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Critical Infrastructure Decay and Development Crises in Nigeria

By Rufus, Anthony & Bufumoh, Pre-ebi
Niger Delta University

Abstract- This paper investigates comparatively the critical nature of infrastructure to the overall development of nations. It points out that critical infrastructure decay in Nigeria is directly related to major issues of development crises in Nigeria. The methodology adopted for this paper is basically content analysis while making use of secondary data in comparative analysis. The paper tries to find answers to the issues of critical infrastructure decay i.e epileptic power supply, poor road network and transportation/ communication imbalances, failing educational structure, overall unemployment, the disconnect between public and private sectors in sustainable infrastructural development, etc in Nigeria. The paper concludes that critical infrastructure must not be treated with levity and neglect if the nation must break out the dialectical cycle of development crises.

Keywords: *role, civics, ethical, education, .attitude, shaping.*

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Critical Infrastructure Decay and Development Crises in Nigeria

Rufus, Anthony [α] & Bufumoh, Pre-ebi [σ]

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Keywords: critical infrastructure, development crises, nigeria.

I. Introduction and Statement of The Problem

Infrastructure that is critical is of utmost importance to a nation. This is why such infrastructure should be taken seriously. These infrastructure ranges from road, electricity, health, national assets all targeted at the comfort of the society and overall development. Even to image a decay of such infrastructure is horrible not talk of a real decay as the case in Nigeria. One major factor that has contributed to the development crises in Nigeria is that of critical infrastructure decay. The problem has manifested in the form of high level of unemployment, poverty, frustration, desperation, criminality, relocation and migration from Nigeria to Europe, America and other parts of the world. Eke, (2011: 39) expressed this view point when he noted;

> *It is not a matter of rhetoric or polemics that basic infrastructure in Nigeria is in a semi-comatose state, and from colonial times up till the present day, the issues of infrastructural development have remained on the lips of successive administrations with no visible indication of accomplishment.*

Considering the role of critical infrastructure in a nation's development, successive governments of Nigeria from colonial to present has given little or no attention to it. This view is also captured in the words of Ihembe, (2011: 504) when he asserted that "Infrastructure as a critical form of development plays animportant role in any country or region or state. Seriously it constitutes the hub upon which socio-economic aspects of society revolve." Expectedly, improvement upon infrastructural development is a key to raise the quality and standard of living in the life of its citizens. For instance, availability of critical infrastructures like; power, quality health care system, quality educational system, water, rail transport system with good road network, good service sector, and its protection and maintenance will bring about good life to its citizens.

Therefore, this paper work tends to access and evaluate the country's critical infrastructural decay and proffer possible solutions on maintaining these infrastructures. A comparative analysis of Nigeria and other developed societies will be considered to identify the missing link and its prospects. We shall make recommendations where necessary. These are what this paper shall consider.

Infrastructure facilities are not demanded for their own sake, but for what they will help in producing. In all aspects, whether in developed or less developed societies, the capacity and capability necessary for business growth stem from the acquisition of science and technology, culture and the availability of enabling infrastructure. The enabling infrastructures are the major factors which must exist to allow private enterprises to operate and grow. Available infrastructure will make people to be creative, innovative, gainfully employed, self reliant, wealth creators and will ensure security. But it is sad to note that the entire critical infrastructure in Nigeria is in a state of comatose thereby creating developmental crisis. The failure and inability of the country to maintain and sustain her critical infrastructure such as; oil installations and pipelines, gas plant, power generation and transmission lines, clean water, public health facilities, educational facilities, railways, road networks, manufacturing industries, etc have accounted for myriads of problems like; food shortage, poverty, high level of unemployment, high level criminality, high level accidental cases on roads, desperation and

Author α: Department Of Political Science, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State. e-mail: Rufusanthony50@Yahoo.Com
Author σ: M.Sc Student, Department of Political Science, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State.

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migration from Nigeria to Europe, America and other parts of the world.

Hence, this problem if not properly tackled, will lead to a more deteriorating state of our economy.

In the light of the above, this paper work tends to raise these questions:

1. To what extent does infrastructure decay account for high level of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria?
2. Are there any way(s) the public and private sector can guaranty sustainable infrastructure development in Nigeria?
3. To what extent does epileptic power supply account for development crisis in Nigeria?

II. Literature Review

The Global Competitiveness Report 2010-2011 of the 2010 World Economic Forum values the competitiveness of 133 Economies and thus provides the most complete economic evaluation of its kind. The forum uses twelve determinants, which the report calls "Pillars" to measure competitiveness. The second pillar which this study is more concerned with is "Infrastructure". World Economic Forum (2010). The report however emphasizes that, extensive and efficient infrastructure is critical for ensuring the effective functioning of the economy, since it is an important factor determining the location of economic activity and the kind of activities or sectors that can develop in a particular economy. Well developed infrastructure reduces the effect of distance between regions, integrating the national market and connecting it at low cost to markets in other countries and regions.

Infrastructure is the basic physical and organizational structures required for the proper running of a society, that is, creating and establishing industries, buildings, health services, power supply, roads and railroads, telecommunications, etc. It is the enterprise or products, services and facilities necessary for an economy to function. Sullivan and Sheffrin, (2003). In the same vein, Olufemi, (2012) described infrastructure as generally a set of interconnected structural elements that provide framework supporting an entire structure of development.

III. Critical Infrastructure

The term critical infrastructure has been widely adopted to distinguish those infrastructure elements that, if significantly damaged or destroyed, would cause serious disruption of the dependant system or organisation. The term infrastructure typically refers to the technical structures that support a society, such as roads, water, electrical national grid, telecommunications and so forth. It can also be defined as "the physical components of interrelated systems providing commodities and services essential to enable, sustain, or enhance societal living conditions". (Fulmer, 2009.30-32)

Therefore, this term becomes very important in judging a country's level of development. Viewed functionally, infrastructure facilitates the production of goods and services, and also the distribution of finished products to end users. (markets), as well as basic social services such as schools and hospitals; an example is the creation of roads to enable transport of raw materials to a factory. American Heritage Dictionary, (2009).

From the above definitions on infrastructure, there is a common feature that has appeared in all which is; the availability of basic social and technical structures that supports and enhances sustainable development in any society. This implies that a society is measured or accessed based on the availability of these structures. Having extensively dealt on the term "Infrastructure", we shall then consider the concept; "Development".

The two basic theories of development are classified into modernisation and dependency. The modernisation theorists based their argument on Economic, Psychology and Diffusion. The economic approach of Rostow (1962: 6) identified five stages in the process of a nation's economic development. Rostow's postulation is that underdevelopment was an original position from which traditional societies has to move through (stages) to development without a recourse to social revolution.

Weber (1930: 60), McClelland (1968: 20) and Everret (1983: 31) explained development in terms of presence (or absence) of (i) some individual personalistic traits or (ii) the general psychological state characterising a society. McClelland argued that the need for achievement encourages the individual to meet challenges to take risks and to succeed in the face of difficulties. Western industrialized nations contained individuals with high level of achievement motivation, which led to high rate of national growth. Hagen (1962: 16) argued that traditional developing nations produced authoritarian personalities who lacked self-confidence, exhibited a high level of anxiety when faced with new situations and who were content to preserve the status quo.

Similarly, Edari (1976:19) utilises diffusion theory to explain the process of less privilege societies' development. Diffusion is a process by which a third world country adopts capital, technology, and social structure from western industrialised countries. He argued that the developing countries would develop to the extent that: (a) Western industrialised countries provide capital programmes. (b) They adopt modern methods of agricultural and industrial production and (c) They adopt those values, attitudes and behaviour patterns that are exhibited by western industrialised nations. A people centred approach to development

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views an individual not as a subject- 'but an actor who defines the goals, controls the resources, and directs processes affecting his/her life (Korten, 1984:21).

The term development in human society is relative and a multi-dimensional process. For radical scholars like Walter Rodney, the term is viewed first from the individual level, which implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material well being which is more relative to this study. The second is at; the level of social groups, it implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relations. And the mode of production level. (Rodney, 1982).

It is important to note that in every human society, there are minimum expectations which all members share. And they are: access to universal qualitative education, and equal opportunity for all members in the public domain where competition is based on merit and upheld against all odds. Access to safe drinking water, functioning health facilities, steady power, qualitative telecom-services etc. All of these are universal values that transcend cultural and political boundaries. (Aliyu, 2013).

Though, liberal scholars have argued that development can only be measured in monetary terms, at the level of economic growth, industrialization, or indices such as per capita income, (GDP) . similarly, Gopinath, (2008) highlighted that" there is a significant potential to raise the per capita standard of living of its people. However, this can happen where there is a culture of sustainable development with available infrastructure facilities. In the same connexion, Peshkin and Cohen, (1967:23) noted that "economic growth was equated with development and was generally considered as the fundamental objective of the decolonised states of Asia and Africa". Therefore, it becomes necessary for countries like Nigeria to sustain its critical infrastructure to arrest the crises of development.

IV. Theoretical Framework

The Structural Functional Analysis theory by Gabriel Almond will be adopted to explain and empirically justify this study. In his theory, Almond's mode of analysis is fundamentally concerned with the phenomenon of system maintenance and regulation. The basic theoretical proposition is that in all social systems, certain basic functions have to be performed. Almond provided a model for structural functional analysis, which identified the functional requirements of the political system and explained the contribution of these functions toward the maintenance of stability of the system. In this study, we are more concerned about how the maintenance and stability of our infrastructure can enhance sustainable development in Nigeria.

He further noted that every political system has some structures and these structures perform certain functions meant for it. These structures in this study represent critical infrastructures and their functions in society. For instance, one of the critical infrastructures emphasized in this structure is railway system. Functional railway system that connects the geopolitical zones of the country will reduce high cost of transportation of goods and commodities from one location to another. The non-functioning state of our railway system is the cause of heavy traffic lock-jams on our roads, heavy pot-holes arising from heavy duty trucks plying the roads, causing road crashes leading to death, etc, which is the case of Nigeria.

V. Critical Infrastructure and Sustainability in Nigeria

The term "Critical Infrastructure" is normally used to describe assets, facilities which are of so much importance for the functioning of the economy of a state. Such assets are identified as basic facilities, services and installations critical to the socio-economic well being of any state. The way and manner these physical assets function and upon which these services are delivered are considered critical infrastructure. Meier,1995. Infrastructure is made up of public utilities such as such as power, pipe born water supply, telecommunication, sanitation and sewage, solid waste collection and disposal, piped gas. While public works include roads, major damps, canal works for irrigation and drainage. More infrastructures are in the transport sector such as; urban and inter-urban railways, urban transports, water ways and airports, etc.

The nature of infrastructure of any country is directly connected with the quality of life. "According to recent statistics, the living conditions of most people in Africa, appears to have either not improved or only done so insignificantly. This situation arises from the misrule of our early political leaders most of whom were instrumental to the struggle for independence" (Eregha, 2007).

Hence, having considered the essential nature of our critical infrastructures, there is therefore the need for sustainable developmental efforts to reduce the harsh effect the infrastructure decay has caused the country. Sustainable development in this direction means improvement upon the needs of the people without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their demands. There is no doubt that available infrastructure will enhance creativity in the mind, innovations, gainful employment, to be self-reliant, create wealth and above all ensure reduction in crime and security issues. Dibie and Okonkwo, 2000 also share this view when they reaffirmed that Nigerians need a healthy business environment, one that will enable them to plan for the future and achieve rewards, and

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that which will encourage entrepreneurs to invest in their enterprises. Similarly, Olalokun, 1979 also assert that with improved infrastructure there will be improved industrial and economic transformation, technological development and business growth. Good infrastructure raises productivity and lowers production cost but absence of basic infrastructure brings poverty and under-development.

In line with this thought, Dauda, 2002 noted that socio-economic infrastructural facilities which include power, water, roads education, public health facilities are highly deficient in rural areas. The frustration Nigerians face arising from inefficient power supply is nothing to write home about. Nnaji, 2009 states that, the power situation in the South-East Geo-political zone is the worse in the country not minding the technological potentials they possess. Due to infrastructural decay and epileptic power supply, small and medium scale businesses have closed down, manufacturing companies are no more in existence and have relocated to other neighbouring African countries to setup their businesses.

In order to sustain development in Nigeria, poverty needs to be reduced drastically to its end, education should be given priority in order for theto be on the march to sustainable development. Sustainable development means to banish poverty in Nigeria. Nwosu, 2000. While making his submission on the subject, he noted that poverty is antithetical to human dignity, it is a great slur, indeed an outrage on human decency and social justice. Therefore there is an urgent need for the country's critical infrastructures to be rehabilitated to full operations to ensure sustainable development. Nigeria should feel challenged by the giant strides which nations such as the Asian Tigers; Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, China, Brazil, India, etc. The way forward is to maintain her critical infrastructures to enhance growth and development.

VI. Critical Infrastructure: A Comparative Analysis

America has good roads not because America is rich but America is rich because it has good roads – J. F. Kennedy. (Gabriel, 2014). Nigeria is the most populous black nation in Africa with huge mineral deposits and natural resources abound. But the unfortunate story is that, right from colonial days to the present the country is still battling on how these vast mineral and natural resources can be harnessed into real capital that will bring about sustainable development. Life in Nigeria is a mix of daunting challenges and boundless opportunities, yet with seeming boundless opportunities her citizens are still in poverty, unemployed, etc with no hope and sign of improvement. Accordingly, Nigeria's infrastructure is in a deplorable state and the nation's infrastructural needs are evident for all to see. Gabriel. C,(2014.) While expressing this view point stated that, the road transport is the most important element in the country's transportation sector carrying about 95% of all the nation's goods and passengers. But currently many of the roads are in disrepair because of poor maintenance and years of heavy traffic. While Nigeria is still grabbling with putting in place structures, countries such as America whose democracy is a model to Nigeria is talking about sustaining its critical infrastructures. There is a standard in the American system, the system demands periodic assessment of the country's critical infrastructures. Accordingly, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) is charged with this responsibility to report to the government in every four years the status of its infrastructures.(ASCE, 2013). Suffice to know that corruption and lack of visionary leaders have been identified as the bane of the country's infrastructure decay. Corruption does not only raise the price of infrastructure, it also reduces quality of economic returns from infrastructure investments. Therefore, it behoves on good leadership and good governance to spearhead the resuscitation of the country's infrastructure.

VII. The Missing Link

In most discussions about Nigeria at present is her strong record that it has established over the last decade. A study by McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) revealed that, Nigeria had the potential to become a major global economy over the past Fifteen years. MGI also estimated that in 2013 -2030 Nigeria could expand its economy more than 6% annually, with its GDP exceeding $1.6 Trillion going into the top global twenty economies of the world that is, if Nigerian leaders can work and ensure all inclusive growth, that thirty million people could escape poverty. The problem is, Nigeria depends too much on foreign aides and assistance which is limiting her prospects. (MGI, 2014).Due to lack of visionary leaders, there is poor attitude towards maintaining our critical infrastructures, thereby causing untold hardship amongst Nigerians. A major aspect where the country missed the mark is in the area of technological development of our educational sector. The importance of technology cannot be de-emphasized as it makes learning more interesting and many more but just a few to mention. It helps to make learning process more suitable and effective. Technological backwardness is traced to the colonial era whenthey discouraged our craftsmen and art men who where into artefact, blacksmiths and goldsmiths from constructing simple farm tools, firearms, etc. The reason the British government had to discourage our technological knowledge was basically economic reasons and not to encourage and develop us

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technologically. (Bahen,1966). The colonial administration saw Nigeria as a ready market to market their finished goods. The truth is Nigerians were engaged both in industrial and practical art before the arrival of the whites, to the extent that even cast objects such as FESTAC Mask was stolen away from Lagos. As Akaniwor, (2008) noted, the colonialists discouraged further development of Nigeria technology for reasons that it was a threat to their potential market. He further noted that "Ogogoro" was termed as illicit gin by the colonial government and that whoever produces, markets or consumes it was to be prosecuted, this was how technological advancement was discouraged and is still being discouraged.

It is no longer news that, the colonialists provided a faulty educational philosophy, this could be confirmed by the words of Lord Lugard and Rev J, C. Taylor who said;

> *The chief function of government primary and secondary schools among primitive communities is to train the more promising boys from the village schools as teachers for those schools, as clerks for the local native courts and as interpreters. (Lugard, 1921).*

Worthy of note is the fact that, that aspect of education which emphasizes skill and practical knowledge was absolutely discouraged and excluded. This mentally continued with our post-colonial elites who took over power from the colonial masters.

VIII. Nigeria After Independence

Nigeria's industrial policy after independence was import substitution whose main objectives where the following;

Establishment of steel plants that brought about Delta Steel Plant and Ajaokuta Steel Plant to produce auto-mobile parts to be assembled in the established assembly plant here in Nigeria and other capital goods.

Another point to note is government attitude;subsequent governments from 1960 have not been able to make concerted effort to improve our technological know-how. Till date, good policies are formulated, but the sad story is poor implementation of these policies and lack of political will with official corruption on the part of our leaders.

Poor equipments in our educational institutions; our universities, polytechnics, colleges that are supposed to train proficient technologists, technicians, and engineers are poorly equipped with obsolete and non-functional equipments. Interestingly, it is claimed that India is ranked third in terms of technological manpower amongst the United States of America (USA) and former United Sovereign Soviet Union (USSR). (The Nigerian Engineers, 2003). It is also reported that India has Four Million scientists and engineers, Indian universities have seven hundred and fifty thousand engineering students registered. Five elite institutions called India Institute of Technology funded and equipped to the highest standards to produce high quality university graduates in electronics, computer science and others. But with Nigeria the story is different, to the extent that our universities, polytechnics and colleges graduate engineers, technologists that have nothing to offer to the country due to poor educational equipments.

The power sector is also not left out of this same scenario in spite of our huge natural and mineral resources which if harnessed could guaranty steady power supply to the country. Nigeria is blessed with Atlantic Ocean, damps, coal, natural gas that can generate electricity and attract investors to the country is still lacking.

Another area were Nigeria is missing the link is in the area of rail transport arising from challenges such as insufficient locomotives, rolling stock, poor working capital, obsolete signalling and communication equipments, narrow gauge systems, poor finance and managerial support coupled with lack of political will and official corruption. Nigeria needs to revamp the rail transport system in order to reduce the heavy traffic jams on our roads, accidents, deaths, delays, etc, to knock down the cost of goods and persons moving from one location to another. There is therefore the need for the country to change its rail system from the narrow gauge to the standard one and ensure prompt and timely maintenance of assets.

IX. Prospects

Suberu, (2007:21) noted that Nigerians earned about US$500 billion in oil revenue since 1970 yet remains mired in poverty, unemployment, bourgeoning domestic debts and infrastructural squalor, abysmal health and educational services and attendant social frustration.

The future of Nigeria is bright if only her political leaders can be selfless and formulate good policies that will maintain and sustain her critical infrastructures. Nigeria's potentials are great due to her strategic location in Africa, her large population, her entrepreneurial spirit, etc. In order to realise this potentials, Nigeria needs to reduce poverty, leaders must pursue reforms, policies aimed at increasing productivity, raising income, ensuring adequate food supply, security and other essential services like health care and education.

The increasing pace of internet exploration in Nigeria demonstrates that the skills are there, and just needs little encouragement from home and abroad, increase private sector investments in infrastructure and intensify its fight against corruption.

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X. Conclusion

Infrastructure facilities are not demanded for their own sake, but for what they will help in producing. In all aspects, whether in developed or less developed societies, the capacity and capability necessary for business growth stem from the acquisition of science and technology, culture and the availability of enabling infrastructure. The enabling infrastructures are the major factors which must exist to allow private enterprises to operate and grow. Available infrastructure will make people to be creative, innovative, gainfully employed, self reliant, wealth creators and will ensure security. Therefore, Structural Functional Analysis theory by Gabriel Almond was implored to explain and justify that the problem of development crises in Nigeria which is mainly due to the structures and its functions in the country. This explains that for any society to function, it is largely dependent on the efficiency and effectiveness of its structures.

Nigeria's developmental crises can be surmounted if she has selfless and vision-oriented leaders who can embark on reforms and policies that will maintain and sustain her country's critical infrastructures.

The study reveals that, infrastructural decay has accounted for high level poverty, unemployment, security, epileptic power supply, etc in the country and therefore needs serious government attention to sustain her critical infrastructure. The study also revealed the importance of the public and private sectors in the sustenance of her infrastructures, and therefore should encourage all inclusive growth policies.

XI. Recommendations

- The Nigerian electorates should learn to elect selfless and visionary leaders during elections into political offices.
- Nigerians should be re-oriented her value systems.
- Provisions for critical infrastructure such as technical and vocational education,science and research, functional health care system, steady power supply, access to safe drinking water, functional rail system, good road network, functional sea and air ports, improvement of the agricultural sector and strong security network should be given priority during budget preparations.
- Monitoring of the budget implementation process so as to avoid misappropriation and corruption.
- The anti-corruption fight must be total and intensified.
- There should be proper procedure for project monitoring, implantation and maintenance mechanism.
- Experts on various fields should be hired to evaluate and report the state of the countries critical infrastructure to government as it is in America.
- The campaign on change begins with me project lunched by President Muhmmadu Buhari's government should seriously be intensified. There is need for every Nigerian citizen to re-examine her ways and do things right

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