

National Productivity Movement (NPM): An Imperative for Economic Recovery Sustainable Growth and Development in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The stringent economic climate around the world today is spurring a rethink in favour of productivity-driven growth as a more viable means for economic recovery and sustainable development among nations. As a part of strategies to enhance production across sectors in Nigeria, the National Productivity Movement emerged as a viable tool for achieving sustainable development. The paper explores NPM's relevance in the current difficult economic conditions and its role in driving recovery, sustainable growth, and development. The Paper argued that with all-inclusive stakeholders, productivity is a viable way for Nigeria's economic recovery, sustainable growth and development. It adopted a qualitative research design and case study approach. Secondary sources were used to collect data. Endogenous Growth Theory was adopted as a theoretical framework for explanation. The theory underscores the importance and the role of internal factors such as human capital, innovation, and improved productivity in driving long-term economic growth and sustainable development rather than more reliance on natural resources and external factors. Findings showed that Nigeria has continuously executed different development plans towards achieving productivity without achieving its targets. Successive regimes have embarked on different economic blueprints because they believed that the previous plans did not achieve the expected goals.

Keywords: National Productivity Movement, Productivity, Economic Recovery, Economic Growth, Sustainable Development

INTRODUCTION

No doubt economic productivity is a pathway for national development. Increases in national output and the resultant profit/income are major drivers of economic programmes, projects, and infrastructures. These further improve living standards, create employment opportunities, and foster economic growth, and stability. This can only be possible through an increase in the production output. A study in the Australian Treasury was interested in not only productivity but also the increasing well-being of Australians as an outcome of productivity (Gruen, 2012). However, the contemporary global environment is increasingly hostile to national economies, especially emerging and developing economies seeking to embrace a viable pathway to economic recovery and reliable sustainability in economic growth and development. Challenges in the global economy are multifaceted ranging from COVID-19's effects, war-disrupted supply chain, pressures from increasing inflations, terrorism, climate change, and other tensions emanating from geopolitical spheres (The Global Competitiveness Report, 2019). (Schwab & World Economic Forum, 2019) called the past ten years the lost decades of low or flat productivity growth. Attempts to reposition Nigeria toward economic recovery, growth, and sustainable development through national economic plans did not achieve the goals. The experience featured the 1st National Development Plan 1962-1968, the 2nd National Development Plan (1970-1974), the 3rd Plan 1975-1980, and the 4th Plan (1981-1985) (Adeyemi, 2001). Others include the Structural Adjustment Programmed (SAP) (1986), the National

Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (2003-2007), vision 20-2020, and the Transformation Agenda (Adenkunle & Fidelis, 2018). Yet the achievement of economic goals remained elusive.

Purposively, the National Productive Movement became a programmed-based, idea-driven, and comprehensive multi-sectorial driver for improving labour output, capital, and proper utilization of other natural resources. National Productivity Center became the house dedicated to this project. A study of the productivity movement in Singapore faces multi-dimensional challenges intensified by its 1965 separation from Malaysia, showing that the Singapore government focused more attention on human resources development and productive efforts to enhance Labour productivity and global competitiveness (Ohno and Kitaw, 2011). Today Singapore is an economic giant. Why not Nigeria?

The paper explores NPM's relevance in the current economic conditions and its role in driving economic recovery, growth, and sustainable development in Nigeria.

METHOD/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper is qualitative research that explores and understands phenomena through non-numerical data. It specifically adopted a case study approach and documented sources of data. Data were retrieved from the World Bank Database, Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, Nigerian Productivity Centre, Ministry of Budget and National Planning, United Nations Development Programmed, Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), National Development Plan 2021-2025, Economic Recovery and Sustainable Growth, books, reports and journal articles. Endogenous Growth Theory is adopted to explain the study. The theory underscored the importance and roles of internal factors such as human capital, innovation, and improved productivity in driving long-term economic growth and sustainable development rather than more reliance on natural resources and external inputs. Simply put the theory argues that economic recovery and growth, innovative, and sustainable development are better achieved through internal productive output rather than reliance on natural or external resources.

Application: Applying Endogenous Growth Theory to Nigeria's National Productivity Movement will help policymakers understand and appreciate how internal drivers enhance productivity. Skills, innovation, and supportive policies are key to success in these processes. The theory provides insights into how policies that inculcate economic resilience from within provide relevance to contemporary economic changes. It presents innovative ideas, viable policies, programmes and actions as central forces that drive productivity. The theory emerged in the 1980s to challenge neoclassical growth theories that attributed long-term productivity to external factors like technology. Paul Romer laid the foundation for Endogenous Growth Theory arguing that knowledge and technological advancement are non-rivalry goods and can be reused across the economy fueling continuous growth (Romer, 1986). He underscored the importance of research and development as engines for economic growth. Investment in education and skill acquisition are crucial for effective innovation. Explaining the theory, Robert Lucas argued that human capital is the primary driver of growth as individuals become more productive through education and experience (Lucas, 1988). Efficient government spending on productive public goods could enhance private sector productivity (Barrow, 1990).

NATIONAL PRODUCTIVE MOVEMENT

In the context of National Productivity, the movement represents policies, efforts, activities, and practices employed by the government, private sector, and other stakeholders to introduce the culture of productivity into national life extending to different sectors of the economy as an organized structure to achieving development on a national scale. It involves raising awareness, implementing policy and programmes fostering productive culture, and engaging stakeholders. The National Productivity Center in Nigeria is research parasternal established by the Federal Government of Nigeria under ACT CAP 70LFN 2004 to drive and promote productivity consciousness in all sectors of the federation. Account of the national productivity in the modern time is rooted in the industrial production era of 1789 which gave rise to the mechanization of industry and the resultant changes in the organization of economic and social life (Nwambe and Ede, 2019). Productivity remains a major instrument for measuring development, particularly in developing countries. Efficient productivity in all sectors has a multiplicative effect: employment opportunities, generation of funds for expansion, improved skills

etcetera (Nwambe & Ede 2019). An increase in productivity improves the income, consumption, and welfare index of the citizen. Efficiency and performance are basic measures of productivity in any economy (Okereke 2006). The role of the productivity movement in Africa is to galvanize the continent towards achieving greater productivity strides (African Union, 2017) The mandate of the National Productivity Center in Nigeria is to develop the mindset and institutionalize productivity culture in the citizenry, for the enhancement of service delivery and quality life (Falaiye, 2024). National Productivity Organization identifies and strengthens partnerships with the private sector and develops a network of public-private sector partnerships to be a productivity ecosystem (Ramkissoon, 2020). The Federal Government of Nigeria calls for improved productivity to cushion the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr. Chris Ngige, flagged off the Nigeria Public Sector Productivity and Innovation Summit and noted that the nation had to increase its level of productivity to recover from the COVID-19 effect (Lamai, 2020). Different national development plans were designed to work for economic recovery, sustainable growth a

KEY COMPONENTS OF NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY DEVELOPMENT

- a. Human Capital Development
- b. Technological Innovation
- c. Policy Support
- d. Regulatory Efficiency
- e. Digitalization, and
- f. Sectorial Collaboration

ECONOMIC RECOVERY SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Economic recovery is a phase in the economic cycle that stabilizes an economy after a period of recession. It is different from economic growth in which the economy experiences an increase in production, consumption and employment rates beyond its usual rates. Development activities in Nigeria need to concentrate on the recovery of economic losses of the nation. This situation became necessary following a retrogression or decline of basic factors of development over the past decades. Governments' plans, strategies, policies and actions geared toward recovery, growth and sustainable development of the country, in the past, have not achieved the goals.

a. Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP):

The vision of the Buhari Administration for agriculture is to work with key stakeholders to build an agribusiness economy capable of delivering sustained prosperity by meeting domestic food security goals, generating exports and supporting sustainable income and job growth (National Economic Council, 2020). The move became necessary due to the economic recession of 2016 which caused a speedy economic decline. An average Nigerian is aware that the value of Naira remains continuously lower than it was, prices of commodities are higher than before, security of life in the country has been depreciating, and food shortages remain worse. The Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) was a Medium-Term Plan of the Buhari Administration for 2017-2020 to restore economic growth while leveraging the ingenuity and resilience of the Nigerian people from the public and private sectors. Funding was from oil and VAT (National Economic Council, 2020). The plan, therefore, focused on the recovery of lost values, and sustainable growth to achieve an agronomy better than the one that existed before. ERGP built on the existing sectoral strategies and plans such as the National Industrial Revolution Plan and the Nigerian Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan by addressing challenges identified in them. ERGP was made up of 36 state governors, the strategies involved MDAs while the Delivery Unit was established in Abuja to support the Ministry of Budget and National Planning in overseeing implementation. The plan was designed to use science, technology and innovation as tools for achieving the goals. Funding, security challenges, corruption, fluctuation in global oil prices, and increasing use of alternate sources of energy were the major challenges that undermined the plan.

Successful development policies and programmes result in economic growth involving an increase in the production of goods and services in the economy over a while. This increase is measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Sustainability is a salient measure in this process. It involves the ability to maintain stable

economic growth and development over a while. This is to ensure efficient and responsible management of resources to meet current needs without compromising the well-being of the economy in future. The result is sustainable development. Development is a process that improves the general quality of life, and well-being of people and society in totality. It involves components like social progress, environmental sustainability, economic growth, and political stability targeted at enhancing human capability, promoting equitability, and reducing poverty. Nigeria has not achieved the economic growth and development targeted in national development plans.

b. National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2025 and Vision 2020:

Based on the 2021-2025 target, the National Development Plan is in its 5th and last target year, 2025 without achieving the expected goals. The plan became necessary due to several subsistent development challenges including low and fragile economic growth, insecurity, insufficient public service delivery, weak institutions, infrastructural deficit etcetera. The plan sought to invest in infrastructure, ensure macroeconomic stability, enhance the investment environment, improve social indicators and living conditions, and implement climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience strategies, among others. Specifically, the plan wanted to generate 21 million full-time jobs and lift 35 million people out of poverty by 2025. The plan built on the foundation developed in Visions 2020 and the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP). Lessons from previous plans have guided the development of the 2021-2025 national plan.

Vision 2020: Vision 2020 was introduced in 2009 as Nigeria's long-term economic transformation blueprint. It aimed at improving the living standards of its citizens and placing the country among the 20 largest economies in the world. Other objectives include achievements of fiscal prudence, low inflation increased availability of infrastructural facilities to spur economic growth. Though some progress was made, the country's ranking in GDP only improved marginally from 30th to 27th position during the period as against the Vision target of becoming one of the world's 20th economies (Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, 2021). It was so robust to the extent that resources meant for it could not do much to achieve most of the targets.

Overall, insecurity is on the increase today, public service delivery is declining, and poverty, hunger and homelessness remain realities of life in different Nigerian communities. The three main United Nations' human development indicators: life expectancy, education and purchasing power parity are declining in Nigeria. Insecurity, bandits, armed robbery, kidnapping, and poverty are causing untimely death. The standard of education is declining. Decreasing the value of the Naira and inflation have reduced the people's purchasing powers. Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index shows that Nigeria has a score of 25% meaning that Nigeria ranked 145 out of 180 countries in 2023 (Transparency International, 2023). Development does not flourish in a corrupt environment of this magnitude.

NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY MOVEMENT AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

National Productivity Movement provides ways for achieving economic recovery and growth through a culture of productivity, organizing resource maximization, reducing inefficiencies, and fostering competitiveness. It addresses workforce challenges and provides an ideal platform to enhance skills. Unfortunately, Nigeria's potential has remained untapped despite its human and material endowments. After a shift from agriculture to oil, Nigeria's growth remains driven by consumption and high oil prices (Ministry of Budget & National Planning, 2017). The Abuja Enterprise Agency and the National Productivity Centre signed an MOU for collaboration. The MOU marked a major milestone in promoting economic development and entrepreneurial growth in the region. The partnership was aimed at boosting national GDP and areas of cooperation include research projects, knowledge sharing, and the development of initiatives to support small and Medium Enterprises (Abuja Enterprise Agency, 2024). The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) inaugurated new members of the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit (ACTU) of NPC in Abuja to ensure transparency and accountability, sensitization of staff against corruption, serve as an internal regulatory mechanism and institutionalize productivity culture in the citizenry (ICPC, 2018). In the bid to revamp the Nigerian economy, successive governments, particularly since the return to democratic governance in 1999 have made attempts to revamp the already battered economy yet the state of the economy and the living

conditions of the people are worse. For Nike in Anam et al (2023) most government policies/reforms in Nigeria have failed to achieve the desired objectives because of lopsided implementation or total failure to give effect to the motive of the policy or reform. President Buhari recognized that economic policies are drivers of development and the Nigerian economy was in decline. The recognition led to the initiation of the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan, the Economic Sustainability Plan, and later the National Development Plan. (Anam, 2023).

NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY MOVEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Since independence, Nigerian leaders have always made plans and policies as better strategies to redeem the economy into speedy growth and sustainability. Unfortunately, no major positive changes have been recorded indicating unrealistic measures in plans implemented to revitalize the economy (Ugwueze, 2022). Buhari's Administration initiated the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan. The contribution of the policy to the national development was insignificant (Anam, et al., 2023). In the quest for sustainable development, Nigeria has developed plans and policies to fast-track the economy, yet no positive change has been achieved and this has made successive governments opt for different development blueprints for the economy (William & Orokpo, 2019). Some of the plans include the 7 Points Agenda, 2007 of the Umar Musa Yar'Adua Administration, the Vision 2020 (2010), the National Industrial Revolution Plan (2014), and the Nigeria Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan (2014) of the Goodluck Jonathan, Buhari Government's Strategic Implementation Plan for the Budget for Change (2016). As if the above plans were inadequate, Buhari's Administration rolled out a comprehensive economic intervention plan tagged the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP). Despite the promising provision of the plans, uncertainty over the prospects of successful implementation is glaring. Despite efforts to revamp the economy planning and execution of programmes did not yield the expected recovery or growth which explains why successive governments mapped out different but sometimes related plans, all in vain (Below & Neba, 2020). The importance of energy in the development of any society cannot be over-emphasized as it is a pre-condition for development. Sustainability requires efficient, reliable, and decentralized energy for an economy based on local energy sources. The power crisis in Nigeria cannot end unless the government diversifies energy sources (Oyedepo, 2014).

CHALLENGES FACING NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY FOR ECONOMIC DISCOVERY, SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

The strength of any nation lies in its internal productive capacity to produce output and innovate structures. Nigeria has not been successful in embracing internal productive innovation competently and has become a victim of external vulnerability and dependency. To a great extent national development plans have been based on good ideas but at the same time implementation and achievement of goals become poorly or sometimes unrealized. The following factors undermined national development plans and productivity:

a. Inadequate and Unpredictable Funding

Funds for national development plans are usually projected to be realized from oil sales, VAT or other revenue windows. On that basis, implementation becomes unpredictably dependent on the outcome of revenue collection. The case of the Economic Recovery and Growth plan was tagged to oil and VAT. The fluctuation of global oil prices affected funding. The case of Vision 2020, experienced a verbous plan without assured funds for full implementation.

b. Corruption

Manipulation of due processes and procedures in policy making and implementation and diversion of public values for private benefits are common practices in Nigeria. The phenomena ate deep into national development planning and execution of development plans. This manifested in the choice of project site, purchase of project materials, the standard of project and materials and outright diversion of project funds to private purses.

c. Poor Implementation

Failure to implement planned projects and programmes or substandard services in implementation contributed

to the non-achievement of development targets. Execution of most projects experienced the use of substandard materials and unqualified labour. This resulted in the collapse of most roads without lasting up to the contract standard duration. In some cases, the qualities of the job done are irritating due to the use of unqualified labour.

d. Lack of Managerial Expertise in implementation of Projects and Programmes

Poor management of the workforce is a major problem in the implementation of policies. In Nigeria, loyalty tends to be more for ethnicity and patrons and they interfere in the management of projects and programmes due to the incompetent managerial capacity of those tasked with the responsibility to oversee or run the projects.

e. Weak Linkages between Planning and Implementation

Policy plans for Visions 2020, Economic Recovery and Growth and National Development Plan 2017-2025 were mainly done in Abuja. There were poor linkages between plans and execution. In most cases, policymakers supposed to oversight project implementation were more interested in what they would benefit from the project. Such deals are done in Abuja and once completed, participation in activities on the project sites becomes less interesting to them. By this, they fail to inculcate the intentions of the policies into the managers of projects due to a lack of contacts.

f. Insecurity

Kidnapping, banditry, robbery, vandalization, and associated threats are realities that characterized productive environment in Nigeria. Terrorism has made the situation worse. The agricultural sector in Nigeria is a major victim of terrorism, kidnapping, and banditry. Many farmers have been killed and chased out of the communities. Insurgency has affected many parts of the country particularly the agricultural areas in Benue state, Nassarawa, Borno, Kaduna etcetera. They contributed greatly to undermining agricultural productivity.

g. Poor Technological Infrastructure

Productivity in the contemporary period requires advanced technology. Nigeria has not invested meaningfully in technological development. Over the decades the country eminently believed that developed countries will transfer technology to it. Rather than developing its technology or buying from the international market, reliance on borrowed technology has not offered productive success as its major concern is maximum profit for technology owners. Currently, refineries in Nigeria are not functional, the Aja Okuta plant is moribund, and the electricity supply is very poor due to a lack of technological innovation.

h. Poor Power Supply

Epileptic power supply and alternation of other sources of energy constituted enormous challenges in the implementation of the above national plans. Sometimes power tripped off during operations or there was an explosion that resulted in a power blackout. Such occurrences interrupted operations and affected time, cost, and quality of production and service delivery.

f. Internal Governance Challenges

The government's efforts in policy formulation and implementation were affected adversely by intra-government politics and sometimes party influences particularly from the ruling party. Human factors among people in and out of the corridor of power like undue influence, bribery, corrupt practices, budget padding etcetera and when the governments were unable to check those and other private operators undermining government efforts, productivity suffered.

i. Weak Institutions

Institutions are the platform necessary for policy-making and implementation, such institutions need to offer efficient support to policymakers and implementation rather than allowing them to manipulate the institutions which are the custodians of such policy. Many public institutions in Nigeria cannot withstand the pressure from

politicians, other pressure groups and individuals. Some officials compromise public interest for personal gain or due to patronage or fear. Such Behaviour weakens the institution and undermines productivity.

CONCLUSION

Economic production is widely believed to be a pathway for national development but despite numerous national plans, policies, programmes, and changes in structures and legal frameworks, the goal of innovative productivity remains elusive in Nigeria. The hostile productive environment did not stop countries' success in productive development, particularly those in endogenous productive programmes. National Productive Movement is the tool for achieving a productive culture but many challenges of productivity movement, and other stakeholders of development remain major obstacles to achieving productive development in Nigeria. Different national development plans have been initiated over time but the ability to move Nigeria to an appreciable developmental stage is lacking. The decline in the existing level of development constitutes a major threat to Nigeria. Despite a hostile global environment, determination, perseverance and commitment can move Nigeria to a better stage of development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Economic recovery, sustainable growth, and development in Nigeria need to rely on productivity based on all-inclusive stakeholders as a major means of achieving success. The internally developed technology is encouraging. The technology could also be purchased from the international market and developed internally. Innoson Motor Nigeria Ltd. is an indigenous automobile company. It developed based on the combination of indigenous and foreign experts. The Nigerian Government can do better.
- b. Funding of the national development plan should have a plan 'B' as a revenue source in case the projected source of funding fails or is inadequate.
- c. The Chief executive of government should muster good courage to challenge any form of corruption that affects the implementation of projects and programmes of government and must not be part of it. The legislature should strengthen its oversight functions on the implementation of government policies. Recruitment of contractors and other persons to be involved in policy implementation should consider the integrity and honesty of such persons executing previous projects.
- d. State of emergency should be declared on insecurity in Nigeria by the President and Commaner-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Nigerians should be mobilized to join efforts with the government to tackle insecurity. Security forces responsible for internal guards need to be decentralized and restructured.
- e. There should be a special budget provision for electricity in Nigeria to tackle the issue of power finally. Studies on countries successful in energy production should be carried out to make the best option and choice. Massive awareness should be created on the use of and payment for energy.
- f. To bridge the gap between policymakers and implementation, there should be a synergy between policymakers and those involved in the implementation of the policies. This will enable them to understand the intentions of the policymakers and policy requirements for achieving successful implementations and targeted goals.
- g. Screening of institutions incapable of carrying out official responsibilities efficiently is necessary to rearrange members of staff into positions where they have capacity based on meritocracy and competence.
- h. good governance is a major requirement for the achievement of the above recommendations. Popular participation of the Nigerian people in chosen quality leaders is highly recommended. Nigerians must unite to fight for good leadership and at the same time provide good followership to achieve sustainable development.

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