

# Human Capital Development in Western Region, Nigeria, 1955-1968

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## Abstract

This paper discusses sustained approaches, programmes and strategies for human capital development in the defunct Western Region of Nigeria. Three broad approaches were vigorously pursued, namely, education, technical skills development and agriculture. The most enduring legacy was human capital development through the introduction of free education at the primary school level, which for a long period placed the region among the most highly educated people in Africa. A composite system of secondary education, which provided technical and vocational as well as grammar school, was built up. In fact, education consumed a substantial portion of recurrent and capital expenditure. Within the framework of the Six-Year Development Plan, 1962-1968, Farm Settlement Schemes were established in various parts of the Region for young school leavers in order to boost agricultural production and provide employment opportunities. The paper argues that development plans were indispensable to human capital development.

**Keywords:** Human capital development, development plans, youth employment, western region of Nigeria

## Introduction

The term "human capital" is a multi-dimensional concept that has been viewed by several scholars from different perspectives. The *Oxford Dictionary of Finance and Banking* cited by Enyekit, (2011) and others defines human capital as the skills, general or specific, acquired

by an individual in the cause of vocational and technical education training and the industrial work place after training. Human capital development can also be seen as a process of increasing human knowledge, enhancing human skills in vocational and technical education for the purpose of increase in productivity and stimulate resourcefulness of trainees (Erluwua, 2007). In the current global market, where businesses are composed of competitors, regardless of industry, in order to develop a relative competitive advantage, it is important that firms truly leverage on the workforce as a competitive weapon (Marimuthu et al, 2009). Therefore, a major strategy for improving workforce productivity to drive higher value for the firms requires comprehensive human capital development programmes not only to achieve business goals, but also most importantly to ensure its long term survival and sustainability. Thus, in order to accomplish this undertaking, firms are forced to invest resources to ensure that employees have the knowledge, skills and competencies they need to work effectively in a rapidly changing and complex environment. This was why Becker (1993) argues that, though, there are different kinds of capitals which include schooling, a computer training course, expenditures on medical care among others, and education and training remain the most important investment in human capital.

In addition, while Okoroafor (2010) posits that education and training are the major components of human capital development. Garavan et al (2001) argue that human capital focuses on two main components, namely, individuals and organisations; further suggested that human capital has four key attributes which are flexibility and adaptability; enhancement of individual competencies; the development of organisational competencies; and individual employability.

It could be seen from the above background that human capital development is significant to the growth and development of a nation's economy. This is why Enyekit et al, (2001) argue that human capital otherwise known as human resources is an inevitable issue which requires government's attention because it is something that must exist or happen for national development. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines major human capital development programmes pursued by the defunct Western Regional government from 1955, when

the then government of the region (initially controlled by the Action Group government under the leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo as the first Premier of the region) launched its first-Five Year Development Plan (which spanned 1955 and 1960). The year 1968, marked the end of the second-Six Year Development Plan (between 1962 and 1968, launched by the Nigerian National Democratic Party's government led by Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola as the new Premier) of the region.

### **Historicising human capital development programmes in western Nigeria up to 1951**

Prior to the birth of the regional government in 1951, the British colonial administration did not actually develop a clear-cut programme geared towards human capital development in the Western Region in particular and Nigeria in general, especially in the period between 1900 and 1945 (Kaniki, 1985). Wherever there was any development in the Colony of Nigeria in general, it was by and large by-product of activities intended to promote the interest of the British (Kaniki, 1983). This is because the British went out primarily, if not exclusively, to enrich themselves and promote their own interests. This argument had been challenged by some Eurocentric scholars such as Fieldhouse and Cook (1983) argued that the British colonial interests in Nigeria were motivated more by social and political intentions rather than economic. For example, in justifying this position, (Cook, 1964)...the men who made Nigeria were not primarily concerned with profits... and that there can be no denial of the fact that the coming of the Pax Britannica has resulted in a definite improvement of conditions of life in Nigeria against vicious practices such as cannibalism, the killing of twins, human sacrifice and slave raiding which contributed little to the happiness of the native population of Nigeria...vigorous action was taken to correct this situation but not because profit was involved Faluyi, (1994).

African scholars such as Toyin Falola, H. A. Oluwasanmi, Michael Crowder, Julius Ihonvbere among others in their different works contended that colonial economic policies of the British were essentially exploitative and indeed provided the basis for Nigeria's economic backwardness. The argument of these African scholars was hinged on the type of colonial economic policy developed in Nigeria

between 1900 and 1945, which Faluyi (1994) called “classical *laissez-faire* policy”.

The British colonial agricultural policy entirely restricted the production of “cash crops” into the hands of the peasant Nigerian farmers, while discouraging the establishment of government-owned plantations as well as foreign capitalists’ plantations, which could have promoted human capital development. Up till 1950, the British did not only establish a single government-owned plantation, but also failed to encourage the foreign capitalists to set up plantations in the whole of South-Western Nigeria (Agboola, 1979). Although the situation was a little bit different in other parts of Southern Nigeria (such as Warri). There were only eight plantations in Nigeria before 1950 and all of these plantations, which were established and managed by foreign interests through the permission of the British colonial government, were located in the Warri and Calabar provinces (Afolabi, 1996).

In order to ensure the success of the colonial agricultural policy in Western Nigeria in particular, the British created the Department of Agriculture in Southern and Northern Nigeria in 1910 and 1912 respectively. The policy aims of the Department of Agriculture were:

...to increase the production of economic crops, foodstuffs and livestock to introduce and establish suitable new crops, forms of livestock and economic plants; to improve methods of cultivation, to achieve a balanced diversity of crops and livestock; to survey and open up new areas of land suitable for cultivation; to effect control of pests and diseases of crops and livestock and to conduct research into all branches of local agriculture and animal husbandry so as to obtain knowledge and information on which to base future development (Afolabi, 1996)

Although the Department of Agriculture organised some training programmes as well as extension services for Nigerian farmers for the purpose of improving methods of cultivation, these programmes were not actually geared towards the development of farmers in modern agriculture, but majorly because of the selfish economic interests of the colonialists who needed quality agricultural produce for the survival of their industries. For instance, in the 1920s, the

Department of Agriculture skillfully drew up a scheme for extension services in the colony. The scheme, according to the department, was to encourage the development of crops suited to each area. The general aim of the extension services was to achieve considerable improvement in the quality of export from Nigeria (Faluyi, 1994). According to Mansfield, the principal objective of the scheme was to train the Nigerian peasant farmers on how to process and improve the quality of their tree crops (Mansfield, 1972). Up till the end of the first phase of British colonial rule in 1945, the cultivation of tree crops for exports by the Nigerian farmers was principally encouraged by the Department of Agriculture.

Significantly, the post 1945 witnessed some fundamental changes in the relations between the British and the Nigerian peoples in particular. For instance, the colonial economic policy of the British changed from classical *laissez-faire* to one of positive development, which invariably laid the foundation for the involvement of the indigenous politicians from 1950s. The change in the attitude of Britain towards economic development of Nigeria in particular from 1945 was mainly necessitated by the philosophy of decolonization (Lawal, 2010). Following radical nationalism staged by the Nigerian nationalists, the British were forced to adopt a more cooperative approach. Among the major programmes initiated by the colonial government from 1945, included the creation of Department of Commerce and Industry in 1946; the launching of the First Ten Year Development Plan in 1946; the promulgation of the Second Colonial Welfare and Development Act; the emergence of new colonial agricultural policy in 1946; the emergence of Cocoa Marketing Board in 1947; establishment of new research stations and the establishment of Colonial Development Corporation, which metamorphosed into the Western Regional Production Development Board in 1949. Although it became evident, considering the above mentioned attempts, that the British had shown the desire to pursue a more developmental programme geared towards human capital development in Nigeria in general, the first-five years of the post 1945 (that is, 1945-1950) did not actually show any significant socio-economic development.

One major fact that cannot be denied with regards to change in the character of British colonial administrators to their development policy in post 1945 Nigeria was that the introduction of the earlier mentioned programmes and policies opened a new chapter in the socio-economic development of Western Nigeria in particular from the 1950s. This development was manifested in the last decade of colonial rule (1951-1960). No doubt, the decade witnessed the birth of a regional government in 1951, as well as the emergence of internal self government in 1954, following the introduction of the Lyttleton Constitution, which later gave Nigerian politicians greater participation in the socio-economic development of their respective regions. With this, the 1950s onward ushered in an era of mechanisation and scientific agriculture as well as the pursuit of a vigorous agricultural policy geared towards accelerating agricultural development in the Western Region of Nigeria.

#### **Western regional government and human capital development programmes, 1955-1968**

The period between 1951 and 1960 was a milestone in the political history of Nigeria in general and Western Nigeria in particular. The progress began with the revision of the Sir Arthur Richards Constitution of 1946 following the arrival of Sir John Stuart Macpherson as a new Governor of Nigeria in 1949, thus leading to the birth of a new constitution known as the Macpherson Constitution of 1951 (Lawal, 1994). The birth of the new constitution was as a result of the successful outcome of the March 1950 Constitutional talks in Ibadan. (Sopolu Library, Ikenne. File No.2262: Awolowo Obafemi Political Diary, 1951, p.2). With this development, elections were held into the Regional Houses of Assembly. For instance, the Western House Assembly elections, which were contested between two major political parties, that is, the Action Group (AG), securing the majority seats; and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) which, later became National Council of Nigerian Citizens was held on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1951 (Falola and Mahadi, et.al, 1991).

Following some political agitations from several quarters against the new constitution by Nigerian politicians, the British were forced to convene another conference in London in July 1953 popularly known as

the London Conference of 1953. The conference was well attended by representatives from the three major regions (East, West and North). The outcome of the conference culminated in the birth of a new constitution known as the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954. It was this constitution that later granted internal self government for any region desiring it. With this, the Western Regional government was properly formed.

It is imperative to emphasize here that the Western region of Nigeria during this period was under the control of three distinct political administrations, namely, the Action Group government under the leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, 1955-1960; the Nigerian National Democratic Party, under the leadership of Chief Ladoke Akintola, 1960-1966; and the military government, from 1966 to 1968. Meanwhile, the major human capital development programmes pursued in the region during this period were initiated by the first-two civilian administrations through the launching of different Development Plans. Thus, the military government that took over the control of the region (which later became known as the Western State following the creation of states in 1967) did not pursue any major spectacular programme. It only complemented the earlier agricultural programmes initiated by the defunct regional government. Therefore, in analysing major human capital development programmes that were pursued in this region, our discussion will focus mainly on the two Development Plans initiated by the first-two successive governments, namely, Five Year Development Plan (1955-1960); and Six Year Development Plan (1962-1968). These two development plans would be simultaneously examined under the three major human capital development programmes initiated by the first-two civilian administrations.

### **Human capital development through western education programmes**

Human capital development was facilitated in the Western region through the promotion of western education by the regional government. The involvement of regional government in the development of western education in the Western region in particular was facilitated by the granting of regional autonomy to the region in 1951 through the introduction of a new constitution, the Macpherson

Constitution of 1951. On 24 September, 1951, elections were held into the Western Regional House of Assembly and were contested between the Action Group (AG) and the National Council of the Nigerian Citizens, with the AG securing majority seats. Meanwhile, during preparation for the Western House of Assembly elections in 1951, the AG under the leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, at its rally held at Glover Memorial Hall, Lagos on 26th August, 1951, in his address highlighted the programme of the party as:

- i. Free and compulsory education for all children from the age of 5 to 13. The programme for adult education;
- ii. The building of more hospitals in important towns and provision of dispensaries and maternity centres in villages and towns;
- iii. Tackling problems of food production, price control, rent restriction, problem of wages and improvement of conditions of the working life of the working classes; and
- iv. Achieving a balanced economy. Since our country is wholly dependent on agricultural economy, we attempt to do two things: we must embark on a measure of industrialisation of our country and we must considerably raise the standard of our peasantry (Amaele, 2003).

Following the emergence of AG government in the region, major emphasis was placed on development of western education partly to address the shortage of manpower needed for development. For instance, in July 1952, Hon. S. O. Awokoya, the then Minister of Education in the region drew a comprehensive programme for the introduction of free and compulsory primary education for the Region for 1955. With the general launching of the First Development Plan in 1955, which spanned through 1960, the universal (free) Primary Education was, however, launched on 17th January, 1955 in the region (Osokoya, 1995)

The education programme was made compulsory for children from the age of five to thirteen. According to Amaele (2003), this was the largest free primary education scheme then in Africa. In fact, it marked an era of educational revolution in Nigeria. In the view of Osokoya (1995), the ground plan for the programme included massive teacher training scheme, expansion of teacher training facilities, secondary



schools as well as introduction of modern schools and technical education. It is important to point out here that, before the launching of the programme, the AG government was fully aware of the problems confronting education in the Western region in particular and Nigeria in general. Among these problems were: parent's attitudes toward sending their children (especially their female ones) to school; shortage of manpower in schools; and lack of proper funding.

Therefore, in order to address these fundamental problems, the regional government embarked on some developmental efforts among which were; first, enlightenment campaigns were carried out to villages and towns on the importance of education to the people (both adults and youths). Second, new training institutions were established and the old ones were expanded. Third, there was massive training of teachers. Fourth, the school curriculum was equally developed and adapted to the pupils needs. Also, new schools were established and some old ones rehabilitated. All these things were put in place between 1952 and 1954 in preparation for the scheme (Fafunwa, 1974).

Thus, as from January 1955, there was expansion of teachers' training with the objective of providing adequate trained teachers. Its overall goal was to offer permanent literacy for the entire population. Teacher training colleges were established to cater for the new educational programme. Also, secondary education which was before this time under the full control of the missionary was expanded through the establishment of more schools with modern equipment. Secondary Modern Schools was introduced in 1955 to give primary school leavers training of a more practical one. By 1959, there were 420 modern schools, 138 grammar schools and 97 teacher training colleges in the region (Enyekit and Amaehule et al, 2011).

More importantly, the technical education was also developed at a very considerable scale with a view to producing trained personnel capable of addressing industrial needs. According to Enyekit et al (2011), technical education remains a vehicle upon which the knowledge, skills and abilities of the workforce are built. In fact, without effective technical education, we cannot hope for a future self-reliant graduate with the required skills and flexibility for sustainable

human capital development in the global age (Nigerian Daily Sketch 1964). Technical education programme began in 1953. In 1960, a Technical College opened in Ibadan. By 1964, a total of about 250 students attended various full-time and part-time courses of study in the College. These included Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Radio and Telecommunication Engineering, Town Planning and Commercial Education. A Higher Diploma course was introduced in 1966. A large proportion of the students in the Technical College were sponsored by government departments and corporate organisations. Technical training at craftsman level was provided in the four trade centres established by the government at Osogbo, Ijebu-Ode, Oyo and Owo. The enrolment in each of them was as follows:

Osogbo	176
Ijebu-Ode	214
Oyo	160
Owo	90

The four trade centres offered training in the following trades: Motor Mechanic, Auto-Electrician; Electrician, Fitted Machinist Mechanic, Painting and Decoration, Carpentry and Joinery, Cabinet Making, Bricklaying, Plumbing, Vehicle Body Building, Agricultural Mechanics, and Welding. All the courses were of three years duration and followed the syllabus of the City and Guilds of London Institute Examinations at Intermediate Level. Teachers at the Trade Centres were experts in their own fields employed by the government of Western Nigeria (Nigerian Daily Sketch, 1964).

There was an intensification of the mass and adult education campaign, with the main goal of eradicating illiteracy and promoting human capital development. Women's education expanded through the establishment of more Domestic Science Centres and provision of educational opportunities for women. Scholarships were awarded to students at the University College, Ibadan and universities overseas in order to increase the number of highly qualified personnel in the region (Western State, 1967). Of the £21,432,980 overall budget for the 1967-1968 financial year, £6,467,650 was earmarked for the expansion of education. The government spent more than half of its total budget for education on the free education programme (Western State, 1967). In

January 1966, there were 4,340 primary schools with an overall enrolment of 740,997 pupils. The enrolment increased to 194,090 by January 1967. In the same vein, the number of secondary schools soared from 212 in 1966 to 220 in 1967 with a corresponding increase in the enrolment from 32,989 boys and 15,157 girls to 35,470 boys and 18,965 girls in 1967 (Western State, 1967). In order to raise the standard of teaching in the schools, more teachers were trained at the Advanced Colleges of Education, the Adeyemi College of Education in Ondo and the Olunloyo College of Education, Ibadan. By January 1968, the latter was merged with the former. The teaching of science was intensified in the secondary schools. Indigenous graduate teachers were encouraged to teach science subjects by introducing a special science allowance of £120 per annum. Thus, scholarships were awarded in favour of science and technological subjects in order to meet the expanding demand of the State for both artisans and high-level manpower (Western State, 1967). In the 1966-1967 fiscal years, scholarships were awarded for Technical education as a way of demonstrating government's increasing interest in providing manpower in the artisan grade in the public and private sectors. In this way, twenty-three awards were offered in the Technical Colleges. Also, postgraduate scholarships increased from 17 in 1962 to 38 in 1967. Government introduced a revolving loan scheme with a provision of £20,000. In 1967, the Western Region government absorbed into universities and other educational institutions both in Nigeria and overseas, former students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, who were displaced by the Nigerian Civil War.

In order to augment the number of graduate teachers in Western Nigerian schools and colleges, a total of twenty-nine Peace Corps Volunteers and other experts were employed through the technical assistance of international agencies and advance countries such as the United Kingdom and Canada. A total of 89 training facilities were provided in order to address the region's high-level manpower problems. An external grant of £3,867 was received from Denmark for the Women's Training Centre, Ibadan. In addition, a loan of £307,888 was provided by the United States Agency for International Development to finance agricultural and educational projects. The Development Plan was part of the National Development Plan of 1962/68. In the Development Plan, the ministries of Education, Health,

Agriculture, and Works and Transport became the "big spenders." Education was the largest item of recurrent expenditure in Western Nigeria. Between 1960 and 1965, £40million out of a total recurrent expenditure of £109million was spent on education. In 1964/65, education claimed £7million out of the recurrent expenditure of £20.8million. In the Six-Year Development Plan for Western Nigeria, a total of £2.89 million was allocated for teacher training expenditure. An in-service training programme was set up for the benefit of untrained teachers. Such teachers attended classes in the evenings for a period of two years for self improvement in knowledge and quality, English, Arithmetic and methods of teaching. The successful and satisfactory completion of the course led to certification. The establishment of a centre of activity for teachers served the following purposes: as a leading library to encourage and foster reading habit in teachers; as a repository of new ideas on teaching aids- film strips and apparatus; and as a workshop equipped with a variety of instructional techniques.

The Western Region government awarded an average of about 200 post-secondary school scholarships annually for qualified candidates to study courses in universities and higher institutions in Nigeria, West Africa and developed countries. The aim was to provide the high level manpower needed in the Public Service, commercial firms, schools and colleges. Postgraduate scholarships were awarded to graduates to pursue specialised and professional courses (Nigerian Daily Sketch, 1964). These included Medicine, Engineering, Science, Veterinary, Education, Surveying, Architecture, Town and Country Planning, Agricultural Science, Economics and Social Studies, Secretaryship and Accountancy. In 1952, a total of 203 scholarships were offered; 115 in 1953; 119 in 1954; 116 in 1955; 97 in 1956; 81 in 1957; 6 in 1958; 186 in 1959; 120 in 1960; 50 in 1961; 101 in 1962; and 95 in 1963 (Nigerian Daily Sketch, 1964).

### **Human capital development through industrial development programmes**

It could be reiterated that one of the cardinal programmes of the AG, which took over the administration of the Western Region was the promotion of industrialisation. In fact, the party in its 1952-1953 manifestoes stressed the importance of industrialisation. A number of

steps were taken towards the attainment of this goal (Sopolu Library, Ikenne). Large scale industrial development in the Western Region was facilitated by the Western Nigeria Development Corporation (WNDC). The corporation which was formerly known as the Western Regional Production Development Board (WRPDB), but renamed the WNDC in 1955 became the chief agency of the government with the responsibility of planning and executing agricultural and industrial enterprise or development in the region (Ekundare, 1973). Meanwhile, in the area of industrial development, the Western Regional government was mainly concerned about the unemployment situation of young school leavers. The first major step taken by the Western Regional government was the establishment of some major industries in some urban areas where workforce and raw materials were readily available. Also, the regional government expanded the Western Nigeria Development Corporation (WNDC) at the Ikeja Industrial Estate. By this, over 750 young school leavers were employed in the Industrial Office in December 1966 (Western State, 1967).

In 1967, many petty traders and market women were formed into trade associations in order to have the advantage of capital formation by the pooling together of their capital. In the bid to reduce the rate of unemployment in the region, 350 young school leavers were trained in the art of winding, warping, dyeing, designing and weaving. Another group of sixty school leavers were trained in the art of clay testing, clay preparation, pottery and brick-making. In order to empower the people, the government restored the democratic control to the Cooperative Movement through the re-organisation of the Cooperative Supply Association Limited. Cooperative Group Farming Societies expanded in Oyo, Saki, Abeokuta and Egbado areas. By this, the Cooperative Thrift and Credit Societies increased from 417 to 857 while the Thrift and Credit Unions soared from twelve to seventeen and the Cooperative Marketing Unions from twenty to twenty-two. In addition, the possibility of introducing Cooperative Insurance into Nigeria was undertaken during this period by an International Labour Organisation specialist. In 1967, the foundation stone of the factory building of the £7,000 Cooperative Printing Press Limited was laid (Western State (1967).

**Resettlement programme**

In October 1966, the non-Eastern Nigerians were driven out of the defunct Eastern Region. Thus, the Western State government established a committee to cater for the repatriates and assist them to resettle. By 1967, the Committee pursued its functions of fund raising, providing jobs for the displaced salaried workers and granting of loans to the self-employed to revive their business. The fund raising for resettlement was officially launched on 7 January, 1967 and by mid-1967, a total of £22, 391 16s 6d was collected (Western State, 1967). About 300 repatriated students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka were placed in educational institutions in the Western State and Lagos. Others among them were granted scholarships to pursue studies overseas. Western Nigerians displaced from the Civil Service and Statutory Corporations of the defunct Eastern Nigeria were absorbed into the Public Service. Indeed, repatriated employees of the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria, the Railway Corporation and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka were employed into similar institutions in Western Nigeria. About 250 repatriates were employed in firms and other businesses in the private sector. Small-scale and rural industries were established. This included palm oil processing at the Pioneer Oil Mills. It provided employment opportunities to 24 displaced persons and produced over 1,110 gallons of edible oil. Displaced fishermen of Ilaje and Okitipupa areas were assisted in reviving their business. Young repatriates passed through a three-months' training course in domestics with a view to securing employment as stewards, waiters, and cooks in catering institutions and private homes. A total of £91,000 interest free loan was given to 247 repatriates to re-establish their former trades (Western State, 1967).

**Human capital development through agricultural development programmes**

Agriculture in the Western Region witnessed some major transformations geared towards human capital development, especially since the 1950s. Agboola, (1979). The period saw the emergence of modernised agriculture through a system of technical education for the masses. Among major agricultural programmes developed in the region during this period included the promotion of plantation agriculture

through alteration of traditional land tenure systems as well as the establishment of government-owned plantations; and the introduction of farm settlements scheme. These two major agricultural programmes cum their implications on the development of human capital will be critically analysed.

Prior to 1950, plantation agriculture did not flourish in Western Nigeria in particular and Nigeria in general. This was owed to the agricultural policy pursued by the colonial government, which generally opposed their development (Agboola, 1979). According to Udo, their opposition was based on the fear that Nigerian farmers might be displaced from their farm-lands, the conviction that peasant production had the capacity to tide over periods of depression, and a desire to protect the local population from exploitation by foreign capitalists (Udo, 1967). As a result of the colonial agricultural policy of the British, which was characterised by classical *laissez faire* policy, no single government-owned plantation was established in the whole of South-Western Nigeria up till 1951 (Udo, 1965). Meanwhile, in other parts of Southern Nigeria, the situation was different. For example, in Sapele and Calabar, there was the establishment of Rubber and Oil palm plantations since the 1930s. Although all these plantations were mainly managed by foreign interests, the permission to establish them had already been granted by government owing to the remarkable successes achieved by plantation agriculture in other parts of the tropics (Agboola, 1979). In spite of this, there were only eight plantations in Nigeria before 1950 and all of these plantations were located in the Warri and Calabar provinces (Agboola, 1979). With the birth of regional government in 1951, frantic efforts were taken towards the development of plantation farming. One of these efforts was the abandonment of the age-long British colonial agricultural policy. By this, the regional government became actively involved in plantation farming. This was effectively achieved through the WNDC. The WNDC acquired land for the establishment of government-owned plantations. Under its development programme of 1955-1960, the Western Nigeria government set aside a capital provision of £4.5 million for the corporation Ekundare, (1973). Government devoted its attention on cash crop production. The table below shows Western regional government expenditures on agricultural schemes.

**WNDC investments on major agricultural schemes and expenditures (unit=£) expenditure to:**

S/N	Plantations / Projects	31 <sup>st</sup> March, 1959	31 <sup>st</sup> March, 1960
1	Ijebu Farming projects	1,414,525	1,680,916
2	Urhonigbe Rubber Estate	405,012	506,223
3	Upper Ogun State	142,729	171,527
4	Araromi Rubber Estate	592,888	691,959
5	Ibokun Cocoa Plantation	50,901	58,548
6	OdaAkure Cocoa Plantation	196,788	262,285
7	Partnership projects	685,805	787,992
8	Ikenne Plantations	2,045	71,911
9	Lomiro/Araromi Oil Plantations	135,503	167,439
10	Eruwa Pineapple	16,166	12,183
11	Eleiyeye Citrus Nursery	10,188	12,266
	Total	3,650,550	4,423,249

Source: H. A. Oluwasanmi, 1966. *Agriculture and Nigerian Economic Development*. Ibadan: Oxford University Press, p.102

The farm settlement scheme was another agricultural programme developed by the regional government in the Western Region geared towards human capital development. Farm settlements were first established in the Western Region in 1959. This trend later continued throughout the 1960s. Accordingly, one of the basic objectives of the scheme was to test and later demonstrate carefully planned farming systems designed to encourage young educated people to take up farming as a satisfying and lucrative means of earning a living (Agboola, 1979). The scheme was also intended to accelerate the rate of agricultural development, as the settlements were to become growth poles of development in rural areas (Agboola, 1979). The scheme was later developed by the launching of the Second Development known as "Six-Year Development Plan, 1962-1968. The key objective of the Plan was "to increase production, both agricultural and industrial, so as to bring about a steady rise in income and the standard of living." Priority was given to agriculture, industry, and technical education. Next to education was agriculture £2.1million. High priority was placed on education and investment in human resources in recognition of the role of education in economic and technological development. It was assumed that labour could be more productive input with both general education and skills. The education programme was given priority in

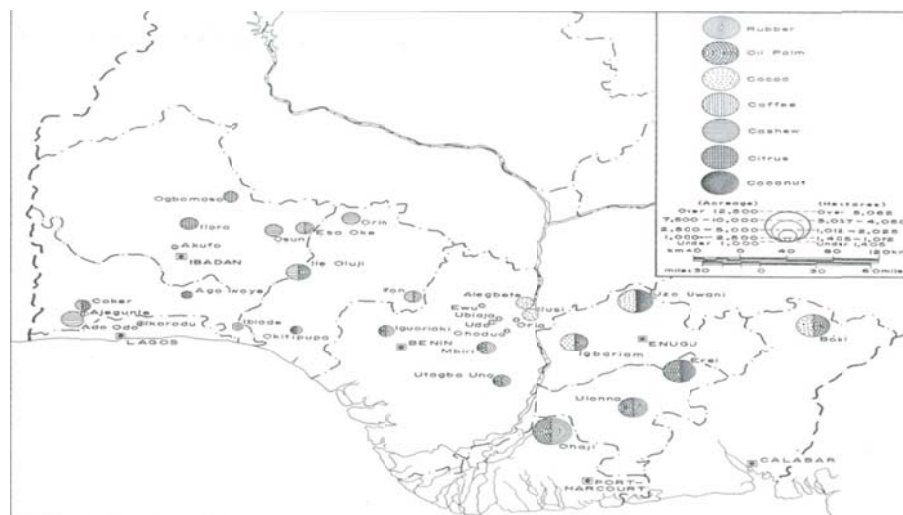


order to produce highly trained personnel. As the magnitude of expenditure increased on education, the content of education programmes also changed in order to achieve the main objectives of training highly qualified personnel for economic development.

From 1960, the Regional government established 19 farm settlements and three farm institutes in order to make farming attractive to the educated youths. The farm settlements planted nearly 2,000 acres of rubber; 391 acres of citrus; and 160 acres of coffee. By the end of 1964/65, 1,138 farmers were settled on the 19 farm settlements in the Region (Iwajomo, 1967). In 1969, a total of 124 graduates from the Farm Institutes in the Western State were settled on Farm Settlements, bringing the total number of settlers on all farm settlements to 1, 261. The farm settlers, especially those that specialised in tree-crops, proved that farming could be a profitable career. Their income ranged between £120 and £300. On the arable settlements, the settlers became more stable and successful and their income ranged from £150 to £900 per annum Western State, (1969). The Farm Settlements constituted crucial areas where considerable livestock, particularly livestock and pigs were raised in 1969. For example, eggs to the tune of 600,000 dozen, were produced in 1969. Also, two arable settlements jointly produced over 700 tons of maize. A total of £23,074:12:9d representing loan repayments by settlers, was remitted to Government in 1969. The payment represented a fraction of the net profit accruing to settlers from their farm businesses. Therefore, the bulk of the net profits went to the settlers for their labour income. The Young Farmers' Club was established to provide educational services in relation to agriculture. Priority shifted from the school clubs to village clubs during 1969. A total number of 12 village clubs were established with a total membership of 500 boys and girls. The clubs were distributed as follows: Ibadan/Oyo Circle -18, Akure/Ondo Circle-9, and Abeokuta/Ijebu Circle- 5. The total number of the clubs was 32. Many youths in the rural areas, with the support of village elders, engaged in various agricultural production including poultry, gardening, fish pond construction and maize cropping. The Western State Farmers' Union was launched on 27 May, 1969 with a total membership of 40,000. A sum total of £20,000 was raised. Subsequently, 2,000 more members

enrolled bringing membership to 42,000. The map below shows farm settlement locations in Nigeria as at 1970

### Locations of farm settlements in Nigeria



Source: S. A. Agboola, 1979. *An agricultural atlas of Nigeria*. London: Oxford University Press, p.185

### Conclusion

The paper argues that development plans were indispensable to human capital development. It examined various educational, agricultural and industrial programmes among others which were put in place by the regional government for the development of human capital in the Western Region between 1955 and 1968. This period was a transitional phase in the political history of the Western Region. During this period, the region was under two major civilian administrations, each with its own development plan geared towards human capital development. While the first administration which was controlled by the AG government with Chief Obafemi Awolowo, as the Premier launched the First Development Plan, 1955-1960, the second administration which was controlled by the NNDP government with Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola as the new Premier of the region launched the second development plan, tagged "Six Year Development Plan, 1962-1968". Although the government of NNDP was overthrown

in 1966 following the success of the first military coup of 15 January, 1966, which resulted in the birth of military rule in the whole of Nigeria, the implementation of the second development plan continued.

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