and empirical findings coming from indigenous data and knowledge in attempt to provide solutions to the problem of Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.

## Introduction

Everything in the world is shaped and reshaped by demographic dynamics. From individual household, to farm and market, community, climate change, governance or leadership, insurgency, peace, education, resources distribution, economic growth, the list is endless. However, the profundity of intricacies between population issues and these phenomena are mostly controversial in public understanding. Therefore, any adventure to map the linkages, or at least, improve the understanding on these complexities cannot be overemphasised. Prominent amalgams of these phenomena are the development plans designed to culminate in the promotion of health, wellbeing and peace for the people and the society, especially the lofty emerging millennium developmental goals (MDGs) and sustainable development goals (SDGs), among others.

While there have been broad evaluation of achievement and progress on these plans, including country-by-country performance assessment, there are numerous unsuspected dimensions to the goals that have not been conspicuously highlighted, especially as it relates to sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria specifically. The region of sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria have not been faring well in most developmental agenda when compared to other settings across the world. On the MDGs (2000-2015) alone, 72%, 68% and 45% out of the 54 countries in African were seriously off target on improved sanitation, reduction of maternal mortality, and eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (World

Bank, 2016). Specifically, Nigeria peculiarities make the country a cynosure for appraisal among other countries in Africa. Nigeria has population growth rate that far outstripped that of several developed countries, and various projections have suggested that between 2030 and 2050, the country will be among the four most populous countries in the world, standing behind China, India and United States of America (Jack & Uzobo, 2017; Jimenez & Pate, 2017; National Population Commission (NPC) [Nigeria] & ICF Macro, 2009; Population Reference Bureau (PRB), 2010, 2017). However, there are wide range polarities between Nigeria economy and these countries and, the Nigeria current status has been adjudged to lags far behind the country's potential (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), 2017).

Notwithstanding that Nigeria embraces global developmental ideologies, the country performance in most if not all development planning has been a failure. The numerous attempts to follow the guiding principles of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (PoA), Cairo 1994, and the 1992 Dakar-Ngor Declaration (DND), especially on health, population, environment, have yielded only little positive results (Adinma & Adinma, 2011; Ashenafi & Imran, 2011; Rigon, 2018). Several other development strategies have been put in place but, that they have not translated to appreciable economic growth, and citizens' wellbeing is open reality today. Nigeria lagged behind in several of the Millennium

Development Goals and there is currently no assurance that the achievement of the most of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs-2030), including Vision 20-2020, would be a reality.

The country is beset with myriads of challenges ranging from population explosion, to depletion of resources, high unemployment rate, food scarcity, conflict and insurgency, high infant and maternal mortalities, climate change and environmental degradation. There are also numerous health challenges: sexual/reproductive, and non-sexual health problems coupled with the political fragility that have huge potential for retarding growth and development. Currently, Nigeria is at the low ebb on the ladder of Social Progress Index (which rates whether a country is really making her citizens' lives better); the country has low Human Development Index; and also listed among the countries with high poverty ratio (Danaan, 2018; Porter, Stern, & Green, 2017; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2016; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), 2017).

Covenant University in her characteristic leadership manner, birthed with the vision of providing solutions to myriads of Africa challenges, approved the initiative by the Programme of Demography and Social Statistics to harvest in a single compendium, the various research outputs that could provide insightful understanding and enhancement of the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 (SDGs-2030) as it relates to Nigeria. Specifically, this special issue is designed to address the interface between population issues and development, using the SDGs-2030 framework. The SDGs list 17 goals including 169 targets that aimed at eradicating poverty and hunger, combating ill-health, child and maternal mortality, pursue inclusive growth, and fights climate change (Adinma & Adinma, 2011; El-Maghrabi, Gable, Rodarte, & Verbeek, 2018; Skevington & Epton, 2018; United Nations., 2016).

This expository compilation therefore covers certain salient challenges of Nigeria, ranging from family breakdowns and wellbeing, Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, environment and climate change, effects of smoking, child mortality, agricultural output, human capital and inclusive growth, unsuspected self-help medical knowledge, and best approach to health-aid. The edition presents ground breaking qualitative and empirical findings using indigenous data and knowledge to provide solution to the problem of Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. Almost 75% of the data were drawn from primary sources but by following international protocols with respect to data collection. Also, the secondary data applied contain

reputable statistics drawn from within Nigeria by international organisations such as ICF International and the World Bank. Virtually all the studies presented in this edition attempted to remind the policymakers and other stakeholders concerned with the realization of SDGs that the contributions from individuals and their households are crucial and should not be neglected.

The Special Edition has only 10 papers that address a wide range of issues. The research on human capital and inclusive growth dwelled on economics of quality education. The study specifically applied the error correction mechanism and Johansen co-integration estimation techniques on dataset that span almost three and half decades (1981-2015), to re-examine the interrelationship between human capital and inclusive growth as a driving force for SDG-4. The study indicated that provision of schools does not necessarily guarantee enrolment in Nigeria context, evident by current larger out-of-school population (British Council, 2014) which still has 'robust' potential for growth. It emphasized that quality education as veritable human capital development. The authors suggested that existing policy of 'primary education for all' could be extended to other levels of education but supported with subsidy to ease the difficulty in accessing quality education in Nigeria. Amoo *et al.* used qualitative approach to expound on what goes wrong when family breaks down and spouse encounter health challenge, especially the deadly cervical cancer, and in the environment where there is little or no public support programmes. The article suggests a thematic framework on coping strategies to curb and manage family breakdown. Ogundipe, Olurinola and Ogundipe utilized the System Generalized Method of Moment dynamic panel data estimator approach to assess the effect of health aid and its sub-categories on child mortality in Africa. The study highlighted that health-targeted-aid is more responsive to new-borns, maternal health and malaria control. Their findings indicated that health-targeted-aid is capable of reducing child death by 40-80% if institutional quality control and socio-political stability are in place.

Drawing relevance from SDGs 1, 3 and 7, Adeloye and colleagues combined with the use of systematic review and meta-analysis to examine the risk awareness of smoking. The study revealed that both smokers and passive smokers (i.e. second-hand smokers) are affected by the toxicology of tobacco smoke. The aggregated means portrays the youth as the most vulnerable to smoking hazards. The exposition on household smoke by Samuel, Oni and others, revealed that cooking fuel is harmful to children health and could heighten under-5 mortality rate that is currently high (128/1000 live births) in

Nigeria (Biradar, Patel, & Prasad, 2018; Duruiheoma, 2014). Oyero, Oyesomi, Abioye, Ajiboye and Kayode-Adedeji addressed SDGs 13-15 and submitted that multi-sectoral communication for behavioural change on handling processes of the environment is a key factor in winning the war against climate change.

Other scholars like Okorie, Amodu, Oyedepo, Usaini and Kayode-Adedeji were concerned about the dearth of empirical investigations on relevance of self-care medical apps for reproductive health services among women. Their study identified unpopular but effective (in self-rating) medical apps that could aid early discovery of health challenges and propel timely intervention for the prevention of maternal and infant morbidities and deaths and, promote healthy living and well-being (SDG-3) among women.

In a conflict and insurgency orchestrated fragile nation, where peace is tagged relative, experience of violence from intimate partners or others at the home front could be likened to double jeopardy and must be avoided. These are the research driven thought-out of Ajayi and Soyinka-Airewele. The victim-centered-analysis drew references from Ghanaian women who have suffered intimate partner's violence. The key proximate factors are alcoholism, financial subjugation (of women) and patriarchal African setting. Olarenwaju *et al.* utilized in-depth interview approach to evaluate the management of displaced women in a volatile region of Nigeria but live in formal (government) camps. The findings delivered pathways towards finding lasting solutions to internal displaced persons and for the promotion of peace in Nigeria.

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