

# An Assessment of the Seven Point Agenda of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua's Administration in Nigeria

Ebi Lawrence Alfred

Veritas University, Abuja.

---

## Abstract

This study explores President Umaru Musa Yar'adua's Seven-Point Agenda policy, which sought to propel Nigeria to the twenty-first position in the world's economic development by 2020. The question that this article sought to address was if the issue of policy discontinuity and collapse in Nigeria afflicted the Seven-Point Agenda. The Marxist theory served as the theoretical foundation for this research. The study adopted qualitative method of research enquiry with data collected from secondary source such as text books, journals, and other internet sources while content analysis was used to analyse the data collected. It discovered that while the Agenda had a good influence on a few areas of the economy, the impact was insufficient to solve the difficulties of poverty, unemployment, security, and industrialisation caused by the administration of Umaru Musa Yar'adua's brief tenure. The research also discovered that the problems impeding the successful execution of the Seven Point Agenda's objectives include, but are not limited to, corruption, bad governance, and inconsistency in policy design and implementation. This study stated that with competent leadership and real dedication to the goals, the aim may be met because Nigeria is endowed with ample natural and human resources. The paper recommended taking decisive efforts to maximise the advantages, opportunities, and strengths of policies in Nigeria while also decreasing the obstacles they face via effective governance.

---

**Keywords:** Public Policy, National Development, The Seven-Point Agenda

## Introduction

It is typical for society to have problems that require policies to solve. The government devotes money and attention to policy formation. Some of these policies may take several years to develop, but once developed, they become the regulatory instrument in linked sectors of activity. Nigeria is not immune to this circumstance, since the country has faced several challenges since its independence, necessitating the design and execution of policies that influence the lives of its citizens.

Despite the accomplishments of past policies in Nigeria, much remained to be done because the challenges that caused the execution of those policies were still extremely prominent in the Nigerian economy at the time President Yar'adua took office. Though since power and energy are critical to the development of any economy, the federal government planned to implement infrastructure reforms in this critical sector, including the development of sufficient and adequate power supply, to ensure Nigeria's ability to develop as a modern economy and become an industrialised nation by 2020.

Second, an unfavourable security climate discourages both foreign and domestic investment in the country, and is thus detrimental to economic progress. As a result, the reform agenda regarded security as not just a constitutional need, but also as a necessary infrastructure for the creation of a modern Nigerian economy. Third, Nigeria has been unable to expand industrially due to her excessive reliance on oil for a significant amount of her foreign exchange revenues. Wealth creation reforms focused on diversifying the economy's economic foundation, particularly in agriculture and solid minerals.

With a very weak road network, Nigeria's transportation industry is an ineffective means of mass movement of people and products. The importance of developing the transportation sector in order to attain the objective of a modernised industrialised Nigeria cannot be overstated. Recognizing this reality, the Federal government started the process of rehabilitating and modernising the railway system. The fundamental point of this change was to make it easier to convey products and people. Furthermore, the Niger Delta security reform addressed

the need to confront the Niger-Delta conflict through open dialogue between residents and the government, as well as to implement the master plan currently in place. The federal government had already made a decision. However, the situation in Nigeria is one of policy discontinuity. Because governments change frequently, policies are interrupted and are not allowed to develop and mature to completion. In most situations, new governments cease policies primarily for selfish motives. Policy stability and continuity are frequently jeopardised by a conflict between powerful political and administrative forces working together with the public. Policy stability and continuity receive little attention. The aforementioned flaws have frequently resulted in bad policy formulation. This research opted to explore the Yar'adua administration's seven-point programme because the economy of a state and the economic policies outlined by the government are important.

### **Conceptual Review: Public Policy and Development**

The concept of policy has been differently defined in public policy literature. For example, Eminue (2005) defines policy as a government strategy aiming at influencing or controlling the operation of the economy and polity. These policies are mostly implemented and carried out by a country's government. Examples of such policies include decisions concerning the movement of money in the economy, tax legislation, and income redistribution, among others. The growth of a country's economic or social sphere is primarily reliant on the government's plethora of policies. As a consequence, a sound policy should have a steady rate of development. It is critical that a well-crafted policy be simple to implement, well-funded, and carried out through effective communication channels within the polity. These policies are mostly implemented and discharged by a state's government.

However, Todaro et al. (2003:51), conceive development is a multi-dimensional process that involves the reorganisation and reorientation of the entire economic and social system. This entails, in addition to increased wealth and productivity, dramatic changes in institutional, social, and administrative structures, as well as changes in population attitudes, practises, and beliefs, as well as the spread of poverty. According to Umuru (2002) and Oyeneho (2012), development is related with modernization, material progress, industrialization, scientific and technical progress, the introduction of nuclear energy, the electronic and biological revolution, and new understanding about man and the cosmos.

Consequence, Ebeh (2015) contends that national development is concerned with quality improvement in various sectors of national life, such as the political, ethical, socio-psychological, and economic spheres of national existence, which work together to define and ensure a quality and productive existence for a country's citizens.

Development is evaluated from the standpoint of a country's percentage growth in GNP over time. In this sense, Meier (1989) defines progress as "maximising GDP growth through capital accumulation and industrialisation." Moreover, Todaro (1979) defines development as a national economy's ability to create and sustain an annual rise in its Gross National Product (GNP) at rates of 5 to 7 percent or more from its baseline economic state. On the whole, the concept of development will be evaluated within the Marxist framework of analysis.

### **Theoretical framework**

The development theory highlights two primary schools of thought, known as the Liberal and Marxist viewpoints. They examine progress through the lens of economic indicators. The Marxist school of thinking, on the other hand, primarily disagrees with the arguments of Liberal researchers who solely attempt to link development with a country's reported level of GDP. This has been criticised as not just flawed but also deceptive. According to scholars with this Marxist viewpoint, the entire discussion of development should focus around the welfare of the population.

They go on to say that rather than viewing progress as an abstract economic concept, it should be viewed from a multidimensional viewpoint. They contend that any discussion of growth should centre on man and his well-being. Rodney's remarks encapsulate this extreme viewpoint: Human development is a multifaceted process. Individually, it entails increasing ability and capacity, more freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well-being. At the level of social groupings, it entails an increased ability to govern both internal

and exterior connections. Historically, advancement has always entailed an improvement in the ability to protect the social group's independence. This work is anchored on this development approach.

Historically, progress has always entailed an improvement in the ability to protect the social group's independence. This paper's theoretical approach is anchored on this development viewpoint, assessing the efforts of the 7-point agenda in enabling national development in Nigeria. This study is situated within the Marxist theory of development in examining how the Yar'adua administration's 7-point agenda contributed to national development in Nigeria.

### **President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua Seven-Point Agenda**

The Yar'Adua administration's primary policy emphasis, commonly known as the 7-point agenda, included Power and Energy, Food Security, Wealth Innovation, Transportation Sector, Land Reforms, Security, and Education. Moreover, the infrastructure power adjustments to be communicated in this sector through the expansion of enough and sufficient power supply to ensure Nigeria's potential to evolve as an advanced system and an industrial nation by 2015.

The food security strategy was basically agricultural in nature. The emphasis was on the advancement of modern technology, research, financial investment in research, output, and development of agricultural inputs in order to transform the agricultural sector, resulting in a five to tenfold increase in output and production. This would result in increased home and commercial output as well as a shift in farmer technology understanding. However, as per wealth innovation, Nigeria has failed to grow industrially due to its reliance on money from non-renewable oil. This amendment focused on wealth innovation via changed production, namely in the agricultural and solid mineral sectors.

Nigeria's transportation sector, with its poor road networks, is an ineffectual means of mass conveyance of people and products. With the goal of becoming a more sophisticated industrialised Nigeria, Nigeria must progress its transportation industry. The government has earlier begun this mission through the present renovation and modernisation of the railway. However, while billions of dollars have been lost due to unsuitable government-owned landed assets, changes in land laws and the advent of land reforms would help Nigeria's prosperity through the release of lands for commercialised agriculture and other large-scale industry by the private sector. The whole result will ensure improvements and advancement to the output and wealth innovation company.

Under the Yar'adua administration, an unfavourable security environment precedes both external and domestic investment into the country. As a result, security was envisioned as not only a necessary precursor, but also as an important infrastructure for the development of a sophisticated Nigerian economy. The Niger Delta security problem was the main focus point, mobilised not by physical control or military security, but through dependable and accurate dialogue between the public and the Federal Government.

Finally, the educational system underwent a two-pronged reformation in order to provide the least desirable worldwide quality of education for everybody. With that completed, an intensive educational development programme was to ensure superiority in both tutoring and the acquisition of skills in science and technology by students who will be regarded as Nigeria's future pioneers and industrialists. This transformation will be implemented with substantial investment in the education system.

### **An Assessment of President Yar'Adua Seven Point Agenda in Nigeria**

President Yar'adua's administration launched an amnesty programme aimed at quelling young unrest in Nigeria's Niger Delta area and increasing money to the Federation account through oil production in the region. As a result, militant organisations operating in the region launched a sustained assault on oil installations in the Niger Delta region. Before the Amnesty Programme, the Niger Delta area had become very turbulent, with increased uncertainty. This showed itself in the form of bunkering, hostage takings, bombing of oil facilities, and so forth. Essentially, the activities of violent groups in Nigeria's Niger Delta area resulted in the establishment of the Amnesty Programme for militants within the region.

The Amnesty Programme included "Disarmament," "Demobilization," and "Reintegration." The insurgency seemed to be a conflict between the Nigerian state and multinational companies, whose oil discoveries had resulted in severe environmental degradation, suffocation of the region's agro-based businesses, and abject poverty among the people of that region. Many of the teenagers chose to reclaim what had been wrongfully

taken from them by foreign corporations and the Nigerian government. The choice of these teenagers was prompted by the fact that multinational firms' operations have not only badly impacted their means of subsistence, but also by the government's blatant indifference to the inhabitants of that region.

Furthermore, the Nigerian government and international corporations that have benefited from the oil discoveries in the Niger-Delta area have made no concerted efforts to address the region's socioeconomic, health, and infrastructure challenges. Instead, the Nigerian government used repressive techniques to contain the upcoming upheaval in the Niger-Delta area, with the implicit influence and backing of international businesses.

As a result, Yar'adua's administration established the Amnesty Programme to cure wounded, soothe frayed emotions, and reconcile militants, and especially Niger Delta residents, with the State for a long and trouble-free exploitation of the region's wealth. In accordance with this, the Yar'adua administration granted amnesty in June 2009 for militants in the Niger Delta area who had been at war with the state for a long time, in return for disarmament, rehabilitation, and reintegration into society.

Moreover, militants were asked to sign the Amnesty within a 60-day period between August 6th and October 4th, 2009. To oversee the process, a Presidential Board on Amnesty and Disarmament of Militants in the Niger Delta was established. Following the expiration of the 60-day grace period on October 4, 2009, a total of 20,192 militants surrendered their weapons and ammunition to the Federal Government and agreed to the amnesty proposal. In reality, practically all militant group leaders and members accepted the amnesty and ventured out of their camps to surrender their weaponry and ammunitions at arms collecting centres set up in Edo, Bayelsa, Delta, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Ondo, and Rivers. Nonetheless, further chances were created for individuals who accepted amnesty after October 4, 2009. As a result, 6,166 people were registered in the second stage in 2010 and 3,642 more in October 2012. The third phase was the outcome of a confirmation exercise conducted by a commission chaired by Air Vice Marshall James and constituted by the Chief of Defense Staff (Ikelegbe, 2016).

The practical execution of the programme began with the disarming component of the Amnesty programme, which was supervised by the Amnesty Implementation Committee. This was primarily a military exercise performed by the Nigerian Armed Forces. Among the weapons surrendered were 287,445 different types of ammunition, as well as about 2,760 various weaponry and 18 gunboats (Ifeatu, 2010). Disarmament was completed in December 2009, but the arms and ammunition collected were stored at the 82 Division of the Nigerian Army in Enugu and, in accordance with existing DDR codes as outlined by the United Nations, were destroyed by the Nigerian Army in Lokpanta, Enugu State on May 25, 2011 under the supervision of the Amnesty Office. (Dode; 2007).

The demobilisation activities included the identification, registration, and recording of militants in designated camps. In December 2011, the Amnesty Office completed the Demobilization component of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (Ugbolue, 2012). Ex-militant rehabilitation began in stages at the Obubra camp in Cross River State in June 2010. The programme included biometric paperwork, a wellness assessment, nonviolent transformative training, and a series of counselling and job categorization sessions for ex-agitators. The transformative and reorientation exercises in the Camp were designed to demolish the ex-agitators' conviction in violence and equip them with the more potent option of nonviolence.

The amnesty offer was a brilliant move in terms of providing Niger Deltans a sense of belonging in the Nigerian enterprise. As a result, amnesty has aided in the advancement of national integration and the building of national unity in the country. Second, and as a result of the first, there has been a high level of peace and stability in the Niger Delta area in particular, and in Nigeria in general. Peace and stability in the region have led to more successful oil exploration efforts, which have benefited Nigeria's income profile. As a result, development initiatives in the area have been boosted.

Considering security is a pillar of progress in any society, the 7-point agenda policy affected the lives and properties of the nation in this respect. One of the most fundamental constitutional tasks of every government is the protection of life and property. Security and the preservation of law and order are the foundations upon which the success of all government actions aimed at guaranteeing good governance is built. With the success of the Amnesty programme, the Yar'adua administration's 7-point plan was able to ensure that peace and stability were restored in the country's southern area.

Ezeibe (2009) writes that power and energy, on the other hand, are two additional subsectors targeted by the Seven-Point-Agenda. This efficiency reform proposed for intelligence and security services in Nigeria has subsequently begun in the electric power industry. True, the reform predated the Yar'adua-Jonathan administration because the National Assembly passed the Electrical Sector Act in 2005. The rural electrification agency (REA) was completely reinstated in 2010. It now has a managing director rather than a sole administrator, which most people considered to be more or less an undertaking. The REA, which was suspended in 2009 for corruption, was given a mandate by President Jonathan to electrify 1,970 communities, which it was doing prior to her suspension in 2009. He resurrected the Niger Delta Power Holding Company (NDPHC), the intervention agency in charge of carrying out the ambitious national integrated power project (NIPP), with a mandate for NNIP to add about 4,700 MW to the kilometres of transmission lines to the national electricity assets. This aspect of the Seven-point agenda policy is critical to the development of Nigerian society because federal government infrastructure reforms in this sector will result in the development of sufficient and adequate power supply, ensuring Nigeria's ability to develop as a modern economy and industrial nation (Ezeibe; 2009).

In the areas of agriculture and food security, Gadzama (2013) asserts that former agriculture and water resources minister Abba Ruma is said to have released 66 metric tonnes of food items from key grain reserves in order to remove food insecurity in the country. This is also in line with the 7-point agricultural and food security plan. In terms of wealth creation and employment, President Umaru Musa Yar'adua's successor resisted the aim of wealth building by eliminating gasoline subsidies. Fuel subsidies in Nigeria cost the government billions of dollars in 2011 and did not enhance the country's wealth. To fulfil the aim of wealth creation, the money granted for fuel subsidies must be removed and utilised for other purposes.

Nonetheless, Nigeria has been rated as one of the world's worst business environments. Nigeria has also been dubbed the world's poverty capital, with millions of its residents living below the poverty line. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the cost of doing business is the highest. This item on the agenda turned out to be wishful thinking under capitalism in a country like Nigeria. Furthermore, transportation is a need in any country. In reality, substantial economic expansion is impossible without a robust and efficient transportation system. However, the majority of the country's highways are now death traps. Despite the fact that the Yar'Adua government was credited with launching the proposal to build the Abuja-Kaduna railway project, which has since been completed and is fully operational. The administration also admitted that the roads are in poor condition and committed to repair and upgrade the railway.

Overall, the Yar'adua administration planned to amend land laws and implement land reforms in order to optimize Nigeria's growth by releasing land to the private sector for commercialized farming and other large-scale companies. Most landed properties are still expensive to ordinary Nigerians, particularly in metropolitan areas.

### **Critique of the President Yar'Adua's Seven-Point Agenda**

A significant policy package of that scale was certain to encounter difficulties. This reality has already been accepted by those directly in charge of pushing the agenda forward, to the point that certain members of the Economic Monitoring Team have voiced pessimism. For example, the Minister of Power has advised Nigerians of a major decline in the water level at dams supplying water to key important hydro units, as well as a lack of gas to power some thermal stations. Given the importance of power and gas to the Agenda's success, these constraints are far from minor issues.

The first concern is inefficient and corrupt public service. The public sector, which serves as the engine room of governance, is critical to the Agenda's success. Over the years, the public sector has been pummeling by corruption and unnecessary bureaucratic bottlenecks, resulting in delays, leakages, and inefficiency in carrying out its mission. The public sector has lost its essential characteristics of neutrality, anonymity, and tenure security throughout time. These negative trends will undoubtedly impair the capacity of the public sector to serve as the required vehicle for delivering policy benefits.

A related issue is the absence of intended synergy between political office holders, whose terms of office are generally considerably shorter but are mostly the architects of government programmes, and public officials, whose terms of office are much longer and are primarily the executors. The two appear to have a strained relationship most of the time. On the one hand, public employees view political office holders as generally

opportunistic, ignorant, and misinformed in their duties. On the other hand, political office holders perceive public servants as wielding significant but underutilised influence and authority in government. This "cat and mouse" interaction is undoubtedly detrimental to the policy's effectiveness.

The lack of a purposeful, trustworthy, respected, and focused leadership in Nigeria is the second significant hurdle to the Seven-Point Agenda's achievement. Despite its rich people and material resources, Nigerians generally believe that the country lacks the required leadership to lift it out of its current condition. Nkom (2005), for example, compared Nigeria, the "Giant of Africa," to the traditional rotting fish, which normally begins to rot from the head (Leadership). The rottenness spreads gradually to the remainder of the body (citizens). In truth, Nigeria's current political leadership has recently suffered from inefficiency and insensitivity to the situation of the people. In response to this, President Umar Musa Yar'adua actually died, only three years after being sworn in. This was a big setback for the policy's effectiveness because he was principally responsible for guaranteeing the successful implementation of the Seven-Point Agenda. Following his death, Vice President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan took over government, and little or no effort was made to secure the continuance of the Seven Point Agenda execution.

A third fundamental problem of the approach is citizens' lack of involvement beyond elections. Most of the time, citizens at various levels of government are either unaware of the need to watch their leaders and demand responsibility, or are manifestly incapable of doing so. Nigerian officials at all levels of government have been accused of failing to meet people's needs and desires, not just in terms of service delivery, but also in terms of information providing. Nigeria has gone through multiple policies and policy reversals since independence, with nothing to show for it. Citizens have not been able to put enough pressure on the leadership to account for this dismal performance. The European Union (EU) highlighted that in Uganda, which is not unlike to other African nations, including Nigeria, civil society actors, who are ideally anticipated to play a vital role in aggregating people' interests, promoting, and monitoring democratic accountability, have failed to do so (Gyong, 2011).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This research indicates that the Seven-Point Agenda had no substantial influence on the reform agenda's main areas of attention. A good policy followed by ineffective execution yields only problematic results. Poorly implemented policies result in massive waste of dollars and resources, as well as service delivery failure. The Seven-Point Agenda has failed to fulfil its aim in this regard. After conducting extensive research, this paper concludes that the conditions in the seven priority areas of the agenda - power and energy, land reforms, transportation, wealth creation, food security, security (Niger Delta militancy), and education sector - were poor prior to the implementation of the Seven-point agenda and have remained poor since its implementation. This analysis may also articulately conclude that the only aspect of the programme that was primarily effective was national security, with a focus on militancy in the Niger-Delta. President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's administration struggled with a shortage of time, particularly in finishing the Seven-Point Agenda plan, due in part to his unexpected death. As a result, this paper proposes that the Federal government, as a matter of priority, back up objectives such as the "Seven-point Agenda" with action, by deliberate participation in important sectors, in order to accomplish significant change that is visible enough to be noticed by all and all. This requires the allocation of adequate financial resources to priority areas in order to facilitate the achievement of the desired goals in those areas; it is believed that achieving the desired goals of policies will contribute significantly to the eradication of poverty, which is the bane of Nigerian society. On peace and security, the relative tranquilly brought about by the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta area must be expanded upon. According to this study, the political class must build the political will to prolong the amnesty programme not just in the Niger Delta but also in other difficult areas of the country in order to establish relative peace. Youths who are most likely to be problematic must be enabled in some way to divert their attention away from creating a threat to the lives and property of citizens.

Finally, this study suggests that every government make active attempts to incorporate unfinished policy objectives of past administrations into their present policies in order to provide continuity and logical conclusions of policies and projects across the country. A prominent example is the Amnesty Programme, which was initiated by the Yar'Adua administration; following administrations have made significant attempts to sustain the programme and continue to address insecurity in the Niger-Delta.

## References

1. Ahmadu, Ali (2006), "Foreword" in giant strides. An authoritative account of the Transformational Achievements of the PDP led Administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, 1999-2007, ed. Anthony Ubani, Peoples Democratic Institute, in association with Genuine Book Place Resources, Abuja
2. Dode, R. O. 2007. "Incidents of Hostage Taking and the Niger Delta Crisis in Nigeria", South-South Journal of Culture and Development, Vol. 9 No. 1.
3. Ezeibe, C (2009) "Relevance and limitations of President Yar'adua's Seven Point Agenda". In: *African Renaissance* Vol 6, pp 33-41
4. Ebeh, J (2015) "National security and national development". A critique International Journal of Arts and Humanities. Vol 4 (2)
5. Eminiue, O. (2005). *Public policy analysis and decision-making*. Lagos, Nigeria: Concept Publications Limited.
6. Gadzama, I (2013) "Effects of president umaru musa yar'adua's 7-point agenda on agricultural development and food security in Nigeria" In: *European Scientific Journal* November 2013 edition vol.9, No.32 ISSN: 1857 – 7881
7. Gyong J.E. (2011) *Good governance and accountability in a democracy. 50th Years of Nigerian's nationhood. Issues and challenges for sustainable development*. Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto, Nigeria
8. Ikelegbe, A. (2016). "Beyond the Threshold of Civil Struggle: Youth Militancy and Militia-ization of the Resource Conflicts in the Niger Delta Region, Nigeria". *African Study Monograph*, 27 (3)
9. Kofarmata, Dan Azumi (2007) "The 8 years of Obasanjo's Squandered and Missed Golden Opportunities, Nigerian Village Square, May 19.
10. Mbanefo F, Gini (2008), "Forward" in Amucheazi, Elo and Ibeanu Okechukwu, (ed.) *Between The Theory and Practice of Democracy in Nigeria. An Assessment of Obasanjo's first term in Office by Academics and Practitioners* (ed.) Adonis and Abbey Publishers Ltd, London
11. Meier, G. (1989). *Leading issues in economic development*. New York: Oxford University Press.
12. Nkom, S.A. (2005). Our cultural legacy as a foundation for purposeful leadership. 60th anniversary of the enthronement of the Chief of *Kagoro*, Kaduna State, Nigeria
13. Todaro, M & Smith, C. (2003) *Economic development*. London: Pearson Education Ltd
14. Todaro, M. P. (1979). *Economics for a developing world*. London: Longman Group Limited
15. Oyeneho, C (2012) *Mathematic education: A prerequisite for national development*. Retrieved from: [globalacademicgroup.com](http://globalacademicgroup.com)