

**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
IN NIGERIA: A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT PLANS (1962-2020)**

Dominic C. Shimawua

Faculty of Management Sciences, Veritas University, Abuja, Nigeria

dshimawua@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: The title of this study is Public Administration and Development Planning in Nigeria: A Critical Evaluation of National Development Plans (1962-2020). The objectives of the study include examining the role of public administration in development planning in Nigeria, critically evaluating various national development plans in Nigeria to identify their specific challenges, and proffering solutions aimed at ameliorating these challenges to enhance better national development plans. To achieve these objectives, the research methodology adopted includes the use of the documentary research design, the use of qualitative descriptive analysis for the analysis of the generated data, the area of study in Nigeria, and the population of the study includes various stakeholders in public administration, while data was collected from secondary sources. The findings made include that public administration plays a very crucial role in development planning in Nigeria; the various national development plans after evaluation had specific challenges that were unique to each national development plan; the solutions were actually proffered, but to a great extent, the various political leadership did not actually address that concerns raised due to sundry issues. The recommendations made include enhancing the role of public administration in national development plans, which requires a comprehensive approach that integrates policy interventions in public administration and human capital development for sustainable national development; each national development needs to be re-evaluated to better understand its inherent specific challenges and the use of a multi-sector approach to planning and implementation of public sector programs and policies.

Keywords: Public Administration, Contemporary Society, National Economy, Government, National Development Plans

INTRODUCTION

National development and transformation, according to Achimugu et al. (2013) are the most compelling challenges confronting Nigeria a country with a population of about 195 million people (www.worldometers.info), a land mass of nearly one million square kilometres which holds great potential for all forms of agriculture, the world's 7th largest producer of crude oil, the 5th largest country with natural gas reserves and many other solid minerals. With these and other resources, Nigeria stands the chance of being one of the world's most prosperous nations.

The situation at hand is so complex that attempts to reverse it must be both systematic and strategic; hence the need for Nigerian public administration, with which national development is intricately

interrelated, to be re-invigorated and repositioned for better performance because a strong bureaucratic/administrative machinery can enhance genuine efforts at national development, and vice versa. The media are replete with cases of bureaucratic/administrative fragility, corruption, inefficiency and unethical behaviour, which often render policy implementation difficult and sometimes impossible (Adegbe et al., 2013). These and similar deficiencies, which are widespread and systemic, permeate public institutions in Nigeria.

Any attempt at meaningful sustainable national development must begin with reforming, repositioning and developing the internal capacity of public administration to support and drive the process of national development. More importantly, it is worthwhile to note that although Nigeria has undertaken four national development plans in her post-independence history, namely, the First National Development Plan (1962-68); the Second National Development Plan (1970-74), the Third National Development Plan (1975-80) and the Fourth National Development Plan (1981-85).

Development planning in Nigeria started with the ten-year plan of development and welfare for Nigeria between 1946 and 1956. However, it has been argued that these pre-independence plans were no plans in the true sense of the word. Besides, it could be asserted and emphatically, too, that many of the drawbacks of the colonial plans, for example, plan distribution and lack of mass participation, are still very glaring to us today, even after a post-independence planning experience that spanned over fifty years. Although several attempts were made, beginning from the close of 1984, to prepare a fifth National Development Plan (1986-90), it was to no avail.

During the preparation for the production of what became the still-born fifth plan, the idea of a perspective 20-year plan was generated and accepted by the government. As a consequence, the Babangida administration abandoned the erstwhile system of fixed five-year development plans and adopted in its place two types of national plans, namely, the perspective plan, which covered three years at a time and was subjected to review every year to evaluate our performance and ascertain whether the economy is on course. The economic crisis that faced the nation in the wake of the 1980's had revealed that fixed five-year plans were not best suited to cope with attendant problems of economic management and adjustment under conditions characterized by numerous uncertainties as well as pressing issues that called for urgent solutions.

The introduction by the government of the 3-year rolling plan can, therefore, be said to have been necessitated by the need for an indicative rather than a comprehensive and rigidly direct plan. By implication, there existed orderly rolling of one plan into another to be consummated at the end of the perspective plan (time) period. Essentially, the 1992-94 rolling plan is the third in the series of medium-term plans that were put in place by the Nigerian government since the adoption of the rolling plan strategy in 1990. The 1992-94 rolling plan could, therefore, be regarded as the 7th plan period, starting with the 1962-68 development plans. Apart from the five national development plans, another document that appears to be ambitious is the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy.

The paper is divided as follows: First, we introduce the study and clarify some key concepts. Next, we look briefly at some attempted development strategies in Nigeria and the problems of national

development; then, we examine briefly some models of development. Finally, the concluding aspect provides findings and recommendations.

Statement of the Problem

One of the critical problems which prompted the study is the disruptive nature of government policy and how it has constituted a serious problem to the processes of administering and managing the affairs of the country. A lot of policies and programmes were abandoned, and most governments that surfaced often came along with a new agenda. They care less about the effects in the society and how it affects national development. The policies and programmes come and go with their founders. Common examples are: War Against Indiscipline (WAI), Green Revolution (GR), Better Life for Rural Women, National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy, Transformation Agenda, Seven Point Agenda, War Against Indiscipline and Corruption and a lot of others.

Another problem which also called for this study is the instability in governance and the challenges of functional administration. The country has witnessed several military coups, and the military administrators have ruled the country for many years. After about 25 years' democracy may not be nascent, but it is still confronted with a long list of challenges such as electoral malpractices, zoning, rotation, and religious/ethnicity extremism, among others, the confusion as to which nature of developmental model to adopt has further exacerbated the problem. All this continues to affect the flow of governance and functional administration in the country.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To examine the role of public administration in development planning in Nigeria.
- ii. To critically evaluate the various national development plans in Nigeria in order to identify their specific challenges.
- iii. To proffer solutions aimed at ameliorating the identified challenges for better national development plans

Research Questions

- i. What is the role of public administration in development planning in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the specific challenges peculiar to the various national development plans in Nigeria?
- iii. What are the solutions that can ameliorate the identified challenges for better national development plans?

Conceptual Clarification

Public Administration

Public Administration, like every other academic term, has been conceptualized from diverse perspectives. That is why Kautilya (1999) observed that the concept has been seen as featuring

hetero-doxy rather than orthodoxy. Despite the plethora of conceptualizations, the fact remains that public administration is an aspect of the generic term “administration” whose essence is determined by action taken in pursuit of group-earmarked objectives. It is concerned with cooperative human efforts geared towards pre-determined goals (Apeh, 2014).

Public administration is a field with two parents, namely, political science and management. More appropriately, it can be said that public administration has a parent and a foster parent. While the mother discipline is political science, management is the foster parent. However, public administration is a discipline of many forces, the influence of the parent and foster parent notwithstanding (Bello, 2005).

Adoyi (2000) averred that public administration is concerned with the purposes of society as a whole as opposed to groups within it. The concept is often used interchangeably with other terms, such as public sector administration, government and administration. It is, therefore, concerned with the purposes of the State. Administration is carried out in an organization. In this regard, the entire society could be regarded as an organisation, which is called a State. As every State has a government which is responsible for the implementation of its policies, public administration is often called government administration.

Development

Development as a concept is a victim of definitional pluralism because of the difficulty in defining it. However, attempts have been made by erudite scholars to conceptualize development. Some of these definitions will be explored for the purpose of this study.

Gboyega (2003) captured development as an idea that encompasses all attempts to enhance the conditions of human existence in all its ramifications. It implies improvement in the material well-being of all citizens, not the most powerful and rich alone, in a sustainable way such that today’s consumption does not imperil the future; it also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances.

Development, according to Aremu (2005), is usually taken to involve not only economic growth but also some notion of equitable distribution, provision of health care, education, housing and other essential services, all with a view to improving the individual and collective quality of life.

National Development

National development refers to a state of change in conditions or situations within a particular nation to a better one (Adoyi, 2006). It denotes positive changes or improvements in some or all aspects of the national life of a country. National development comprises the holistic array of policies, programmes and actions detailed in the confrontation of national challenges, with the intention of improving the internal workings of government, the private sector and the entire citizenry (Achimugu et al., 2013).

Obstacles to Development Administration in Nigeria: Several years of development planning in the country have failed to produce the supposed much sought-after sustainable development. The factors that hinder the development agenda in Nigeria, according to Aremu (2003) include the following: misplacement of priorities, lack of plan discipline, lack of self-reliance, public service inefficiency, technology transfer syndrome, systemic corruption, inadequate executive capacity, absence of relevant data, domestic-foreign resource generation ratio and public/private sector partnership

General Overview of National Development Plans in Nigeria: We have had a series of development plans in Nigeria. The spectre of development permanently hunts Nigeria. This seems to be the only country where virtually all notions and models of development have been experimented with (Aremu, 2003). Two years after independence, the first National Development Plan policy was formulated between 1962 and 1968 with the objectives of developing opportunities in health, education and employment and improving access to these opportunities, etc. This plan failed because fifty per cent of the resources needed to finance the plan was to come from external sources, and only fourteen per cent of the external finance was received (Ogwumike, 1995).

The collapse of the first Republic and the commencement of civil war also disrupted the plan. After the Civil War in 1970, the second National Development Plan 1970 to 1974 was launched; the plan's priorities were agriculture, industry, transport, manpower, defence, electricity, communication and water supply and provision of social services (Ogwumike, 1995). The third plan, covering the period of 1975 to 1980, was considered more ambitious than the second plan. Emphasis was placed on rural development and efforts to revamp the agricultural sector. The fourth plan, 1981 to 1985, recognized the role of social services, health services, etc. The plan was aimed at bringing about improvement in the living conditions of the people. The specific objectives were an increase in the real income of the average citizen, more even distribution of income among individuals and socio-economic groups, increased dependence on the country's material and human resources, and a reduction in the level of unemployment and underemployment (Ogwumike, 1995).

During these periods, Nigeria's enormous oil wealth was not invested in building a viable industrial base for the country and for launching an agrarian revolution to liquidate mass poverty. For instance, the Green Revolution Programme that replaced Operation Feed the Nation failed to generate enough food for the masses. In the recent past, various strategies for development have also been tried with little or no result; among these were the structural adjustment programme (SAP), Vision 2010, national economic empowerment and development strategy (NEEDS), creation of development centres, seven-point agenda, with vision 2020, Change, Renewed Hope etc. without any clear methodological approach towards achieving them. It is obvious that the current results so far are not what development connotes.

Strategies for National Development: First, development requires total commitment on the part of the leadership. The need for discipline and honesty on the part of the project implementers cannot be compromised, such officials should show enough discipline, interest, willingness,

dedication and honesty. Without these attributes and the will to pursue set economic goals, all other ingredients of development present would amount to nullity.

Second, this country should learn that wholesale liberalization, the type advocated by the apologists of orthodox SAP, is not necessarily synonymous with development. (Mimiko, 1997). Arno (2017) contribution tilted towards stability and continuity of policies to encourage investment and propel development. Development depends very much on human knowledge and skills. This must be such that a high quality of education and training is achieved for a large majority at a reasonable price, and the context and quality of such education and training should be relevant and adequate to the country's development needs.

The idea or belief that "things cannot work in Nigeria or the Nigerian factor" should be discouraged. Real development is achieved through internal activities rather than from external influences. Development is seen as a process generated within a society by forces propagated and invigorated by the actual members of that society. It is believed that true development can neither be started nor sustained by outsiders (Omotoso, 2008).

Additionally, the need to reform the electoral process is imperative for socio-economic and political development. Electoral fraud is one of the banes of Nigeria's development. The role of leadership in development cannot be overemphasized; all efforts towards development must be coordinated and directed by the leaders. Therefore, the leaders must be development-conscious, have a genuine interest in development and have the political will to propel such development. Lastly, development plans should not be exclusively regarded as an economic issue; it should be seen as holistic and encompassing all national issues that cut across economic, social, political and psychological aspects of human endeavour (Apeh, 2014).

Appraisal of Development Planning Efforts in Nigeria: Although setting up criteria for the appraisal of development plans is a thorny issue, Ezeani (2005) identified five criteria for the evaluation of development plans. They are the plan's contribution to policy making, plan size and priorities, plan strategy and plan implementation.

Mimiko (2018), Dagash (2018), and Ezekiel (2017), among others, examined the various national development plans

First National Development Plan (Tafawa Balewa (1962-1968))

The first national development plan was launched in June 1962 and was expected to operate for a period of six years up to 1968 (FRN 1962). But in spite of the fact that regional autonomy was still very attractive, the regional and federal governments realized the need for the formulation of common objectives and economic targets.

Policy Making under the First National Development Plan: The first plan was not bad in terms of contribution to policy making. The macro-objectives of the plan included ensuring a growth rate of at least 4.0% per annum; achieving economic take-off by 1980; developing opportunities in specific areas like health, education and employment; enhancing access to opportunities in

education, health and employment; promotion of balanced development; promotion of equity in income and promotion of macro-economic stability. In addition, there was a spelt-out commitment to encourage private entrepreneurship, particularly indigenous entrepreneurship. It was clear from the plan document that efforts were made to tackle key policy issues like physical and institutional infrastructural inadequacy.

At any rate, the first plan saw the creation of Kainji Dam and the establishment of the Nigerian Industrial Development Bank, which is a clear indication of the successful institution of infrastructural development by the plan. The plan, however, failed when one considers the fact that marketing boards continued to impose taxes on agricultural export commodities, which clearly became a cog in the wheel of the progress of the peasant farmers who were the main producers of and contributors to agricultural development. The problem was further compounded by the over-valuation of the pound which meant additional taxation of such exports, with the Developing Country Studies accompanying effect of a drastic cut down in the prices of domestic food items due to the influx of relatively cheaper foreign food items. This situation was particularly defective, especially due to the high-priority position of agriculture during the said period. In fact, the situation was nothing short of milking a productive cow to death.

Plan Size and Priorities: The first plan had a capital expenditure package of N1,307.8 million. By the plan's estimate, available domestic financial resources amounted to N526 million. Under-spending was estimated to amount to N45.8 million, leaving a balance of expenditure gap of N781.8 million to be financed from other sources. It was assumed that foreign aid would cater for N654.2 million, leaving an uncovered gap of N127.6 million to be financed, possibly by inflationary measures. Judging by the Lewisian view that the basis of development does not need but resources, it is obvious that the first plan was over-sized, especially when one considers the fact that the plan's investment was N1,307.8 million, with domestic resource availability amounting to no more than N526 million.

It is no distortion of facts to assert, therefore, that the expectation of 50 per cent (N654.2 million) of the capital budget from foreign sources was clearly unrealistic. However, despite the abysmal performance of the foreign aid sector during the plan period, the domestic economy was able to generate resources for the financing of the plan. Ultimately, executive capacity constituted a greater constraint on plan implementation than finance, which resulted in a fast depletion of our foreign reserves. At the end of the plan period, total capital expenditure amounted to about N307.0 million against the planned figure of N1, 307.8 million, which amounted to about 80 percent rate of achievement. It should be emphasised, however, that the iron and steel (industrial) project was not implemented at all.

Also, agriculture, industry and manpower development were accorded the highest priority rating by the first plan. It should be stressed, however, that despite the fact that agricultural development is a key factor in successful industrialisation and the fastest route to modern development, the highest priority ranking given to agriculture was nothing but mere paperwork, especially as agriculture which then employed more than 70 per cent of the work-force received only 13.6 per cent of the planned capital expenditure. In fact, the sector received only 9.8 per cent of the total in terms of actual expenditure.

Plan Strategy: In respect of rural-urban balance, the first plan was obviously urban-oriented. The truism of this assertion is evident when one considers the fact that the percentage of the expenditure did not have any meaningful impact. The situation was lamented by Dibia (2020) when he observed that the greatest contemporary issue in the third world underdevelopment is not between foreign exploiters and the indigenous population or capital and labour but rather between rural poverty and powerlessness and urban affluence and power. This plan heavily favoured the urban sector to the relative neglect of the rural sector in line with the colonial pattern.

It was estimated that about 90 per cent of planned investment in infrastructural facilities in the first plan was allotted to the urban sector, while less than 6 per cent was allotted to the rural sector. Even in the area of industrial development, the first plan focused largely on large enterprises to the detriment of the small-scale entrepreneurs. For instance, the Nigerian Industrial Development Bank, established in 1964, was barred from financing unincorporated businesses, which clearly defined most of the small-scale industries out of the bank's operations.

Plan Implementation: Although the first plan made some appreciable impact in terms of plan implementation, particularly with respect to some key projects of the plan like the Kainji Dam, the country's first petroleum refinery and the Nigerian Industrial Development Bank, the implemented plan did deviate significantly from the planned programme. For instance, agriculture and industry had actual allocations of 9.8 and 8.9 per cent, respectively, as compared with planned allocations of 13.6 and 13.4. Given the highest priority rating of these two key sectors, such downward displacement of allocations of investment expenditure ought not to have been entertained.

In fact, in the first plan, four capital programmes were patched together so that this was not an integrated plan at all. Conclusively, the masses had no place in the first plan. Even the technocrats who prepared the plan were foreign. In fact, the two expert planners during the first plan, W.F. Stopler and L.M. Hansan, were Americans. Although it is quite clear from the plan document that the government was aware of the need for mass participation for successful plan implementation, the government did nothing to encourage the participation of Nigerians in both planning and implementation.

Second National Development Plan (Yakubu Gowon 1970-1974)

The second National Development Plan (SNDP) started in 1970 instead of 1969 because of the civil war, which necessitated the extension of the first National Development Plan to 1970 (FRN 1970). The objectives of the plan, which give the impression of Nigeria's first attempt to grapple with real development, included efforts to build a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; a just and egalitarian society; a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens and free and democratic society.

Policy Making: This plan recognised the importance of policy making in development planning. The plan also recognised the role which policy could play in the management of the external sector in the 1960s, for which a monetary policy was geared towards the provision of easy money to satisfy the Government's financial requirements. In this regard, the financial system was to be reconstituted with an eye to increasing the plan's capacity to mobilise funds for development

purposes. The afore-said fiscal policy was expected to provide funds for financing economic development, containing inflationary pressures and reducing existing inequalities in wealth, income and consumption. Recognizing the enormous damage done to physical infrastructural facilities due to the civil war, emphasis was placed on the physical rehabilitation of infrastructure. The plan was essentially geared towards rehabilitation, reconstruction and reconciliation. Consequently, programmes including agricultural research and extension services were planned and executed.

Plan Size and Priority: The second plan had an initial investment expenditure of N1,560,000 million for the public sector which was eventually revised upwards to 3,271.9 million, thereby giving the plan an over-sized structure. Although the overreliance on the foreign aid contribution that was evident in the 1962-68 plan was corrected during the second plan, the priorities given to transportation and communication as witnessed in the colonial planning of 1949 through 1956 transcended the 1962-68 to that of 1970-74 plan. For example, the biggest single sector in the 1970-74 plan was transportation with 23.7 per cent of the total public sector programme and 30.1 per cent of the Federal Government's programme.

Agriculture, industry and education combined were allocated 21.1 percent of the federal programme, leaving transportation with 1.7 per cent. Worse still, more emphasis was placed on industries that would tie Nigeria's economy to the monopoly capitalist nations in terms of dependency of our economy on foreign raw materials. This is evident in the import substitution industries in Nigeria. Particularly, the 1970-74 plan for the industrial sector witnessed the setting up of ventures like the Peugeot Motor Car Assembly Plant in Kaduna and the Volkswagen Plant in Lagos to the relative neglect of food storage and processing industries or the Liquefied Natural Gas or Petro-chemical and Agro-allied industries.

Plan Strategy: While the plan was aware of the multiplier effects of improvements in rural incomes, it proceeded to identify itself with the first plan's strategy of taxing the 'rural surplus' through the marketing boards for urban development. Obviously, therefore, the plan can be said to be urban-biased. It should be emphasized that the urban-oriented posture of the plan was nothing short of a contradiction of its egalitarian objectives. In the words of Aka, the objectives were a mere political posturing of a defensive radical mariner. In terms of industrial development, the second plan de-emphasized on small scale industrial development as an important factor for employment generation with its accompanying effect of rapid improvement of the living standards or conditions of the rural inhabitants and elements of the urban informal sector.

Plan Implementation: Hard and fast rules to enforce plan discipline and conditions required for the introduction of new projects were all embedded in the plan. In the above plan, a total capital expenditure of N2,236.4 million was realized against the initial plan size of 560.0 million which was revised upwards to N3,271.9 million. This represented a financial achievement rate of 67% in terms of the revised programme and over 140 per cent against the background of the original programme. By the close of 1974, a reasonable number of abandoned agricultural farms and plantations in the war-affected areas had been rehabilitated and a number of government-owned companies were established in several areas of business including banking and insurance.

The plan implementation was comparatively better than the first plan when one considers the level of plan distortion. For instance, agriculture during the second plan, received 9.7 per cent allocation of 9.9 per cent, showing 0.2 per cent distortion against the 3.8 per cent distortion for the first plan. In the same vein, industry and commerce had a revised allocation of 7.1 per cent, but in actual sense, it received 6.5 percent that represented 0.6 per cent contrary to the 4.5 per cent distortion recorded in the first plan. Essentially too, the second plan was defective in the area of mass participation despite the substitution of indigenous expertise for the foreign ones that prepared the first plan.

The Third National Development Plan (Murtala /Obasanjo 1975-1980): This plan marked a watershed in the history National Development planning for several reasons. First, its sheer size was very large. It has been put roughly by Egbonmuwan and Ibodie (2021) to be almost ten times the size of the Second National Development Plan. Second, it was handled by the National Economic Advisory Council (NEAC) which was established in 1972. The council undertook extensive consultation with various bodies and organs and was well placed to consult widely because of its wide membership base. These comprised government officials of various technicalities and backgrounds and representatives of various bodies such as private organizations, trade unions, chambers of commerce, manufacturers' Associations, Agricultural Associations and other professionals.

The objectives of the plan were increase in per capita income; even distribution of income; reduction in the level of unemployment; increase in the supply of high level manpower; diversification of the economy; balanced development and indigenization of economic activities. The third plan was supposed to be a blue-print for the industrial development of Nigeria. Although the financial capacity to implement the plan was there, the political will was almost completely absent. In fact, Nigerians were more concerned with sharing the oil booty than in laying the foundation for the much-needed industrial development index.

Policy Making: The third plan which was meant to ensure a radical transformation of the economy during the plan period identified three objectives of the policy which were: economic growth and development; price stability and social equity. The plan also classified the policy into three namely: fiscal policy, monetary policy and incomes policy. While the fiscal policy was meant for the curtailment of imports and generation of government revenue, the monetary policy and the incomes policy were meant for the control of inflation and the reduction of income inequality respectively. Although the plan recognized the need for improvement in the lot of the rural people, the Udoji awards of 1975 worsened the relative position of the rural dwellers through the combination of a very strong Naira and massive importation of food.

Plan Size: The third plan originally projected a capital expenditure of N30.0 billion and was revised upwards to N43.3 billion in 1976 due to the massive increase in oil revenue without any evidence of a new absorptive capacity to support such flamboyance. Although the plan was not oversized in financial terms, it was essentially oversized when considered against the background of the level of executive capacity. It could be asserted therefore that inadequate executive capacity and lack strong political will were some of the greatest problems that plagued the plan in terms of implementation or execution.

Plan Priorities: Although the third plan accepted the five national objectives identified by the second plan, the lack of operationality of the said objectives occasioned the identification of seven short-term objectives which were: increase in per capita income; more even distribution of income; reduction in the level of unemployment; increase in the supply of high level manpower, diversification of the economy, balance development indigenization of economic activity. Consequent upon the above mentioned objectives, the plan placed more emphasis on economic infrastructure, industrial development, agriculture and manpower development. The revised plan, however, shifted priority in favour of social services. Although the plan earmarked and expended a huge amount of money to support agricultural development, a policy environment was created which made agricultural development far from possibility.

Plan Strategy: The third plan capitalized on the oil boom for the purpose of creating a productive base for self-sustaining growth and development. To achieve the objective of more even distribution of income, the public sector was made to provide subsidized facilities for the poor, which eventually benefited the rich. Despite the plan's goal of improving living conditions of the rural people, the resource allocation pattern was even more urban-based than the previous plans. In fact, the plan aided and abetted the resultant massive rural-urban migration. The plan also failed to recognize the key employment-generating role of the small scale industries.

Plan Implementation: A good number of programmes like the further indigenization of the economy and free education and industrial projects like the Warri and Kaduna refineries, and Ajaokuta Steel Plant were implemented during the said plan period. However, one must emphasize the non-implementation of the petrochemical complex and the liquefied Natural Gas projects. The implementation of the plan was fraught with indiscipline when one considers the fact that N979.8 million was spent contrary to the planned expenditure of N667.4 million on importation of consumer goods for the 1975-75 period. This overspending persisted despite the awareness by government of the adverse effect of such a pattern on the achievement of our development objectives. Structural distortion also characterized the third plan. For instance, Agriculture and Industry were allotted 7.2 per cent and 17.2 per cent of the public sector's capital expenditure respectively.

The Fourth National Development Plan (Alhaji Shehu Shagari 1981-1985)

The fourth National Development plan made some improvement on the 3 plan (FRN 1981). It tried to further consolidate the process of laying a solid foundation for economic and social development. A look at the sectoral allocations would reveal that all the subsectors were retained as in the third National Development plan, except that in some cases, increased funds allocation was made. Another difference between the Third and Fourth National Development plans was that the objectives were enlarged and some of them were more particularistic or definitive in the fourth plan. The objectives included increase in the real income of the average citizen; more even distribution of income among individuals and socio-economic group; increase in the level of skilled manpower; reduction in the level of unemployment; reduction of the dependence of the economy on a narrow range of activities; balanced development, increased participation by citizens in the ownership and management of productive enterprises and greater self-reliance. Others were

development of technology; increased productivity and the promotion of a new national orientation conducive to greater discipline, better attitude to work and clean environment.

Policy Making: The plan also considered three broad objectives of the policy which were; economic growth and development, price stability and social equity and recognized three policy categories namely: fiscal policy, monetary policy and incomes policy framework; the only difference was the emphasis on the need to generate investible surplus by the latter.

Plan Size: The fourth plan began with a planned capital expenditure of N70.5 billion for the public sector and N 1.7 billion for the private sector. However, the slide in the market rendered the N70.5 billion investment target unrealistic. The plan was as a result of the assumption that oil production would remain at over 2 million barrels a day at a price of at least \$40 per barrel. Unfortunately, however, by February 1983, Nigeria was producing less than 1 million barrels a day at about \$ 30 per barrel. The plan can be said to be over-sized, if the relevant available data upon which the plan size was determined is anything to go by.

Plan Priorities: The fourth plan like the previous plans accorded the highest priority to economic infrastructure, industry, agriculture and manpower development. To this end, agriculture, industry and education were allotted 12.6 per cent, 13.6 per cent and 11.0 per cent respectively. The fourth plan also emphasized the development of technology and the promotion of a new national orientation.

Plan Strategy: The fourth plan also relied on the possible utilization of the proceeds from oil to establish the productive base of the economy. Unfortunately, there was downward trend in the oil market shortly after the plan came into effect. Consequently, there was the need to curtail the importation of consumer goods in order to be able to generate the funds needed to finance the plan, but the government lacked the discipline to pursue such a line of action. Thus, by the end of 1983, evident signs of the consequences of such a plan-less strategy were coming to light.

Plan Implementation: In respect of plan implementation, the fourth plan was characterized by uncompleted and often abandoned projects. Key industrial projects started during the fourth plan period included the liquefied Natural Gas Plant at Eleme, a new refinery in Port-Harcourt, petrochemical complexes at Kaduna and Warri and a fertilizer complex at Onne. There was also the problem of distorted under-allocation during the plan period. For example, industry was allotted 15.8 per cent in the revised plan, but in reality, it got 13.6 per cent which amounted to 2.2 per cent distorted under-allocation. Generally, the implementation of the plan was defective.

Fifth National Development Plan and One Year Economic Emergency Programme (Ibrahim Babangida-1986)

Even in economic sector, the fourth National development plan was assessed to have performed poorly and so it became necessary to carry out extensive consultations as a prelude for the preparation of the fifth National Development plan. A national conference on the matter was held at the University of Ibadan in November, 1984 and the recommendations from it formed the basis of the policies and strategies included in the fifth National Development plan. The objectives

remained essentially the same. The main thrust of the plan was to correct the structural defects in the economy and create a more self-reliant economy that would largely be regulated by market forces.

The economy was therefore expected to be restructured in favour of the production sector especially those of agriculture and manufacturing. More than ever, the linkages between the agricultural and manufacturing sectors of the economy were to be emphasized during the plan period (Ayo, 1988). The Fifth National Development Plan did not actually take off in 1986 and the year was taken as one-year of economic emergency period and programme. It was later absorbed by a two-year structural adjustment programme (SAP). The two-year SAP ended the five-year planning model. The two-year model was also replaced by the three year rolling plan.

The Perspective Plan and the Rolling Plans 1986-1994

An innovative view of planning was introduced during the preparation of the fifth development plan. It was felt that the established 5 year planning model did not actually provide an opportunity for a realistic long- term view of the problem of the economy. It commenced action with a conference organized by the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) and the Federal Ministry of National Planning to discuss strategies for the National Development plan. Following the recommendations of the planning experts who attended the Ibadan conference in November, 1984, the government decided to institute what became known as perspective planning that was to cover a period of 15-20 years, so that there can be a longer term view of the country's problems.

The first phase of the perspective plan was to constitute the fifth National Development Plan, while the establishment of 5-year National Development Plan ceased to operate. In fact, the period between 1986 and 1989 was uneventful. Essentially, the Babangida administration abandoned the erstwhile system of fixed five-year development plans and adopted in its place, two types of national plans namely the perspective which will span over a period of 15-20 years, and the rolling plan which will cover three years at a time subject to review every year to evaluate our performance and ascertain whether the economy is on course. In view of its comprehensive nature, it requires a lot of information and data to prepare the perspective plan. It is, in this connection, that the national bank undertook a major survey of the statistical base as early as January 1991. This was done to avoid a situation where there will be gaps in our data that will resultantly make it difficult to plan and monitor the performance of our economy.

The economic crisis that faced the nation since 1983 revealed that fixed five-year plans were not the best suited to cope with the attendant problems of economic management and adjustment under conditions characterized by numerous uncertainties as well as pressing issues that called for urgent solutions. The introduction by the Developing Country Studies government of the 3-year rolling plan could be said to have been necessitated by the need to have an indicative rather than a comprehensive and rigidly directive plan. It was also borne out of the fact that there is the need to have a systematically and orderly rolling of one plan into another to be consummated at the end of the perspective plan time period.

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (Olusegun Obasanjo 1999-2007)

Poverty has been a problem and concern for Nigeria. It was against this background that the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) that appears to be an ambitious developmental blueprint was introduced in 1999. The document was expectedly an attempt to put in place the rudiments of a developmental state and design instruments within it to accelerate growth and reduce poverty. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) is therefore a response to the development challenges of Nigeria for the level grossly underestimated the extent of social, political, and economic decay of the country was grossly underestimated.

Although the NEEDS document stated explicitly that it is Nigeria's home-grown poverty reduction strategy and it appears to conform to what a country PRSP should be (World Bank 2010), it suffers from the shortcomings and inadequacies which Ijaiya and Usman (2020) identified for African PRSP generally. Among the shortcomings he identified are weakness on poverty diagnostics; cosmetically descriptive rather than analytical approach and weakness in the setting of economic targets. However, the most fundamental problem with NEEDS as a PRSP is its "trickle down" approach to poverty reduction instead of the 'Rights Based Approach' now internationally recognized as the most fruitful approach.

Challenges of Nigerian Public Administration: A number of problems have been hindering Nigerian public administration over the years from playing its role as an instrument of national development. Such challenges include the following factors, according to Ani (2017) bribery and corruption, paucity of training and development opportunities, rigidity and red tape, ineffective leadership, poor remuneration, inadequate provision of energy, resources/public utilities, crimes and insecurity and national cake mentality.

Improving Public Administration for National Development: The following suggestions are capable of re-engineering this machinery of government to be able to cope with the arduous demands of national development. Apeh (2014) identified the following under-listed as suggestions for improving public administration, empowering anti-corruption institutions, human capital development, introduction of information and communication technology, effective leadership, improved remuneration packages and adequate provision of energy resources/public utilities, mitigation of crimes and insecurity.

Theoretical Framework

The theory that was adopted for this work is the administrative management theory by Henri Fayol (1935). This theory can be described as an approach to management and increasing productivity by emphasizing organizational structure and human behaviour. Management theory plays a crucial role in public administration and national development by providing frameworks and tools to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in government operations. The application of administrative management theories aids public administrators in developing long-term goals and aligning resources to achieve national development objectives. By applying this theory, public

administrators can enhance service delivery, promote transparency, and contribute to sustainable national development.

Empirical Studies

Olawale and Nwosu (2023) work titled the Role of Public Administration in Enhancing Economic Growth in Nigeria, focused on the Nigerian economy, with a population comprising government officials and economic experts across the 36 states. Using a sample size of 500 respondents, the data was analysed using multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive impact of effective public administration on economic growth ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$). The study recommended strengthening institutional frameworks and capacity building initiatives to sustain economic development.

Smith and Patel (2022) work titled Public Administration and Social Development, using a comparative analysis of developed and developing countries. The research involved a comparative analysis of 10 developed and 10 developing countries, with a total population of 1,000 public administrators and social workers. A sample of 300 respondents from each category was analysed using ANOVA. The findings indicated that developed countries had higher efficiency in public administration, positively affecting social development ($F(1, 598) = 45.67$, $p < 0.001$). Recommendations included adopting best practices from developed nations to improve public administration in developing countries.

Gupta and Fernandez (2021) work titled the Impact of Public Administration Reforms on Transparency and Accountability in Government Operations. The study examined government operations in India, targeting a population of 800 government employees across various departments. A sample of 250 respondents was analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM). The results showed a significant improvement in transparency and accountability due to public administration reforms ($\chi^2/df = 2.34$, RMSEA = 0.05). The study recommended continuous reform and periodic evaluation to maintain transparency and accountability.

METHODOLOGY

The research approach to this study is the documentary research design. Being non-experimental research, the use of qualitative descriptive analysis is employed for the analysis of the generated data. The area of study is Nigeria, and the population of the study includes various stakeholders in public administration, while data was collected from secondary sources.

Summary of Findings

- i. Public administration plays a very crucial role in development planning in Nigeria. This role is holistic from plan initiation, design, development, implementation and evaluation. They certainly do not act independently; they act in conjunction with relevant stakeholders and are often supervised by the political executives and, in extension, oversight by the legislative assembly. The judiciary also does come in, especially in areas that deal with public administrative law interpretation.

- ii. The various national development plans, after evaluation, had specific challenges that were unique to each national development plan; these include linkage between the different spheres of the society, inter-governmental relations issues, finance shortfalls, sustainability, policy design issues, models of development adopted, executive capacity issues, discipline, general political leadership ineptitude among others.
- iii. The solutions were actually proffered, but to a great extent, the various political leaderships did not actually address the concerns raised due to sundry issues.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Nigeria's journey towards effective public administration and robust human capital development is fraught with challenges but also opportunities for transformation. Addressing these challenges requires sustained political will, strategic investments, and conclusive policies that prioritize meritocracy, equity, and sustainable development. By tackling these issues head on, Nigeria can harness its demographic dividend and propel itself towards socio-economic prosperity and competitiveness in the 21st century. The role of public administration in National development is multifaceted and indispensable. It encompasses governance, economic growth, social welfare, and environmental stewardship. Through effective management of resources and responsive policy making, public administration contributes significantly to the overall progress and prosperity of a nation. Its impact extends beyond immediate outcomes, laying the foundation for a sustainable and inclusive future.

This study has revealed that there are many challenges to obstructive national development in Nigeria, which include bribery and corruption, inadequate education/training opportunities, rigidity and red tape, ineffective leadership, poor remuneration, inadequate sources of energy, increasing rates of crimes and insecurity and national cake mentality. These are the factors that stand in the way of Nigerian public administration in its bid to play its catalysing role in national development. Possible solutions to these problems have also been proffered, and they include the revitalisation of the organisations and agencies providing the various resources of energy and water, empowering the anti-corruption institutions, the introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) in public governance, efforts to be made to have effective leadership and improved remuneration packages. The government should also endeavour to address the material poverty (needs) of Nigerians as a deliberate move to curb crimes and insecurity. These suggestions are capable of repositioning Nigerian public administration so as to play its role in a way that will effectively engender national development.

Recommendations

- i. Enhancing the role of public administration in national development plans requires a comprehensive approach that integrates policy interventions in public administration and human capital development for sustainable national development. There is also a need for the reformation of public institutions to enhance transparency, accountability and professionalism through training and performance management.
- ii. Each national development needs to be re-evaluated to understand its inherent specific challenges better.

- iii. This paper strongly recommends a multi-sector approach to planning and implementation of public sector programs and policies. Harmonisation of development programs and initiatives is also seriously advocated to enable plans to operate as a whole rather than isolated and scattered ideas, which makes implementation a herculean task. Massive re-training and attitudinal re-orientation for the leadership and governing elites of the country. The machinery/institutions for gathering data for planning require strengthening or a total overhaul. The inter-ministerial/departmental and agency coordination machinery should be strengthened for effective plan monitoring, policy evaluation, and program implementation. In addition, the Anti-graft war should be pursued with vigour and without selection.

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