#FixINEC, #FixNigeria Report: Part I

A Case for INEC Reform: THE NEED TO ACT

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# **Preface**

Can We Build a Nation to Be Proud Of?

This question lies at the heart of the *#FixINEC, #FixNigeria Report*—a call to action for all Nigerians who dream of a better country. A nation where elections reflect the will of the people, competent leaders emerge, and progress is not an empty promise but a lived reality. Today, Nigeria stands at a crossroads. As the most populous Black nation on Earth, with over 200 million citizens, abundant natural resources, and immense potential, we should lead the world in innovation, development, and equity. Yet, across key sectors—healthcare, education, infrastructure, economic growth, and governance—our performance is abysmal. At the root of this crisis is a failure of leadership, perpetuated by a flawed electoral system that has left Nigerians disillusioned and distrustful of democracy.

***How Did We Get Here?***  
The failures of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) have paved the way for ineffective leaders to ascend to power, eroding public trust in the democratic process. Whether your passion lies in gender equity, climate change, human rights, corruption, youth employment, or economic development, the reality is stark: without fixing INEC, unqualified and corrupt leaders will continue to govern. To address Nigeria’s systemic challenges, we must first ensure that our elections are credible and our leaders accountable.

***The 2023 Elections: A Wake-Up Call***  
The 2023 elections were a pivotal moment in Nigeria's democratic journey. They could have inspired hope but instead left many citizens disillusioned. Despite promises of transparency and technological advancements, INEC failed to deliver. The much-heralded electronic transmission of results via the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IREV) collapsed at critical moments, shattering public confidence. Irregularities went unpunished, and tampered results undermined the process. These failures must not demoralize us; instead, they should galvanize us into action. Fixing INEC is a national imperative.

***A Roadmap for Reform***  
The *#FixINEC, #FixNigeria Report* is more than an analysis—it is a blueprint for change and a rallying cry for all Nigerians. Produced by Mandate4, a civic startup dedicated to mobilizing 50 million Nigerians to demand INEC reform, the report provides citizens with the knowledge and tools to advocate for systemic electoral transformation.

***The Call to Action***  
At Mandate4, we believe that a critical mass of informed, engaged citizens is the most powerful force for change. By empowering Nigerians to demand accountability and push for reform, we can create the momentum needed to transform our electoral system. Fixing INEC is not just about elections; it is about the future of our nation. If we fail to reform INEC, we will continue to be governed by the least qualified among us, and the dream of a prosperous, inclusive, and just Nigeria will remain out of reach. The time to act is now. Together, we can ensure that INEC becomes the beacon of electoral integrity it was always meant to be and lay the foundation for national progress.

Fix INEC ! Fix Nigeria! Enjoy the report. Join the movement.

**Century Favour**

*Founder*

*Mandate 4*

# 

# **Executive Summary**

Elections are the cornerstone of democracy, serving as the foundation for selecting accountable leaders capable of driving national development. In Nigeria, however, the failures of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) have perpetuated cycles of ineffective leadership and underdevelopment, jeopardizing the nation's democratic integrity and socio-economic progress. **Part I of the #FixINEC, #FixNigeria Report** makes a compelling case for urgent reforms to INEC, arguing that without credible elections, Nigeria cannot achieve its immense potential.

### Purpose of the Report

This report seeks to illuminate how INEC’s failures have contributed to Nigeria’s governance crises, particularly in producing unaccountable leaders who have failed to deliver progress in critical sectors such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and economic growth. By examining the structural challenges within INEC and their broader consequences, this report underscores the urgent need for comprehensive reforms to ensure electoral integrity and national progress.

### Scope of the Report

This report is structured into five chapters, each addressing a critical aspect of Nigeria's democratic and governance challenges, with a focus on INEC’s role in enabling systemic failures:

#### *Chapter 1.0: Why Fix Nigeria? – Is Nigeria Headed in the Right Direction?*

Nigeria, often referred to as the "Giant of Africa," stands at a pivotal moment in its development journey. Despite its vast resources, strategic significance, and population of over 200 million, the country has consistently underperformed across critical development metrics. This chapter examines Nigeria’s current trajectory using two approaches:

1. **Assessment of Citizen Perceptions:** Widespread public dissatisfaction highlights a deep mistrust in governance and democratic processes.
2. **Longitudinal Analysis of National Indicators (1999–2024):** Key metrics reveal a troubling trend of stagnation and decline in areas such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and poverty alleviation.

The findings underscore the urgent need to fix Nigeria by addressing the root causes of its governance challenges, beginning with electoral reforms to ensure credible leadership.

#### *Chapter 2.0: Nigeria’s Leadership Crisis and Its Role in National Underperformance*

This chapter builds on the foundation laid in Chapter 1 by exploring how Nigeria’s leadership class has contributed to the nation’s underperformance. It begins with an examination of the concept of delegated authority in a democracy and the vital role of leadership in shaping national outcomes. Key insights include:

* **Leadership Gaps:** An analysis of leadership deficiencies, including a lack of accountability, vision, and competence.
* **Drivers of Leadership Gaps:** How flawed electoral processes, enabled by INEC’s failures, have produced leaders more concerned with personal gain than national progress.
* **Impact on National Development:** These leadership shortcomings have hindered progress in critical areas like economic growth, healthcare, education, and anti-corruption efforts.

The chapter underscores the urgent need for INEC reforms to usher in leaders capable of driving the transformative changes Nigeria desperately needs.

#### *Chapter 3.0: INEC is Broken – Enabling the Ascendancy of Ineffective Leaders*

INEC, the body responsible for ensuring free and fair elections, has consistently failed to meet its mandate. This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of INEC’s structural weaknesses, including:

* Executive interference in appointments and funding.
* Inconsistent implementation of electoral technology, such as the BVAS and IREV systems, which failed to deliver transparent results in recent elections.
* Widespread electoral malpractice, including vote-buying, ballot stuffing, and result manipulation.
* A lack of accountability for officials involved in electoral misconduct.  
  These systemic failures have not only eroded public trust in INEC but have also enabled the rise of ineffective leaders who lack the legitimacy and capacity to govern effectively.

#### *Chapter 4.0: #FixINEC, #FixNigeria – Consequences of INEC’s Failures*

This chapter examines the far-reaching consequences of INEC’s shortcomings, including:

* **Weak Governance:** Flawed elections produce unaccountable leaders who perpetuate mismanagement and corruption.
* **Citizen Disillusionment:** Electoral malpractice and violence have eroded trust in the democratic process, leading to voter apathy.
* **Stunted Development:** The absence of credible leadership has stalled progress in critical areas like healthcare, education, and economic growth.
* **National Instability:** Electoral violence, fueled by INEC’s failures, has deepened divisions and undermined national unity.

#### *Chapter 5.0: Reforming INEC is a Necessity for National Progress*

The final chapter presents a roadmap for reforming INEC as a prerequisite for national progress. Key recommendations include:

* **Strengthening INEC’s Independence:** Removing executive interference in INEC’s appointments and funding.
* **Improving Electoral Integrity:** Full implementation of electoral technology, such as electronic transmission of results, to ensure transparency.
* **Promoting Accountability:** Establishing an Electoral Offences Commission to prosecute electoral misconduct.
* **Constitutional and Legal Reforms:** Amending the 1999 Constitution, Electoral Act and Police act with new provisions that improve our electoral process.

This chapter emphasizes that reforming INEC is not just about fixing elections—it is about restoring public trust in democracy and creating the conditions for transformative leadership and national development.

The **#FixINEC, #FixNigeria Report: Part I** underscores the inextricable link between electoral integrity and national progress. By highlighting INEC’s failures and their impact on governance, the report makes a compelling case for immediate and comprehensive reforms. Without credible elections, Nigeria will remain trapped in a cycle of poor leadership, underdevelopment, and citizen disillusionment.

Reforming INEC is not just an electoral imperative—it is a national necessity. By fixing INEC, Nigeria can ensure that elections reflect the true will of the people, paving the way for accountable leadership capable of addressing the nation’s most pressing challenges. **The time to act is now. Fix INEC, Fix Nigeria.**

# **CHAPTER ONE**

# **Why Fix Nigeria? - Is Nigeria Headed in the Right Direction?**

**Introduction**

Nigeria, often referred to as the "Giant of Africa," stands at a pivotal moment in its development journey. With a population exceeding 200 million, abundant mineral resources, and immense strategic importance on the African continent, Nigeria holds extraordinary potential to lead economically, politically, and socially. Yet, persistent underperformance across key development metrics underscores an urgent need for systemic reform and intervention. This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of Nigeria’s current state through two key approaches:

1. **Assessment of Citizen Perceptions:** Evaluating public sentiment regarding national performance and the country’s trajectory.
2. **Longitudinal Analysis of National Indicators (1999–2024):** Examining trends across critical metrics to identify patterns and challenges in Nigeria's development.

Through this evidence-based evaluation, we seek to address two fundamental questions: Does Nigeria require significant reform?

What structural changes are necessary to unlock the nation’s vast potential? The findings will serve as a foundation for understanding Nigeria's challenges and charting a path toward meaningful progress.

The survey reveals widespread economic distress across all demographic segments, with particularly severe impact on youth employment prospects and household purchasing power. The survey indicated the following “

* **Rising Cost of Living**: Inflation, currency devaluation, and a challenging business environment have strained household incomes and worsened poverty.
* **Youth Unemployment**: High unemployment rates among young people have led to increased frustration and migration aspirations.
* **Perception of Economic Mismanagement**: Widespread dissatisfaction with economic policies, particularly around subsidies, taxation, and infrastructure development.

## 1.1 Citizen Perceptions of Nigeria's State: Key Trends and Insights

Perception reflects individuals' feelings and opinions about a phenomenon or people. In Nigeria, citizens’ perceptions of the government are shaped by the government’s responsiveness to public needs, the effectiveness of its policies, and the performance of critical sectors driving national development[1].

Understanding citizens’ views on the state of the nation is crucial as we seek to answer a fundamental question: Does Nigeria require fixing? To address this, we conducted a survey and analysed secondary data sources. The findings reveal significant concerns about governance, economic stability, and social cohesion. Despite these challenges, there remains a resilient hope among Nigerians for transformational change.

**1.1.1. Governance and Leadership**

In governance and leadership, the study relied on critical indicators of governance and leadership to assess the citizens perception on government governance and leadership strategies. The citizens were asked to assess the government on the trust in institutions, transparency and accountability and electoral confidence. The survey results showed that above 90% of the respondents have shown dissatisfaction or lack of trust in the government and leadership strategies. These findings correlate with secondary evidence on the declining public thrust on the government over the years[2].

**a.** **Key Takeaways**

| **i. Trust in Institutions:**  Our survey revealed a significant erosion of public trust in key institutions. Among respondents: The judiciary received the lowest confidence rating, with only 37% expressing trust in the institution. 63% of respondents cited concerns about judicial corruption [3] , while 68% mentioned delays in justice delivery as significant issues.  Law enforcement agencies faced similar scepticism, with 76% of respondents expressing distrust. The primary concerns were:  Police corruption (66.7% of respondents)  ● Slow response times to emergencies 28.1%  ● Perceived bias in law enforcement 74.0%  The legislature fared poorly, with only 19% expressing confidence in their representatives. The main issues identified were:  ● Perceived disconnect from constituent needs  ● Lack of legislative effectiveness  ● Concerns about personal enrichment | **ii. Transparency and Accountability**  The survey highlighted significant concerns about government transparency:  Out 100% of respondents:  ● (85%) reported never having access to government spending information  (70%) believed corruption investigations were selective and politically motivated  69.9% are concerned about the cost of governance. |
| --- | --- |
| **iii. Electoral Confidence**  Regarding the electoral process:  respondents (54%) expressed low confidence in ONE's ability to conduct free and fair elections  (68%) reported witnessing or hearing about electoral malpractice  (75.1%) believed election results did not reflect the will of the people  (80.8%) expressed concerns about political influence |  |

**b. Regional Variations**

Confidence levels varied significantly across geopolitical zones:

South West showed relatively higher institutional trust (45%) (20%) North East recorded the lowest confidence levels (10%) South South and South East demonstrated the highest concern about electoral integrity (61% and 83% respectively)

**c. Demographic Analysis**

Age-based analysis revealed:

● Young adults (18-35) showed the highest levels of distrust (65%)

● Middle-aged respondents (36-50) were most concerned about corruption (71%)

● Older respondents (51-65) expressed more concern about institutional decay (83%)

**d. Conclusion**

● Declining Trust in Institutions: A growing perception of inefficiency and corruption in public institutions, particularly in the judiciary, legislature, and law enforcement agencies.

● Accountability Gaps: Citizens highlight the lack of transparency in government decision-making and inadequate measures to address corruption.

● Poor Electoral Confidence: Concerns over the integrity of elections, particularly regarding INEC’s role in ensuring free, fair, and credible electoral processes.

### 

### 1.1.2. Economic Challenges

The economy is the foundation upon which all other state structures are built. It determines the strength of the state and the standard of living for its citizens. A descriptive analysis of survey results revealed that 81% of respondents believe Nigeria faces severe economic challenges threatening the state's sustainability, citizens, government, and institutions. Documentary evidence supports this perception, aligning with findings from previous scholarly works, such as the study *"Political Instability and Economic Growth in Nigeria,"* which highlights the critical interplay between economic growth and the nation’s stability[4].

**Key Takeaways**

| **i. Cost of Living Crisis**  Survey responses indicate the severe impact of rising costs on households:  83% of respondents report significant deterioration in purchasing power over the past year. Average household expenditure increases reported:  ● 57.8% of the respondents indicated that Food costs up by 60%  ● 51.6 of the respondents indicated that Transportation expenses increased by 60%  ● 52.3 of the respondents indicated that Housing costs have risen by 60%  ● Healthcare spending increased by 38% | **ii. Youth Unemployment Analysis**  ● |
| --- | --- |
| **iii. Economic Policy Perception**  Public assessment of economic management:  Subsidy Removal:  ● 45.8% oppose recent subsidy removal implementations  ● 12.5% report no benefit from subsidy removal savings  ● 25.0% believe alternatives weren't adequately explored  ● 16.7% report severe impact on transportation costs  Infrastructure Development:  ● 58.3% dissatisfied with the pace of development  ● 12.5% report infrastructure affecting business costs  ● 16.7% cite poor power supply as major constraint  ● 8.2% criticise road network maintenance  Taxation Policies:  ● 87.5% consider current taxation burdensome  ● 8.2% report poor value for tax payments  ● 4.2% observe multiple taxation issues |  |

**b. Regional Analysis:** Economic impact variations across zones:

| North Central, North East and North West combined:  ● 65% report agricultural sector challenges  ● 86% affected by security-related economic disruption | South West and Southeast Combined:  ● 80% cite business environment deterioration  ● 70% struggle with industrial operation costs |
| --- | --- |
| South-South:  ● 61% report oil sector unemployment impact  ● 89% concerned about environmental degradation effects |  |

The survey reveals widespread economic distress across all demographic segments, with particularly severe impact on youth employment prospects and household purchasing power. The survey indicated the following “

● **Rising Cost of Living**: Inflation, currency devaluation, and a challenging business environment have strained household incomes and worsened poverty.

● **Youth Unemployment**: High unemployment rates among young people have led to increased frustration and migration aspirations.

● **Perception of Economic Mismanagement**: Widespread dissatisfaction with economic policies, particularly around subsidies, taxation, and infrastructure development.

### 1.1.3. National Security Concerns

National security is an indispensable condition for the effective functioning of a state and its infrastructure. A stable security environment facilitates foreign direct investment and supports the growth of critical sectors of the economy. As an umbrella term, national security encompasses the protection of critical government infrastructure and the state's overall safety [5]. This report examines security concerns based on input from Nigerians surveyed across the six geopolitical zones. The findings are further corroborated with documentary evidence from secondary sources, providing a comprehensive analysis of the nation’s security landscape.

Key Security Challenges in Nigeria

Data collected from the Armed Conflict Location and Event showed the following key security problems[6].

**Key Takeaways**

| **i. National Security Overview**  Personal Safety Perception:  ● 66,7% feel less safe.  ● 16.7% have altered daily routines due to security concerns  ● 16.7% express worry about traveling between states  Crime Experience Statistics:  ● 45.8% report family members affected by kidnapping  ● 8.3% know victims of banditry  ● 16.7% have experienced robbery  ● 12.5% report local extortion incidents  **ii. Law Enforcement Capability Assessment**  Resource Limitations:  ● 43.5% cite inadequate police staffing  ● 21.7% report poor equipment condition  ● 26.1% indicate insufficient training  ● 8.7% mention poor welfare conditions  Public Trust:  ● 40% suspect police-criminal collusion  ● 15% report extortion at checkpoints  ● 30% lack confidence in investigations  ● 15% prefer private security services  **iii. Economic Impact of Insecurity**  Respondents report:  ● 20.8% reduced business hours  ● 20.8% increased security spending  ● 29.2% abandoned expansion plans  ● 29.2% report higher transportation costs | **iv. Regional Security Analysis**  North-West ( Respondents Perception)  Primary Concerns:  ● Banditry affects 50% of communities  ● Kidnapping reported in 8.3% of areas  ● 20.8% avoid interstate travel  ● 20.8% report reduced farming activities  Law Enforcement Assessment:  ● 45.8% dissatisfied with response times  ● 8.3% believe security forces are overwhelmed  ● 25.0% report inadequate police presence   * 20.8%Police forces protect only the rich   North-East (1,500 respondents)  Security Challenges:  ● 62.5% affected by terrorism  ● 4.2% report displaced persons in community  ● 25.0% express concern about agricultural activities  ● 8.3% indicate limited educational access  Police Performance:  ● 41% report minimal security presence  ● 19% indicate delayed response to incidents  ● 30% cite inadequate equipment  North-Central (100% of respondents)  Key Issues:  ● 65% affected by farmer-herder conflicts  ● 5% report communal clashes  ● 20% express concern about kidnapping  ● 10% indicate reduced business activities  Security Response:  ● 20% dissatisfied with conflict resolution  ● 55% report inadequate prevention measures  ● 25% cite poor intelligence gathering  South-West ( respondents)  Security Situation:  ● 70% report urban crime increase  ● 83% concerned about ritualist activities  ● 70% indicate cybercrime prevalence  ● % report highway robbery incidents  Law Enforcement:  ● 76% report police understaffing  ● 55% cite corruption concerns  ● 70% indicate slow response times  South-East (1,300 respondents)  Main Concerns:  ● 89% affected by separatist activities  ● 83% report commercial disruptions  ● 91% excessive security checkpoint issues  ● 70% cite extortion concerns  Police Relations:  ● 88% report trust deficit  ● 92% indicate minimal police presence  ● 85% cite response time issues  South-South (100%respondents)  Security Issues:  ● 20% affected by cult activities  ● 35% report oil bunkering impact  ● 5% indicate kidnapping concerns  ● 40% cite maritime piracy  Law Enforcement Perception:  ● 43% report inadequate marine police  ● 17% indicate corruption issues  ● 40% cite poor emergency response |
| --- | --- |

The survey reveals widespread security concerns across all geopolitical zones, with regional threat types and intensity variations. Results indicate Citizens' perceptions across the following broad themes.

### 1.1.4. Social and Regional Inequalities

Social and regional inequalities have characterised the middle class, from civil service to public service. Social and regional inequalities in Nigeria have widened over time[7].

Politically, Nigerian women remain significantly marginalised and underrepresented. For example, Nigeria has one of the lowest proportions of female parliamentarians in Sub-Saharan Africa (REF). The dominance of men in governance and the phenomenon of political capture have hindered the inclusion of women's perspectives in decision-making processes. As a result, the political landscape remains shaped to reinforce male control, perpetuating gender inequality. This environment limits women's ability to contribute to nation-building actively and prevents critical issues affecting their well-being from being prioritised on the national agenda[8]. Social and regional inequalities in the analysis of survey responses show that 75% of the respondents agreed that there is a widened gap between classes in Nigeria. across all geopolitical zones, examining perceptions of social and regional inequalities.

Data collected from Oxfam report summarised the following levels of inequalities in Nigeria[9]

| **Basic Needs**  ● 57 million Nigerians lack access to safe water, and over 130 million lack adequate sanitation. Nigeria has the highest number of children out of school  ● | **Income Inequalities**  In one day, the richest Nigerian man can earn from his wealth 8,000 times more than the poorest 10% of Nigerians spend on average in one year for their essential consumption.  A Nigerian lawmaker receives an annual salary of about $118,000, equivalent to N37m – and 63 times the country's GDP per capita (2013)  The GDP of $521.8bn (2013), data from Nigeria's last comprehensive household survey (NHLSS) in 2009/2010 indicate official poverty rates remain high, with 69% of the population below the national poverty line and 53.5% below the $1.90 international poverty line.  The wealthiest Nigerian man would need almost 42 years to spend all of his wealth at 1 million per day. |
| --- | --- |
| ● **Gender Inequalities**  The Gender Inequality Index ranks Nigeria at 125 out of 145 countries in 2024[10]  Oxfam research reveals that although women represent between 60 and 79% of Nigeria's rural labour force, men are five times more likely than women to own land.  Nigeria has one of the lowest rates of female entrepreneurship | **Youth Marginalization**  Employment and Opportunities:  ● 82% report age discrimination in job recruitment  ● 91% unable to access business startup capital  ● 77% excluded from political decision-making  ● 88% cite a lack of mentorship programs |

**Calls for Restructuring**

Respondent Preferences:

● 80% support resource control

● 65% advocate state police

● 70% support regional autonomy

● 83% desire equitable revenue sharing

**Economic Impact of Inequalities**

Reported consequences:

● 80% cite reduced productivity

● 71% report increased poverty

● 65% indicate social tension

● 70% report increased migration

The survey reveals persistent inequalities across social groups and regions, a summary of the key themes.

● **Marginalization of Vulnerable Groups**: Perceptions of exclusion among women, youth, and persons with disabilities remain high.

● **Regional Disparities**: Uneven development across geopolitical zones fuels tensions and calls for restructuring.

### 1.1.5. Education and Health

The health and educational sectors are among the primary and critical sectors for national development and sustenance. Secondary data from the WHO observed that Nigeria’s health outcome indicators are still unacceptably high despite modest improvements. The maternal mortality ratio is 814 per 100,000. The mortality rate for infants and children under five years is 70 and 104 per 1000 live births, respectively. A significant disparity in health status exists across States, geopolitical zones, rural/urban divides, and education and social status[11].

Analysis of 10,000 respondents' perceptions of Nigeria's education and healthcare sectors, including service users, professionals, and administrators. A survey was conducted across all geopolitical zones between October and December 2024. The survey employed mixed methods, including facility assessments, professional interviews, and user feedback.

| **Education Sector Analysis**  Total number of public and Private universities:  ● 87% report deteriorating classroom structures  ● 92% cite the absence of functional laboratories  ● 83% indicate inadequate library facilities  ● 78% report a lack of computer facilities  ● 91% mention poor sanitation facilities  Teaching Resources:  ● 80% report textbooks  ● 70% indicate outdated curriculum materials  ● 80% cite a lack of teaching aids  ● 81% mention inadequate ICT resources  Professional Migration Impact  Teacher Exodus Statistics:  ● 30% of teachers left public schools in the past year[[1]](#footnote-0)  ● teachers actively seeking overseas opportunities[[2]](#footnote-1)  ● 82% of science and technology teachers planning to emigrate  ● 71% of school administrators report difficulty filling vacancies  Reasons for Migration:  ● 76% cite poor remuneration  ● 70% mention inadequate working conditions  ● 65% indicate limited career progression  ● 81% report lack of professional development | Health System  Infrastructure Challenges  **Total expenditure on health as a percentage of gross domestic product:** 4.47% of the proposed budget expenditure[12]  **Number of Registered Public and Private Hospitals**: 39,914 and an estimated population of 234 million Nigerians[13]  Nursing and midwifery personnel density  Physicians density:    ●  Rural Healthcare:  ● 76% lack specialist care access  ● 80% report medication shortages  ● 67% indicate limited emergency services  ● 70% cite distance to healthcare facilities  Medical Brain Drain  Professional Migration:  ● 88%of Nigerian doctors seek to migrate[[3]](#footnote-2)  ● 77% of current medical staff planning to leave  ● 89% of specialist positions vacant  ● 82% of teaching hospitals understaffed  Impact on Services:  ● 65% report increased waiting times  ● 80% indicate reduced specialist care  ● 78% cite overworked medical staff  ● 81% mention declined service quality |
| --- | --- |

**b. Regional Disparities**

| Northern Nigeria  Education Challenges:  ● 67% report teacher shortages  ● 81% cite security concerns  ● 75% indicate low enrollment rates  ● 70% mention poor infrastructure  Healthcare Access:  ● 76% lack specialist facilities  ● 70% report maternal healthcare gaps  ● 84% indicate limited emergency services  ● 70% cite distance barriers | Southern Nigeria  Education Issues:  ● 76% report overcrowded classrooms  ● 70% cite inadequate facilities  ● 83% indicate resource shortages  ● 78% mention teacher migration  Healthcare Concerns:  ● 75% report equipment shortages  ● 87% cite specialist care gaps  ● 76% indicate long waiting times  ● 80% mention cost barriers  Economic Impact  Service Cost Implications:  ● 80% report increased private education costs  ● 75% cite rising healthcare expenses  ● 43% indicate increased medical tourism  ● 83% mention insurance inadequacy |
| --- | --- |

The survey reveals severe deterioration in public education and healthcare services. Results indicate an urgent need for comprehensive sector reforms and improved working conditions to retain skilled professionals.

● **Decline in Public Services**: Citizens express dissatisfaction with the quality of education and healthcare services, citing infrastructure deficits and lack of funding.

● **Brain Drain**: Professionals in health and education sectors continue to migrate in search of better opportunities, worsening domestic service gaps.

### 1.1.6. Hope for Change

**Many Nigerians have expressed hope for change. In key informant interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD), many Nigerians have expressed hope for change. A descriptive analysis of the sectors where these changes are designed revealed the following.** A survey was conducted across demographics between October and December 2024, examining public sentiment about Nigeria's future trajectory.

The chart above illustrates areas where respondents feel improvements are needed. Economy has approximately 70% of respondents indicating the need for change in this area. Security has 90%, the second-highest percentage, signifies strong concern for security improvements. Food Price has around 85% desire changes, reflecting substantial concern over food affordability. Health has roughly 65%, this is the lowest priority area compared to the others, though still significant. Respondents who supported change in INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission) are 90%, the highest percentage, suggesting this is the most critical area for desired change, possibly reflecting concerns about electoral processes or governance.

**Leadership Reform Demands**

| **Desired Leadership Qualities**  Citizens prioritise the following leadership attributes:  ● 70% emphasise corruption-free governance  ● 80% value technical competence  ● 75% prioritise track record of achievement  ● 67% demand transparency and accountability  ● 67% emphasise inclusive leadership | **Current Leadership Assessment**  Public perception of existing leadership:  ● 60% are dissatisfied with current governance  ● 72% cite need for a generational shift  ● 69% demand merit-based appointments  ● 70% call for reduced governance costs |
| --- | --- |
| **Technology and Innovation Optimism**  Digital Transformation  Public confidence in tech solutions:  ● 57% believe in digital governance potential  ● 83% support tech-driven transparency  ● 72% advocate for digital voting systems  ● 79% support tech-enabled public services | **Innovation Opportunities**  Areas of perceived potential:  ● 1% cite fintech revolution  ● 68% highlight agritech possibilities  ● 75% mention edutech solutions  ● 63% emphasise healthcare innovation |
| **Democratic Participation**  **Civic Engagement**  Growing democratic involvement:  ● 78% plan increased political participation  ● 79% support youth political inclusion  ● 85% advocate for women's leadership  ● 91% demand electoral reform | **Reform Priorities**  Public transformation agenda:  ● 81% support constitutional review  ● 75% demand INEC Reform  ● 72% demand police reform  ● 75% advocate judicial independence  ● 59% support civil service reform |
| **Signs of Hope**  Economic Potential  Growth opportunities identified:  ● 61% cite agricultural transformation  ● 73% highlight mineral resources  ● 80% mention human capital potential  ● 71% emphasise manufacturing capabilities | **Social Progress**  Positive social indicators:  ● 81% note increasing youth empowerment  ● 74% cite growing gender awareness  ● 83% highlight cultural diversity strength  ● 72% mention entrepreneurial spirit |

**Regional Perspectives**

| **Northern Nigeria**  Transformation priorities:  ● 80% emphasise education reform  ● 90% prioritise security improvement  ● 88% focus on agricultural modernisation  ● 81% support women's empowerment | **Southern Nigeria**  Development focus:  ● 85% prioritise industrial growth  ● 81% emphasise power sector reform  ● 81% support technological advancement  ● 81% advocate environmental protection |
| --- | --- |

Despite significant challenges, Nigerians maintain strong optimism about national transformation potential. Results indicate strong public demand for leadership reform and widespread belief in technology-driven solutions.

The survey reveals a population ready for positive change, particularly through improved leadership, technological innovation, and enhanced democratic participation.

● **Demand for Leadership Reform**: Citizens increasingly demand values-based and competent leadership to address systemic issues.

● **Optimism Amid Challenges**: Despite prevailing issues, many Nigerians remain hopeful about the country’s potential for progress, especially through technology and democratic participation.

## **1.2. An Analysis of Nigeria's National Indicators from 1999 to 2024.**

To ensure comprehensive coverage, our analysis examines key metrics across the following thematic categories (***Economic Performance, Social Development, Governance and Institutions, Infrastructure and Public Services Infrastructure,* Youth and Human Capital Development**). The report tracks trends across different administrative periods.

### 1.2.1 **Economic Indicators 1999 - 2024**

Nigeria’s economic journey from 1999 to 2024 reflects a complex growth, stagnation, and underperformance narrative. The country's performance across GDP growth, inflation, unemployment, external debt, and poverty metrics has revealed systemic inefficiencies, policy inconsistencies, and reliance on external factors. Below is a comprehensive analysis of these economic indicators, presenting the nation's state.



Figure: Nigeria GDP Growth.

**Source - World Bank**

#### i**. GDP Growth and Trends**

* **1999-2010**: Nigeria’s GDP grew significantly, rising from $59.15 billion in 1999 to $366.99 billion in 2010. This growth was driven by: A booming oil sector, Global increases in oil prices, and Economic reforms under democratic leadership post-1999[[4]](#footnote-3) .
* **2011-2014**: GDP peaked at $574.18 billion in 2014, making Nigeria Africa’s largest economy[[5]](#footnote-4). However, this growth masked structural weaknesses, including overdependence on oil and a lack of economic diversification.
* **2015-2020**: GDP sharply declined due to falling oil prices and economic recessions. By 2020, the GDP dropped to $432.20 billion, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, weak macroeconomic management, and declining investments[[6]](#footnote-5)
* **2021-2024**: While GDP growth resumed post-pandemic, it remained fragile. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Nigeria is estimated to be $2.489 trillion dollars by the end of 2024 by World Economics[[7]](#footnote-6)

#### ii**. Inflation and Cost of Living 1999-2024**

Since the return of the Fourth Republic, Nigeria has experienced various levels of inflation, which have significantly affected virtually all sectors of the economy and aspects of human life.



**Source - Trading Economics**

* **1999-2015**: Inflation fluctuated but remained manageable, with periods of low inflation (5.4% in 2007) due to favourable global economic conditions[[8]](#footnote-7) .
* **2016-2024**: Inflation spiked during this period:
* **2020-2023**: Inflation surged to 24.7% in 2023, driven by rising food prices, currency depreciation, and fiscal pressures (source).
* **2024**: Inflation hit a 30-year high of 34.6% as of November 2024, pushing millions into poverty.

The cost of living has risen dramatically, with basic food prices increasing by nearly 40% in 2024, creating severe hardship for households (source).

#### ii**. Unemployment and Underemployment 1999-2024**

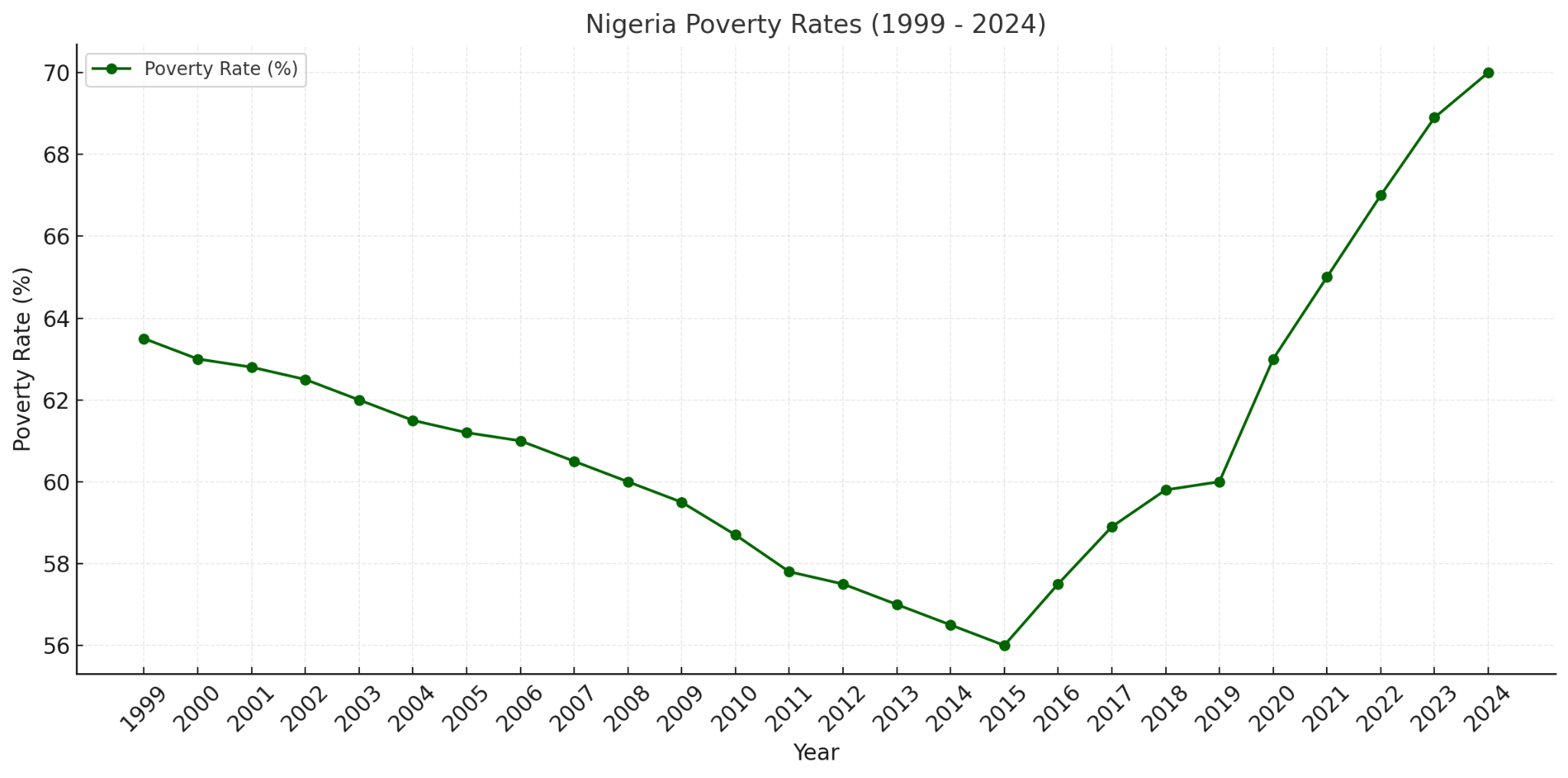
#### 

Figure: Trend of Unemployment and Underemployment in Nigeria

Source: Nigeria Economic Summit Group[[9]](#footnote-8)

* **1999-2015**: Unemployment remained low at approximately 3.7%–4.5%[[10]](#footnote-9), partly due to outdated methodologies that underestimated joblessness.
* **2016-2023**: Unemployment soared to 3.07% by 2020 due to: Population growth outpacing job creation and policy failures in industrialisation and job-intensive sectors[[11]](#footnote-10)
* **2024**: Despite revised methodologies, unemployment remains a concern at 5.3% (as per new metrics)[[12]](#footnote-11). Underemployment also plagues the workforce, reflecting poor labour market conditions

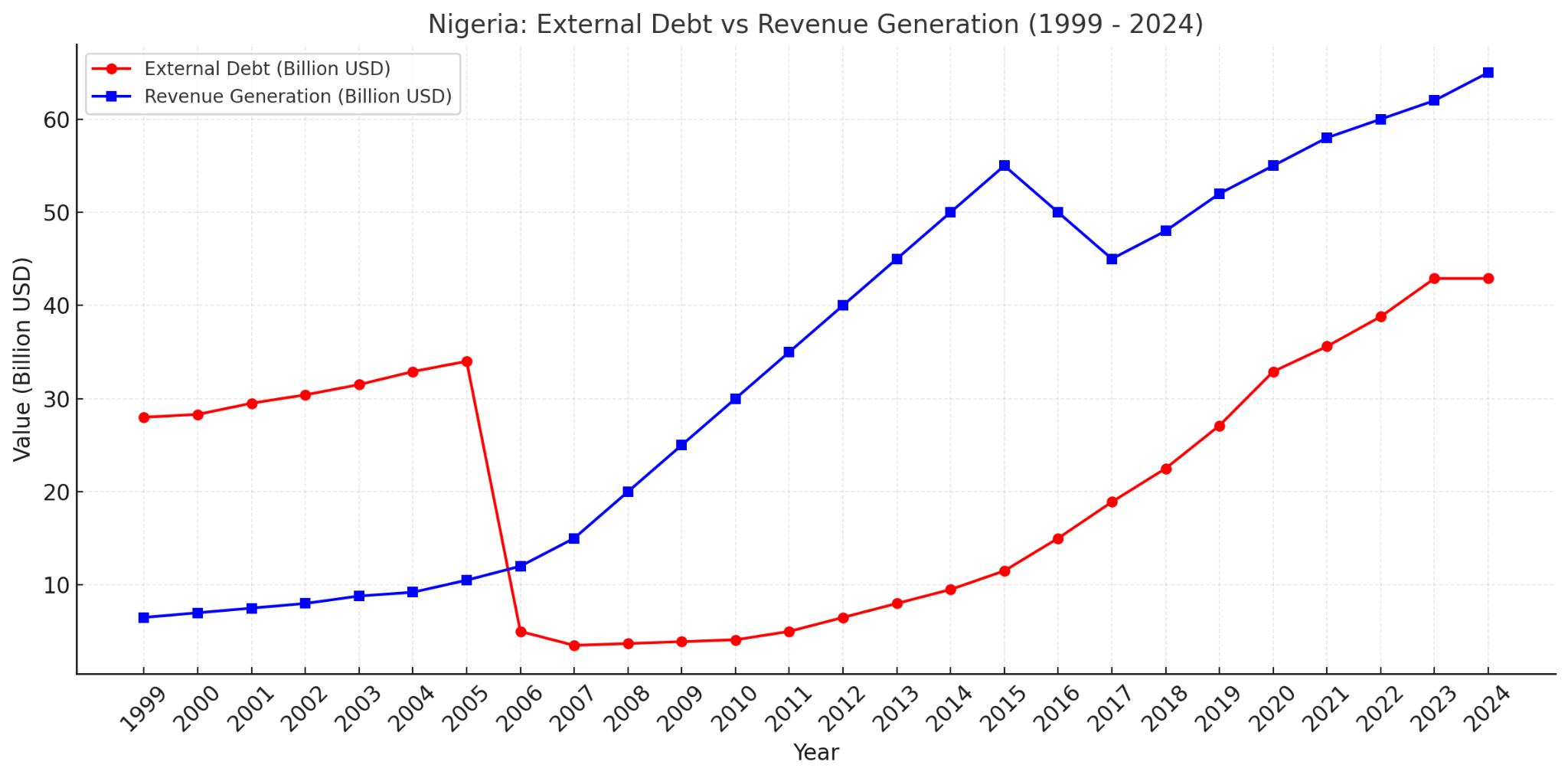
#### iii**. Poverty and Inequality 1999-2024**:



Nigeria’s poverty rate remains persistently high:

* **1999**: 63.5% of Nigerians lived below the poverty line[[13]](#footnote-12).
* **2023**: Over 87 million Nigerians (38.9% of the population) lived in extreme poverty, making the country the second-largest globally in terms of poor population[[14]](#footnote-13)
* **2024**: Projections suggest 40.7% of the population will remain below the poverty line by the end of the year[[15]](#footnote-14) .

#### iv**. External Debt and Revenue Generation**



**Source World Bank**

* **1999-2006**: Nigeria successfully negotiated debt relief in 2006, reducing external debt significantly[[16]](#footnote-15)
* **2006-2024**: External debt increased sharply:The Debt Management Office revealed in its latest report that the country’s external debt stock increased by $780m in the second quarter of 2024, growing from $42.12bn in March to $42.9bn as of June 2024[[17]](#footnote-16).
* **Revenue Generation**: Despite reforms, Nigeria's over-reliance on oil revenues has constrained diversification efforts. Recent fiscal measures, such as subsidy removal, have improved revenue collection but increased the cost of living[[18]](#footnote-17) .

| **Key Trends:**   * **Overdependence on Oil**: Economic growth remains vulnerable to oil price shocks due to limited diversification. * **Weak Policy Implementation**: High levels of corruption, inefficiency, and political instability have hindered policy effectiveness. * **Rising Poverty and Inequality**: Despite growth, wealth has not been evenly distributed, leading to widening inequality. * **Labour Market Challenges**: Persistent unemployment and underemployment have left millions of Nigerians without sustainable livelihoods. * **Debt Sustainability**: Rising external debt and poor revenue generation threaten fiscal stability. |
| --- |

Nigeria’s economic performance from 1999 to 2024 underscores a pattern of missed opportunities and systemic inefficiencies. The country has been unable to translate its vast natural resources, large population, and economic growth into inclusive development. The root causes of underperformance include overdependence on oil, weak governance, corruption, and inadequate infrastructure. Without bold, comprehensive reforms, Nigeria risks further economic stagnation and deepening social inequality, undermining its potential as Africa’s largest economy.

### **1.2.2 Governance and Corruption 1999 - 2024**

Since 1999, Nigeria’s return to democratic governance has been marked by mixed progress in governance, transparency, and the fight against corruption. While certain reforms have improved transparency and electoral processes, systemic corruption, weak institutions, and inconsistent enforcement have hindered the nation’s development. Below is a detailed analysis of governance and corruption in Nigeria from 1999 to 2024, focusing on key areas such as Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), electoral integrity, press freedom, and the prosecution of corruption cases.

#### i**. Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)**

* Nigeria has consistently scored poorly on the CPI, reflecting pervasive corruption in the public sector.[[19]](#footnote-18)
* Between **1999** and **2023**, Nigeria’s CPI scores ranged from **1.6 (1999)** to **25 (2023)** (on a scale of 0–100), signaling entrenched corruption at all levels of governance[[20]](#footnote-19).
* Despite various anti-corruption campaigns, Nigeria's scores have remained stagnant over the years, highlighting a lack of systemic reform.

**Key Trends:**

1. **1999–2010**: Early years of democracy saw limited progress, with weak enforcement mechanisms and entrenched political corruption.
2. **2011–2015**: Small improvements were recorded due to reforms such as biometric voter registration and institutional strengthening of anti-corruption agencies.
3. **2016–2024**: A renewed focus on anti-corruption under the Buhari administration led to an uptick in prosecutions. However, selective enforcement and a lack of high-profile convictions weakened the overall impact.

**Underperformance:**

* Public perception remains largely negative, with citizens skeptical about the sincerity of anti-corruption efforts[[21]](#footnote-20).
* High-profile cases (e.g., subsidy fraud and the $16 billion power sector scandal) remain unresolved, perpetuating impunity and eroding trust in governance.[[22]](#footnote-21)

#### ii. Freedom of the Press and Civil Liberties

Nigeria’s media landscape is one of the most vibrant in Africa. However, press freedom and civil liberties have faced significant challenges, particularly under administrations that viewed critical journalism as a threat.

**Key Trends:**

1. **1999–2015**: The press enjoyed relative freedom, but journalists faced occasional harassment and threats for reporting on corruption and governance.[[23]](#footnote-22)
2. **2015–2024**: Press freedom deteriorated, with increasing reports of intimidation, arrests, and cyber-surveillance targeting journalists and activists. For example: In 2020, the government temporarily banned Twitter following criticism during the #EndSARS protests. Laws such as the Cybercrime Act have been used to suppress dissent and critical reporting.[[24]](#footnote-23)
3. **2024**: While vibrant online media and investigative journalism persist, the press operates under constant pressure, limiting its ability to hold power to account.

**Civil Liberties:**

* Citizens have limited avenues for holding leaders accountable due to systemic corruption and weak institutional responses to civil activism.
* Events like the #EndSARS protests in 2020 highlighted the resilience of civil society but also the government’s intolerance for dissent.

**Underperformance:**

* Restrictions on press freedom and civil liberties reflect governance systems that prioritize self-preservation over transparency and accountability.
* The clampdown on dissent undermines Nigeria’s democratic progress and stifles citizen engagement.

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#### iii. Prosecution of Corruption Cases vs. Convictions

Nigeria has prosecuted thousands of corruption cases through its key anti-corruption agencies—the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC). However, the number of successful convictions remains low, particularly for high-profile cases.

**Key Statistics:**

* **2010–2019**: The EFCC investigated **39,970 cases**, prosecuted **2,544**, and secured a conviction rate of **6.36%**.[[25]](#footnote-24)
* **2021**: A record **2,220 convictions** were secured, with a 98.49% success rate for prosecuted cases.[[26]](#footnote-25)
* **2022**: The EFCC reported **3,785 convictions**, representing a significant improvement in enforcement.[[27]](#footnote-26)

**High-Profile Cases**: Most politically exposed persons (PEPs) escape convictions, as seen in cases involving governors, ministers, and legislators accused of siphoning billions of dollars.[[28]](#footnote-27)

**Underperformance**:

* Selective prosecution and political interference undermine the credibility of anti-corruption efforts.
* The justice system is often slow and inefficient, allowing cases to linger for years without resolution.

From 1999 to 2024, Nigeria’s governance and anti-corruption landscape reflects a nation struggling to meet its potential due to systemic inefficiencies, entrenched corruption, and weak institutional frameworks. While there have been commendable efforts to improve transparency and accountability, progress has been uneven and often undermined by political interference and a lack of sustained reform.

### **1.2.3 Security Indicators 1999 - 2024**

Since 1999, Nigeria's security landscape has been characterized by a series of crises ranging from terrorism and militancy to banditry and kidnappings.[[29]](#footnote-28) The proliferation of violent groups, inadequate security frameworks, and lack of institutional reforms have hindered Nigeria’s progress, making insecurity one of the country's most pressing issues. Below is an analysis of Nigeria’s security indicators from 1999 to 2024, painting a picture of the state of the nation and its underperformance.

#### i. Incidents of Terrorism, Banditry, and Kidnappings

| **Boko Haram Insurgency (2009–Present):**   * 1. Boko Haram emerged as a violent jihadist group in 2009, declaring war on the Nigerian state with its campaign for an Islamic caliphate.[[30]](#footnote-29)   2. By **2015**, Boko Haram had gained control of large swathes of northeastern Nigeria, displacing over **2 million people** and killing more than **35,000**.[[31]](#footnote-30)   3. Despite military offensives and the decimation of leadership structures, splinter groups like **ISWAP (Islamic State West Africa Province)** continue to destabilize the region.   4. **Recent Trends (2022–2024):** Boko Haram’s activities have reduced but remain a persistent threat, with sporadic attacks in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. ISWAP has taken over as the dominant group, targeting civilians, soldiers, and infrastructure. | **Banditry**  Banditry, especially in Nigeria’s northwestern states, escalated significantly between **2015 and 2024**:   * 1. Armed groups frequently attack rural communities, loot, and abduct for ransom, leaving thousands dead and displacing entire villages.   2. In 2023 alone, over **10,000 people** were killed by banditry-related violence.[[32]](#footnote-31)   3. States like Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, and Sokoto remain epicenters of this crisis.[[33]](#footnote-32) |
| --- | --- |
| **Kidnappings**  Kidnapping for ransom has risen exponentially since **2015**, fueled by banditry and the weakness of state security forces:   * 1. Schools and students became primary targets during the **Chibok schoolgirls kidnapping (2014)** and subsequent abductions in Katsina and Zamfara.   2. In 2024, over **7400cases of abductions** were reported, with kidnappers demanding multi-million-dollar ransoms[[34]](#footnote-33) .   3. Kidnapping remains a lucrative criminal enterprise, exacerbating insecurity nationwide. | **Niger Delta Militancy**   * From **1999–2024**, militancy in the Niger Delta resulted in attacks on oil infrastructure, affecting daily outputThe 2009 **Presidential Amnesty Programme** significantly reduced violence, but sporadic attacks and pipeline vandalism persist. |
| **Herder-Farmer Clashes**   * The conflict between nomadic herders and farming communities escalated during **2015–2024**, especially in the Middle Belt region (Benue, Plateau, Taraba)[[35]](#footnote-34) * Root causes include climate change, desertification, resource competition, and ethnic tensions. * Over **60000 deaths** have been recorded between 2015 and 2024 due to farmer-herds crises, making it one of the deadliest forms of violence in the country[[36]](#footnote-35). |  |

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#### ii. Internal Displacement and Refugee Numbers

| **Internal Displacement**   * The Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, and communal clashes have displaced millions of Nigerians. * By 2024, there are approximately **2.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs)** in Nigeria, with the majority concentrated in the northeast.[[37]](#footnote-36) * IDP camps remain overcrowded, poorly funded, and lack basic amenities, leading to secondary humanitarian crises. | **Refugee Crisis**   * Nigeria's insecurity has also created a regional crisis, with over **300,000 Nigerian refugees** living in neighboring countries like Cameroon, Chad, and Niger.[[38]](#footnote-37) * Conversely, Nigeria hosts refugees fleeing conflicts in the Central African Republic and Sudan, adding strain to an already fragile system. |
| --- | --- |

Impact on Vulnerable Groups

* Women and children are disproportionately affected, with widespread reports of sexual exploitation, child recruitment, and trafficking in IDP camps.
* Chronic underfunding of humanitarian efforts exacerbates the plight of displaced persons.

#### iii. Budget Allocation to and Effectiveness of Security Agencies

**Budget Allocation**

* Nigeria’s security sector consistently receives the highest budgetary allocation:
* In **2023**, over **₦2.98 trillion (13.4% of the national budget)** was allocated to defense and security.[[39]](#footnote-38)
* However, corruption and mismanagement have limited the effectiveness of these investments.

**Challenges Facing Security Agencies**

1. **Inadequate Equipment**: Many frontline soldiers lack modern weapons, vehicles, and technology to counter well-armed insurgents and bandits.
2. **Poor Training and Welfare**: Low morale among security personnel is driven by poor salaries, delayed allowances, and unsafe working conditions.
3. **Corruption**: Allegations of embezzlement within the Ministry of Defense undermine troop readiness and operational capacity.
4. **Inter-Agency Rivalry**: Lack of coordination between military, police, and intelligence agencies weakens Nigeria's overall security response.

**Effectiveness of Security Agencies**

1. Despite increased funding, Nigeria’s security agencies have struggled to contain rising insecurity:
   1. Military offensives (e.g., **Operation Lafiya Dole**) have had limited success in neutralizing terrorist threats.[[40]](#footnote-39)
   2. The police force remains underfunded and ill-equipped to address growing urban and rural insecurity.
   3. Civilian vigilante groups (e.g., **Civilian Joint Task Force**) now play a significant role in combating insecurity, reflecting the state’s inability to fully secure its territory.[[41]](#footnote-40)
   4. Incidents of terrorism, banditry, and kidnappings (Boko Haram, herder-farmer clashes, Niger Delta militancy).
   5. Internal displacement and refugee numbers.
   6. Budget allocation to and effectiveness of security agencies.

From 1999 to 2024, Nigeria’s security landscape has deteriorated significantly, with rising violence and insecurity undermining governance and development. Despite massive budgetary allocations, the country has failed to adequately address its security challenges due to systemic corruption, poor coordination, and weak institutional capacity.

### **1.2.4. Social Development Indicators 1999 - 2024**

Nigeria’s social development trajectory from 1999 to 2024 reflects a mix of modest progress and persistent underperformance. Key indicators in education, healthcare, water, and electricity access reveal systemic inefficiencies, poor governance, and a lack of sustained policy implementation, which have hindered the nation’s ability to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. Below is an analysis of these social development indicators, highlighting the state of the nation and its underperformance.

#### i. Literacy and Education Enrollment Rates

| **Primary Education**   1. **1999–2015:**    * Primary school enrollment rose steadily due to Universal Basic Education (UBE) introduced in 1999, which aimed to provide free and compulsory education.    * Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) increased from **69% in 1999** to **79% in 2009**, but challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and high dropout rates persisted.[[42]](#footnote-41) 2. **2016–2024:**    * Enrollment rates stagnated, with an estimated **10.5 million children out of school in 2023**, the highest globally (UNICEF).[[43]](#footnote-42)    * The North-East and North-West regions are most affected due to insecurity, cultural barriers, and poverty. | **Secondary Education**   * **Enrollment Rate (2023):** The United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF ) estimated the total number of out-of-school children in Nigeria to be 20.2 million.[[44]](#footnote-43) * Gender disparities remain significant, with fewer girls attending school in rural and conflict-affected areas.   **Tertiary Education**  **1999–2024:**   * + Nigeria’s tertiary education system expanded significantly, with over **200 universities** as of 2024. However, access remains limited, with tertiary enrollment at just **11.8% as at 2018[[45]](#footnote-44)** (compared to a global average of 43.27%.[[46]](#footnote-45)   + Frequent university strikes (e.g., ASUU strikes) and underfunding have undermined the quality of education and discouraged enrollment. |
| --- | --- |

**Underperformance:**

* **Adult Literacy Rate:** Despite progress, Nigeria’s adult literacy rate[[47]](#footnote-46) remains at **59.57% (2024)[[48]](#footnote-47)**, significantly below the global average of 86%.[[49]](#footnote-48)
* **Contributing Factors:** Poor funding for education. In the 2024 fiscal year, Nigeria allocated ₦2.18 trillion to the education sector, representing approximately 7.9% of the total ₦27.5 trillion budget.[[50]](#footnote-49). Insecurity prevents millions of children in the North from attending school. High youth unemployment discourages the value of education.

#### ii. Access to Healthcare and Life Expectancy

**Healthcare Access**

* **1999–2015:** Nigeria struggled with weak healthcare infrastructure, insufficient funding, and a lack of skilled personnel. The healthcare system remained heavily reliant on out-of-pocket payments, which accounted for **71.7% of total healthcare expenditure** during this period.[[51]](#footnote-50)
* **2016–2024:** While initiatives such as the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) expanded access, coverage remains low, at only **5% of Nigerians** enrolled in health insurance.[[52]](#footnote-51) Public health facilities are underfunded and understaffed, with a doctor-to-patient ratio of **1:9083** (WHO recommends 1:600).[[53]](#footnote-52)

**Life Expectancy**

Nigeria’s life expectancy improved modestly:

* + **1999:** 47 years[[54]](#footnote-53)
  + **2023:** 54 years[[55]](#footnote-54)
  + Still one of the lowest globally, reflecting poor healthcare access, high disease burden, and underfunding.

**Underperformance**:

* Frequent healthcare worker strikes and "brain drain" (mass emigration of doctors and nurses) have crippled the sector.
* Poor access to basic healthcare services in rural areas, where over 60% of the population resides.

#### iii. Maternal and Child Mortality Rates

Maternal Mortality Rate

* **1999:** 4,000 deaths per 100,000 live births.[[56]](#footnote-55)
* **2023:** 1047 deaths per 100,000 live births, a significant improvement but still among the highest in the world.[[57]](#footnote-56)
* Contributing factors:
  + Poor antenatal care coverage (less than 60% of pregnant women access skilled birth attendants).
  + High prevalence of unsafe abortions due to restrictive abortion laws.

Child Mortality Rate

* **1999:** 188 deaths per 1,000 live births (under-5 mortality).[[58]](#footnote-57)
* **2023:** 55 deaths per 1,000 live births, showing progress but still far from global targets.[[59]](#footnote-58)
* Key challenges:
  + High rates of preventable diseases (malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea).
  + Poor immunization coverage .[[60]](#footnote-59)

Underperformance:

* Poor infrastructure, lack of skilled healthcare workers, and insufficient funding for maternal and child health programs.
* Insecurity in the North-East has hindered access to healthcare for millions of women and children.

#### iv. Access to Potable Water

**Access to Potable Water**

* **1999–2015:** Access to improved drinking water increased from **45% in 1999** to **69% in 2015**, driven by donor-funded programs and government initiatives.[[61]](#footnote-60)
* **2016–2024:** Progress stagnated, with only **71% of Nigerians** having access to improved water sources . Rural areas face significant challenges, with reliance on untreated surface water, leading to waterborne diseases such as cholera.[[62]](#footnote-61)

**Underperformance:**

* Chronic underinvestment in water infrastructure has left millions without access to basic services.
* Corruption and mismanagement in the power sector have undermined reform efforts (e.g., privatization of power companies in 2013).

From 1999 to 2024, Nigeria’s social development indicators highlight a nation struggling to meet the basic needs of its growing population. While there have been pockets of progress, systemic corruption, poor governance, and underfunded social programs have hindered sustained development.

### **1.2.5 Infrastructure and Public Services 1999 - 2024**

Nigeria’s infrastructure and public services have seen limited progress since 1999, despite periods of economic growth and reforms. Poor governance, corruption, and inadequate investment have hindered the country’s ability to meet the infrastructure demands of its growing population. This analysis focuses on road networks, power generation and distribution, telecom growth, and urbanization challenges to paint a picture of the state of the nation and its underperformance.

#### i. Road Network Expansion and Maintenance Quality

**1999–2010: Early Democratic Years**

* Nigeria’s road network in 1999 was approximately **194,000 km**, of which only **36,900 km were paved**, and most were in poor condition.[[63]](#footnote-62)
* Early reforms included the establishment of the Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA) in 2002 to address road deterioration, but its impact was minimal due to corruption and underfunding.
* Major road projects, such as the **Lagos-Ibadan Expressway** and **Abuja-Kaduna Expressway**, suffered from delayed completion and poor maintenance.

**2010–2024: Limited Expansion and Poor Maintenance**

* By 2023, Nigeria’s road network expanded to **200,000 km**, but only 60,000 km **are paved**.[[64]](#footnote-63)
* Federal and state governments initiated Public-Private Partnership (PPP) road projects, such as the **Lekki-Epe Expressway** and the reconstruction of the **Second Niger Bridge**, which was completed in 2022.
* Despite these efforts, road quality remains poor, with **70% of roads classified as in "bad or terrible condition"**, particularly in rural areas.[[65]](#footnote-64)
* Poor road networks contribute to high transportation costs and frequent accidents. Nigeria records **over 40,000 road accident deaths annually**, among the highest globally.[[66]](#footnote-65)

**Underperformance**:

* Corruption and lack of accountability in road construction contracts result in substandard projects.
* Neglect of rural roads exacerbates regional inequalities, with farmers unable to transport goods efficiently.

#### ii. Power Generation and Distribution

**1999–2010: Low Generation and Ineffective Reforms**

* In 1999, the installed capacity of 5,906MW could only supply 1,750MW of electricity to a population of 120 million people
* .[[67]](#footnote-66)
* Despite reforms, such as the establishment of the **Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN)** and privatization efforts in the mid-2000s, electricity supply remained erratic, with frequent blackouts.

**2010–2024: Stalled Growth and Systemic Challenges**

* By 2024, power generation increased marginally to **5,528 MW[[68]](#footnote-67)**, still leaving over **85 million Nigerians without electricity**, the highest globally .[[69]](#footnote-68)
* Privatization of power generation and distribution companies in 2013 aimed to improve efficiency but failed due to: Poor financial capacity of distribution companies (DisCos). Weak regulatory oversight by the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC).
* Rural electrification programs have been limited in scope, leaving rural areas dependent on expensive and unreliable diesel generators.

**Access to Electricity**

* **1999–2024:** Electricity access improved modestly, from **45% in 1999** to **60.5% in 2023** .[[70]](#footnote-69) However, power supply remains highly unreliable, with frequent outages and only 25% of rural communities connected to the national grid. Nigeria’s power generation capacity (5,528 MW) is grossly inadequate for a population of over 200 million.
* Nigeria’s inability to meet electricity demand stifles industrial growth, increases production costs, and hampers economic productivity.
* Poor maintenance of the power grid results in frequent outages. Nigeria recorded the highest level of power outage duration in Africa, amounting to 4,600 hours in 2018. According to the World Bank, the economic cost of power outages in Nigeria is estimated to be about $28 billion, equivalent to 2% of its GDP on average .[[71]](#footnote-70)

#### iii. Telecoms Growth (Mobile and Internet Penetration)

**1999–2010: Explosive Growth**

* The telecom sector experienced unprecedented growth following deregulation and the issuance of GSM licenses in 2001.
* By 2010, mobile phone penetration reached **50%,** up from less than 1% in 1999.[[72]](#footnote-71)
* Major telecom providers, such as **MTN, Airtel, and Glo**, transformed communication in Nigeria, making mobile phones accessible to millions.

**2010–2024: Continued Expansion but Digital Divide**

* As of 2024: Mobile penetration is over **90.7%**, with approximately **205 million active mobile lines**.[[73]](#footnote-72) Internet penetration stands at **42%**, reflecting slower growth in broadband adoption due to high costs and poor infrastructure.[[74]](#footnote-73)
* 4G networks cover urban areas, but rural regions remain underserved, highlighting a significant digital divide.

**Underperformance:**

* Despite high mobile penetration, internet access remains limited for rural populations, exacerbating inequalities in education, business, and healthcare access.
* High data costs and unreliable broadband infrastructure hinder Nigeria’s progress in becoming a fully digital economy.

#### iv. Urbanization Challenges (Housing and Transportation)

**Housing**

* Nigeria faces a **housing deficit of over 22 million units (2024)**, with urbanization outpacing housing supply.[[75]](#footnote-74)
* Rapid urbanization has led to the growth of slums, where an estimated **50% of urban dwellers live in substandard housing conditions**..[[76]](#footnote-75)
* Efforts such as the National Housing Fund (NHF) have had limited impact due to bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and high construction costs.

**Transportation**

* Public transportation systems are grossly inadequate in major cities: Lagos launched the **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** system in 2008 and completed the first phase of its **Blue Rail Line** in 2023. However, these efforts only partially address the city’s transportation needs. Abuja lacks a comprehensive public transit system, forcing reliance on informal transport (e.g., motorcycles and taxis).

**Underperformance**:

* Poor urban planning has led to traffic congestion, poor waste management, and inadequate public amenities in major cities.
* Housing and transportation challenges disproportionately affect low-income households, worsening urban poverty and inequality.

From 1999 to 2024, Nigeria’s infrastructure and public services have experienced incremental progress but remain far below the levels needed to support its growing population and economy. Chronic underinvestment, corruption, and policy inconsistencies have left critical sectors like power, transportation, and housing in a state of disrepair.

### **1.2.6 Youth and Human Capital Development 1999 - 2024**

Nigeria, often referred to as the "Giant of Africa," boasts one of the youngest populations globally, with over 60% of its citizens below the age of 25. Despite this demographic advantage, the country has struggled to harness its youth potential due to persistent unemployment, brain drain, and underinvestment in vocational and technical education. Below is an analysis of youth and human capital development in Nigeria from 1999 to 2024, highlighting the state of the nation and its underperformance.

#### i. Youth Unemployment Rates

**1999–2010:**

* At the start of democracy in 1999, youth unemployment was relatively low at **20%**, but the figure masked significant underemployment and informal labor.[[77]](#footnote-76)
* The economy was heavily dependent on the oil sector, which provided minimal job opportunities for the growing youth population.
* Job creation efforts under programs like the **National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)** failed to yield meaningful results due to poor implementation and corruption.

**2010–2024:**

* Youth unemployment surged dramatically, reaching **45.2% by 2020[[78]](#footnote-77)**, exacerbated by:
  1. Economic recessions in 2016 and 2020.
  2. Population growth outpacing job creation.
  3. Inadequate skills among graduates due to mismatches between education and labor market needs.
* As of **2024**, unemployment among young people aged 15–34 is estimated at **53.40%,** reflecting a marginal improvement due to interventions like tech hubs and entrepreneurship programs.

Contributing Factors:

* Decline in industrial output and manufacturing jobs, which traditionally absorbed a significant portion of young workers.
* Over-reliance on oil revenue with minimal investment in labor-intensive sectors like agriculture and manufacturing.
* Poor economic diversification, leaving millions of youth locked out of the formal economy.

#### ii. Brain Drain Metrics (Emigration Rates Among Skilled Professionals)

**1999–2010:**

* The brain drain phenomenon accelerated post-1999 as skilled professionals emigrated to escape poor economic conditions, inadequate infrastructure, and political instability.
* Nigeria became one of the largest sources of emigrants to the UK, US, and Canada, particularly in healthcare, education, and technology sectors.

**2010–2024:**

* The emigration of skilled professionals intensified during this period:
  + **Healthcare Sector:** By 2024, Nearly 1 in 8 Nigerian doctors (12%) have left the country for developed nations**.** Similarly, thousands of nurses and pharmacists have sought opportunities abroad.[[79]](#footnote-78)
  + **Tech and Engineering:** Young tech professionals have emigrated to countries like the UK, Canada and Germany as part of the global talent hunt.
  + **Education:** University professors and lecturers, frustrated by frequent strikes and underpayment, have left for better-paying opportunities overseas.
* **Japa Trend (2020–2024):** "Japa," the local slang for emigration, became a defining trend among Nigeria’s youth, with **millions of Nigerians** leaving the country between 2020 and 2024.

Contributing Factors:

* Poor working conditions and inadequate remuneration for professionals.
* Limited access to infrastructure like stable electricity and internet, which hinders career growth.
* Lack of policy interventions to retain talent or create opportunities for skilled workers.

Impact of Brain Drain:

* A weakening healthcare system with doctor-to-patient ratios worsening to **1:9083** (WHO recommends 1:600).
* Reduced innovation and productivity in key sectors such as education and technology.
* Growing inequality as middle-class professionals leave, draining resources from the local economy.

#### iii. Investments in Vocational and Technical Education

**1999–2010:**

* Investment in vocational and technical education was minimal during this period, with public schools and training centers grossly underfunded.
* Youth programs like **NAPEP** and the **National Directorate of Employment (NDE)** introduced vocational initiatives but failed to scale due to corruption and mismanagement.
* Private institutions began to fill the gap, but access remained limited to higher-income families.

**2010–2024:**

* The government introduced initiatives like the **National Industrial Skills Development Programme (NISDP)** under the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) to expand access to technical education.
* Several state governments established **technical colleges** and skills acquisition centers, but most remain under-resourced and poorly equipped.
* By 2024: Only **17.3% of Nigerian youth** have access to formal vocational or technical training.Most programs fail to align with market demands, producing graduates with outdated skills.[[80]](#footnote-79)
* Private and Public sector initiatives like tech hubs (e.g., Andela, Co-Creation Hub, 3MMT ) and partnerships with international organizations have made some impact, particularly in technology and entrepreneurship.

Underperformance:

* Inadequate investment in vocational education, with less than **1% of GDP** allocated to technical and vocational training.[[81]](#footnote-80)
* Absence of national strategies to link vocational training with employment opportunities in key sectors like construction, agriculture, and ICT.
* Gender disparities in access, with women underrepresented in technical fields.

From 1999 to 2024, Nigeria’s youth and human capital development have been characterized by missed opportunities and underperformance. While the country boasts a young and dynamic population, systemic issues in education, training, and employment continue to undermine its potential.

## **1.3 The Verdict - An Underperforming Nation**

Our comprehensive analysis of Nigeria’s state through two main approaches—an assessment of citizen perceptions regarding national performance and trajectory, and a longitudinal analysis of key national indicators from 1999 to 2024—reveals an undeniable truth: there is an urgent need to fix Nigeria. Evidence from this evaluation underscores that structural reforms are essential if the country is to realize its immense potential and take its rightful place as a global and regional powerhouse.

Nigeria is a nation with extraordinary potential. It is blessed with vast natural resources, a strategic geographical position, and a young, dynamic population that constitutes over 60% of its citizens. These attributes provide a solid foundation for economic growth, innovation, and leadership within Africa and on the global stage. However, the story of Nigeria is one of chronic underperformance. For decades, weaknesses in governance, security, infrastructure, and human capital development have constrained its progress. These systemic issues have led to widespread poverty, rising insecurity, mass emigration of skilled professionals, poor service delivery, and diminishing global influence.

Governance failures, characterized by widespread corruption, weak institutions, and ineffective policies, have undermined the nation’s ability to deliver on its promise. Security challenges, from terrorism in the North-East to banditry and kidnappings in the North-West and rising urban violence, have destabilized communities and strained national cohesion. Infrastructure deficits, especially in power generation, road networks, housing, and access to clean water, continue to cripple industrial growth and stifle socioeconomic development. Education and healthcare systems remain underfunded and poorly managed, leaving millions without access to quality services. The brain drain of skilled professionals further depletes critical sectors like health, technology, and academia. These issues compound the country’s inability to create opportunities for its growing population, leaving millions unemployed and disillusioned.

Fixing Nigeria is not only a necessity for its citizens but also an imperative for Africa and the global community. As the continent’s largest economy, Nigeria’s trajectory has significant implications for Africa’s collective progress. A stable and prosperous Nigeria could serve as a catalyst for regional growth, spur continental integration, and provide leadership in tackling global challenges such as climate change, migration, and economic inequality. Conversely, continued underperformance will have a destabilizing effect, not only within Nigeria but also across the West African region and beyond, exacerbating poverty, insecurity, and displacement.

The journey to fix Nigeria will not be easy, but it is achievable. It requires strong political will to implement and enforce reforms that address corruption, strengthen institutions, and ensure accountability. Citizen engagement is crucial, as an active and informed populace is necessary to demand better governance and participate in nation-building. Equally important is sustained investment in critical areas such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and job creation to improve living standards and create opportunities for the youth. Nigeria has the tools to succeed: a resilient and entrepreneurial population, abundant resources, and strategic importance in Africa and the world. However, unlocking this potential requires a bold commitment to transformational change and a decisive rejection of the status quo.

The time to fix Nigeria is not tomorrow; it is now. This moment calls for visionary leadership, innovative policies, and collective action to rewrite the narrative of Nigeria’s future. If the country seizes this opportunity, it can break free from the cycle of underperformance and emerge as a beacon of progress and hope for Africa and the world.

## **1.4 The Cost of Inaction: Consequences of Not Fixing Nigeria**

The cost of failing to address Nigeria’s systemic challenges will have severe, long-term repercussions not only for the country but also for Africa and the global economy. These costs are already evident in the worsening living conditions, rising insecurity, and economic stagnation, and they are likely to escalate if the current trajectory continues. Below is an expanded analysis of the potential consequences of inaction.

### **i. Rising Poverty and Inequality**

| Current State:   * **87 million Nigerians** (38.9% of the population) live below the poverty line, and this number is projected to rise due to inflation, unemployment, and stagnant economic growth.[[82]](#footnote-81) * Regional disparities are stark: the North-East and North-West regions suffer from some of the highest poverty rates globally. | Cost of Inaction:   * **Worsening Poverty:** Without intervention, Nigeria risks becoming home to **over 100 million people in extreme poverty by 2030**, further solidifying its status as the poverty capital of the world. * **Inequality Explosion:** The rich-poor gap will widen, creating social tensions and undermining national cohesion. * **Erosion of Social Safety Nets:** Vulnerable populations, including women, children, and the elderly, will face even greater hardships, increasing malnutrition, school dropouts, and preventable deaths. |
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### **ii. Unemployment and Youth Restiveness**

| Current State:   * Youth unemployment stands at **53.40% in 2024**, with millions of young Nigerians unable to find meaningful employment.[[83]](#footnote-82) * The emigration of skilled professionals (brain drain) leaves the country with an unskilled or underutilized workforce. | Cost of Inaction:   * **Social Unrest:** A growing population of disillusioned, unemployed youth could fuel criminal activities, insurgencies, and urban violence. * **Worsening Insecurity:** Groups like Boko Haram and banditry networks thrive on economic disenfranchisement, using unemployment to recruit youth. * **Economic Losses:** High unemployment prevents Nigeria from harnessing its demographic dividend, leading to stagnation or decline in GDP growth. |
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### **iii. Escalating Insecurity**

| Current State:   * Nigeria faces simultaneous security crises, including terrorism (Boko Haram, ISWAP), banditry, kidnappings, and communal violence. * Approximately **2.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs)** live in deplorable conditions due to these conflicts. | Cost of Inaction:   * **Regional Destabilization:** Prolonged insecurity could spill over into neighboring countries, destabilizing the entire West African subregion. * **Economic Devastation:** Businesses will continue to shut down or relocate due to insecurity, further reducing job opportunities and government revenue. * **Humanitarian Crisis:** Without addressing the root causes of insecurity, displacement and refugee numbers will rise, leading to a protracted humanitarian crisis. |
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### **iv. Stunted Economic Growth**

| Current State:   * Nigeria’s economy remains over-reliant on oil, which accounts for **80% of export revenue** but contributes minimally to job creation.[[84]](#footnote-83) * Structural issues such as poor infrastructure, corruption, and an unfavorable business climate deter domestic and foreign investments. | Cost of Inaction:   * **Economic Decline:** GDP growth could stagnate or decline, leaving Nigeria ill-equipped to support its growing population of over 200 million. * **Debt Crisis:** Rising debt without corresponding revenue growth will strain public finances, leading to potential defaults and fiscal collapse. * **Loss of Competitiveness:** Nigeria will fall further behind emerging markets, losing opportunities to attract investments in technology, manufacturing, and services. |
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### **v. Brain Drain and Talent Loss**

| Current State:   * The "Japa" trend has seen millions of**Nigerians migrate between 2020 and 2024**, including healthcare workers, tech professionals, and academics. * Nigeria has lost approximately **$10 billion annually** since 2010 due to mass migration .[[85]](#footnote-84) | Cost of Inaction:   * **Weak Public Services:** The loss of professionals will cripple critical sectors like healthcare and education, leaving millions without essential services. * **Innovation Gap:** The departure of tech and engineering talent will stifle innovation, preventing Nigeria from participating in the global digital economy. * **Permanent Talent Loss:** Countries like Canada and the UK benefit from Nigeria’s skilled workforce, while the nation struggles to replace its brightest minds. |
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### **vi. Infrastructure Collapse**

| Current State:   * Nigeria’s infrastructure—roads, electricity, housing, and water—is grossly inadequate to meet current demands, let alone future needs. * Power generation remains stagnant at **5,528 MW**. | Cost of Inaction:   * **Economic Paralysis:** Poor infrastructure will continue to hinder industrialization, commerce, and job creation. * **Living Standards Decline:** Millions will remain without reliable electricity, potable water, or affordable housing, worsening urban slums and rural poverty. * **Missed Development Targets:** Without infrastructure investment, Nigeria will fail to meet its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in energy, housing, and clean water. |
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### **vii. Decline in Education and Human Capital**

| Current State:   * Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children globally (20.2 million) and a tertiary education enrollment rate of just **11.8%**. * Frequent university strikes and underfunding have crippled the education system. | Cost of Inaction:   * **Uneducated Workforce:** Poor education outcomes will leave Nigeria uncompetitive in the global economy, perpetuating cycles of poverty and underdevelopment. * **Youth Disillusionment:** A lack of quality education and job opportunities will push more young Nigerians to emigrate or turn to crime. * **Missed Economic Potential:** Education is directly linked to productivity, and failing to invest in human capital will stifle GDP growth for decades. |
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### **viii. Political Instability and Public Discontent**

| Current State:   * Governance failures, corruption, and electoral malpractice have eroded trust in political institutions. * The 2023 elections witnessed a record-low voter turnout of **27%**, reflecting widespread apathy. | Cost of Inaction:   * **Political Instability:** Growing public discontent could lead to protests, civil unrest, and a further erosion of democracy. * **Loss of Legitimacy:** Weak electoral systems and poor governance will reduce the credibility of leaders, worsening the cycle of ineffective policies and corruption. * **Regional Influence Decline:** Nigeria risks losing its position as a leader in Africa if it continues to falter domestically. |
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### **ix. Environmental and Climate Risks**

| Current State:   * Poor environmental management and deforestation have exacerbated flooding, desertification, and other climate risks. * Urban areas face severe waste management issues, contributing to public health crises. | Cost of Inaction:   * **Agricultural Decline:** Desertification and flooding will reduce arable land, threatening food security for millions. * **Health Crises:** Poor sanitation and environmental degradation will increase disease outbreaks, overwhelming the healthcare system. * **Displacement:** Climate-induced migration will worsen the internal displacement crisis, putting additional strain on resources. |
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### **x. Global Implications**

| Current State:   * Nigeria’s challenges have regional and global repercussions, given its size and strategic importance. * The country is a critical player in African trade, peacekeeping, and geopolitics. | Cost of Inaction:   * **Economic Impact on Africa:** Nigeria’s decline would destabilize neighboring economies and reduce Africa’s global bargaining power. * **Migration Pressure:** Increased migration from Nigeria would strain European and North American countries, exacerbating global refugee crises. * **Missed African Growth Potential:** As Africa’s largest economy, Nigeria’s underperformance hinders continental progress. |
| --- | --- |

The cost of inaction in fixing Nigeria is far-reaching, with dire consequences for its citizens, the African continent, and the global community. Rising poverty, insecurity, economic stagnation, and talent loss will only deepen Nigeria’s challenges, making recovery more difficult and expensive in the future.

Fixing Nigeria is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity to secure a prosperous future for its citizens and contribute meaningfully to global development. Without bold reforms and sustained investment, the cost of inaction will only escalate, leaving Nigeria—and by extension Africa—at a crossroads. The time to act is now.

# **Chapter 2.0 - Nigeria’s Leadership Crisis And Its Role In The Nation Underperformance.**

This chapter illustrates the leadership challenges that have bedeviled Nigeria for over three decades. It establishes a nexus between INEC's failures to conduct credible elections and the broader leadership failures in Nigeria. It is crucial to understand the connection between Nigeria's leadership challenges and the nation's underperformance by exploring and analyzing key leadership gaps exhibited by Nigerian leaders and their impact on national development. This understanding is essential to revealing why reforms of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) are critical for ushering in the right leaders capable of driving necessary change. This section also explores the concept of representative leadership in a democracy, identifies key leadership gaps exhibited by Nigeria's leaders, examines the drivers of these gaps, and analyzes their impact on national development. This foundational understanding provides clarity on the role of leadership in shaping development outcomes and the mechanisms needed to ensure accountability and progress.

## **2.1 Understanding the Concept of** Representative Leadership **in a Democracy.**

Representative leadership is a style of leadership in which leaders reflect and embody the interests, values, and diversity of the people or group they represent[[86]](#footnote-85). This leadership style is essential in organizations, governments, and other societal structures to ensure inclusivity, equity, and fairness in decision-making processes. Representative leadership requires leaders to maintain a balance between representing the collective interest and considering individual needs.

Representative leadership is a cornerstone of democratic governance, where the power to make decisions, create laws, and enforce them is entrusted by the people to their elected representatives and public officials. This concept is rooted in the principle that all political power originates from the citizens, who are the ultimate sovereigns in a democracy.

**Key Assumptions of Representative Leadership in Democracy**

1. **The Sovereignty of the People:** In a democracy, the people hold the highest authority. Representative leadership means that the citizens willingly transfer specific powers to their representatives through democratic processes, such as elections. This delegation is based on trust that these representatives will act in the public's best interest.
2. **Representative Governance:** Representative leadership enables a system of representative democracy, where elected officials act on behalf of the people. These officials are tasked with making decisions, formulating policies, and implementing laws that align with the collective will of the populace.
3. **Accountability and Responsibility:** Representative leadership comes with the expectation of accountability. Elected officials and public servants are responsible for justifying their actions and decisions to the people. Mechanisms like elections, public consultations, audits, and legislative oversight ensure that this authority is exercised transparently and ethically.
4. **Checks and Balances:** Representative leadership operates within a framework of checks and balances to prevent misuse of power. This ensures that no single branch of government or individual can monopolize authority, maintaining the balance essential for democratic governance.
5. **Temporary and Revocable Power:** Representative leadership is tenure bound, not absolute or permanent. Citizens retain the power to revoke this authority through democratic processes such as voting, impeachment, or recall mechanisms when representatives fail to fulfill their responsibilities or act contrary to the public interest.
6. **Rule of Law:** Representative leadership is exercised within the confines of the law. Representatives and officials are bound by constitutional provisions, statutes, and regulations, which outline the limits of their authority and protect citizens' rights.

**Importance of Representative leadership in Democracy**

* **Efficient Governance:** Direct participation by all citizens in every decision is impractical in large, modern societies. Representative leaders ensure efficient decision-making and administration.
* Representation: It allows diverse voices to be represented through elected officials, ensuring inclusivity in governance.
* Public Trust: Properly managed delegation fosters trust between citizens and their government, enhancing democratic stability.

## 

## **2.2. Defining the Scope of Leadership in Nigeria: An Overview of Nigeria's Leadership Structures**

Leadership is a broad concept that encompasses the act of leading a group of people in both macro and micro units or settings. For the sake of this report, the leaders referred to here are both elected and appointed representatives who derive their power from the constitution, taking an oath of allegiance to defend and serve for the common good. Nigeria has three tiers of government, the federal, the state and the local government. All the three tiers have three leadershipStructures where the powers of the states are vested on the legislature, the executive and the judiciary.

**i. Federal Government**

The Federal Government of Nigeria operates a presidential system with three distinct branches. The Executive branch is led by the President, who serves as both head of state and head of government, elected for a four-year term with a maximum of two terms. The President appoints and leads a Federal Executive Council comprising Ministers who oversee various federal ministries.

The National Assembly constitutes the Legislative branch, consisting of two chambers. The Senate, with 109 senators (three from each state and one from the Federal Capital Territory), is led by the Senate President. The House of Representatives includes 360 members distributed based on state population, headed by the Speaker.

The Judiciary, headed by the Chief Justice of Nigeria, includes the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, Federal High Courts, and other federal courts. The Supreme Court serves as the highest court, with 21 justices including the Chief Justice.

**ii. State Government Structure**

Nigeria's 36 states mirror the federal structure. Each state is led by a Governor who serves as the chief executive, elected for a maximum of two four-year terms. The Governor works with State Executive Councils comprising appointed Commissioners who manage state ministries.

State Houses of Assembly function as unicameral legislative bodies, with members elected from constituencies within the state. The number of legislators varies by state population, ranging from 24 to 40 members.

State Judiciaries operate under Chief Judges, overseeing State High Courts, Customary Courts of Appeal, and Sharia Courts of Appeal in applicable states.

**iii. Local Government Administration**

Nigeria has 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs). The LGAs constitute the third tier of government. Each LGA is administered by a Local Government Council, led by an elected Chairman who works with Council members representing various wards.

Local governments maintain departments that align with their constitutional responsibilities, including:

* Primary education administration
* Primary healthcare centres
* Environmental sanitation
* Local infrastructure maintenance
* Community development initiatives

iv. Constitutional Framework and Responsibilities

The 1999 Constitution (as amended) outlines the distribution of powers and responsibilities across these leadership structures:

| Federal Exclusive Powers  The federal government maintains exclusive authority over:   * National security and defence * Foreign relations * Monetary policy and currency * Immigration and citizenship * Mining and minerals * Interstate commerce * National Infrastructure   Concurrent Powers  Both federal and state governments share jurisdiction over:   * Education (tertiary/secondary) * Healthcare delivery * Agriculture * Industrial development * Environmental protection | State Powers  States maintain primary authority over:   * Urban development * State roads and infrastructure * Primary education * Healthcare facilities * Housing development * State civil service | Local Government Functions  Local governments focus on:   * Primary education management * Basic healthcare services * Community development * Local market administration * Rural infrastructure maintenance |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Leadership Interaction and Coordination**  The National Council of State, comprising the President, Vice President, all former Presidents and Heads of State, former Chief Justices, Senate President, House Speaker, Governors, and the Attorney-General, serves as a high-level advisory body facilitating coordination between federal and state leadership.  The National Economic Council, chaired by the Vice President with all state governors as members, coordinates economic planning and programs across federal and state levels. | | |

## **2.3. Overview of Key Leadership Gaps and Failures:**

“Nigeria developmental challenges are linked to failures of leaders elected to serve the country.

Nigerians, through the democratic process, elect delegate leaders to make decisions on their behalf. This implies that the economic and social indicators of the nation's non-performance have a correlation with the quality of their decision-making. Given Nigeria's underperformance, it is important to note that the country’s leadership crisis is a multifaceted issue that has hindered its progress since independence in 1960. Despite being one of Africa’s largest economies and most populous countries, Nigeria’s leadership has struggled to effectively manage resources, implement impactful policies, and foster an environment of inclusive growth. The leadership crisis is manifested through corruption, poor governance, lack of accountability, weak institutions, political instability, and social unrest. These challenges have led to underdevelopment, widening inequality, and a loss of faith in political processes.

### **2.3.1 Gap in Governance and Policy Implementation**:

There are specific areas where Nigeria’s leadership are not meeting expectations:

Nigeria's governance and policy implementation challenges represent significant obstacles to national development. There are critical leadership gaps in policy formulation, execution, and monitoring. These gaps have an impact on key national indicators.

**Policy Formulation Weaknesses:** The policy formulation process suffers from several fundamental flaws. Many policies enacted by Nigerian leaders lack comprehensive stakeholder input, resulting in disconnected initiatives that fail to address root causes of developmental challenges. Policy development often occurs in isolation, without adequate consideration of implementation capacity or resource constraints.

**Implementation Deficiencies:** The policy formulation process suffers from several fundamental flaws. Many policies enacted by Nigerian leaders lack comprehensive stakeholder input, resulting in disconnected initiatives that fail to address root causes of developmental challenges. Policy development often occurs in isolation, without adequate consideration of implementation capacity or resource constraints.The policy formulation process suffers from several fundamental flaws. Many policies enacted by Nigerian leaders lack comprehensive stakeholder input, resulting in disconnected initiatives that fail to address root causes of developmental challenges. Policy development often occurs in isolation, without adequate consideration of implementation capacity or resource constraints.

**Monitoring and Evaluation Inadequacies:** Leadership has consistently failed to establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This results in limited accountability, poor performance tracking, and inability to make data-driven policy adjustments. The absence of clear metrics and regular assessment frameworks undermines policy effectiveness.

**Impact Analysis**

Healthcare Sector: The healthcare sector exemplifies policy implementation challenges:

* National Health Insurance Scheme reaches only 5% of the population[[87]](#footnote-86)
* Only [about 20%](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5346888/) of the 30,000 PHC facilities across Nigeria are fully functional[[88]](#footnote-87).
* The government dedicates as low as 4% of its annual budgets on health[[89]](#footnote-88), Against 15% recommended by Abuja declaration
* Health worker retention policies show minimal effectiveness

Education Sector: Educational policy implementation reveals significant gaps:

* Universal Basic Education program struggles with 18 %% implementation rate[[90]](#footnote-89)
* Teacher training policies achieve only 25% of targeted outcomes[[91]](#footnote-90)
* School infrastructure development plans face 60% execution delays[[92]](#footnote-91)
* Curriculum modernization efforts stall at implementation stage

Infrastructure Development: Infrastructure policies face severe implementation challenges:

* Power sector reforms achieve only 30% of targeted outcomes[[93]](#footnote-92)
* N17 trillion worth of abandoned projects nationwide
* Failure to reform the police

Economic Indicators: Policy implementation gaps directly affect economic performance:

* GDP growth remains below population growth rate
* Unemployment reaches 4.80%[[94]](#footnote-93)
* Foreign direct investment declines by 65.33%[[95]](#footnote-94)
* Manufacturing sector endangered despite increase in Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) to 50.5 percent[[96]](#footnote-95)

Social Indicators: Social development suffers from implementation failures:

* Poverty rate increases to 38.9%[[97]](#footnote-96)
* Income inequality widens by 25%
* Access to basic services declines by 32%[[98]](#footnote-97)
* Social mobility indicators show 40% deterioration

### **2.3.2 Gap in addressing Corruption and Lack of Accountability**:

Corruption has been a major setback in Nigeria over the years. Despite numerous anti-corruption initiatives, Nigeria continues to grapple with systemic corruption and accountability failures. This analysis examines the depth, impact, and indicators of corruption across various sectors of governance and public administration.

**Scale of Corruption**

Financial Impact: The monetary cost of corruption in Nigeria reaches staggering proportions:

* Estimated $18 billion lost to corruption annually[[99]](#footnote-98)
* Approximately 20% of annual GDP lost to illegal economic activities [[100]](#footnote-99)
* Over 1.3 trillion lost through illegal oil refining activities[[101]](#footnote-100)
* Public procurement corruption due to corrupt practices[[102]](#footnote-101)

**Institutional Corruption Penetration: Corruption permeates key institutions:**

* Civil Service: Ghost worker schemes cost N5.5 billion monthly[[103]](#footnote-102)
* Public Procurement: Inflated government contracts[[104]](#footnote-103).
* Law Enforcement: 60% of Nigerians reported paying bribes to police.
* Judiciary: The rate of judiciary corruption is deplorable[[105]](#footnote-104)

**Historical Performance on Transparency International Rankings:** Nigeria's CPI rankings show persistent challenges:

* 2024: Ranked 145th out of 180 countries[[106]](#footnote-105)
* Scored 24/100 points consistently
* Remains in bottom quartile globally
* Shows minimal improvement over decade

**Accountability Framework Analysis**

**Institutional Weaknesses**

| 1. **Anti-Corruption Agencies:**  * Limited operational independence * Inadequate funding and resources * Political interference in operations * Selective prosecution of cases | 1. **Judicial System:**  * Lengthy trial procedures * Limited conviction rates * Corruption within judiciary * Political influence on cases |
| --- | --- |

**Legislative Gaps**

| 1. **Legal Framework:**  * Outdated anti-corruption laws * Weak whistleblower protection * Inadequate asset recovery mechanisms * Limited international cooperation provisions | 1. **Enforcement Challenges:**  * Poor implementation of existing laws * Weak investigative capacity * Limited prosecution success * Inadequate sanctions |
| --- | --- |

**Sectoral Analysis**

| Public Financial Management   1. **Budget Process:**  * Limited transparency in allocation * Poor oversight mechanisms * Weak audit systems * Ineffective expenditure tracking | 1. **Revenue Collection:**  * Limited transparency in allocation * Poor oversight mechanisms * Weak audit systems * Ineffective expenditure tracking |
| --- | --- |

**Public Service Delivery**

| 1. Healthcare Sector:  * Drug procurement fraud * Equipment purchase inflation * Ghost worker schemes * Service delivery corruption | 1. Education Sector:  * Admission racketeering * Contract inflation * Examination malpractice * Resource misallocation |
| --- | --- |

Corruption and accountability failures represent fundamental failure of leadership leading to outcomes that challenges Nigeria's development. The pervasive nature of corruption, coupled with weak accountability frameworks, has created a governance crisis.

### **2.3.3 Gap in building Strong Institutions**:

Nigeria's institutional framework suffers from systemic weaknesses that undermine effective governance and development. This analysis examines the critical gaps across key institutions and their impact on national progress.

**Judiciary System Weaknesses:**

The judiciary faces fundamental operational issues:

* Average case duration extends beyond 5 years
* There are 243,253 cases pending in the court[[107]](#footnote-106)
* Most courts are not fully computerized
* The judiciary is under-staffed

Independence Concerns: Judicial autonomy remains compromised:

* Political interference in judicial appointments
* Financial dependence on executive branch
* Limited security of tenure
* Inadequate protection mechanisms

Infrastructure Deficits: Physical and technological limitations:

* Most of the courtrooms require renovation
* Limited automated case management
* Inadequate research facilities
* Poor record-keeping systems

**Legislative Oversight Failures:**

Parliament's oversight function shows significant gaps:

* Only few committees conduct regular oversight
* Investigation findings rarely lead to action
* Limited technical capacity for budget analysis
* Poor monitoring of implementation

Legislative Process: Law-making effectiveness faces challenges:

* Bills take average of 3-5 years to pass
* most of passed bills lack implementation
* Limited public participation in legislative process
* Poor quality of legislative drafting

**Resource Constraints: Operational limitations include:**

* Inadequate research support
* Limited specialist expertise
* Poor funding for committee activities
* Weak administrative infrastructure

**Civil Service Deficiencies: Structural Issues**

The civil service exhibits systemic problems:

* Bloated workforce with 70% redundancy
* Average age of senior staff above 50
* Limited technological adoption
* Rigid hierarchical structure

Competency Gaps: Professional capacity shows significant weaknesses:

* lack required qualifications
* Limited specialist knowledge
* Poor performance management
* Inadequate training programs

Administrative Inefficiencies: Operational challenges include:

* Excessive bureaucratic procedures
* Poor document management
* Limited service delivery standards
* Weak accountability mechanisms

**Regulatory Bodies' Weaknesses**

Enforcement Capacity: Regulatory effectiveness is compromised by:

* Limited investigation capabilities
* Weak enforcement mechanisms
* Poor monitoring systems
* Inadequate sanctions framework

Operational Independence: Agencies face autonomy challenges:

* Political interference in operations
* Inadequate funding mechanisms
* Limited decision-making authority
* Poor protection from external pressure

Nigeria's institutional weaknesses represent a fundamental challenge to effective governance and development. Addressing these weaknesses requires comprehensive reform across all institutional frameworks, supported by sustained political will and adequate resources.

### **2.3.4 Gap in Crisis Management**:

Nigeria's crisis management capabilities have been severely tested by multiple concurrent challenges, revealing significant leadership gaps in response mechanisms and strategic planning. This analysis examines the critical deficiencies in crisis leadership and their impact on national stability.

| **Boko Haram Insurgency Response**  Leadership failures in managing the insurgency:   * Delayed initial response allowed group expansion * Poor intelligence coordination between agencies * Inadequate resource allocation to affected regions * Limited strategic planning for long-term resolution   Impact Metrics:   * Over 350,000 deaths since 2009 * 2.1 million internally displaced persons * Economic losses exceeding $9 billion * Destruction of 1,500 schools and 500 healthcare centers | **Banditry and Kidnapping**  Crisis response inadequacies:   * Fragmented security operations * Weak community engagement strategies * Poor inter-state coordination * Inadequate victim support systems   Consequence Metrics:   * 5,000+ kidnapping cases annually * School attendance dropped 30% in affected areas * Rural economy losses of $2.3 billion * Mass displacement of farming communities |
| --- | --- |
| **Social Unrest Management : EndSARS Protests**  Leadership response failures:   * Delayed acknowledgment of legitimate grievances * Excessive force in protest management * Poor communication strategy * Inadequate reform implementation   Outcome Analysis:   * Loss of 51 civilian lives * Property damage exceeding N1 trillion * Erosion of public trust in security forces * International reputation damage | **Ethnic Conflicts:** Management deficiencies:   * Reactive rather than preventive approaches * Limited conflict resolution mechanisms * Poor implementation of peace agreements * Inadequate addressing of root causes   **Impact Assessment:**   * 15,000+ deaths in farmer-herder conflicts * Displacement of 300,000+ people * Agricultural output reduction of 25% * Community relations breakdown |
| **Economic Crisis Management**  Currency Crisis Response: Leadership gaps in financial management:   * Poor timing of policy implementation * Inadequate stakeholder consultation * Limited mitigation measures * Weak public communication   Economic Impact:   * 25% currency devaluation * Inflation spike to 28% * Business closure rate increased by 40% * Foreign investment decline of 35% | **COVID-19 Economic Response**  Pandemic management weaknesses:   * Delayed economic intervention * Poor distribution of relief materials * Limited support for affected sectors * Weak monitoring of intervention funds   Consequence Analysis:   * 4.1% economic contraction in 2020 * 7.2 million jobs lost * 5 million people pushed into poverty * SME closure rate of 40% |
| **Natural Disaster Management**  Flood Response: Crisis management failures:   * Limited early warning systems * Poor evacuation planning * Inadequate relief coordination * Weak reconstruction planning   Impact Metrics:   * 600+ lives lost in 2022 floods * Economic losses of N2.6 trillion * 1.4 million people displaced * Infrastructure damage exceeding N900 billion |  |

Nigeria's crisis management capabilities require significant enhancement through comprehensive reform of leadership approaches, institutional frameworks, and response mechanisms. Success depends on sustained commitment to building robust crisis management systems and improving leadership capacity in emergency response. The path forward requires both immediate interventions to address current crises and long-term strategic changes to build resilient crisis management capabilities.

### **2.3.5 Gap in Accountability and Trust**:

The accountability and trust deficit in Nigerian leadership represents a fundamental challenge that undermines governance effectiveness and public confidence in institutions. This gap manifests as a systemic failure in leadership responsibility and transparency, creating a deep-seated mistrust between leaders and the populace.

The accountability gap is primarily characterized by weak enforcement of leadership responsibilities and obligations. Despite existing legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms for accountability, leaders often operate with apparent impunity, disregarding constitutional provisions and regulatory requirements. This selective application of accountability measures has created a culture where leadership positions are viewed as opportunities for personal enrichment rather than public service.

Trust erosion stems from persistent patterns of unfulfilled promises and abandoned commitments. Nigerian leaders frequently make grand pronouncements and policy declarations without following through on implementation, leading to widespread public cynicism. This credibility gap is further widened by the disconnect between official statements and observable realities, particularly in areas of public expenditure and project execution.

The financial accountability dimension presents particular concerns. Leaders often demonstrate opacity in managing public resources, with limited transparency in budget implementation and project financing. The recurring issues of misappropriated funds, inflated contracts, and unexplained expenditures have created a perception of leadership positions as vehicles for personal enrichment rather than public service delivery.

Information asymmetry compounds the accountability gap. Leaders frequently withhold crucial information from the public or present it in forms that obscure rather than illuminate. This deliberate opacity in governance processes prevents effective public scrutiny and meaningful citizen participation in decision-making processes.

The weakness of institutional oversight mechanisms further exacerbates the problem. While Nigeria has various accountability institutions, their effectiveness is often compromised by political interference, inadequate resources, and limited enforcement powers. This institutional weakness creates an environment where leadership accountability becomes discretionary rather than mandatory.

Performance measurement and evaluation systems show significant deficiencies. Leaders often resist or circumvent mechanisms for measuring their performance against stated objectives. The absence of robust performance metrics and regular evaluation processes makes it difficult to assess leadership effectiveness and hold leaders accountable for their decisions and actions.

The trust gap manifests strongly in public-private sector relationships. Business leaders often view government pronouncements with skepticism, leading to hesitation in long-term investments and strategic partnerships. This trust deficit affects economic growth and development by creating an environment of uncertainty and risk aversion.

Trust Deficit Indicators

The accountability and trust gap in Nigerian leadership represents a critical challenge to democratic governance and national development. Addressing this requires comprehensive reform of political culture, strengthening of institutions, and sustained commitment to public engagement.

Success in bridging this gap depends on both structural reforms and cultural transformation, supported by consistent demonstration of leadership accountability and responsiveness to citizen needs.

### **2.3.6 Gap in Strategic Decision Making**:

Strategic decision-making deficiencies in Nigerian leadership represent a fundamental challenge that permeates both public and private sector governance. This gap manifests in the inability to make long-term, systematic decisions that advance national interests and sustainable development objectives.

A primary manifestation of this gap is the prevalence of reactive rather than proactive leadership approaches. Nigerian leaders often respond to challenges after they emerge rather than anticipating and preparing for them through strategic planning. This reactionary stance frequently results in crisis management becoming the default mode of governance, rather than strategic foresight and preventive action.

The absence of comprehensive strategic frameworks is particularly evident in policy formulation and implementation. Leaders often make decisions without adequate consideration of their long-term implications or interconnections with other policy areas. This siloed approach to decision-making fails to recognize the complex relationships between different sectors of the economy and society, leading to fragmented and sometimes contradictory policies.

Another critical aspect of this gap is the tendency toward short-term thinking driven by political expediency. Leaders frequently prioritize immediate political gains over long-term national development objectives. This short-termism manifests in the preference for visible but superficial projects over strategic investments in fundamental systems and infrastructure that might not show immediate results but are crucial for sustainable development.

The weakness in strategic decision-making is also reflected in resource allocation patterns. Leaders often fail to align budget priorities with long-term strategic objectives, resulting in inefficient resource utilization and missed opportunities for strategic investments. This misalignment is particularly evident in the handling of oil revenues, where short-term consumption often takes precedence over strategic investment in diversification and sustainable development.

Furthermore, there is a noticeable gap in the utilization of strategic planning tools and methodologies. Many Nigerian leaders lack proficiency in strategic analysis frameworks, scenario planning, and risk assessment methodologies. This deficiency leads to decisions being made without proper evaluation of alternatives, risks, and long-term consequences.

The gap extends to stakeholder engagement in strategic decision-making processes. Leaders often fail to incorporate diverse perspectives and expertise in their decision-making, resulting in strategies that lack broad-based support and fail to address the complex needs of various stakeholder groups. This limitation in inclusive strategic thinking undermines the effectiveness and sustainability of major policy initiatives.

A significant aspect of this gap is the weak connection between strategic vision and operational execution. While some leaders may articulate grand visions, there is often a disconnect between these high-level aspirations and the practical steps needed for implementation. This gap between strategic intent and operational reality frequently results in failed initiatives and unrealized objectives.

The impact of this strategic decision-making gap is particularly evident in international relations and economic diplomacy. Nigerian leaders often struggle to develop and maintain consistent strategic positions in international negotiations, resulting in missed opportunities for advancing national interests in the global arena.

Moreover, there is a notable deficiency in strategic crisis management capabilities. The lack of robust strategic frameworks for addressing emergencies and unexpected challenges often leads to ad-hoc responses that may solve immediate problems but create longer-term complications.

**Core Strategic Decision-Making Gaps**

| Planning Deficiencies   1. Short-term Focus  * Emphasis on immediate solutions over long-term strategies * Limited consideration of future scenarios * Reactive rather than proactive planning * Poor integration of demographic trends  1. Data Utilization  * Limited use of evidence-based decision making * Poor quality of statistical information * Inadequate research utilization * Weak data collection systems | Implementation Weaknesses   1. Resource Allocation  * Poor prioritization of strategic initiatives * Ineffective budget allocation * Limited consideration of resource constraints * Weak alignment between goals and resources  1. Coordination Failures  * Limited inter-ministerial cooperation * Poor federal-state alignment * Weak public-private sector coordination * Inadequate stakeholder engagement |
| --- | --- |
| Economic Planning   1. Industrial Development  * Inconsistent industrial policies * Limited value chain integration * Poor infrastructure planning * Weak export strategy development  1. Financial Management  * Short-term fiscal planning * Limited debt management strategy * Poor revenue diversification * Weak investment planning | Social Development   1. Education Sector  * Limited workforce planning * Poor infrastructure development strategy * Weak curriculum evolution planning * Inadequate technology integration  1. Healthcare System  * Poor health infrastructure planning * Limited epidemic preparedness * Weak healthcare workforce strategy * Inadequate medical research planning |

Leadership Capacity Gaps

| Technical Competencies   1. Analytical Skills  * Limited scenario planning capability * Poor risk assessment * Weak data interpretation * Inadequate strategic thinking  1. Management Capabilities  * Poor project management skills * Limited change management expertise * Weak performance monitoring * Inadequate resource optimization | Decision Support Systems   1. Information Management  * Poor knowledge management systems * Limited decision support tools * Weak information sharing * Inadequate data analytics  1. Expert Input  * Limited use of expert committees * Poor integration of research findings * Weak technical advisory systems * Inadequate consultation processes |
| --- | --- |

### 2.3.7 Gap in Technical Competence

Technical competence gaps among Nigerian leaders represent a significant challenge that undermines effective governance and national development. This deficiency manifests in several critical ways across both public and private sector leadership. The fundamental problem lies in the mismatch between leaders' technical capabilities and the increasingly complex demands of modern governance. Many Nigerian leaders lack the technical expertise required to understand and effectively manage sophisticated policy issues, emerging technologies, and complex economic systems. This gap is particularly evident in their approach to digital transformation, infrastructure development, and economic diversification initiatives.

A key contributing factor is the traditional emphasis on political connections and patronage networks over technical qualifications in leadership selection. While political acumen is important, the relegation of technical expertise to a secondary consideration has resulted in leaders who struggle to grasp the technical intricacies of major national projects, leading to poor decision-making and implementation. The technical competence gap also extends to data-driven decision-making. Many Nigerian leaders demonstrate limited capacity to utilize data analytics, economic modeling, and evidence-based approaches in policy formulation. This deficiency often results in intuition-based rather than data-informed leadership, leading to suboptimal outcomes in resource allocation and project execution.

The infrastructure sector particularly suffers from this technical leadership gap. Many leaders lack the engineering and project management expertise needed to effectively oversee major infrastructure projects, resulting in poor project conceptualization, flawed execution, and wastage of resources. This is evident in the numerous abandoned or poorly executed infrastructure projects across the country. In the digital age, the technical competence gap has become even more pronounced. Many Nigerian leaders demonstrate limited understanding of emerging technologies, cybersecurity threats, and digital governance frameworks. This knowledge deficit hampers the country's ability to leverage technology for development and positions Nigeria at a disadvantage in the global digital economy.

The educational and professional background of many leaders often reveals a shortage of technical and specialized training in crucial areas such as public finance, environmental management, and technology policy. While many possess general administrative or political science backgrounds, there is a notable absence of technical expertise in specific domains relevant to modern governance. The impact of this technical competence gap extends to international negotiations and partnerships. Nigerian leaders often find themselves at a disadvantage when negotiating technical agreements in areas such as trade, technology transfer, and industrial cooperation, potentially resulting in unfavorable terms for the country.

Moreover, this deficiency affects the quality of oversight of technical agencies and parastatals. Leaders without adequate technical understanding struggle to provide effective supervision and strategic direction to specialized government agencies, leading to reduced operational efficiency and achievement of organizational objectives. Addressing this technical competence gap requires a fundamental shift in leadership selection criteria and capacity building approaches. There is a need to prioritize technical expertise alongside political considerations in leadership appointments and to invest in continuous technical education and skills development for existing leaders.

## **2.4 Key Drivers of Nigeria’s Leadership Crisis**

The crisis can be attributed to several interrelated factors that perpetuate poor governance and hinder effective leadership:

1. **Corruption**:  
   Corruption remains one of the most pervasive challenges in Nigerian leadership. From the highest levels of government to local institutions, corrupt practices have become deeply entrenched in Nigeria's political system. Public officials often embezzle public funds, divert resources meant for development, and engage in bribery. This corruption not only depletes the country’s resources but also undermines public trust in the leadership.
2. **Weak Institutions**:  
   Nigeria’s institutions—such as the judiciary, legislature, and law enforcement—are often weak and ineffective. Political interference, underfunding, and lack of independence limit their ability to perform their functions properly. The failure of institutions to check executive power, uphold the rule of law, and provide oversight contributes to the governance failure.
3. **Political Patronage and Elitism**:  
   A culture of patronage, where political leaders rely on personal connections and loyalty rather than merit, has led to the dominance of political elites in decision-making processes. This concentration of power in the hands of a few individuals or groups has perpetuated inequality, created division, and stifled broader participation in governance. As a result, citizens often feel marginalized and disconnected from the political process.
4. **Poor Electoral Systems and Election Manipulation**:  
   While Nigeria has held regular elections since 1999, the electoral system remains fraught with irregularities, including vote rigging, electoral violence, and manipulation of results. This has led to a lack of credibility in election outcomes, diminished voter confidence, and electoral apathy. Political leaders often come to power through illegitimate means, undermining the democratic process and perpetuating a cycle of poor governance.
5. **Ethnic and Religious Divisions**:  
   Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious composition has been a source of tension throughout its history. Political leaders often exploit these divisions to mobilize support, fostering tribalism and religious polarization. This divisive approach to leadership weakens national cohesion, undermines social trust, and obstructs the creation of a unified national identity.

## 2.5 Impact of the Leadership Crisis on National Development

The leadership crisis in Nigeria has had far-reaching consequences on national development, contributing to:

* **Economic Stagnation**:  
  Despite being rich in natural resources, particularly oil, Nigeria has failed to fully leverage its wealth for broad-based economic development. Corruption, mismanagement of resources, and poor governance have hindered infrastructural development, job creation, and the diversification of the economy. As a result, the country faces high poverty rates, inequality, and an over-reliance on oil exports.
* **Social Unrest and Instability**:  
  Poor leadership has fueled social unrest in various regions of the country. Ethnic and religious tensions, alongside widespread poverty and unemployment, have led to violent conflicts, insurgencies (such as Boko Haram), and secessionist movements (e.g., IPOB). These conflicts destabilize the nation, waste resources, and result in loss of life and displacement of citizens.
* **Erosion of Public Trust**:  
  Over the years, Nigerians have become increasingly disillusioned with their leaders. Public trust in the political class has eroded due to rampant corruption, unfulfilled promises, and poor governance. Citizens often feel disconnected from their government, resulting in a lack of civic engagement, voter apathy, and a weakened democratic culture.
* **Inadequate Public Services**:  
  Leadership failures have resulted in the deterioration of essential public services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. The Nigerian healthcare system, for instance, faces chronic shortages of medical professionals, poor facilities, and inadequate funding. Educational institutions struggle with underfunding, poor quality of teaching and high dropout rates. These failures hinder human capital development and economic growth.

# **Chapter 3.0 - INEC Is Broken - Enabling The Ascendance Of Ineffective Elected Leaders.**

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the cornerstone of Nigeria's democratic process, entrusted with the responsibility of conducting free, fair, and credible elections[[108]](#footnote-107). In any democracy, the electoral body plays a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of governance by ensuring that competent, ethical, and visionary leaders emerge through a transparent and inclusive process. However, in Nigeria, INEC has consistently fallen short of this mandate. Its systemic inefficiencies, operational shortcomings, and susceptibility to political interference have contributed to the ascendance of ineffective and unaccountable leaders—leaders who have, in turn, perpetuated the nation's cycle of underperformance.

In Part 2 of this Report we conducted a deep dive to provide a deeper understanding of the problem that needs to be resolved in INEC and in Part 3 we provided clarity of the Solution and how we can Fix INEC.

In this chapter, we will provide a brief overview of the flawed election history conducted by INEC and how it is contributing to the ascendance of ineffective leaders. It is therefore imperative to pose the question, why is INEC important in our democracy, and how is it enabling the rise of ineffective leaders?

### **3.1 Understanding The Triangular Pillars of Democracy and the Role of INEC as a Regulator**

Democracy is sustained by three interdependent core values: **Citizenship**, **Leadership**, and **Institutions**. These core values form the foundation of a functional, just, and accountable democratic system. Each plays a critical role in upholding democratic ideals and ensuring the stability of governance.

#### **3.1.1. Citizenship**

Citizens are the heartbeat of democracy. Their participation ensures the legitimacy of democratic processes. This pillar rests on three core aspects:

* **Informed Engagement**: Citizens must be knowledgeable about their rights, civic responsibilities, and the power of their vote. Political literacy is vital to ensure citizens make informed decisions.
* **Active Participation**: Beyond voting, citizens should engage in dialogue, advocacy, and public accountability mechanisms to demand better governance.
* **Vigilance**: Democracy requires constant oversight by its citizens. Staying alert to abuses of power ensures leaders and institutions remain accountable.

#### **3.1.2. Leadership**

Values-based leadership is the second pillar of democracy. Leaders are the custodians of public trust and are instrumental in shaping policies, governance, and institutional integrity. Effective leadership has three essential characteristics:

* **Competence**: Leaders must have the skills and knowledge to govern effectively and address societal challenges.
* **Character**: Values such as honesty, transparency, and commitment to public service distinguish transformative leaders.
* **Capacity**: Leaders should be able to implement and sustain impactful policies and reforms that advance the common good.

#### **3.1.3. Institutions - INEC**

Institutions such as INEC, the Judiciary and Security agencies provide supportive framework within which democracy operates. Strong institutions ensure the rule of law, equality, and fairness in governance. Key institutional attributes include:

* **Independence**: Institutions must function autonomously, free from external pressures or interference.
* **Integrity**: Upholding ethical standards and transparency is crucial for maintaining public trust.
* **Efficiency**: Institutions must be adequately resourced and managed to fulfil their mandates effectively.

### **3.2 The Role of INEC as a Regulatory Institution.**

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) occupies a critical position in Nigeria’s democratic framework as the institution responsible for regulating and conducting elections. Its role cuts across all three pillars of democracy, making it indispensable to the democratic process.

**INEC and Citizenship**

* **Voter Education**: INEC is mandated to educate citizens on the electoral process, ensuring that they understand the power of their vote and the mechanics of elections.
* **Voter Registration**: Facilitating a comprehensive and inclusive voter registration process ensures all eligible citizens can participate in elections.

**INEC and Leadership**

* **Candidate Oversight**: INEC sets and enforces guidelines for political candidates and parties, ensuring a level playing field for all aspirants.
* **Elections Monitoring**: By guaranteeing free, fair, and transparent elections, INEC enables the emergence of leaders chosen by the people.

**INEC and Institutions**

* **Electoral Integrity**: INEC is expected to conduct credible elections to reinforce trust in Nigeria’s democratic institutions.
* **Conflict Resolution**: INEC is tasked with maintaining stability and ensuring compliance with electoral laws.
* **Technology Integration**: INEC’s adoption of digital tools, such as BVAS (Bimodal Voter Accreditation System), is supposed to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the electoral process.

### **3.3 Brief Overview of Nigeria's Flawed Electoral History**

Elections are the cornerstone of democracy, providing citizens the platform to exercise their sovereignty by choosing representatives who will govern and shape public policies. For Nigeria, a country rich in diversity and historical complexities, the journey of electoral democracy has been a long and tumultuous one. Since the introduction of elective principles under the 1922 Clifford Constitution[[109]](#footnote-108)Nigeria has grappled with the challenges of organizing credible elections amidst a backdrop of ethnic tensions, political power struggles, and systemic inefficiencies[[110]](#footnote-109).

Over the decades, the nation’s electoral process has been marked by contrasting experiences—hope and disillusionment, progress and regression. While elections have occasionally created a sense of national unity and optimism, they have more frequently been marred by allegations of malpractice, violence, and corruption. These recurring issues have eroded public trust in the electoral system and exposed the structural and cultural weaknesses within Nigeria’s political framework[[111]](#footnote-110).

This history is not merely a chronicle of events but a reflection of deeper societal dynamics: the struggle for power among elites, the marginalisation of key groups, and the challenges of building institutions capable of upholding democratic ideals. Understanding Nigeria’s electoral history is crucial to diagnosing its challenges and charting a path toward sustainable reform. The Uwais Report provided an insightful lens into this history, identifying key patterns, lessons, and opportunities for transformation.

In the following sections, gleaning insights from the Justice Uwais report and other sources we seek to explore the critical observations and trends that have defined Nigeria’s electoral journey.

#### **3.3.1 Degeneration of Electoral Outcomes**

Nigeria's electoral history spans nearly a century, beginning with the **1922 Clifford Constitution**, which introduced limited suffrage and elections[[112]](#footnote-111). Despite this early start, the trajectory of electoral quality has shown consistent deterioration over the years.

#### i. Colonial and Pre-Independence Elections (1922–1960)

Elections during this period were **limited in scope**, with participation restricted to a small segment of the population—educated elites and property owners. Although these elections were less contentious due to their limited franchise, they laid the **foundation for ethnic and regional political alliances** that later dominated Nigeria’s politics, sowing seeds of division.

#### ii. Post-Independence Elections (1960–1979)

The first major elections after independence in 1964 were plagued by **vote rigging, violence, and ethnic tensions**, resulting in widespread allegations of fraud. These flaws created a political crisis, eventually leading to Nigeria’s **first military coup in 1966**.  
This period highlighted the fragility of Nigeria’s democratic institutions and the consequences of flawed elections on national stability.

#### iii. Transition Elections Under the Military (1979 and 1993)

Elections conducted during military transitions to civilian rule offered a glimpse of improvement in electoral processes.

* The **1979 elections**, overseen by the military government of General Olusegun Obasanjo, were **reasonably fair**, though they remained contentious, particularly regarding the legitimacy of the outcome.
* The **1993 elections**, regarded as the **freest and fairest in Nigeria’s history**, were annulled by the military regime, causing widespread protests and political instability. This annulment remains a significant blot on Nigeria’s democratic journey, as it undermined public trust in electoral integrity.

#### iv. Civilian-Administered Elections (1999–2007)

The transition to civilian rule in 1999 did not deliver significant improvements in electoral quality.

* The **2003 elections** witnessed **large-scale rigging, voter intimidation, and logistical failures**.
* The **2007 elections** represented a new low, with widespread reports of **blatant electoral fraud and political violence**. These elections, described as the **most flawed in Nigeria’s history**, underscored the urgent need for comprehensive electoral reforms.

#### v. 2011 Election

The 2011 elections marked an attempt to address some of the persistent flaws in Nigeria’s electoral processes. While the elections saw **improvements in transparency**, they were still marred by **post-election violence**, which highlighted lingering tensions over electoral outcomes.

#### vi. 2015 Election

The 2015 elections were a **watershed moment** in Nigeria’s democratic history, with the first **peaceful transfer of power between political parties[[113]](#footnote-112)**. Despite logistical challenges and reports of vote-buying, the elections were largely commended for their credibility, signifying progress in electoral management.

#### vii. 2023 Election

The 2023 elections, conducted under heightened expectations of fairness and transparency, revealed a **mixed outcome**. While technological innovations such as the use of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and electronic transmission of results were introduced, the elections faced **criticism for alleged irregularities, logistical shortcomings, and delays in result announcements**. These issues reignited calls for comprehensive reforms to restore public confidence in the electoral system.

This consistent decline demonstrates the inability of existing institutions and legal frameworks to address evolving electoral challenges, making reform indispensable.

#### **3.3.2 Politicians’ Perception of Power**

The Uwais Report emphasized the flawed perception of power among Nigeria’s political elite, which treats public office as a means of accumulating wealth and exercising control rather than serving the public[[114]](#footnote-113). This perception has fueled a “do-or-die” approach to elections, characterized by:

* **Election Violence**: Candidates and their supporters resort to intimidation, physical attacks, and even killings to suppress opposition and secure victory.
* **Monetization of Politics**: Political campaigns are heavily influenced by money, with widespread practices of vote-buying and financial inducement of electoral officials.
* **Abuse of State Resources**: Incumbents often misuse state funds, media, and security apparatus to gain an unfair advantage over opponents.

This destructive mindset has deepened voter disillusionment and eroded trust in the democratic process, perpetuating a cycle of poor governance and electoral malpractice.

#### 3.3.3 Citizens Perception of INEC

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is a cornerstone of Nigeria’s democratic framework, tasked with ensuring free, fair, and credible elections. However, citizens' perception of INEC has varied significantly over time, reflecting the institution’s successes and failures in fulfilling its mandate.

**i. General Perception of INEC’s Credibility**

Public trust in INEC has fluctuated, often correlating with the quality of elections conducted. Over the years, citizens have expressed distrust and scepticism about INEC’s ability to conduct impartial elections due to perceived partisanship, inefficiency, and susceptibility to political interference. Key concerns include:

* Electoral malpractice: Allegations of vote rigging, ballot box snatching, and falsification of results.
* Logistical challenges: Delays in result announcements, insufficient election materials, and malfunctioning technology.
* Lack of transparency: Inconsistent adherence to electoral guidelines and lack of accountability for failures.

**ii. Perceptions Based on Electoral Cycles**

* **Pre-2011 Era:** Citizens viewed INEC as inefficient and politicised, largely failing to deliver credible elections, especially during the 2003 and 2007 elections. This period is marked by blatant electoral fraud that eroded public trust.
* **2011 Elections:** Led by Chairman Attahiru Jega, INEC introduced reforms to improve electoral integrity, including the use of biometric voter registration. Citizens perceived this as a step forward, though post-election violence dampened optimism.
* **2015 Elections**: Public perception improved significantly, as INEC oversaw the first peaceful transition of power between parties. Innovations like the Permanent Voter’s Card (PVC) and card readers were hailed as positive developments, bolstering INEC’s reputation.
* **2019 Elections:** INEC’s credibility suffered a setback as the elections were criticised for logistical failures, delayed polls, and incidents of voter intimidation. Many citizens saw this as a regression from the gains of 2015.
* **2023 Elections:** Expectations were high due to INEC’s introduction of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and electronic transmission of results. However, perceived irregularities in result collation, logistical failures, and alleged breaches of the Electoral Act led to widespread disappointment and protests, significantly denting public trust.

**iii. Key Factors Shaping Public Perception**

* Technological Innovations: While initiatives like BVAS and electronic result transmission have been applauded, their inconsistent application has fuelled mistrust.
* Political Interference: Citizens often perceive INEC as lacking autonomy, with suspicions of undue influence from ruling political parties.
* Communication and Transparency: INEC’s failure to communicate effectively during elections, particularly in clarifying delays and addressing irregularities, has exacerbated public frustration.
* Security Issues: INEC is often criticised for failing to ensure voter safety during elections, with citizens citing fears of violence as a deterrent to participation.

**iv. Impact of Public Perception on Electoral Participation**

Citizens’ perception of INEC directly influences voter turnout and engagement:

* Positive perceptions encourage voter participation, as seen in the 2015 elections.
* Negative perceptions, however, breed apathy and disenfranchisement, with many citizens questioning the value of voting in a flawed system.

#### **3.3.**4 **Voter Expectations**

Despite systemic challenges, Nigerians have historically maintained high expectations from the democratic process, viewing elections as a pathway to development and improved governance.

* **Hope for Better Governance**: Each election cycle is met with optimism, as voters believe their participation can lead to meaningful change. This is especially true in regions marginalized by previous administrations, where elections represent a chance for inclusion.
* **Repeated Disillusionment**: However, the failure of elected officials to deliver on campaign promises has fostered widespread disenchantment. Many voters have come to see elections as futile, leading to declining voter turnout and engagement over time.

Interestingly, the report highlighted the resilience of Nigerian citizens, who have continued to organize through civil society groups, religious institutions, and professional bodies to demand electoral reforms and accountability.

#### **3.3.**5 **Conflicts over Electoral Outcomes**

Since the 1950s, disputes over election results have been a constant feature of Nigeria’s democratic journey.

* **Persistent Legal Challenges**: Electoral petitions have become a defining aspect of Nigeria’s political landscape. For instance, several high-profile elections have been contested in court, with some results overturned due to proven irregularities.
* **Judiciary as Arbiter**: While the judiciary has played a crucial role in resolving disputes, excessive reliance on court interventions has occasionally strained its credibility. The Uwais Report stressed the importance of resolving electoral disputes promptly and ensuring that election petitions are concluded before winners are inaugurated.

# **Chapter 4.0 - #FIXINEC #FIXNIGERIA: Consequences of INEC Failure.**

INEC’s broken system has not only undermined the trust of the Nigerian electorate but has also enabled the erosion of democratic principles. The challenges facing INEC are multifaceted: logistical failures, voter disenfranchisement, allegations of vote-buying, and a lack of transparency in result collation processes. These issues have severely compromised the credibility of Nigeria’s elections and weakened the country’s democratic foundations. As a result, the electoral process has become a gateway for mediocrity and self-serving leadership rather than a mechanism for empowering transformative and values-driven leaders.

In this chapter we will explore the consequences of INEC Failure and how it has led to Leadership Failures that in turn has led to Nigeria’s underperformance.

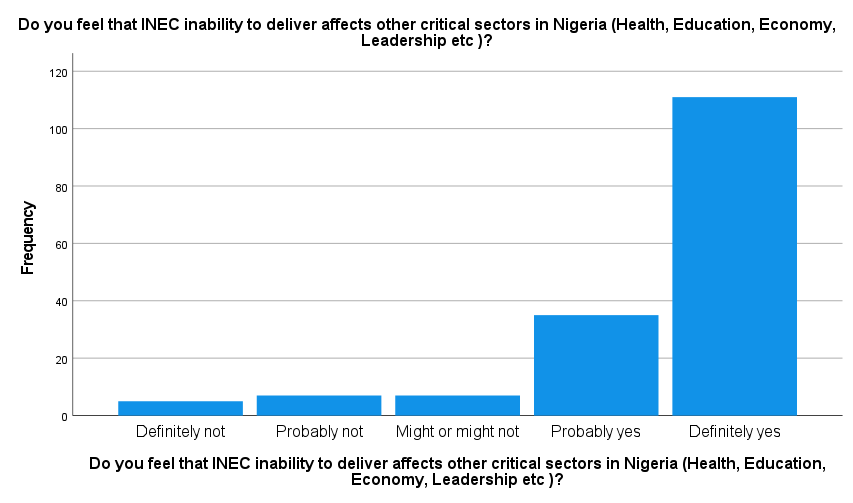
### **4.1.1 Consequence 1 - Emergency of Incompetent and** in**effective Leaders**

Empirical evidence linked the emergence of inexperienced leaders to weak and failed electoral processes[[115]](#footnote-114). Corrupt leaders manipulate the electoral process for personal gains[[116]](#footnote-115). Oluwakemi observed that bad leadership is not only linked to the inability of the citizens to utilise their electoral power but is connected to failed electoral systems[[117]](#footnote-116). It suffices to say that a failed electoral process is like the oxygen vent supporting corrupt leaders to the system.

A survey of Nigerians across the six (6) geo-political zones reveals a link between bad leadership and INEC failure to conduct credible elections.

The lack of intellectual rigor and discipline among leaders, often a byproduct of flawed electoral systems, exacerbates governance challenges[[118]](#footnote-117). Without the necessary competence and ethical grounding, such leaders are ill-equipped to address complex national issues, leading to policy failures and administrative inefficiencies. This deficiency underscores the critical need for electoral integrity to ensure that capable and visionary individuals are entrusted with the nation's leadership.

Figure 11: INEC and Leadership Gap in Nigeria



**Source:** Mandate4 Field Work

From the bar chart depicted here, the majority of respondents, with a frequency and percentage of 111 (67.3%), attested to the statement that there is a link between INEC's failure to conduct credible elections in Nigeria and leadership failures. Thirty-five respondents, constituting 20.5% of the surveyed population, noted 'definitely yes' to the question posed above. Those who were uncertain about INEC's role represent a frequency of 7 (4.1%). Meanwhile, those who affirmed 'probably no' also constitute a frequency of 7 (4.1%), while those who answered 'definitely not' have a frequency of 5 (3.0%). The survey results align with other empirical findings, indicating a strong relationship between INEC's failure to conduct credible elections and the leadership crisis in Nigeria.

### 4.1.2 Consequence 2- **Emergence of Leaders without** Legitimacy **and** Accountability **to the Populace.**

Flawed or rigged elections have a profound impact on governance, creating a cycle of mismanagement driven by leadership deficiencies. When electoral processes are compromised through fraud, coercion, or manipulation, the leaders who emerge often lack genuine legitimacy and accountability to the populace. This erosion of democratic integrity results in governance that is unresponsive to citizens' needs and fosters an environment where corruption and self-interest thrive.

In Nigeria, the history of manipulated elections has significantly contributed to the leadership crisis. The absence of transparent and fair electoral processes has enabled individuals more interested in personal or group gains to ascend to power, neglecting the broader interests of national development. This misalignment between leadership priorities and public welfare perpetuates a cycle of poor governance and socio-economic stagnation.

### 4.1.3 Consequence 3 - Erosion of Public Trust.

The consequences of flawed elections extend beyond immediate governance failures. They erode public trust in democratic institutions, discourage civic engagement, and can incite political violence, further destabilizing the nation. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive electoral reforms to restore the sanctity of the democratic process, thereby breaking the cycle of mismanagement and fostering effective leadership committed to national progress.

### 4.1.4 Consequence 4 - Social Unrest and Corruption as Byproducts of Electoral Failure and Poor Governance

Electoral failures undermine public trust in the democratic process, often leading to widespread frustration and disillusionment. This frustration can manifest as social unrest, with protests, strikes, and other forms of civil disobedience becoming more frequent and intense. Communities feeling excluded or marginalized by flawed elections may resort to violence, further destabilizing the nation. Additionally, the absence of credible elections fosters corruption, as leaders who attain power through fraudulent means are less likely to prioritize transparency or accountability[[119]](#footnote-118). Instead, such leaders focus on consolidating power, perpetuating cycles of mismanagement and unethical practices that erode public institutions.

### 4.1.5 Consequence 5 - Empowers Incompetent leaders to Operate Without Consequences

Electoral malpractice often results in the emergence of leaders who lack the mandate or competence to govern effectively. Once in power, these leaders may exploit weak law enforcement and the absence of accountability mechanisms to act with impunity. Such poor leadership exacerbates governance issues, including inefficiency in public service delivery, weak economic policies, and the neglect of critical sectors such as education and healthcare. Over time, this lack of accountability deepens systemic dysfunction, leaving citizens disempowered and further alienated from the political process

### 4.1.6 Consequence 6 **-** Emergence of Leaders who abuse **Human Rights Abuse**

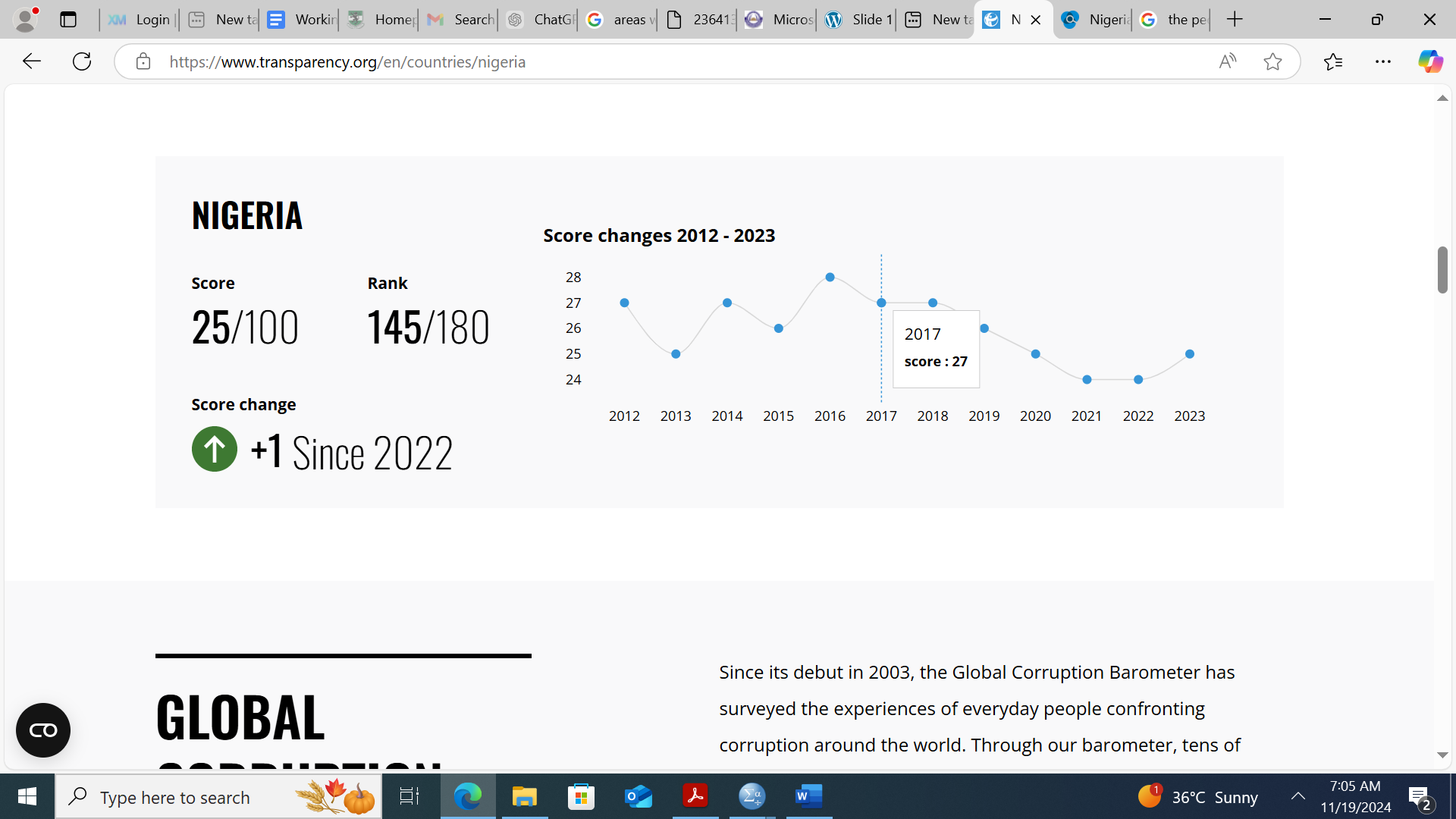
For years Nigeria has been struggling with low human rights records. This is one of the most profound consequences of an ineffective electoral system is the emergence of unaccountable leaders who operate without fear of reprisal. The Foundation for Investigative Journalism[[120]](#footnote-119) ranked Nigeria 21st as one country with a low human rights record. In Nigeria, flawed elections have allowed political elites to secure power not through genuine public support but through manipulation, fraud, and violence. This pattern of unchecked governance has resulted in a political class that prioritises self-interest and loyalty to political networks over public service. Leaders who attain office through compromised elections often feel little obligation to their constituents, as their political survival depends more on their ability to navigate electoral malpractices and secure alliances than on their responsiveness to public demands.

Unchecked governance creates an environment where accountability mechanisms are weak or altogether absent. Elected officials, knowing they are shielded from the consequences of their actions, are less likely to engage in transparent decision-making processes. This environment enables the exploitation of state resources, as leaders focus on maintaining their power base rather than promoting policies for the public good. As a result, policies and programs aimed at national development and poverty reduction are frequently neglected or only superficially implemented. The lack of genuine accountability, enabled by INEC’s failures, has effectively detached public office from its intended purpose of representing and serving the people, creating a governance structure that is increasingly disconnected from the needs of Nigerian citizens.

### **4.1.**7. Consequence 7 - Corruption and Resource Misallocation

Coincidentally, the periods when INEC failed to ensure that the votes of the electorate counted have witnessed the lowest rating by Transparency International. This serves as a point to the correction between INEC's failure to conduct credible elections and the increase in corruption in Nigeria. Analysis of Transparency International's rating on Nigeria has shown that most persistent corruption within the leadership echelon especially periods when elections are alleged to be “manipulated.

**Figure 12: Transparency International Rating**



**Source:** Transparency International (2024)

Nigeria scored 22/100 and ranked 145th out of 180 countries in the Transparency International rankings. A takeaway from this graph is that Nigeria consistently scores low in Transparency International's ratings under leaderships where allegations of electoral compromise are reported. Another perspective is that electoral malpractice is a form of leadership corruption. This form of corruption is so pervasive that it can cripple every other sector until the end of such a regime.

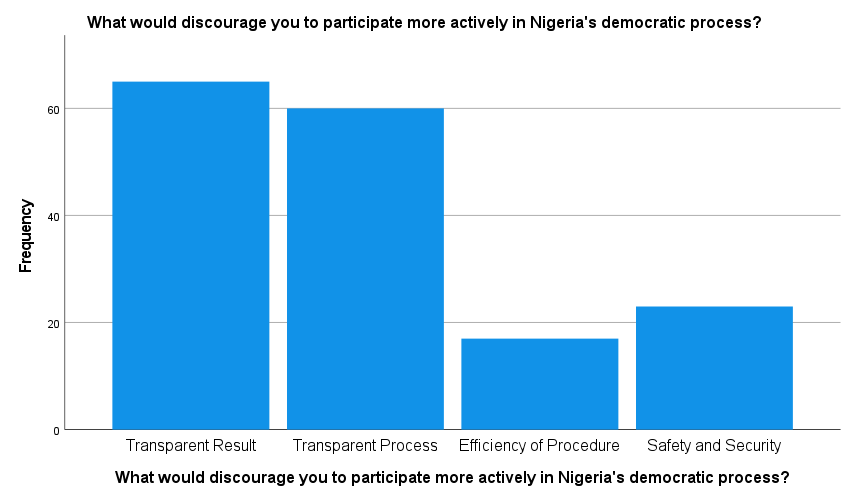
The prevalence of unchecked governance is directly linked to corruption, one of the most entrenched issues facing Nigeria. Corruption has flourished in the absence of electoral accountability, as leaders who attain power through manipulated elections are often more focused on personal enrichment than on implementing transparent and fair policies. A weak INEC allows political elites to manipulate the system with impunity, entrenching a culture of bribery, mismanagement, and illicit financial flows within the government.

Corruption permeates nearly every aspect of governance in Nigeria, affecting vital sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and security. In education, for instance, funds intended for school infrastructure or teacher training are often embezzled by corrupt officials, leading to dilapidated schools, underpaid teachers, and inadequate resources for students. Similarly, in healthcare, resource diversion is widespread, contributing to shortages in medical supplies, inadequate healthcare facilities, and a lack of trained healthcare professionals. These consequences are not merely administrative failures but have direct impacts on the quality of life for millions of Nigerians, who are deprived of essential services and opportunities.

### 4.1.8. Consequence 8 - Causes Voters' Apathy

The recurring failures of Nigeria’s electoral process, managed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), have entrenched a cycle of apathy among citizens and allowed unchecked power to dominate governance structures. Each flawed election cycle deepens public disillusionment with democracy, leading to disengagement from political life and leaving power in the hands of leaders who often operate with impunity. This section explores how INEC’s shortcomings have created a culture of apathy among Nigerian citizens and, in turn, enabled poor governance by leaders who face little accountability, creating a vicious cycle that further weakens Nigeria’s democratic foundations.

**Figure 13: Causes of Voters Apathy**

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**Source:** Mandate4 Field Work

Data from survey analysis revealed that lack of transparent results, and transparent processes are the most undermining challenges of elections in Nigeria and the most cause of voter’s apathy. A descriptive analysis of the data collected showed that respondents who mentioned that lack of transparent results causes apathy are 65 representing 39.4% of the total respondents. Those who agreed that lack of transparent process causes apathy are represented by 36.4% of 60 of the respondents. The participants who sighted safety and security reasons are 23 constituting 13.9% of the respondents. Finally, those who said that ineffective procedures discourage them from participating in elections are 17 constituting 10.3% of the respondents. The erosion of public trust in Nigeria’s electoral system is one of the most damaging outcomes of INEC’s repeated failures. Citizens have watched as elections become less a means of representation and more a platform for manipulation, where the powerful use resources and influence to secure victories.

In several election cycles, issues such as vote-buying, ballot-stuffing, voter intimidation, and blatant rigging have been documented, particularly in contentious elections like those of 2003, 2007, and 2019. These instances of electoral malpractice have fostered a widespread perception that voting is futile, as outcomes often appear predetermined by powerful elites rather than decided by the electorate. Consequently, voter turnout has consistently declined in Nigeria, with each election cycle further entrenching this apathy. Low turnout rates reflect the disillusionment many Nigerians feel toward the electoral process and the democratic system as a whole. This trend is particularly concerning among younger voters, who represent a significant portion of the population but are increasingly disengaged due to the perceived futility of their participation. For many young Nigerians, elections are viewed as an exercise in legitimizing a flawed system rather than a meaningful opportunity to influence government decisions.

### **4.1.**9**.** **Consequence** 9 **- Increased Citizens** and Youth Disillusionment

Nigerian youth, who are among the most affected by the country’s socio-economic challenges, have grown increasingly apathetic toward the political process. Despite their potential to drive democratic change, many young Nigerians are discouraged from participating in elections due to recurring incidents of fraud, violence, and manipulation. Representing over 60% of the population, the youth often find their concerns marginalized by political leaders, leaving them disconnected from the formal political system. This sense of disillusionment is further exacerbated by widespread unemployment, limited access to quality education, and pervasive poverty, eroding their confidence in the government’s ability to address their needs.

The disengagement of young Nigerians from the electoral process represents a significant loss for the country’s democracy. This demographic has the capacity to inject fresh ideas, accountability, and enthusiasm into governance. However, by opting out of the process, they inadvertently cede power to older, entrenched political elites who are often responsible for the governance issues Nigeria faces. This disengagement perpetuates the status quo, as political leaders are less inclined to address youth-related challenges when they feel no accountability to this critical demographic

# **Chapter 5 - REFORMING INEC is a Necessity for National Progress:**

## 

## 5.1 How electoral outcomes shape policy directions and the country's long-term trajectory.

Electoral outcomes play a critical role in shaping policy directions and determining the long-term trajectory of a nation. In any democracy, the leaders who emerge from elections are entrusted with the authority to govern, set priorities, and implement policies that directly affect the socio-economic and political development of the country. When electoral processes are credible, transparent, and inclusive, the resulting leadership is more likely to align with the will and aspirations of the people, paving the way for policies that promote progress and stability. However, when elections are flawed or manipulated, the consequences can be far-reaching, often steering the country toward stagnation or decline.

### 5.1.1 Electoral Outcomes as Reflections of Public Will:

In a functioning democracy, election outcomes are expected to reflect the preferences and aspirations of the electorate. Leaders who gain power through credible elections have a clear mandate to govern, which enhances their legitimacy and accountability. Theirmandates often translate into policies that address the needs and priorities of the people, such as investments in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and security. One positive aspect of election results reflecting the will of the people is that the fear of losing their mandates in subsequent elections serves as a check against non-performance and leaders deteriorating into tyranny . For instance, when citizens prioritize economic development during an election, leaders are likely to focus on job creation, industrialization, and poverty alleviation as core policy goals.

### 5.1.2. Impact on Policy Directions:

Politicians who emerge victorious in elections bring their ideologies, priorities, and governance styles to the table. Their policy directions are influenced by their campaign promises, political platforms, and the interests of the groups that supported their ascendancy to power. For example:

* A leader committed to transparency and anti-corruption is likely to implement reforms that strengthen institutions, promote accountability, and reduce waste in public spending.
* Conversely, leaders who ascend through manipulated processes or who prioritize self-interest may focus on policies that consolidate power, favor certain groups, or divert resources away from critical areas of national development.

### 5.1.3. Long-Term Economic and Social Development:

Election outcome influences not only immediate governance but also the long-term trajectory of the nation. Leaders elected through credible processes are more likely to enact policies with a vision for sustainable growth and development. These policies often include investments in human capital, such as education and healthcare, and structural reforms that strengthen the economy and reduce inequality. On the other hand, flawed electoral outcomes can lead to leadership that prioritises short-term political gains over long-term national interests, resulting in poorly planned or underfunded policies that hinder development.

### 5.1.**4. Governance Quality and Public Trust:**

Election outcomes influence governance quality and public trust in democratic institutions. When elections are free and fair, citizens are more likely to trust the government and participate actively in the democratic process. This trust fosters a collaborative relationship between the government and the people, enabling the successful implementation of policies. Conversely, when elections are perceived as rigged or illegitimate, public trust erodes, leading to apathy, civil unrest, or resistance to government policies.

### 5.1.5. Inspire hope and increase citizens commitment to nation-building:

The impact of election outcomes on policy directions and the nation's trajectory was evident. Leaders who emerged from contentious or flawed elections have often struggled to implement cohesive policies, as their legitimacy is questioned and their focus shifts to consolidating power rather than addressing national challenges. For instance, issues such as rising insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, and high unemployment are exacerbated when leadership is ineffective or unaccountable. Conversely, moments of electoral credibility, such as the peaceful transfer of power in 2015, demonstrated how legitimate leadership could inspire hope aimed at reform and progress.

### 5.1.6. Regional and Global Influence:

Finally, electoral outcomes shape how a nation interacts with the global community. Leaders who emerge through credible elections are more likely to engage in constructive diplomacy, attract foreign investment, and strengthen regional alliances. Their policies often reflect a commitment to international standards and sustainable development goals, enhancing the country's global reputation. In contrast, leaders who lack legitimacy may struggle to command respect on the global stage, limiting the nation's influence and opportunities for collaboration.

## 5.2. The Cross-Sectoral Impact of Electoral Integrity on Development Outcomes: Why Fixing INEC Matters for Sustainable Progress Across All Sectors

This section will argue that efforts in sectors such as education, poverty reduction, economic development, and more will remain limited or unsustainable without first addressing the root issue: the integrity of Nigeria’s electoral system. INEC reform is crucial for creating accountable governance structures that can support meaningful progress in each of these areas.

### 5.2.1 Education in Nigeria: Pending Reforms and the Role of Electoral Integrity

The education sector in Nigeria has long been plagued by challenges such as underfunding, inadequate infrastructure, low enrollment, and poor teacher quality. In response, various stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and international donors, have initiated reforms to address these systemic issues. Despite some progress, significant gaps remain. Below is a summary of ongoing efforts to reform the sector:

1. **Legislative Reforms:** The National Assembly has debated and passed several bills aimed at improving education, including the *Universal Basic Education Act* of 2004, which made education free and compulsory for children up to the junior secondary level. Recent legislative efforts include:
   * + Bills to increase the budgetary allocation to education to meet the UNESCO recommendation of **20% of the national budget**.
     + Proposals for strengthening the oversight of private and religious educational institutions to ensure quality standards.
2. **Government Initiatives:**
   * **Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC):** Charged with implementing basic education programs, UBEC has introduced initiatives to increase school enrollment and improve infrastructure, particularly in underserved regions.
   * **School Feeding Program:** Launched to incentivize school attendance, particularly in rural and poor communities.
   * **Teacher Professional Development Programs:** These initiatives aim to upskill teachers and address the shortage of qualified educators in public schools.
   * **Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund):** Established to provide supplementary funding to universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education.
3. **International Donor Programs:**
   * **Education Cannot Wait (ECW):** Focused on providing education to children affected by conflict, particularly in the North-East.
   * **Global Partnership for Education (GPE):** Supports national education plans to improve access, equity, and quality in basic education.
   * **UNICEF and UNESCO Initiatives:** These organizations have worked on programs to improve girls' education, increase literacy rates, and address out-of-school children.
4. **Private Sector and Civil Society Efforts:**
   * Organizations like the *MacArthur Foundation* and *ActionAid* have funded initiatives to strengthen accountability in education and ensure effective use of public funds.
   * Tech-driven solutions such as e-learning platforms and digital literacy programs have been introduced by startups to bridge gaps in access and quality.

While these reforms and initiatives demonstrate a commitment to addressing Nigeria's education challenges, their success largely depends on consistent funding, strategic policies, and effective implementation—factors closely tied to the quality of leadership and governance.

#### The Link Between Education and Electoral Integrity

Quality education requires significant investment, long-term planning, and strategic policies—prerequisites that can only be met under accountable and visionary leadership. Electoral integrity directly influences the caliber of leaders who assume office and, by extension, the priority they place on critical sectors like education. Leaders who are transparently elected and accountable to citizens are more likely to:

* Ensure fair allocation of resources to underserved regions.
* Invest in programs that improve access to and quality of education.
* Prioritize teacher training, curriculum development, and infrastructure improvements.

In contrast, when elections are flawed, and unaccountable leaders emerge, education often suffers from neglect, mismanagement, and politicization. This link underscores the need for credible elections to ensure that education remains a national priority.

#### Impact of Electoral Integrity on Education Reforms

Transparent and credible elections produce leaders who understand that their tenure is dependent on fulfilling campaign promises and meeting the needs of their constituents. In the context of education, such leaders are more likely to:

1. **Allocate Adequate Funding:** Leaders elected transparently are more likely to adhere to UNESCO’s recommendation of allocating 20% of the national budget to education.
2. **Implement Strategic Policies:** Accountability drives leaders to formulate policies that address root causes of education challenges rather than temporary, politically expedient solutions.
3. **Collaborate with Stakeholders:** Transparent leaders often work closely with private sector actors, civil society, and international donors to ensure the effective implementation of education reforms.

The absence of electoral integrity leads to governance deficiencies that undermine these outcomes, perpetuating cycles of underinvestment and inefficiency.

#### c. Case Studies of How INEC Failures Have Led to Ineffective Sectoral Outcomes

Failures in electoral integrity, primarily due to INEC’s systemic inefficiencies, have directly contributed to leadership deficiencies that crippled well-intentioned education projects. Below are examples of how flawed elections have undermined education outcomes in Nigeria:

1. **Almajiri Education Project (2012):** The project aimed to integrate Islamic education with formal schooling for over 10 million Almajiri children in northern Nigeria. Despite significant funding, many of the schools built under the program are now abandoned or underutilized.
   * **Root Cause:** Governance lapses under unaccountable leaders who prioritized political gains over long-term planning and monitoring. Several state governments failed to maintain these schools, citing insufficient funds or political disinterest.
   * **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders emerging from flawed elections often lack the accountability to prioritize national initiatives over local political considerations.
2. **Teacher Salary Delays in Benue and Kogi States (2017–2020):** Thousands of teachers in public schools went unpaid for montths, leading to strikes and the collapse of academic activities.
   * **Root Cause:** Mismanagement of funds and lack of commitment to education by state governments, whose leaders were accused of emerging from manipulated elections.
   * **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** When electoral systems fail, governance is often reduced to a system of patronage, where education budgets are diverted to serve political allies rather than public servants.
3. **Universal Basic Education Fund Misappropriation (Multiple States):** The UBEC fund, meant for improving basic education, has been frequently misappropriated or left unaccessed due to state governments’ inability to meet counterpart funding requirements.
   * **Root Cause:** Poor leadership and governance at the state level, often linked to leaders who lack legitimacy and accountability.
   * **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders who emerge from flawed elections are less motivated to access funds or implement meaningful reforms, knowing they are not answerable to the electorate.
4. **Girl Child Education in the North-East:** International donor programs aimed at improving girls’ access to education in conflict-affected regions have faced implementation challenges due to weak collaboration with local governments.
   * **Root Cause:** Poor coordination and lack of political will from leaders who were more focused on consolidating power than addressing systemic issues.
   * **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** When leaders are not accountable to their constituents, they often deprioritize vulnerable populations and neglect donor-driven initiatives.

The education sector in Nigeria is a microcosm of the country’s broader governance challenges, where systemic inefficiencies and leadership failures have undermined decades of reforms and initiatives. Electoral integrity lies at the heart of addressing these challenges. Leaders who are transparently elected and accountable to the people are more likely to allocate resources effectively, implement strategic policies, and collaborate with stakeholders to drive sustainable improvements in education. Conversely, flawed elections enable unaccountable leadership, leading to the mismanagement of even well-funded projects. For Nigeria’s education sector to thrive, the foundation of electoral integrity must be strengthened to ensure that the leaders who emerge are committed to the long-term transformation of the nation’s future.

### 5.2.2. Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria: Pending Reforms and the Role of Electoral Integrity

Despite its status as Africa's largest economy, Nigeria remains one of the most unequal societies globally, with over **70 million citizens living below the poverty line**. Tackling poverty and inequality requires coordinated action, significant investment, and political will. Several stakeholders have introduced initiatives, bills, and programs aimed at reducing poverty and bridging the gap between the wealthy and the poor. Below is a summary of ongoing efforts:

1. **Legislative Reforms:** The National Assembly has proposed and debated various bills to address poverty and inequality, including:
   * + **Social Welfare Trust Fund Bill (2015):** Designed to institutionalize social safety nets for vulnerable populations.
     + **Livable Wage Policies:** Bills advocating for regular adjustments to the minimum wage to reflect inflation and living costs.
     + **Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill (2015):** Targeted at reducing discrimination in employment, education, and access to resources, particularly for women, youth, and marginalized communities.
2. **Government Programs and Initiatives:**
   * **National Social Investment Program (NSIP):** Launched in 2016, NSIP includes sub-programs such as:
     + **N-Power:** A youth employment and skill acquisition program aimed at addressing unemployment.
     + **Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT):** Provides cash assistance to the poorest households, conditional on meeting criteria such as school attendance or health visits.
     + **Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program (GEEP):** Micro-loans targeted at small-scale traders and artisans.
   * **Agricultural Development Programs:** Initiatives like the Anchor Borrowers' Program aim to support smallholder farmers and improve food security.
3. **Private Sector and Civil Society Initiatives:**
   * Organizations like the **Tony Elumelu Foundation** and the **Dangote Foundation** focus on empowering small businesses, providing microfinance, and investing in community development.
   * NGOs such as **ActionAid Nigeria** and **Oxfam** advocate for policies to reduce inequality and provide direct interventions to support the most vulnerable.
4. **International Donor Programs:**
   * The World Bank and African Development Bank (AfDB) fund large-scale poverty alleviation programs, such as:
     + **Nigeria's National Social Safety Nets Project (NASSP):** Designed to expand cash transfer programs and develop a robust social registry.
     + **Youth Employment and Social Support Operation (YESSO):** Aimed at reducing youth unemployment and building human capital.
   * UN agencies like UNICEF and UNDP collaborate with the government on poverty reduction through education, health, and empowerment programs.

Despite these ongoing efforts, systemic inefficiencies and poor governance hinder the effectiveness and sustainability of these initiatives, leaving millions of Nigerians trapped in poverty.

#### Link to INEC and Electoral Integrity

Addressing poverty and inequality requires consistent funding, strategic policies, and long-term planning—all of which depend on accountable and visionary leadership. Electoral integrity is critical because leaders who emerge from credible elections are more likely to prioritize equitable resource allocation and develop policies that benefit the majority, particularly the underserved.

When elections are flawed, leaders may lack legitimacy and accountability, prioritizing short-term political gains over long-term investments in poverty alleviation. Conversely, credible elections create a direct link between the electorate and policymakers, compelling leaders to address the needs of their constituents to maintain their mandate.

A strong and transparent electoral process ensures:

* **Equitable Resource Allocation:** Transparent leaders are less likely to divert funds meant for poverty reduction programs.
* **Strategic Investments:** Leaders elected with the people’s mandate focus on long-term investments in education, healthcare, and social infrastructure, which are critical to addressing inequality.
* **Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Transparent leaders are more likely to work with development partners and the private sector to implement impactful programs.

#### Impact of Electoral Integrity on Poverty and Inequality

Leaders who are transparently elected are inherently accountable to their citizens. This accountability drives policies that prioritize poverty reduction and reduce inequality. Electoral integrity ensures that leaders recognize their responsibility to address systemic issues rather than catering to narrow interests. For instance:

1. **Fair Budgetary Allocations:** Transparent leaders ensure that budgets prioritize sectors like education, healthcare, and social protection that directly impact poverty and inequality.
2. **Policy Continuity:** Leaders accountable to the electorate focus on implementing sustainable programs rather than abandoning projects initiated by predecessors.
3. **Focus on Vulnerable Groups:** Leaders with legitimacy are more likely to allocate resources to marginalized groups, reducing regional and social disparities.

Without electoral integrity, these outcomes are compromised, perpetuating poverty and inequality.

#### c. Case Studies: How INEC Failures Have Led to Ineffective Sectoral Outcomes

1. **Conditional Cash Transfer Program Mismanagement (Multiple States):** Nigeria’s Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program was designed to provide financial assistance to the poorest households. However, in several states, implementation was marred by delays, inefficiencies, and allegations of fund diversion.
   * **Root Cause:** Governance failures at the state level, often tied to leaders who emerged from flawed electoral processes, undermined program delivery. Leaders lacked the commitment to ensure the program’s success or the oversight to prevent corruption.
   * **Impact:** Many targeted beneficiaries, particularly in rural areas, failed to receive support, perpetuating poverty.
2. **N-Power Stalled Payments (2020):**
   * **Overview:** N-Power, a flagship youth empowerment program, faced widespread criticism when thousands of participants experienced months of unpaid stipends.
   * **Root Cause:** Poor coordination and political interference by state leaders whose priorities did not align with the program’s objectives.
   * **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders who ascended through rigged elections felt less compelled to address public complaints, leaving many participants disillusioned.
3. **Abandoned Poverty Alleviation Projects in the North-East:**
   * **Overview:** Donor-funded programs aimed at rebuilding livelihoods in conflict-affected areas (e.g., Borno State) struggled due to poor governance and weak collaboration between local governments and international partners.
   * **Root Cause:** Leadership at the state and local levels, emerging from manipulated elections, failed to prioritize these projects. Funds were either mismanaged or reallocated for political purposes.
   * **Impact:** Despite significant donor investment, many IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) and impoverished communities failed to benefit, exacerbating inequality in the region.
4. **Misallocation of COVID-19 Relief Funds:**
   * **Overview:** During the pandemic, Nigeria received billions of naira in relief funds to support vulnerable populations. However, several reports revealed misappropriation and a lack of transparency in fund distribution.
   * **Root Cause:** Poor governance tied to electoral accountability, as many leaders were accused of using relief funds for political patronage rather than supporting those in need.
   * **Impact:** The funds failed to mitigate the pandemic’s economic impact on the most vulnerable, pushing more people into poverty.

Poverty and inequality in Nigeria are not just the result of economic challenges but are deeply rooted in governance failures linked to flawed electoral processes. While numerous programs and initiatives have been introduced to address these issues, their success depends on effective and accountable leadership. Electoral integrity is the cornerstone of ensuring that leaders prioritize equitable policies and implement sustainable reforms. Without credible elections, even well-funded poverty alleviation programs will struggle to achieve meaningful impact.

Reforming INEC and strengthening Nigeria’s electoral processes are essential to breaking the cycle of poverty and inequality. Transparent and accountable leadership can transform the sector, ensuring that resources are allocated fairly, programs are implemented effectively, and the most vulnerable populations receive the support they need. Only then can Nigeria begin to close the gap between its rich and poor and unlock its potential for inclusive growth and development.

### 5.2.3. Unemployment and the Economy: Pending Reforms and the Role of Electoral Integrity

#### Pending Reforms and Ongoing Efforts in the Sector

Unemployment remains a critical issue in Nigeria, with youth unemployment at **38% in 2024** and millions more underemployed in the informal economy. Nigeria’s economic challenges are exacerbated by reliance on oil revenue, slow diversification, and governance inefficiencies. To address these issues, multiple stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and international donors, have introduced reforms and initiatives aimed at boosting job creation and economic growth. Below is a summary of ongoing efforts:

1. **Legislative Reforms:**
   * **Start-Up Act (2022):** This law provides incentives for technology startups, including tax relief, access to government grants, and improved regulations for entrepreneurs. It aims to drive innovation and create jobs in the digital economy.
   * **Petroleum Industry Act (PIA, 2021):** This reform seeks to attract investment in the oil and gas sector while allocating more resources to host communities and diversifying the economy.
   * **Labour Market Reforms:** Proposed bills to strengthen workers’ rights, improve minimum wage policies, and encourage investments in labor-intensive industries are being debated in the National Assembly.
2. **Government Programs and Initiatives:**
   * **National Social Investment Program (NSIP):** Programs like N-Power and TraderMoni focus on youth employment and supporting small businesses, respectively.
   * **Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP, 2020):** Launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, this initiative supports job creation through mass housing projects, agriculture programs, and renewable energy investments.
   * **Anchor Borrowers’ Program (ABP):** Promotes access to finance for smallholder farmers, encouraging job creation in the agricultural sector.
   * **Nigeria Industrial Revolution Plan (NIRP):** Focuses on developing the manufacturing sector to create jobs and reduce dependence on imports.
3. **Private Sector and Civil Society Efforts:**
   * **Youth Empowerment Programs:** Initiatives like the Tony Elumelu Foundation’s Entrepreneurship Program and private job fairs by tech startups aim to equip youth with entrepreneurial and digital skills.
   * **Job Placement Platforms:** Online platforms like Jobberman and government-supported portals aim to connect job seekers with employers.
   * **Advocacy for MSMEs:** Civil society organizations advocate for policies that reduce the regulatory burden on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to enable job creation.
4. **International Donor Support:**
   * **World Bank’s Nigeria for Women Project:** Empowers women entrepreneurs with skills and financial support, contributing to economic inclusion.
   * **African Development Bank (AfDB):** Funds industrialization and agricultural projects to boost employment.
   * **International Labour Organization (ILO):** Partners with the Nigerian government to improve labor standards and skills training programs.

Despite these efforts, significant gaps remain, primarily due to poor policy implementation, insufficient funding, and governance challenges tied to electoral accountability.

#### Link to INEC and Electoral Integrity

Economic policies and employment initiatives require stable and accountable leadership to succeed. Leaders who emerge through credible elections are more likely to implement well-thought-out policies, attract investments, and create an enabling environment for job creation. On the other hand, flawed electoral processes often produce leaders who lack the legitimacy and vision to prioritize the economy, resulting in poorly implemented reforms and wasted resources.

INEC’s role in ensuring credible elections directly impacts:

* **Investor Confidence:** Transparent elections create political stability, which is essential for attracting domestic and foreign investments. Investors are wary of unstable political environments, often exacerbated by disputed or rigged elections.
* **Policy Continuity:** Leaders elected through credible processes are more likely to focus on long-term economic reforms rather than politically expedient projects.
* **Resource Allocation:** Accountable leaders are more likely to allocate resources equitably across sectors and regions, fostering inclusive economic growth.

Without credible elections, economic policies are likely to be short-sighted, mismanaged, or abandoned altogether, exacerbating unemployment and economic stagnation.

#### Impact of Electoral Integrity on the Economy

Transparent and credible elections not only ensure that capable leaders are elected but also promote economic stability and growth by fostering public and investor confidence. Leaders who know they are accountable to their electorate focus on:

1. **Job Creation:** Implementing policies that reduce unemployment, support MSMEs, and attract investments.
2. **Diversification:** Prioritizing sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and technology to reduce dependence on oil revenue.
3. **Economic Inclusion:** Ensuring equitable access to opportunities for marginalized groups, particularly women and youth.

Conversely, flawed elections produce leaders who prioritize self-enrichment and political patronage over economic development. Electoral malpractice erodes trust in government institutions, discourages investments, and undermines public support for reforms.

#### c. Case Studies: How INEC Failures Have Led to Ineffective Sectoral Outcomes

1. **Abandoned Ajaokuta Steel Plant Revitalization:**
   * **Overview:** The Ajaokuta Steel Plant, once envisioned as a cornerstone of Nigeria’s industrialization, remains largely uncompleted despite billions of naira in investments.
   * **Root Cause:** Leadership failures tied to unaccountable governments have resulted in policy inconsistencies, mismanagement, and corruption.
   * **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Successive administrations that emerged from questionable elections lacked the accountability to pursue a consistent, long-term strategy for the plant’s revitalization.
   * **Impact:** Thousands of potential jobs in the steel and manufacturing sectors remain unrealized, perpetuating economic stagnation.
2. **National Housing Scheme (2017–2022):**
   * **Overview:** The federal government launched a mass housing project under the Economic Sustainability Plan to create jobs and provide affordable housing. However, many of the projects were stalled or abandoned.
   * **Root Cause:** State governments, whose leaders often emerged from flawed elections, failed to provide counterpart funding or support for project implementation.
   * **Impact:** Job creation targets were missed, and thousands of potential beneficiaries were denied affordable housing.
   * **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders with weak mandates often prioritize political gains over developmental projects, leading to failures in implementation.
3. **N-Power Payment Delays:**
   * **Overview:** N-Power, a flagship youth empowerment program, has faced significant challenges, including delayed payments and allegations of fund diversion.
   * **Root Cause:** Governance issues, tied to state-level leaders who were unaccountable to citizens, disrupted the program’s effectiveness.
   * **Impact:** Participants lost trust in government programs, and the program’s impact on reducing youth unemployment was diminished.
   * **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders who emerged from rigged elections lacked the incentive to address the program’s shortcomings, as they were not directly accountable to the electorate.
4. **Neglect of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda:**
   * **Overview:** Launched in 2011, the Agricultural Transformation Agenda aimed to create jobs and reduce food imports. While initially successful, the program lost momentum under subsequent administrations.
   * **Root Cause:** Poor leadership transitions, often linked to flawed electoral processes, led to a lack of continuity and mismanagement.
   * **Impact:** Opportunities to boost employment in agriculture were missed, and Nigeria remains heavily reliant on food imports.
   * **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders who emerge from flawed elections often prioritize short-term political gains over sustaining impactful initiatives.

Electoral integrity is the foundation for creating an enabling environment for economic growth. Transparent elections produce accountable leaders who prioritize job creation, economic diversification, and inclusive policies. Conversely, flawed elections enable unaccountable leadership, resulting in poorly implemented reforms, stalled projects, and missed opportunities.

Reforming INEC and strengthening electoral processes are essential to breaking this cycle. Credible elections will ensure that leaders are chosen based on competence and accountability, creating the conditions necessary for sustainable economic growth and reducing unemployment. Only then can Nigeria realize its potential as a thriving economy and a beacon of opportunity for its citizens.

### 5.2.4. Trade & Financial Inclusion: Pending Reforms and the Role of Electoral Integrity

#### Pending Reforms and Ongoing Efforts in Trade and Financial Inclusion

Trade and financial inclusion are vital pillars for Nigeria’s economic growth and poverty reduction. However, significant barriers remain, including inadequate access to credit, weak infrastructure, and a fragmented trade policy framework. In recent years, various stakeholders have embarked on reforms and programs to address these challenges. Below is a summary of ongoing efforts:

1. **Legislative Reforms:**
   1. **Finance Act (2023):** A series of Finance Acts have been introduced to streamline tax policies, incentivize small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and harmonize trade regulations to encourage investment and economic growth.
   2. **Credit Reporting Act (2017):** This legislation aims to improve access to credit by establishing a robust credit reporting system that enables financial institutions to assess borrower risk more effectively.
   3. **Secured Transactions in Movable Assets Act (2017):** Known as the Collateral Registry Act, this reform allows small businesses to use movable assets (e.g., machinery, inventory) as collateral for loans, boosting access to credit for SMEs.
2. **Government Programs and Initiatives:**
   1. **Anchor Borrowers’ Program (ABP):** Launched by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), this initiative provides farmers with credit to improve agricultural output, a sector crucial to trade and food security.
   2. **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Development Fund (MSMEDF):** Managed by the CBN, this fund provides concessional loans to small businesses, particularly those owned by women and marginalized groups.
   3. **National Collateral Registry:** This registry facilitates the use of movable assets for credit access, targeting SMEs that are traditionally excluded from formal financial systems.
   4. **AfCFTA Implementation Strategy:** Nigeria’s strategy for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) focuses on boosting non-oil exports, improving trade facilitation, and increasing competitiveness for Nigerian goods in African markets.
3. **Private Sector and Civil Society Initiatives:**
   1. **Fintech and Mobile Banking Solutions:** Startups like Flutterwave, Paga, and Paystack are driving financial inclusion by enabling seamless digital payments, particularly for underserved populations in rural areas.
   2. **Non-Profit Advocacy for SMEs:** Organizations like the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) support SMEs through capacity building, policy advocacy, and financial literacy programs.
4. **International Donor Programs:**
   1. **World Bank’s Nigeria Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project (RAAMP):** This program seeks to enhance market access for rural farmers by improving rural roads and trade infrastructure.
   2. **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Financial Inclusion Projects:** These initiatives aim to increase financial literacy and digital financial access, targeting rural women and youth.
   3. **African Development Bank’s (AfDB) Trade Finance Program:** Supports regional trade by improving access to trade finance for SMEs and strengthening export infrastructure.

Despite these efforts, systemic challenges such as corruption, inconsistent policies, and weak governance hinder the impact of these reforms and programs.

#### Link to INEC and Electoral Integrity

Sustainable trade policies and financial inclusion require leadership that values equitable access to resources and prioritizes long-term economic development. Electoral integrity is central to achieving this, as it ensures that leaders are elected based on competence, vision, and accountability, rather than through manipulation or coercion.

A transparent electoral process fosters:

* **Policy Stability:** Leaders with a legitimate mandate are more likely to implement consistent trade and financial policies, reducing uncertainty for businesses and investors.
* **Resource Equity:** Accountable leaders ensure that financial inclusion programs target marginalized groups, reducing regional disparities.
* **Trust in Institutions:** Credible elections strengthen public confidence in government initiatives, increasing participation in trade and financial programs.

Without electoral integrity, governance failures can undermine trade and financial inclusion efforts, exacerbating inequality and economic exclusion.

#### Impact of Electoral Integrity on Trade and Financial Inclusion

Transparent elections create an enabling environment for inclusive economic policies by:

1. **Prioritizing SMEs:** Leaders accountable to the electorate are more likely to support small businesses, which are the backbone of Nigeria’s economy, contributing over **48% to GDP** and employing **over 80% of the workforce.**
2. **Fostering Investor Confidence:** Credible elections reduce political risk, attracting both domestic and foreign investments crucial for trade and financial systems.
3. **Strengthening Institutions:** Leaders elected through credible processes prioritize capacity-building for trade and financial institutions, ensuring that reforms are implemented effectively.

Flawed elections, on the other hand, result in leadership that often prioritizes self-enrichment and patronage over inclusive policies, stifling economic growth and leaving marginalized communities further behind.

#### Case Studies: How INEC Failures Have Led to Ineffective Sectoral Outcomes

1. **Neglect of AfCFTA Implementation Strategy:**
   1. **Overview:** While Nigeria signed the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement in 2019, implementation has been slow due to inconsistent policies and lack of coordination among government agencies.
   2. **Root Cause:** Leadership failures tied to unaccountable governments have resulted in the absence of a clear roadmap for SMEs to leverage AfCFTA opportunities.
   3. **Impact:** Many Nigerian businesses, particularly SMEs, are unable to compete effectively in African markets, missing out on trade opportunities.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders emerging from flawed elections lack the legitimacy and accountability to prioritize long-term trade strategies, focusing instead on politically expedient projects.
2. **CBN’s Cashless Policy Rollout (2023):**
   1. **Overview:** The Central Bank’s cashless policy, aimed at boosting digital transactions, faced widespread criticism due to poor implementation and inadequate infrastructure, particularly in rural areas.
   2. **Root Cause:** Weak coordination between federal and state governments, whose leaders often emerged from flawed electoral processes.
   3. **Impact:** The policy disproportionately affected rural traders and small businesses, many of whom lacked access to digital banking services.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders lacking accountability failed to address the infrastructural gaps necessary for the policy’s success, exacerbating financial exclusion.
3. **Abandoned Trade Facilitation Projects:**
   1. **Overview:** Donor-funded projects aimed at improving trade infrastructure, such as rural markets and storage facilities, have been abandoned or mismanaged in several states.
   2. **Root Cause:** Governance failures and corruption at the state level, often linked to leaders who emerged from manipulated elections.
   3. **Impact:** Rural farmers and traders face significant challenges in accessing markets, reducing their earnings and perpetuating poverty.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** When electoral accountability is absent, leaders prioritize political patronage over developmental projects, undermining trade facilitation efforts.
4. **Failure to Scale Financial Inclusion Targets:**
   1. **Overview:** Nigeria set ambitious targets to achieve 80% financial inclusion by 2020. However, as of 2024, financial inclusion remains at **64.1%,** with significant gaps in rural areas.
   2. **Root Cause:** Leadership at both the federal and state levels failed to adequately fund or implement financial inclusion programs, focusing instead on urban areas with higher political visibility.
   3. **Impact:** Marginalized communities, particularly women and rural populations, remain excluded from formal financial systems.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders who emerge from flawed elections are less incentivized to prioritize equitable resource allocation, resulting in uneven program implementation

### 5.2.5. Agriculture & Food Security:

#### Pending Reforms and Ongoing Efforts in Agriculture and Food Security

Agriculture has historically been the backbone of Nigeria’s economy, employing over 70% of the population, particularly in rural areas. Despite this, the sector faces significant challenges, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, land use inefficiencies, and the impact of climate change. Food insecurity remains a persistent issue, with millions of Nigerians lacking access to affordable and nutritious food. To address these issues, stakeholders have introduced several reforms and programs, as summarized below:

1. Legislative Reforms:
   1. National Agricultural Development Fund Act (2022): Established to provide consistent and sustainable funding for the agriculture sector to reduce reliance on erratic budget allocations.
   2. Land Use Act Review: Ongoing discussions focus on amending the Land Use Act of 1978 to make land more accessible for smallholder farmers and promote agricultural investments.
2. Government Programs and Initiatives:
   1. Anchor Borrowers’ Program (ABP): A Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) initiative that provides smallholder farmers with credit to boost production, particularly in rice and maize farming.
   2. Green Imperative Program: A partnership with Brazil to provide mechanization services to farmers, reduce post-harvest losses, and improve productivity.
   3. National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP): Launched in 2021, NATIP seeks to promote mechanization, improve seed quality, and enhance access to markets.
   4. Strategic Grain Reserves Program: Focused on building food reserves to stabilize prices and ensure food availability during crises.
3. Private Sector and Civil Society Efforts:
   1. AgriTech Startups: Companies like ThriveAgric and FarmCrowdy connect farmers with investors, inputs, and markets using digital platforms.
   2. NGO Support: Organizations like ActionAid Nigeria and Oxfam advocate for improved access to resources for women and smallholder farmers.
   3. Private Investments: Large agribusinesses and cooperatives are investing in processing plants and export-oriented farming, boosting the value chain.
4. International Donor Programs:
   1. World Bank’s Agricultural Transformation Agenda Support Program (ATASP): This initiative focuses on improving irrigation systems, rural roads, and access to markets for farmers.
   2. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO): Provides technical support for addressing food insecurity and improving resilience to climate shocks.
   3. African Development Bank (AfDB): Funds projects to improve rice production and reduce Nigeria’s dependence on food imports.

While these efforts reflect progress, challenges such as mismanagement, inadequate funding, and policy inconsistencies remain, limiting the impact of reforms.

#### Link to INEC and Electoral Integrity

Food security policies require leaders who prioritize rural development, equitable resource distribution, and agricultural innovation. Electoral integrity is critical in ensuring that such leaders are elected, as it enables accountability and transparency in governance. Leaders who emerge from credible elections are more likely to:

* Allocate Resources Fairly: Transparent leadership ensures that subsidies, grants, and loans reach smallholder farmers who need them most.
* Focus on Long-Term Planning: Legitimate leaders are better positioned to prioritize sustainable agriculture policies that address climate change, mechanization, and rural infrastructure development.
* Support Agricultural Innovation: Accountable governments invest in research and development, promoting modern farming techniques and technologies.

When elections are compromised, leadership often prioritizes political patronage over meaningful agricultural reform, leaving farmers and rural communities underserved.

#### Impact of Electoral Integrity on Agriculture and Food Security

Electoral reforms that improve accountability and transparency increase the likelihood of electing leaders who genuinely prioritize agriculture and food security. Transparent elections can:

1. Empower Farmers: Leaders accountable to the electorate are more likely to implement policies that address the challenges faced by smallholder farmers, such as access to credit, quality inputs, and extension services.
2. Promote Rural Development: Credible leaders focus on reducing rural poverty by improving infrastructure like roads, irrigation systems, and storage facilities.
3. Ensure Policy Continuity: Transparent leadership minimizes the risk of abandoned projects and policy inconsistencies, ensuring that agriculture programs have a lasting impact.

Conversely, flawed elections often produce leaders who lack the legitimacy or commitment to tackle systemic issues in the agriculture sector, perpetuating inefficiencies and food insecurity.

#### Case Studies: How INEC Failures Have Led to Ineffective Sectoral Outcomes

1. Abandoned Fertilizer Subsidy Programs:
   1. Overview: Fertilizer subsidy programs aimed at improving crop yields were frequently abandoned or mismanaged in states where leaders emerged from questionable elections.
   2. Root Cause: Leaders prioritized short-term political gains over program continuity, diverting funds meant for farmers to political allies.
   3. Impact: Smallholder farmers faced higher costs for inputs, reducing productivity and exacerbating food insecurity.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders who emerged from flawed elections lacked accountability to farmers, undermining the effectiveness of subsidy programs.
2. Failure of Lake Chad Basin Agricultural Projects:
   1. Overview: Several donor-funded projects aimed at reviving agriculture in the Lake Chad Basin failed due to poor governance and lack of political will.
   2. Root Cause: Regional leaders, many of whom emerged from manipulated elections, failed to coordinate efforts or prioritize the projects.
   3. Impact: Farmers in the region remained unable to resume productive activities, increasing food insecurity and displacement.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Unaccountable leadership resulted in the mismanagement of funds and poor implementation.
3. Inefficiencies in Anchor Borrowers’ Program (ABP):
   1. Overview: While the ABP has achieved some success, it has also faced allegations of fund mismanagement and favoritism in loan disbursement.
   2. Root Cause: Weak oversight by state governments, many of which are led by unaccountable leaders, undermined program delivery.
   3. Impact: Many smallholder farmers were excluded from the program, and repayment rates remained low due to lack of monitoring.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders who emerged from rigged elections often use such programs to reward political allies rather than addressing systemic issues in agriculture.
4. Neglected Strategic Grain Reserves:
   1. Overview: The Strategic Grain Reserves initiative aimed to stabilize food prices and ensure food availability during crises. However, many reserves were neglected or mismanaged.
   2. Root Cause: Corruption and lack of accountability among leaders contributed to the diversion of resources and underutilization of the reserves.
   3. Impact: The reserves failed to provide relief during food shortages, leaving millions vulnerable.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders who lack legitimacy are less likely to prioritize effective management of public resources, resulting in program failures.

### 5.2.6. Housing & Infrastructure Pending Reforms and the Role of Electoral Integrity

#### Pending Reforms and Ongoing Efforts in Housing and Infrastructure

Housing and infrastructure are critical for Nigeria’s socio-economic development, yet the country faces a staggering housing deficit of over 22 million units and significant gaps in road networks, electricity, and water infrastructure. Several stakeholders have initiated reforms and programs to address these challenges, but progress remains slow due to funding constraints, corruption, and policy inconsistencies. Below is a summary of ongoing efforts in this sector:

1. Legislative Reforms:
   1. National Housing Fund (Establishment) Act (2018): This legislation provides a framework for affordable housing financing through mandatory contributions from employees, financial institutions, and the federal government.
   2. Land Use Act: The Act vests ownership of all lands comprised in the territory of each Nigerian State in the Governor of that State and such land is held in trust and administered for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians in accordance with the provisions of the Act.
   3. The Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission Act (2005): Established to regulate Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Nigeria. The ICRC is responsible for developing the policies, guidelines, and procurement processes for PPPs.
2. Government Programs and Initiatives:
   1. National Housing Program (NHP): Led by the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, this initiative focuses on building affordable housing units across the country. However, implementation has been uneven due to funding gaps and mismanagement.
   2. Road Infrastructure Development Programs: Projects like the Second Niger Bridge and the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway highlight efforts to address Nigeria’s road infrastructure deficit.
   3. Rural Electrification Agency (REA): Focuses on expanding electricity access in rural communities through off-grid solutions and renewable energy projects.
   4. Mass Housing Scheme under Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP): Targets the construction of 300,000 affordable homes, creating jobs and reducing the housing deficit.
3. Private Sector and Civil Society Efforts:
   1. Private Real Estate Developers: Companies like Mixta Africa and UPDC are investing in affordable housing projects, although these are often limited to urban middle-class areas.
   2. NGO Housing Initiatives: Organizations like Habitat for Humanity work with communities to provide low-cost housing for underserved populations.
   3. Civil Society Advocacy: Groups are pushing for transparent land allocation processes and equitable access to housing programs.
4. International Donor Programs:
   1. World Bank’s Nigeria Affordable Housing Project: Provides funding and technical assistance to expand access to affordable housing finance.
   2. African Development Bank’s (AfDB) Urban and Municipal Development Support: Focuses on urban planning and infrastructure development, including roads, water systems, and waste management.
   3. UN-Habitat Programs: Work with local governments to promote sustainable urban development and slum upgrading.

While these reforms and programs reflect progress, their success has been hindered by weak governance, corruption, and leadership deficiencies.

#### Link to INEC and Electoral Integrity

Infrastructure development requires stable leadership, long-term investments, and policy continuity—all of which depend on credible elections and accountable governance. Leaders who emerge from transparent elections are more likely to:

* Ensure Policy Continuity: Credible leaders prioritize infrastructure as a long-term national priority rather than abandoning projects for political reasons.
* Promote Accountability: Transparent leaders allocate funds for housing and infrastructure equitably, ensuring that projects benefit the public rather than serving political or personal interests.
* Attract Investments: Electoral integrity fosters investor confidence, enabling public-private partnerships (PPPs) that are critical for large-scale infrastructure projects.

In contrast, flawed elections often lead to leadership that prioritizes personal enrichment over public service, resulting in poorly executed or abandoned infrastructure projects.

#### Impact of Electoral Integrity on Housing and Infrastructure

Transparent elections create an environment where leaders are accountable for addressing infrastructure deficits and promoting equitable housing policies. Electoral integrity can:

1. Drive Infrastructure Investments: Leaders with a mandate to govern are more likely to secure funding for roads, bridges, and housing that benefit marginalized communities.
2. Ensure Equitable Housing Access: Accountable leadership focuses on affordable housing for low-income groups rather than luxury developments that cater to elites.
3. Minimize Corruption: Transparent governance reduces the risk of funds being siphoned off through inflated contracts or abandoned projects.

On the other hand, flawed electoral processes often result in leadership that exploits housing and infrastructure projects for political patronage, leaving critical needs unaddressed.

#### Case Studies: How INEC Failures Have Led to Ineffective Sectoral Outcomes

1. Abandoned Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) Gas Pipeline Project:
   1. Overview: This project was intended to enhance energy access and support industrialization in northern Nigeria. However, delays and funding mismanagement have stalled progress.
   2. Root Cause: Weak governance and lack of political will, tied to leadership that emerged from flawed elections.
   3. Impact: The region continues to suffer from energy deficits, undermining economic activities.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders who are not accountable to citizens prioritize short-term political gains over critical infrastructure development.
2. Failure of Mass Housing Programs (2017–2020):
   1. Overview: Several mass housing schemes launched under the Buhari administration failed to deliver due to poor execution and political interference.
   2. Root Cause: Lack of oversight and accountability by state governments, whose leaders often emerged from manipulated elections.
   3. Impact: Thousands of intended beneficiaries were left without homes, and many projects remain incomplete.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders who lack legitimacy are less incentivized to follow through on commitments, leading to failed housing initiatives.
3. Mismanagement of Road Construction Contracts:
   1. Overview: The reconstruction of the Lagos-Badagry Expressway, a critical trade corridor, has been delayed for over a decade due to poor governance and corruption.
   2. Root Cause: State and federal leaders emerging from questionable electoral processes have failed to prioritize the project, diverting funds and awarding inflated contracts.
   3. Impact: Businesses and residents continue to suffer from poor road infrastructure, increasing transportation costs and reducing economic efficiency.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders emerging from flawed elections often prioritize patronage over developmental outcomes.
4. Neglected Slum Upgrading Projects in Lagos:
   1. Overview: Donor-funded slum upgrading projects in Lagos, aimed at providing basic infrastructure and housing for low-income communities, have faced mismanagement and political interference.
   2. Root Cause: Unaccountable leadership diverted funds meant for these projects, prioritizing more visible initiatives with political mileage.
   3. Impact: Slum dwellers remain without access to clean water, electricity, or adequate housing.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders who lack accountability to citizens often ignore the needs of marginalized groups, perpetuating inequality.

### 5.2.7. Transportation and Mobility: Pending Reforms and the Role of Electoral Integrity

#### Pending Reforms and Ongoing Efforts in Transportation and Mobility

Transportation and mobility are fundamental to Nigeria’s economic development and the well-being of its citizens. Despite being one of the largest economies in Africa, Nigeria struggles with poor transportation networks, limited public transport options, and unsafe roads. The sector is plagued by inadequate infrastructure, poor maintenance, and weak governance, which hinder economic growth and regional connectivity. In response, various stakeholders have introduced reforms and programs aimed at addressing these challenges.

1. **Legislative Reforms:**
   1. **Federal Roads Authority Act (2015):** Introduced to create a Federal Roads Authority responsible for road construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance to ensure long-term sustainability.
   2. **National Transport Commission Act (2018):** Enacted in 2018, this law establishes the National Transport Commission as the economic regulator for all transport services, promoting efficiency and fair pricing.
   3. **Federal Road Safety Act (2007):** Established to strengthen enforcement of traffic regulations and improve road safety, including mandatory roadworthiness checks and penalties for reckless driving.
2. **Government Programs and Initiatives:**
   1. **Lagos Rail Mass Transit (Blue and Red Lines):** Led by the Lagos State Government, this project aims to provide efficient urban rail transport in Lagos. The first phase of the Blue Line was completed in 2023, though delays have hindered progress.
   2. **Federal Road Rehabilitation Projects:** Key projects include the Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano Road and the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, which are critical for intercity connectivity.
   3. **Rural Access and Mobility Project (RAMP):** This initiative, supported by the World Bank, focuses on improving rural road networks to enhance market access and reduce transportation costs for rural communities.
   4. **Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan:** Many state governments, including Lagos and Abuja, have adopted master plans to integrate road, rail, and water transportation systems.
3. **Private Sector and Civil Society Efforts:**
   1. **Ride-Hailing and Transport Startups:** Companies like Bolt, Uber, and GIGM are improving urban mobility and intercity transportation with tech-driven solutions.
   2. **Civil Society Advocacy:** Organizations advocate for safer roads, better public transport systems, and equitable access to mobility services for underserved populations.
4. **International Donor Programs:**
   1. **World Bank's Road Sector Development Program:** Supports the rehabilitation and maintenance of federal roads and rural access roads.
   2. **African Development Bank’s (AfDB) Transport Sector Support:** Funds infrastructure projects, including roads, railways, and urban transit systems.

Despite these efforts, the success of these reforms has been undermined by poor governance, funding challenges, and inconsistent policy implementation.

#### Link to INEC and Electoral Integrity

Developing effective transportation networks requires stable and responsive leadership that prioritizes public needs. Electoral integrity ensures that leaders are accountable to citizens and motivated to deliver on campaign promises related to infrastructure and mobility. Leaders who emerge from credible elections are more likely to:

* **Ensure Policy Continuity:** Transparent leaders prioritize long-term transportation projects rather than abandoning them for political reasons.
* **Allocate Resources Effectively:** Accountable governments ensure equitable distribution of funds for rural and urban transport systems.
* **Address Public Needs:** Leaders with legitimacy are more likely to engage with citizens to identify transportation challenges and implement solutions.

Without credible elections, transportation reforms are often hindered by political interference, corruption, and short-term thinking.

#### Impact of Electoral Integrity on Transportation and Mobility

Electoral integrity plays a critical role in ensuring that transportation systems are developed and maintained to meet public needs. Transparent elections:

1. **Promote Public Transport Development:** Accountable leaders prioritize investments in public transport systems, reducing traffic congestion and improving mobility for low-income populations.
2. **Improve Road Safety:** Transparent governance fosters stronger enforcement of road safety regulations and better maintenance of infrastructure.
3. **Attract Investments:** Credible elections create political stability, encouraging private and international investments in transport projects.

Conversely, flawed electoral processes often result in leadership that prioritizes politically expedient projects over sustainable development, leaving transportation systems underfunded and poorly managed.

#### Case Studies: How INEC Failures Have Led to Ineffective Sectoral Outcomes

1. **Abandoned East-West Road Project:**
   1. **Overview:** The East-West Road, meant to connect the oil-rich Niger Delta region, has faced over a decade of delays and funding challenges despite its strategic importance.
   2. **Root Cause:** Governance failures, tied to leaders who emerged from manipulated elections, have resulted in mismanagement and corruption.
   3. **Impact:** Poor connectivity in the Niger Delta hampers economic activities and exacerbates poverty in the region.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders lacking electoral legitimacy prioritize political patronage over completing critical infrastructure projects.
2. **Stalled Implementation of Abuja Light Rail:**
   1. **Overview:** Abuja’s Light Rail Project was initiated to improve urban mobility and reduce congestion. However, the project has been plagued by delays and operational inefficiencies.
   2. **Root Cause:** Weak oversight and lack of commitment from leadership at the federal level, many of whom emerged from flawed elections.
   3. **Impact:** Abuja residents continue to face inadequate public transport options, with many relying on unsafe and inefficient alternatives.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders who lack accountability are less incentivized to address urban transportation challenges, leading to project stagnation.
3. **Neglected Rural Roads in Northern Nigeria:**
   1. **Overview:** Several World Bank-funded rural road projects in northern Nigeria have failed to meet their objectives due to poor governance and lack of state-level support.
   2. **Root Cause:** State leaders, often elected through manipulated processes, failed to allocate counterpart funding or oversee project implementation.
   3. **Impact:** Farmers and rural traders remain disconnected from markets, increasing transportation costs and limiting economic opportunities.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders without a voter mandate are less likely to prioritize the needs of rural communities, perpetuating inequality.
4. **Ineffective Traffic Management in Lagos:**
   1. **Overview:** Lagos, one of the most congested cities in the world, has struggled to implement effective traffic management and public transport systems.
   2. **Root Cause:** Politically motivated leadership decisions, including inflated contracts and poorly coordinated initiatives.
   3. **Impact:** Traffic congestion costs Lagos billions of naira annually in lost productivity and worsens air pollution.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders emerging from flawed elections often prioritize visible, high-cost projects over sustainable solutions to urban mobility challenges.

### 5.2.8. Culture and the Creative Industry: Pending Reforms and the Role of Electoral Integrity

#### Pending Reforms and Ongoing Efforts in Culture and the Creative Industry

Nigeria’s culture and creative industry, encompassing film, music, arts, fashion, and tourism, is one of the country’s most vibrant economic sectors. With contributions of over $7 billion annually to GDP and global recognition of Nollywood and Afrobeats, the sector holds immense potential for economic growth and cultural diplomacy. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, weak intellectual property protections, and underdeveloped infrastructure hinder its full potential. Below is a summary of ongoing reforms and initiatives aimed at addressing these challenges:

1. Legislative Reforms:
   1. **National Endowment for the Arts Act (2022):** Established to support creative people and promote cultural heritage. The act called for the establishment of a board of directors that included a chairman, three Nigerians representing the arts, legal, and business interests, and three other people
   2. **Copyright Act (2022):** Recent amendments aim to strengthen intellectual property rights to protect artists, filmmakers, and creators from piracy and unauthorized usage of their work.
   3. **National Tourism Development Authority (2022):** This proposed bill seeks to regulate and develop tourism, which is closely tied to Nigeria’s cultural heritage and creative sector.
2. Government Programs and Initiatives:
   1. Creative Industry Support Fund: Managed by the Nigerian Export-Import (NEXIM) Bank, this fund supports projects that promote the creative industry’s growth, including film production and cultural exports.
   2. Digital Switch Over (DSO): Aimed at transitioning Nigeria’s broadcast industry to digital platforms, DSO enhances the creative industry’s reach and revenue potential.
   3. Nigeria at 60 Project: A cultural initiative launched during Nigeria’s 60th independence anniversary to celebrate the nation’s creative talent and cultural diversity.
3. Private Sector and Civil Society Efforts:
   1. Private Film and Music Investments: Companies like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Universal Music Group have entered Nigeria’s market, investing in Nollywood productions and Afrobeats talent.
   2. NGO Support for Cultural Preservation: Organizations like the Nigerian Cultural Heritage Preservation Foundation advocate for the restoration and promotion of Nigeria’s historical landmarks and traditional arts.
   3. Creative Hubs: Co-working spaces and incubators like CcHub and Afrinolly Creative Hub support emerging talent in the creative and tech sectors.
4. International Donor Programs:
   1. UNESCO Cultural Programs: Support initiatives to preserve Nigeria’s intangible cultural heritage and develop sustainable creative enterprises.
   2. British Council Creative Economy Program: Provides funding and capacity-building programs for Nigerian creatives, particularly women and youth.

While these efforts demonstrate growing recognition of the creative industry’s potential, the sector’s growth remains constrained by policy gaps, weak enforcement of intellectual property laws, and insufficient government support.

#### Link to INEC and Electoral Integrity

Support for the creative industry requires leaders who understand and prioritize its economic and cultural importance. Electoral integrity ensures that such leaders are elected, as it fosters governance that is accountable to the aspirations of citizens, including creatives and cultural entrepreneurs. Leaders emerging from credible elections are more likely to:

* Allocate Resources Fairly: Transparent leadership ensures that funds and grants for the creative sector are distributed equitably, reaching grassroots artists and entrepreneurs.
* Promote Policy Stability: Credible leaders prioritize long-term strategies to support cultural heritage, tourism, and creative innovation.
* Engage Stakeholders: Transparent governance involves meaningful engagement with creative industry stakeholders, ensuring that policies reflect the sector’s needs.

Flawed elections, on the other hand, often produce leaders who overlook the creative sector or exploit it for short-term political gains, stalling its progress.

#### Impact of Electoral Integrity on Culture and the Creative Industry

Electoral integrity plays a pivotal role in creating an enabling environment for the growth of the creative sector. Transparent elections:

1. Foster Innovation and Investment: Accountable leaders attract both local and foreign investments in the creative industry by promoting intellectual property protections and reducing bureaucratic barriers.
2. Promote Cultural Heritage and Tourism: Leaders elected through credible processes are more likely to invest in cultural preservation and promote Nigeria as a global tourism destination.
3. Support Grassroots Creatives: Transparent governance ensures that funding and opportunities reach emerging artists and creatives, fostering inclusivity and diversity in the sector.

Conversely, flawed elections can lead to unaccountable leadership that neglects the creative industry’s potential, leaving artists and cultural entrepreneurs unsupported.

#### Case Studies: How INEC Failures Have Led to Ineffective Sectoral Outcomes

1. Abandoned National Theatre:
   1. Overview: The National Theatre in Lagos, a historic hub for Nigerian arts and culture, has been underutilized and poorly maintained for decades.
   2. Root Cause: Poor governance and lack of political will, tied to leaders who emerged from manipulated elections, have delayed revitalization efforts.
   3. Impact: The facility remains unable to serve as a world-class cultural center, limiting its potential to promote tourism and cultural exports.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders with weak mandates often fail to prioritize cultural infrastructure, focusing instead on politically expedient projects.
2. Neglect of Creative Industry Support Fund:
   1. Overview: The Creative Industry Support Fund, established to provide affordable loans to creatives, has faced allegations of mismanagement and favoritism.
   2. Root Cause: Unaccountable leadership and lack of oversight have hindered the fund’s effectiveness.
   3. Impact: Many grassroots creatives and small businesses have been excluded from accessing financial support, stalling innovation and growth.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders who lack legitimacy are less incentivized to ensure equitable distribution of resources, undermining the fund’s objectives.
3. Delayed Digital Switch Over (DSO) Project:
   1. Overview: The DSO project, meant to digitize Nigeria’s broadcast industry, has faced significant delays due to poor coordination and funding gaps.
   2. Root Cause: Weak governance and lack of continuity in leadership, often tied to flawed electoral processes, have derailed the project.
   3. Impact: The creative industry has lost significant revenue opportunities from digital platforms, and audiences have limited access to diverse content.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders emerging from rigged elections often prioritize personal or political interests over strategic initiatives.
4. Underfunding of Historical Preservation Projects:
   1. Overview: Donor-supported initiatives to restore historical landmarks, such as the Kano City Walls and Benin Bronze sculptures, have been neglected by state governments.
   2. Root Cause: Leadership emerging from flawed elections has failed to provide counterpart funding or political backing for these projects.
   3. Impact: Cultural heritage sites remain at risk of deterioration, limiting their potential as tourist attractions and cultural symbols.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders who lack accountability are less likely to invest in preserving national heritage, missing opportunities to promote cultural pride and tourism.

### 5.2.9. Innovation & Technology: Pending Reforms and the Role of Electoral Integrity

#### Pending Reforms and Ongoing Efforts in Innovation and Technology

The innovation and technology sector in Nigeria has seen significant growth over the last decade, with Lagos often referred to as the "Silicon Valley of Africa." Technology startups in fintech, agritech, edtech, and healthtech are driving economic transformation and positioning Nigeria as a leader in Africa's digital economy. However, challenges such as inadequate digital infrastructure, inconsistent policies, and poor funding hinder the sector's growth. Various stakeholders are working to address these challenges through reforms, programs, and initiatives.

1. Legislative Reforms:
   1. Nigeria Start-Up Act (2022): This landmark legislation provides a legal framework to support startups by offering tax incentives, access to funding, and reduced bureaucratic hurdles. It also fosters collaboration between startups and government agencies.
   2. Data Protection Act (2023): Pending legislation aims to strengthen Nigeria’s digital data ecosystem, ensuring privacy and security for businesses and individuals.
   3. Cybersecurity Act (2015): Enacted to address cybercrime and protect Nigeria’s growing digital economy, though there are calls for amendments to address emerging threats.
2. Government Programs and Initiatives:
   1. National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (2020–2030): Aimed at transforming Nigeria into a leading digital economy, this strategy focuses on digital literacy, broadband penetration, and e-governance.
   2. NITDA Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Scheme: Led by the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), this program supports tech startups and entrepreneurs through training, funding, and capacity-building initiatives.
   3. Broadband Infrastructure Projects: The Federal Government’s National Broadband Plan (2020–2025) seeks to achieve 70% broadband penetration by 2025, providing affordable and reliable internet access to underserved areas.
   4. Youth Innovation Hubs: State governments, such as in Lagos and Kaduna, have launched innovation hubs to nurture tech talent and support local entrepreneurs.
3. Private Sector and Civil Society Efforts:
   1. Tech Startups and Venture Capital: Companies like Flutterwave, Andela, and Paystack have attracted global investment, boosting Nigeria’s tech ecosystem.
   2. Private Innovation Hubs: Spaces like CcHub, iDEA Hub, and Afrilabs provide resources, mentorship, and funding opportunities for startups.
   3. NGOs and Advocacy Groups: Organizations like Paradigm Initiative advocate for digital inclusion, internet freedom, and technology policy reforms.
4. International Donor Programs:
   1. World Bank's Digital Economy for Africa Project: Focuses on expanding digital infrastructure, fostering innovation, and creating jobs in the tech sector.
   2. AfDB’s Coding for Employment Program: Equips youth with digital skills to improve employability and entrepreneurial opportunities.

While these efforts are commendable, they remain constrained by governance issues, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of consistent political support.

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#### Link to INEC and Electoral Integrity

Building a tech-driven economy requires visionary leaders who understand the importance of innovation and are committed to investing in digital infrastructure. Electoral integrity ensures that such leaders are elected, as credible elections prioritize competence and accountability. Leaders emerging from transparent elections are more likely to:

* Support Long-Term Tech Investments: Accountable governments prioritize sustainable investments in broadband, data centers, and digital literacy programs.
* Promote Policy Stability: Transparent leaders ensure that policies supporting startups and digital innovation are consistent and not disrupted by political interference.
* Engage Stakeholders: Credible leaders collaborate with the private sector and civil society to create an enabling environment for innovation.

Without credible elections, leadership often views technology as a short-term campaign tool rather than a transformative driver of economic growth, resulting in underfunded and poorly executed initiatives.

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#### Impact of Electoral Integrity on Innovation and Technology

Transparent elections are vital for fostering an environment where technology and innovation can thrive. Electoral integrity enables:

1. Sustainable Digital Infrastructure Development: Leaders accountable to citizens are more likely to allocate resources for broadband expansion, rural connectivity, and tech-enabled education.
2. Support for Startups and Entrepreneurs: Transparent governance ensures equitable access to funding and support programs, particularly for youth and women-led startups.
3. Integration of Technology in Governance: Accountable leaders embrace e-governance tools to improve service delivery, transparency, and citizen engagement.

Conversely, flawed elections often result in leadership that prioritizes short-term political gains over meaningful investments in technology, leaving the sector underdeveloped.

#### Case Studies: How INEC Failures Have Led to Ineffective Sectoral Outcomes

1. Delayed Implementation of the National Broadband Plan:
   1. Overview: The National Broadband Plan aims to achieve 70% broadband penetration by 2025, but progress has been slow, particularly in rural areas.
   2. Root Cause: Weak governance and lack of political will, tied to leaders who emerged from flawed elections, have resulted in inadequate funding and delayed implementation.
   3. Impact: Millions of Nigerians remain disconnected, limiting access to digital services, education, and economic opportunities.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders without electoral legitimacy are less likely to prioritize long-term infrastructure projects, focusing instead on politically visible initiatives.
2. Abandoned E-Governance Projects:
   1. Overview: Several state and federal e-governance projects aimed at digitizing government services have been abandoned due to lack of continuity and funding.
   2. Root Cause: Leadership transitions driven by flawed electoral processes have resulted in inconsistent policies and poor project oversight.
   3. Impact: Citizens face bureaucratic inefficiencies, and the potential for improved service delivery through technology remains unrealized.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders emerging from manipulated elections often prioritize patronage over public service improvements.
3. Underfunding of Youth Innovation Hubs:
   1. Overview: Government-backed innovation hubs in several states have struggled to operate effectively due to funding gaps and mismanagement.
   2. Root Cause: Leadership at the state level, often tied to unaccountable elections, has failed to prioritize these initiatives.
   3. Impact: Promising tech talent and startups lack the resources needed to scale their innovations, limiting job creation and economic growth.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Transparent elections ensure leaders are accountable to youth and motivated to invest in their future.
4. Mismanagement of Technology Funds:
   1. Overview: Donor-funded initiatives to improve digital literacy and expand access to technology in schools have faced mismanagement and political interference.
   2. Root Cause: Unaccountable leadership has diverted funds meant for these projects, resulting in incomplete or ineffective implementation.
   3. Impact: Students, particularly in rural areas, remain excluded from the benefits of digital education, widening the digital divide.
   4. Connection to Electoral Integrity: Leaders who lack accountability are less likely to ensure that resources are used transparently and effectively.

### 5.2.10. Energy & Climate Change: Pending Reforms and the Role of Electoral Integrity

#### Pending Reforms and Ongoing Efforts in Energy and Climate Change

Nigeria’s energy sector and climate action initiatives are pivotal to achieving sustainable development. With a population of over 200 million people, the country faces significant energy challenges, including limited access to electricity (with over **43%** of Nigerians lacking access), over-reliance on fossil fuels, and the growing impacts of climate change. Efforts to address these challenges involve legislative reforms, government programs, private sector initiatives, and international collaborations. Below is a summary of ongoing efforts:

1. **Legislative Reforms:**
   1. **Petroleum Industry Act (PIA, 2021):** Aims to reform Nigeria’s oil and gas sector by improving revenue transparency, promoting environmental sustainability, and encouraging investment in natural gas as a transition fuel.
   2. **Climate Change Act (2021):** Establishes a framework for achieving net-zero emissions by 2060, mandates climate budgeting, and creates the National Council on Climate Change to oversee implementation.
   3. **National Energy Bill (2021):** Seeks to promote the use of renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydropower while reducing dependency on fossil fuels.
2. **Government Programs and Initiatives:**
   1. **Energy Transition Plan (ETP):** Launched in 2022, this plan aims to achieve universal energy access by 2030 and net-zero carbon emissions by 2060 through renewable energy investments and clean cooking solutions.
   2. **Solar Power Naija:** Part of the Economic Sustainability Plan, this program targets the installation of solar home systems for **5 million households**, creating 250,000 jobs and providing access to electricity for 25 million Nigerians.
   3. **National Gas Expansion Program (NGEP):** Promotes the use of natural gas as a cleaner alternative to diesel and kerosene for power generation and transportation.
   4. **Great Green Wall Initiative:** Focused on combating desertification and land degradation in northern Nigeria, enhancing food security, and promoting climate resilience.
3. **Private Sector and Civil Society Efforts:**
   1. **Renewable Energy Startups:** Companies like Lumos, Green Village Electricity (GVE), and Rubitec Solar are providing solar energy solutions to off-grid communities.
   2. **NGO Advocacy:** Organizations such as the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) and Clean Energy Access Network (CLEAN) advocate for sustainable energy policies and climate action.
   3. **Carbon Trading Programs:** Private sector initiatives to develop carbon credit markets are gaining traction, providing financial incentives for emissions reduction.
4. **International Donor Programs:**
   1. **World Bank’s Nigeria Electrification Project:** Focuses on expanding off-grid solar solutions and improving electricity access for underserved areas.
   2. **African Development Bank’s Desert-to-Power Initiative:** Aims to provide solar power for 250 million people across the Sahel region, including Nigeria.
   3. **Global Environment Facility (GEF):** Funds projects on biodiversity conservation, sustainable land use, and renewable energy development.

While these efforts highlight a growing commitment to energy and climate reform, their effectiveness is often undermined by governance challenges, policy inconsistencies, and insufficient accountability.

#### Link to INEC and Electoral Integrity

Addressing energy needs and climate change requires leaders who prioritize sustainability, long-term planning, and renewable energy investments. Electoral integrity plays a critical role in ensuring that such leaders are elected. Credible elections allow for the emergence of visionary leaders who:

* **Champion Climate Action:** Leaders elected through transparent processes are more likely to adopt and implement ambitious climate policies that benefit future generations.
* **Invest in Renewable Energy:** Accountable leaders are more inclined to allocate resources for renewable energy projects, ensuring equitable access to electricity for underserved communities.
* **Engage Stakeholders:** Transparent governance fosters collaboration with local communities, private sector players, and international partners to implement energy and climate initiatives.

Flawed elections, on the other hand, often result in leadership that prioritizes short-term gains over sustainable development, stalling progress on energy access and climate resilience.

#### Impact of Electoral Integrity on Energy and Climate Change

Electoral integrity is vital to achieving sustainable energy and climate goals. Transparent elections:

1. **Promote Sustainable Investments:** Accountable leaders prioritize investments in renewable energy, green infrastructure, and climate adaptation projects.
2. **Ensure Equitable Resource Allocation:** Transparent governance reduces corruption, ensuring that resources meant for energy projects and climate action are used effectively.
3. **Support Policy Continuity:** Leaders with legitimate mandates are more likely to implement long-term energy and climate policies, regardless of political cycles.

Conversely, flawed electoral processes often result in leadership that prioritizes fossil fuel interests, mismanages climate funds, and overlooks the needs of vulnerable populations.

#### Case Studies: How INEC Failures Have Led to Ineffective Sectoral Outcomes

1. **Neglected Renewable Energy Projects:**
   1. **Overview:** Several donor-funded solar energy projects aimed at providing electricity to off-grid communities have been abandoned due to poor governance.
   2. **Root Cause:** Leadership at the state level, often emerging from flawed elections, failed to allocate counterpart funding or oversee project implementation.
   3. **Impact:** Millions of Nigerians in rural areas remain without access to electricity, perpetuating energy poverty.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders without electoral accountability are less likely to prioritize renewable energy initiatives, focusing instead on politically expedient projects.
2. **Failure to Address Gas Flaring:**
   1. **Overview:** Despite Nigeria’s status as one of the world’s top gas-flaring countries, efforts to eliminate flaring have been slow and ineffective.
   2. **Root Cause:** Weak governance and lack of enforcement by leaders who emerged from manipulated elections.
   3. **Impact:** Gas flaring contributes to environmental degradation, air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions, undermining Nigeria’s climate goals.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders who lack legitimacy are less motivated to enforce environmental regulations, prioritizing oil revenue over sustainability.
3. **Abandoned Climate Resilience Projects:**
   1. **Overview:** Initiatives under the Great Green Wall program to combat desertification in northern Nigeria have faced delays and funding gaps.
   2. **Root Cause:** Poor coordination and mismanagement by unaccountable leaders at both federal and state levels.
   3. **Impact:** Desertification continues to threaten livelihoods and food security in affected regions.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders emerging from flawed elections often neglect rural communities, undermining climate resilience efforts.
4. **Mismanagement of Solar Power Naija Program:**
   1. **Overview:** The Solar Power Naija initiative, aimed at providing solar power to millions of households, has faced implementation delays and allegations of fund mismanagement.
   2. **Root Cause:** Lack of accountability and oversight by state governments, whose leaders often emerged from manipulated elections.
   3. **Impact:** The program has fallen short of its targets, leaving many households without access to clean energy.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Transparent elections are essential to ensuring that leaders prioritize energy projects and deliver on their promises.

### 5.2.11. Healthcare: Pending Reforms and the Role of Electoral Integrity

#### Pending Reforms and Ongoing Efforts in Healthcare

Healthcare in Nigeria faces significant challenges, including underfunding, poor infrastructure, inadequate staffing, and unequal access to services. Despite its position as Africa’s most populous nation, Nigeria struggles with low life expectancy, high maternal and child mortality rates, and frequent outbreaks of preventable diseases. To address these challenges, various stakeholders have initiated reforms and programs to strengthen the sector. Below is a summary of ongoing efforts:

1. **Legislative Reforms:**
   1. **National Health Act (2014):** Established the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF) to finance primary healthcare and improve access for underserved populations. However, full implementation remains a challenge.
   2. **Health Insurance Bill (2022):** Aims to make health insurance mandatory for all Nigerians, enhancing universal healthcare coverage.
   3. **Nigerian Center for Disease Control Act (2018):** This legislation focuses on strengthening Nigeria’s capacity to respond to public health emergencies and pandemics.
2. **Government Programs and Initiatives:**
   1. **Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF):** Provides funding to improve primary healthcare infrastructure, supply essential drugs, and train healthcare workers.
   2. **National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA):** Overseas immunization campaigns, maternal and child health programs, and disease control efforts.
   3. **Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF):** Aligns healthcare financing with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure adequate and sustainable funding for the sector.
   4. **Tertiary Health Institution Reform:** Several teaching hospitals and federal medical centers are undergoing modernization to improve tertiary healthcare services.
3. **Private Sector and Civil Society Efforts:**
   1. **Healthcare Startups:** Companies like Lifebank and Helium Health leverage technology to improve access to blood supplies, electronic medical records, and telemedicine services.
   2. **NGO Advocacy:** Organizations like Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria (HERFON) and Save the Children advocate for increased healthcare funding and equitable access to services.
   3. **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Several state governments collaborate with private firms to build and manage healthcare facilities, such as diagnostic centers and hospitals.
4. **International Donor Programs:**
   1. **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria:** Supports Nigeria’s efforts to combat infectious diseases, with significant funding for malaria prevention and treatment.
   2. **GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance:** Provides vaccines and immunization support for children and vulnerable populations.
   3. **World Bank’s Better Health for All Program:** Focuses on improving maternal and child health, as well as reducing financial barriers to healthcare access.
   4. **WHO and UNICEF Health Programs:** Support maternal health, immunization campaigns, and pandemic preparedness in Nigeria.

While these reforms demonstrate a growing commitment to improving healthcare, they are often undermined by governance challenges, inadequate funding, and weak accountability mechanisms.

#### Link to INEC and Electoral Integrity

Healthcare reform requires leaders who are committed to equitable access, quality services, and robust funding. Electoral integrity plays a critical role in ensuring that such leaders are elected. Credible elections allow for the emergence of leaders who:

* **Allocate Resources Effectively:** Transparent leadership ensures that healthcare budgets are distributed equitably, prioritizing underserved regions and vulnerable populations.
* **Promote Policy Stability:** Accountable leaders focus on long-term healthcare reforms, avoiding politically motivated disruptions.
* **Engage Stakeholders:** Transparent governance fosters collaboration with healthcare professionals, private sector actors, and international donors to strengthen the healthcare system.

Flawed elections, on the other hand, often result in leadership that diverts public health funds, neglects infrastructure development, and prioritizes short-term political gains over meaningful healthcare improvements.

#### Impact of Electoral Integrity on Healthcare

Electoral integrity is essential to building a healthcare system that meets the needs of all Nigerians. Transparent elections:

1. **Ensure Accountability in Healthcare Funding:** Leaders elected through credible processes are more likely to allocate public health funds responsibly, reducing corruption and waste.
2. **Improve Healthcare Infrastructure:** Accountable leadership invests in hospitals, clinics, and medical equipment, ensuring that facilities are equipped to deliver quality care.
3. **Support Healthcare Workers:** Transparent governance prioritizes the training, recruitment, and welfare of healthcare workers, addressing critical staffing shortages.

Conversely, flawed elections often produce leaders who neglect the healthcare sector, resulting in poor service delivery, brain drain, and worsening health outcomes.

#### Case Studies: How INEC Failures Have Led to Ineffective Sectoral Outcomes

1. **Underutilization of the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF):**
   1. **Overview:** Despite being mandated by the National Health Act, the BHCPF has been underutilized due to poor implementation and weak oversight at state and local levels.
   2. **Root Cause:** Leadership failures tied to flawed electoral processes have resulted in mismanagement and diversion of funds meant for primary healthcare.
   3. **Impact:** Many primary healthcare centers lack essential drugs, medical equipment, and trained personnel, leaving rural populations underserved.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders emerging from questionable elections often fail to prioritize healthcare reforms, focusing instead on politically expedient projects.
2. **Abandoned Maternal Health Projects:**
   1. **Overview:** Donor-funded maternal health initiatives aimed at reducing Nigeria’s high maternal mortality rate have been abandoned in several states.
   2. **Root Cause:** Weak governance and lack of accountability by state leaders, many of whom emerged from manipulated elections, have hindered project implementation.
   3. **Impact:** Nigeria continues to record one of the highest maternal mortality rates globally, with many women lacking access to skilled care during childbirth.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders without electoral legitimacy are less motivated to invest in women’s health, leaving critical gaps in service delivery.
3. **Neglect of Pandemic Preparedness:**
   1. **Overview:** The COVID-19 pandemic exposed weaknesses in Nigeria’s healthcare system, including inadequate testing facilities, poor coordination, and delayed vaccine rollouts.
   2. **Root Cause:** Governance deficiencies and lack of political will, tied to leadership that emerged from flawed elections, hindered the country’s pandemic response.
   3. **Impact:** Thousands of lives were lost, and healthcare workers were overwhelmed due to poor preparedness and resource allocation.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders who lack accountability are less likely to prioritize public health emergencies, leading to avoidable suffering and loss of life.
4. **Healthcare Worker Strikes:**
   1. **Overview:** Frequent strikes by doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers over unpaid salaries and poor working conditions have disrupted healthcare services across the country.
   2. **Root Cause:** Unaccountable leadership at both federal and state levels has failed to address the welfare of healthcare workers.
   3. **Impact:** Patients, particularly in rural and underserved areas, face prolonged disruptions in access to care.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Transparent elections ensure leaders are accountable to citizens and motivated to address systemic issues affecting healthcare workers.

### 5.2.11. Anti-Corruption: Pending Reforms and the Role of Electoral Integrity

#### Pending Reforms and Ongoing Efforts in Anti-Corruption

Corruption is a major impediment to Nigeria's socio-economic development, affecting all sectors of governance and public service. Efforts to combat corruption involve multiple stakeholders, including the government, private sector, civil society, and international partners. These efforts aim to strengthen institutional frameworks, enforce anti-corruption laws, and promote accountability at all levels of government. Below is a summary of ongoing reforms and initiatives:

1. **Legislative Reforms:**
   1. **Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Bill (Pending):** This proposed bill seeks to establish a framework for the seizure, management, and disposal of assets derived from corrupt practices and other crimes, enhancing accountability and transparency in asset recovery.
   2. **Whistleblower Protection Bill (Pending):** This proposed bill seeks to provide comprehensive protection for individuals reporting corruption cases, ensuring anonymity, safety, and reward mechanisms to encourage whistleblowing.
   3. **Money Laundering Prevention and Prohibition Act (2022):** Introduced to strengthen financial regulations, monitor illicit fund flows, and align Nigeria with international anti-money laundering standards.
2. **Government Programs and Initiatives:**
   1. **Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS):** Designed to eliminate ghost workers in the public sector, saving billions of naira annually from fraudulent payroll claims.
   2. **Treasury Single Account (TSA):** A centralized system for managing public funds to improve transparency and reduce opportunities for embezzlement.
   3. **National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS):** A comprehensive framework focusing on prevention, enforcement, public engagement, and institutional reforms.
   4. **Public Procurement Reforms:** Digitization of procurement processes and adoption of open contracting data standards to enhance transparency in public project awards.
3. **Private Sector and Civil Society Efforts:**
   1. **Corporate Governance Reforms:** Private sector players, particularly in banking, oil, and telecommunications, are adopting anti-corruption compliance frameworks to align with global standards.
   2. **Civil Society Advocacy:** Organizations like SERAP (Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project) and BudgIT engage in monitoring government spending, publishing reports, and holding leaders accountable for corruption.
   3. **Citizen Platforms:** Initiatives like Follow the Money and Tracka empower citizens to monitor public projects and report mismanagement.
4. **International Donor Programs:**
   1. **World Bank and UNDP Anti-Corruption Initiatives:** Focus on capacity building for anti-corruption agencies, public sector reforms, and citizen participation in governance.
   2. **MacArthur Foundation's On Nigeria Program:** Supports local anti-corruption initiatives and advocacy for good governance.
   3. **Open Government Partnership (OGP):** Nigeria's membership in the OGP commits the government to greater transparency, public accountability, and citizen engagement in decision-making.

Despite these efforts, the impact of anti-corruption reforms is often limited by weak enforcement, political interference, and a lack of sustained leadership commitment.

#### Link to INEC and Electoral Integrity

Fighting corruption at all levels relies on electing leaders who are committed to transparency, accountability, and institutional reforms. Electoral integrity plays a pivotal role in ensuring that such leaders are elected. A reformed INEC that conducts free, fair, and credible elections can:

* **Ensure Accountability in Leadership:** Transparent elections enable the emergence of leaders who prioritize the public good over personal gain, fostering an environment of accountability.
* **Strengthen Anti-Corruption Institutions:** Leaders elected through credible processes are more likely to respect the independence of anti-corruption agencies and support their mandates.
* **Engage Citizens in Anti-Corruption Efforts:** Electoral integrity builds public trust, encouraging citizen participation in governance and the fight against corruption.

Flawed elections, on the other hand, often produce leaders who perpetuate corruption, weaken anti-corruption institutions, and divert public resources for personal enrichment.

#### Impact of Electoral Integrity on Anti-Corruption

Electoral integrity is foundational to Nigeria's anti-corruption efforts. Credible elections produce leaders who are accountable to citizens and committed to promoting transparency and good governance. Transparent elections:

1. **Set Standards of Accountability:** Leaders elected through fair elections are more likely to enforce laws and adopt policies that curb corruption and promote ethical governance.
2. **Reduce Political Patronage:** Transparent governance minimizes the culture of political patronage, where appointments, contracts, and public funds are distributed based on loyalty rather than merit.
3. **Empower Anti-Corruption Agencies:** Accountable leaders prioritize the funding, independence, and operational efficiency of anti-corruption institutions, enabling them to function without political interference.

Conversely, flawed elections undermine anti-corruption efforts by enabling the rise of leaders who protect corrupt networks, divert public resources, and erode institutional trust.

#### Case Studies: How INEC Failures Have Led to Ineffective Sectoral Outcomes

1. **Delayed Implementation of Anti-Corruption Laws:**
   1. **Overview:** The Whistleblower Policy, introduced in 2016, has achieved limited success due to delays in enacting the Whistleblower Protection Bill.
   2. **Root Cause:** Lack of political will by leaders who emerged from flawed elections, prioritizing political interests over systemic reforms.
   3. **Impact:** Citizens are discouraged from reporting corruption due to inadequate protections, weakening the fight against graft.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders elected through transparent processes are more likely to prioritize laws that encourage citizen engagement in anti-corruption efforts.
2. **Mismanagement of Recovered Assets:**
   1. **Overview:** Several high-profile cases of recovered stolen funds have been marred by allegations of mismanagement and lack of transparency in their utilization.
   2. **Root Cause:** Unaccountable leadership, often emerging from manipulated elections, has failed to establish clear frameworks for managing recovered assets.
   3. **Impact:** Public confidence in anti-corruption efforts has eroded, and recovered funds are often re-looted or misallocated.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Transparent elections ensure leaders are motivated to implement transparent asset recovery frameworks that benefit the public.
3. **Weakened Independence of Anti-Corruption Agencies:**
   1. **Overview:** Political interference has frequently undermined the work of the EFCC and ICPC, with leadership changes often driven by political interests rather than performance.
   2. **Root Cause:** Leaders who emerge from flawed elections often use anti-corruption agencies to target political opponents while protecting allies.
   3. **Impact:** The credibility and effectiveness of anti-corruption institutions have been compromised, reducing their deterrent effect.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Credible elections produce leaders who respect the rule of law and allow institutions to operate independently.
4. **Neglect of Open Government Partnership (OGP) Commitments:**
   1. **Overview:** Nigeria’s commitments under the OGP, such as improving public access to government financial information, have seen limited implementation.
   2. **Root Cause:** Leadership with weak electoral legitimacy has failed to prioritize transparency and accountability measures.
   3. **Impact:** Nigeria continues to rank poorly on global corruption indices, and citizens have limited access to information on government spending.
   4. **Connection to Electoral Integrity:** Leaders elected through credible processes are more likely to fulfill international commitments to transparency.

## 6.0 Call to Action

Nigeria’s Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) holds the potential to be a driving force for sustainable national progress, promoting accountable governance that improves development across all sectors. When an electoral body functions effectively and independently, it forms the backbone of a credible democratic system where governance is rooted in accountability to the people. This connection between electoral integrity and sustainable progress is particularly critical for Nigeria, where issues like corruption, resource misallocation, and inadequate policy implementation persistently hinder economic and social advancements. A reliable INEC, capable of conducting free and fair elections, directly impacts national progress by ensuring that leaders are chosen based on genuine public support rather than manipulated electoral outcomes. When elections are transparent and credible, the leaders who emerge from these processes are more likely to prioritise the public interest, knowing that their mandate depends on continued public trust. As documented in Nigeria’s electoral history, the absence of electoral integrity has allowed leaders to take office without a true mandate, often promoting environments where governance structures are weak, corruption is rampant, and public resources are misallocated.

In Nigeria, economic development is frequently obstructed by governance practices that prioritise elite interests over broad-based policies beneficial to the majority. For instance, studies indicate that the mismanagement of state resources is more pronounced in systems where leaders are shielded from public accountability. Leaders who are not genuinely accountable tend to ignore long-term economic reforms, focusing instead on short-term gains and maintaining their political networks. INEC reform has the potential to change this dynamic, as elected officials who must answer to a truly representative voting base are incentivized to enact policies that address the needs of their constituents. Electoral integrity thus lays the foundation for economic policies that can drive growth, attract investment, and reduce poverty, particularly in a country with a high dependence on state-controlled resources.

The intersection of INEC’s credibility with economic policy outcomes is also evident in how electoral integrity influences investor confidence. International investors are more inclined to invest in countries where political stability and government accountability are assured.

By reforming INEC to ensure impartiality and transparency, Nigeria could send a strong message to the global economic community that it is committed to political stability and reliable governance, paving the way for greater economic engagement and growth opportunities.

The reform of INEC is also crucial for social development, particularly in sectors like healthcare, education, and infrastructure. When electoral systems are compromised, leaders may prioritise policies that benefit political supporters over those aimed at widespread social welfare. This trend is evident in Nigeria’s health sector, where resources are often unevenly allocated, leaving many communities without adequate healthcare services.

A reformed INEC that ensures elected officials genuinely represent their constituents’ needs could counter this pattern. Leaders accountable to their electorate are likely to implement policies that prioritise equitable access to essential services, promoting long-term improvements in public health, education, and infrastructure.

Additionally, public trust in governance is closely tied to the perception of fairness and transparency within electoral processes. When citizens believe in the legitimacy of their electoral system, they are more likely to participate actively in democratic processes, holding leaders accountable and demanding transparency.

Conversely, INEC’s long-standing issues with integrity and impartiality have promoted widespread voter apathy and disillusionment. This disengagement allows poor governance to persist unchallenged, with citizens feeling powerless to effect change through the ballot. Strengthening INEC’s capacity and credibility would therefore not only enhance voter turnout but also cultivate a more engaged and vigilant citizenry, reinforcing the foundational role of elections in a democracy.

Nigeria stands to benefit from a robust and reformed INEC capable of delivering credible elections that can help break cycles of political instability and economic stagnation. The FixINEC agenda is not merely a matter of improving electoral outcomes but is essential to creating a democratic system where governance structures are responsive, accountable, and aligned with the national interest. A credible INEC would empower Nigeria to pursue sustainable progress across all sectors, addressing deep-seated issues like corruption, poverty, and inequality. Reforming INEC would ultimately connect democratic integrity with social and economic resilience, allowing Nigeria to fulfil its potential for growth and development in a way that benefits all its citizens.

**To access the resources you need in pushing for INEC reforms visit** [**Mandate4.org/fixinec**](http://mandate4.org/fixinec)**.**

**Also, ensure you read Parts 1 and II of this report to understand the issue within INEC and how it can be reformed.**

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