

Problems and Prospect of Development Planning in Contemporary African Societies: Nigeria in Perspective

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Abstract

All societies of the world have experienced development at one time or the other. Development planning is an effective vision whereby a country which tend to be backward in economic development, desire to put up strategies within the shortest period of time to meet the desires needs and expectation of its society. The strategies, policies and programmes are formulated by the technocrats and development planners. Consequently, this paper seeks to look at conceptual definition of terms, the purpose of planning and pre-requisite for planning. It will discuss the various Nigeria development plans. Also, the paper reveals problems and prospects of development plans in Nigeria. The research adopts an explanatory approach for analysis. The paper recommended that the way forward is to build out poor institutional framework in area of policy formulation, programme and institutional lapses of the past as a basis for laying an enduring foundation for the economy, especially in areas which are of future short, medium, and long-term policy and programme directions.

Introduction and Statement of Problem

Development planning is an institutional and structural framework by the government to achieve a desired objective. The ultimate survival of any society depends on the ability to set clearly defined objectives and goals and to map out strategies for attainment of development. There is hardly any benefit from any country to achieve meaningful development when it refuses to plan.

Development planning is usually taken in response to the market failure argument prevalent in most developing countries that are overwhelm by institutional and structural crises in their policies formulation and implementation particularly in areas of infrastructural facilities, manpower development, and unstable political environment (Adeyemi, 2001). Development of any country can be realised when there is an effective and successful plan vision through establishment and implementation of good and efficient policies. This can be possibly achieved when the government in control establishes good strategies to correct the imperfections of the general system particularly

the market system to ensure the adequate and even resource allocations and utilization of management of security networking so as to promote unity and harmony in the society. The efficiency of development planning is an instrument for sustainable socio-economic development. It has been widely adopted as a means of accelerating economic growth in backward economies of the world. In several instances, the development planning in Africa failed to meet its desired context due to project specified in the plan failed to receive appropriate emphasis in the policy implementation while some other that were implemented did not pass through planning consistency. It is widely asserted by scholars that most African countries suffer with the colonial nature of development particularly in their structural and institutional rigidities on account of poor infrastructure facilities, frequent changes in government policies, an unstable political environment, and low level of societal civility. This however, made development planning and implementation unsuccessful in Africa and to a large extent Nigeria.

Concept of Development:

The 17th century gave rise to the idea of progress, and progress brought about development. By the 19th century, the idea of progress was improved upon and the social thinkers came up with the idea of applying reason to anything that had life. Thus, development is a process by which people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstances to realize higher levels of civilization in accordance with their own choices and values (Rebecca, et al. 2005). Auty (1995) defined development as a process of structural transformation of the national socio-economic system which in the long term is expected to secure high and self-sustained economic growth; and a distribution of national income which is acceptable to all parties in the society.

According to traditional economy growth perspective, development is the capacity of national economy whose initial economy condition has been more or less static for a long time, to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national product (GNP) at rate of 5% or more (Thomas, 2010). This view was a dominant conception of development where most developmental theories relied on.

Development is conceived as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structure particularly attitudes, and rational for national institutions as well as

the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of poverty (Thomas, 2010, Todaro and Smith, 2004). According to World Bank Report (1999), development is improving the quality of life in various institutions such as education, health, environment and also reduction in poverty, more quality opportunity, greater individual freedom and a richer cultural life. In collaboration to these definitions, development must represent the entire range of changes by which entire social system tune to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within that system. Also, development is both a physical process and a state of mind. This in essence is the fact that, transformation of social institutions is one aspect, and the other is the perception of the people, which must be changed.

Seers' contribution to the meaning of development appeared in form of rhetorical questions, when he asserts that: "The questions to ask about a country's developments are: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have decline from high levels, then beyond doubt has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development, even if per capital income doubled (seer 1969). Amartya Sen in his book *Development as Freedom* (1999) maintained that capability to function is what really matters for status as poor or non-poor person that development should be more in enhancing the lives we lead and the freedoms we enjoy through good quality and matched with great functioning.

Development in its priciest definition and common usage can be adjudged as the impartial of transit to a state that is relatively better than what previously existed: good change. As change is a process, this definition of development tends to mean a process towards a desirable state in society. The change has implications in the society irrespective of whether short- or long-term achievements. Disruption may occur in the established patterns of living within the society as it moves towards *good change*, and thus reflect a contradiction to its intended meaning, and generate a discourse on what constitutes this "good change". As a result, the term *development* in both academic and non-academic fields have enjoyed an ambiguous position of being alluded to a diversity

of meanings defining or evaluating *what* „good change“ is, and *who* this *good change* belongs to (Thomas, 2000, Boateng et al., 2008).

However, development is an ability to meet all desire needs of life such as foods shelter, health, protection, self-esteem and freedom from servitude and also is a people’s ability to conquer their environment. Finally, development can only be measured using quantitative and qualitative variables.

African development since independent has been dependent development. This is largely because of the integration of African economies into the metropolitan economics during the colonial era. Thus, they defined their structural coherence, limited as it was from the integration. Ake, (2001) posits that dependent development was a politically driven decision hinging on considerations of political survival, considerations that impelled African leaders to marginalize development and even their role in its pursuit.

Concept of Development Planning:

The concept of development planning can be better understood first by providing the understanding of planning. ‘Planning involves decision about ends as well as means and about conduct as well as result’ (Marcellus, 2009). Obadan (2004) defined planning as looking ahead and anticipating the future, making choices from available alternative means to achieve specific objectives, and formulating programme of actions to attain those objectives. This definition maintained that planning can be seen as an organized process of preparing a set of decisions for future action directed in achieving desired goals. Planning bridges the gap town where we are to where we want to go. It makes it possible for things to occur which wouldn’t otherwise happen. However, planning is a projected course action geared towards an end or a rational thinking that has to do with determining objectives, control, direction and methods to achieve oriental goals. In the context of contemporary African societies, it serves as a tool geared towards economic and social development. In a precise instance, planning is an action of today that guides tomorrow.

However, development plan as, Obadan (2003) described, is the blueprint of programmes and policies geared towards achieving the goal of development planning in the aspect economic, social and spatial development. In essence, African countries came

to independence with hardly any discernible vision of development and no agenda for its realization other than liberation from imperialisms by foreign forces. They relied heavily on expatriates for their development plans, which were usually collections of policy targets and program that took for granted the validity of the inherited economic and social structures. Development planning is necessarily a deliberate and conscious governmental attempt to coordinate economic, social and spatial decision-making over the long-run and to influence, direct or control the level and growth of some principal economic and spatial variables or indicators of a country in order to move the spatial and socio-economic from a given state to a more desired state. As Rebecca et al. (2005) noted that development planning is “putting the economy firmly back on the path of self-sustaining, equitable and balanced growth of output, employment, income with the minimum possible level of inflation and above all enhances the physical growth of the Nation. On the other hand, Eghe, (2002) further defined development planning as preparation for future action. This is to say; to plan is to organise to meet the desire success. Development planning is to organise and utilise the resources to the greater advantages to meet the desire objectives. He further maintained that there are two main constituents of the concept of planning: a system of ends to be pursued and knowledge as to available resources and their optimum allocation. Eghe, (2002) argued that the rationale behind development planning in the combination of all human behaviours or a design rational that has to do with chances, and reaching of a decision before line of action. Furthermore, development planning involves the collection of substantial information, evaluation of past development records, projections of future trends, and setting out of targets. It also involves major policy measures for short, medium and long-term planning and goals.

Purpose of Development Planning

The aspect of development planning has been viewed primarily as the feature of developing countries. Worthy of note is the fact that, planning in general common to all economies and environmental and or physical planners. Nonetheless, specific emphasis and techniques of planning depends on the prevalent political philosophy or ideology. Todaro (1982) asserts that planning is obviously a matter of degree and there are no

completely planned or completely unplanned economy and societies. Even in predominantly private enterprise economics and societies like those of the United States and United Kingdom, planning plays a vital, although relatively indirect role in the economic process” which transgress to societal wellbeing.

Although, development planning has been embraced in Nigeria primarily to attain orderliness in the socio- economic, and environmental/ spatial development over a long-term. The reasons for the adoption of development planning include the following;

- a. The need for rapid Institutional and structural change especially of African economics, from a traditional subsistence, hoe- agricultural society to a modern economy industrially self- sufficient.
- b. To bridging the infrastructure gap to unleash economic growth and wealth creation, increasing productivity and competitiveness and functional human resource base, for economic growth and social advancement.
- c. The necessity to tackle the problems of poverty and wide spread unemployment in developing countries as well as ensure development of the economy.
- d. To improve government, security, law and order and engendering more efficient and effective use of resources to promote social harmony and conducive business environment for growth and to foster more accelerated, sustainable social and economic development in a competitive and environmentally friendly manner.
- e. The achievement of orderly development through the establishment of priorities, formulation of a plan of action consistent with the available resources and channelling of resources to serve the broad goal of improving living standards or development.

For any successful government to achieve the above objectives, certain condition for successful planning must be put in place:

- a. There must be strong and efficient government that can utilize all her credible qualities to pull all things right.
- b. There must be a competent planning agency (commission) for formulating, implementing and reformulating effective plan.

- c. There must be sound administrative machineries that will exercise freely a susceptible deliberate social control and charge to influence and determines the success of the entire development.
- d. The country must have a great financial stability for sufficient and steady developmental progress.
- e. There must be an existence of well-defined objectives that will make plan purposive to give meaningful direction to the various steps taken in that direction.

This is imperative because developing countries cannot afford to waste their limited financial and skilled manpower, and resources on unproductive venture. So, development planning becomes necessary. To buttress this point, Todaro (1982) posit that "Development planning helps to modify the restraining influence of limited resources by recognizing the existence of particular constraints and by choosing and coordinating investment projects so as to channel these scarce factors into their most productive channels".

Development Planning in Nigeria an Over View.

At independence, most African countries were yet to decide what they wanted with the freedom they had just been granted by their colonial masters.

However, development was staring them in the face; they could not afford to ignore it since seeking it had become their strategy of power as well as the Justification for existence. Although, the period from the 1960's to planning was unanimously accepted in all the African countries. This period is said to represent the golden age of planning in the continent. The drive towards planning was as a result of many reasons amongst which was, the remarkable economic progress of such countries as the former Soviet Union, India, China, South Korea and Japan as well as the planning experiences of Great Britain, Holland and especially France, inspired the developing world. Rebecca et al (2005) asserts that the golden age of planning in Africa, the 1960s and 1970s, witnessed progressive efforts at peak development planning when most government prepared plan documents and when planning aroused great hopes on the continent and among development agencies and institutions".

Furthermore, Africa development plans over the years started with the first-generation development plans which are as follows:

The development plans in Africa were argued and believed to have followed the rhythm of colonial economy. This could be so, because, African countries as at then lacked man power, though this could be a minor problem compared with inadequate ideas and a weak political will. Ake (2001) buttressed this assertion that the poverty of ideas was remarkable, several countries, such as Ghana, Angola and Guinea- Bissau came to independence with an economic agenda. But even then, the agenda was largely political. The severe inconsistency appeared to affect the structure of the development planning.

In contemporary Africa, in spite of the fact that various African countries were grappling with the development of their economies and with the emergence of the Bretton woods institutions, it did not go down well with them. There was a call for a new phase of agenda. This gave rise to different development strategies by African countries, such as the Addis Ababa Declaration in 1973. The Revised framework of principles for the implementation of the new international economic order in Africa, adopted at Kinshasha in December, 1976, The National and collective self-Reliance in social and economic development for the establishment of a new international economic order 1979 in line with the perspective of development and economic growth in Africa up to the year 2000.

Also, the Lagos plan of action in 1980 was an original design for restructuring African economies on two principles. The first was **self-reliance**, which entails national and collective effort which entails among other things, changing Africa's location in the existing international division of labour, changing the pattern of production from primary commodities of manufactured goods, and that meant relying more on internal sources of raw materials, spare parts, management, finance and technology. While the second was **self-sustaining** development which takes a holistic approach in several ways: in treating agriculture and industrial development together and being methodically, attentive to the effects of the one on the other, in recognizing the integral relation of internal and external causes of the African crisis, and in seeing development as a task that must involve every one and every sector, private and public, agricultures and industry, labour, capital and peasantry (Ake 2001).

With regards to contemporary African societies, for better understanding of the nature of Development planning so far, Nigeria's Development planning will be considered. Nevertheless, Nigeria has had a relatively long experience in development planning beginning with the colonial development plan (1958-1968) as a strategy for effective resource mobilization and the attainment of societal objectives and goals. The change of this development plan was that, it hardly had an input from Nigerians for whom, of course, the plan was meant (Adeyemi, 2001).

Nigeria's first national development plan (1962 - 1968) was in essence established relatively conformity with the definition of planning in the conventional sense; it has involved National Institute, the Economic Planning Unit of the federal ministry of Finance Economic Development. The plan aimed at, and required cooperation between public and private sectors, and as expected between federal and regional governments and also to avoid any balance of payment crises. The plan emphasis agricultural, industrial, transport and manpower development. Comprehensively, the plan was generally aimed at improving the standard of living of the people as target savings of about 5%, an annual investment of 15% of the GDP during the period, the GDP minimum growth rate of 4% for the economy, with the total expenditure of about N2, 132million, the public expenditure of N352.3million, and private sector expenditure of N780million (Marcellus, 2009).

The second national development plan (1970-1974), which was refer to oil boom development plan (Marcellus, 2009) due to the high earning made from the sale of crude oil and allied products. The development plan was for reconstructions and regained developmental facilities that suffered damage by civil war. The plan constitutes rehabilitation and resettlement of public damages, mobilization of armed forces personnel, constituting efficient administrative services, revitalizing economic infrastructures, creation of job opportunities amongst other (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1970). The plan involved capital expenditure of N3.2billion, and an anticipated overall growth rate of 7% per annum (Marcellus, 2009).

The third national development plan (1975-1980) is the reaffirmed of second national development plan. The objectives were to increase per capita income, increase in supply of high-level manpower, even distribution of income, reduction in the level of

unemployment, diversification of economy, balance development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1975, Marcellus, 2009). According to Osifo-whiskey (1987) that the plan has an initial total expenditure of N30billion but further adjusted to N60billion in 1980. He further argued that the plan recorded some success in area of GDP grew at an average rate of 5%, manufacturing growth 18.1%, building and construction 13.9%, government service 17.7% others 15.7%.

The fourth national development plan was also considered as reaffirmation of the long-term national objectives of the proceeding plans. It was made to consolidate the third national development plan with much commitment to petroleum resources (Usman & Ajaiye, 2000). The objective was to promote export-oriented industries, improving the efficiency of government, increase real income, reduction of unemployment amongst other (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981). Marcellus (2009) noted that the total investment was estimated to N82billion, out of the amount, public sectors N70.5billion, private sector N11.5billion. He further argued that the development plan is characterised by huge debt resulted to foreign loans in which at end became the major factor for Nigerian underdevelopment.

The fifth development plan (1990-92) took a different shape, as it now embraced a three-year rolling plan instead of the usual five-year plan. It was initially mooted in late 80s but never materialized (Onah, 2006) the lunched was postponed twice in a row in 1987 and 1988. The fifth national development plan was made to be integrated development initiatives which constitutes Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Agricultural Development Scheme (ADS), National Accelerated for Food Production Programme (NAFPP), Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS), Vision 2020 as development planning initiative, Seven Points Agenda, Vision 2010 and Concept of Social Development. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1986, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1993, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1997).

These national development plans however, experienced big and ambitious investment program, the plans replete with various projects, outputs, and macroeconomic projects. Apart from its seriousness and intention to reduce social and economic inequality and the overall improvement in standard of living and well-being of

the masses, the plans documents remain words on paper to achieve. Aghe (2002) argued that the plan lacked proffer conceived, clear and meaningful policies framework for success.

Problems of Development Planning in Nigeria

In considering the many problems that have bedevilled contemporary African society's development planning, the question to ask is why has development planning not performed so well? The answer is that, the implementation of a development plan requires a judicious combination of consistency and flexibility. Thus, flexibility is required to be able to accommodate major disturbances or shocks, which most of these development plans lack. For example, using Nigerian development planning over the years as point of consideration, it is believed that Nigeria's planning experience does not portray a history of effective plan and budget monitoring and evaluation. Suffice to say that, proper plan evaluation has hardly ever been done and no correlation between economic and physical planning. The absence had resulted in so many wastes of scarce resources. This was in the form of misplacement of priority as a result of no recourse to physical planning. To buttress this point, Usman (2001), posit that "important as monitoring is considered, past efforts have failed to ensure that projects implemented were commensurate with the resources that were committed, and all too often, projects for which resources were spent were not implemented at all".

On the relatively poor results of planning in Nigeria and many other African countries, Dimock (1970) noted that "the crisis is a direct consequence of the crisis of planners, resulting from a crisis of (Western) planning theories. Compounding all these are inherent weakness in third world economies themselves, both in their market mechanism and in their public administration.

The following, are major problems facing development planning in contemporary African societies.

1. **Deficiencies in the plans and their implementation:** Overly ambitious plans sought to achieve too many objectives with unrealistic targets.
2. **Lack of Mass Commitment:** The top-down approach to planning did not involve the intended beneficiaries of planned programmes and projects in the planning process, and so failed to secure the commitment of the people to development plan

implementation.

3. **Financial Constraints:** Financial strangulations resulted from unexpectedly tight financial short-falls due to declines in projected revenue, and cost escalation due to such factors as inflation, under estimation of project cost; increase in scope, delays in designing and completion of projects.
4. **Corruption:** Large scale corruption has emerged especially since the oil boom era, and is still a major problem affecting the implementation stage. The effect of corruption is felt through the abuse of the contracts system, particularly, overpricing of contracts for the execution of public projects, non-performance of contracts with the connivance of monitoring teams, haphazard construction and delivery of public goods, and non-adoption of the prescribed technology. The net effects are diversion of resources into private pockets, delayed in project execution and to a large extent many are abandoned.
5. **Occasional instability and upheavals in Nigeria Political system:** Example of these includes military coups, civil war, inter-ethnic/religious strife and other disturbances. Thus, the frequent changes occasioned by political instability, not only made it impossible to establish enduring development priorities, but also made it difficult to implement planned projects and programmes consistently to completion. For instance, political instability as well as frequent changes of government is the significant contributors to the abandonment of projects all over the country. A number of programmes and projects are often abandoned as a result of policy conflict between the outgoing and incoming government.
6. **Shortage of committed well trained professional planners and executive capacity:** The effect of this has been inadequate project identification, formulation, design and execution, example Nigeria's third development plan, low capacity was a major constraint.
7. **No correlation between economic and physical planning:** all the development plans in Nigeria over the years were only targeted towards economy. It is a known fact that economic activities are not done in vacuum rather in space. This geography space needs to be planned to avoid waste by misplacement of priority. Location of related land uses driving facilities and infrastructural is a subject of

professional physical planners and or environmental planners. This shows that the needs to co-opt physical planners and economic planners in the development planning that is in the appropriation/ budget planning to reduce risk of wasting of merger resources.

Prospects of Development Planning in Nigeria

Contemporary African countries envisage the 21st century as a century of African revival and renewal. This necessitated the ideas of different global plans targeting under developed nations and Africa is vulnerable as MDGs, vision 2020 and SDGs among others. To achieve this, they seek to build on, and celebrate the achievements of the past, as well as reflect on the lessons learned through painful experiences, so as to establish a partnership that is both credible and capable of implementation. However, Africa's history over the years was blighted by two areas of weakness. These have been capacity, thus the ability to design and deliver policies; and accountability how well a state answers to its people. Hence, improvements in both are first and foremost the responsibility of African Countries and people. Furthermore, African leaders are setting an agenda for the renewal of the continent. The agenda is based on national and regional priorities and development plans that must be prepared through participative process involving the people.

Although these agendas have given rise to African Millennial Initiative, New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD); and African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). According to National Planning Commission (2004) these plans have been embraced for the promotion of peace, security, democracy, good governance, human rights and sound economic management, for sustainable development. The plan of NEPAD is to ginger or improve economic growth of African countries; To improve the education and health sector; to Improve in infrastructure; and also, to look back at what the Asian tigers have done to combat their own economies; new values for accountability and transparency. African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) performance and progress will be measured in some substantive areas, like Democracy and political governance; Economic governance and management; corporate governance and socio- economic development. For these reasons, democracy and state legitimacy have been redefined to include transparency and accountability government, culture of human rights and

popular participation as central elements. Significantly, the numbers of democratically elected leaders are on the increase.

In spite of all these mouth-watering development plans, the question to ask is, where will funding come from? Contemporary African countries have answered it by putting across that funding will be done by Africans themselves, but not without help from international bodies. To this end, the international bodies are ready and they have called for additional 25 billions per year in aid to be implemented by 2010 to support the changes that have begun in Africa. This brings us back to the issue of dependency. It is an indication that like the past development plans which depended on foreign aid, the ones at present are not an exception.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusively, this paper looked at contemporary Nigeria development plans since the early sixties, and also on the most recent of their development planning. The problems that characterized African development planned were explored, such as, deficiencies in the plans and their implementation, lack of mass commitment; corruption; occasional instability and upheavals in Nigeria political system, shortage of well trained and committed professional planners and executive capacity and poor quality of information and data. Above all, no correlation between economic and physical planning

The general situation is very serious but not entirely hopeless. For this there is a way forward, the Nigeria have a new vision, a new focus on how to make things work for them.

1. The government should build out poor institutional framework in area of policy formulation, programme and institutional lapses of the past as a basis for laying an enduring foundation for the economy, especially in areas which are of future short, medium, and long-term policy and programme directions.
2. There should be sufficient and effective strategic plans and implementations to achieve a well define objectives in all plan and programmes.
3. There should be a genuine stakeholder participation in a form of 'three in a circle' (public, private and critical stakeholders) using a button of approach which involve the intended beneficiaries of the planned programmes and projects in the

planning process.

4. There should proffer funding of the policy and programmes by the government in order to avoid financial strangulation that may lead to delay in the design and completion of the intended projects.
5. There should be mechanism to avert corruption through good governance and genuine democracy by way of maintaining and sustaining a genuine principle of rule of law, transparency guarantee, good service delivery and power to the people (socially, economically and politically) and responsible political leadership.
6. The government should establish enable environment that will reduce unjust, uncertainty and encroachment of thrust in the society. This will make it possible to have enduring development priority and make it easier for implementation of planned projects and programmes.

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