

**ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND VISION 20:2020 AS GROWTH AND
DEVELOPMENT POLICIES/PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA: ISSUES,
CHANLLENGES AND WORKABLE ALTERNATIVES**

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Abstract

Nigeria has embarked on several growth and development policies/programmes since independence. These growth and development policies have failed to achieve their various core mandates. The evidence of their failures manifest in the increasing rate of poverty, massive rate of unemployment, infant, child, and maternal mortality as well as dilapidated infrastructure among others. This paper assessed Nigerian growth and development policies thus far, focusing on NEEDS and the Vision 20:2020. These were accomplished via the utilization of secondary sources of data from journals – national and international, textbooks, government official gazettes, and so on. The paper is strictly an evaluation research analyzed from the platform of mixed development model. The study found that, lack of effective and efficient implementation of these policies coupled with corruption and Western influences among other factors greatly militated against their successes. It is the conclusion of this paper that growth and development strategies are not a parlour game or just podium talk, but need to be back-up with action and clear cut achievable objectives. It therefore recommends formulation of clear and purposeful policies, implemented with strong patriotism and effective focus, back-up with political will free of corruption and Western interferences as a pathway to ameliorating our growth and development challenges.

Keywords: Growth, Development, Policies/Programmes, NEEDs and Vision 20:2020.

Introduction

The economic aspirations of Nigeria can best be exemplified by the various growth and development policies/programmes pursued by successive government since independence. Nigeria has embarked on series of development policies to fasten the rate of economic growth and development as well as improving the lots of her citizens.

Though growth and development policies such as: NEEDS and Vision 20:2020 have been a consistent issue in successive Nigeria's administrations, it is however, worrisome to note that, these policies/programmes have not achieved their core mandates; evident by the present state of the country which shows a rather negative signs in all development indices. We agree with Obikeze & Obi (2004) when they asserted that, a review of the policies/programmes of growth and development embarked upon in the country thus far, has clearly shown that the country is still far from where it was envisaged or expected to today.

Between 1973 and 1999, the federal government of Nigeria invested the equivalent of about 100 billion US dollars in various growth and development policies on 590 public enterprises, 160 of them commercial, in virtually every sector of the economy, from petroleum refineries to flour mills, from telephone and electric power companies to radio stations, from oil palm plantations to car assembly plants. By the early 1980s, with oil revenues dwindling, the financial burden of maintaining these enterprises had become overwhelming. The fiscal unsustainability of public enterprises was an indication of broader problem to Nigeria's quest for sustainable growth and development. Often they were not only poorly managed but were also hotbeds of corruption, resulting in severe operational inefficiencies and poor service delivery (Iweala, 2012). Between 1992 and 1999, public enterprises consumed an average 3 billion US dollars per year in direct and indirect subsidies (BPE, 2000).

Since the oil boom in the 1970s, the Nigerian economy has been highly undiversified. The overwhelming of export (96 per cent) and government revenue (more than 75 per cent) depend on oil for all our growth and development projects. But this is always a

problem because oil has two important attributes that demand attention and careful treatment. First, oil prices are internationally determined, highly volatile, and unpredictable, hence oil revenues in any economy are highly volatile. Second oil is a depleting national resource whose benefits must be managed carefully for the good of both current and future generations. Growth and development policies/programmes in Nigeria over the years have paid scant attention to both attributes. For over four decades, oil was the primary source of revenue for Nigeria's government powering every growth and development policies; averaging more than 75 per cent of government revenue on an annual basis (Iweala, 2012).

Over the past five decades, Nigeria has never been short of growth and development policies/programmes aimed at alleviating her failing economy. Some of these programmes includes: Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) (1975-1979); Green Revolution (GR) (1980-1984); Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) (1986-1991); The poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS); Vision 2010 (1995-1998); NEEDS (2005-2007); Vision 20:2020 (2007-2009) and other specific reforms associated with poverty alleviation and sustainable development. How does Nigeria fare under these growth and development policies/programmes?

Conceptualizing Key Terms

Growth and Development: Growth is the increase in social, physical infrastructure such as: roads, bridges, schools buildings and so on, which must reflect in the standard of living of the people in the society before conclusion can be drawn that there is development; while the concept of development is slippery and necessarily value laden.

Development is a comparative concept, thus in contemporary world, it is fashionable to partition the world into groups of developed and underdeveloped, or developed and developing or emerged and emerging in the current usage. The discourse of the concept is also political because politics is concerned with defining priorities in resource allocation and polarizes society into pro and con. While any progress in health, education, agricultural sector as well as infrastructure, including accessible roads, railway lines and communication are considered growth; until all of these make any impact positively in the physical quality of life index (PQLI) of the people, it cannot be termed development.

It is in this light that Igbuzor (2009) recently argued, that development must mean “progress of some kind.” Such progress necessarily entails comparison between two periods and not infrequently, between different countries. Development can further be defined as an all-embracing set of activities and processes, deliberately planned to yield positive change in a system like Nigeria (Alubo, 2012). In all, Seers’s (in Alubo 2012) definition of development posed as questions gives us a clearer understanding and means through which development can be measured and identified. Those pertinent questions are: what is happening or has happened to poverty? What is happening or has happened to unemployment? What is happening or has happened to illiteracy? We can further extend this question to health, housing, and transportation. When all these indicators are on the increase or increasing, we can state in any sense that development is and has taken place even if there is visible growth; but on the contrary, we cannot conclude that there is development. It is on this purview, that we will assess Nigeria to ascertain or see if we have attain or achieve development with the formulation and implementation of Obasanjo’s NEEDS and late Yar’adua’s vision 20:2020 growth and development

policies/programmes. Development and growth are therefore not the same but related (Onu and Oche, 2015). As succinctly differentiated by Alanana, (2012), while development is inclusive of growth, growth is not inclusive of development, even as there has to be growth before development. Growth is quantitative increase or change in certain economic indices. Increase or change in economic variable is an indication of growth, and not development. But if these increases translate into improving the physical quality of life index (PQLI), conclusion can safely be drawn that development has taken place.

Policy: The concept of policy itself takes a different form. There is a thrust to designate policy as the output of the political system and in a lesser degree to define public policy as more or less interdependent policies dealing with many and different activities (Sapru, 2012). Studies of policy on the contrary, have tended to focus on the evaluation of policy decisions in terms of specific values – a rational rather than political analysis. The magnitude of these divergent opinions can be seemed from the various definitions and understandings of scholars in the field of public policy. According to Drior (2012), policies are general directives on the main lines of action to be followed. Self (1972) also opined that policies can be regarded as changing directives as to how tasks should be interpreted and performed. While Vickers (1965) further added to our understanding by conceptualizing policies as decisions giving direction, coherence and continuity to the courses of action for which the decision-making body is responsible. And from a broader perspective, Friedrick, (1963) regards policy as a proposed course of action of a person, group or government within a given environment providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilize and overcome in an effort to a goal or a purpose.

Upon these various understandings, it can be deduced that policy can be general or specific, broader or narrow, simple or complex, public or private, written and unwritten, explicit or implicit, discretionary or detailed, and qualitative or quantitative. But the emphasis of this paper is on public policy – the formulated and implemented growth and development policy/programme which is what a government chooses as guidance for action towards a goal or goals. It is upon these various understandings that we consider National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and vision 20:2020 a growth and development policies/programmes.

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (Needs):

NEEDS was a vision for Nigeria’s growth and development based on the constitution; the Kuru declaration; previous initiatives such as: the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and vision 2010. The strategy aimed at value reorientation, wealth creation, poverty reduction and employment generation. The programme’s core values recognize the importance of respect for elders, honesty, discipline, self-confidence, and moral change (CBN, 2005).

Prior to Nigeria’s return to democracy, the country have suffered setbacks that have greatly tarnished her reputation. The primary aim of NEEDS then was to create a new Nigerian citizen who values hard work, self-actualization rather than dependency and who will realize that one cannot have something for nothing.

NEEDS wishes to significantly eradicate poverty in Nigerian; this is one area or objective that the programme got it all wrong in her quest for Nigeria growth and development; as eradicating poverty in capitalist democracy like ours is out rightly impossible but alleviating it is more feasible and realizable. Be that as it may, the programme aimed to

create a Nigeria that Nigerians can be proud to belong to and grateful to inhabit; a Nigeria that promotes self-reliance, entrepreneurship, innovation, rewards hard work, protects its people and their properties, and offer her youths better prospects than those they may be tempted to seek in Europe or the United State. All citizens regardless of gender, race, religion, or politics will feel that they have a stake in Nigeria’s future and that their loyalty and diligence will be rewarded. The NEEDS vision was one in which Nigeria aimed to fulfill her potentials of realistically becoming Africa’s largest economy and a major player in the global economy. It is also a development strategy that integrates economic development efforts at federal, state and local government levels (Nigeria at 50 compendiums, 2010).

Vision 20:2020 was another growth and development policy fashioned and planned to make Nigeria a strong, diversified, sustainable and competitive economy that can effectively harness talents and energies of her citizens and to utilize her natural endowments to guarantee a high standard of living and quality of life for her citizens by year 2020 with a targeted GDP of 900 billion dollars and a per capita GDP of 4000 dollar.

The goal of vision 20:2020 was guided by three pillars which include: to guarantee the wellbeing and productivity of her citizens optimized the key sources for her economic growth and to foster sustainable social and economic development. Each of these pillars has its own key strategic objectives. The policy is therefore anchored on the recognition that the most essential assets of nation are its people. To achieve these imperatives, vision 20:2020 was implemented through three medium-term national development plan; 1st NIP (2010-2013), 2nd NIP (2014-2017) and 3rd NIP (2018-2020), which will detail

specific goals, strategies and performance targets for all sectors of the economy, in line with the overall strategy and the principle of the vision. The institutionalization of monitoring and evaluation (ME) across all levels of government in Nigeria was the second critical level in the implementation of the vision. An integrated national ME system was created for this purpose to ensure its success, an executive level demand for ME information was also generated through legislative instruments that included the annual presentation of the national performance report by the president (Nigeria at 50 compendium, 2010). In addition to its strong implementation, monitoring and evaluation, the proposed vision 20:2020 legislation and draft project implementation continuity Act, was compelled at all tiers of government to have a multi-year development plan and implement identifiable projects through the cycle.

Theoretical Framework: Mixed Development Model

A model is a term often used in conjunction with theory; it is a representation of all or part of a system that is constructed to study that system (e.g. how the system works or what triggers the system). While a theory tries to explain a phenomenon, a model tries to represent a phenomenon (Bhattacharjee, 2012). It is within this understanding that the mixed development model was developed to represent the phenomenon under study.

The mixed development model was developed from the various reactions and counter-reactions on modernization and dependency theory. It is upon such reactions and counter-reactions that the model outlined the following five (5) conditions/principles for developing countries like Nigeria in their quest to attain sustainable growth and development.

First, modern and developed societies tend to be urban, literate, and industrialized, having sophisticated transportation and media systems – all important indices for measuring growth and development; developing countries must strive to attain this height with dedication and focus.

Secondly, underdeveloped countries should seek and adopt assistance in areas of technological innovations from developed countries; learn it and advance it for their use. Asian tigers that have recorded a dramatic economic development at a large scale tread this path. A study by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2000) found a change over the course of the last 100 years for the 42 economies studied; Japan and China movement up into the group of core nations is a reflection of this path.

Furthermore, developing nations must stay always from the monetary aids of the developed countries which have form the forum of the global debt crisis that have intensified the developing countries' continuous dependency; from the era of colonialism to neo-colonialism and the multinational investment activities in developing countries. An action that have further enabled the international financial institutions to further pressure indebted countries to take severe measures to meet their interest payment; that has also resulted to the developing countries to devalue their currencies, freeze workers' wages and increase their privatization drive.

In addition, Multinationals Corporation should be welcomed by developing countries. The jobs, skill technology, inventions and innovations they brought should be learnt, perfected and run by citizens of developing countries given a period of time with all

patriotic zeal. Strong trade unions should be encouraged by government of developing countries to insist on decent wages and humane working conditions.

Finally, citizens of developing countries like Nigeria should be extremely patriotic under a well fashioned ideology like the American dreams in their quest to attain development beyond their respective personal interest; their personal interest would be taken care of with honour and dignity when they attain sustainable growth and development. Such extreme patriotic spirit exercised by citizens will therefore; take care of corrupt practices and ineffective implementation of any growth and developmental policies/programmes.

Assessing Needs and Vision 20:2020 as Development Policies in Nigeria

Achieving these development plans would have been the strongest success made by our leaders to build a better, purposeful and proud future for the nation and her citizens. The fundamental questions are: with the formulation and implementation of NEEDS and Vision 20:2020 how had Nigerians felt? Did the policies achieve their core mandates? What is the state of the nation today? Can we say Nigeria is growing and developing or has grown and development?

Statistics and the nature of our economy as well as the living condition of Nigerians today did not provide positive answers to these questions. Nigeria Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the fourth quarter of 2015 released by NBS (2016) has not shown any positive sign of development in our pursuit of it thus far. The report shows that, Nigeria GDP declined to 2.11 per cent, the figure is lower by 0.73 per cent points from growth recorded in the preceding quarter and also lower by 3.83 per cent points from growth recorded in the corresponding quarter of 2014. Quarter by quarter, real GDP increased by 3.10 per cent during the quarter, while aggregate GDP stood at 25, 930, 469.41 million

naira (in normal terms) at basic prices. When compare according to the report to the fourth quarter of 2014, the value of 24,205, 863.34 million naira, nominal GDP was 7.12 per cent higher. Oil sector during the period under review stood at 2.16 million barrels per day (mbpd) 0.3 lower from production of third quarter in 2015. Oil production was also lower relative to the corresponding quarter in 2014 by 1.0 per cent when output was recorded at 2.16 mbpd.

The cycle of poverty keeps growing with all its attendant consequences; food security is currently an issue for many households in Nigeria as well as the rate of unemployment which is still perpetually high. Studies have shown that more than quarters of Nigerians working age population aged 15-65 years are not in the labour force (Treichel, 2010). According to this study, fully 70 per cent of Nigeria's that is over 160 million population are 30 years of age or younger. If this figure is increasing six (6) years ago; today, it is sky-rocketing since it remain unattended to even with the much talked about NEEDS and vision 20:2020.

The health care situation in the country today, is another grave challenge. The desired goal for NV 20:2020 was to place Nigeria in the Human Development Indicator (HDI) ranking of not less than 80 by 2020, and achieve a life expectancy of not less than 70 years. All of these are on the contrary today with Nigeria current Human Development Indicator (HDI) ranking at 143 and life expectancy currently at 48 years and falling. The maternal mortality rate is 300 per 1000 live births; less than 5 years mortality is 189 in 1000, and less than 5 years malnutrition is over 53 per cent in Nigeria today (UNICEF, 2012).

Shelter, one of the basic human needs is still a challenge and unaffordable for most Nigerians with many families still living in slums and make shift houses. Education is also not left out of these lists with the increasing rate of drop out and decreasing rate of school enrolment. Even more telling is lack of adequate infrastructures and qualified teachers/effective teaching mechanism that is still analog. How do we expect these students to compete favourably and operate in this digital age with an analog training and capacity?

With all the development indicators still on the increase in Nigeria today, despite the formulation and implementation of NEEDS and vision 20:2020; even though we are less than three (3) years away to 2020 without any positive indicator that we are on a smooth ride to our development destination, shows that NEEDS and vision 20:2020 have failed to address the nations growth and development challenges as laudable as there were with much expectations and hope. What then went wrong?

Challenges

Nigeria's experiences with her various national development policies/programmes and their implementation can at best be described as mixed and worst. A logical drawn up plans like: NEEDS and vision 20:2020 have seemed to falter at the implementation stage due to a combination of factors among which are:

The mono-economy nature of our economy has been and still a challenge on the nation's development quest as they are most often planned around proceeds from oil that are often volatile. Our mono-economy state has deprived us of many foreign trade opportunities and agreements that we are signatory to; one of such agreement is The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) which provide duty-free access to the US market for

virtually all products exported from 38 eligible Sub-Saharan Africa countries which Nigeria is also part of. AGOA built upon an existing trade programme by expanding the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) established by the World Trade Organization (WTO). Currently, the duty-free access to the US market under the combined AGOA/GSP programme now include around 7000 products tariff lines, 1,800 of which were added by AGOA legislation. Way back in 2006, over 98 per cent of US import from AGAO eligible countries entered into the US duty tree. To qualify for duty-free access to the US, the US requires that all products be “grown, produced or manufactured” by an AGOA eligible country. The product must as well be imported directly from an AGOA eligible country. Under this programme, Nigeria accounts for less than 44 per cent of all products to the US, most of which was petroleum products due to our mono-economy nature. With these fuel products excluded, AGOA imports are 5.1 billion dollars, increasing by 51.2 per cent. Supply capacity constraints remain one of the key factors hindering Nigeria’s ability to fully participate in this programme by picking up all the opportunities it offers in our quest to develop or be a develop economy among the comity of nations. Our manufacturing sectors lack the necessary push in terms of creating an enabling environment to incorporate technological innovation for her goods to compete globally due to our mono-economy state.

Second, our various development policies/programmes lack the citizens’ involvement and participation. The various development plans in the country were drawn up by technocrats and consultants, with little or no in-puts from the general public; with the exception of NEEDS which had a broad based consultation with a cross section of Nigerians mainly the elites or the elitist class.

Thirdly, international influences constituted another challenge. What will often happen and happens in Nigeria economy are mostly determined by the international community via the activities of the Britton woods institutions and other imperialist agencies which are in most cases to our disadvantage.

Furthermore, corruption and lack of patriotism are other visible challenges that have militated against the actualization of NEEDS and vision 20:2020. There have been ubiquitous stories of fraud, embezzlement, misappropriation of funds running into trillions of naira. Such stories relate to all tiers of government – executive, legislative and judiciary, all of which point to lack of patriotism as selfish interest was placed against national interest hence our present state.

Conclusion

Nigeria is a rich country with poor citizens! The current rate of poverty, unemployment, social inequality etc. all indices for measuring development; have a knock-on effects on a whole range of opportunities and outcomes such as education, where many more children from poor families drop and are still dropping out from school; our social infrastructure are all in complete state of dilapidation; opportunities for skill trainings are less available for the poor in all circumstances, poverty may soon become hereditary as many children are falling through the cracks precisely where their parents did. A clear indication that our growth and development policies/programmes thus far formulated and implemented have all failed to address our growth and development challenges. All hopes are still not lost, we can still make our sustainable growth/development dream a reality. But what are the possible way out?

Towards a Workable Alternative/Recommendations

Nigeria is large and diverse. At 924, 768 square kilometers, Nigeria is larger than most countries in Europe, for example Sweden, Norway and Denmark put together. Our landscapes range from the mangroves and wetlands in the south to tropical rainforest in the central area and arid savannah to the north. Nigeria is blessed with abundant natural resources, including arable land, natural gas, petroleum, tin, columbite, iron ore, coal, limestone, marble, tantalite, uranium, salt, soda and sulphur. Nigeria produces over 2 million barrels of oil per day; we are the sixth largest producer in OPEC, our proven reserves of oil amount to 34 billion barrels, enough to last for 37 years at the current rate of production. Our proven natural gas reserves amount to 174 trillion cubic feet, the equivalent of 30 billion barrels of crude oil. About 20 per cent of this gas is used to generate electricity; at this rate of production our gas can last for another 110 years. We have greater agricultural potential as well. Of our 98 million hectares of land, roughly 74 million hectares are arable (roughly three-quarters of our land area). But our agriculture is still rain-fed and we cultivate just 40 per cent of the available farmland. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimate that most of our arable land would be medium to good productivity if properly managed in our quest for growth and development. Adding to all these potential and resources at our disposal, we numbered 125 million people in 2001, accounting for nearly one quarter of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa. Our culture is astonishingly rich; our 100 plus universities have produced and still producing an educated labour force even if adult literacy still remains at 48 per cent. Nigeria's location on the west coast of Africa is nearer to both EU and US for the delivery of any goods than the Far East countries. A cargo vessel from Nigeria takes about 12 days to EU and over 15 days from far Eastern countries. With our two big rivers

– Niger and Benue, suggest great potentials for agriculture and forest resources if properly harness and utilized. Attaching effective and efficient management to these natural resources and potentials, backed-up with extremely (fundamental) patriotism can placed Nigeria at the top of any 20 economic ranking list in the world at the top five (5).

We must begin to open up other sectors of our economy and unbundle our over reliance on oil, our government as a matter of urgent necessity must begin to encourage and support citizens of Nigeria to tap into the potentials of new technologies to impact progress and development. These technologies are not just improving lives, but also creating jobs globally. Now, is therefore the time to harness the explosion in these technologies so as to connect low-income, high-potential youths with employment opportunities, specifically digital jobs; the possibilities of digital jobs are staggering, over two quintillion bytes of data exist in the world today – 90 per cent of which has been created in the last two years. Business and organizations of all sizes and scope – companies, universities, libraries, and government need workers who can curate and manage that data, from transcribing printed books into digital formats to creating databases to mine insight from customer data. These tasks can be performed from almost any location in the world, not just onsite at a company’s headquarters, and often at lower costs. American internet businesses can set up outposts in Nigeria as they have done in India, and generated 800,000 new jobs and 17 billion dollars in revenue for India (McKinsey, 2008). If Nigeria can put her telecommunications infrastructure up to an appropriate level, we can attract such multi-trillion dollars businesses that can create thousands and thousands of jobs for our increasing unemployed population.

Finally, borrowing one of the Singaporeans strategies, we should create a first world or emerged economy oasis around what we do. If Nigeria can establish a developed economy standards in public and personal security, health, education, telecommunications, transportation, and services, Nigeria can become a base camp for entrepreneurs, engineers, managers, and other professionals who had business to do in Africa region. To achieve this, Nigerian government need to train her citizens and equip them to provide developed economy standards of service.

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