Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Interrogating the Situation in Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The case study research design of the qualitative type was adopted to investigate the situation of Osun State in her drive towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Interview guide was used as an instrument for data collection from a key informant (the Special Adviser to Governor Aregbesola Adesoji Rauf on SDGs). The study revealed that the Osun State government adopted goal 3 (good health and well-being) and goal 4 (quality education for all) presently as her vehicle to drive the global agenda. In achieving goal 3, the effectiveness of and facilities in their primary health care centers are emphasized. Meanwhile, on achieving goal 4, the State government has restructured the educational programme to accommodate all and sundry with well-equipped libraries. Also, the provision of electronic tablets (OponImon) to high school students with educational programmes installed has among other things helped improved the education situation. The study concluded that for Nigeria to fully or remarkably achieve SDGs; the various States that constitute the country must contribute their quota to the agenda. States should adopt a few goals for concentrated efforts and establish policies that support the actualization of these goals. Moreover, task force should be set up to monitor the progress made with respect to SDGs actualization.

Keywords: Libraries, Sustainable development goals, Osun State, Nigeria

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the United Nations' effort to transform our world using a development framework that cuts across all areas of human endeavors within the society. This framework also referred to as the global agenda or the universal goals was a fall-out from the resolution of the United Nations' General Assembly held on the 25thof September, 2015, with the view to proffering solutions to global challenges. The goals were unanimously adopted by Members State of the UN to pilot their development endeavor in a bid to address crucial societal problems and make the world a better place. SDGs according to Igbinovia (2017) is a set of 17 goals and 169 targets expected to stimulate development within the next 15 years and it is a transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The 17 development goals which made up the United Nations development framework called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are enumerated below as given by the United Nations (2014):

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Nigeria as a member of the UN has resolved on her commitment to development through the SDGs which is universal. The universality of SDGs according to CAFOD (2015) makes it equally applicable to all countries including Nigeria, as it addresses the issues pertinent to all countries regardless of economic, social and technological advancement. According to OSSAP-SDGs and NBS (2017), on their SDGs indicators baseline report for 2017, noted that "Nigeria, being one of the countries that ratified and adopted the Agenda for implementation in September 2015, proceeded immediately to domesticate it. The domestication began with the data mapping of the SDGs with a view to identifying which agencies of government and other stakeholders

could provide relevant and sustained data for tracking the implementation of the programme".

While keeping data is necessary to track and monitor activities alongside progress, Nigeria must

consciously take action towards the various target and goals contained in the agenda.

The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) has been working to achieve the global

agenda and domesticate it in the country. Odogwu (2018) reported some mechanisms put in

place for the implementation of SDGs to include the establishment of the office of the Senior

Special Assistant to the President on SDGs; House Committee on SDGs at the lower chamber,

and a counterpart Senate Committee in the upper chamber for oversight function and

appropriation of the SDGs. Regardless of the FGN efforts to achieve the agenda, they need the

efforts and contributions of other stakeholders to achieve much. In view of this, Aramide (2017)

was of the opinion that government at National, State, and Local levels; private sector, academia,

civil society and every citizen have a stake at achieving SDGs. While several ministries,

parastatals, and directorates at the federal level are working to achieve the agenda, the States

effort must be complementary in a bid to drive development at all nook and crannies of the

Nation. Hence this study, to investigate what Osun State is doing with regards to achieving

SDGs.

Literature Review

The role of sustainable development goals in the 21st Century Nigeria cannot be

overemphasized because it enables people to think critically for sustainable development

(Ojokuku, Aboyade & Chris-Israel, 2017). Lele (1991)   identified some factors that could be

obstacles to achieving sustainable development in less Economically Developed Countries

(LECDs) like Nigeria to include: Quality data and information; fragmented social, economic and

environmental issues; short term problem resolution: Government should think long term and

deal cautiously with risk; resource allocation prospects; population surge may forestall achieving

SDGs; housing defects; climate Charge; gender inequality; unemployment. The author concludes

that a well-functioning governance mechanism in the public sector has always played a vital role

in achieving prosperity and development. Whether the SDGs are focused on public service

delivery or infrastructure, governance components are foundational building blocks to the

success of this agenda. Oyewole (2018) posits that in the broader context of the SDGs, Nigerian

governance will play an important role in all of the goals if they are to be achieved on time:

1.   Rules-Based Governance

2.   Quality Budgetary and Financial Management

3.   Tax Policies and Efficient Resource Mobilization

4.   Quality Administration

5.   Fighting Corruption

6.   Environmental Protection

7.   Economic Development

8.   Social Development

Thus, for Nigeria to meet these goals there is a need to formulate and implement policies

that will promote transparency and accountability, overcome institutional constraints, and

promotes pro-poor growth (Oyewole, 2018). Adeagbo, Kuteyi, Adewale and Asubiojo (2018)

reported from their study that the Senior Special Assistant to the President (SSAP) on

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Ms Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire, in an interview

(thisdaylive.2016), revealed that workplace plans are in place to domesticate and adapt the SDG

into Nigeria's national development plans as a well as identify the key areas for priority

attention. The plans include the creation of awareness on stakeholder's role, identifying gaps in different sectors and proposition strategies and sustainable frameworks that could be adopted.

Adetayo (2018) gave list of countries with top performance and low performance with respect to the actualisation of SDGs. The position of Nigeria with regards to her performance in the actualisation of SDGs alongside with other countries was in the rank of low performance. The list showed that Nigeria is not among the top 20 countries with high SDGs performances but rather appears among the low performing countries with a position of 141. The implication of this poor ranking is that Nigeria as at the time of this survey are not doing so much to achieve sustainable development. However, to achieve more, Igbinovia, Ishola and Alex-Nmecha (2018) advised that Government should increase library funding and set up policies that are favorable to the library and Libraries should strengthen community engagement by providing specialized information, capacity building and development to the public especially rural dwellers towards achieving the goals in Nigeria.

Ojokuku, Ogunsipe, Chris-Israel, and Adeleke (2018) examined Nigerian Libraries and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria and compared the activities of libraries in some African countries and their services in the support of SDGs. They reported that the actualisation of SDGs requires the joint effort of everyone and all should be involved. The government should appreciate the role of the libraries in the overall development of society. Efforts should be made to ensure that libraries and information centers are integrated fully into the scheme of activities at the various levels and concludes that for the overall development of the society there is need for partnership with private sectors and non-governmental organization as library and information professionals cannot succeed in isolation to achieve the desired sustainable development. The Literacy level of the people should

be keenly looked into to increase literacy and subsequent use of the services of the library so as to increase the awareness of the actualization of the SDGs.

Abimbola, Olowokere, and Oluwasola (2018) stated that a lot could be achieved on the realization of SDG through ICT development and thus, ICT development should be embraced by all and sundry in Nigeria in order to achieve a high level of sustainable development goals. Bankeefa, Tijani, and Sarki (2018) posit that in achieving SDG in Nigeria there should be proper policy coordination and policy stability, educational curriculum reform, massive investment in national infrastructure facilities and frantic effort in taming the menace of insecurity across the country. While Olatunde and Ayodele (2018) emphasized the need to reposition our libraries in the educational system in order to make progress towards the attainment of SDG in Nigeria. In the same vein, Oladapo (2018) argued that for the SDG goals to be achievable in Nigeria there is the need for effective entrepreneurship education in Nigeria rather that than engaging in vain competition for degree acquisition and paper certificates that put undue pressure on the system.

From the reviewed studies, the authors found out SDGs is currently the global agenda to drive sustainable development and that Nigerian government at the Federal level is not ignorant of the necessity to pursue sustainable development in the country. Thus, the government is seemingly making efforts to achieve this universal resolution to make the world a better place for all citizens. However, the States which are closer to the people must also be involve in this agenda, yet no scholarly investigation to examine what State governments in Nigeria are doing towards the achievement of sustainable development in their respective states. Consequently, this study examines the effort of Osun State government towards the actualization of SDGs.

Methodology

The case study research design was used for the study to locate data from a key informant with regards to the state of SDGs in Osun State, Nigeria. The choice of this design is supported by the definition of Nworgu (2015) that case study research design is an intensive study geared towards a thorough understanding of a given social unit which could be an individual, group of individuals, community or institution.

The Interview was used as a method of data collection from The Special Adviser to Governor Aregbesola Adesoji Rauf on Sustainable Development Goals, Dr. Folawiyo Kareem Olajoku on Monday 12th February, 2018. The result of the interview is presented for the study in view of the main objective of the study which is to examine the state of SDGs actualization in Osun State.

Findings

This section of the study presents the data which emanated from the interview carried out for the study.

Interviewer: Clifford Bolanle Ishola

Interviewee: Dr. Folawiyo Kareem Olajoku. The Special Adviser to Governor Aregbesola Adesoji Rauf on Sustainable Development Goals.

Being the Special Adviser to the Governor on SDGs, the interviewee is in the best position to provide the researchers with information on the situation of SDGs in the State. This is due to the fact that the interviewee is familiar with every policy and programmes made with respects to SDGs in the State and advices the Governor accordingly.

Date of Interview: Monday 12th February, 2018

Question 1: What is your familiarity with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Response 1: I am very familiar with SDGs. I have a PhD in sustainable development goals.

This implication of this is that the interviewee possesses sufficient and adequate knowledge on SDGs to guide the Governor into making informed decisions on policies and programmes that are linked to sustainable development. The interviewee understands the implication of this agenda on the collective good of the people and will likely perceive SDGs as a vehicle for sustained development. Consequently, the interviewee is in the best position to evaluate the situation SDGs in Osun State, for the purpose of this study.

Question 2: What is the state of SDGs in Osun State, Nigeria?

Response 2: Osun State government currently adopts goals 3 (good health and well-being) and 4 (quality education).

The Osun State government has given priority to two of the goals in the sustainable development agenda in a bid to concentrate its effort and achieve much on the adopted goals. It means that the State government will strive to provide good access to health care and quality education for its citizens. This is in agreement with Igbinovia (2016) institutions should adopt those goals that can be well-managed through concentrated efforts for success. The adoption of some others could be for a certain period of time after which other goals can be adopted. However, adopting some goals does not mean that nothing will be done at all on other areas but that concentrated efforts, policies and programmes will be carried out on the adopted areas, and achievements in those areas will be measured by SDGs indices to ascertain global acceptable performance on adopted areas.

Probing question 2.1: What has been done towards achieving goal 3?

Response 2.1: Towards achieving goal 3 which is on Good Health

- Osun State intends and is providing Primary healthcare for every Ward in the state. Even though it has the highest amount of Public Health Care centers in Nigeria

- Since SDG structures are built to be lifelong; the community leader, Health care board and community ownership of health facilities are emphasized.

With the provision of health care in every Ward in the State, citizens of the State will have health facilitates easily accessible to them regardless of their location. The citizens do not have to travel very long distance in a bid to access health care facilities or meet with medical personnel. Also, the health centers are built to be inclusive, accessible to everyone regardless of physical conditions.

Probing question 2.2: What has been done towards achieving goal 4?

Osun State government after it'sinauguration, decided to build modern school buildings and equip it with modern facilities. To achieve the above, the government divided the existing Primary and Secondary Education programme. The educational system is as seen in the Table 1 below:

Table 1: Educational system and its implications

Old System	New System	Implication
Primary	Elementary	Closer to homes
Junior Secondary	Middle	A bit closer to homes
Senior Secondary School	High School	Farther from homes

The Osun State government recognizes that its efforts to achieve goal 4 of the SDGs which is access to quality education for all, without provision of modern information recourses powered by Information Communication Technology may be impossible. Hence, the government decided to adopt the under listed measures and policies towards achieving quality education:

i.   In all the new structure design for built for all the Elementary, Middle, High School, provision was made for a functional library to serve students and staff.

ii.   Provision of electronic tablets (OponImon) to high school students across the state of Osun

iii.   The information resources in the tablets (OponImon) are updated regularly,

iv.   Partnership with Macmillan for rights to own books in the tables (oponImon). The partnership ensured that all the information resources a student will need is provided in the tablets before it is given to students.

v.   The tablets (OponImon) are equipped with software to prevent the installation of Pornography, music videos, home videos etc. There was a case of students who took the tablets to Lagos to unlock and installed rubbish video; he was prosecuted at the law courts to serve as deterrent to others. Facts on this case are available online.

vi.   Students are expected to drop the tablets to the school management when graduating, for onward transmission to new students moving to the SSS classes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study was carried out to ascertain the state of Osun State with regards to the actualization of SDGs. The study concludes that for countries like Nigeria to fully or remarkably achieve SDGs; the various States that constitute the country must contribute their quota to the agenda. Osun State through her government initiatives has adopted goals 3 and 4 in actualizing the development framework. This will enable them to focus their resources on their areas of choice to yield visible and excellent results. However, there seem to be no written policies known to the general public that devote the State government's resources to the achievement of these adopted goals. It has implication on the public acceptance of these development agenda, smooth

implementation of programmes geared towards sustainable development among others. Though the Osun State government has a portfolio for office of the Special Adviser to the Governor on SDGs, there is no task force dedicated to the comprehensive actualization of programmes geared towards SDGs.

In view of the study's conclusion, the authors recommend the following:

i.   State governments should provide policies that support the realization of SDGs in their State. Implementing development plans is usually more successful when there is a policy or strategy to guide such implementation. SDGs policy does not seem to be in unquestionable existence in Osun State alike other States in Nigeria, which calls for further investigation.

ii. There should be a special task force in each State assigned to enforce and monitor the appropriation of SDGs. Even where there are policies to guide a course of action, there is the need to focus all resources towards their implementation. Task force can be set up to follow up on the actualization of SDGs and the citizens' reaction to development strides.

iii. Other State governments in Nigeria should adopt a few goals they can manage within a set period of time and see to its actualisation before adopting new ones. This will enable concentrated effort that could yield more results than a general attempt on all goals. However, what other states are doing with regards to actualization of SDGs in their States is open to scholarly investigation.

iv. The Federal government should create an enabling environment for the States to adopt and actualize the development framework. Certain Federal laws have the potency to hinder the pace of State's development. On this premise, the Federal government

should provide adequate political environment capable of stimulating development at the State levels. Also, the Federal laws binding States should take into cognizance the need for State government to freely employ mechanisms in achieving SDGs. However, the situation of things on this regard is yet to be ascertain and cries for further investigation.

v. Federal and State governments should allow their annual budgeting and fiscal policy to reflect their commitment to the actualization of SDGs. The developmental focus of every government is usually reflected in the pattern of their budget. What the government prioritize will often times receive more financial attention. To this end, government should define their adopted goals and adjust their budget accordingly.

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