

## INDIGENEOUS PEOPLE, MULTICULTURALISM AND INCLUSIVENESS IN PORTHARCOURT CITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

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### ***Abstract***

*Despite efforts to promote sustainable development planning, programmes and projects in Nigeria, the process has achieved little success due to certain limitations. There have been cases of abandoned projects, vandalism, theft, corrupt and fraudulent practices, but the significant of it all is the neglect of indigenous people, multiculturalism and non-inclusiveness in development planning. It has been observed that the development of Port Harcourt City is limited to few ethnic groups located within the State capital. This has initiated a pause in the pace of development in the city due to inequality, ethnic interest, injustice, and under-development of many areas. Most operating firms are foreign and their interests are centered at making profits and not developing indigenous people and their environment. There is reduction in human capacity building and, lack of acquisition of new skills among the people. The State development plans and execution lacked participation of other natives within the State. In an attempt to addressing development planning issues, this paper buttressed the fact that Port Harcourt City can go a long way in promoting development planning by adopting indigenous people, multiculturalism and inclusiveness in Port Harcourt City development planning. The paper, therefore, focused on conceptual analysis of multiculturalism, indigenous people and development, through inclusiveness approaches to solve challenges of development in Nigeria. The paper suggested amongst others that the people should identify sustainable development programmes and projects and promote them through multiculturalism and inclusiveness of indigenous people.*

**Keywords:** *Development, Multiculturalism, Indigenous People, Inclusiveness and Planning*

### **Introduction**

Development as part of human existence is an essential element of life. Starting from

the biological, psychological, physical aspects of development, man has recognized development as a way of life in

order to actualize desired goals. Scholars have viewed and described development from different perspectives, as it suits their disciplines or professions. Theories do not provide a comprehensive explanation of development as “development”. For Example, development does not refer to one particular perspective on social, political and economic betterment. Instead, it is a hybrid term for a myriad of strategies adopted for socio-economic and environmental transformation from current states to desired ones, (Pearson in Abuiyada, 2018). An economist would see development in terms of increase in the Gross National Product (GNP), Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and per Capita income of individuals in the system, the political scientist would view it as improvement on political consciousness of the people and improved government structure, the environmentalist would see the term development as improvement and welfare of the totality of the physical and natural environment. To the psychologist, development implies mental and physical growth of an individual, to the adult educators, development is viewed in terms of improvement in the life and living standard of the people and their community, (Oyebamiji & Adekola, 2008). However, it is worthy to note that any development without planning to integrate all factors and actors of development will leave such development efforts unsustainable. This buttress the fact that the place of proper planning and inclusiveness of indigenous people and multiculturalism in development cannot be over emphasized in urban areas.

Planning is one of the basic principles of administration and about the most critical of its functions since it permeates all others. Development planning, therefore, becomes a necessary tool used by many governments, organizations and communities to set their visions, missions, goals, and means of realizing development through effective direction and control. Development planning has been a consistent phenomenon in Nigerian administration since 1946. Obikeze and Obi (2004) however, argued that it has not been as successful as expected. Truly, Nigeria remains an underdeveloped nation occupying a low position among the poorest countries of the world in spite of her tremendous natural and human resource endowments. This points to a distorted planning regime and implies two things; either the correct plan had not always been made or correct plans made were not effectively implemented. Both options seem to be true of Nigeria (Obikeze & Obi, 2004). Most development programmes are designed and implemented without giving attention to the exact needs of the grassroots people. Based on this backdrop, there is an urgent need for indigenous people, multiculturalism and inclusiveness in Port Harcourt City development planning. This can be a means to an end in development of the two Local Government Areas; Obio-Akpor and Port Harcourt City Local Government Areas in Port Harcourt City. These Local Government Areas could be developed beyond its current state if the relevant authorities will recognize indigenous people, multiculturalism along with their needs, experiences, expertise,

participation as well as recognizing and respecting the cultures (Totem and customs) and so on in the process of development planning. This will also go a long way in promoting and achieving all round development plans, reducing vandalism of public properties, unemployment, theft, economic melt-down and lack of interest or will.

This paper focused and discussed the following: concept of development, concept of multiculturalism, indigenous people and development, development planning in Nigeria, overview of challenges of development in Nigeria and suggestions as the way forward.

### **Development**

The term “development” has various meanings to different people and can be explained in different contexts. Balogun, Kobani and Alozie (2019) noted that development is concerned with change but it is not simply the same as change. They noted further that development is concerned with those progressive changes which are rooted in, and sprang out of previous situations. This means that development is not making everything new but new emerging from the old. Development and man integrate and compliment one another, man needs development and vice versa. This view is likely derived from the opinion of Nyerere in Kobani and Alozie (2019) who maintained that Development is for man, by man and of man.

Seers in Abuiyada (2018) asserted that development means the conditions for realization of the human personality. Its evaluation must, therefore, take into account three linked criteria: where there

has been a reduction in poverty, unemployment and inequality. The term development has been narrowed to sky scrapers, bridges and fly-overs, roadsets. On this notion, Akinpelu in Kobani and Alozie (2019) noted that development is of man rather than of infrastructures and public works, supermarkets, sky scrapers and highways, though these could be regarded as indices. Seers in Abuiyada (2018) further opined that development should be seen as a progress towards complex goals such as the elimination of poverty, the provision of employment, the reduction of inequality and the guarantee of human rights. Furthermore, Balogun (2002) agreed with this view when he said that the emphasis of development is on the people; as they are thought to appreciate what constitutes change. From the above, development should be centered on the people hosting the development programme or project, as they are to identify the most felt-needs and they participate in the planning, mobilizing, executing, monitoring and evaluation stages of the development. The quality of any development initiative is a reflection of the quality of the initiator(s) of such initiative and therefore, the people are the ones who wear the shoes know where they pinch the most (Oyebamiji and Adekola, 2008).

### **Concept of Multiculturalism**

Multiculturalism represents a major issue of political and intellectual discourse. It is considered a new model for societies whose populations have become multi-ethnic through immigration. Multiculturalism is a dominating theory in Canada because Canada is characterized

by immigration. Multiculturalism also encourages integration and this means that the minority groups are able to retain their home culture and ethnic community as immigrants in another environment. “Multiculturalism” became a discourse in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when both Australia and Canada began to declare their support for it. One of multicultural society’s merits is that societies which host several nationalities and ethnicities can live together free from ethnic and religious conflict. Canada, for example, manages to allow people from different nationalities to live side by side with no religious or ethnic conflict. The best definition of multiculturalism is: The belief that all citizens are equal. Cultural differences make a large contribution to unity and multiculturalism celebrates that contribution. Multiculturalism also ensures that all citizens can maintain their identities, take pride in their ancestry, and have a sense of belonging (Canadian Heritage Leaflet, 2008). This is a merit in a multicultural society because this requires retaining elements of ethnic community and home culture which is an important vehicle of integration. In this regard, multiculturalism simply means the acceptance of the others including his/ her ethnic beliefs and cultures and paves the way for a complete abolition of racial qualifications. In the light of these considerations, multiculturalism encompasses democratic principles such as equity, equality, freedom, social justice, and human dignity. Some scholars defined multiculturalism in terms of pluralism of racial and ethnic groups (e.g. Fowers & Richardson; Watson, 2002). Others have

argued that the meaning of multiculturalism is beyond pluralism and includes the desire to create new social realities from marginalized minority groups. Multiculturalism promotes social justice, equal access, and opportunities for minorities and other oppressed groups. Multiculturalism is based on the idea of cultural pluralism and is based on the notion of equality among all groups and respect for cultural diversity. The practice of multiculturalism will create a sense of ownership in the development planning of Port Harcourt City, as well as dispel poor assumptions, promote dialogue, increase access to ideas, good economic move, good national security move, and accommodate ‘diverse’ interests. The idea is that society as a whole benefits from increased diversity through the harmonious co-existence of different cultures.

### **Indigenization**

The word ‘indigenization’ is derived from the root word ‘indigene’ which means ‘native’ or ‘local’: that is not alien or foreign. In this sense, indigenization implies making an idea, practice or otherwise, native or localized: that is, adapted to the domestic environment and making use of local resources for programmes, projects and development initiatives. Indigenization is the act of making something more native, transformation of some service, idea, etc. to suit a local culture, especially through the use of more indigenous people in public administration, employment and development planning (Law, 2014). Thus, culture, politics, religion, economy or otherwise could be indigenized. In this

regard, our concern is to clarify what 'indigenization' means. According to Etuk (2005), indigenization is defined as the strategic handing over of the ownership and control of productive forces, once in the hands of foreign expatriates, to the indigenous elements, often petty local entrepreneurs. Thus, when the means of production and development planning of a nation is in the hands of its citizens, and not foreigners with colonizing outlay, it is safe to say such development is indigenized.

Indigenization policy is a deliberate government policy aimed at replacing foreign investors and personnel in certain industries with indigenes or the natives of a country that is, excluding foreign participation and resources in certain productive activities. This is different from nationalization which means taking over the ownership of an organization usually owned by a foreigner or foreigners. With nationalization foreigners could still be employed in the firm involved but with indigenization, the natives become the only personnel both in administrative and subordinate capacities, that is, indigenes become the only participants in certain economic and development ventures (Law, 2014). This implies the effective use of local resources and considering the realities of the environment in development planning processes.

### **Indigenous People and Development**

Indigenous peoples are distinct social and cultural groups that share collective ancestral ties to the lands and natural resources where they live, occupy or from which they have been displaced. The land and natural resources on which they

depend are inextricably linked to their identities, cultures, livelihoods, as well as their physical and spiritual well-being. They often subscribe to their customary leaders and organizations for representation that is distinct or separate from those of the mainstream society or culture. Many indigenous peoples still maintain a language distinct from the official language or languages of the country or region in which they reside.

According to World Bank (2016) there are between 370 and 500 million indigenous peoples worldwide, in over 90 countries. Although, they make up just 5 percent of the global population, they account for about 15 percent of the extreme poor. Indigenous peoples' life expectancy is up to 20 years lower than the life expectancy of non-indigenous people worldwide.

Indigenous peoples often lack formal recognition over their lands, territories and natural resources, and are often last to receive public investments in basic services and infrastructure, and face multiple barriers to participate fully in the development planning, formal economy, enjoy access to justice, and in political processes and decision making (World Bank, 2016). This legacy of inequality and exclusion has made indigenous communities more vulnerable to under development, use of substandard materials, equipment and facilities such as schools, health care centers etc.

World Bank (2016) further stated that indigenous peoples own, occupy, or use a quarter of the world's surface area; they safeguard 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity. They hold vital

ancestral knowledge and expertise on how to adapt, mitigate, and reduce climate and disaster risks (Amirize & Kobani, 2020). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an opportunity to work through the traditional authorities and healers of indigenous peoples to provide accurate information on disease prevention, distribute protective gear and hygiene supplies, and support traditional medicine, livelihoods and recovery in ways that are appropriate to their priorities and cultures.

Port Harcourt City is the capital of Rivers State which is the sixth-largest geographic area in Nigeria according to 2006 census data. The State has an indigenously diverse population with major riverine and upland divisions. The dominant ethnic groups are: Ogoni, Ijaw and Ikwerre.

Upland Rivers State covering about 45% is composed mainly of Ogoni and Ikwerre, although there are many other minority people in the region. The riverine, including most of the towns and villages surrounded by water is moderately inhabited. It covers approximately 39% of the total land mass and holds a significant Ijaw population. There are also various autonomous ethnic groups residing within Rivers State's boundaries in addition to its upland and riverine areas. These areas include Abua, Asa Andoni, Babbe, Bille, Bolo, Degema, Ekpeye, Eleme, Engenni, Etche, Gokana, Ibani, Ikwerre, Igbo, Kalabari, Khana, Kula, Ndoni, Nkoro, Nkoroo, Ndoki, Ogba, Ogu, Egbema, Okrika and Saro.

The development of Port Harcourt City will be more sustainable once there is inclusiveness of all these ethnic groups

into the development planning processes. According to World Bank (2016) over the last 20 years, indigenous peoples' rights have been increasingly recognized through the adoption of international instruments and mechanisms, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007, the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2016, 23 ratifications of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Convention from 1991, the establishment of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' (EMRIP), and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' (UNSR). In essence, there can never be any form of sustainable development when the indigenous people that have direct contact with development programmes and projects do not feel a sense of belonging and ownership of such development programmes/projects. This brings to bear that the involvement of indigenous people and their culture in all phases of development cannot be overemphasized if sustainability is the goal.

### **Development Planning in Nigeria**

To have a comprehensive understanding of development planning, it will be most appropriate to define the concepts of development and that of planning separately. Development is concerned with change but it is not simply the same as change. They noted further that development is concerned with those progressive changes which are rooted in, and sprang out of previous situations. This means that development is not making

everything new but the new emerging from the old (Balogun in Kobani & Alozie, 2019).

Planning in its simplest sense refers to decisions one intends to put into action. It is a process of organizing ourselves to perform a better job, to use our resources in a better manner, to use our time in a more fulfilling way and to think of the future beforehand. It is also a process of making decisions regarding what should be done, when these things should be done (Kobani & Alozie, 2019). Onyeozu (2007) stated that planning implies a purposeful attempt to determine in advance the most effective and judicious use of time, finance, and resources in the process of executing a project so as to achieve desired results and avoid unwanted effects. In the words of Ejumudo (2008), planning is as old as mankind and it has been undertaken in all facets of human endeavour, it includes warfare, politics, administration and social spheres. It is worthy of note that planning has become much popular the world over and almost every society has embraced planning as it has been seen as a means to an end, and the improvement in all aspects of human activity. In the words of Iheanacho (2014), without planning, the activities of organizations, institutions, societies and nations may well become a series of random actions without meaningful objectives. Development planning is about coming up with well-researched and well-reasoned plans that prioritize and synchronize activities, giving the scarce resources at disposal. Kobani and Alozie (2019) viewed development planning as a procedure of people working

together in an effort to recognize unsatisfactory situations or problems and to determine possible solutions or objectives and goals, in this case, indigenous people's needs.

The Nigeria Vision 20:2020 expresses the aspiration for Nigeria to become one of the top 20 economies in the world by 2020. Attainment of the Vision would enable the country to achieve a high standard of living for its citizens. It was developed by Nigerians for the Nigerian people and involved a process of thorough engagement with all stakeholders across all levels of government and society. The vision was pursued through a series of three/four years plans which will further articulate strategies, policies, projects and programmes. Between 2003 and 2007, another ambitious plan was introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria, and it was known as The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). The NEEDS programme was replicated in the States as (SEEDS) and that of the Local Governments as (LEEDS). This was a medium-term plan and its focus was wealth creation, employment, poverty reduction and national value re-orientation (Iheanacho, 2014).

Port Harcourt was formally established in 1912 under British rule. The city was planned and land use controls were established, as per the British system of town and country planning to manage the urban composition and its growth. City planning entailed the establishment of a central business district that for the most part housed commercial and institutional uses, surrounded by homogenous

residential areas and suburbs. Provision was made for open spaces and parks, little of which still remains today, but, which together with the tree-lined Arterial routes, earned Port Harcourt the status of 'Garden City'. In time, Port Harcourt grew into a major city, accommodating roughly 195,000 people by the 1960s.

Then came Independence and 30 years of military rule, which brought with it serious instability. During this time, there was no regard for planning and formal development, and nearly all established planning procedures, systems and structures were abandoned. However, at this time, crude oil was discovered, which resulted in major population influx into the city, despite volatile governance.

The planning philosophy of the firm engaged for Greater Port Harcourt adopted a blend of Principles, which came from 19<sup>th</sup> Century Garden City planning and 20<sup>th</sup> Century New Urbanism and Sustainability. They argued that the principles of Garden City in England of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Urbanism of 20<sup>th</sup> century are workable syntheses for the Regeneration of Port Harcourt. It appears that from inception up to about 40 years ago, Port Harcourt was a well-developed and well-managed Port City that boasted of good infrastructure and service delivery, low densities, well kept open spaces and parks, a formal CBD and a well-defined Institutional precinct. The City had status and was visually attractive to the extent that it was known as the Garden City of Nigeria, but it is arguable whether such an appellation still fits its present state.

The ways some urban features disconnect are apparent for Port Harcourt, so it is a generally held opinion of a need to reinstate values that can uphold the former status, create good and healthy living environment, and achieve sustainability and plan for the future. The objective of the Urban Design Framework is to create a new and exciting urban environment where citizens feel safe, their lifestyle is uplifted and investments are protected through the application of known urban design principles (Ede, Owei & Akarolo, 2008).

The Territory of Rivers State of Nigeria where the City of Port Harcourt is situated comprises 23 LGAs, while the City of Port Harcourt, i.e. Greater Port Harcourt, extends to over 8 of them. These 8 LGAs are: Port Harcourt LGA, the most Southern LGA; Oyigbo, Eleme, Okrika and Ogu-Bolo LGAs situated to the east and south of the CBD; Obio/Akpor directly to the north of Port Harcourt LGA; Ikwerre LGA to the north-west of Obio/Akpor LGA; and Etche LGA to the North-east which includes the Otamiri-Etche River. Greater Port Harcourt does not completely enclose all eight areas. In most instances, only sections or fractions of the LGAs form part of the urban agglomeration which is known as Greater Port Harcourt. Large portions within will remain undeveloped due to a number of factors such as natural and physical constraints (like excessively pounded places), retention of existing settlements in the outskirts of the old city, large infrastructure like, the refinery-petrochemical complexes, Airports, etc. Limited habitat space, poor town planning

and urban management, and lack of flood and erosion policy and its implementation, have resulted in many structures being built within flood prone areas, while other structures have been built in storm water discharge area (Greater Port Harcourt Master Plan, 2008).

The consequence is that many houses are located in unsafe areas, which is of Great concern. Flooding in the City is a common occurrence; a minor rainfall event causes major flooding problems around the city. It should be noted that flooding is not caused by the overflowing of rivers and creeks, but by rain falling on the impervious surface of the urban terrain. The Master Plan proposes a storm water master plan to manage flooding in the city using rivers as primary drainage channels.

### **Overview of Challenges of Development in Nigeria**

While Nigeria has made some progress in socio-economic terms in recent years, its human capital development ranked 150 of 157 countries in the World Bank's 2020 Human Capital Index. The country continues to face massive developmental challenges, including the need to reduce the dependency on oil and diversify the economy, address insufficient infrastructure, build strong and effective Institutions, as well as address governance issues and public financial management systems. Inequality, in terms of income and opportunities, remains high and has adversely affected poverty reduction. The lack of job opportunities is at the core of the high poverty levels, regional inequality, and social and political unrest. High inflation has also taken a toll on household's welfare and high prices in

2021 are likely to have pushed an additional 7 million Nigerians into poverty in 2022 (World Bank, 2020).

Makinde (2005) maintained that the imposition of policies on citizens of a nation, lack of adequate human resources or capital to implement these plans/policies, corruption and lack of credible leadership are the major challenges to Nigeria's development. Most national development problems in Nigeria arise as a result of poor implementation of policies and subsequently lack of adequate and reliable human resources. Makinde (2005) further stated that most policies of developing nations are imposed on the masses. The policies are made by the Government without considering the target population; as such, the Natives are not given the opportunity to contribute in the formulation of policies that concern their wellbeing. In addition, there are no human resources or capital to implement these plans as a result of the low quality of human development in the country. Records from United Nations Development Programme 2014 report revealed that Nigeria ranked number 152 Out of 187 countries in Human development, which is average quality of life and standard of living. The report puts Nigeria's Human Development Index at 0.381 which is below the prescribed level. Thus, in such instances, there is absence of continuity in policies when the tenures of specific Governments come to an end. Makinde (2005) also pointed out that, although corruption is a global issue, Nigeria as a country is caught in its web. Often times, funds which are set aside for implementing policies are usually

siphoned to the detriment of the Natives meant to benefit from such projects. In addition, lack of credible leadership which can recognize and articulate the specific needs of the people also poses a challenge to development.

For the rural dwellers, any change or policy which would dispossess them of their ancestral land is looked upon with suspicion and resistance, unless they are convinced that such a change would be in their best interest. The exploitative nature of the Nigerian economy coupled with glaring insecurity and abuses in the political system make a collective mobilization of the masses towards noble endeavours quite difficult. The Nigerian school system reflects and is affected by all plights of the nation, namely: corrupt practices, disregard for merit and productivity; unhealthy scrambles, abuse of power and position and wastage of resources, etc (Kobani, 2014).

Dike (2010) also stressed the fact that leadership has become a bane to development in Nigeria. To him, most of the so called leaders do not actually understand that leadership entails assuming responsibilities for certain important issues. Poor governance on the part of the leaders has also resulted to inappropriate checks and balances and mechanisms to regulate the affairs of Government officials and institutions. As such, politics is seen as a “do or die” affair, while ethical politics is relegated to the background. So it must be concluded that when a leader assumes the mantle of leadership, it does not mean that he is the most intelligent. Therefore, the ideal leader should be ready to accept

constructive criticisms to improve his leadership skills (Kobani, 2022).

### **Inclusiveness**

Inclusiveness is the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those having physical or mental disabilities or belonging to other minority groups. Inclusive development argues that perverse growth may lead to the exclusion of some people, the concentration of wealth, and segmented labour markets. Rather than focusing on economic growth, it calls for direct democracy (the exercise of civil, civic and political rights) and the distribution of amenities (e.g., education, infrastructure, etc) with a view to enabling participation by all in these amenities. Inclusive wealth shifts attention from flows (income) to the reproducible stocks in society - human and natural capital, population, institutions and time (United Nations, 2012). Inclusive development, includes taking account of the needs of the poorest; either as part of the electorate in a democratic state or as the fundamental logic and justification of a Communist state. Rising inequalities might threaten the possibility of continuous growth and well-being and may further lead to the exploitation of the resource base.

Gupta (2014) ascribed ten elements to the term ‘inclusive.’

1. A focus on the most marginalized in society (the poor, vulnerable, disadvantaged, women, elderly) in a non-discriminatory manner and with the aim of reducing inequalities.

2. A focus on sectors and areas of exclusion - for example, promoting urbanization hubs in per urban areas that generate jobs or investment in employment opportunities in rural areas, supported by rural infrastructure.
3. Equal opportunities for participation.
4. Building on local and indigenous knowledge.
5. Redistributing social benefits including roads, electricity, health care and education.
6. Context specificity.
7. The understanding that providing opportunities is not enough for the most marginalized who may not be able to avail any of these opportunities without some targeted capacity building.
8. Rearranging existing power relations, going beyond a merely technocratic approach.
9. The recognition of customary and/or traditional rights (e.g., through legal pluralism).
10. Stimulating the self-help options of the poorest.

Inclusiveness is a process which allows community members, including persons with disabilities, to express their needs and to decide their own future in terms of empowerment, ownership and sustainability. It recognizes the importance of the needs of persons with disabilities, low income, women unions, etc. It seeks to understand the community's concerns and priorities, mobilizing persons with disabilities and other community members, and engaging them in activities and programmes. Persons with disabilities

and other community members define, plan and implement activities and programmes related to their own future. They manage the resources available to them. The focus is on helping people in the rural area and other community members organize themselves to solve their own problems by participation. The Government and multinationals role is to include the rural communities in building, rebuilding or strengthening the community's capacities to solve their own problems.

An inclusive community values all its members and helps them to meet their basic needs so that they can live with dignity, engage actively, and contribute to their community.

Inclusive communities are welcoming to diverse groups of people, including, but not limited to seniors, youth, children, aboriginal peoples, immigrants and newcomers, persons with disabilities, and low-income populations. Social inclusion can impact both the physical and mental health of community members, affecting their life expectancy, infant mortality rate, etc.

### **Approaches for Inclusiveness**

The term inclusiveness connotes citizen participation, which involves the inclusion of every group of a community, ethnicity, and multiculturalism in the decision making process. This may be through a table or town hall meeting involving all stakeholders (youths, opinion leaders, women, persons with disabilities etc) to discuss the pressing challenges of the people. Identification of felt needs means every community has one form of challenge or the other. That is why the

quest for solution will always thrive; the awareness of a particular need of the community will suggest possible solutions. Planning process is the process of collaborating with all sectors and designing steps in achieving development execution. Here, is the implementation of the project, bringing it into life/reality. Monitoring involves on the project monitoring and after the project. Evaluation is ascertaining if the executed project is going as planned, it is to be done in every stage of the project execution and usage. The essence of every development project is for the beneficiaries to make adequate use of the project. This is only appreciated when there is active inclusiveness of the beneficiaries of the community development projects. Once there is no form of inclusiveness of the indigenous people and multiculturalism in the development planning, the result will be vandalism, sit and look attitude, etc.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs UNDESA (2021) cited the 1995 World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) in Copenhagen, the assembled world leaders called for fostering stable, safe and just societies where everyone would have equal rights and can grow with access to services to contribute to the fullest of their potentials. The World Summit endorsed a coherent people-centered approach to development, noting the importance of social integration as the key to creating a society for all, that actively supports eradicating poverty and generating productive employment for all. A 'Society for all' is the goal of such a declaration where all individuals with their rights and

responsibilities have an active role to play in the functioning of the Government and society they live in. Social integration was rightly identified as the underlying condition to enable societies and individuals living therein to fully participate in all the activities in all the domains of life, be they political, economic, and cultural and all other areas, (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDESA, 2021). To encourage and ensure inclusive planning, support is needed in outlining the elements of inclusivity and how that can be linked with standard planning steps and process. The following items may be a starting point to establish the settings for initiating inclusive planning in the development of Port Harcourt City.

### **Embracing Inclusive Planning as the Vision and Strategy of Planning**

Most country level major planning documents are: Five Year National Plans, longer term perspective plans and UN documents like UNDAF and UN Country Plans choose one or more major higher level objective as the overarching goal for the plan period. Usually, such higher and overarching objectives set the tone of the planning document. For example, the title of India's 11th Five Year Plan (2007-2012) reads as "Towards a Faster and Inclusive Growth". In the approach paper of the plan (Government of India 2006), Inclusive growth is restated prominently in the vision for the plan that notes that the plan "provides an opportunity to restructure policies to achieve a new vision based on faster, broad based and inclusive growth".

By inclusive growth, the plan refers to an all out effort to increase the access of basic social services to the masses (presumably the left-outs included) not only as a welfare measure but as a strong justification for robust growth in the long run. Government of India (2006) said the second reference it makes is to ensure weaker and vulnerable sections of the population like the elderly, disabled, adolescent girls and children under three and “primitive tribal groups” and others whose interests are not always strongly lobbied receive adequate attention. These pronouncements in the first chapter of the Five Year Plan set the tone for the planning objectives and hopefully reflect in the investment and outlays.

### **Identifying the Social Groups and Weaker Sections**

Social Inclusion refers to the process that enables equal opportunities for everyone regardless of background. It is not confined to economic opportunities only but transcends to all aspects of human life to ensure individuals can realize the full potentials of their life. This is particularly important for vulnerable groups and weaker sections in society. Therefore, it is important to have identification of the groups and data for youth, disabled, older people, indigenous people and groups in country context (like disadvantaged castes, ethnic minorities etc.). They are significant proportion of the total population but their profile is largely invisible.

### **Characteristics of Social Groups and Weaker Sections**

Demographic, socio-economic and community participation in political

process and social/community activities among others are important issues for understanding the group’s status and role, which in turn is critical in ascertaining how to integrate them in mainstream development activities. Qualitative studies, Situation Analysis, variety of micro level case studies, stakeholders’ consultation records in addition to census and others survey studies can provide comprehensive data and information on these areas for the government and the UN Country Team.

### **Analyzing the Current Legal and Regulatory Environment**

Although social exclusion is often repudiated and rights of all citizens are usually proclaimed in no uncertain terms in all constitutions, inclusion of all in the political process and every one’s participation in the economic sphere is by no means assured through these constitutional guarantees. Appropriate examination of the legal and regulatory framework is, therefore, required to ensure there are no structural impediments for the usually excluded groups. For planning purposes, it is important that both the Government and UN System analyze the existing legal and policy instruments to ensure that planning for all can be carried out without legal or regulatory hindrances and appropriate policy support is present to support inclusive planning.

### **Promoting Participatory Methods in Policy Development and Planning**

It is important to examine the practice of participatory methods in national/regional policy making and planning exercises. If there are precedents of employing

participatory methods then the chances of inclusive policy making and planning may not be a distant dream, although for various reasons cited earlier, it is by no means an automatic process, especially as it concerns less visible vulnerable groups.

### **Focusing the Social Groups and Weaker Sections within the Planning Resource Envelope**

Usually overriding priorities in the planning process include poverty reduction, eradication of hunger and malnutrition, reduction of mortality for children, women, education for all and such other SDG related and other global commitments. While most vulnerable social groups are poor and suffer from all other related deprivations, they are usually not thought of in devising the target and thus receive no allocations either. This needs resource envelope in order to initiate inclusive planning for all. Targeting programmes are useful but not necessarily the only measure to ensure weaker sections receive the attention. The danger, however, is by just including a few token targeted programmes for the vulnerable groups the responsibility of inclusive planning cannot be thought to be complete and such approach may actually harm the process more. Therefore, by adopting inclusive planning in the strategic objective upfront by mainstreaming their concerns is important which can be strengthened by allowing standalone initiatives for the vulnerable groups.

### **Concerns for the Excluded in Planning Assumptions**

There is the need to ensure concerns for the vulnerable social groups are duly included in the major planning assumptions

at national and sub-national levels. This may refer to intra-regional differences, disparities as well as opportunities; government and other implementing agency's capacity to plan, monitor and evaluate programmes; availability of resources (both financial and human) to implement programmes for the group; risks of not undertaking such programmes and inter alia their implementation if undertaken at all levels. This would translate into taking cognizance of vulnerable groups' distribution in the country, impact of all new programmes upon them, risks of not ensuring their mainstreaming including possible impact on SDGs progress etc.

### **Align Concerns of Social Groups to National Targets**

The concerns of the vulnerable social groups should be align to the national goals and targets, particularly, in line with global commitments and goals, e.g., Copenhagen Declaration, SDGs, ratification of global conventions on disability, non-discrimination, and rights of elderly people, indigenous people and youths. This is particularly important because while aggregate progress on key indicators, this can still mar the intra-regional, intra social group disparities which will negate overall national progress.

### **Establishing a Monitoring System that goes beyond aggregates**

It is important to establish a monitoring system with key results and appropriate indicators reflecting the concerns of vulnerable groups as well as ensuring inclusiveness is mainstreamed and clearly specifying time frame and responsible

parties to follow-up on the planning outputs.

### Conclusion

Development as earlier stated remains a basic drive of any system. It involves coming from the inside to the outside, and it involves human being and their existence. Indigenous People should be prepared by developing their capacities to fit into development opportunities. In 2007 the government of Rivers State, Nigeria contracted a South African firm to produce a master plan for a new city called Greater Port Harcourt to be situated in the outskirts of the old city. This development plan would have achieved tremendous success if it was contracted to a capable indigenous firm or indigenous people were trained by experts on the plan and execution. Thus, there is a need for government and multinationals to consider indigenous people, multiculturalism and inclusiveness in future development planning of Port Harcourt City.

### Suggestions

The following are suggestions that can further help indigenous people, multiculturalism and inclusiveness in future development planning of Port Harcourt City:

1. The Government of Rivers State should encourage indigenous people, multiculturalism and inclusiveness in identifying sustainable development programmes and projects in Port Harcourt City.
2. The State Government and multinationals should consider indigenous people in development planning and execution in Port Harcourt City.

3. Rivers State Governments should harness multiculturalism to promote sustainable development planning and execution of project in Port Harcourt City.
4. Rivers State Government should include the needs, experiences, expertise and participation of the indigenous people in the development planning of Port Harcourt City.
5. Rivers State Government should create training opportunities and skills acquisitions to enable indigenous people participate fully in the development planning of Port Harcourt City.

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