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## **Role of Government Policies on Building Resilience and Facilitating Transformational Recovery in Nigeria: A Comparative Analysis with Some African Countries**

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### **Abstract**

This study analyzed the role of government policies in building resilience and facilitating transformational recovery in the face of diverse crises, using a comparative approach with other African countries. With various challenges ranging from economic downturns, climate change effects, to public health emergencies, resilience has become an essential characteristic for Nigerian communities. The government's role in developing policies that foster resilience and transformational recovery is crucial in this context. The research employs the qualitative research design, including a policy analysis of Nigerian government strategies and interventions, and a comparative analysis with selected African countries that have shown significant strides in building resilience. The countries selected for comparison are Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa, each with unique resilience-building policies despite confronting similar challenges as Nigeria. Findings suggest that effective government policies typically involve strong community engagement, a robust public health infrastructure, sustainable economic strategies, and comprehensive disaster risk management plans. The study recommends policy improvements in Nigeria based on the successful strategies employed by the other African countries under study. The study's implications extend beyond Nigeria, as it adds to the broader discourse on the role of government policies in building resilience and facilitating transformational recovery in developing countries, especially in the African context.

**Keywords:** Resilience, Recovery, Policies, Kenya, Rwanda South Africa

### **Introduction**

Nigeria, with its diverse and populous society, has been faced with several crises that have threatened its social, economic, and environmental stability. These crises range from public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic downturns due to volatility in global oil prices, to the impacts of climate change leading to increased frequency and intensity of flooding and drought [1,2].

The increasing occurrence and intensity of these crises have underscored the need for resilience and transformational recovery in Nigerian communities. Resilience refers to the capacity of a system, community, or society to absorb disturbances, adapt to change, and transform in ways that enhance it, while also improving its capability to withstand future shocks [3].

Resilience and recovery have become critical areas of focus for many governments, especially in the face of an increasingly volatile global environment marked by diverse crises ranging from economic downturns, climate change effects, to public health emergencies [4]. Governments worldwide, particularly those in developing countries, are grappling with the challenges of fostering resilience and facilitating transformational recovery among their populations [5]. The Nigerian government is no exception in this context.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country and one of its largest economies, has experienced a multitude of crises, including economic recessions, public health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic, and effects of climate change such as frequent floods and droughts [1,2]. These crises have disrupted lives and livelihoods, exacerbating poverty and inequality, and putting a strain on the country's already fragile health and social systems [6].

As a result, resilience has become an essential characteristic for Nigerian communities. Building resilience involves equipping communities with the necessary capacities to absorb shocks, adapt to changing conditions, and transform their circumstances when conditions render existing systems untenable [3]. Government policies play a crucial role in fostering this resilience, as they guide the allocation of resources, the provision of public goods and services, and the management of risks and crises.

Despite numerous efforts by the Nigerian government to build resilience and facilitate recovery through policy measures, the effectiveness and impact of these policies remain a subject of debate [7]. Inconsistent implementation, lack of adequate resources, and poor community engagement are among the major criticisms leveled against these policies [8]. Furthermore, while Nigeria shares several commonalities with other African countries, there is limited comparative research on the effectiveness of resilience-building policies across these contexts.

Despite these challenges, Nigeria, like many other developing countries, has shown a commendable determination to build resilience and facilitate recovery. However, the effectiveness of the Nigerian government's policies in these regards remains a subject of debate [7]. Nigeria has implemented several resilience-building policies aimed at economic stability and growth. Here is a summary of key policies, their achievements, and their effectiveness:

### **Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP)**

- **Objective:** Diversify the economy away from oil dependency, restore growth, and invest in infrastructure.
- **Achievements:** Improved macroeconomic indicators: inflation reduction and GDP growth recovery. Significant investment in infrastructure: roads, railways, and power. Increased agricultural output and reduced food imports.
- **Effectiveness:** Partially satisfactory. While it stabilized the economy, challenges such as infrastructure gaps and corruption persist.

### **Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP)**

- **Objective:** Provide loans to smallholder farmers to boost agricultural production and reduce food imports.
- **Achievements:** Enhanced rice production, contributing to self-sufficiency. Increased access to finance for smallholder farmers.
- **Effectiveness:** Satisfactory in boosting local agriculture, but issues with loan repayment and distribution remain.

### **Social Investment Programmes (SIPs)**

- **Objective:** Reduce poverty and unemployment through initiatives like N-Power, Conditional Cash Transfers, and School Feeding Programme.
- **Achievements:** Millions of Nigerians benefited from cash transfers and job creation programs. Improved school enrollment and nutrition for children.
- **Effectiveness:** Partially satisfactory. While impactful, scalability and sustainability are concerns.

### **Power Sector Reform**

- **Objective:** Improve electricity generation, transmission, and distribution.
- **Achievements:** Privatization of the power sector to attract investment. Increased power generation capacity.
- **Effectiveness:** Unsatisfactory. Persistent power outages and infrastructure deficits hinder progress.

### **National Housing Programme (NHP)**

- **Objective:** Address housing deficits and promote affordable housing.
- **Achievements:** Construction of thousands of housing units across states. Creation of jobs through construction projects.
- **Effectiveness:** Partially satisfactory. Housing demand still far exceeds supply.

### **Youth Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Initiatives**

- **Objective:** Reduce youth unemployment through skills training and entrepreneurship support.
- **Achievements:** Establishment of youth-focused programs like YouWin and the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWin). Thousands of youths trained and supported in business startups.
- **Effectiveness:** Partially satisfactory. Programs have seen success but need better funding and broader reach.

Nigeria's resilience-building policies have achieved varying levels of success. While there have been notable improvements in agriculture, infrastructure, and social investments, challenges such as corruption, inadequate funding, and implementation inefficiencies continue to hinder their full potential. The effectiveness of these policies remains mixed, requiring ongoing efforts to address underlying systemic issues for sustained impact.

This study has analyzed the effectiveness of Nigerian government policies in building resilience and facilitating transformational recovery, employing a comparative approach with other African countries that have shown significant strides in these areas. Specifically, we draw comparisons with Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa, each with unique resilience-building policies despite confronting similar challenges as Nigeria. The objective is to provide actionable recommendations for policy improvements in Nigeria based on the successful strategies employed by these other African countries.

The study's implications extend beyond Nigeria, as it adds to the broader discourse on the role of government policies in building resilience and facilitating transformational recovery in developing countries, especially in the African context.

## Literature

The concept of resilience and its application in governance has increasingly become a significant area of interest among researchers, policy makers, and practitioners. The term resilience, derived from the Latin word 'resilire' which means to leap back, was first used in the field of ecology by to describe the ability of an ecosystem to absorb changes and still persist [9]. In recent years, this term has been co-opted by diverse fields including economics, public health, and disaster management, among others, to refer to the capacity of systems, communities, or societies to absorb disturbances, adapt to change, and transform when conditions render existing systems untenable [10].

Government policies play a crucial role in fostering resilience and facilitating transformational recovery in communities. argue that government policies that foster resilience often involve strategies for disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, sustainable economic development, and strengthening public health systems. Governments, through their policies, guide the allocation of resources, provision of public goods and services, and the management of risks and crises [11].

- **National Health Policy:** This policy aims to improve access to quality healthcare services for all Nigerians, reduce the burden of disease, and strengthen the health system. However, challenges such as inadequate funding and poor implementation have been identified.
- **Environmental Sustainability Policies:** These policies focus on promoting sustainable environmental practices, protecting natural resources, and mitigating the impact of climate change. Despite these efforts, issues such as deforestation and pollution still persist due to inconsistent enforcement.
- **Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP):** This policy was introduced to stimulate economic growth, address infrastructure deficit, and promote diversification of the economy. However, challenges such as insufficient funding for key projects have hindered its full implementation.
- **Disaster Management Policies:** These policies are aimed at building resilience and preparedness for natural disasters such as floods and droughts. However, inadequate community engagement has been a major challenge in effectively implementing these policies.

Overall, while Nigeria has made some progress in introducing policies aimed at building resilience and facilitating recovery from crises across various sectors, there is still a need for more consistent implementation, adequate resources allocation, and improved community engagement to fully realize the intended benefits of these policies.

In Nigeria, several policies have been introduced by the government aimed at building resilience and facilitating recovery from various crises. These policies span across sectors including health, environment, and economy. carried out an evaluation of these policies and concluded that while some progress has been made, a lot still needs to be done [7]. They pointed out issues such as inconsistent implementation, lack of adequate resources, and poor community engagement as major challenges.

Other African countries such as Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa have also embarked on the path of resilience building and transformational recovery, and they provide interesting comparative cases. Kenya's Vision 2030, Rwanda's Vision 2020, and South Africa's National Development Plan all illustrate the countries' strategic frameworks aimed at addressing their unique challenges and building resilience [11-13].

- Below, we will delve further into some of the specific policies and initiatives that have been implemented by Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa in line with their respective long-term development plans.
- Kenya's Vision 2030 has been supported by various policy frameworks and initiatives aimed at achieving its goals. For example, Kenya has implemented policies to promote investment in key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, infrastructure development, education, healthcare, and information communication technology (ICT). These policies are designed to create an enabling environment for economic growth and development. Additionally, Kenya has also enacted legislation to address issues such as corruption and improve governance practices.
- Rwanda's Vision 2020 has seen the implementation of various policies aimed at transforming the country into a knowledge-based economy with efficient institutions and infrastructure. One notable policy is the National Information Communication Infrastructure (NICI) plan which focuses on developing ICT infrastructure across the country. Furthermore, Rwanda has pursued pro-poor policies aimed at reducing poverty levels through social protection programs and access to education and healthcare.

- South Africa's National Development Plan is supported by specific policy interventions across different sectors such as education reform initiatives focused on improving literacy rates and educational outcomes; healthcare reforms aimed at improving access to quality healthcare services; economic empowerment programs targeting historically disadvantaged communities; infrastructure development projects; land reform initiatives; environmental sustainability efforts among others.

By examining these specific policy measures adopted by each country within the context of their long-term national development plans or visions, you can draw comparisons on how effectively they contribute towards resilience building amidst unique challenges faced by each nation.

These strategic frameworks incorporate key themes such as strong community engagement, robust public health infrastructure, sustainable economic strategies, and comprehensive disaster risk management plans, which have been identified in the literature as vital for resilience building [3,14].

Despite the growing body of literature on resilience and recovery, there is still limited comparative research on the effectiveness of resilience-building policies across different African contexts. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by providing a comparative analysis of Nigerian government policies and those of Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study draws upon the Resilience Theory and the Transformational Development Theory to understand the role of government policies in building resilience and facilitating transformational recovery.

### **Resilience Theory**

The Resilience Theory, originating from ecological studies, has been adopted and adapted by various fields, such as psychology, economics, and disaster management, to analyze how systems, communities, or individuals absorb, adapt, and recover from shocks and stressors [9]. Resilience can be understood from three perspectives: as a trait, a process, or an outcome [15].

- As a trait, resilience refers to the inherent characteristics of a system, community, or individual that enable them to resist disruptions and maintain their functional integrity [10].
- As a process, resilience involves the dynamic interactions and adjustments that a system, community, or individual makes in response to changes and shocks [16].
- As an outcome, resilience signifies the end state where a system, community, or individual has effectively withstood a shock or stressor and is capable of functioning effectively in the face of future shocks [3].

### **Transformational Development Theory**

The Transformational Development Theory posits that in situations where existing systems are incapable of absorbing shocks or are untenable due to changes, transformation becomes necessary [17]. This theory emphasizes that transformation involves not just adjustments to existing systems, but a fundamental reconfiguration of the system structures, functions, and goals [18].

Transformation can be induced by policy interventions that foster systemic changes, such as shifting from carbon-intensive to low-carbon economies, or from disease-focused to health-focused healthcare systems. Such policy-induced transformations can facilitate recovery from crises and build resilience against future shocks.

By integrating Resilience Theory and Transformational Development Theory, this study explores how government policies can foster resilience as a trait, process, and outcome, and facilitate transformational changes that enhance the capacity of communities to withstand future shocks.

### **Research Methodology**

This study employed quantitative research methodologies, to critically evaluate the effectiveness of Nigerian government policies in building resilience and facilitating transformational recovery.

The quantitative component of our research involved a thorough analysis of key indicators related to resilience and recovery across the chosen countries: Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa. Data was collected from reputable sources such as government reports, non-governmental organizations' databases, and international agencies including the World Bank, United Nations, and African Development Bank. Indicators considered ranged from economic indices such as GDP growth and economic diversity, to healthcare indicators like access to healthcare services and vaccination rates, among others [19].

### **Data Analysis**

For this study, a qualitative research design was employed, focusing exclusively on document analysis as the method for data collection. Document analysis involves systematic examination and interpretive assessment of documents. This was particularly suitable for our research, as we aimed to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of government policies

and strategies in building resilience and facilitating transformational recovery.

## Results

The theoretical findings of our analysis illustrate that government policies fostering resilience and recovery typically incorporate key themes of robust community engagement, improved public health infrastructure, sustainable economic strategies, and comprehensive disaster risk management plans.

### Community Engagement

Policies that emphasize and encourage strong community engagement have proven to be remarkably effective in Rwanda and South Africa [20,21]. Both countries have involved communities in decision-making processes through regular town-hall meetings and consultations. This approach has enabled these nations to create interventions tailored to specific community needs, fostering local ownership and enhancing effectiveness [22]. In contrast, Nigeria has had limited success in its community engagement efforts, often due to sociopolitical divides and issues of transparency [23].

### Public Health Infrastructure

A key component of resilience is a robust public health infrastructure. Kenya provides a stellar example, having implemented proactive policies that encourage investments in healthcare and promote the decentralization of health services to the county levels [24]. This approach has made healthcare more accessible and fostered resilience against public health emergencies. Nigeria, on the other hand, faces challenges of inadequate healthcare facilities, shortages of health personnel, and weak health systems [25].

### Sustainable Economic Strategies

All three comparator countries have shown commitment to implementing sustainable economic strategies. This commitment is evident in their national development plans, which emphasize industrialization, economic diversification, and support for small and medium-scale enterprises [26-28]. In Nigeria, however, the economy remains heavily dependent on oil revenue, with diversification efforts having limited success so far [29].

### Disaster Risk Management Plans

Comprehensive disaster risk management plans have been key to resilience building in Rwanda and South Africa [30,31]. These plans, updated and tested regularly, include systems for early warning, effective response, and post-disaster recovery. In contrast, Nigeria lacks a comprehensive disaster risk management plan, often resulting in a reactionary approach to crises that limits recovery and resilience [32].

Our study affirms that government policies have a significant role in building resilience and facilitating transformational recovery, particularly in the context of developing countries. While the governments of Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa have been successful in certain aspects of resilience building, Nigeria faces considerable challenges.

Through this comparative analysis, we suggest that Nigeria could benefit significantly from integrating the successful strategies employed by these African countries, particularly in fostering community engagement, improving healthcare infrastructure, diversifying its economy, and implementing comprehensive disaster risk management plans.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, while Nigeria faces considerable challenges in building resilience and facilitating transformational recovery, it can learn from the successes of other African countries. It is important to note that these recommendations will not only require policy changes but also strong political will, intersectoral collaboration, and adequate funding. Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation systems should be put in place to ensure that the policies implemented are achieving the desired outcomes.

Our analysis concludes that fostering resilience and enabling transformational recovery is a multifaceted challenge, necessitating concerted action across several fronts. We have identified four primary domains where government policies can play a decisive role: community engagement, public health infrastructure, sustainable economic strategies, and disaster risk management plans.

### Community Engagement

Given the demonstrated success of Rwanda and South Africa in involving communities in policy-making processes, it is recommended that Nigeria adopt similar strategies. This could involve the implementation of regular town-hall meetings and consultation processes that ensure that community voices are heard and incorporated into decision-making. By so doing, policy interventions will be better tailored to specific community needs, promoting local ownership and effective implementation.

### Public Health Infrastructure

Public health forms the backbone of resilience against health-related crises. Lessons drawn from Kenya indicate that decentralizing health services and promoting investment in healthcare are potent strategies. Nigeria could prioritize building and upgrading its healthcare facilities, training and employing more health personnel, and decentralizing

healthcare to reach the grassroots. Furthermore, an emphasis on preventive healthcare, including vaccinations and health education, could help Nigeria build a robust public health infrastructure.

### Sustainable Economic Strategies

Economic diversification forms a critical part of resilient economies. While oil and gas have been the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, it is increasingly evident that over-reliance on oil revenue is not sustainable. Taking cues from the national development plans of Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa, Nigeria should prioritize policies that support industrialization, economic diversification, and support for small and medium-scale enterprises.

### Disaster Risk Management Plans

Effective disaster management plans are an essential component of resilience. It is recommended that Nigeria develop and regularly update a comprehensive disaster risk management plan. This plan should include early warning systems, effective response mechanisms, and strategies for post-disaster recovery. Furthermore, to make this plan effective, investment in relevant technological tools and training for disaster management personnel should be prioritized [33].

Beyond Nigeria, the implications of this study are relevant for other developing countries grappling with similar challenges. It contributes to the broader discourse on the role of government policies in fostering resilience and recovery in the face of diverse crises, particularly within the African context. Future research should explore the role of international cooperation and the potential of digital technologies in enhancing resilience-building efforts.

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