

The Politics of Administration of Development in Nigeria: Interrogating Critical Issues

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Abstract: Nigeria gained her political independence in 1960 but surprisingly sixty two years after independence, Nigeria is yet to achieve development prosperity. The situation calls for worry. Therefore this study was undertaken to assess the efforts made by successive regimes and administrations in Nigeria to list Nigeria among development nations. It would appear that development plans in Nigeria are more of politics and therefore lack actual implementation. The paper adopted documentary research methodology and many development plan- documents were critically examined to ascertain the areas of lacuna. After thorough interrogations of the reasons why the development plans and agenda failed in Nigeria, the author made some findings. Critical among the findings are that community development planning as conscious action of government at arranging and achieving certain social political and economic goals through some preferred means and procedures is imperative for a sustainable self- reliance in Nigeria. That although development planning is imperative for national development in Nigeria, the process is so extremely politicized. A case in point is the current agricultural development program. Development plans are nothing more than a well packaged interest of the geo-ethnic areas whose members dominate the federal government. That the past development plans failed to lead to economic development because the relevant critical economic variables and principle were not put into consideration in the choice and location of projects and industries. The author therefore recommended that development agenda should be properly funded and the implementers closely monitored by anti- graft agencies to ensure that the funds are not siphoned to private coffers.

Keywords: Development, underdevelopment, politics of development, rural development

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Abah (2000) defines development as a tri-dimensional concept. It has a utilitarian or consummator dimension which connotes increase in the quantity of usable items available to man in society. There is also a behavioural or relational dimension which defines the nature of the relationship among men in society and among societies. There is the institutional and structural dimensions which defines the institutional and legal framework which circumscribes the behaviours of men and streamlines their relationships while they individually and collectively seek to gain greater access to material things of value in society. Rodney (1986) contends that development in human society is a man sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Some of these are virtually moral categories and are difficult to evaluate- depending as they do on the age in which one lives. One's class origins, and one's personal code of what is right and what is wrong.

Chukwuemeka (2020) argues that development refers to man's progressive qualitative and continued improvement of human labour. It is first and foremost a phenomenon associated with changes in man's creative energies. Development does not lie on products or the efforts of people to apply their creative energy to the transformation of local, physical, biological and social cultural developments.

However, we advocate again and again that a state can either be developed or underdeveloped. The word 'developing' is illusive and deceptive.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: NORMATIVE THEORY PERSPECTIVE

The issue of development or under development in Nigeria has been explained by three basic schools of thought: - *the modernization theory, dependency and Marxian models.*

(a) Modernization theory

The theory is championed by liberal scholars. The basic assumption of the theory is that underdevelopment is a natural stage. They attribute underdevelopment especially in Nigeria to lack of *skilled manpower, high incidence of corruption, politicisation of ethnicity, absence of adequate institutional structures, non-availability of modern technology, inability of the third world countries to explore its natural resources, absence of effective leadership.*

In the opinion of the school, the only way to overcome this is for Nigeria to adopt open door policy, which will enable western technology and values to be transferred to Nigeria. In the final analysis, development will come through diffusion of capitalism and values. The mode of thinking has influenced Nigeria development strategies since independence.

This theory has been widely criticized by scholars like (Onyishi 2010, Chukwuemeka, 2016, Clark 2010 and Asogwa 2000). The argument is that after several years of pursuing an open-door policy, the Nigeria society for instance is yet to attain a meaningful development. Therefore, the school failed to provide answers to Nigeria economic predicament and under- development.

(b) Dependency School

The school is led by dependency scholars like Rodney (1986). The theory is a critic of liberal theory. The theory argues that Nigeria under-development can only be attributed to her continued interaction with international capitalism. The interaction, which is, based on unequal relationship has distorted Nigeria development and at the same time stagnated the development of its productive forces. This relationship only helps the centre to develop and the periphery to under develop.

It is the view of this school that even after independence, this relationship has continued to exist. This is exploitative because the periphery constitutes into the production of the raw materials and consumes manufactured products. This type of relationship has been maintained and encouraged by the ruling class who are the agents of international capital.

The school therefore recommends that for Nigeria to develop, it should delink from the world capitalist system, since her interaction with international capitalism is causing her underdevelopment.

The theory has been criticized because (i) it lays much emphasis on external forces and ignores internal problems. (ii) It ignores class formation and class struggle, which is very vital in understanding underdevelopment. (iii) It ignores relations of production (who owns the means of production) (iv) The policy recommendations are vague – after delink, what next?

However, despite the above defense, the theory helps us to identify the particular pattern of development experienced by Nigeria, which has continued to reproduce underdevelopment today.

(c) Marxian theory

The school agrees specifically with dependency theory by saying that Nigeria's underdevelopment is as a result of her incorporation into the world capitalist system. It argues that although external factors are important, other factors such as relations of production and class formation help in understanding Nigeria underdevelopment. It recommends that for Nigeria to develop, there must be a fundamental structural transformation of the society. Nigeria should not delink, but transform that relation of production. Therefore, Nigeria can only develop by adopting socialist party as a mode of production.

4.1 Features of Development

- (i) Self-reliance i.e. self-generating growth a linkage between agriculture and industry must exist
- (ii) Independent control of the economy to include nationalization of finance houses and monitoring the movement of money.
- (iii) Equalization of economic opportunities i.e. the re-organisation of production relation in agriculture and industries and socialisation of the means of production, which runs counter to privatization
- (iv) A developed country should have ability to solve internal problems
- (v) A developed country should be able to supply the basic necessities of life to its citizens i.e. food, clothes, shelter and health care services. So in discussing development, we don't use the indices of Gross National Production (GNP), per capita income because this explains only the growth rate (Chukwuemeka, 2008).

3.0 UNDERDEVELOPMENT

By underdevelopment, we mean a situation in which the institution of a country in the periphery of international capital maintains a dependent relationship with one or several countries at the centre of international economy. Underdevelopment does not mean absence of growth, but it is characterised by unequal distributions, slow growth, and the sub-ordination of internal economics and political institutions to the influence from the centre (Clark, 1997, Onyishi, 1995). It therefore means the loss of real economy. It is characterised by a high incidence of poverty and a distorted economy.

5.1. Features of underdevelopment

- (i) Corruption
- (ii) Politicization of ethnicity
- (iii) Political hegemony and shenanigan

- (iv) Non availability of modern technology
- (v) Absence of effective leadership
- (vi) Cultural domination
- (vii) Lots of import substitution
- (viii) Marginalization of the peasantry
- (ix) Pre-dominance of a comprador bourgeoisie over the national bourgeoisie capital
- (x) Monopoly capitalism i.e. absence of competition because the industries are dominated by the MNCs leaving no room for new industries to spring up.
- (xi) Mono-cultural economy – dependent on mineral or one item for economic survival therefore making it susceptible to uncertainties in international economy. Any change seriously affects them.
- (xii) Enclave economy – suppliers of raw materials. The materials are unrefined and most of its labour forces are engaged here.
- (xiii) Poverty of ideology – unidentified ideological interest. Underdeveloped country wallows in ideological confusion in the pursuit of development strategies.
- (xiv) There is a divorce between resource and need i.e. most underdeveloped third world countries are very wealthy in terms of natural resources endowment but poorest in the type of good and services provided for their citizens.
- (xv) Domination of commercial activities instead of production

4.0 ADMINISTRATION OF DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Efforts to achieve development prosperity in Nigeria started with the development plans. The first development plan in Nigeria was programmed to last from 1946-1956. The development was of a colonial vintage. A total of #155 million was the planned expenditure. It was an all-white affair and the implementation was centralized in the hands of “Central Development Board”. The development plan according to Ayo (1988) lacked the necessary prerequisite of a development plan, and had no clearly defined national objectives.

Because of the failure of the first development plan, the post- independence plans featured.

The first post- independence National Development Plan (1962-1966). The plan was launched in June 1962, to cover a period of six years. The basic objectives were to meet a target growth rate of 4% per annum, a target savings ratio of about 15% of the gross domestic product, an increase of 1.0% per annum in per capita consumption was proposed.

The second development plan was post-independence. It covered the period 1970-1974. The specific objectives were to have a united strong and self-reliant nation, to have a great and dynamic economy, a just and egalitarian society, a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens and a free and democratic society.

The third post-independence development plan was essentially to cover a period between 1975 and 1980. The main objectives were to increase the per capita income, to foster more even distribution of income, to reduce the level of unemployment, to increase the supply of high level manpower, to diversify the economy, to promote balanced development, and to encourage the indigenization of economic activities.

The fourth post- independence development plan which was formulated by a democratically elected government in 1981, was programmed to last between (1981 and 1985). The major objectives were: the local government was made third tier of government with specific responsibilities of development, there was also emphasis on domestic production of raw materials for local industries in order to reduce the import content of locally manufactured goods and finally to promote employment opportunities in order to arrest the deteriorating mass unemployment.

When these development plans ended with no significant positive impact on the economy, the military launched Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in July 1986.

The specific objectives of SAP were as follows: To restructure and diversify the production base of Nigeria in order to reduce dependence on the oil sector and on import, to achieve fiscal and balance of payments viability over the period, to lay the basis for

a sustainable non-inflationary of minimal inflationary growth and finally to reduce the dominance of unproductive investments in the public sector, improve that sector's efficiency and enhance the growth potential of the private sector.

4.1 Agrarian and Multi Sectorial Development Agenda in Nigeria

With the discovery of crude oil in Nigeria and the subsequent oil boom in the 1970^s, far less attention was given to the industrial, agricultural and other sectors of the Nigerian economy with the resultant decline in agricultural production Nigeria became a net importer of both food items and agro-allied raw materials. 'The cumulative effect of this situation is that the agricultural sector failed to perform its traditional functions effectively. To meet up with the crisis, both federal and state governments of Nigeria formulated several development policies, programs and embarked on a variety of agro and industrial development programs aimed at improving economic growth of Nigeria. This interest is demonstrated by the formulation of the following programs, plans and policies, which are both agrarian and industrial, oriented.

The Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) are some of the agrarian programs of Nigerian government aimed at agricultural development. The international organizations also played serious role in this direction. Among other foreign assisted agricultural development programs was the World Bank assisted Agricultural Development Program (ADP), funded by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) otherwise known as World Bank. This program was further boosted by another arm of the United Nation Organization- the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The fund was solely for improved cassava multiplication. Other indigenous agricultural development programs include: The River Basin and Rural development Authorities, Palm for Palm Programs, Nigerian Agricultural and Land Development Authority (NALDA) etc.

In a bid to boost industrial development in Nigeria, the government established the Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry and Nigerian Industrial Development Bank to offer small, and large scale industrial development loans to industrialists. The Nigerian Agricultural Co-operative Bank was also established to assist small, medium and large-scale farmers especially in the area of "agricultural loans" which they received at low interest rates.

Economic development programs and plans were also formulated in Nigeria. Some of them were: Enterprises Promotions Decree (EPD), Structural Adjustment Program towards self-reliance, National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND), National Directorate of Employment, to reduce the burden of unemployment and boost skill acquisition and self-employment. River Basin Development Authority (RBDA) established in 1977, was also a pragmatic development effort of Nigerian government to achieve a comprehensive river basin approach to water resources development and utilization. However, in spite of the objectives of the RBDA, water problem has remained a big cog in the wheel of farmers' progress.

Vision 2010 was launched on November 27, 1996 by the military. The target plan was to ensure that Nigeria is en-route by the year 2010 to becoming a developed nation in terms of economic prosperity, political stability, systemic stability and social harmony.

The Federal Military Government under General Yakubu Gowon in 1970 introduced three 'R^s' – Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation. The primary aim was to put in place all the damaged structures during the Nigeria – Biafra Civil War. The program also helped immensely in not only rehabilitation but building of new structures in Nigeria.

Furthermore, several National development and rolling plans were put in place, all for the purpose of development.

There is no gainsaying that the Federal Government of Nigeria and state governments alike have done marvelously well in planning for development. Where problems exist, we cannot attribute it to poor plan formulation, but largely due to poor funding, corruption or implementation strategies

5.0 RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

No matter the level of a nation's socio- economic, political and technological advancement; the rural sector still plays an important role in its total economy. Without sound rural development there can not be balanced national economic development. This suffices to say that economic development of a nation requires the growth and modernization of both the rural and urban sectors. Furthermore, since a very large proportion of the total population live in the rural areas, no national development effort can claim to be successful without improving the quality of life of the rural dwellers.

5.1 Rural Infrastructural Facilitates

Rural infrastructures can be defined to include the system of physical, human and institutional forms of capital which enable rural residents to better perform their production, processing and distribution activities as well as helping to improve the overall quality of rural life. Four types of rural infrastructures can be identified according to Olayide et. al (2020), as

- Rural physical infrastructures
- Rural social infrastructures
- Rural farm infrastructures

5.2 Rural industrialization:

Rural industries (small scale) argues Umebali (2000) provides employment opportunities and subsequently income for the rural dwellers. It also encourages private individual to forge ahead in establishing industries especially those that utilize local raw materials. Most of the small industries handle processing of farm produce.

5.3 Rural Banking Programme:

The federal military government in 1997 launched rural banking scheme through the central Bank of Nigeria. The rural banking programmes go beyond expansion of banking facilities in the rural areas. The Programme was also aimed at dealing with the hitherto “arm – chair” banking.

Other objectives of rural banking are:

- i. To inculcate banking habits among the rural dwellers.
- ii. Mobilize savings from the rural areas for the purpose of channeling same to profitable ventures.
- iii. Creation of credit by way of equity and loans for small scale industries
- iv. Development of agriculture and agro allied industries in the rural areas with a view to achieving the national objective of self sufficiency in food production.
- v. Reducing to large extent the drift of young men and women from the rural area to the urban area.

6.0 APPROACHES TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

As a result of the various definitions, concepts and various agencies, organization and institution involved in rural development, a variety of approaches emerged. Six approaches adopted in planned community change include:

1. The community approach
2. The information self-help approach
3. The special purpose; problem solving approach
4. The demonstration approach
5. The experimental approach
6. The power conflict approach

1. **The community approach:** this approach emphasizes the more primitive concept of community- the type or idea upon which community development is based in the developing areas. It stresses broad based participation, democratic methods, indigenous leadership, a geographical locality as the basis of citizen participation and a holistic approach to community or rural problems.

2. **The information self-help approach:**

This approach emphasizes that the right type of information applied to participants who are knowledgeable at a strategic point in time in the stream of community life, can and do make a difference in the direction and quality of living. The community in this context is seen as a systematic stream while participant at the right time smacks of the ideal unitary view of community development.

3. **The special purpose; problem solving Approach:**

Though this approach does not ignore the basic features in community approach, it lays stronger emphasis on “special” interest in a particular problem e.g. water can go beyond the limited locational criteria of a community.

4. **The Experimental Approach:**

This approach portrays the growing interest among agencies and institutions in the application of quasi – experimental designs to community development activities. It involves testing and verification of the effectiveness of a particular community development effort with a view to transforming such test method or concept into theory or operational techniques for use by other communities.

5. **The Demonstration Approach:** The idea here is the display of methods and result that work or are likely to result in failure. It is the technique of applying the results of development in one community to another community. This differs from the experimental approach in that experimental involves testing of an idea without prior knowledge of the result. The

experimental approach seeks some standardized solution to community problems, whereas the demonstration approach believes that such answers are readily available.

6. **The power conflict approach:**

This approach points to the fact that the action of social interveners and controller of power are indispensable in rural development. The fight for an upward movement from state of poverty to more developed state may be frustrated if the power to effect such a change in local other than the sub-groups attempting to bring the change it. Stresses that the tradition definition of power need to be enlarged in the context in contemporary complex technological society to include such things as the capability know-how and means to identify, create and develop product that cage the rural areas, the ability, right dose of authority and responsibility to make decision on community goals and priorities and to obtained allocate resources so that these goals can be realised.

In Nigeria, the approaches to rural development can be taken at two levels the governmental and local people's levels. At the governmental level community development is handled through a multi-purpose approach. This involves an attempt to develop the rural area "by coordinating the extension service of the various executive ministries and integrating the people's organized self-help and corporative action with the specialized services of the government and voluntary agencies. In other words rural development is seen as an "umbrella organization within which variety of local level programmes can be housed. Ekong (1997) divided government approach into three sub headings Viz: Extension, project and service".

The extension approach concentrates on techniques of either farming, health care or how to read and write (code and decode information).

The project approach is usually linked with "rural development". It involves the establishment of an economic project such as farm settlement or rural based industry. Neither of these two approaches are based on the people's initiatives but on that of government or its agencies.

The service approach is often based on the initiative of local people.

It involves the provision of amenities like postal agencies, dispensaries, pipe borne water, community halls etc. Generally the local communities or their voluntary association or elected leaders have to approach government experts and justify the need for a particular social services. Thus, the government will encourage the community to initiate or be ready to partake in the provision of such services.

At the level of the people, rural development in Nigeria is tackled through the self help or inner resources approach". This is the situation where the people themselves through discussions, stimulation through demonstration effect an international enlightened leadership identify their needs and mobilize their own resources to meet such needs. The emphasis in this approach is on specific concrete achievements e.g. a school building, community centre, new road, market stall etc. While the philosophy itself is an extension of the traditional communal way of life of the people. Finally the best approach to emerge when we are able to marry the governmental multi-purpose with the community self-help approach. The strategy for doing this is still problematic in Nigeria.

7.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The effort so far is an attempt to explain and analyze the politics of development plan and administration in Nigeria. The highlights are:

- (a) Community development planning as conscious action of government at arranging and achieving certain social political and economic goals through some preferred means and procedures is imperative for a sustainable self-reliance in Nigeria.
- (b) That although development planning is imperative for national development in Nigeria, the process is so extremely politicized. A case in point is the current agricultural development programme. Development plans are nothing more than a well packaged interest of the geo-ethnic areas whose members dominate the federal government.
- c. That the past development plans failed to lead to economic development because the relevant critical economic variables and principle were not put into consideration in the choice and location of projects and industries.
- d. That due to the extreme geo-ethnic orientation of the past economic development plans, they failed to lead to the desired goals of social political and economic development
- e. The past National development plans had the general political effect of generating mutual inter-ethnic conflicts, quarrels, hostilities hatred, and tension which combined to precipitate political instability and chaos in the country.

In the light of the above, the author recommends that: (a) The anti-graft-agencies like EFCC, ICPC should be more proactive in the monitoring that funds meant for development agenda are properly utilized. (b) Development plants should be based on felt-needs (c) Nigeria should formulate implementable development programs.

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