

Development Plans and Policies in Nigeria: Observed Impediments and Practical Best Alternatives

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Abstract:—Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria had explored four 5-year development plans, one structural adjustment programme, two 3-year rolling plans, four visions and strategies including the recently launched Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP). There seem to be an endless search for the best strategy for her developmental purposes as the country is still wandering around and manipulating all sorts of developmental initiatives. It is utterly disappointing that all the various planning initiatives the country had adopted had not delivered the much expected results rather the country is still battling with mounting developmental challenges. There is widespread poverty, hunger, unemployment, illiteracy, diseases, decaying and dilapidated infrastructures, excessive debt burden, among other things in the country. The study relied heavily on secondary source of information as it took a critical look at those factors responsible for the development planning failures as experienced in Nigeria. We identified factors like corruption, policy inconsistency/policy summersaults, lack of commitment towards implementation, over reliance on external doctrines, etc as some of the clogs on the wheel of Nigeria development. We recommend therefore, that governance in Nigeria must reflect the attribute of a going-concern (a continuum) and not of personal initiatives that can be jettisoned at any moment; secondly, a home-grown developmental strategy devoid of external dictates must be initiated and implemented to take Nigeria out of its present situation.

Keywords: Development, Planning, Infrastructures, Policy Inconsistency, External dictates

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, different governments in Nigeria had adopted different types and models of development plans to drive her quest for sustainable development and self actualization. But suffice it to say that many decades after independence; the country is still battling with monumental developmental challenges. Development planning is considered as a pathway-out of the economic challenges and a channel to the much-needed economic recovery and optimal performance. Development planning is seen as a long-term programme designed to effect some permanent structural changes in an economy. It is connected with the total involvement of the government in the economy whereby well perceived objectives about the modalities they want the economy to develop within the nearest future and the necessary interventions made to achieve those stated objectives (Ejumudo, 2013).

As observed by Tordoff (1993) and cited by Iheanacho (2014), there is a general consensus that the instrument of

both diagnosis and remedy to development is the "development plan". That is to say that without development plan, a nation can hardly achieve reasonable developments and such a state would continue wallowing in abject poverty. Similarly, Adedeji (1989) notes that the economic aspirations of Nigeria since her independence were perhaps best exemplified by her various development plans. As noted by Ikeanyibe (2009), development planning has been a consistent phenomenon in Nigeria's administration since 1946. Many scholars (Obikeze and Obi, 2004; Okojie, 2002) however, argued that not much success was realized from it as expected. Of a true, Nigeria remains underdeveloped and currently occupy a very low position amongst the poorest nations of the world inspite of the abundant human and natural resources available (Ikeanyibe, 2009).

An issue of concern is whether Nigeria as a country has not been able to fashion out appropriate development plans or where such exists; maybe it becomes a problem of non-implementation or poor implementation. Nigeria has remained underdeveloped despite adoption of several types of development plans ranging from the long-term plans to the recent perspective and rolling plans. As noted by Obikeze and Obi (2004), it seems that Nigeria is battling with both problems of inappropriate plan framework and poor implementations of the available plan as a review clearly shows that the country is still very far from where she ought to be. This is obviously either as a result of inappropriate development framework, faulty implementation of the plans, distortions or even non-implementations of plans. Development planning is seen as a necessary action because development is neither incidental nor does it take place on its own naturally or quickly, this makes it expedient for nations to adopt planning as a transformational tool.

It is noteworthy to emphasize that Nigeria since her independence had adopted and applied four national development plans; namely: the First National Development Plan (1962 – 1968); the Second National Development Plan (1970 – 1974); the Third National Development Plan (1975 – 1980) and the Fourth National Development Plan (1981 – 1985), the Fifth National Development plan did not see the light of the day before it was replaced by the newly adopted method of planning – the perspective plans (1986 – 1990), (NPC, 2005). Although the idea of development planning kicked started in Nigeria with the ten-year plan of development and welfare for Nigerians between 1946 and

1956 which was given by the colonial masters, suffice it to say that it was argued that the pre-independence plans were not accepted to be real development plan and this was basically because the plans were not true pictures of realities on ground rather it was necessitated by the needs and choices of the colonial administrators. There were a lot of drawbacks in the pre-independence plans and such is exemplified in the areas of plan distributions, lack of mass participation, and non-involvement of Nigerians; these were some of the factors that militated against the pre-independence plans (Ejumudo, 2013). Aside the five year national development plans, Nigerian government also adopted a three year rolling plan between 1990 and 1998 and another long-term development plan in the continuous search for optimal strategy.

Between 2003 and 2007, another ambitious plan was introduced by the Federal Government and it was known as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). The NEEDS programme was replicated in the states as SEEDS and that of the local governments as LEEDS. This was a medium term plan and its focus was wealth creation, employment, poverty reduction and national value re-orientation (Iheanacho, 2014). Although the NEEDS programme was stated explicitly as a Nigerian home-grown poverty reduction strategic programme and it seems to conform to what a country's PRSP looks like (World Bank, 2010), it suffered a lot of shortcomings and inadequacies among which were weakness on poverty diagnostics; cosmetically descriptive rather than analytical approach, and inadequacy in setting of economic targets (Ohihemiam, 2003). Another major weakness of the NEEDS programme as noted by AAIN (2005) was its "trickle-down" approach to poverty reduction instead of the "Right Based Approach" that is internationally recognized and accepted as the most fruitful approach.

Immediately after the NEEDS programme, Nigeria government launched another development plan in the name of vision 20:2020. The vision 20:2020 is a perspective plan that has its major aim of making Nigeria fully a developed economy by the year 2020. It is equally worthwhile to point out that vision 20:2020 did not take Nigeria beyond where she was before its introduction. Most recently, the current administration in 2017 launched its ambitious plan framework for development of Nigeria tagged Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP). The ERGP with its all-inclusive and more comprehensive strategies that somewhat made it different from all other plans Nigeria had adopted over the years had entered second year since it was launched, Nigerians are eager to see it deliver its promises rather than tail towards the direction of the previous plans.

On the premise of the above reviews, the major focus of this work is to critically examine the various development plans of Nigeria both in the pre and post-independence and ascertain the extent to which these plans had achieved the targets upon which it was initiated. Equally, this study aims at unravelling and identifying the numerous challenges that had militated

against the implementations of the development plans in Nigeria and proffer appropriate curative measures that can bring about effective plan formulations and implementations in Nigeria.

The paper is organized in six sections – section one is the introductory part, followed by section two which discusses the concepts of developments and planning on a global perspective. The next section is a critical review of development planning in Nigeria and highlights some observed problems. The following section highlights the reasons for development planning failures in Nigeria while the last sections concludes the work and identifies some critical policies that can take Nigeria to the promise land.

II. CONCEPTS OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

To have a comprehensive understanding of development planning, it will be most appropriate to define the concepts of development and that of planning separately. Development is a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty (Todaro, 1977). Ake (1996) sees development as a process by which people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstances to realize higher levels of civilization in accordance with their own devices and values. Schumpeter (1934) defines development as a "discontinuous and spontaneous" change in the stationary state which forever alters and displaces the equilibrium state previously existing. In the same vein, Friedman (1962) is of the view that development is an innovative process that leads to the structural transformation of a social system. In the word of Haliu-Been (1970) development is a process of acquiring a sustained growth of a system's capacity to cope with new and continuous changes towards the achievement of progressive political, economic and social objectives. Basically, development is a state of equilibrium whereby a nation's affair and almost everything start working in the direction it is expected. Every aspect of such society will change to the positive and forward looking. There will be almost an elimination of negativities and vices. There will be improvement in the standard of living of the populace, reduction of unemployment, improvement in health, education, infrastructure and social wellbeing. The primary objective of development is to improve man and his environment (Iheanacho, 2012).

Planning on its own is the conscious government effort to influence, direct and in some cases control changes in the principle economic variables (consumption, investment, exports, imports, etc) of a certain country or region over the course of time in order to achieve a predetermined set of objectives (Jhingan, 2011; Todaro, 1992). In the word of Ejumudo (2008), planning is as old as mankind and it has been undertaken in all facets of human endeavour, it includes warfare, politics, administration and social spheres. It is worthy of note that planning has become much popular the

world over and almost every society has embraced planning as it has been seen as a means to an end, and the improvement in all aspects of human activity. In the words of Datta (2010 as cited by Iheanacho, 2014), without planning, the activities of organizations, institutions, societies and nations may well become a series of random actions without meaningful objectives. This is to say that such society or organization engages itself in a kind of "trial and error" actions that may or may not lead them to anywhere. Cole (1993) defines planning as an activity which involves decisions about ends as well as means and about conduct as well as result. Planning as Koonzt, Donnel and Weihrich (2006) put it, is deciding what to do, how to do it and who is to do it. Every plan must have a timeframe upon which the stated objectives are to be realized and upon which evaluations are based. Nwachukwu (1998) notes that planning entails determination of control, directions and methods of accomplishing the overall organization's or nation's objectives. There must be a strong action to direct and control plans towards the achievement of the desired objectives. From the foregoing, it is clear that without appropriate planning, there will not be any meaningful development in any system or state.

Development planning on its entirety and as observed by UNPD (2008), is a long-term programme designed to effect some permanent structural changes in an economy and it is connected with the involvement of government whereby it sets out objectives about the ways it wants the economy to develop in future and then intervenes to achieve those objectives. Development planning involves processes which ensure that national policies and strategies are realized and development concerns at all levels are fully integrated into the overall national development thrust (Datta, 2010). Jhingan (2000: 488) sees development planning as a technique, a means to an end, which is the realization of certain predetermined and well defined objectives laid down by a central planning authority. In Kalu (2001) and cited by Ohale and Agbarakwe (2009), it is the projection of structural and other changes for part or the entire economy including some direct and indirect methods of implementations. As noted by Ikeanyibe (2009), development planning comprehensively involves predetermining a nation's visions, missions, policies and programmes in all facets of life such as social, human, political, environmental, technological factors, etc., and the means of achieving them. Basically, no nation can realize its economic visions and targets without a holistic review of its developmental issues which entails improvement in all aspects of human endeavour. As succinctly puts by Ikeanyibe (2009), development surpasses the attainment of the economic criteria often measured by economic growth (GDP) and must be conceived of as a multidimensional process which involves changes in inelastic social structures, destructive popular attitudes and ineffective national institutions as well as the incorporation of the plan for economic growth. Economic/development planning as Ohale and Agbarakwe (2009) puts it, involves state direct interference with the workings of the market forces in the entire economy. It

implies government intervention in the economy which is a direct opposite of laissez-faire. Planning was firstly initiated by the then USSR and this made it that it is usually seen and associated with the socialist economies. But experiences of nowadays have shown that it can operate in any form of economy with the necessary moderations that can specifically suit such economy. Different variations of planning are being carried out by socialist, capitalist and even the mixed economic systems.

2.1 Development Planning Experiences of Nigeria

Over the years Nigeria has adopted development planning and it is seen as a suitable strategy to the development challenges in Nigeria. Therefore, it becomes expedient to x-ray the various development plans activities of the Nigerian government, their strategies, levels of implementation and conclusively outline the observed limitations.

Pre-independence plan:

Development planning experience of Nigeria began with the ten-year plan of development and welfare for Nigeria that was introduced by the colonial masters in 1946 upon the notice/circular from the then secretary of state for colonies to all British colonies, mandating them of setting up a Central Development Board (CDB). Onah, (2010) as cited by Iheanacho 2014). Suffice it to say that the ten year plan of development and welfare for Nigeria as it was christened was not actually been seen as a real plan because it was just like a list of mostly uncoordinated projects of the British in various regions of Nigeria. The hidden objective of the plan was to meet the perceived needs of the colonial government and not necessarily a conscious effort to influence the overall performance of the Nigerian economy (Egonmwan, 2001). As noted, the British government had it primary interest to use the colonies in producing agricultural products that they actually need in their factories. There were not concrete attempts made towards incorporating and considering the needs and interest of Nigerian people into the objectives and priorities setting of the development plan (Onah, 2010). Ayo (1988) and cited by Iheanacho (2012), observes that the programme "suffered from non-specialized colonial administrators approach to development planning, the inadequacy of planning machinery and absence of clearly defined national objectives." Much of the challenges that Nigeria still experience these days are deeply rooted in this colonial plan which set the pace for other plans even the ones by Nigerians. Even with its challenges and weaknesses, the pre-independence plan still served as a lunch pad to subsequent development plans in Nigeria (Iheanacho, 2014).

It is equally pertinent to state that most writers and scholars unanimously exert that the first attempt at development planning in Nigeria started in 1946 with the ten-year plan of Development and Welfare (Okoli, 2004; Obiekezie and Obi, 2004; Ugwu, 2009; Ibieta and Ekhusuehi, 2013). It is equally on record that the plan was expected to run till 1956 but came to an abrupt end in 1951 due to the constitutional changes that

introduced federation (Ekhosuehi, 2013). A follow-up to this was the 1951 – 1956 and was meant to last for five years but was scrapped in 1983 due to the bitter struggles for dominance among Nigerians after the introduction of the 1954 Littleton constitution that made Nigeria a Federal system. Obiekezie and Obi (2004:232) explained that the plan was not really different from the original one as there was not clear demarcation between the two plans. Based on the observed developments, another plan was introduced to run between 1956 – 1962. However, as noted by Ekhosuehi (2013) the political events that dramatically unfolded – rapid reversals of earlier political stand which led to the agitation for self-governance by Northern members of the parliament which was an aftermath of the Action Group (AG) sponsored motion that sought self-governance for Nigeria in 1956; hence independence came in 1960 much earlier than expected. After gaining independence, there was a compelling need to have a home-grown development plan for Nigeria that will invariably reflect Nigeria's independent status. As noted by Okoli (2004:162) the new status made the 1956 – 62 Development Plan anachronistic and impracticable.

The first National Development Plan (1962 – 1968): as soon as Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the First National Development Plan was immediately launched. The plan was seen as a clear-cut plan that will ensure and bring about an all-round development in Nigeria based on its objectives which includes among others; to bring about equal distributions of national income, to speed-up the rate of economic growth; to generate savings for investments to ensure a reduction on the external sector; to bring about enough capital for manpower development; to increase the standard of living for Nigerians particularly in the areas of food, housing, health and clothing and to develop the infrastructure of the nation (Onyenwigwe, 2009; Iheanacho, 2014). The plan appeared comprehensive and impressive in the nature but the political crises in the country that culminated into the 30 months civil war made the plan to become almost redundant. As Nnadozie (2014) noted, the objectives and targets of the first national development plan of 1962 – 68 were too large and somewhat over ambitious in nature and therefore out of time with realities on ground in the aspects of financial, technical and managerial capabilities of Nigerians. As noted by Onah (2010) the above challenges made the plan to lack clarity and precision in the formulations of objectives/targets and even its implementation. However, Iheanacho (2014) observed that despite the numerous challenges and weaknesses of the plan, it recorded the execution of some major projects in the country. But it is noteworthy to point out that the successes recorded from the plan were far below its expectations. Obiekezie and Obi (2004) blamed the failure of the plan to the civil war which meant that distortions were as a result of channelling resources towards keeping Nigeria together.

The Second National Development Plan (1970 – 1974) immediately after the civil war, the second national development plan was launched and it was called the plan for

Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (3R). As noted by Ohale and Agbarakwe (2009), in this plan period, the Federal Government was billed to "occupy the commanding heights of the economy in the quest for purposeful national development." There was a consensus that Nigeria lacked a national sense of purpose mostly in economic matters and there was a determined effort to correct the situation. The plan was meant to cover the four-year period, 1970 – 1974, but it was later extended to cover the 1974 – 75 fiscal years (Iheanacho, 2014). The plan was built upon five principal objectives that it was meant to pursue and they are as follows: a united, strong and self-reliant nation; 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 (Onyenwigwe, 2009; Second National Plan, p. 32; Ohale and Agbarakwe, 2009). The objectives of the plan were considered to be so relevant that they were included in the 1979 constitution. Yet their inclusion in the constitution did not materialize into plan implementation but they were considered as ordinary directives that are fundamental and not legally enforceable (Abasili, 2004). Ikeanyibe (2009) recorded that the guiding principles that became increasingly recognized from the second national plan could not correct plan distortions and slippages. He noted that apart from its vagueness, that it did not in actuality achieve its rationale of directing the programmes and budgets of various administrations. The major drawbacks of the second national plan were issues bordering on lack of will to perform, lack of finance, corruption, monocultural oil economy, etc. In spite of its challenges, the second national plan recorded some significant improvements and they were mainly in the areas of manufacturing, transport, education, health, social welfare, communication, mining, etc (Ohale and Agbarakwe, 2009). It is equally pertinent to point out that the achievements recorded from this plan were mainly a function of the unprecedented inflow of crude oil revenue that accrued to the country in this period than of any inherent strengths of the plan itself (Awoseyila, 1996). In essence, much could not have been achieved from the plan if not for the oil boom that occurred during the plan period.

The third National Development Plan (1975 – 1980) was also launched during the oil boom years and this led to a jumbo investment that was ten times of that of the second plan and about 15 times of the first plan (Iheanacho, 2014; Ekhosuehi and Ibietan, 2013). The objectives stated in the third national plan were similar to that of the second plan objectives as they were seen as being long-term in nature. The objectives outlined in the third plan include; increase in per capita income, even distribution of income, reduction of unemployment level, increase in the level of the supply of higher-level manpower, diversification of the economy, balanced development and indigenization of economic activities (Obi, 2006). The main approach of the plan was to utilize the proceeds of the oil boom to develop the productive base of the economy that can permanently lead to the improved standard of living of the populace. As Egonmwan

and Ibodje (2001) put it, the plan was premised on the need for the public factor to provide facilities for the poorer sections of the population including electrification, water supply, health services, urban housing and education. A clear assessment of the plan points to the fact that it actually focused in giving priority to projects and programmes that could have direct positive impact on the rural dwellers but suffix it to say that the meagre allocations to agriculture and social development scheme that should have direct impact and improvement in the wellbeing of the masses received only 5% and 11.5% respectively of the total huge financial outlay of the plan (Okigbo, 1989; Iheanacho, 2014). Based on this, it is obvious that this meagre finance allocated to these priority areas is a clear demonstration of "lack of focus of the planners" (Onah, 2010). Like the previous plans, the third plan did not actually achieve its set targets and stated objectives but to an extent, there were reasonable achievement in some areas. Okowa (1991) noted that in terms of achievement, the manufacturing sector witnessed a very fast rate of growth with an average of 18.1% per annum. It equally recorded higher growth in other areas like building and constituencies and government services (Iheanacho, 2014).

The fourth National Plan (1981 – 1985) was the first plan that was prepared by a civilian administration since after military intervention in 1966. In its part, the plan tailored the way of the previous plan in its targets and policy formulations. As Ijaiyaa and Ilsmann (2002:2) noted, it was lunched simply to consolidate the third national development plan and it placed much emphases on revenue from petroleum resources. On its part, the plan had some lofty objectives which includes: increases in the real-income of the average citizen; more even distribution of income among individuals and socio-economic groups; reduction in the level of unemployment and underdevelopment; increase in the supply of skilled manpower; broadening of the economic base; increased indigenization programmes; development of high technological base; the promotion of a new national orientation and discipline among the citizens; better attitude to work and cleaner environment (Obi, 2006).

As cited by Iheanacho (2014), from the work of Adedeji (1989), the fourth plan was the largest and most ambitious that Nigeria ever lunched. The plan's main strategy was to use the revenue from oil sector to bring about an all-round expansion in the productive capacity of the country and lay a solid foundation for a self sustaining growth (Egonmwan and Ibodje, 2001). There was anticipation in the fourth plan that revenue from the petroleum dominated export basket would be huge enough to finance the plan that was formulated. However, the revenue realized was far-below expectations. As Okigbo (1989) puts it, it is a sad commentary that only 54% of the export proceeds that were realized in 1984. It was projected that N79.449 million would be realized from petroleum export between 1980–84; but it became a sorry moment that only N52.78 million about 66.4% of the projections that were realized (Okigbo, 1989). As the country

witnessed dwindling resources to finance the fourth plan, the economy witnessed huge debt services burden, balance of payment challenges and high rate of inflation. Most of the projects initiated in the early part of the plan were abandoned (Jaja, 2000). There was a sudden rise in the cost of living which brought about low standard of living of the populace, unemployment rate equally rose to a very high level, external reserve plunged to the negative (Onah, 2010). Reflecting on the plan, Alapiki (2009) elucidates that the plan period 1981 – 85 proved to be the most dismal in the economic history of Nigeria as at that time.

In spite of its numerous challenges and downsides, the fourth national development plan recorded some levels of achievements in some areas of the economy. Among these are: the implementation of the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) in most states and its successful completion; the commissioning of the Egbin Power Station; Akure Airport, increased enrolment in education across all levels; Dry Dock Project at Snake Island; improvement in healthcare facilities and 87 telephone exchange located all over the federation (Onah, 2006; Egonuwan and Ibodje, 2001; Ekhosuehi and Ibietan, 2013; Iheanacho, 2014). The primary objective of the three-year rolling plan that was initiated in 1990 was to provide the country an opportunity of revision in the midst of increasing socio-political and economic uncertainties (Ikeanibe, 2009). Unfortunately, the preparation of the medium term plan turned out to be a yearly event (an annual ritual) and it became completely indistinguishable from the annual budgets. As Okojie (2002) noted, the rolling plans were prepared annually at all levels of government, but at the end of it all (about ten years) – 1990 – 1999, Nigerians were not better-off than they were during the years of the fixed medium term plans.

In their work, Ibietan and Ekhosuehi (2013) observed that the Vision 2010 called for an urgent developmental paradigm shift and it placed a duty on Nigerians regarding their attitudes in order to realize the stated objectives and targets. They noted that it is doubtful to affirm if any conscious efforts were made to disseminate these requirements to the wider society as such had been a recurring dilemma in Nigeria's policy formulations without proper implementations strategy.

The Era of Perspective and Rolling Plans (1990 – 1998)

Obviously, at the very end of the four plans, there was no foundation lined for sustainable growth and development in the country. The productive base and capacity of the economy was yet to be diversified as Nigeria remained a mono-economy and lacked its own driving force rather was highly prone to external shocks (Okojie, 2002). By 1986, the fourth development plan hit the rock. There were huge deficits and external debts rose to the tune of \$22billion. This situation necessitated Nigeria's creditors to get involved in her plan so as to be able to get debt rescheduled. Thus, they introduced the Structural Adjustment Policy which was just a "reform therapy" from World Bank and the International Monetary

Fund (IMF) (Ikeanyibe, 2009). SAP as it were, was an economic emergency programme that was expected to last for only two years but its contents were too elaborate and radical to be realized within such short time. SAP recommended a shift from "project-based" to policy-based planning system and placed more emphases as a private sector-led economy that the prevailing public-sector-led system. Ikeanyibe (2009) noted that SAP presented an opportunity for reevaluating the planning system of the country which was lacking in the previous fixed medium plans. As Okojie (2002) noted, a three tier planning system was outlined to succeed SAP and they consist of:

- i. A 15 – 20 year perspective or long-term plan
- ii. A three-year rolling plan, and
- iii. An annual budget that will draw from the rolling plan.

As Ikeanyibe (2009) observed, the perspective plan main objective was to identify long-term policies by which the perspective plan will draw its medium-term programme, while the annual budgets draws it short-term programmes. It is pertinent to point out that most of the national objectives enumerated in the second national fixed plan was very much like the work done in the perspective plan. On the other hand, the idea of perspective was a significant innovation in planning because it was more elaborate and specific than the previous plans that were criticized for being vague and without constitutional significance (Okojie, 2002; Abasili, 2004). The Perspective and Rolling Plans were meant to take effect from 1990 but not until 1996 when the then Abacha administration set up the Vision 2010 committee. As Dagash (2008:35) asserted and as cited by Ibieta and Ekhousuehi (2013), the era of the Rolling plans (1990 – 1999) which he tagged as "the Rolling stones that gathered no moss." He further observed that in a bid to have a long-term National Vision that can ensure development (Vision 2010) was introduced. The vision 2010 committee submitted its reprint to the government in September 1997 and it recommends among other things that the vision should provide the focus of all other plans being its long-term (perspective), medium-term (rolling) or annual (budgets) (Adubi, 2002). The Vision 2010 provided the country with her first perspective plan but the plan was dumped immediately after Abacha's death in 1998.

The National Economic Direction (1999 – 2003): As a democratic government was elected in Nigeria in May 1999, there was a high hope and high expectations among Nigerians as they hope that the democratic government will turn the country around and positions her to the right direction. The new administration started a development plan in 1999 on a plain ground with the introduction of the four-year medium-term plan document tagged "National Economic Direction." The main objectives of the plan were: a pursuance of a strong, virile and broad-based economy that has adequate capacity to absorb all external shocks. Ikeanyibe (2009) pointed out that the plan though a new document in its entirety, its objectives and policy directions were not significantly different from the

directions introduced from the SAP document. Accordingly, Donli (2004) observed that the new plan was aimed at the development of an economy that is highly competitive, responsive to incentives, private sector led, diversified, market-oriented and open but it relied heavily on external momentum for growth. The plan failed to achieve most of the articulated objectives such as deregulating the economy, reduction in bureaucratic red-tapism in governance, creation of jobs, alleviating poverty, provision of welfare, infrastructure, improved healthcare and education, etc. In spite of the huge resources from oil revenue occasioned by the oil boom, inclusive of proceeds from the sales of public enterprises, and loots recovered from Abacha's family, Nigeria plummeted down the line among impoverished nations.

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (2003 – 2007): The economic conditions of Nigeria in his first tenure (Obasanjo's administration) which was far below its potentials, the Nigerian government introduced the NEEDS document. Ejumudo (2013) asserts that the NEEDS programme appears to be an ambitious developmental blueprint and as expected, it attempts to put in place the rudiments of a developmental state and design instruments that can accelerate growth and ensure poverty reduction. NEEDS has its basic thrust in the areas of empowerment, wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value reorientation. Ikeanyibe (2009) elucidates that NEEDS programme contains all the envisaged policies and programmes of the federal government not just for 2003 – 2007 but far beyond and it should serve as foundation of the much-talked about Obasanjo's reform. As established in the NEEDS programme, and as reported recorded in CBN (2005); National Planning Commission, NPC (2005:4) wishes to significantly eradicate poverty in Nigeria, create a Nigeria that Nigerians can be proud of, a Nigeria that promotes self-reliance, entrepreneurship, innovations, rewards hard work, protects her citizens and their property and offer to them better prospects than they can obtain any other part of the world.

Onah (2006:46) noted that NEEDS goals could be realized by creating an environment in which business can thrive, government is redirected to providing basic services and the people are empowered to take full advantages of the opportunities the plan will bring to bear. He elaborates that the strategies upon which the above goals could drive are in the areas of: reforms in government and its allied institutions, growing of the private institutions, implementation of better social character and value re-orientation. The states and the local governments had their own counterpart forms from the NEEDS programme - the SEEDS and the LEEDS respectively. Ejumudo (2013) reported that NEEDS was a direct response to the developmental challenges of Nigeria which was grossly underestimated both in areas of social, political and economic decays. He opines that NEEDS document stated explicitly that it was a home-grown poverty

Reduction strategy and that it appeared to conform to what a country's PRSP should be (World Bank, 2010), but the programme suffered some shortcomings and inadequacies which Ohiorhenuan (2003) identifies as African PRSP generally. The shortcomings he identified are: weakness on poverty diagnostics, cosmetically descriptive rather than analytical approach and weaknesses in setting economic targets. The most fundamental weakness of the NEEDS as a poverty reduction strategy was its "trickle down" approach to poverty reduction instead of the adoption of "Right Based Approach" which is internationally recognized and accepted as the most significant approach (AAIN, 2005). Iheanacho (2014) opines that the NEEDS programme which was a medium-term plan should have achieved its objectives before the expiration of Obasanjo's administration in May 2017. But the truth remains that those objections eluded Nigerians just like previous developmental plans in Nigeria. It was only on papers that the four key objectives of NEEDS viz: employment generation, poverty reduction, wealth creation and value re-orientation were achieved. Thus, NEEDS failed to sort out Nigeria's needs (Ebigbo, 2008).

Vision 20: 2020 (2007)

The Nigerian government launched the Vision 20:2020 in 2007 as a development planning initiative; the major objective of the programme is to make Nigeria one of the first 20 economies in the world by the year 2020 (Iheanacho, 2012). It promises to move Nigeria from its position of 41st in the world then to the 20th best by 2020 and to make Nigeria the African Financial centre of choice by that same year (Ugwu, 2009). The Yar'adua administration carried over the Vision 20:2020 from the Obasanjo's administration. It was expected that with positive economic management in the country, GDP growth for Nigeria will be larger than that of Italy by 2015 based on Jim Neil's (2007) calculations. On the basis of Oyeboade (2007) and Iluyomade (2008), Ugwu (2009) observed that most of the yardstick used in the statistics of Vision 20:2020 were economic indicators of growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP). Daggash (2008) who was then a Minister and Deputy Chairman of National Planning Commission opined that Vision 2020 had clear goals and it includes engendering peaceful, harmonious and stable democracy by 2020; sustenance of sound, stable and globally competitive economy with an estimated GDP of not less than \$900billion and per-capita GDP of over \$4000. Other goals include provision of infrastructure, modern and a vibrant system of education, an improved health sector and delivery services that can guarantee a life expectancy of not less than 70 years; modern and technologically based agriculture sector, a competitive manufacturing sector, etc (Ibietan and Ekhosuehi, 2013).

Eneh (2011) reports that the Vision 20:2020 like other developmental plans and programmes was nothing but a mere vision which much unrealistic targets. Ibietan and Ekhosuehi (2013) observed that Vision 20:2020 also tailored the paths of other plans by presenting areas/issues it was not to cover in an

omnibus manner without breaking it down into phases. The assumption of a prudent economic management which the vision was built upon for its success is still lacking in Nigeria.

The Seven Point Agenda:

The administration of President Yar'adua presented a seven point agenda for development in Nigeria and it is aimed at tackling the numerous problems of: power and energy; food security and agriculture; wealth creation and empowerment; transport sector; land reforms; security; education. Ibietan and Ekhosuehi (2013) recorded that the seven point agenda was an off-shoot of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and it was expected to run concurrently with its agendas of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2015; achieving universal primary education by 2015; reducing child mortality by two-third; improving maternal health by 2015; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other preventable diseases by 2015; ensuring environmental sustainability between 2015 and 2020 and developing a global partnership for development by 2015. The seven-point agenda of Yar'adua administration was somewhat an uncoordinated plan and looked more of an administration's mantra with much talk than actions. It rather alienated itself on the MDGs which were much of "goals from outside." Though, some of the objectives were achievable, the programme did not go beyond the usual policy formulations that lacked the necessary implementation mechanism which had been the major challenge of other plans in Nigeria. The seven-point agenda died immediately with the sudden demise of President Yar'adua.

The Transformation Agenda (2011 – 2015):

In May 2011, another government took over the helms of affair and being headed by the person of President Goodluck Jonathan. Suffice it to say that President Jonathan did not continue with the "seven-point agenda" of his former boss – President Yar'adua, he rather came up with the new idea tagged "Transformation Agenda." Awojobi (2017) noted that the transformation agenda was meant to run from 2011 – 2015 and it promised to be a policy and programme that will transform Nigeria to an economic powerhouse in the world. Itah (2012) is of the opinion that the transformation agenda of President Jonathan aimed to address the surge in poverty and insecurity. The then Minister of Trade and Investment Olusegun Aganga describes the agenda as a development policy that is embedded with good governance, security, energy and human development (Awojobi, 2017). In the words of Gyong (2012), the transformation Agenda seeks to catapult Nigeria in economic growth and national development. He elaborates that the agenda had its focus on three core areas of: revamping all ailing industries, encouraging agriculture and agro-related businesses promote small and medium enterprises (SMEs); secondly, to reduce poverty and create massive employment; and thirdly, to fight corruption at all levels of governance. As Awojobi (2017) noted, the realization of the objectives of the transformation

agenda remains a mirage. Nigeria witnessed high level of corruption, insecurity, high cost of governance, upsurge in the rate of unemployment, etc. At the second anniversary of the Jonathan administration in May 29, 2013, the president asked Nigerians to evaluate his government transformation agenda. In a quick reaction, erudite constitutional lawyer, Prof. Ben Nwabueze after a careful assessment of the agenda, said that it has absolutely nothing to do with, not a word to say about, the transformation of our society from rural decadence into which it has sunk. As he noted, no agenda in the context of Nigeria, is worth being called a transformation agenda which does not aim at the moral and ethical transformation of the society Nwabueze (2013) as cited by Aloa and Alao, (2013) and quoted by Awojabi, (2017). In a similar view, Afolayam (2011), Gyang (2012) and Aloa and Aloa (2013) stressed that the high-level corruption was the biggest obstacle to the realization of the transformation agenda which invariably brought stagnation of economic growth and development. El Rufai (2014) notes that corruption brings no good to any society, funds that are meant for developmental purposes were carried away by public office holders and this led to increasing rate of poverty, unemployment, diseases, inequality and insecurity in the life of the country. The Jonathan Transformation Agenda connotes a clear-cut agenda for development purposes, but it equally tailored the path of other development plans of Nigeria as it was marred with lack of implementations and inconsistencies.

The Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017:

The continuous search for the optimal development strategy in Nigeria led to the introduction of ERGP by the present administration of President Mohammed Buhari (PMB). The government launched the ERGP in 2016 as a medium-term economic framework meant to stimulate the recessive economy back to sustainable, accelerate development and restore economy in the medium term (Kyaram and Ogwuche, 2017). The ERGP was launched soon after Nigeria slumped into economic recession in the second half of 2016 (PWC, 2017) as cited by Kyaram and Ogwuche (2017). The ERGP has so many lofty objectives, it aims to restore growth, engender macroeconomic stability and diversification. It equally aims at investing in Nigeria people by continuing to provide support for the economically disadvantaged individuals, create jobs, and improve accessibility and affordability to quality healthcare across the country and improved human capital in the areas of improved education for all. Finally, the ERGP aims to significantly increase investment in infrastructure through a robust Public Private partnership arrangement, it equally aims to simplify and improve the legal and regulatory framework for doing business in Nigeria and promote digital-led growth through the expansion of broadband coverage (Kyarem and Ogwuche, 2017). It is expected that the cumulative effect of the ERGP's targets will translate to expansion and growth in GDP by 2.19% in 2017, averaging 4.62% between 2018 and 2019 and finally hit 7% by 2020. It is equally expected that

unemployment rate will reduce from 13% (Q3, 2016) to 11.23% by 2020.

Kyarem and Ogwuche (2017) notes that the ERGP has some downside risks which are embedded in the 2 macro-structural risks of ERGP document. In their assertion, the plan which is called a growth plan, it is obvious that the ERGP focuses more on growth out of recession than growth on a sustainable basis towards development. The calculated GDP growth was on the basis of an improved oil prices that does not guarantee improvement in real production. As Kyarem and Ogwuche (2017) observed, a policy gap exists in the ERGP and that is the absence of how to manage an after-recession economy which should serve as a spring board for sustainable growth and development. It is obvious that the above gap actually exists; the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2017b) announced and celebrated Nigeria's exit from recession, yet the country's socio-economic indices and welfare are worsening. Whilst the objectives of the ERGP are laudable, its vulnerability to political disruption is a key risk which may impact the sustainability and enforceability of the development plan.

IV. REASONS FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FAILURES IN NIGERIA

Nigeria had over the years adopted and implemented several forms of development plan. Both military and civilian administrations had at one time adopted a particular plan, but suffice to say that they had failed to transform the nation and set it on the path of development. As Ejumudo (2013) puts it, it is instructive to note that while there had been plethora of activities tagged and cosmetically dubbed development plans in Nigeria, true development had not been on the agenda as far as Nigerian leadership is concerned. He elaborates that one of the biggest obstacles to the development plans in Nigeria is lack of clear vision. This he identified as the foundational basis for the disjointed mission of development planning in Nigeria. As Onyenekenwa (2011) puts it while quoting the erstwhile Minister of National Planning (Dagash, 2008) he confirmed that the circumstances are still so devastating for the vast majority of Nigerians in spite of the nation's enormous endowments, he states that this is because Nigeria has no serious intention to turn things around or lack of capacity to face the challenges or still on the search for the right strategy to tackle the core issues of true development.

Another challenge facing Nigeria development planning is the absolute alignment to Western pattern and notion of development. Ake (1981), in Onah (2006) averred that "any development plan and initiatives that did not encourage the disengagement of Nigeria economy from the exploitative structural links with Western capitalist economy, such a policy will not succeed." Munroe (1992) corroborates the notion of disengaging from western notion of development as he states that "this standard of measuring success in the source of much Third World frustration as nations". This success trap will not bring true fulfilment or freedom but greater bondage. Ibieta and Ekhusuehi (2013) observed that financial

constraint is another factor facing development planning successes in Nigeria. They argue that development plans are financed through multiple sources like taxation, other internally generated revenue (IGR), external reserves, aids and loans, it has been argued that these are not always adequate to fund the plans. Other factors that are responsible for the failures include among other things, inadequacy of professional planners due to institutionalized framework for planning; plan indiscipline and unnecessary partnership; poor and inadequate feasibility studies in planning; lack of accurate data; erratic and conflicting government policies which results in policy summersault and abandonment and as Eneh (2011) puts it, most policies in Nigeria are wonderful put policy summersault, abandonment or failures awaits it. Nigeria is replete with most times brilliant, impeccable and well written policies but lack the will to implement them. The logical and expensively produced policies often end just as ordinary policy. There is always a weak effort at implementing those policies which is always been rubbished by corruptions across all spheres of national life.

Other factors are in the areas of: lack of inter-ministerial and inter-disciplinary coordinating machinery, lack of proper project monitoring, lack of efficient public sector, lack of proper public and private sector partnership, lack of political will to implement the plans, etc.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The paper has enumerated the various development plans that Nigerian governments had embarked upon since the pre-colonial era, the post-colonial era and the present democratic dispensation. The paper equally considered the present administration's development initiative tagged "Economic Recovery and Growth Plan" (ERGP). The paper relied on information sourced from existing records. Most of the developmental challenges that militate against the success of the plans were equally identified. It is obvious that Nigeria has experimented with several development plans from day one till date, yet the needed transformation has continued to elude the citizens in spite of the robust plans. The failures of these plans are being manifested in the crises that beset Nigerian economy. Both economic, political and social indicators point to the direction of a crisis-ridden economy. There is acute unemployment, widespread poverty, high level of illiteracy, decayed social and physical infrastructure, technological backwardness, urban congestion, monumental upsurge of social/political and economic vices, excessive debt burdens and high incidence of diseases. Therefore, the search still continues.

Based on the above observations which points out that the Nigerian government has got it right in her development plans and initiative, the paper recommends among other things that:

- **A disciplined political leadership is indispensable:** there is need for a disciplined political leadership in Nigerians that can ensure a complete implantation of development plans. The development plans will not

succeed if the political leaders are not committed to implementing it to the letter.

- **Setting of priorities** – another factor that will enhance the achievement of plans and objectives is setting the priorities aright. Most a-times the Nigerian government meddle-up everything it wants to achieve at the same time. Without setting priorities right, the country cannot get beyond where she is.
- **Consistency in planning initiatives and implementation** – government and governance is a going concern, the idea of a particular government setting up a development plan and immediately another administration emerges, the plan from the predecessor will be abandoned immediately had been a major obstacle to development plans in Nigeria. Therefore, Nigerians should see governance as a continuum and not a personal business.
- **There is need for a home-grown development plan** – Nigerian government met to setup a development plan that is completely home-grown devoid of external vagarious and dictates. Most of the development plans and reform policies implemented in Nigeria were by-products of World Bank, IMF dictates as it hardly considered Nigeria's peculiarities in its formulation.
- **Cooperation among all sundries** – a critical factor that can ensure the success of a development plan is cooperation. Nigerians from all facets of endeavour must cooperate and work tougher for us to reap the benefits of a proper development plan.

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