

Good Governance Panacea for National Development: A Study Of the Growing  
Unemployment, Illiteracy and Poverty in Nigeria

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Abstract

The research analysed efforts by the Nigerian state since independence to attain development. National development plan is discovered to be a structured and intentional procedure to achieve the desired aim of the state. Nigeria as a nation has been drafting and re-drafting national development plans since colonial history. Good governance is a product of good leadership, characterised by a sense of direction, astuteness, creativity, high intelligent quotient, etc. It is discovered and recommended that once good governance takes hold of the state our developmental plans will start yielding desired results and growth. Development will ensue which will lead to industrialisation that in effect creates jobs and invariably solve societal challenges facing the nation.

**Introduction**

According to Ozigbo in Ade (2007), governance denotes how a people are ruled and how the affairs of the state are administered and regulated. It relates to politics and administration in a state. While World Bank Report (1989) in Ade captions governance as the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs. This definition depicts the nation's decision-making apparatus, its implementation capacity and the relationship between government and the people. While good governance shows the perceived commitment of the government that enjoys some level of acceptance in its response to the needs of the people. Good governance can be seen in freedom, transparency, participation and accountability. Good governance leads a state to development.

Development is linked to stimulated economic growth. The best way to stimulate economic growth by the modernization theory is through the free market system, this system allows individuals to pursue self-interests, provide incentives for people to work, engage in trade, set up businesses. Backward states are bound to be transformed through modernisation theory when implemented.

Developmental plans have nothing wrong with them but the leadership to implement it religiously is always lacking either because of lack of political will, corruption, maladministration, etc. The greater effect of the inability to implement the

plans to the fullest made Nigeria heaven for many social vices. Of the two backward regions on poverty and literacy index in Nigeria based on statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics are the Northeast and Northwest. They are now plagued by insecurity in form of banditry, armed robbery, insurgency (cattle rustling) and kidnapping. This is a result of a lack of development.

The development plan is a long-term programme designed to effect permanent structural changes in the economy. It is viewed as the diagnosis and remedy to development. This is meant to be so as development is never a by chance product nor by accident. It is a transformational tool for national development.

Colonial developmental planning in Nigeria became very clear between 1946 and 1956. The emphasis in the plan is on building a transport and communication system. It has no provision for industrialization. It is focused on limited cash crops production, according to Ayila (2005) the emphasis on transport and communication was necessary since these were necessary for the export of the raw material produce and surpluses from the site of production to the coast for onward shipment to Britain. It was an externalization of Nigeria economy. It created complementarity between Nigeria and Britain.

The solution remains good governance that is development-oriented, focused, dedicated, astute and selfless, both in fighting corruption and other vices. The work is subdivided into parts like introduction, clarification of concepts, theoretical framework, series of development plans in Nigeria, planning and poverty, planning and unemployment, conclusion and recommendations.

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

The work uses the modernization theory for analysis of the issue of good governance as a panacea for national development. Modernization theory was developed in 1950 by Eurocentric scholars to explain procedures for attaining development by the underdeveloped nations of the Second World and Third world. This step is the step Europe and America claim to have followed and the advice that if the Second world and Third world follow it religiously development will be theirs. The processes include; industrialization, urbanisation, rationalisation, bureaucracy, mass consumption, and most importantly adoption of a democratic system of government. Whenever these things are done the country will move from traditional society to modern society. This theory is anchored on formal education, mass media that will together foster the democratic political institution. Under modernization, we witness more division of labour, a cash-driven market economy, capitalism. Although the theory has no room for the place of colonialism from which the West got the push from plantation to the industrial revolution, which is one of its shortcoming and criticism, the modernisation theory comes very close to our study which is Africa moving from traditional to modernity. According to Crossman (2019) development is anchored on the implementation of developmental plans of the Western world in Africa. It is making Africa look like the western nations.

#### DEVELOPMENT

Development is a multidimensional process involving the reorganisation and reorientation of the entire economic and social system of the society (Michael and Stephen, 2011). It has never been a purely economic thing. In as much as development

involves improvement in income and production, it typically entails radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures including the people's attitude, customs and beliefs system. It is more of economics. It is believed there are processes to achieve this.

Developmental theorists of the 1950s and 1960s viewed the development process as a series of stages of economic growth that every country must follow to attain development. Here it includes the process where the right quality and mixture of savings, investment and foreign aid were needed to propel nations to proceed along an economic growth path that all the developed countries of the world followed to attain theirs. It invariably means development is the same as rapid, aggregate economic growth. Under this argument, we have modernisation theory. The advocate of the stages of growth model of development was Walt.W Rostow. According to him the transition from underdevelopment to development can be seen in the series of steps or stages that all countries must pass.

Modernisation theory suggests a movement of society from pre-modern to the state of modernity. As a theory of development, it sees development as the movement from a traditional society to modern society. It groups societies into two enclaves traditional and modern. It contends that traditionally represent values such as backwardness, high population, corruption, extended family system, lack of need for achievement in development while modern represent capitalist countries and values like the need for achievement, rationality (Henry 2006). In every development there are three basic objectives. According to Michael and Stephen (2011), these include:

- To increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health and protection.
- To raise the level of living, including in addition to higher income, the provision of more jobs, better education and greater attention to culture and human values all of which will serve not only to enhance material well-being but also to generate greater individual and national self-esteem.
- To expand the range of economic and social choices available to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence not only on other people and nation-states but also to forces of ignorance and human misery

In effect, development is sustained elevation of an entire society and social system toward a better or more humane life. It is the ability to meet basic needs in life, which includes: food shelter, health and protection. If any of these are lacking it is a sign of underdevelopment. The desire to bridge the gap in development between the developing and developed nations prompted crafting development plans of which Nigeria has had many of them. A review of the development plans in Nigeria.

#### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The first national development plan was expected to achieve the following objectives

- Increase the rate of growth in national income from 3.9% per year to at least 4%
- Aim at investing 15% of GDP and raise per capita consumption by 1% per year

- To develop as rapidly as possible opportunities in education, health and employment and also improve access to them
- To improve the distribution of income both among people and among regions
- To maintain price stability and values of Nigerian currency

According to Uche (2019), Nigeria has adopted and applied Four national development plans, the First national development plan after independence (1962-1968), the second national development plan (1970-1974), the third national development plan (1975-1980), and the fourth national development plan (1981-1985). The Fifth national development plan did not materialise as it was replaced with a new method of planning- the perspective plans (1986-1990), there was also a three-year rolling plan from 1990-1998. From 2003-2007 another plan known as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) replicated in states as (SEEDS) and (LEEDS) in local government areas. This was a medium-term plan aimed at wealth creation, employment, poverty reduction and national re-orientation. Its method was a "trickle-down" approach instead of a "rights-based" approach which is an internationally accepted approach as most effective in tackling poverty. At the change of regime, another development plan was introduced known as vision 20:2020. This is a perspective plan aimed at achieving developed status for the economy by 2020. Like other plans, it died with the change of the Jonathan regime and in 2017 Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) was introduced. Of special interest is the Fifth national plan that was formulated based on the recommendation of the conference organised by the Federal Ministry of National Planning and Nigeria Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER). Their recommendation led to the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986.

Some of the reasons why the plans did not work according to Arokoyu (2006) is that the country's leadership has never been committed to national development, rather it is their survival and longevity in office that they are after. They lack the leadership quality that works towards implementing and achieving the ideals of national development. A glance at poverty, literacy and unemployment indices since the national development plans commenced is an indication that our plans are only paperwork, as leadership for its implementation is lacking.

#### PLANNING AND POVERTY.

The reason behind every plan is to speed up development but the reverse is usually the case with Nigeria since the first development plan of 1946, according to Ayila (2005) the level of poverty has rather been on the increase. According to Yaqub (2003) in Ayila (2005), this situation is not healthy for the country as a wealthy nation is a healthy nation. The human development report 2000/2001 shows that the highest income bracket 10% of Nigeria population shares 34.4% of total national income while the poorest 10% of the population shares 1.3%. The table below is the poverty level in Nigeria between 1986-1996.

Poverty Table in Nigeria (1980-1996)

Year	Poverty level %	Estimated total population	Population in poverty (M)
1980	28.1	65	17.7
1985	46.3	75	34.1

1992	42.7	91.5	39.2
1996	65.6	102	67.1

Source: National Bureau of Statistics.

The ranking of Nigeria on the Human Development Index (HDI) is very low when compared to other less endowed nations. The table below shows Nigeria in comparison with other selected African countries.

S/N	HDI	NAME OF COUNTRY	LIFE EXPECTANCY	ADULT LITERACY	GDP PAR CAPITA US\$
1	148	NIGERIA	51.7	55	896
2	141	TOGO	51.8	57.1	1.442
3	129	GHANA	56.8	71.5	1964
4	115	EGYPT	67.3	55.3	3635
5	107	SOUTH AFRICA	52.1	85.3	9401
6	100	CAPE VERDE	69.7	73.8	4863
7	64	LIBYA	70.5	98.4	2363
9	25	SINGAPORE	77.5	92.3	2335

Sources: UNDP Human Development Report, pp 149-151

Poverty incidence in Nigeria from 1980-2004 is mostly in rural areas. At the regional level, the Northeast had the topmost poverty level in 1980 and 1996 followed by the Northwest. Northeast is the highest among the regions of the North. The northern part of the country has more poverty households than the Southern part. This explains the incidence of banditry, insurgency and kidnapping in the northern region. This is a sign of failure of governance.

The GDP of Nigeria is the lowest among the states under review, under life expectancy Nigeria is also the lowest and only a few points higher than Egypt in adult literacy in the year under review. This is for a country with a huge deposit of natural resources and human capital. The country's level of development is not commensurate with its natural endowment.

Poverty by Regions in Nigeria (1980-2004)

Regions	1980	1985	1992	1996	2004
South-south	13.2	45.7	40.8	58.2	35.1
Southeast	12.9	30.4	41.0	53.5	26.7
Southwest	13.4	38.6	43.1	60.9	43.0
Northcentral	32.2	50.8	46.0	64.7	67.0
Northeast	35.6	54.9	54.0	70.1	72.2
Northwest	37.7	52.1	36.5	77.2	71.2

Source: NBS Poverty Profile for Nigeria. Pp. 22-24. [www.researchgate.net/publication/283235391](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/283235391) has poverty reduced in nigeria 20 years after.

With these statistics, the number of idle citizens to create insecurity is very high within the northern region than in the southern region. This we see in present-day kidnapping, insurgency, banditry, high mortality and morbidity, early marriages etc.

**Planning and Unemployment in Nigeria**

## Unemployment Rate in Nigeria (1991 -2020)

Year	Unemployment rate %	Annual change
1991	3.64	0.04
1992	3.67	0.04
1993	3.74	0.07
1994	3.76	0.01
1995	3.76	0.00
1996	3.77	0.01
1997	3.76	-0.01
1998	3.76	0.00
1999	3.79	0.04
2000	3.78	-0.01
2001	3.78	0.00
2002	3.82	0.04
2003	3.82	0.00
2004	3.79	-0.04
2005	3.74	-0.05
2006	3.65	-0.09
2007	3.57	-0.08
2008	3.54	-0.03
2009	3.72	0.18
2010	3.77	0.04
2011	3.77	0.00
2012	3.74	-0.04
2013	3.70	-0.03
2014	4.56	0.86
2015	4.31	-0.25
2016	7.06	2.75
2017	8.24	1.33
2018	8.24	-0.15
2019	8.10	-0.15

World Bank source: [www.macrotrends.net/countries/NGA/nigeria/unemployment-rate](http://www.macrotrends.net/countries/NGA/nigeria/unemployment-rate).

The statistics shows the failure of the state in tackling unemployment through planning. The statistics have always been increasing from 1996 till date. The statistics are a reflection of the fact that planning is at variance with the reduction of poverty in Nigeria. Poverty reduction is an indication of purposeful leadership and development through growth and industrialization.

Literacy Rate in Nigeria in 2018, based on Zone and Gender.

Regions	Male	Female
Northwest	59%	29%
Southeast	86.7%	79%
Southsouth	88.5%	79%

Southwest	89%	80.6%
Northcentra l	72.9%	49.6%
Northeast	50.5%	31.8%

Source: Statista account. 2021. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1124745/literacy-rate-in-nigeria-zone-and-gender/>

The southern regions showed the highest number of literacy and the lowest percentage difference between males and females. Juxtapose the level of literacy between the regions and you will see why banditry and kidnapping are rife in both the Northeast and Northwest. These statistics prove that banditry and fanaticism is not a function of religion but a product of illiteracy, poverty and unemployment. The educated person is prone to grow wealth and creates employment. The role of a good leader comes in here through good governance.

### GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

According to Abdullahi (2013), good governance is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs as well as the exercise of control in society about the management of its resources for social and economic development. According to him, the developed world view good governance as a decentralised, legitimised and participatory government that focused on development through empowering the people, eradicating corruption, ensuring legally binding and accountable administration to achieve pro-people developments, which ultimately boost economic growth. It is usually made to reduce poverty in society. Good governance when established ensures accountability of governing authority develops transparency in its workings and binds the authority to follow the law.

While Igbuzor in Torbunde and Gyanggyang (2014) budgeting is at the heart of good governance, with emphasis on participation, accountability delivery and transformation. The success of our fledgling democracy should hinge on cooperative governance as was entrenched in the constitution. It should also involve the engagement of civil society. A capacitated administration and a legislature that is alive to its responsibility. This process of budget formulating, budget execution and budget evaluation is geared towards entrenching good governance which leads to national development. The quality of a good leader includes; integrity, ability to delegate, effective communication, self-awareness, gratitude, learning agility, influence, empathy, courage, respect. Without these qualities, a leader cannot achieve good governance.

Importantly Good governance has now become a tool for donors as multilateral organisations now base aid and loans on the conditions of good governance. According to Sachs (2005), more assistance does contribute to development when it is used properly and is delivered in a sustained way to states with records of democracy. To give backing to this statement Olson (1993) insists that stable democracy provides the impetus for economic development while Ake reiterate that development was not even part of the programmes of African politicians that assumed office on independence. To him repression, alienation, harassment, and intimidation in governance cannot generate development because development is an autonomous process, independent of politics, culture, and institutional framework

## CONCLUSION

Those who fail to plan and implement, plan to fail and remain underdeveloped. All the politics without ideology and my tribe, my religion should stop if we mean to develop in this country. Merit should be the criteria for recruitment into political offices and award of contract, no room should be allowed for a quota system. This procedure if allowed fills the system with mediocre. Education backed with practical, skill acquisition being the key to freeing the mind of man should be free and compulsory at least to the secondary school level. It is only a good leader that can achieve this. From the statistics enumerated above, it is a pointer that governance has failed from every front since independence, as Claude Ake captured it that political leaders in Nigeria and Africa have never been after development but how to secure their position and enrich themselves and their generation. Planning/budgeting in Nigeria made a mockery of the planning and implementation process of the western world.

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