

# Politics of National Development and the Dilemma of Development Planning in Nigeria

Olanrewaju O. Ogunnubi

Department of Political Science, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

Email: [ogunnubiolanrewaju@gmail.com](mailto:ogunnubiolanrewaju@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** *Over the past 6 decades, Nigeria has experimented with a plethora of development plans and programmes intended to stimulate national development. However, the country remains troubled with socio-economic and political challenges which continues to dampen the prospect of development. This paper examines the dilemma of development planning in Nigeria within the context of national development. It provides a historical analysis of the various development plans and programmes that have been adopted to stimulate national development. The paper reveals that despite the concerted efforts of both military and civilian administrations evident in the array of development strategies introduced over the years, development planning is yet to bring about substantial national development, which largely stems from the failures of development plans to achieve projected results. The paper further identifies political instability and lack of continuity, corruption, lack of relevant data, indiscipline and lack of political will, ambiguity and over-ambitious plans, the inefficiency of the public service, and lastly lack of adequate public-private partnership as the major impediments to effective development planning in Nigeria. The paper concludes with potential remedies for addressing the problem of national development in the country.*

**Keywords:** Development, National Development, Development Planning, Nigeria

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The quest for national development in Nigeria has been a major challenge that successive military and civilian administrations have been unable to effectively address over the past 6 decades of independence. Despite various efforts in development planning, the country continues to grapple with the problem of addressing the socio-economic and political crisis that impedes desired development. The evident crisis of development in Nigeria which manifests in a high rate of unemployment, widespread poverty, lack of adequate infrastructural amenities, excessive debt burden, insecurity among others, are pitfalls of years of ineffective development planning (Iheanacho, 2014). Quite notably, the country experienced a major recession in 2020, during which its economy dwindled by 1.8% (Aitalohi, 2021). The 2020 recession, which was as a result of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the attendant fall in oil prices, became Nigeria's second recession in five years and its worst decline since 1983 (Word bank, 2021).

Furthermore, Nigeria is largely a monolithic economy with oil revenues accounting for 80% of its export, a third of banking sector credit and half of the government's income (Word bank, 2021). As a result, the country is heavily affected by fluctuations in oil prices, which has further fuelled calls for economic restructuring and diversification (Suberu et al., 2015). Up until the era of independence in October 1960 and the formative years that followed, Nigeria heavily relied on agriculture as the mainstay of its economy. During these early years, agriculture was the major source of government revenue, accounting for employment, food production, raw materials and foreign exchange earnings (Chete et al., 2014). Following the discovery of oil in Oloibiri in 1956, Nigeria soon became an oil-producing state in 1958, which marked a defining moment in its history. By the 1970s oil became a major source of revenue arising from the oil boom occasioned by the Arab Israeli crisis (Suberu et al., 2015).

It should be noted that Nigeria at that time had just emerged from a devastating civil war, hence, the oil boom provided an opportunity for rebuilding and repositioning the country towards national development. However, this period was characterized by wastage and poor management of the bountiful oil wealth (Ezeogidi, 2020). In addition, the oil boom era resulted in a gradual decline in agriculture leading to Nigeria spending more on agricultural imports compared to its agricultural export earnings (Pinto, 1987). Arising from years of neglect, poor management and lack of basic infrastructure, the productivity of the agricultural sector over the years have been relatively low, although the sector accounts for 18% of the country's GDP and about one-third of employment (Suberu et al., 2015; Olomola, 2007). More recently, Nigeria has witnessed an upsurge in insecurity, arising from the activities of terrorist groups, bandits, kidnappers and what is often described as 'unknown gunmen' (The Cable, 2021; Fatherland Gazette, 2021). The country's dilapidating socio-economic and political realities further illustrates the failures of various development strategies in addressing developmental problems. Development planning plays an integral role in achieving sustainable national development as it provides a pathway for addressing socio-economic challenges.

Although the history of development planning in Nigeria is often traced to the British colonial era, it has been however argued that development was never part of the agenda set by the pre-independence plan as it was designed to serve the interest of the colonial economy (Egonmwan and Ibodje, 2001). Following independence in 1960, Nigeria adopted its first national development plan, which was chronologically followed by the second, third and fourth national development plans. Although attempts were made at

designing a fifth national development plan, however, the plan did not materialize. In the 1990s, the era of the five-year national development plan was replaced by three-year rolling plans (1990-1998) and Vision 2010, which was a long-term perspective plan. With Nigeria's return to civilian government in May 1999, the National Economic Direction Plan was introduced by President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration, which was later replaced by the more comprehensive National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). In 2007, Vision 20:2020 was launched by the same government, which the succeeding administration, led by President Yar'Adua abandoned in favour of its Seven-Point Agenda. By 2011, President Goodluck Jonathan's administration introduced the Transformation Agenda (2011 – 2015) and lastly, the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) was launched by President Muhammadu Buhari's administration.

In essence, while development plans have often been deployed as instruments for managing the country's socio-economic and political landscape to spur national development, observed trends in the planning and implementation process coupled with present-day realities reveal that these plans have failed to achieve projected results (Iheanacho, 2014; Tordoff, 1993; Adedeji, 1989). Thus, this paper evaluates the various developmental plans and programmes that have been adopted to foster national development in Nigeria. It further examines the major impediments that characterized effective development planning and concludes with potential remedies for addressing the problem of national development in the country.

## **2. DEVELOPMENT, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW**

Over the years, the concept of development has been viewed from various perspectives. Seers (1969) noted that development entails a reduction or eradication of inequality, unemployment and poverty. Todaro (1977) views development from a multidimensional perspective, which entails structural, institutional and attitudinal changes on the one hand and poverty alleviation, reducing inequality gaps and increased economic growth on the other. For Owens (1987) development relates solely to human development. Similarly, the World Development Report (WDR, 1991) posits that the goal of development is to enhance the wellbeing of individuals through quality healthcare and nutrition, improved access to education, poverty alleviation, equal opportunities, a hygienic environment, individual liberty and better cultural life. For Ake (1996) development is a process through which people reorganize themselves towards achieving better civilization in line with their values.

Development can be linked to socio-economic and political transformation, which seeks to provide better and improved living conditions for the people. Hence, it often involves the equitable distribution of resources and wealth (Oye, 2014). For Sen (1999) development denoted enhancing the freedom and capacities of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, thus, improving their living condition. He argued that development provides the opportunity for people to liberate themselves from the hardship that arises from illiteracy, mortality and starvation (Sen, 1999). Thus, development is concerned with safeguarding socio-cultural and political freedom. Development relates to change, which can be spontaneous and ultimately dislodges pre-existing state of equilibrium (Schumpeter, 1934). It encompasses all efforts at improving the wellbeing and living conditions of the people such that poverty and inequality are significantly reduced or eradicated (Oye, 2014; Gboyege, 2003).

Friedman (1962) posits that development can take an innovative process that overall results in the structural transformation of the societal system. Naomi (1995) argued that development goes beyond mere economic growth but involves better education, healthcare, housing, and other related services intended to enhance individual and collective wellbeing. Similarly, in his bid to distinguish between economic growth and development, Haller (2012) argues that economic growth encapsulates the quantitative aspect of economic activities, while development, on the other hand, encompasses qualitative changes that occur within the economy and society. In essence, development is broader and larger in scope.

Development involves helping people to build and maximize their potential. It also entails improving the quality of human life through increased production and income (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013; Olawoye, 2002). Chrisman (1984) noted that improvement in the standard of living of the people is derived through a multistakeholder partnership between all critical sectors of the society. From the foregoing, it is evident that development is not only limited to economic activities as it also involves social and political concerns that affect societal life (Oye, 2014).

National development indicates that developmental goals take a nationalistic outlook and are thus designed to facilitate nationwide development. As such, the wellbeing of citizens becomes the focus of development (Idike et al., 2020; Okeke & Ifeagwazi, 2018) National development refers to efforts made by the authorities of the state to improve the living conditions of its citizens (Stevenson, 2014; Douglas, 2014). This can include poverty reduction programmes, empowerment schemes, provision of education, roads, infrastructural facilities and so on. In essence, national development is human-centred and usually designed to address societal problems.

Development planning is a conscious attempt at driving national development. It entails mapping out policies, programmes and objectives involving key societal aspects such as political, social, technological, health, environmental issues among others as well

as the mechanisms for realizing them (Solomon & Fidelis, 2018). It allows for predetermined and methodical actions towards achieving projected results. The UNDP (2008) views development planning as a long-term programme put in place to achieve permanent structural changes economically, which often emanates from a government that outlines specific objectives intended to guide economic development. Development planning can be challenging as it largely involves projections and managing futuristic events (Okojie, 2002; Ayo, 1988). It involves the process of developing futuristic goals and visions corresponding to societal expectations and state capacity (Solomon & Fidelis, 2018). Adeyemi (2001) noted that development planning involves projecting into the future in line with existing resources.

### **3. POLITICS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS**

In order to drive economic development across the board, Nigeria has over time experimented with various development plans, which have been designed and implemented by both military and civilian administrations. This section takes a historical analysis of the many development strategies that have developed over the years.

#### ***3.1 Development planning under colonial rule:***

Scholars have traced the origin of development planning in Nigeria to the Ten-Year Plan of Development and Welfare (1946-1956), which was introduced by the British colonial administration in 1946 (Okoli, 2004; Ugwu, 2009). Importantly, this was preceded by a directive from the Secretary of State for colonies, instructing all British colonies to set up a Central Development Board (CBD) (Onah, 2010). It has been argued that the Ten-Year Plan was merely a list of obligatory projects that were to be executed by the colonial masters within the respective regions of the country and as such does not qualify to be viewed as an actual development plan (Iheanacho, 2014). The plan was not explicitly designed to facilitate economic development in Nigeria, rather, it was to implicitly serve colonial ends (Egonmwan and Ibodje, 2001), which was to exploit the colonies for production of raw material and agricultural products needed to sustain the British political economy (Iheanacho, 2014).

The plan was largely alienated from the people as there was no effort made to seek and integrate the interest, needs and desires of the people into the core goals and objectives of the plan (Onah, 2010). Hence, the development plan “suffered from non-specialized colonial administrators’ approach to development planning, the inadequacy of planning machinery and absence of clearly defined national objectives” (Ayo, 1988). Although the development plan was designed to continue until 1956, it should be noted that the constitutional amendment of 1951 brought the plan to an abrupt end (Ibietan and Ekhosuehi, 2013). The plan was thus succeeded by the 1951 – 1956 plan which was a five-year medium-term plan that was later aborted as a result of the internal power tussle among Nigerians, which followed the Lyttleton constitution of 1954. The plan shared similarities with the previous one as both plans lacked any clear distinction (Uche, 2019).

Furthermore, the British colonial administration introduced a new development plan that was to last from 1956 to 1962, which however became obsolete and impracticable following Nigeria’s independence in 1960. It should be noted that the political events at that time characterised by the reconsideration of the northern members of the parliament to reverse their opposition to the motion for independence resulted in Nigeria gaining its independence sooner than expected. Following Nigeria’s independence in 1960, the need for a domesticated development plan that will not only signpost the country’s new status as a sovereign state but also cater for its development needs became imperative.

#### ***3.2 The First National Development Plan (1962-1968)***

This was Nigeria’s first homegrown development plan, which was introduced shortly after the country’s independence in 1960 to ensure inclusive development nationwide. The core objectives of the plan were to ensure equal distribution of national income, to accelerate economic growth; to generate savings for investment in order to mitigate dependence on external capital for national development; to generate sufficient capital for manpower development; to improve the standard of living of the people particularly with regards to health, food, clothing and housing; to facilitate infrastructural development and so on (Iheanacho, 2014; Onyenwigwe, 2009). Its proposed investment expenditure was about ₦2,132,000, which was expected to be shared between the public and private sector with the public sector accounting for about 63% of the proposed expenditure (Iheanacho, 2014).

As Iheanacho (2014) rightly observed, despite the systematic nature of the plan, the political instability that characterised the first republic, including two military coups in 1966 and a civil war that lasted for 30 months, the plan was rendered ineffective. The civil war for instance resulted in the diversion of resources that would have served developmental ends into prosecuting the civil war. In addition, the plan was too sophisticated as its objectives were largely ambitious and did not align with the technical, managerial and commercial capabilities of the country at that time (Onah, 2010; Nnadozie, 2004). It should be noted however that a number of major developmental and infrastructural projects were carried out during this period despite the numerous challenges that characterised the plan (Iheanacho, 2014). For instance, the Niger Bridge, Jebba Paper Mill, Niger and Kainji Dam are some of the major accomplishments linked to this plan.

### **3.3 The Second National Development Plan (1970-1974)**

As part of the federal government's effort at rebuilding the country following the civil war, the Yakubu Gowon regime introduced the second national development plan with its famous '3Rs' agenda, which was Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation. These became the three pillars upon which the federal government sought to drive decisive national development and to give the country a sense of direction on economic growth. The second national development plan was initially designed as a four-year medium-term plan; however, the plan was later extended to include the 1974 – 1975 fiscal year. The plan articulated five core objectives which include; creating a united, strong and self-reliant nation; building a strong and vibrant economy; a just and egalitarian society; a land with bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and lastly, a free and democratic society (Onyenwigwe, 2009; Ohale and Agbarakwe, 2009). Quite notably, the second national development plan was fully home-grown and more comprehensive, diversified and integrative when compared to the first. Its proposed capital expenditure was ₦4.9 billion, with the public sector projected to invest ₦3.3 billion while 1.6 billion investment was expected from the private sector (Iheanacho, 2014).

Furthermore, the development plan placed much emphasis on indigenization, which later became one of its fundamental principles. Okowa (1991) noted that indigenization was adopted as an instrument for facilitating the broader objective of economic development. The indigenization policy provided the opportunity for Nigerians to be fully engaged in the country's economic activities by allowing them to take control of the industrial and commercial sectors. To this end, a number of indigenization decrees were pronounced by the then military government. Unfortunately, only about 33 per cent compliance was recorded and to date, a reasonable number of multinational companies continue to dominate Nigeria's petroleum industry (Onah, 2010;). In addition, the second national development plan prioritized areas such as manufacturing, housing, transport, communication, education and agriculture as the key aspects of public sector expenditure. However, this was not substantiated with an effective implementation plan. Similarly, lack of political will and corruption among public officials were major impediments to realizing the goals of the second national development plan. Notwithstanding, the plan was able to achieve remarkable feats particularly in areas such as agriculture, transport, social welfare, mining, manufacturing, health and communication (Ohale and Agbarakwe, 2009; Egonmwan and Ibodje, 2001). Although the various achievements of the plan are largely due to the oil boom that characterized the period.

### **3.4 The Third National Development Plan (1975 – 1980)**

The third national development plan also benefited from the oil boom era resulting in a colossal investment that was about ten times the second plan and fifteen times the first development plan (Iheanacho, 2014). Its primary objectives include an increase in per capita income, equal distribution of income; reduction in the unemployment rate; increase in the supply of higher-level manpower; diversification of the economy; balanced development and indigenization of economic activities (Obi, 2006). The plan was focused on providing social and infrastructural facilities such as health services, electricity, housing, water, roads, education among others, particularly to impoverished communities. In essence, it sought to utilize expanding oil revenues to improve the standard of living of the masses and facilitate a more productive economy (Egonmwan and Ibodje, 2001). While the plan was targeted at rural development, the failure of the government to allocate substantial funds to agriculture and social development, which directly affect the well-being of rural communities demonstrated a lack of political will towards the realization of this objective (Iheanacho, 2014). Only 5% and 11.5% of the financial expenditure was appropriated respectively to agriculture and social development, which evidently signposts lack of focus and misplaced priorities of planners (Okigbo, 1989; Onah, 2010). It is therefore not surprising that the plan was largely unable to achieve its major objectives. Although some level of development was achieved, particularly in the manufacturing sector, which as noted by Okowa (1991) had a growth rate of about 18.1% each year.

### **3.5 The Fourth National Development Plan (1981-1985)**

This was the first development plan that was designed by a civilian government since the military came into power in January 1966. The plan stressed the importance of petroleum resources and was largely designed to strengthen the third development plan as it was patterned in line with previous plans. Its objectives include:

- (i) increase in the real income of the average citizen; (ii) more even distribution of income among individuals and socio-economic groups (iii) reduction in the level of unemployment and underemployment; (iv) increase in the supply of skilled manpower; (v) reduction of the dependence of the economy on the narrow range of activities; (vi) increased participation by the citizens in the ownership and management of productive enterprises; (vii) greater self-reliance, that is, increased dependence on local resources in seeking to achieve the various objectives of the society; (viii) development of technology; (ix) increased productivity and (x) the promotion of a new national orientation conducive to greater discipline, better attitude to work and cleaner environment. (Iheanacho, 2014:54)

With a projected capital investment plan of about ₦82 billion, the fourth plan was a massive development programme, which like the previous plan also relied heavily on oil revenues for building a productive economy and ensuring national development (Obi,

2006; Egonmwan and Ibodje, 2001). It was projected that revenues generated from petroleum exports would be sufficient to implement the proposed plan. However, this was not the case as the revenue that was eventually realized was far from expected projections. For instance, only about 54% of the projected export revenues was realized in 1984 (Iheanacho, 2014). Similarly, between 1980 and 1984, only about 66.4% of the expected earnings were realised (Okigbo, 1989).

Arising from the declining oil revenues, financing the fourth development plan became a major challenge. As a result, completing projects that had been earlier initiated at the beginning of the plan was no longer viable. Hence these projects in addition to spillover projects were abandoned (Jaja, 2000). Furthermore, the balance of payment challenges, debt service, high level of inflation, increase in unemployment, unprecedented rise in the cost of living and a decline in the standard of living were major problems that characterized the plan's period. Nevertheless, the plan accomplished a number of feats. For instance, the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) was successfully implemented in most states.

### ***3.6 The Fifth National Development Plan***

The fifth national development plan was expected to replace the fourth national development plan which largely failed as a result of poor implementation. Thus, in November 1984, a conference was organized at the University of Ibadan, which provided a platform for deliberation on the most suitable approach for the fifth national development plan. Outcomes of the conference became the blueprint that formed the strategic policies of the fifth national development plan. The plan sought to restructure the economy such that it would be largely regulated by market forces and thus become self-reliant. Hence, it placed significant emphasis on diversification and revamping both the agricultural and manufacturing sectors.

The objectives of the plan include:

- (i) diversification of the nation's economy away from the monocultural one to which it has been pushed by the fortunes of the oil sector;
- (ii) revitalization of the agricultural sector with a view to achieving thorough integrated rural development programmes;
- (iii) domestic production of raw materials for local industries in order to reduce the importation of locally manufactured goods and
- (iv) promotion of employment opportunities in order to arrest the deteriorating mass unemployment (Onyenwigwe, 2009; cited in Iheanacho, 2014:55).

It should be noted that the fifth national development plan did not come into existence but was however integrated into the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), a two-year model that also brought the adoption of the five-year planning model in Nigeria to an end. The two-year planning model introduced by SAP was later transformed into three-year rolling plans.

### ***3.7 The Perspective Plan and Rolling Plans (1990-1998)***

The military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida introduced two national planning models which were the perspective plan and the rolling plan. The perspective plan was a long-term plan, intended to last a period of 15-20 years with the goal of addressing long-term development needs. On the other hand, the rolling plan was to last for 3 years and was subject to annual review. Although the perspective plan was originally expected to start in 1990 alongside the rolling plans, it was however not launched until the setting up of the Vision 2010 Committee by General Sani Abacha's regime in 1996. By September 1997, the committee submitted its report, in which it recommended a comprehensive Vision, which will specify the focus of the long (perspective), medium (rolling) and yearly (budgets) plans (Adubi, 2002). Thus, Vision 2010 became what can be regarded as the country's first perspective plan. It should however be noted that the three-year rolling plan had been in operation since 1990 with the launch of the first national rolling plan (1990-1992). Arising from its annual review, the rolling plans soon became similar to annual budgets and by 1999, there had been about ten rolling plans, with neither of them realising any substantial economic development. In addition, it is salient to note that the perspective plan was abandoned after General Sani Abacha's death in 1998.

### ***3.8 The National Economic Direction Plan (1999 – 2003)***

Following Nigeria's return to democratic government in 1999, the newly elected President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration introduced a medium-term development plan that was designed to last for four years. The plan which was labelled 'National Economic Direction' was aimed at strengthening, broadening and invigorating Nigeria's economy and making it invulnerable to external shocks (Uche, 2019). The plan sought to diversify the economy, make it more open, competitive, private sector-led and market-oriented. In assessing the plan, Ikeanyibe (2009) argued that its objectives and strategies were indistinguishable from those of the Structural Adjustment Programme. Quite noticeably, the plan was unable to realize many of its objectives, despite huge proceeds from oil, recovered Abacha's loot and sales of public enterprises.

### ***3.9 The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (2003-2007)***

Following its second term re-election in 2003, President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration introduced the NEEDS programme, which was a comprehensive attempt at socio-economic and political reform in the country. The NEEDS was designed to address four major areas which are: "improving the macroeconomic environment, pursuing structural reforms, strengthening the management of public expenditure, and implementing legal and statutory reforms" (Aiyede, 2015:97). Importantly, NEEDS was domesticated at the State and Local Government level through the State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (LEEDS) respectively. The programme was a medium-term plan that sought to articulate a developmental blueprint intended to address poverty, facilitate economic growth and accelerate national development (Ejimudo, 2013). Iheanacho (2014) argued that:

As a medium-term plan, most of the objectives of NEEDS should have been achieved before the expiration of President Obasanjo's administration in May 2007. The truth is that NEEDS as a development plan did not achieve the expected results like previous development plans in Nigeria (Iheanacho, 2014:56).

Furthermore, Ohiorhenuan (2003) noted that the plan was descriptive and not analytical in its approach. Similarly, the adoption of a 'trickle down' rather than an internationally proven 'right-based approach' to poverty reduction have been associated with the failure of NEEDS to achieve its objectives (AAIN, 2005).

### ***3.10 The Vision 20:2020***

This was another development plan launched by President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration in 2007, at a time when the administration was coming close to the expiration of its second term tenure. The primary goal of the plan was to make Nigeria one of the first 20 economies in the world by the year 2020. The plan sought to reposition Nigeria from its 41st position at that time to the top 20th economies by 2020 (Ugwu, 2009). It equally aimed to position Nigeria as Africa's financial centre of choice by 2020. As earlier noted, the plan was developed towards the end of President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration, hence, the succeeding President Yar'Adua's administration inherited the Vision 20:2020, which it later jettisoned for its Seven-Point Agenda. Thus, lack of continuity in government was a major bane to the realization of the goals of Vision 20:2020. As rightly captured by Eneh (2011) the Vision 20:2020 was too ambitious and largely unrealistic, much like several other development plans before it. Contrary to the objectives of Vision 20:2020, Nigeria experienced its second recession within the space of 5 years in 2020. The first recession was in 2016 following the global fall in oil prices, while the second recession which was in 2020 was largely due to the economic impact of Covid-19.

### ***3.11 The Seven-Point Agenda***

Introduced by President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the seven-point agenda was targeted at addressing developmental challenges in areas of agriculture and food security; education; power and energy; transport sector; security; wealth creation and empowerment; and lastly, land reforms. The seven-point agenda was largely an attempt to domesticate the United Nations Millennium Development Goals from which it was derived (Ibietan and Ekhosuehi, 2013). The plan however lacked adequate coordination and administrative action towards achieving its primary objectives. Therefore, while many of its objectives were realistic, poor implementation strategy became an impediment to the plan. Furthermore, the sudden demise of President Yar'Adua brought the plan to an abrupt end.

### ***3.12 The Transformation Agenda (2011 – 2015)***

President Goodluck Jonathan's administration introduced the transformation agenda in 2011. The plan which was to continue till 2015 sought to transform the country's economy by addressing issues relating to poverty, insecurity, energy, agriculture, human development, and industrial growth (Awojobi, 2015; Itah, 2012). It further sought to combat corruption and promote good governance across all governmental levels. However, during President Jonathan's administration, Nigeria experienced an upsurge in insecurity, unemployment, corruption among public officials among others. Thus, the transformation agenda largely failed to achieve its objectives (Awojobi, 2015). Likewise, scholars have attributed the failure of the transformation agenda in ensuring economic growth to the high level of corruption that was evident in President Jonathan's administration (Alao & Alao, 2013; Gyong, 2012).

### ***3.13 The Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) (2017-2020)***

The ERGP was introduced by President Muhammadu Buhari's administration as a medium-term plan for revamping the country out of economic recession. The plan sought to pursue three major objectives, which were; firstly, to restore growth by realizing macroeconomic stability and economic diversification with a primary focus on energy, manufacturing, agriculture, among others. Secondly, it sought to invest in the Nigerian people through reducing unemployment and underemployment, increasing social inclusion for vulnerable people, and investing in health and education. Lastly, the plan was aimed at building a globally competitive economy through facilitating a conducive business environment to drive investors and enhancing investment in infrastructures such as roads, power, rails and so on. It should be noted that the ERGP emphasizes reviving the economy out of recession and not

necessarily on substantial economic development. Hence it creates a policy gap with respect to managing an after-recession economy (Kyarem and Ogwuche, 2017). Similarly, despite the country's celebrated exit from recession, the socio-economic indices of the country continue to exacerbate (CBN, 2017b).

#### **4. THE DILEMMA OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN NIGERIA**

From the foregoing, it is evident that various developmental plans and programmes have been introduced in Nigeria over the years by both military and civilian administrations with varying degrees of success recorded. Similarly, it can also be observed that the majority of the development plans largely failed in their bid to achieve sustainable national development. As Inoykwe (2018:12) noted, "the history of public policy administration in Nigeria is associated with policy abandonment, policy failure and diversion of project funds." In essence, the proliferation of developmental programmes has been unable to address the deepening economic crisis and widening developmental gaps. The dilemma of development planning is further obfuscated by the lack of concrete efforts at attaining sustainable development through proactive policy mechanisms intended to drive a realistic development agenda. This largely accounts for the country's economic woes, which continues to dampen the prospect of sustainable national development. It is instructive to note that Nigeria's developmental planning dilemma largely stems from a compendium of socio-economic and political challenges which are discussed below.

##### ***4.1 Political Instability and Lack of Continuity***

The political instability that characterized the 1960s up until the fall of the 1990s in which Nigeria experienced a copious change in government largely as a result of successive military coups negatively impacted the implementation process of development plans. Starting with the January 1966 coup that first brought the military into power, there were further military interventions in July 1966, 1975, 1976, 1983, 1985 and 1993. Between October 1979 and December 1983, there was an elected civilian administration and for a brief period of about 82 days in 1993, Nigeria was under an interim civilian administration. Thus, arising from the instability that characterized the period and coupled with the unwillingness of successive administrations in continuing with inherited plans, many development plans were brought to an abrupt end (Okoli and Onah, 2002).

It is important to note that under the current dispensation of the fourth republic, which began in May 1999, lack of continuity remains a major impediment to development plans. Virtually all the four civilian administrations during this period came into office with their peculiar development programmes while abandoning previous plans (Iheanacho, 2014). For instance, the President Buhari administration discarded the transformation agenda of its predecessor for the ERGP. Similarly, President Jonathan's administration jettisoned the seven-point agenda of its predecessor for the transformation agenda; President Yar'Adua's administration equally jettisoned the Vision 20:2020 plan of its predecessor in favour of the seven-point agenda; lastly, President Obasanjo's administration discarded the Vision 2010 perspective plan of General Abacha's regime for the Vision 20:2020 (Inoykwe, 2018). This clear lack of continuity and commitment accounts for uncompleted projects and a lack of sustainability in pursuing economic development.

##### ***4.2 Institutionalization of Corruption***

The problem of corruption in Nigeria poses a major bane to realizing developmental objectives. Over the years, corruption has been nurtured across all levels of government such that it has become an integral part of the societal value system. The OECD (2018) observed that corruption prevents productivity of both public and private sectors, resulting in exacerbating conditions of poverty and inequality with a dire impact on the living conditions of citizens and their ability to engage in productive socio-economic and political activities. Hence, the OECD (2018:1) recommends public integrity through "having a system in place to reduce opportunities for corruption, changing a culture to make corruption unacceptable socially and making people accountable for their actions" (OECD, 2018:1.). In the case of Nigeria however, the institutionalization of corruption has eroded public trust resulting in poor implementation of developmental policies and projects. In several cases, funds meant for executing public policies are often mismanaged, embezzled or diverted to private coffers (Godbless et al., 2019; Ologbenla, 2007). Nigeria is said to have lost about \$582 billion to corruption since its independence in 1960 and ranks 149th out of 179 countries on Transparency International's corruption perception index (Guardian, 2021; Transparency International, 2020). Onah (2006) attributed the failure of all development plans in Nigeria to poor management by corrupt politicians and bureaucrats.

##### ***4.3 Lack of Relevant Data***

Accurate and reliable data is sacrosanct to effective development planning. As a result of the ineptitude of the Federal Office of Statistics (later merged with the National Data Bank and renamed the National Bureau of Statistics), obtaining accurate and reliable data in Nigeria is very problematic. This is further compounded by malicious manipulation of data for personal benefits as well as a culture of unwillingness to disclose information (Iheanacho, 2014). Importantly, poverty alleviation and reduction of unemployment often form the key elements of development plans and policies. However, there is a dearth of accurate information on the country's

poverty and unemployment figures. Hence, such policies are often reliant on estimated figures from the National Bureau of Statistics and international agencies such as the World Bank.

Similarly, the total number of the country's population remains largely unknown to date and as such effective planning has become unrealistic. Despite the internationally recognized conventional practice that census should be conducted every ten years, there has been no census in Nigeria since 2006. Although attempts were made by President Buhari's administration to conduct a census in 2021, this was later abandoned for nebulous reasons (Vanguard, 2021). As noted by Ejumudo (2013) the lack of accurate, up-to-date and reliable data creates enormous challenges for planning, implementing and monitoring national development in the country.

#### ***4.4 Lack of Discipline and Political will in Executing Development Plan***

Another major impediment to development planning stems from the failure of government to adhere strictly to the specific objectives of the plan. During implementation, development plans often undergo several distortions by political office holders and bureaucrats, which ultimately vaporises the primary objectives of the plan. Ihenacho (2014:57) observed that "indiscipline in the process implementation of development plans has resulted in many abandoned projects in all parts of the country." Though development plans are often embedded with several rules and guidelines intended to enforce compliance with realizing its objectives, political leaders often demonstrate a shared lack of political will in ensuring adequate implementation. Therefore, the execution of proposed projects is not often accorded much-needed priorities. The lack of political will in implementing development plans has resulted in an upsurge in uncompleted and abandoned projects. In a convocation lecture delivered in 2012, Professor Kole Omotoso noted that about 12,000 federal government projects across the country have been abandoned within the past 40 years (Premium Times, 2012). Evidently, political leaders have failed to demonstrate considerable commitment towards executing development plans and as a result, development continues to elude the masses. (Godbless et al., 2019).

#### ***4.5 Ambiguous and Over-ambitious Development Plans***

Compared to the resources and capacity of the government, development plans in Nigeria are often over-ambitious without necessarily setting realistic targets. Similarly, development plans often lack clear directions on specific policies and programmes needed to be embarked upon or put in place in order to achieve projected goals. Policy objectives mostly tend to be ambiguous and sometimes contradictory (Ihenacho, 2014). In addition, development plans often seek to pursue various objectives with competing priority areas, thus, creating further implementation difficulties.

#### ***4.6 The Inefficiency of the Public Service***

The public service constitutes the administrative mechanism of government and therefore plays a central role in the implementation of development plans. In order to improve the efficiency of the Nigerian public service, President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration initiated a series of public service reforms. Despite these reforms, the public service remains largely inefficient due to the numerous challenges that confront it, some of which include: red-tapism, lack of adequate monitoring, corruption, overstaffing, poor remuneration, nepotism, indiscipline among others (Ukwandu & Ijere, 2020; Ihenacho, 2014). The continued manifestation of these problems in the public service poses a significant challenge to the effective implementation of development plans.

#### ***4.7 Lack of Adequate Public and Private Sector Partnership***

There has been minimal involvement of the private sector in development planning due to poor collaboration between government and private sector organizations (Ejumudo, 2013). Hence, development plans have been largely alienated from the private sector. This lack of synergy between the public and private sector results in lopsided plans that are not inclusive and thus unable to foster development across all sectors.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

Nigeria's development planning experience has largely failed to yield substantial national development. As a result, poor living conditions, high rate of unemployment, poverty, insecurity, infrastructural deficit among others, have become the realities of the masses, thereby plunging the country into a major socio-economic and political crisis. Thus, the need for urgent action towards addressing the problems associated with development planning cannot be overstated.

Moving forward, political leaders and bureaucrats need to demonstrate a substantial commitment to achieving the specific objectives of development plans, while distortions should be minimized. Similarly, the fight against corruption needs to be reinforced in order to discourage the culture of corruption and impunity, which is evident in the public sector. The cost of corruption on national development is no doubt grievous. As such, a lot can be achieved by simply addressing the high level of corruption in the public sector. Furthermore, there should be inclusion of the private sector and critical stakeholders in the planning and implementation of



development plans. This will facilitate cooperation, collaboration and collective action towards national development. In essence, multistakeholder governance and joint policymaking should be embraced for effective development planning.

## 6. REFERENCES

- AAIN (2005). Fighting poverty together in the mist of plenty, 2005 Annual Report., Abuja. Action Aid International.
- Adedeji, A. (1989). Towards A Dynamic African Economy: Selected Speeches and Lectures. Great Britain: Frank Cass and Company Limited.
- Adeyemi, O. (2001). Moving Nigeria forward: The development planning approach. Ibadan: University Press.
- Adubi, A. A. (2002). Pre-Budget Link in Nigeria: An Exploratory Investigation. NCENI Policy Analysis Series, 8, 2.
- Aitalohi, G. (2021). *Resilience through Reforms*. The World Bank.
- Aiyede, E. R. (2015). Democratic security sector governance and military reform in Nigeria.
- Ake, C. (1996). Democracy and development in Africa. Ibadan, Oyo, Spectrum Books Limited.
- Alao, D. O. & Alao, I. O. (2013). A mid-term evaluation of President Goodluck Jonathan Transformation Agenda. Journal of Research and Development, 1(1).
- Awojobi, O. N. (2015). Cultivating policy for development in Nigeria: An appraisal of President Goodluck Jonathan's Transformation Agenda (2011 – 2014). International Journal of Humanities, Engineering and Pharmaceutical Sciences 1(9)1-11.
- Ayo, E. J. (1988). *Development planning in Nigeria*. Ibadan: University Press Limited.
- Central Bank of Nigeria (2005). CBN Briefs (2004-2005 Edition). Abuja: Research and Statistics Department of Central Bank of Nigeria.
- Chete, L. N., Adeoti, J. O., Adeyinka, F. M., & Ogundele, O. (2014). *Industrial development and growth in Nigeria: Lessons and challenges* (No. 2014/019). WIDER working paper.
- Egonmwan, J. S. and Ibodje, S. (2001). Development Administration: Theory and Practice. Benin City: Thesyin (Nig) Company.
- Ejimudo, K. B. O. (2013). The problematic development planning in Nigeria: Critical discourse. Journal of Developing Country Studies, 3(4) 67-80.
- Ezeogidi, C. (2020). The Wasted Years of Oil Boom: A Critical Analysis of Military Economic Policies in Nigeria (1970–1979). Available at SSRN 3563260.
- Fatherland Gazette (2021). THE CHALLENGE OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA TODAY <https://fatherlandgazette.com/the-challenge-of-insecurity-in-nigeria-today/> Last accessed October 19, 2021.
- Friedman, M. (1962). Capitalism and Freedom. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Gboyega, A. (2003). Democracy and Development: The Imperative of Local Governance. An Inaugural Lecture, University of Ibadan, pp. 6-7.
- Godbless, D. D., Ikechukwu, A. C., & Emeto, J. O. (2019). Nigeria development plans and its challenges: the way forward. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research* 5 (12): 1, 12.
- Guardian (2021). Nigeria loses \$582 billion to corruption in 61yrs – YIAGA Africa <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria-loses-582-billion-to-corruption-in-61yrs-yiaga-africa/> Last accessed October 19, 2021.
- Gyong, J. E. (2012). A social analysis of the Transformation Agenda of President Goodluck Jonathan. European Scientific Journal, 8(16) 1857-7431.
- Haller, A. P. (2012). Concepts of economic growth and development. Challenges of crisis and of knowledge. *Economy Transdisciplinarity Cognition* Vol. 15, Issue 1/2012 pp 66-71.
- Ibietan, J., & Ekhosuehi, O. (2013). Trends in development planning in Nigeria – 1962 to 2012. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 15(4)297-311.
-

Idike, A. N., Okeke, R. C., Okorie, C. O., Ogba, F. N., & Ugodulunwa, C. A. (2020). Gender, Democracy, and National Development in Nigeria. *SAGE Open*, 10(2), 2158244020922836.

Iheanacho, E. N. (2014). National Development Planning in Nigeria: an endless search for appropriate development strategy. *International Journal of Economic Development Research and Investment*, 5(2), 49-60.

Inoykwe, O. S. (2018). Economic Recovery and Growth Plan and Nation Building in Nigeria: Matters Arising. Available at SSRN 3225997.

Jaja, S. (2000). History of Budgeting and Planning in Nigeria: Lessons for the fourth Republic. In Akpuru-Aja, A. and Emeribe, E (eds) Policy and Contending Issues in Nigeria National Development. Strategy. Enugu: John Jacobs Publishers.

Naomi, O. (1995). Towards an Integrated View of Human Rights. *Hunger Teach Net*, 6(3): 6-7.

Nnadozie, U. (2004). The State Civil Service and Underdevelopment in Nigeria: An Analysis of Public Policy Making Process in a Neocolonial Society. Enugu: Johnkens J and Willy Publishing Co. Nig. Ltd.

Nwanegbo, C.J and Odigbo,J (2013) Security and National Development in Nigeria: The Threat of Boko Haram, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol.3 No.4

Obi, E. A. (2006). Development Administration. Onitsha: Bookpoint Ltd.

Obikeze, O. S. and Obi, E. A. (2004). Public Administration in Nigeria: A Development Approach. Onitsha: Bookpoint Ltd.

Ohale, L., & Agbarakwe, U. H. (2009). An Introduction to Economic Planning. Choba, Port Harcourt. Emhai Printing and Publishing Company.

Ohiorhenuan, J. K. (2003). Challenges of the New Millennium. Lagos, NES Publishers.

OKEKE, R. C., & IFEAGWAZI, P. A. (2018) PUBLIC POLICY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A FOCUS ON ADMISSION POLICIES IN TERTIARY EDUCATION.

Okigbo, P. (1989) National Development Plan in Nigeria 1900-1907. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers Ltd.

Okojie, C. E. (2002). Development planning in Nigeria since Independence. In Iyoha, M. A. & Itsede, C. O. (Eds.) Nigerian economy: Structure, growth and development. Benin City: Mindex Publishing.

Okoli, F. C. (2004). Theory and Practice of Public Organizations: A Book of Readings. Enugu, John Jacob's Classic Publishers Ltd.

Okoli, F.C. and Onah, F.O. (2002) Public Administration in Nigeria: Nature, Principles and Application. Enugu: John Jacob's Classical Publishers Ltd.

Okowa, W. (1991). Political Economy of Development Planning in Nigeria. Port Harcourt: Pam Unique Publishers.

Olawoye, J.E (2002) Contemporary Challenges for Rural Sociologists in Nigeria in Isiugo-Abanihe, U. C., Isamah, A. N. and Adesina, J. O. (Eds.) Currents and Perspective in Sociology, Lagos: Mathouse Press Limited.

Ologbenla, D. K. (2007). Leadership, Governance and Corruption in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in African*, 9, 3.

Olomola, A. S. (2007). Strategies for Managing the Opportunities and Challenges of the Current Agricultural Commodity Boom in sub-Saharan Africa. In *seminar papers on Managing* (pp. 88-99).

Onah, F. O. (2010). Managing Public Programmes and Projects (2nd Edition). Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers.

Onyenwigwe P. I. (2009). Principles of Development Administration: Third World Perspectives. Owerri: Ambix Printers Nigeria.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2018). OECD recommendation on public integrity, OECD. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/ethics/OECD-Recommendation-Public-Integrity.pdf> Last accessed October 19, 2021.

Owens-Stively, J. A. (1987). Self-esteem and complicity in encopretic children. *Child psychiatry and human development*, 18(1), 13-21.

OYE, A. J. (2014). NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES: CHALLENGES AND OPTION. *International Journal of Humanities and Social science invention*, 3(4), 51.

Pinto, B. (1987). Nigeria during and after the oil boom: A policy comparison with Indonesia. *The World Bank Economic Review*, 1(3), 419-445.

Premium Times (2012). About 12,000 federal projects abandoned across Nigeria <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/108450-about-12000-federal-projects-abandoned-across-nigeria.html> Last accessed October 19, 2021.

Schumpeter, J.A. (1934). *The Theory of Economic Development*, Cambridge, MA, US: Harvard University Press.

Seers, D. (1969). The meaning of development. Paper presented at the Eleventh World Conference of the Society for International Development, New Delhi.

Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Solomon, B. A., & Fidelis, M. A. (2018). An appraisal of the Nigeria economic recovery and growth plan, 2017-2020. *African Research Review*, 12(3), 25-37.

Suberu, O. J., Ajala, O. A., Akande, M. O., & Olure-Bank, A. (2015). Diversification of the Nigerian economy towards a sustainable growth and economic development. *International journal of Economics, finance and Management sciences*, 3(2), 107-114.

The Cable (2021). Unknown gunmen <https://www.thecable.ng/unknown-gunmen> Last accessed October 19, 2021.

Todaro, M. P. (1977). *Economics for Developing World. An Introduction to Principles, Problems and Policies for Development*. London: Longman Group Limited.

Tordoff, W. (1993). *Government and Policies in Africa*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.

Transparency International (2020). <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/nigeria> Last accessed October 19, 2021.

Uche, E. (2019). Development plans and policies in Nigeria: Observed impediments and practical best alternatives. *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation*, 6(7), 27-36.

Ugwu, C. E. (2009). The imperatives of national development programmes harmonization in Nigeria: Vision 2020, Millennium Development Goals and Seven Point Agenda. *Nigerian Journal of Public Administration and Local Government*, XIV (2)200-216.

Ukwandu, D. C., & Ijere, E. S. (2020). Public sector reforms and national development: A situational analysis of post-independent Nigeria. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, 8(1), 1-7.

UNDP (2008). *Human Development Report*. New York: UNDP

Vanguard (2021). Why no population census this year, NPC <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/06/why-no-population-census-this-year-npc/> Last accessed October 19, 2021.

World Bank (2021). Nigeria Economic Update: Resilience through Reforms <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/publication/nigeria-economic-update-resilience-through-reforms> Last accessed October 19, 2021.

World Development Report (1991). *The challenge of development*. New York: Oxford University Press.