

Discourse on Western Development Plans in Post-Colonial British West Africa

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Abstract:

This scholarly discourse seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Western Development Plan that was executed in British West Africa during the post-colonial era. Academics have examined the portrayal of the British colonial government from different viewpoints and perspectives. Distinguished African academics have thoroughly examined this topic from an angle of self-interest, whereas highly regarded European scholars have analysed it from the standpoint of imperialism. The connections and affiliations between African states and their European counterparts have negatively affected their economic sustainability and cultural cohesion. Therefore, it is indisputable that the economies of post-colonial Africa are primarily shaped by the enduring impacts of their colonial past. The colonial economies were tightly interconnected with the economic systems of their respective metropolitan powers via a range of measures, such as currency manipulation, trade restrictions, and infrastructure expansion. This article provides a thorough review of the development plans created after the attainment of Nigeria's independence with the aim of reporting their effects on the economy and growth of West Africa..

Keywords:

Developmental Plans, Post Colonial, Colonialism, West Africa, Review, Economic History

I. Introduction

Since the attainment of independence, it has been observed that West African States have consistently upheld intimate political and economic associations with their erstwhile colonial powers (Englebert, 2000). During the epoch of colonialism, the colonial administrators adeptly enforced and ingrained their foreign framework and disposition upon the economic matters of West African nations. The financial affairs of West Africa have been subject to distortion to such a degree that, even two decades subsequent to achieving independence, a significant number of African nations find themselves heavily reliant on their former colonial administrators in matters of economic sustenance (Oyewale & Osadola, 2018). The post-colonial African economies are abundantly marked by the enduring imprints of the disparate and exploitative character of colonialism (Kothari, 2005).

One of the most formidable challenges encountered by the recently emancipated nations of West Africa pertained to the arduous endeavour of dismantling the colonial economic framework bequeathed to them. In the context of the colonial economy, it is noteworthy that these states maintained their primary role as suppliers of raw materials to the manufacturing industries of the colonial powers, while simultaneously serving as a receptacle for the disposal of finished products (Osadola, 2012). Once more, it is worth noting that the import and export trade of these states was unequivocally dominated by the prominent trading companies affiliated with the colonial powers (Bush, 2002).

Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that the West African governments have demonstrated a profound cognizance of the multifarious challenges stemming from the underdeveloped state of their economy (Englebort, 2000). Consequently, in the wake of their emancipation from colonial rule, these governments have undertaken resolute initiatives aimed at effectuating a comprehensive economic transformation and augmenting the quality of life within the African independent States. The aforementioned determination serves as a manifestation of the diverse development strategies formulated by a number of African sovereign nations (Falola, 1996: 257).

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Conceptual Clarification

In reference to the scholarly insights of Convey & Hills (1986), National Planning is an enduring and iterative procedure that necessitates the deliberation and selection of various courses of action pertaining to allocating and utilising existing resources. The overarching objective of this process is to attain specific goals within a designated timeframe. The aforementioned concept can be regarded as a methodological approach, serving as a conduit towards a desired outcome, which manifests as the achievement of specific predetermined and clearly articulated goals and objectives, as stipulated by a governing body responsible for strategic planning (Bush, 2002). The ultimate objective may encompass a range of aims, including but not limited to economic, social, political, or military aspirations (Convey & Hills, 1986, p. 3).

The notion of development is inherently subjective and, consequently, encompasses a multitude of interpretations. As posited by Ihonvbere & Falola (1987), the concept of development manifests itself as a multifaceted phenomenon, wherein it can be comprehended as a sequential progression characterised by structural transformation and the accumulation of capital. This progression, in turn, propels a society towards a state wherein the fundamental necessities of its populace are adequately fulfilled (p. 200). According to Mobagunje (1980), the concept of development can be understood as a fundamentally human-centric matter, encompassing the profound ability of individuals to actualize their innate potentials and adeptly navigate the dynamic vicissitudes that permeate their existence (Mabogunge 1980: 45).

The aforementioned perspective was substantiated by Rodney (1972), who espouses a discernment between the conceptions of development in relation to the individual and its broader implications for society. Rodney (1972) elucidates that the process of development, when examined through the lens of the individual, entails a notable augmentation in aptitude and capability, a heightened sense of liberty, an amplification of creativity, the cultivation of self-discipline, the assumption of responsibility, and an improvement in material prosperity (Rodney, 1972: 1) (Kothari, 2005). In his elucidation, Rodney (1972) has additionally discerned the fundamental attributes through which human potentials are evaluated. Nevertheless, the author proceeds to assert that the attainment of any of these facets of human development is intrinsically interconnected with the overall condition of the societal framework. This proposition posits that any given society aspiring to progress would inherently predicate the achievement of said progress upon the fulfilment of these fundamental necessities for its inhabitants (Alidou, 2003).

The concept of a development plan, conversely, has been commonly employed to delineate a diverse array of written or oral declarations pertaining to a government's

overarching and immediate aspirations vis-à-vis the advancement of its nation (Bush, 2002).

In the pursuit of scholarly inquiry, the present investigation delves into the intricacies of development, specifically within the confines of the nation-state. Our focus lies in comprehending the essence of national development plans and their constituent elements. Scholars such as Jhingan (2007) have observed that the concept of a national development plan entails the systematic formulation of strategies aimed at attaining predetermined objectives in the realm of development. The formulation of a region's or nation's development plan typically entails a concomitant consideration of the development of social requisites. The multifaceted nature of national development necessitates a comprehensive approach encompassing various criteria (Osadola et al., 2023). The author posits that the composition of a nation can exhibit significant variations, and that the divergence in the development and content of different nations stems not only from their initial developmental stage, but also from a multitude of factors such as national characteristics, industrial structure, geographical location, economic framework, and numerous other determinants (Odedokun, 2021).

The imperative of strategic planning in less developed nations is further underscored by the imperative of mitigating pervasive unemployment and fostering the cultivation of human capital. In the event of a dearth of enterprise and initiative, it becomes imperative to acknowledge that a centralised planning authority emerges as the sole institution capable of effectively orchestrating the development of the economy (Alidou, 2003).

In order to facilitate expeditious economic progress, it is imperative for underdeveloped nations to prioritise the advancement of both the agricultural and industrial sectors, while concurrently establishing robust social and economic infrastructures (Hopkins, 2019). Additionally, the expansion of domestic and foreign trade sectors must be pursued in a synchronised and cohesive manner, ensuring a harmonious trajectory towards comprehensive development (Soetan & Osadola, 2018). The successful implementation of such a multifaceted endeavour necessitates the concomitant allocation of resources across various sectors, a feat that can only be accomplished through the meticulous orchestration of a comprehensive economic blueprint (Jhingan 2007, 168).

III. Results and Discussion

3.1 Historical Background of British West African Countries

According to Oyewale and Osadola (2018), Africa, a continent of abundant resources encompassing natural, mineral, national, and human assets, possesses the potential to ascend as one of the most advanced regions globally. However, the current state of underdevelopment that pervades the continent is a cause for concern. The underdevelopment of the subject in question can be attributed to its profound entrenchment within the context of its colonial experience. The aforementioned statement elucidates the perspective of the esteemed scholar, Crowder (1976), who posits that the British colonial dominion in West Africa was primarily motivated by economic considerations. Furthermore, any semblance of progress that transpired within the African continent during this epoch was fortuitous rather than premeditated (Crowder, 1976: 167). Henceforth, it is evident that within the present temporal framework, a prevailing inclination persists among recently emancipated African nations to attribute their challenges to the historical phenomenon of colonialism, while concurrently perceiving neo-colonialism as a formidable impediment to their continued progress (Kothari, 2005).

During the nascent stages of colonial governance, a substantial discourse emerged pertaining to the most appropriate form of colonial administration for the effective governance of the West African region. Moreover, an escalating apprehension emerged regarding the manner in which individuals hailing from various backgrounds and cultural heritages could be effectively assimilated to ensure streamlined administrative processes (Williams & Chrisman, 1994). As a result, the British government opted to implement the strategy of indirect rule. The policy, initially implemented within the confines of Northern Nigeria, was introduced under the auspices of Lord Lugard. Indirect rule, while having historical antecedents in India, was primarily influenced by the conviction that Europeans and Africans possessed distinct cultural identities, albeit not inherently unequal, and that the most appropriate governmental structures for the latter were those that they had autonomously fashioned (Crowder, 1976: 168). The inaugural endeavour in the realm of development planning within the context of British West Africa materialised in the form of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945. The ten-year plans, as elucidated by Livingston (1987: 540-543), were characterised by their partial nature, focusing solely on public sector capital expenditure programmes. These programmes primarily aimed to enhance educational, health, transportation, and communication facilities, while concurrently modernising the administrative framework and fortifying agricultural support services.

The inherent deficiencies of this plan become readily apparent upon examination of its temporal scope, particularly considering the fact that it was conceived as an inaugural endeavour by a nation that possessed a limited framework for development (Alidou, 2003). Furthermore, it is noteworthy to highlight that the primary focus was directed towards the realm of transport, which garnered the most substantial allocation of resources. This deliberate allocation aimed to streamline the extraction and subsequent exportation of agricultural commodities, while concurrently fostering the methodical expansion of British merchant enterprises and other commercial interests into the hinterland. In the Nigerian context, it is worth noting that during the year 1946, a substantial proportion of the populace resided in rural localities (Oyewale and Osadola, 2018). However, it is intriguing to observe that the financial resources allocated under the plan exhibited a disproportionate emphasis on the urban hub (Ihonvbere, 1987: 204).

It is of utmost significance to acknowledge that in the aftermath of the Second World War, there materialised two dominant global powers, specifically the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Williams & Chrisman, 1994). This development engendered a novel global paradigm, characterised by the promotion of the fundamental tenets of national self-determination and racial egalitarianism. One notable development that transformed West Africa into a strategically significant staging point for the Allied forces was the establishment of a strong military presence in the region. This military presence facilitated logistical operations and troop movements and served as a launching pad for various strategic initiatives (Kothari, 2005). Moreover, it is worth noting the influential role played by Allied propaganda during this period, which placed a strong emphasis on democratic principles and the universal right of individuals to determine the form of governance under which they wished to live. This propaganda campaign aimed to garner support and rally the local population behind the Allied cause, promoting the ideals of democracy and self-determination. The aforementioned occurrence engendered a notable surge in political consciousness within the nation. Consequently, the policies and practises implemented by the British government were subjected to meticulous examination and vehement censure, as noted by Tamuno (1980: 524). During this particular juncture, the dominant imperial force, namely Britain, had experienced a notable decline in its strength and influence as a direct consequence

of the conflict. Henceforth, it can be posited that African nationalists, employing the mechanism of the mass party and the mass meeting, effectively rouse their complacent populace to fervently advocate for the attainment of self-governance and liberation from colonial rule (Cornwell 1969: 242).

The interplay between internal and external heat factors precipitated the initiation of the decolonization policy by Britain. The process of decolonization undertaken by Britain resulted in the emergence of contemporary nation-states such as Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia. Nigeria, a former British colony, achieved its independence in the year 1960. Similarly, Sierra Leone, another British colony, attained self-governance in 1958 and subsequently gained independence in 1960. The Gambia, yet another British colony, successfully secured its independence in 1965 (Alidou, 2003). Additionally, the British Gold Coast, under the auspices of Britain, was granted the privilege of self-government and, consequently, independence in 1957. It is worth noting that the British Gold Coast assumed the name Ghana upon its attainment of independence (Cornwell 1969: 243).

3.2 The Dilemma of Western Development Models in British West African States

During the colonial period, the economies of West Africa exhibited a significant degree of dependency. This concept is further elucidated by a theoretical framework known as 'dependency theory'. The theory is based on the concept that resources are transferred from economically disadvantaged and underdeveloped states located at the periphery to economically prosperous states situated at the core or centre, resulting in the enrichment of the latter at the detriment of the former (Jhingan 2007, 169). Understanding the fact that the ten-year plan during the colonial era was directed towards the realisation of this objective holds significant importance. Bryce et al. (2010) provide insight into the rationale behind the implementation of the plan. They argue that following the conclusion of the Second World War, the colonial government recognised that intervening in the management of primary and other economic endeavours within the colonies was the sole solution to address the severe scarcity of export crops required by their domestic markets (Williams & Chrisman, 1994).

The aforementioned phenomenon became evident through the actions of the colonial banks, as these institutions sought to establish monopolistic control over the market, thereby disadvantaging the British West African populace. In British West Africa, the banking sector was primarily dominated by two major financial institutions, namely Barclays and the Bank of West Africa. From 1916 to 1960, they exerted significant economic and financial influence over the entirety of British West Africa. According to the perspective of dependency theory, these banks exploited their position by engaging in price fixing and implementing certain unjust regulations (Jhingan, 2007).

Based on the aforementioned premise, it is evident that the plan exhibited minimal intention to foster the economic or overall development of West Africa. There was no indication of a desire to establish inclusive and participatory institutions or a willingness to engage the majority of the population in the process of shaping their lives and society (Alidou, 2003). The conceptualization and implementation of the subject matter exhibited characteristics of being static, elitist, discriminatory, and lacking discipline. The projects showed a lack of interconnectivity and, instead of enhancing the quality of life for individuals, the plan had a detrimental impact on the populace.

Therefore, any assertion suggesting that the British colonial government effectively fostered development in West Africa, either by establishing the groundwork or by achieving tangible progress on behalf of the populace, must be deemed illusory (Englebert, 2000). The

current peripheral role and geographical positioning of the West Africa formation within the global division of labour, the presence of a feeble and predominantly unproductive bourgeoisie, the coexistence of various production models based on capital, the existence of an unstable state, and the generally low living standards can be attributed directly to the colonial planning and policies that have been perpetuated into the present era (Williams & Chrisman, 1994). The West African economy's focus on external markets, lack of technological infrastructure, educational system influenced by neo-colonialism, the brutality of armed and security forces, and the presence of inefficient institutions can all be attributed to the deliberate prioritisation of the metropolis over the colonised population during colonial rule (Ihonvbere, 1987: 205).

West African states achieved independence within the context of this detrimental relationship. Following their attainment of independence, the British West African states were faced with the imperative task of addressing the developmental obstacles through the implementation of diverse development plans. Since achieving independence, Nigeria has implemented four development plans spanning the periods of 1962-1968, 1970-1974, 1975-1980, and 1981-1985 (Anyanwu 1997: 399). Similarly, Ghana has adopted development plans during the years of 1959-1964, 1968-1970, 1970-1971, 1975-1976, and 1979-1980. Sierra Leone, on the other hand, has implemented development plans in the periods of 1962-1963, 1971-1972, 1974-1975, and 1978-1979. Lastly, The Gambia has had development plans during the years of 1967-1968, 1970-1971, and 1974-1975 (Anyanwu 1997: 399).

While a subset of these plans can be categorised as short-range and medium-range plans, the remaining plans fall under the categories of perspective and rolling plans. While there have been certain indications of advancement, it is important to acknowledge that these endeavours have encountered significant challenges stemming from the persistent dependence on Western frameworks inherited from former colonial nations. The development models in question have their origins in the colonial development plans formulated during the colonial era (Anyanwu 1997: 395).

The observation has been made that the developmental strategies pursued by the post-colonial government of British West Africa were predominantly aligned with the developmental trajectory established by their preceding colonial powers. In the context of British West Africa, a discernible manifestation has been observed pertaining to the asymmetrical nature of trade relations and the resultant establishment of a dependency structure within the economic domain of the region. The aforementioned perspective finds validation in the scholarly work of Adedeji (1989), who articulates the notion that post-colonial development strategies have predominantly relied on external trade, foreign technology, foreign enterprise, and other forms of stimuli. The author posits that the developmental strategies implemented by African governments subsequent to their attainment of independence have been heavily influenced by economic development theories that originated from the colonial mode of production in Africa (Adedeji, 1989: 93). The second plan of Nigeria, for instance, has garnered criticism due to its nature as a plan predominantly crafted by a team of expatriates, thereby lacking substantial local engagement. Consequently, its efficacy in stimulating domestic endeavours has been called into question. In the realm of technical exercises, it is worth noting that the database utilised for the purpose of planning exhibited such profound deficiencies that the esteemed principal architect of the plan, W. F. Stolper, aptly characterised the experience as a form of planning devoid of factual basis (Livingstone 1969: 530).

It is of utmost significance to acknowledge that the post-colonial elites of West African states duly acknowledged and assimilated a plethora of mythical conceptions pertaining to development and planning. These notions, in turn, exerted a profound influence on the intellectual landscape during the post-colonial era (Englebert, 2000). Consequently, the newly independent states of West Africa embraced and implemented the mythical notions and models that had been established by the colonial powers. 'These are:'

- a. Planning had to be elitist in initiation and implementation; there was no need to involve the masses whose lives and future was been planned.'
- b. Planning had to be heavily centralized and kept secret from the people because the decentralization of decision making and executing institutions demands a level of political and power decentralization.
- c. For a plan to be successful, it must involve huge expenditure on all sorts of projects whether co- ordinate or not was a secondary matter and
- d. Planners must rely on foreign aid capital, technology, and manpower. (Ihonvbere, 1987: 205)

The issue of development planning in the West African region is further exacerbated by the implementation of a mixed economy system, a model that is not comprehensively grasped by the stakeholders involved. A mixed economy represents a harmonious amalgamation of the two prevailing economic paradigms, namely capitalism and socialism (Williams & Chrisman, 1994). The fundamental objective of this economic framework is to delineate the economy into distinct sectors, namely the public and private sectors, with the aim of fostering and advancing economic growth and development. The principal objective of planning in underdeveloped nations revolves around the augmentation of the economic growth rate, taking into account the manifold constraining factors inherent to these countries. In the context of a mixed economy, the process of planning entails the contemplation of a substantial level of capital accumulation, achieved through a diverse range of monetary, fiscal, and physical regulatory measures. This includes the implementation of foreign aid, exchange control mechanisms, and protective tariffs, as well as the facilitation of both public and private investments. The overarching objective of such planning is to foster a harmonious and equitable development of the economy, ensuring a balanced trajectory of growth. Regrettably, the inverse holds true, as these economic policies are indeed determined by the metropolis, as expounded upon by Jhingan (1966: 522).

The potential explanation for the unequal integration of African states into the global economic system may lie in the following factors. Commencing our discourse, it is imperative to acknowledge that the West African states, in their current state, exhibit economic fragility primarily attributable to the dearth of domestic economic prowess and feeble social infrastructure, both of which can be traced back to the historical colonial encounter (Englebert, 2000). Consequently, these nations are deemed inadequate in their ability to contend with the more advanced and established states within the global community. The nations in question are further enfeebled by the adverse effects of diminished export prices and a substantial deterioration in their terms of trade. Additionally, they grapple with the formidable challenges posed by the debt crisis and the onerous task of servicing their debt obligations (Khor, 2005: 13).

In light of the aforementioned circumstances, subsequent to the attainment of independence, the British West African states have encountered the formidable task of constructing a cohesive, robust, and self-sufficient nation-state. Thus, her core objectives since the drafting of development plans have centered on:

- a. Economic growth and the provision of infrastructure,
- b. Increase in productivity and in the level of agricultural exports
- c. Increase in per-capita income
- d. Reduction in the level of unemployment and increase in the supply of high-level manpower'
- e. Balanced development
- f. Diversification of the economy and promotion of national economic independence in terms of creation of effective links between sectors of the economy so that development becomes mutually reinforcing. (Nwosu 1977: 114)

To achieve these objectives, it was necessary for West African states to be integrated economically.

3.3 Failure of the Development Plans

The adoption of Western models, in the context of British West Africa, proved insufficient in addressing the multifaceted challenges of development due to the inherent complexities arising from the disparate environmental and socio-cultural conditions prevailing between Britain and the colonised populace (Englebert, 2000).

The magnitude of the constraints imposed by the development plans is indeed substantial. In the nascent phase of the post-colonial epoch, one is compelled to acknowledge that the foremost predicaments that emerged were predominantly centred around the sphere of political instability. The profound impact of civil wars, coups, counter-coups, military takeovers, and political rivalries on the meticulous strategizing of West African states cannot be overstated (Osadola & Asiyambi, 2022). Furthermore, the cultivation of despotic governance and military regimes, which materialised through idiosyncratic interpretations of development agendas, also resulted in a lack of consistent focus on these programmes. The aforementioned challenges have significantly impeded the execution of developmental initiatives. The attainment of development is contingent upon the presence of an environment characterised by serenity and stability (Bush, 2002). Furthermore, it can be argued that the aforementioned plans were executed in a suboptimal manner. One of the most prominent deficiencies observed in numerous plans devised for the African context pertains to the inadequacy in effectively transforming the plan's theoretical constructs into practical and actionable operational strategies (Williams & Chrisman, 1994). In addition to the aforementioned point, it is imperative to acknowledge that a prevalent fallacy in the realm of development planning lies in the tendency to forecast an unattainably elevated rate of growth, coupled with a misguided sense of prioritisation. The failure to attain the designated objective in this particular scenario undoubtedly stems from the inadequacy of one or more sectors to progress as intended. Consequently, this deficiency disrupts the harmonious alignment with other sectors, thereby engendering the imbalances that the plan was partially formulated to circumvent. The ultimate determinant of the success of a development programme lies in the presence of productive projects, as they dictate the immediate parameters for development (Kothari, 2005).

Additional obstacles include the dearth of human resources possessing the requisite expertise and the scarcity of essential technical knowledge. Furthermore, the absence of suitable policies to effectively amalgamate the developmental strategies and the insufficiency of precise and comprehensive information pertaining to the overall economic landscape also pose significant challenges (Bush, 2002).

Moreover, it is imperative to note that the borrowing rate and the subsequent debt servicing obligations pose a significant cause for concern within the context of a developing nation. The aforementioned factor, which contributes significantly to the phenomenon of rural-urban migration, is the conspicuous disregard for rural development. One of the most pivotal impediments to the realisation of development plans in the West African region resides in the pervasive presence and deleterious effects of corruption, which permeate the actions and behaviours of its leaders. The deleterious ramifications of the corrupt practises exhibited by leaders in West Africa engender a state of inefficiency, bitterness, and frustration, thereby engendering a disconcerting impact on the fabric of society within these nascent nations (Williams & Chrisman, 1994).

It has been emphasised that the mere presence of a well-conceived strategy is insufficient in and of itself as a foundational prerequisite for attaining progress and advancement. In order to effectuate a comprehensive transformation, it is imperative to have a political leadership that possesses a multifaceted array of qualities (Osadola et al., 2023). These qualities encompass a visionary outlook, a sound educational background, unwavering determination, unquestionable credibility, and the requisite capacity to adeptly navigate the intricacies inherent in the change process.

Furthermore, it can be posited that the prevailing lackadaisical demeanour exhibited by individuals within the populace serves as a significant catalyst for the impeding stasis observed within the economic realm (Kothari, 2005). The individuals comprising a society serve as both the instrumental agents and ultimate objectives of the developmental process. For a nation to achieve progress, it is imperative that both the citizenry and those in leadership positions actively collaborate and dedicate themselves to this pursuit (Bush, 2002). Hence, as individuals engage in personal growth and self-improvement, they concurrently enhance their capacity to serve as catalysts for subsequent transformative processes (Alidou, 2003). In accordance with the scholarly insights of Walter Rodney, it is posited that individuals of African descent bear the onus of comprehending the intricate mechanisms underpinning the process of societal advancement, thereby necessitating their concerted efforts towards its materialisation rather than engaging in oppositional endeavours (Rodney, 1972).

IV. Conclusion

Based on the preceding analysis, it is evident that there exists a consensus regarding the unequivocal nature of colonization's underlying objective, namely the pursuit of economic prosperity for the colonising power and the subordination of the colonised populace (Osadola & Gbadeyan, 2023). Consequently, subsequent to the attainment of independence, the primary imperative confronting contemporary nation-states resided in the imperative to dismantle the colonial economic framework bequeathed upon them during the decolonization process. In the context of the colonial economy, it is noteworthy that these states maintained their primary role as producers of raw materials for the manufacturing industries of the colonial powers, while simultaneously assuming the position of consumers for the finished goods produced by said powers (Adefolaju & Adeyemi, 2017). The imposition of disparate trade and fiscal policies by the colonial powers resulted in a significant balance of payment deficit for African states, thereby rendering them reliant on the Western world's economy for their sustenance. The contemporary ramifications of this phenomenon manifest in the disparate levels of integration experienced by West African nations within the global framework, thereby positioning them as the disadvantaged beneficiaries of the process of globalisation.

In order to extricate themselves from this quandary, the nations of West Africa devised various development strategies that, regrettably, now appear to be illusory, operating in opposition to their intended purpose (Odedokun, 1999).

It is worth noting that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established with the intention of addressing the aforementioned issues. However, it became evident that the organisation encountered significant challenges that hindered its ability to effectively resolve the problem at hand. Consequently, the efficacy of ECOWAS gradually diminished as it grappled with its own set of predicaments.

In addition to the assimilation of Western paradigms, a multitude of factors contribute to the inadequacy of development initiatives. These encompass political instability during the nascent post-colonial period, deficient execution of plans, insufficiency of human resources, excessive reliance on borrowing and subsequent debt servicing, disregard for rural areas, apathetic disposition among the populace, and, lastly, the pernicious influence of corrupt practises perpetrated by leaders (Adefolaju et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, it is highly advisable that to ensure the efficacy of any development strategy and the optimal utilisation of resources, disciplined leadership is imperative. Furthermore, it is imperative to emphasise the necessity for a transformative shift in the populace's perception and interaction with their surroundings (Adegoke et al., 2022). This entails the cultivation of a collective consciousness that is deeply rooted in a shared national ethos. Furthermore, it is imperative for West African states to formulate strategic plans that are tailored to their unique environmental conditions and possess the capacity to effectively address the distinctive challenges they face.

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