

## Success and Failure of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria

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### Abstract

*The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals developed by the world community to uplift people from social and environmental problems. The MDGs aimed to halve the rate of poverty and hunger, reduce illiteracy, diseases, and environmental degradation and enhance global partnership among nations by the year 2015. The purpose of this study was to examine the success and failure of MDGs in Nigeria. The study adopted a qualitative method and the main source of data is secondary. Analytical results revealed that out of the eight goals of the MDGs, Nigeria could only achieve one which is primary school enrolment. All other goals were not achieved. The study recommended that for Nigeria to achieve sustainable development goals, all the perceived factors that were responsible for the failure of the MDGs must be tackled.*

**Keywords:** Success, Failure, Millennium Development Goal

### Introduction

Despite significant efforts and resources invested since the 1990s to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the outcomes have been mixed, with some notable successes but also persistent challenges in various areas. While substantial progress was made in reducing extreme poverty globally, the goal of halving hunger was not fully achieved. The proportion of people living in extreme poverty decreased from 36% in 1990 to 10% in 2015. However, hunger reduction targets were not met in many regions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia (Force, 2015).

Though the number of primary school-age children who were not in school fell from 100 million in 2000 to 57 million in 2015, there were still issues with literacy and educational quality in many developing nations. In terms of health and disease control, there were significant advancements in reducing the prevalence of diseases and improving health outcomes; for instance, child mortality rates fell by more than half between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio also decreased by 45% globally, and the number of new HIV infections decreased by roughly 40% between 2000 and 2013 (Force, 2015).

In terms of environmental sustainability, efforts to address environmental degradation showed mixed results. For instance, over 2.6 billion people gained access to improved drinking water sources since 1990. However, challenges persisted in areas such as deforestation,

biodiversity loss, and climate change mitigation. In the area of global partnership, global partnership, the development of global partnerships saw some progress but faced limitations. Official development assistance (ODA) from developed countries increased from about \$81 billion in 2000 to \$134 billion in 2014. However, only a few countries met the UN target of providing 0.7% of their Gross National Income as ODA (Force, 2015).

On the challenges and shortcomings encountered, several factors contributed to the incomplete achievement of the MDGs. One of the factors was uneven progress, improvements were not uniform across regions or within countries, with some areas lagging significantly behind. Another which contributed to the incomplete achievement of the MDG was data limitations, the lack of reliable data in many developing countries hindered accurate assessment and targeted interventions. Also, despite increases in ODA, funding gaps remained a significant obstacle to achieving the goals. Complex global challenges that centre around issues such as climate change, political instability, and economic crises impeded progress in many areas (Weststrate et al, 2019). Recognizing the need for continued efforts, the international community developed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a more comprehensive framework for the post-2015 era. The SDGs build on the MDGs, addressing a broader range of issues and emphasizing sustainability. Greater emphasis is placed on partnerships, including the involvement of the private sector and civil society (Asadullah, 2018).

In Nigeria, a report by the MDG offices indicated that there was a significant improvement in primary school enrolment, HIV infection had also reduced significantly, child mortality had been reduced tremendously, and there was also improvement in girl child enrolment in basic schooling. The report further reveals that there were serious challenges in the area of reducing poverty, hunger, gender inequality, environmental degradation and global partnership. Another critical challenge was in the area of information gathering and management which is daunting in Nigeria.

These challenges coupled with a lack of commitment from the political leaders, and an absence of transparency and accountability at all the tiers of government, were some of the factors that hinder Nigeria from achieving the millennium development goals as stipulated. Based on this background, this study seeks to assess the failure and success of millennium development in Nigeria with the view of recommending ways for achieving sustainable development goals. A qualitative method was adopted for this study and the data for the study is mainly secondary and an analytical method of analysis was utilized as well.

## **1.2 Literature Review**

Although many definitions of millennium development abound, the most frequently used definition is the one offered by the United Nations which perceives millennium development as the integration and enhancement of eight goals such as the reduction of poverty and hunger reduction, improving primary school enrolment, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, and promoting global partnership (Fukuda-parr, 2013; Asadullah, 2018).

When derived from the conventional date of Christ's birth, the term "millennium" literally refers to one thousand years. It is when one millennium comes to a close and a new one starts. Development on the other hand is a normative concept which is synonymous with improvement, advancement, and growth. Development has been approached from different perspectives and backgrounds - political, economic cultural, administrative and technological perspectives. Development implies a favourable change from inferior to superior, from low to high, from undesirable conditions to desirable ones, and from backwards to forward (Salisu, 2020). Anyebe

(2012) perceives development as a process of change that is progressive which is ascension from a lower to a higher stage.

Ngu (2019) conceives development from a narrow perspective, that is, seeing development as an economic growth measure in quantitative terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Gross National Product (GNP), and Per Capita Income in economically developed and undeveloped areas. Ruggerio (2021) believes that development is not purely economic progress, even though it is an essential part of it, development is a multi-dimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of the entire people's economic and social system. That development should be viewed from a holistic perspective which involves a radical change in the institutional, social administrative structure as well as change in people's attitudes, customs and beliefs, and acceleration of economic growth, eradication of poverty, reduction of inequality, in essence, development represents the entire gamut of change by which the entire social system turns.

Development from a holistic perspective is the progressive ability of man to fashion out tools with which to conquer his environment and use them to his advantage. Development covers changes in both man and his environment. At the individual level, it implies the acquisition of relevant skills, capacity, greater freedom, creativity, responsibility, self-reliance, and self-discipline, at the group level, it entails increased capacity to regulate both external and internal relationships (Rodney 1974).

According to Anyebe (2012), growth indicates a movement from a lower and frequently undesired condition to a higher and preferable one. As such, when used to define a nation, it means the transformation of numerous areas of the nation's life.

From the 21st-century development perspective, development entails the ability to reduce poverty, hunger, unemployment, child mortality, maternal mortality, and the spread of HIV and other diseases to a tolerable level, as well as safeguarding the environment for future generations and the ability to compete with other nations favourably.

### **1.3 Efforts Made by Nigeria to Achieve MDGs**

While MDGs cannot be said to have entirely failed, in some areas, there were some successes even though the failure outweighs the success.

#### **1.3.1 Goal 1 Eradication of Poverty and Hunger**

Going by the World Bank's definition of poverty, a person is living in extreme poverty if he lives below the poverty line of \$1.90 which translates to N693.5 per day, but when it is 1.25 dollars per day, that translates to N360 a day. Nigeria made some progress in reducing poverty but fell short of the target, for example, poverty levels declined from 65.6% in 1996 to 45.5% in 2010, though this was still short of the 21.4% target (UN, 2016). According to the MDGs Nigeria, the trends in poverty were in the decline as the population living in relative poverty reduced to 54 % and those living in extreme poverty was 35 % (Force, 2015). The poverty rate in Nigeria remained very high at more than 60% of the population, with little evidence of recent progress in poverty reduction (BBC NEWS, 2017).

Similarly, before the implementation of the MDGs in Nigeria, the population living on less than a dollar per day in 1992 was 39.2 million people amounting to 41.7 %. The figure rose to 67.7 million people amounting to 65.6%. In 2004, the number rose to 68.7 million people which translates to 54.7 %, in 2010 the number dramatically increased to 112.47 million people amounting to 60.9 %, in 2013, the number of people living below the poverty line rose to 174 million people, in 2015 when the number of those living below the poverty was supposed to have been reduced to half, it stood at more than 60 % instead (Kazeem, 2017).

## **Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education**

The net primary education enrollment rate in Nigeria rose from 68% in 1999 to 89% in 2013, indicating gains in basic education enrollment.

The literacy rate for 15-24-year-olds rose from 60% in 2000 to 80% in 2008. The government reviewed the Federal Teachers' scheme and provided continuous training for teachers to improve teaching quality.

Similarly, a recent report by the Ministry of Education indicates that between 20211/2012, the total enrolment for both public and private primary schools by gender was 24,893,442, in 2012/2013 it was 26,158,375, in 2013/2014 the enrolment was 25, 801,197, in 2014/2015 the enrolment was 25,442,535, in 2015/2016 the enrolment was 25, 591,181 (UN, 2019). Similarly, as for the senior secondary school pupils between 20211/2012, the enrolment for both gender and by class was 4,934,722 million students, in 2012/2013, the enrolment was 5,210,941 million pupils, in 2023/2014, the enrolment was 4,292,489, in 2014/2015, the enrolment figure was 4, 935,739, in 2025/2016, the enrolment was 4,475,309 respectively. Although there has been a great achievement in the education sector toward achieving the stated goal, however, the issue of school dropout stands as the main stumbling block in the realization of both the MDGs and the SDGs as a recent report from UNICEF indicated that about 10.5 million child of school age are out of school in Nigeria due to some economic and cultural factors (UNICEF, 2018).

## **Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women**

Some progress was made in gender parity in education, but challenges remained in political representation. Nigeria achieved higher gender parity in primary school enrollment. However, the prevailing patriarchal culture remained a major factor limiting women's access to elective positions.

In terms of gender contribution to the GDP, if women participated in the economy to the same extent as men, the GDP would grow by 23% translating to \$229bn in 2025 (2019, McKinsey). According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 40% of Nigerian girls do not attend school and even those who do have an average school life expectancy of nine years, compared to seventeen years in the industrialized world. Nigerian women have one of the highest rates of maternal death worldwide and are severely denied reproductive rights in the healthcare system. Even worse were the post-election results - according to the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), only 62 women won, making up a pitiful 4% of elected politicians.

Just seven women were selected for President Muhammadu Buhari's cabinet, which made up little more than sixteen per cent of the federal ministers. Similarly, according to a 2016 survey conducted by DCSL Corporate Services Limited, between 2013 and 2015, women accounted for only 14% of the 915 board directors of the 132 companies quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (UNICEF, 2018).

## **Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality**

Nigeria made progress in reducing child mortality as the child mortality rates decreased by more than half between 1990 and 2015. Reducing child mortality has remained a serious challenge to Nigeria in achieving the global target of 30/1000 live births by 2015. In 2005, the child mortality rate was 110/1000 live births which indicates a wide gap which calls for serious action to reduce the rate. Likewise, the infant mortality rate has not improved as the rate stood at 90/1000 in 1999 and rose to 100/1000 in 2003. Similarly, prevention measures have deteriorated from 30.0 per cent in 1999 to 38.0 per cent in 2003 (UNICEF, 2018).

### **Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health**

There were improvements in maternal health, for instance, the maternal mortality ratio declined, though specific figures for Nigeria were not provided in the search results.

In rural areas, the maternal death rate increased from 704 per 100,000 in 1999 to 828 per 100,000 in 2003. According to recent data, Nigeria's infant mortality rate decreased by 2.38% from 2018 to 60.662 deaths per 1000 live births in 2019. Nigeria's infant mortality rate decreased by 3.97% from 2017 to 62.142 deaths per 1000 live births in 2018.

Similarly, as of 2015, the maternal death ratio was 814 per 100,000 live births. In comparison to the 2017 birth rate of 38.582 births per 1000 people, the 2018 birth rate was 38.098 births per 1000 people, a 1.25% decrease. As shown by the statistics above, Nigeria has not succeeded in achieving goals 4 and 5 of the MDGs which means that a lot needs to be done for Nigeria to be able to achieve the SDGs (Asadullahi, 2018; UN, 2019).

### **Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Other Diseases**

Nigeria celebrated one year without polio from July 2014 to July 2015, marking tremendous progress in the country's efforts to eradicate the disease. From 5.4% in 2000 to 4.1% in 2010, the prevalence of HIV among pregnant young women aged 15 to 24 years decreased steadily. Between 2000 and 2013, there was a roughly 40% decrease in new HIV infections. According to MDGs Nigeria, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and malaria decreased from 5.8% in 2001 to 4.4% in 2005. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women aged 15 to 24 also slightly decreased. Still, TB and malaria remain serious public health issues in Nigeria, where they account for 30% of hospital admissions, 60% of outpatient visits. Malaria is responsible for 300,000 deaths annually ranking 4th among 22 high burden countries in the world (UN, 2019).

### **Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability**

Nigeria made some progress in improving access to safe drinking water, the country achieved appreciable progress in improving households' access to safe drinking water, with an end-point status in 2015 of 67.0% access.

### **Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development**

Nigeria saw improvements in technology access, the growth in the number of cellular phone subscribers and the teledensity per 100 people stood at 77.8 and 99.3, respectively, in 2014, signifying wide coverage (UN, 2019). Despite these efforts, Nigeria's overall progress towards achieving the MDGs was mixed, with some goals seeing significant improvement while others lagged. The country faced challenges such as corruption, poor policy implementation, and insufficient funding, which hindered the full achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

## Summary of the Success and Failure of MGDs in Nigeria

### Goals: Goal 1: Eradication of Extreme Poverty and Hunger

*Target 1: Reduction by half of the proportion of the population living below 1 USD per day (N260)* Weak

*Target 2: Reducing hunger* Weak

*Target: Reducing malnutrition among children of under-five age* Fair

### Goal 2: Achieving Universal Primary Education

*Target 1: Net Enrolment* Weak

*Target 2: Primary Six completion* Weak

*Target 3: Literacy rate of 15 to 24 years old* Weak

*Target 4: Ratio of girls to boys in primary education* Good

*Target 5: Ratio girls to boys in secondary school education* Fair

### Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality

*Target 1: Share of women in wage employment in non-agricultural sector* Weak

*Target 2: Proportion of seats held by women in national assembly* Weak

### Goal 4: Reducing child Mortality

*Target 1: Under-five mortality rates* Strong

*Target 2: Infant mortality rate* Fair

*Target 3: Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles* Weak

### Goal 5: Maternal Mortality

*Target 4: maternal mortality ratio* Met

*Target 5: Proportion of birth attendance by skilled health personnel* Weak

*Target 6: Contraceptive prevalence rate* Weak

*Target 7: Antenatal coverage at least 1 visit* Weak

### Goal 6: Combating HIV/AIDS

*Target 1: HIV prevalence among pregnant young women age 15 to 24* Weak

*Target 2: Young people age 15 to 24 reporting the use of condoms during sexual intercourse with a non-regular partner* Weak



<i>Target 3: Proportion of the population aged 15 to 24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HI/AIDs</i>	Weak
<i>Target 4: Proportion of the population with advanced infection with access to antiretroviral drug</i>	Weak
<i>Target 5: Proportion of under-five children sleeping under insecticide-treated nets</i>	Weak
<i>Target 6: Incidence of TB per 1000,000 population</i>	No Progress

### **Goal 7: Ensuring Environmental Sustainability**

<i>Target 1: Proportion of land areas covered by forest</i>	Weak
<i>Target 2: Proportion of the population using an improved drinking water source</i>	Weak
<i>Target 3: Proportion of the population of urban population living in slums</i>	Weak

### **Goal 7: Developing global partnership**

<i>Target 1: Per capita ODA to Nigeria</i>	Fair
<i>Target 2: Debt service as a percentage of export of goods and services</i>	Strong
<i>Target 3: Telephone line per 100 people</i>	Weak
<i>Target 4: Cellular Phone subscribers per 100 people</i>	Strong
<i>Target 5: Internet users per 100 people</i>	Fair
<i>Target 6: Tele Density</i>	Strong

### **Source: MDG End Report Nigeria (2015)**

Interpretation of Remarks:

Met =100%

Strong = 60 %

Fair = 45-59 %

Weak = Less than 45 %

### **Conclusion**

Nigeria has not achieved the MDG's target from 2000 to 2015, out of the 8 goals Nigeria could only achieve one goal which is primary school enrolment for children, all the other goals were not achieved. Some of the reasons advanced as why Nigeria could not achieve at least five of the goals were centred around lack of commitment from the political leaders as well as lack of sufficient data on the demographic variables of the Nigerian population which made it extremely difficult to make a good plan, because a good plan must rely on accurate data which is absent in Nigeria. Another factor that hindered Nigeria from achieving the MDGs was the lack of coordination of the activities of the MDGs at various levels from national to the state, and local government levels. For Nigeria to achieve the SDGs, all mentioned factors that were responsible for the failure must be put into consideration with the view of taking corrective measures.

## **Recommendations**

There should be an examination of Nigeria's policy frameworks and implementation strategies related to MDGs. There should be a focus on identifying gaps between policy formulation and execution, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of various development plans introduced since 1999.

Also, the quality and reliability of Nigeria's data collection methods for MDG indicators should be re-examined. Research should focus on developing more robust baseline data and improving monitoring systems to accurately track progress.

There should be an analysis of the effectiveness of institutional structures set up for MDG implementation in Nigeria, such as the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs and an assessment of how these structures coordinated efforts across different levels of government.

Investigations should be carried out on the allocation and utilization of resources for MDG-related programs. There should be a focus on issues of corruption, mismanagement, and inefficient use of funds that may have hindered progress.



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