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# The Impact of National Development on the Built Environment and Challenges of Leadership in Nigeria

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*Abstract:*
*National development is about working strenuously to change the general disposition of our basic resources of land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship towards greater production and productivity. It is simply about wealth creation. The built environments encompass places and spaces created or modified by people including buildings, parks and transportation systems. The environment is structured by land use rules as well as by economics and design features. Creating healthy environments cannot be done in isolation by anyone organization or field. It requires coordinated and comprehensive efforts by multiple organizations, leaders, fields and sectors. In Nigeria, credible leadership seems to be critical challenge we are confronting. In this paper, field survey was carried out using structured questionnaire among professionals of the built environment. A total of seventy questionnaires were distributed, out of which fifty were returned. Data was analyzed using percentage frequency table. The result of the study showed that the impact of national development will be felt with emergence of a credible leader in Nigeria. In conclusion, it can be drawn from the results of the study that attitudinal change of all the built environment stakeholders in Nigeria is required for the built environment to be transformed.*

*Keywords: Built environment, challenges, leadership, National development, productivity.*

## 1. Introduction

National development is always about efficient management of nation's human, material and other resources in a way that adds value to the quality of life within a given polity and enhances the overall wellbeing of the people. It is therefore people-focused and people-driven and encompasses social, political and economic dimensions in the building of national identity (Anago, 2001).However, leadership and followership are very essential factors for national development and achievement of organizational goal. Leadership and followership are a major universal challenge to all nation states; while some countries have overcome the primitive or dictatorial stage to propel their economy and social welfare of her people to a comfortable level, other emerging developing economy are still reeling to grow above the challenges of impotent leadership and followership syndrome (Thom-Otuya, 2012). Owoeye and Omole (2012) posited that the built environment in many developing countries like Nigeria is fast decaying. The factors responsible can be traced to rapid urbanization, rural-urban migration, steady economic downtown, decay of urban infrastructure, poor quality of original construction, lack of integrated planning, negligent of urban housekeeping, preservation of historic value, disaster and war (Omole, 2000); Omole et al, 2006; Aliamba et al, 2008; Owoeye and Omole, 2012).

Primarily, environmental degradation is caused by several factors including rapid urbanization due to overpopulation, accelerated industrialization, unplanned and uncoordinated physical development resulting from poor urban management and ineffective control policies, insufficient urban infrastructure such as housing and efficient transportation system to cater for the population upsurge (Jiboye, 2003; Ajala, 2005 Olayode, 2005). A World Bank report indicates that technological advancement and economic development are factors which also cause environmental degradation (World Bank, 1995). The effects of this environmental problem exist in different forms such as drought, desertification, deforestation, flood and erosion, pollution, housing congestion leading to slums and unsanitary situation, loss of bio-diversity and all forms of deplorable physical conditions. The resultant effect of these problems has adverse socio-economic, cultural and environmental consequences on the wellbeing of the people and the physical development of the nation (Jiboye, 2003).

In Nigeria, after her independent in 1960, Nigeria has moved from Parliamentary system of government to Presidential System of government, she has experienced both civilian and military regimes, yet her leaders have been unable to deliver to her citizens the quality of life commensurate with her numerous endowed resources. In Nigeria, government has failed to provide portable drinking water, electricity, good roads, effective service delivery, employment, housing scheme,

quality health care, quality education, credible electoral system etc. According to Achebe (1983) in Ngwube (2010), the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is the inability of Nigerian leaders to rise to the challenge of personal example which according to Achebe is the hallmark of true leadership. In fairness to Achebe is that our leaders have not led by example. Ngwube affirmed that, sycophancy, and mere oratories have not helped the situation but have rather compounded it. The quality and integrity of a country's leadership can make or mar a country's development or growth. Leadership can decisively influence the quality of life of her people and her national power vis-à-vis annihilating them through war or poor governance. The perception of the followers of their leaders in Nigeria is an issue of great importance. In most cases the followers hold the view that their leaders lack the skill required for governance, and that the leaders act not in accordance with the needs and aspirations of the people but in accord with their personal agenda or interests not unconnected with imperialistic forces.

## 2. Literature Review

Gabriel and Sikiru (2010) defined the built environment as man-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity, ranging from large scale civic surroundings to the personal spaces. In general context, built environment refers to all buildings and spaces between them such as street and squares as well as civil and mechanical engineering works such as roads, drainages, sewage disposal, plumbing and so on (Dauda and Shitufa, 2014)

However, transformational leadership, modern bureaucracy, national development, national integration and innovation, Nigeria seems to be infamous for whatever is Ijewereme and Dunman (2014) opined that the extent of development of any nation globally is often been determined by the quality and selfless nature of its leaders. When there is a culture of impunity in any society and there is a wide spread of lack of leadership by example to enthrone transparent and qualitative public bureaucracy, a degenerated symptom of underdevelopment continues to manifest as exemplified in Nigeria Public Administration. The manifestation of symptoms of underdevelopment does not imply Nigeria lacks quality and competent human resources to engender development, but the process of enthroning leaders is bedeviled with crisis and it does not provide room for morally upright, competent, visionary leaders to emerge. Imhonopi and Ugochukwu, (2013) aptly capture Nigeria situation thus: Nigeria is richly endowed by providence with human and material resources critical for national development and advancement. However, since gaining political independence, Nigeria has continued to meander the path befitting failed, weak and "juvenile" states. A state that had very great prospects at independence and was touted to lead Africa out of the backwoods of underdevelopment and economic dependency, Nigeria is still stuck in the league of very poor, corrupt, underdeveloped, infrastructural riven, morally bankrupt and leadership-deficient countries of the South. Rather than become an exemplar for mediocre, corrupt, insanely violent and morally untoward.

History has shown that no nation in the wide world grew and enjoyed steady development in almost all spheres of its national life without experiencing good and selfless political leadership (Ogbeidi, 2012). This is mainly because qualitative growth and development has constantly been a product of good governance. However, a renowned novelist, Chinua Achebe, in 1983 attributes the root cause of the Nigerian problem to bad leadership. "The trouble with Nigeria," Achebe argues, is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land, climate, water, air, or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which is the hallmark of true leadership Achebe (1983).Extant literature shows that Nigeria is fraught of poor leadership, corruption and weak bureaucratic institutions. It is an axiom that since attainment of political independent, Nigeria has never been governed by selfless, truly transformational and intellectually endowed leaders. That is, Nigeria has never selected its best sons to positions of leadership and mediocre leadership can only lead to mediocre government without any serious achievement. What has been common over the years in our governance is the enthronement of clueless, parochial, attitudinal debauchery and uninspiring leaders, with attendant formulation of series of ill-informed and poorly implemented policies/civil service reforms which decapitated the service, leading to the exit of dedicated, competent bureaucrats and provided incentives for corruption (Ogbu, 2013). Competent and morally upright leadership engenders strong bureaucratic institutions. The success or failure of any society depends largely on the attitude and competency of its leaders. Current debates rest on the conclusion that Nigerian leadership suffers from extreme moral depravity and attitudinal debauchery (Agbor, 2011; Agbor, 2012; Ezirim, 2010; Ebegbulem, 2009).

Ineffective leadership and corruption have impacted negatively on Nigeria's democratic stability and her economic development (Ebegbulem, 2012). The majority of Nigerian elected office holders are product of political corruption, they got their party tickets through political godfathers and mandate through election rigging. Corruption is used to acquire and sustain political mandate in Nigeria, leading to grievous consequences of mass poverty, unemployment and insecurity. Bad leadership and outrageous salaries of the public office holders, most especially the executives and legislature are another source of corruption in Nigeria (Aleyomi, 2013). The major means of living in flamboyant affluence and conspicuous consumption in Nigeria is to hold a political office. Government functionaries in Nigeria often involve in several dubious means to amass dynastic wealth which their generation born and unborn cannot finish. Billions of naira is often being misappropriated and looted by our leaders from public treasuries without any thing being done by the government to track them down (Lotterman, 2002). Instead of addressing the problem of corruption, governments dissipate energy in castigating critics and oppositions. Bad leadership breeds corruption and ineffective taxing system, which makes it difficult for societies to track down people's financial activities. However, excessive greed, urge for a shortcut to wealth by the general public, the

absence of a strong sense of national community and giving out chieftaincy titles to corrupt persons by traditional rulers, are among the causes of persistence corruption in Nigeria(Ndiulor, 1999).

## 3. Methodology
This research work was done through:
Textbooks, journals, conference materials and the internet were used to carryout a wide literature review in order to articulate existing knowledge on the subject.
**Field survey:** Field survey was carried out using structured questionnaires as the instrument of the study. A total of seventy questionnaires were distributed among professionals in the built environment. Fifty questionnaires were all completed and returned. Data was analyzed using percentage frequency table. Attention was given to only two cities of Lagos and Ibadan where most of the professionals reside.

### 3.1. Results and Discussion
Data that were obtained from the field survey are presented below under the following headings:

#### 3.1.1. Details of the Respondents
A total of 50 questionnaires were returned and properly completed, which represented 71.43% of the overall questionnaires distributed. Details of the respondents were as follows: Architects were 8 (16%); Builders were 7 (14%); Engineers were 5 (10%); Estate Surveyors were 7 (14%); Quantity Surveyors were 8 (16%); Town Planners were 8(16%) and others were 7 (14%).

The educational background of the respondents was as follows: National Diploma holders were 5 (10%), Higher National Diploma were 15 (30%), Bachelor's Degree were 15 (30%), Master's Degree were 10 (20%), PhD were 2 (4%) and other qualifications were 3 (6%).

#### 3.1.2. Development Framework
National development is very important; however, capacity building is the means of achieving it. However, the factors considered in assessing the impact of national development on the built environment and challenges of Leadership in Nigeria are:
- National development policies at the federal, states and rural levels.
- Development of environmental Laws.
- Capacity building/mitigation to environmental changes.
- Technology transfer.
- Best practices dissemination.
- Timely assessments and issue of early warning notices.
- Synergies enhancement between environmental conventions and multilateral environmental agreements

#### 3.1.3. National Development Challenges
The evaluation of the impact of national development and challenges of leadership in Nigeria are done under the following:
- Credible leadership.
- Corruption.
- Inconsistent government policies.
- Lack of basic infrastructures.
- Justice.
- Care free attitude to government properties.
- Defense/security.
- Transportation.
- Education.
- High cost of social amenities.
- Development of public housing.
- Health/hospital.

➢ How impact of national development and challenges of leadership in Nigeria were assessed
Major factors as stated above were used to assess the topic. On the Likert scales are Poor (P), Fair (F), Average (A), Good (G) and Very Good (VG) were assigned values of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

| s/n | Areas of Development framework | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | F | Fx | Mean(x) |
|-----|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------|
| 1 | National development policies | - | 2 | 3 | 16 | 28 | 49 | 217 | 4.43 |
| 2 | Environmental laws | 1 | 3 | 5 | 20 | 21 | 50 | 207 | 4.14 |
| 3 | Capacity building | 2 | 1 | 4 | 25 | 17 | 49 | 201 | 4.10 |
| 4 | Mitigation of environment changes | 13 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 6 | 50 | 137 | 2.74 |
| 5 | Technology transfer | 8 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 18 | 49 | 170 | 3.47 |
| 6 | Best practices | 7 | 5 | 6 | 15 | 16 | 49 | 175 | 3.57 |
| 7 | Timely assessment | 6 | 8 | 5 | 14 | 17 | 50 | 178 | 3 .56 |
| 8 | Early warning notices | 2 | 3 | 10 | 18 | 16 | 49 | 190 | 3.88 |
| 9 | Synergies enhancement | 10 | 11 | 5 | 15 | 9 | 50 | 152 | 3.04 |

Table 1: Areas of National Development that were assessed
Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table1 above shows the areas that national development framework was assessed in Nigeria in order to be able to know its impact. National development policies at the Federal, States and Rural levels is the highest with 4.43 using likert scale of 5, which represents 88.6%. This was followed by environmental laws with 4.14 and capacity building with 4.10 in likert scale of 5. The lowest was mitigation of environmental changes with 2.74 showing insensitivity to changes by the governments while others are from the range of 3.04 to 3.88 on the likert scale being between 60.8% to 77.6%.

| s/n | Areas of Evaluation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | F | Fx | Mean (x) |
|-----|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----------|
| 1 | Transportation | 5 | 6 | 15 | 12 | 11 | 49 | 165 | 3.37 |
| 2 | Education | 7 | 4 | 16 | 16 | 7 | 50 | 162 | 3.24 |
| 3 | Corruption | 2 | 2 | 8 | 10 | 27 | 49 | 205 | 4.18 |
| 4 | lack of basic infrastructures | 3 | 10 | 15 | 13 | 8 | 49 | 160 | 3.27 |
| 5 | Justice | 2 | 7 | 16 | 13 | 12 | 50 | 176 | 3.52 |
| 6 | Defense /security | 8 | 9 | 13 | 7 | 12 | 49 | 153 | 3.12 |
| 7 | Credible leadership | 1 | 2 | 6 | 10 | 30 | 49 | 213 | 4.35 |
| 8 | Health/Hospital | 2 | 1 | 10 | 22 | 14 | 49 | 192 | 3.92 |
| 9 | High cost of social amenities | 1 | 2 | 10 | 18 | 18 | 49 | 197 | 4.02 |
| 10 | Inconsistent govt. policies | - | 1 | 8 | 15 | 25 | 49 | 211 | 4.31 |
| 11 | Care free attitude to government Properties | 2 | 2 | 6 | 18 | 22 | 50 | 206 | 4.12 |

Table 2: Assessment of Nigerian factors
Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 2 shows that many factors are seriously mitigating against national development and challenges of leadership in Nigeria. Top on the list is the issue of credible leader with 4.35 on the Likert scale of 5 representing 87%, who will be able to lead the country by example. It is only on that note he can tackle the issue of inconsistent government policies and corruption with 4.31 and 4.18 respectively on the Likert scale. These are followed by care free attitude to government properties with 4.12 and high cost of social amenities of 4.02 on the scale. Other factors range from 3.12 to 3.92 representing 62.4% to 78.4% respectively. All they show is that all the twelve (12) factors are very important for the development of our country.

### 3.1.4. Discussion of Results
From the field survey, it could be seen from tables 1 and 2 that many prevailing factors are hindering the impact of national development that need to be addressed. Mitigation to environmental changes needs to be improved upon with 2.74 on the Likert scale as the early warning notices is as high as 3.88 on the scale. All it shows is that our country has not made adequate provision to react immediately to environmental changes even when the warning notices are there. It equally shows that we are yet to get the kind of credible leader we need to take Nigeria to the next level of adequately providing for emergencies. However, corruption, inconsistent government policies and high cost of social amenities with 4.18, 4.31 and 4.04 respectively needs to be addressed properly alongside with care free attitude to government properties with 4.12. The impact of the above-named factors will not help Nigeria to get to her desired development at the federal, State and rural levels.

## 4. Conclusion

From this research work, it can be established as follows:

- Emergence of a credible leader is key to help our country to move to the next level in her developmental stride.
- Attitudes of our leaders need to change as governance is a continuum which should inherit assets and liabilities, but inconsistent government policies have not help matters.
- Enabling environment need to be created to help government ministries, agencies and parastatals to respond without delay to environmental changes in order to mitigate the effect on her citizens.
- Continuous capacity building/ education of Nigerians need to be done in order to change our general attitude to event in our country

### 4.1. Recommendations

From this research work, the following recommendations are preferred:

- Attitudinal change of all the built environment stakeholders in Nigeria is highly needed in order for the built environment to be transformed.
- We must develop interpersonal relationship as a philosophy of human interaction. We must see life as a cooperative "win-win," not a competitive arena.
- The Nigeria built environment professional must offer sound unbiased advice when called upon to do so. His leaning must change from one of passive docility to not one of confrontation but that of constructive engagement in performing his duties.
- We must synergise- there must be harmony, the fragmentation must be stopped if we are to be relevant to the national development plan. Synergy is the essence of principle–centered leadership. It catalyzes unifies and unleashes the greatest power within people.

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