

Analyzing Development Administration in Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges

Onah, Vitalis Emeka

Vitico4justice@yahoo.com

Department of Public Administration Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT)

ABSTRACT

Economy and efficiency serves as both ends and means blurring the distinction between them. Development Administration therefore can be seen as an instrumental means for defining, consolidating, and implementing national goals in developing countries. The study is guided by two specific objectives; examine the challenges of development administration in Nigeria and ascertain plausible mitigation strategies to the identified challenges towards engineering and fostering social and economic progress in Nigeria. The study adopted the Marxist theory of post colonial state, by Alavi (1972). Content analysis were used in the study. However, the study revealed that Nation-building and socio-economic development are dependent on development administration, hence recommended amongst others that promoting and creating enabling policies, environment and building capacity for participation in global economy is imperative in mitigating perceived challenges.

Journal of Policy and Development Studies (JPDS)

Vol. 14, Issue 2 (2023)

ISSN(p) 0189-5958

ISSN (e) 2814-1091

Home page

<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jpds>

ARTICLE INFO:

Keywords:

Development, Administration and Development Administration

Article History

Received 30th October 2023

Accepted: 25th November 2023

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jpds.v14i2.1>

1. INTRODUCTION

Public administration is a strategic factor in economic and social development. It influences and determines the success of any development plan, and is at the same time susceptible to deliberate social control and change. The inadequacy of administration in many developing countries is now recognized as a major obstacle to development, perhaps more serious obstacle than the lack of capital or foreign aid. Herbert Emmerich, a noted scholar and administrator, estimates that 80 per cent of the plans of the world are incapable of being fulfilled because of administration (Ijje & Iyoriobhe, 2018).

The term 'development administration' can be used in a broad sense, to embrace the variety of approaches and points of view that mark the study of public administration in developing countries. Some writers have sought to assign a more restricted and precise meanings to the term, but their attempts have been arbitrary and conflicting. Mukoro (2015) speaks of 'development administration' in order to emphasize the inadequacy of the established discipline of 'public administration'; others treat the field as merely an application of the traditional study; still others use the term with neither connotation. Some use the term in the sense of 'the administration of development'; others are thinking of the development of administration; still others see these concepts as two sides of the same coin.

Another important school of thought who studies the role and problems of administration in developing countries calls its field 'comparative public administration'. The battle over meanings and labels is symptomatic of substantive differences in approach and outlook which, we shall see, have important implications for planning.

To some degree, all of the different approaches share a comparative point of view. Almost every writer who discusses a developing bureaucracy is at least, implicitly holding up against it, the Weberian image of the efficient, rational, functionally specialized, impersonal, non-political bureaucratic hierarchy, an image associated chiefly with the western industrialized nations. These developed bureaucracies probably look good only when being compared with their counterparts or imitators in developing countries. But the latter, although they certainly did not invent corruption, irrationality, and incompetence, are more afflicted with those ills, and much less able to afford them. Whatever are their views of the appropriateness of the Weberian standard, scholars of development administration inevitably focus on the falling-short-of-the-ideal as their special problem.

The term development administration is used to refer to the complex of agencies, management systems, and a process a government establishes to achieve its development goals. Development is the centre of politics, and governments play a key role in national development. Public administration is an important mechanism in this development process. Government uses its administrative authority to achieve national development task by formulating, organizing and implementing large-scale action programmes through the deployment of instrument of development administration (Onwuemele, 2013). Development Administration therefore can be seen as an instrumental means for defining, consolidating, and implementing national goals in developing countries (Ijie & Iyoriobhe, 2018). The purposes of development administration are to stimulate and facilitate defined programmes of social and economic progress. However, several challenging obstacles bedevil development administration, hamper its efficiency and prevents from fulfilling purposes for which it is established. Thus the immediate contribution of development administration is its exposure of the administrative obstacles to the planning and implementation of development. The literature of the field presents a formidable catalogue of obstacles, which this paper will examine with reference to Nigeria experience with a view of suggesting plausible mitigation strategies to help ensure its successful stimulation and facilitation of defined programmes borne towards engineering and fostering social and economic progress in Nigeria. More specifically, the study aspires to:

- Examine the challenges of development administration in Nigeria
- Ascertain plausible mitigation strategies to the identified challenges towards engineering and fostering social and economic progress in Nigeria.

2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Concept of Development

Abundant Literature exists in development studies and ample attention has been paid to the problem of defining development. From what exists, development can be defined as a tri-dimensional concept, it has a utilitarian or consummatory dimension which connotes increase in the quantity and quality of useable items available to man in society. There is also a behavioural or relational dimension which defines the nature of the relationship among men in society and among societies, and there is the institutional and structural dimension which defines the institutional and legal framework which circumscribes the behaviors of men and streamlines their relationships while they individually and collectively seek to gain greater access to material things of value in society (Abah, 2000 cited in Okafor, 2016). Development at the individual level implies increased skill and capacity to earn

income, greater freedom of action, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and general material and psychological wellbeing. The achievement of these has meaning only in relation to the state of society.

Development essentially suggests progress and prosperity and some self-evident transition from conditions of neediness to a state of comparative adequacies. This comparative character of development illustrates the fact that development is not a particular permanent condition (Okeke & Aduma, 2020). However, the context of development can simply be summarized as:

- Change for betterment
- A process of directed change towards some objectives which are accepted as desirable goals
- Qualitative and quantitative changes in the social and economic life of the citizens
- Attack on the chief evils of humanity and prosperity
- Expansion of opportunities for advancement
- Meaningful transformations
- Freedom and dignity which are enjoyed by the society and shared by its members.
- Conceived in economic terms as sustained economic changes are necessary for the achievement of many social goals.

2.2 Meaning of Administration

There are various valid ways of conceptualizing administration. It is accordingly not one of those concepts that social science researchers quickly claim the meaning has been under scholarly disputations for ages. Each of the usages of administration definitely conveys its intended meaning, devoid of disputations. It is therefore accurately possible to regard administration as a process and also as a body of persons (Okeke & Aduma, 2020). Administration can therefore refer to the process of achieving organizational goals through the coordination of human and material resources. As a body of persons, it can mean a body of non-elected government officials or an administrative policy-making group. In this context, administration is interchangeable with the bureaucracy (the non-pejorative notion of bureaucracy), as this conceptualization begins to approach the idea of public administration. Administration may then also be private or public. It can still take the form of other classifications such as educational administration, business administration, sports administration, etc. (Okereka & Okolie, 2022).

When two or more people cooperate to roll a stone that neither one could have moved alone, the elements of administration have occurred. This simple act has the two essential characteristics of what is called administration. Here is a purpose (moving the stone); and there is cooperative action/effort (several persons using combined strength to accomplish something that could not have been done without such a combination). Administration, in its broadest sense, can be defined as the activities of groups cooperating to accomplish common goals.

Many definitions and meaning of administration have been given by different scholars. Leonard D. White said that the art of administration is the direction, co-ordination and control of many persons to achieve some purpose or objective; Frederick Lane defined administration as organizing and maintaining human and fiscal resources to fulfil a group's goals; As defined by Ordway Tead Administration is conceived as the necessary activities of individuals (executive) in an organization who are charged with ordering, forwarding and facilitating the associated efforts of a group of individuals brought together to realize certain defined purposes; to Nigro, Administration is the organization and use of men and materials to accomplish a purpose; Herbert A Simon stated that in its broadest sense, administration can be defined as the activities of groups co-operating to accomplish common goals; while to J. M. Pfiffner Administration means "the organization and direction of human and material resources to achieve desired ends.

Putting all these definitions into perspective, we can establish for a fact that administration is characteristic of all human enterprises to achieve a purpose or a predefined objective(s). However, the central idea of administration is rational action, defined as action correctly calculated to realize given desired goals.

2.3 Development Administration

The task of development in the developing countries is said to be a most challenging one for a variety of reasons: first, because, unlike in the advanced countries where the pressure on the government is for more social services for a society already at an advanced stage of development in which most of its members possess and enjoy the basic necessities for a decent life, in the new nations even those basic necessities are either non-existent or minimal for the vast majority of the population. Moreover, the task of development was an urgent one since upon it depend the very survival or nation itself. The people had also been made to expect that independence would bring about an immediate improvement in their conditions. It was therefore; felt that the traditional model of public administration would be inadequate in providing guidelines for building a nation-state out of traditional society. Thus, a new model of administration termed development administration within the broader field of public administration was adopted in the new nations to 'modernize' their economies, accelerate development to be equivalent, eventually, to the advanced countries. It was reasoned that a technocratic bureaucracy following rational-legal principles as set out by Max Weber would be all that was needed to overcome tribal authority and superstition, combined with the application of technical expertise to agriculture and industry.

Basically development administration can therefore be defined as a system of administration geared towards development. It initiates and manages innovation, political, social and economic. Development administration is characterized by innovation and social engineering. Explaining development administration, Fainsod (1993 cited in Avijit 2020) says it is a carrier of innovation and values. It embraces the array of new functions assumed by developing countries embarking on the path of modernization and industrialization. Development administration ordinarily involves the establishment of machinery for planning economic growth and mobilizing and allocating resources to expand national income.

However, Eneh & Aduma (2023), argued that the nature of administration of a country is influenced by its environment thus, one of the characteristics of environment is development. Traditionally, public administration is concerned with maintaining law and order. So is development administration but the latter is geared towards transformation. Traditional model of public administration emphasizes the extraction of resources in the form of tax or from petroleum (as in Nigeria) and depositing this money with the central bank. This money is used for maintaining a strong police force and the army to provide security while economic and social activities are substantially left in the hands of the private individuals and companies.

Development administration extracts these resources and uses the proceeds to build concrete structures like roads, pipe borne water, power generating plants, schools, hospitals and other social amenities. In Nigeria, most of the known hospitals were built by governments (Federal and State). The roads are constructed and maintained by the governments. Despite the privatization and commercialization policy of the country, governments still have commanding shares in corporations like railway, power sector and in many other public corporations hence Nigeria is still practicing development administration.

Avijit (2020), argued that, development administration is the process of executing developmental programmes and projects in the direction of nation-building and socio-economic progress through

public administration. From his definition above, two important concepts or issues are identified namely: Nation-building and Socio-economic development. The two concepts go hand in hand as the strengthening of institutions and building capacity of citizenry bring about socio-economic development. Avijit (2020) went further to highlight the following goals of development administration.

Development administration is the process of executing developmental programmes and projects in the direction of nation-building and socio-economic progress through public administration. There are two main issues identified as development administration goals –

1. Nation-building and
2. Socio-economic development.

Emordi & Onuegbu (2020) have mentioned three major factors for the emergence and growth of development administration.

1. The emergence of newly decolonized nations after the Second World War.
2. The emergence of international and the US economic and technical plans for assistance to developing nations. And
3. The establishment of the Comparative Administrative Group and the interest was shown by its members in developing nations and their administrative systems.

For our purposes, we can say that development administration is a system of administration geared towards transformation and it is characterized by innovation and social engineering. It initiates and manages development, political, social, and economic changes.

2.4 Theoretical Discourse

The study adopted the Marxist theory of post colonial state, which contended that the state is an independent objective force and an impartial judge that not only cater for the overall interest of every member of the society but also regulates equitably their socio economic transactions and processes. (Okolie 2006, cited in Ayka, 2017). The theory argued that state is an instrument of domination and exploitation of available resources by the dominant class and their collaborators, (Alavi, 1972 cited in Ayka, 2017). To properly understand and establish the links between development and challenges of development administration in Nigeria, theory of post colonial state is imperative. However, power is concentrated on few hands who usurp power and determine allocation and distribution of resources to the detriment of the masses. This trend on the long run breeds corruption that results to development challenges and perceived underdevelopment in Nigeria. Meanwhile, the politicians engage in misappropriation, embezzlement of public funds, bribery, nepotism, extortion, electoral fraud etc

2.5 Features of Development Administration

The diagram below presents the major features of development administration in literature

Features of Development Administration

The diagram below presents the major features of development administration.



Source: Avijit (2020)

The following features of development administration can be identified in literature

1. **Action and Goal Orientation:** Development administration is action as well as goal-oriented. This means that it is related to achieving certain programmatic results. Developing countries need to address socio-economic problems, and this is exactly why development goals are set and development administrations take action towards those goals.
2. **Socio-economic change:** Development administration is also change-oriented. Here change means the socio-economic change of underdeveloped or developing countries. So, development administration is concerned with bringing socio-economic development.
3. **Client Orientation:** It has to do with satisfying the needs of its clients. The need for clients means the need of citizens. It is concerned with upliftment of the poorer section of the society.

Almost every country announces various schemes for the betterment of the lower class or community in the society and all those schemes are managed by the public administration and this kind of administration is called client-based development administration.

4. **Commitment Orientation:** The development administration is committed to its goals and responsibilities. It has high morale and motivation in working conditions to achieve developmental goals.
5. **Time Orientation:** It is time-oriented. The development administration has to perform all its developmental tasks within a time frame. All development projects have to be implemented within the time frame prescribed by the government.
6. **Ecological Orientation:** It is an open system. It continuously interacts with every element of its environment (Social, economic, and political system). It is influenced by every social, political, and economic environment and influences them as well. F.W Rigg's ecological perspective of public administration is a great example of this.
7. **Participation Oriented:** The Development administration adopts the policy of administrative collaborative and participatory systems for its purpose. Here, people are not just considered passive recipients of services. The active participation of the people in the formulation and implementation of developmental policies is given priority. The expansion of the decentralized administrative system is recognized in the development administration. Local self-government ensures people's participation in their grassroots administrative system.

8. **Responsiveness:** It is very responsive. That means it is responsive in terms of its service. The administration implements every public welfare project of the government. So the more responsive it is, the more development extends.
9. **Innovativeness:** Development administration is innovative as it relates to social change in achieving developmental objectives. It is dynamic and progressive in thought and action.

3. METHODOLOGY

In a bid to achieve the sole objectives of this study, the problem-solution qualitative analytical approach was adopted. Hence, problems are examined individually and recommended solutions are provided pairwise in a tabulated format.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper examines each obstacle of development administration in Nigeria with a view of suggesting plausible mitigation strategies to help ensure its successful stimulation and facilitation of defined programmes borne towards engineering and fostering social and economic progress in modern Nigeria. In a bid to achieve this sole objective, the problem-solution qualitative analytical approach was adopted. Hence, problems are examined individually and recommended solutions are provided pairwise in a tabulated format.

S/N	Challenges of Development Administration in Nigeria	Recommendations
1.	<p>The inadequate concern with people-driven development: Development administration has been developed keeping in view the objective of people-oriented development. In any country, people live in different communities. In such a situation, no general policy can bring about the overall development of the people.</p>	<p>To facilitate people-drive development there is need for government to formulate and successfully implement community-oriented development policies.</p>
2.	<p>Bureaucratic domination in development The role of bureaucracy as the main tool of development is also questioned. The bureaucracy is an efficient instrument with which administrative policies are implemented. But the bureaucracy proved to be a very powerful institution to the common backward people. In fact, bureaucratic power goes hand in hand with political power. In the case of development projects in such organizations, there are allegations of nepotism. Therefore, the general public has doubts about the importance of this institution in the overall development of the state.</p>	<p>Social Justice Social justice is of the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities. Every citizen of a country should be allowed equal access to enjoy services provided by the government. The five main principles of social justice include access to resources, equity, participation, diversity, and human rights. Government needs to ensure full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Distribution of resources should be equitable to ensure citizens' physical and psychological safety and security. Also, appropriate control measures should be put in place to ensure that the</p>

		bureaucracy abide by the principles of social justice in their operation.
3.	<p>Lack of political capability and politicization of development</p> <p>The biggest problem of newly independent countries is the lack of adequate political capabilities and the politicization of development. Due to the weakness of both the political parties and the interest groups, the correct problem is not represented. Its effect can be seen in the policy. Fails to administer the proper implementation of that policy.</p>	<p>Lobbying strategy, instead of protesting and riot, should be used by pressure groups, interest groups to influence the government as this, if well deployed, can enhance the political capability of political parties. Political parties should employ the service of professional <i>lobbyist</i> to directly influence legislation by interacting with government officials towards a community-centered goals and objectives.</p>
4.	<p>Administrative Corruption</p> <p>The biggest challenge for the development administration is administrative corruption. The government allocates a lot of money for development projects and that money is spent through the administration. Corruption at the administrative level is often seen in developing countries. That means that money is not spent in the right place.</p>	<p>Establishment and institutionalization of oversight independent agencies to monitor and supervise the disbursement, sharing and utilization of public funds as well as maintenance cost of government. This agency should be made to have the duty of publishing government financial report, operation costs and projects/programmes expenses to ensure transparency and accountability.</p>
5.	<p>Low priority for quality assurance, monitoring, and evaluation</p> <p>The policy is formulated in the interest of socio-economic development but there is a lack of proper assurance about its outcome. At the same time, it is not seen how effective those projects are, that is, they are not properly evaluated.</p>	<p>Establishment and institutionalization of oversight independent agencies to monitor and supervise the activities of government officials and agencies towards ensuring that services provided for citizens are of suited standards and quality.</p>
6.	<p>Lack of Bureaucratic professionalism</p> <p>Different departments are required for different types of work. In developing and underdeveloped countries, there is no separate division for each job. As a result, there is a lack of bureaucratic professionalism in the proper implementation of the policy.</p>	<p>There should be separation in the duties and job function within the bureaucracy and to ensure that personnel put in-charge of an office have the requirement professional qualification and required skills to carry the responsibilities of that office.</p>

In addition to the above, much of the reliance by Nigeria on public enterprise for rapid socio-economic development was misplaced and the results were not what had been expected. Instead of serving as an agent of national development, many public enterprises served only the interests of the government officials, their managers and workers. Even if it could be argued that infrastructure needed to be provided through public hands, there seemed little justification for government ownership of football clubs, mines or national airlines almost everywhere.

Following the bureaucratic approach to development, most developing countries adopted the principle of a strong state sector in the economy, in many cases allied with the prevailing ideas of socialism and Marxism then. There was the belief that the fastest way of attaining economic development was through government ownership of enterprise and intervention in the private economy and dominance

by a bureaucratic technocracy. This also led to a padded bureaucracy in Nigeria which was characterized by inefficiency and ineffectiveness.

While the motivations of the practitioners of development administration were high, there were problems as Dwivedi and Henderson argue: Development administration was supposed to be based on professionally oriented, technically competent, politically and ideologically neutral bureaucratic machinery. The ostensible output was modernization-induced and predictable social change following western perceptions preceded by institution-building and modernization of indigenous bureaucratic machinery to undertake developmental tasks. But what was missing from the expected picture-perfect imitation in the Third World was the necessary set of conditions for bringing about a number of social, economic, cultural and political changes. These included an expanding economic base, a tax base, professionally trained manpower, political legitimacy, cultural secularization, universalism, a relatively open society and a strong political superstructure capable of governing (Dwivedi & Henderson, 1990, cited in Anyebe, 2017).

5. CONCLUSION

The challenges faced by development administration make it difficult for Nigeria to achieve development goals, socio-economic progress, and nation-building. Therefore, efforts should be made to improve the techniques and methodologies of development administration in the developing countries like Nigeria to serve as the instrument to implement developmental programmes. The efforts to improve administration relates to both qualitative and quantitative changes in bureaucratic policies, programmes, procedures, methods of work, organisational structures, staffing patterns, number and quality of development personnel of different types, and patterns of relation with clients of administration.

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that development administration played a very important role in ushering in socio-economic progress and development of a nation, but has been constrain by many factors in Nigeria like in most developing countries of the world. Therefore, mitigating the impeding challenges and obstacles can further help enhance its significant role in our contemporary society.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made;

- Promoting and creating enabling environment, policies and building capacity for participation in global economy.
- There is urgent need for budgetary provision for partnership with Community-Based Organizations in rural areas for provision of human and infrastructure development.
- There is need to enable fundamental structural transformation of the society, thus Nigeria should not delink, but transform that relation of production. Therefore, Nigeria can only develop by adopting socialist party as a mode of production.
- Finally, policy maker should of necessity think homeward in terms of economic policies that will engender rapid development, ie home grown economic policies.

REFERENCES

- Anyebe, A.A. (2017). An assessment of the relevance of development administration as a system of action in developing nations, *Global Journal of Economic and Business*, 3(3), 312- 321
<http://www.refaad.com>
- Avijit, B. (2020). Development Administration: Meaning, Features, and Challenges, Indian School of Political Science: Generate Press.
- Eneh M. & Aduma, A. (2023) Challenges of Development Administration in Nigeria: Issues and Prospects. *Journal of Policy and Development Studies* 14(1), 107-111
- Emordi, P.J. & Onuegbu, E.M. (2020). Development administration and the challenges of neo-liberal reforms in the expansion of Nigerian education system, *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, 4(9), 154-161I
<https://ssrn.com/abstract=3714113>
- Ijie, B.A. & Iyoriobhe, M.O. (2018). Contemporary Issues in development administration, *University of Port Harcourt Journal of Management*, 3(1), 1-12
- Mukoro, A. (2015). The impact of the environment on Nigeria's public administration, *Journal of Human Ecology*, 17(2), 117-122.
- Okafor, V.C. (2016). Graduate unemployment in Nigeria: A critical Analysis (A case study of Enugu State, *Inter-disciplinary Policy Studies Journal*, 39(1), 7-27.
- Okeke, R.C. & Aduma, T.A (2020). Critical issues in development administration in Nigeria: Administration of development or the development of administration, *JORIND*, 18(1)
www.transcampus.org/journal; www.ajol.info/journals/jorind
- Okereka, O.P. & Okolie, U.C. (2022). Issues and challenges of public administration education and training in Nigeria, *Indonesian Journal of Social Studies*, 6(2), 21-39
- Onwuemele, A. (2013). Analysis of community-driven development in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region: Use of Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework, *Global Economy and Development Journal*, 10(6), 201-213