

National Development Strategies: Challenges and Options

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ABSTRACT: *The potential of development are not limited by the world's resource or by man's ingenuity to eliminate poverty rather the central concern of development is raising the quality of life beyond mere sustenance as assured by respect for the right of human dignity and liberty. This paper therefore examines some of the development strategies designed to bring about an improvement in the socio-economic life of the people, the challenges of the strategies and the misconception of the concept of development. The paper concludes with issues on the following as way forward that if: the equitable distribution of income, increase in employment opportunities, improved social services and an efficient allocation of available resources to eliminate waste with proper planning and enquiries as blue-prints for development as has been previously advocated will work then the populace and the implementer should be properly checked.*

KEY WORDS: *Development strategies, Poverty, Unemployment, Resources, Inequality, insecurity.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian government has aspired to achieve development through the use of various types of plans, namely short term (Annual Budget), medium and long term plans (Marcellus, 2009). Most development strategies ever adopted for use in Nigeria have been the same, with slight differences in their objectives, they are just mere nomenclature, and that is why the problem of development had persisted. We are often pursued with myriad of question as why Nigeria had remain on a point, nations that came into international scene few years back had been able to sought themselves out by overcoming the challenge of underdevelopment, and in spite of the huge endowment in Nigeria (natural and human) the country situation remain unabated, there were nations colonized and has been able to get there footings, and also nations that jettison both the modernization and the dependency argument what then is to be done, what is the way forward?

The paradigm for development that favors development in the western world has had a dereliction on the developing nations with a specific attention on Nigeria; the top-down development paradigm will be compared with the down-up development paradigm. The top-down development strategies in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular have generally not succeeded in raising the living standards among the rural poor.

It is argued that appropriate development strategies have stemmed from methodologies that fail to appreciate the whole picture in rural communities and in particular ignore local people's perception, need and understanding (Olawepo, 2004 citing Binns, 1997). This paper is therefore poised to address the challenge of development and to give options for development. A critical appraisal of the various development strategies in Nigeria is what this work set as its objective. The methodology for this work shall depend on collated secondary data.

II. DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY

Democracy as a system of government has been adopted universally since the turn of the century and the third world countries are not left out of this, in Nigeria effort at nurturing the nascent democracy has been a recurring debate for a truly consolidated democratic government. A major trend since the end of the cold war has been the enabling environment for enhancing the global propagation of the liberal democratic paradigm (Lawal and Olukayode, 2012). Inculcating the virtues and ethos of democracy in Nigeria will entrench and sustained the system and established the dividend of democracy, but the present democratization process in Nigeria has suffered from problems ranging from the manipulations of the rules to the agencies saddled with the responsibility of keeping the rules.

Democracy has been variously defined by various scholars; the views of a few will be adopted for this work: Franceschet (2009) sees democracy as a governmental rule that is non-violent, permitting political participation and control and political equality. According to Kolawole (2004) democracy is not the absence of military rule nor is it necessarily the presence of civilian administrators, but a situation where political actors and institutions of state are oiled in democratic values, norms and ethos. Archibugi and Marchetti (2009) opine

that the fundamental democratic principle requires that public decisions have to be taken after consultation with all individuals who would enjoy or suffer the public consequences of those decisions. The best political tool to guarantee the possibility of influencing public decisions in any sphere of action is political participation

Development is complex and multi-dimensional; it entails process in the social, economic, cultural and other facets of life. Throughout human history, men have sought to increase their ability to conquer the environment with a view to improving their standard of living. Development entails qualitative and quantitative increase in the capacity, skills, creativity and general material well-being of individuals. The problem of development in Nigeria does not resume from lack of competent personnel or the absence of adequate financial resources, rather it is more associated with dishonesty and the quest for personal gain on the part of the policy makers and the implementers of the Programme. The key issues that development tends to address are referred to as the indicators of development; they are inequality, unemployment, and poverty.

Development is the transformation of community into socially, economically, politically, educationally, orderly, and materially desirable conditions, with the aim of improving the quality of life of the people. It is also referred to as the uniform distribution of resources, the integration of the people into national economy; it is a socio-economic process which seeks to bring about a more equitable distribution of resources and income within the society (Mundi, 2008).

According to Ohagwu (2010) development is not the same thing as change, growth or modernization, but the nature, content and course of a society, it is the choice about goals for achieving the realization of human potential. Gboyega (2003) described development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. It implies improvement in material well-being of all citizens, not the most powerful and rich alone, in a sustainable way such that today's consumption does not imperil the future, it also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances. Naomi (1995) believes that development is usually taken to involve not only economic growth, but also some notion of equitable distribution, provision of health care, education, housing and other essential services all with a view to improving the individual and collective quality of life.

Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) assert that development could be seen as the process of empowering people to maximize their potentials and the ability to exploit nature to meet daily human needs. It can also be seen as a process by which quality of human lives and capacity to surmount daily needs are considerably improved.

Chrisman (1984) views development as a process of societal advancement, where improvement in the well-being of people is generated through strong partnerships between all sectors, corporate bodies and other groups in the society. It is reasonable to know that development is not only an economic exercise, but also involves both socio-economic and political issues and pervades all aspects of societal life.

Development is not just a matter of getting more money into the hands of the poor, but ensuring that increased production, and its resulting increased income, leads to an improved standard of living (Isiugo-Abanihe, Isamah and Adesina, 2002). Every meaningful, concrete and lasting development begins and ends in the focus on human resources. Human resources refers to all economic resources that are wholly and directly supplied by human beings, this includes the suppliers of labour services and entrepreneurial function (Onyeka, 2010). The size of the human resources depends largely on the population size while the quality is a product of educational, health services and environmental factors (conducive environment that promotes an investment friendly platform)

The dividend of democracy is to address security and developmental challenges, to what extent has this been achieved remain the fundamental intellectual question. In this democratic era, the issue of insecurity should not be left unattended to, as a matter of fact government effort should be directed to addressing this challenge, insecurity remain one of the major setbacks to development in Nigeria. Until very recently, plethora of explanations on the crawling pace of development in Nigeria tends to pay infinitesimal attention to the centrality of security to national development. Insecurity tends to have hampered national development. Security is seen as a pillar upon which meaningful development could be achieved and sustained and these are a product of good governance.

III. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA

The following are the various development strategies that has been adopted at one time or the other. These are: community boards of 1954, the farm settlement scheme of 1959, The First National Development Plan Period (1962-68); The Second National Development Plan Period(1974-1980); The Third National Development Plan Period (1975-80); The Fourth National Development Plan Period (1980-85); and the Post Fourth Plan Period (1985 to 1990), the agricultural development project, operation feed the nation, national directorate for employment, green revolution, mass mobilization for self-reliance and economic recovery, river basin development authority, national accelerated food production Programme, the national livestock development Programme, the directorate of food, roads and rural infrastructures, the integrated rural development programs, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy, the vision 2010, the vision 2020, the seven point agenda and the likes (Ohagwu,2010;Ezeah,2005; Ndukwe,2005;Igbokwe and Enwere,2001,Seniyi,1998)

Brief overviews of a few developmental strategies in Nigeria are:

The First National Development Plan (1962-1968)

The plan made no clear statement on rural infrastructural development, as agriculture was still an important exchange earner; the plan's objectives were to encourage the assemblage of agricultural produce for export purpose.

The Second National Development Plan (1970-1974)

The Second plan was launched shortly after the end of the civil war. The plan attempted to rehabilitate economic activities in the war-affected areas. The plan spelt out five principal national objectives meant to achieve a united, just, strong and self-reliant nation. But just as in the first plan; government did not make any clear statement on rural infrastructural development. However, it was stated in the plan that government was committed to village regrouping. This was perhaps to reduce the cost of providing economic and social infrastructure such as health, electricity, water and educational facilities for the rural areas. The sum allocated to rural development looks too paltry, and, generally like the previous ones, the plan failed to introduce an

The Third National Development Plan (1975-1980)

Serious concern for rural development at the national level was first highlighted in the third national radical package towards rural infrastructural development. The objectives of the plan are similar to those of the second national development plan. The plan emphasized the need to reduce regional disparities in order to foster national unity through the adoption of integrated rural development. The plan provided for rural electrification scheme, the establishment of River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs). The construction of small dams and boreholes for rural water supply and the clearing of feeder roads for the evacuation of agricultural produce and the supply of electricity to rural areas from large irrigation Dams. At the State Level, some governments, like Oyo State, showed their intention to transform the rural areas through the provision of basic infrastructural facilities.

The Fourth National Development Plan (1981-85)

The Fourth National Development Plan exhibits several distinguishing features. First, it was formulated by a civilian government under a new constitution based on the presidential system of government. Second, it was the first plan in which the local government tier was allowed to participate fully in its own right. The plan emphasized among other things the need for balanced development of the different sectors of the economy and of the various geographic areas of the country. It emphasized the importance of rural infrastructural development as a vehicle for enhancing the quality of rural life.

In terms of rural transportation development, the local government in the country planned for the provision of intercity/village bus services, for the construction of motor parks, and for petrol filling stations during the fourth plan period (1981-85).

In order to increase the access of rural dwellers to safe drinking water, rural water supply schemes were planned apart from the huge boreholes drilling Programme.

At the state level, the various state governments spelt out different policy issues in the fourth development plan. For instance, in Oyo State, the government identified four cardinal programs for itself. These include-

- (a) Free education at all levels
- (b) Free medical services
- (c) Integrated rural development and
- (d) Gainful employment

The Post Fourth Plan Period (1985 to 1990):

The post fourth plan period witnessed the establishment of the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) in 1985 for the purpose of providing rural infrastructure in the country side. The laws establishing the Directorate was promulgated under Decree number four of 1987. The core of the Directorate's Programme is the promotion of productive activities. Besides, the directorate recognized the provision of rural infrastructure such as feeder roads, water, electricity and housing as essential for the enhancement of the quality of life in the rural areas.

The Programme of the directorate includes:

- The organization and mobilization of the local people to enhance or facilitate closer interaction between the government and the people. In addition the local communities were asked to form unions or associations for the purpose of providing common facilities for themselves;
- The provision of rural infrastructures such as rural feeder roads, rural water and sanitation, rural housing and electrification;
- The promotion of productive activities such as food and agriculture, rural industrialization and technology;
- The promotion of other extracurricular activities such as socio-cultural and recreational programs, intra and inter community cohesion activities.

The plan for the implementation of DFRRI programs was organized into two phases, the target was to provide water for 250 communities in each of the states of the federation, to construct 90,000km of feeder roads, and to promote rural housing, health and agriculture. To facilitate industrial growth, and improve the attractiveness of the rural environment, the Directorate planned to commence its rural electrification Programme in the second phase starting in June 1987. In pursuit of its objectives, DFRRI also planned to co-operate with organization (Edwin, 1972; Ikotun, 2010 ;)

In Nigeria several attempts were made to effect both rural and national development from independence apart from the various rolling plan, they includes the agricultural development project (ADP), green revolution, operation feed the nation, and others.

The various aforementioned strategies for development have all been the same, it is just a change of a nomenclature, their objectives and medium for achieving the various goals have not been different from one another.

The Agricultural Development Project (ADP)

This initiative was on the advice of the World Bank in 1970, the pilot project were stated in Funtua, Gombe, and in Gasua, the Programme was also expanded to other states such as Plateau State (the Lafia Agricultural Development Project now in Nasarawa State), Kogi, Benue, Kwara and Oyo State. The objective is to improve the living conditions of the low income earners resident in rural areas, this implies the supply of farm inputs like fertilizers, fungicides, pesticides, and high yielding variety seeds, credit facilities in cash and kind, land clearing services, the development of feeder roads and extension services. This brought about significant growth recorded in the agricultural sector in the late 1980's to early 1990's but the main challenge was the withdrawal of fund by world Bank(Ogundele,2008Ohagwu, 2010).

Operation Feed the Nation

Operation feed the Nation was introduced just as the time the National Accelerated Food Projection Programme (NAFPP) was introduced by the Federal Military Government in 1976, with the objective of creating awareness about the importance of agriculture in National development. The Programme was designed to involve all the segments who were engaged during the long vacation, it was for a cross breeding of ideas from school and traditional knowledge. The Programme faced out at the expiration of the regime that introduced it. The problem with the Programme was that its birth was spontaneous without specific and measurable objectives (Alanana, 2005, Ndukwe, 2005Ohagwu, 2010)

In the recent past the following were the development Programme in the wake of the return to democratic government, National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), the seven point agenda. The President of Botswana Mr. Festus Mogae, during his presentation had a wise thought for our policy makers, according to him, "Nigeria could grow its economy through focused, honest leadership, with well-defined and coordinated national priorities"(Peterside,2003).

IV. CHALANGES OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The beauty of any development plan is the faithful implementation of such plan, which its success lies with the implementers, most of the past development plans failed as a result of implementation problem and lack of committed leadership

Based on this fact, new development policies and strategies were raised as alternative strategies for development, such as Seven Points Agenda in the Yaradu'a's administrations, Vision 2020, the Goodluck Jonathan transformation agenda, the adoptions of the millennium development goal

The Nigeria Vision 20: 2020 is a perspective plan; an economic business plan intended to make Nigeria one of the top 20 economies by 2020, with a growth target of not less than \$900 billion in GDP and a per capita of not less than \$4,000 per annum. The three Pillars of the NV 20:2020 are I) guaranteeing the well-being and productivity of the people, ii) optimizing the key sources of economic growth and iii) fostering sustainable social and economic development.

Nigeria Vision 20:2020 is Nigeria's second attempt at driving the attainment of her national aspirations using long term perspective plan. In addition to the first perspective plan (Vision 2010), several strategic planning efforts have been undertaken by the Federal Government in recent years. These efforts include the Poverty Strategy Reduction Papers (PSRPs), the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS I & II), Nigeria's Strategy for attaining the Millennium Development Goals, and the Seven Point Agenda. (National planning Commission <http://wikipedia encyclopedia>). These policies and vision appear to be all embracing but they are not sacrosanct in their totality. But if faithfully implemented, the nation at least will move towards path of development.

Nigeria still wallows in abject poverty, high level of unemployment and starvation in spite of her huge resources endowment. This has greatly affected her quest to improved quality of life of her citizen and in other to successfully enhance meaningful development, effective strategies must be evolved with personnel that will religiously and faithfully implement it (Lawal and Oluwatoyin, 2011). Adopting spick and span the capitalists models of development has been responsible for the methodological flaws noticeable in African developmental process as against the peasant models. The bureaucratic models postulated by modernization proponent of the likes of WW Rostow states that for Africa to develop it has to pass through the stages laid down in his work and that African has not developed as a result of the fatalistic nature of African society, meaning that until Africa jettison his culture development and security which are regarded as gains of democratizations will elude Africa. Suffice it to say that this work will be corroborating previous work done challenging the authenticity and genuineness of the assertions of the modernization school of thought as regards development. Mbakogu (2004) assert that an African development should begin with an identification of Africans condition as well as solutions for correcting these conditions, which should be formulated by Africans for Africans, and that as long as Africans remain armchair recipients of western cultures, without learning to do things targeted at their awakening, the development challenge will persistently remain an illusion. Jackson (2009) advocating the enlightenment yearning for universal principles of development is stark.

Development task will be unsuccessful if it does not have root in a people's culture. Culture is the basic assessment of whether a society is either developing slowly or rapidly (Mbakogu, 2004). Government of nations had been encouraged to work at enhancing social and economic development by increasing cultural heritage and tourism potential of country's with the aim of reducing poverty, and to increase employment (<http://www.mdg-f//accessed> July 20, 2013).

Seniyi (1998) opined that the various developmental strategies failed because of lack or insufficiency of knowledge and equipment to carryout activities that agriculture as an enterprise demands. But more to this is the commitment to the implementation of the raised developmental strategies, because most of the strategies ever adopted had been the same the major differences are just the change in the name given each strategy. Some of the previous development plans failed because; there was little or no consultation of the general public. Planning is supposed to involve even the peasants in the villages.

Nigeria developmental hiccups are the total rejection of the cultural pattern of transformation, that is, a complete rejection of the peasant route for the external bureaucratic (capitalist) route. There is no total adherence to the present chosen route which is the modernization route. The Neo-Marxist dismissed state efforts for developmental purposes by arguing that they were not intended to create broad-based development. To them the primary purpose of development policies was to help the capitalist system survive the periodic crises it created for itself.

Another challenge is the relevancy of strategy adopted for development, considering the main purpose of development as bringing about the total well-being of people; we then say to what extent has the people benefited from the project? There is therefore a need to set priorities when talking and designing development strategies.

The successful implementation of the development strategy is equally a matter of concern. Most strategies are laudable but the challenge is the finished product that is the execution or implementing to the letter of the said project.

Most strategies are without a home grown outlook.

The Nigerian economy remains basically and structurally a mixed one, which promoted and generated underdevelopment, poverty, ignorance and diseases more than ever in the history of the country. Put differently, the series of development plans after political independence, namely the 1962-1968 National Development Plan, 1970-1974 Second National Development Plan, and the 1975-1980 Third National Development Plan, merely translated to further underdevelopment, unemployment, and waste, primitive accumulation of public wealth due to lack of commitment, lethargic and lackluster approach to developmental projects by successive government.

Decades after political independence was achieved (successive government) respective administrations that were in power either elected or imposed did not show consistent and convincing commitment to any fundamental change in the society. Although economic reforms such as free enterprise, indigenization, nationalization, import substitution, later privatization, and commercialization free export zone were either introduced or implemented; rather sad, these policies neither change production mode nor alter property ownership.

V. OPTIONS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Suffice it to say that strategy formulation is never enough but faithful and religious implementation of the strategy portends the beauty of development, no matter how laudable the strategy might sound they are not sacrosanct in their totality, lack of discipline, dishonesty, lack of interest, the absence of willingness and dedication will nullify irrespective of the preparations and methodical approach. Therefore, this work advocates total commitment on the part of the leadership, discipline and honesty on the part of project implementers in order to chart a new course.

The enviable growth and development patterns of several Asian countries are well known. East Asia is the only region in the world that has been able to maintain strong, consistent growth patterns over several decades, led first by Japan and the newly industrializing economies of Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan, and the likes (Mimiko, 1998; Adelman, 1995).

Apart from the homogenous nature of these societies, other several factors were responsible for their development. These were: development of agricultural sector, a system of mass education, development of indigenous industries, export-oriented strategy, the Spartan discipline of their leadership, existence of efficient bureaucracy, these therefore suggest taking a clue from these close peasant culture if we intend to develop better and to sustain it.

Lesson from a peasant close culture: The Japanese and Chinese experience

We must understand the type of development that took place in the Japanese society was highly influenced by the citizens. During the 2nd World War, America bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki and this rendered the Japanese society helpless, to this point they were forced to surrender. The story of Japan's influence started from here, they closed their economy never connected or transacted business with the outside World and looked inward for their supply and development. They managed their resources within their own context, developed and modernized their traditional and indigenous ways of doing things and getting work done. This implies that inward approach to development was used by the Japanese society. They were able to modernize in line with their technology, they never conceived technology breakthrough, innovation and development they weren't ready or matured for and this really helped the development of the society. Indeed the development that is people oriented and initiated is long and lasting.

The Chinese experience

Their experience are similar and alike, they also looked inward for transformation. The society recognized the significance of the citizenry to a sustainable development, after the 2nd World War attention shifted from complete production and accumulation to improvement of the living standard of the people and consumption. On the same platform they maintained their traditional language, developed their crude technology via indigenous knowledge, cherished their culture and taught their citizens the principle of hard work. Today China stands tall among the communiqué of nation, highly developed, technologically advanced and produces over 70% of the electronics used in Nigeria.

Nigeria should learn from the experience of China and Japan, we should understand following the principles of the Western world like we did during the colonial era and we still doing now has not helped and may not profit us. Our leaders should initiate people oriented developmental programs, we should look inward for development, let us modernize our own indigenous ways of doing things.. A quick response to address the following issues as poverty, inequality, unemployment, and economic crisis and insecurity problems will nip at the bud the underdevelopment challenges. Therefore, a major concern to governments, multilateral institutions and policy makers in different countries is to identify appropriate strategy for poverty alleviation especially in the rural areas. The paper concludes with issues on the following as way forward that if: the equitable distribution of income, increase in employment opportunities, improved social services and an efficient allocation of available resources to eliminate waste with proper planning and enquiries as blue-prints for development as has been previously advocated will work then the populace and the implementer should be properly checked.

Another way forward that this work looks at is that the stability and continuity of policies encourage investment and propel development as against party politics and personal aggrandizement. The revamping of the agricultural sector for a diversified economy are also steps towards the development of a country.

VI. RURAL DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW

To achieve a realistic range of Rural Development strategy, there is a great need to develop practical and workable objectives that take into cognizance of all the forces and factors that militate against it. Until quite recently, Rural Development had been perceived as a strategy mainly related to agricultural productivity and primarily tied to economic growth. In other words, increased agricultural productivity by itself would solve problems of rural communities and their inhabitants. Other earlier misconceptions of Rural Development were embedded in the promotion of investment ratio, setting up of import substitution industries, expansion of education etc. But it was soon realized that there are a number of countries that had attained rapid economic growth without a corresponding increase in the condition of living of the majority of the people.

There is therefore a need to develop a comprehensive package alternative of Rural Development strategy or theory based on a set of workable policies peculiar to the circumstances inherent in a given situation. For example, certain volatile issues (political, economic, social, moral, cultural etc.) have to be critically understood and settled before anything is evolved. Since practical achievement of Rural Development strategy is crucially dependent on many interacting factors, its fulfillment demands spontaneous increases in the production and utilization of goods and services, redistribution of land and other productive assets. In essence, there is a need to have a long-range Rural Development goal, which is synonymous with complete transformation of the entire social and economic institutions, relations and processes of production.

The Nigerian economy remains basically and structurally a mixed one, which promoted and generated underdevelopment, poverty, ignorance and diseases more than ever in the history of the country. Put differently, the series of development plans after political independence, namely the 1962-1968 National Development Plan, 1970-1974 Second National Development Plan, and the 1975-1980 Third National Development Plan, merely translated to further underdevelopment, unemployment, and waste, primitive accumulation of public wealth due to lack of commitment, lethargic and lackluster approach to developmental projects by successive government.

Decades after political independence was achieved the (successive government) respective administrations that were in power either elected or imposed did not show consistent and convincing commitment to any fundamental change in the society. Although economic reforms such as free enterprise, indigenization, nationalization, import substitution, later privatization, and commercialization free export zone were either introduced or implemented; rather sad, these policies neither change production mode nor alter property ownership.

VII. CONCLUSION

The various strategies adopted had been just a change in the nomenclature, the formulations and the process of implementation is the same, it is believed that we cannot continue doing the same thing repeatedly and expect different result. therefore, for development to thrive in Nigeria, the attitude and orientation of the implementers of the various strategies must change. Commitment and honesty on the part of the policy makers and implementers remains the only antidote to developmental challenges and the ineffectiveness of the strategies for development.

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