

National Development Planning in Nigeria: An Endless Search for Appropriate Development Strategy

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ABSTRACT

Since independence, Nigeria has embarked on series of National Development plans and visions in her endless efforts to search for appropriate development strategy. It is worrisome that these development plans and visions have failed to achieve their expected objectives. This is evident from widespread poverty, dilapidated infrastructure, massive unemployment, high incidence of diseases and excessive debt burden among others. Therefore this study aims to examine critically various development plans in Nigeria and identify those problems that hinder successful implementation of development plans in Nigeria. The study relied on secondary data, as its source of information. Based on the findings that development plans have been accepted as a suitable strategy to address development challenges in Nigeria, this study concludes that the efficacy of our national development plans would be enhanced and serve as a viable instrument of sustainable development if the problems that confront the National Development plans are properly addressed.

Keywords: *Development, Planning, Development Planning, strategy.*

INTRODUCTION

Successive governments in Nigeria have adopted development plans as appropriate strategy to address development challenges in the country. Tordoff (1993) observes that there is a general consensus that the instrument of both diagnosis and remedy to development is the “development plan” In the same vein Adedeji (1989) opines that the economic aspirations of Nigeria since independence are perhaps best exemplified by her various development plans. Since the past four decades, Nigeria has embarked on series of development plans to fasten the rate of economic growth and improve the standard of living of the people. It is noteworthy that Nigeria has gone through four national development plans in her post-independence history, (the fifth National Development Plan did not materialize).

These plans are: First National Development Plan (1962), the Second National Development Plan (1970-74), Third National Development Plan (1975-80), and Fourth National Development Plan 1981-85. Apart from the five year National Development Plans, the Federal Government has also embarked on three year rolling plans between 1990 and 1998 and long term perspective planning in her endless efforts to search for appropriate developmental strategy. The federal government introduced another ambitious programme between 2003 and 2007 known as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). It was a medium term planning which focused on wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value orientation. Recently

Vision 20:2020 was launched. Vision 20:2020 is a perspective plan which aims to make Nigeria a fully developed economy by the year. Though development planning has been a consistent phenomenon in Nigeria's administrative system, it is worrisome that these plans have not achieved the expected results. This is evident from widespread poverty, dilapidated infrastructural facilities, massive unemployment, low capacity utilization, technological backwardness, short-life expectancy, urban congestion, excessive debt burden, environmental degradation and high incidence of diseases which beset the country. It is obvious that Nigeria is an underdeveloped country and occupies very low position among the poorest countries of the world inspite of her huge potential in natural and human resources. In the opinion of Obikeze and Obi (2004) "a review of the various plans clearly shows that the country is still very far from where it was envisaged it will be today. This is simply as a result of either faulty implementation of the plan, distortions or even non-implementation".

Therefore, the basic thrust of this work is to examine critically the various development plans and visions since independence and determine the extent which these development plans and vision has achieved their expected objectives. The study also aims at identifying those problems that militate against effective implementation of development plans in Nigeria and suggests appropriate remedies to enhance the efficacy of these plans.

Conceptualising Development Planning

Development planning can be better comprehended by explaining the concepts of development and 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 eradication of absolute poverty (Todaro, 1977). Development is a process of societal transformation from a traditional to a modern society and such transformation is also known as modernization (Sapru, 1994). Hahn-Been (1970) defines development as a process of acquiring a sustained growth of a system's capacity to cope with new continuous changes towards the achievement of progressive political, economic and societal objectives. Therefore, development is nothing but improving the welfare of the individuals which is usually measured in terms of providing infrastructural facilities that could afford them a chance for better life. Improving the standard of living, education, health and opening out new and equal opportunities for richer and varied life are all important ingredient of development. The primary goal of development is to improve man and his environment (Iheanacho, 2012).

Planning is deciding what actions to be taken in the future for the purpose of achieving organizational goals, it involves thinking ahead, initiating and taking a predetermined course of action and deciding in advance what should be done, how, when and by whom. Without planning, the activities of organizations, institutions, societies and nations may well become a series of random actions with meaningless objectives (Datta, 2010). According to Cole (1993), planning is an activity which involves decisions about ends as well as means and about conduct as well as result. Planning is deciding what to do, how to do it and who is to do (Koonzt, Donnel and Weihrich, 2006). Nwachukwu (1998) observes

that planning entails determination of control, direction and methods of accomplishing the overall organization or national objective. Plans must be directed and controlled towards achieving desired objectives. Todaro (1992) conceptualizes development planning as the conscious governmental effort to influence, direct and in some cases, even control changes in the principal economic variables of a country over the course of time in order to achieve predetermined set of objectives". From the above it is obvious that without adequate planning, no meaningful development can take place in any system or State. Development planning as long-term programme designed to effect some permanent structural changes in the economy is connected with the involvement of government in the economy whereby it set out objectives about the way it wants the economy to develop in future and then intervenes to try to achieve those objectives (UNPD, 2008). 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).

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN NIGERIA

Development plans have been accepted as a suitable strategy to address development challenges in Nigeria. Therefore, the analysis of various development plans in Nigeria since independence becomes necessary.

Pre-Independence Plan: Nigeria's planning experience began with the Ten-Year Plan of Development and Welfare for Nigeria which was introduced in 1946 by the colonial government (1945-1956) sequel to a circular from the Secretary of State for Colonies to all British colonies, directing the setting up of a Central Development Board (Onah, 2010). The Ten Year Plan of Development and Welfare for Nigeria could not be actually be termed as plan in real sense because it contained mainly a list of uncoordinated projects in various regions. The objective of the plan, though not stated was to meet the perceived needs of the colonial government rather than any conscious attempt to influence the overall performance of the Nigerian economy then (Egonmwan and Ibodje, 2001). The primary interest of the colonial government was to produce agricultural products such as groundnuts, palm oil, and cocoa that were required by the British factories. No attempt was made to articulate and incorporate the needs and interest of Nigerian people into the objectives and priorities of development plans (Onah 2010). Ayo (1988) 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." Irrespective of the weaknesses of the plan, it served as a launch pad to subsequent development plans in Nigeria.

First National Development Plan 1962-1968: Immediately after attainment of independence in 1960, the first National Development Plan (1962-1968) was launched. The objectives of the plan were: to bring about equal distributions of national income; to speed up the rate of economic growth; to generate savings for investments so as to reduce its dependence on external capital for the development of the nation; to get enough capital for the development of manpower; to increase the standard of living of the masses

particularly in respect of food, housing, health and clothing and to develop the infrastructure of the nation (Onyenwigwe 2009). It had a proposed total investment expenditure of about N2,132million. The public sector was expected to invest about N1,352.3million while the remaining investment expenditure of N780 million was expected to be made by the private sector (Obi, 2006). Though, the plan appeared impressive, but due to political upheaval in the country which resulted in 30 month civil war, the plan almost became redundant. According to Nnadozie (2004), the objectives and targets of the 1962-68 plan were too large and over-ambitious and therefore out of tune with financial technical and managerial capabilities of the country. This made the plan to lack clarity and precision in the formulation of objectives and targets (Onah, 2010). Despite the weaknesses of the plan, some major projects were executed during that period. These included the Nigerian Security and Minting Plant, the Jebba Paper Mill, the Sugar Mill, Niger Dam, the Niger Bridge, Onitsha, Kaingi Dam and Port Harcourt Refinery.

The Second National Plan (1970-1974): At the end of 1970, national reconstruction and rehabilitation were the focus of attention of the federal government. In order to fasten the growth of national economy and ensure equitable distribution of national income, it became imperative to launch the Second National Development Plan. Initially, the plan, was meant to cover the four year period, 1970-1974, it was later extended to cover the fiscal year of 1974-1975. The plan put forward five national objectives: a United, strong and self reliant nation; a just and egalitarian society; a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and a free and democratic society (Onyenwigwe, 2009). Ayo (1988) outlines the difference between this plan and others as:

“Besides being much bigger in size and more diversified in its project composition, it was in fact the first truly national and fully integrated plan which viewed the economy as an organic unit: the twelve states were fully integrated into national development plan. Also, unlike the first plan, the second plan was formulated wholly by Nigerians.”

The total capital projected expenditure of about 4.9 billion was contained in the plan. Out of this figure, the proposed public sector investment was 3.3 billion while the private sector was expected to invest 1.6 billion (Obi, 2006). The highest order of priorities in public sector projected expenditure were accorded to transport and communication, manufacturing, housing and education (Onah 2010). Second National Development Plan laid much emphasis on indigenization. In the opinion of Okowa (1991) “indigenization was seen by this plan as an instrument towards the long term objective of economic independence”. Although the Second National Development Plan also attached importance on agriculture, industry and the development of high level and intermediate level manpower, the plan was beset with problems as in the first National Development Plan. Onah (2010) alludes to this fact that “the high priority given to agriculture and industry was not matched with action during the implementation of the plan”. One of the basic tenets of Second National Development Plan is indigenization policy. Indigenization policy was carefully designed to encourage Nigerians to participate fully in the commercial, industrial and financial activities of the Nigerian economy. Several indigenization decrees were made to realize

the objectives of this policy. It is a sad commentary that close to two years after enactment of the first indigenization Decree (1972), out of about 950 affected enterprises, only 314 or 33 percent were confirmed as having fully complied with the provisions of the decree (Onah, 2010). It should also be emphasized that despite indigenization policy, there were over 16 multinational oil companies representing the United States, Dutch, Japanese, British, Italian, German and French interest that have firm and massive grip on Nigeria's Petroleum till date (Koha, 1994). An interesting feature of the Second National Development Plan was the objective of creating "a free and democratic society" that was being challenged by the military government. This objective was put in place without considering any discussion on political development in the plan document and any means of returning to civilian rule. Despite the inadequacies of the plan, it witnessed achievements in the areas of industry and agriculture. The industrial sector recorded more improvements. Many industries in the war affected areas were rehabilitated, coupled with establishment of two salt factories in Kaduna. Super phosphates project and two vehicle assembly plants were also established. Other achievements included the establishment of colleges of technology and trade centres by state governments and reconstruction of about 3000 kilometres of roads (Egonmwan and Ibodje, 2001).

The Third National Development Plan (1975:1980): The Third National Development Plan had a projected jumbo investment of N30 billion which was later increased to N43.3 billion. This represented ten times that of the Second Plan and about 15 times that of the First Plan (Obi, 2006). The objectives of the plan were: increase in per capita income; more even distribution of income; reduction in the level of unemployment; increase in the supply of higher level manpower; diversification of the economy; balanced development and indigenization of economic activities (Obi, 2006). The approach of the plan was to utilize resources from oil to develop the productive capacity of the economy and thereby permanently improve the standard of living of the people. Therefore, the plan was premised on the need for the public factor to provide facilities for the poorer sections of the population including electrification, water supplies, health services, urban housing and education (Egonmwan and Ibodje, 2001).

The assessment of the plan showed it focused to give priority to projects and programmes that would directly impact positively on the rural dwellers, but the meagre allocations to agriculture and social development schemes did not indicate sincere intention of the government to achieve the objective. According to Okigbo (1989) agriculture and social development scheme (education, housing, health, welfare etc) that have direct bearing on the living conditions of the rural population received only 5 per cent and 11.5 per cent respectively of the financial allocations contained in the plan. It is appropriate to state here that the meagre allocation to agriculture and social development schemes, which were priority areas, indicated the "lack of focus of the planners to careful sifting of the criteria for allotting principles" (Onah, 2010). In this context, nobody should expect the plan to achieve the desired objective. Like other plans before it, the third plan did not really achieve its set targets. Irrespective of the inadequacies of this plan, it witnessed achievements in some areas. In the opinion of Okowa (1991), "in terms of achievement, the manufacturing sector

recorded the fastest growth rate with an average of 18.1 per cent per annum. Some other sectors that witnessed growth were building and construction and government services.

Fourth National Development Plan (1981-1985): The Fourth National Development Plan (1981-85) came on board in 1981. It was the first that the civilian government prepared since the intervention of the military in Nigerian politics in 1966. The objectives of the plan according to Obi (2006) were: (i) increase in the real income of the average citizen; (ii) more even distribution of income among individuals and socio-economic groups (iii) reduction in the level of unemployment and under employment; (iv) increase in the supply of skilled manpower; (v) reduction of the dependence of the economy on the narrow range of activities; (vi) increased participation by the citizens in the ownership and management of productive enterprises; (vii) greater self reliance that is, increased dependence on local resources in seeking to achieve the various objectives of society; (viii) development of technology; (ix) increased productivity and (x) the promotion of a new national orientation conducive to greater discipline, better attitude to work and cleaner environment. The projected capital investment of the plan was put at N82 billion. Out of this figure, the public sector investment was N70.5 billion while the private sector was expected to invest N11.7 billion (Obi, 2006).

According to Adedeji (1989) the plan was “the largest and most ambitious programme of investment ever launched in Nigeria”. The plan also adopted as its main strategy the use of resources generated from oil to ensure all-round expansion in production capacity of the economy and to lay a foundation for self sustaining growth (Egonmwan and Ibodje, 2001). It was anticipated in the Fourth Plan that exports led by petroleum products would generate enough funds to actualize the plan that had been formulated. Eventually, the revenue realized from exports were far below anticipated projections. It is a sad commentary that only 54 per cent of the export proceeds projected for the period were realized in 1984. For instance, it was projected that N79.449 million would be earned from petroleum exports between 1980 and 1984, but only N52.78 million some 66.4 per cent of the projected figure was earned (Okigbo, 1989).

With the dwindling resources to finance the Fourth Plan, the Nigerian economy witnessed debt service and balance of payment problem coupled with high level of inflation. Most of the projects that were started at the beginning of the plan period could not be completed and these together with several spillover projects from previous plan had to be abandoned (Jaja, 2000). The growth rate of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per annum was only 1.25 percent compared to 5.5, 13.2 and 4.6 percent under the previous National Development plans (Onah, 2010). Another problem of this plan was rise in the cost of living that led to a reduction in the standard of living of a common man. There was also phenomenal increase in unemployment among school leavers in the country. Our external reserves kept on declining. Commenting on the plan, Alapiki (2009) observed that “the plan period 1981-85 proved to be the most dismal in the economic history of Nigeria at that time”. The Fourth National Development Plan recorded some achievements in some areas in spite of its drawbacks. The implementation of Agricultural Development Programme

(ADP) in most states was successfully completed, the commissioning of Egbin Power Station, Dry Dock Project at snake Island, Lagos and the 87 telephone exchanges located all over the federation which increased the number subscribers to telephone lines from 188,000 in 1981 to 297,000 in 1985 (Egonmwan and Ibodje, 2001).

The Fifth National Development Plan: Due to poor implementation of the Fourth National Development Plan, a machinery was put in place for preparation of the Fifth National Development Plan. In order to facilitate the exercise, a conference was held at the University of Ibadan in November 1984 to deliberate on the appropriate mechanisms for the Fifth National Development Plan. The conference suggested some measures which formed the corner stone of the policies and strategies incorporated in the Fifth National Development Plan. The objectives of the Fifth National Development Plan were: (i) diversification of the nation's economy away from the monocultural one to which it has been pushed by the fortunes of the oil sector; (ii) revitalization of the agricultural sector with a view to achieving thorough integrated rural development programmes; (iii) domestic production of raw materials for local industries in order to reduce the importation of locally manufactured goods and (iv) promotion of employment opportunities in order to arrest the deteriorating mass unemployment (Onyenwigwe, 2009). The primary focus of the plan was to correct the structural defects in the economy and create a more self-reliant economy that would largely be regulated by market forces. The economy was therefore expected to be restructured in favour of the production sector especially those of agriculture and manufacturing (Onyenwigwe, 2009). More than ever; the linkage between the agricultural and manufacturing sectors of the economy were to be emphasized during the plan (Ayo, 1988). The Fifth National Development Plan did not materialize. It was later incorporated in the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The two year SAP brought to an end the five year planning model in Nigeria. The Federal government changed the two year model to three year rolling plans.

The Perspective Plan and Rolling Plans (1990-1998): The Babangida government had abandoned the previous fixed five year development plans and replaced it with two types of national plans viz: perspective plan which will cover a period of 15-20 years that will provide opportunity for a realistic long-term view of the problem of the country and the rolling plan which will cover three years subject to review every year to ascertain whether economy is progressing or not. The perspective plan which was to start from 1990 together with rolling plans did not take off until 1996 when Abacha set-up the Vision 2010 Committee. The main report of Vision 2010 submitted to Abacha government in September 1997 among other things recommended that the vision should provide the focus of all plans including long (perspective), medium (rolling) and annual plans (budgets) (Adubi, 2002). Therefore, the Vision became the first perspective plan for the country even though it failed to proceed beyond Abacha's death in 1998. The three year rolling plan became operational from 1990 with the introduction of the First National Rolling Plan (1990-1992). The primary objective of the rolling plan was to afford the country the opportunity of revision in the "midst of increasing socio-political and economic uncertainties"

(Ikeanyibe (2009). But the preparation of medium term plans turned out to be a yearly event and became almost indistinguishable from annual budgets. Rolling plans are being prepared annually at all levels of government. At the end of about ten rolling plans from 1990 to 1999, Nigerians are not better of than they were during the years of fixed medium term planning (Okojie, 2002).

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (2003-2007): When the Obasanjo's government was re-elected in 2003, it realized the necessity for comprehensive socio-political and economic reform of the country since the previous plans did not put the Nigerian economy on sound footings. It was in this context that the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) that appeared to be a road map to address the development challenges in Nigeria was launched. The basic thrust of NEEDS focused on: empowerment, wealth creation, employment generation and poverty reduction as well as value reorientation.

It is worrisome that the government has not realized most of the professed objectives of NEEDS. Within the period of NEEDS 2003-2007, Nigeria's annual budget crossed the threshold of billions into trillions of naira, but the per capita income of Nigeria falls into the one dollar per head level of the poorest countries (Ikeanyibe, 2009). Education which is expected to empower citizens has witnessed increase in the number of educational institutions from primary to tertiary institutions. The universities have increased from about forty in 1999 and mainly belonging to federal and state governments to about eighty nine in April 2007, with greater private sector participation (Ikeanyibe, 2009). It is regrettable that despite increase in the number of educational institutions, the cost of education is very exorbitant. For example an average private university charges fees as high as N250,000 per session. This has led to the reduction of number of citizens that can have access to higher education. Therefore, empowerment of such citizens is grievously hampered.

NEEDS had planned to create about seven million jobs by 2007, but the reality is that most policies adopted by the government to realize this objective were inimical to employment generation. In her efforts to reform government institutions, many employees have actually lost their jobs. The Central Bank of Nigeria alone severed 804 employees through mandatory retirement in 2005 (CBN, 2005). In the area of infrastructural development, NEEDS has also failed to achieve the expected objectives. Electricity which coincidentally was a major policy choice area of the government rather than show improvement, seemed to have declined tremendously (Ikeanyibe, 2009). The poor supply of electricity in the country has reached a dangerous proportion by 2007. Adegboyega (2006) observed that "we have to look beyond Obasanjo's reform package if we must get out of the power quagmire". As a medium term plan, most of the objectives of NEEDS should have been achieved before the expiration of Obasanjo's administration in May 2007. The truth is that NEEDS as a development planning did not achieve the expected results like previous development plans in Nigeria. The four main objectives Viz: employment generation, poverty reduction, wealth creation and value re-orientation remains only on paper.

Vision 20:2020: Nigerian leaders under President Olusegun Obasanjo have added Vision 20:2020 to one of its endless search for appropriate development strategy. The objective of the Vision 20:2020 is to make Nigeria one of the first 20 economics in the world by the year 2020. To actualize this lofty dream, Nigeria's GDP per capita must grow at an incalculable rate (different from the present 0.8%) from US\$ 752 to \$30,000 at least and the GDP of those countries (over US \$29,000) Nigeria wishes to displace and/or join must stop growing (now they grow at 2%) (Eneh, 2011). The rural areas in Nigeria must be transformed from age-long poverty and misery centres to urban status of world standard. Nigeria's education, health, power, agriculture, manufacturing and other sectors must receive such miraculous boasts that in 10 years time, the country will compare with high income OECD nations in all development respect (Eneh, 2011). Nigeria must move from its 158th (2007) position in the UNDP human development ranking to the first 20 position in the world. (Eneh, 2011). Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 like other development plans and initiative is nothing but a mere vision until it is realized. At present, Nigerians are beset with hunger and starvation, dilapidated road network, poor power supply, underdeveloped rail system and insecurity of lives and property. Is Vision 20:2020 attainable under the present state of affairs? Based on the previous experience of the failures in Nigeria's development plans and initiatives the Vision 20:2020 is bound to fail.

CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENTS PLANS IN NIGERIA

Despite the series of development plans and visions introduced by successive Nigerian governments since independence, the country has failed to produce much needed sustainable development. Development plans in Nigeria have failed to achieve their desired objectives due to many challenges that bedeviled the plans. These challenges are:

Corruption: Corruption in Nigerian political system has hampered development plans and programmes. Corruption has been a pervasive social phenomenon. The disheartening thing about the whole scenario is that the purported development plans are to a large extent corruption avenues to some greedy Nigeria leaders. Illicit misappropriation of privileges and opportunities in public and private sectors for personal aggrandizement particularly those in positions of authority are sine-qua-non to Nigeria (Ologbenla, 2007). The involvement of our political leaders in massive corruption both in military and civilian governments has been a stumbling block to national development plans. Onah (2006) observes that all development visions and programmes fail in Nigeria because of poor handling by corrupt and poor/hungry politicians and bureaucrats.

Lack of Plan Discipline: The failure of Nigerian political leaders and bureaucrats to abide by the plan objectives has frustrated development plans in Nigeria. Many previous plans in Nigeria were distorted during the implementation stages which eventually killed the overall objectives of the plans. Indiscipline in the process implementation of development plans has resulted in many abandoned projects in all parts of the country. Many projects like Ajaokuta Steel Complex which could have fasten Nigeria's industrialization are not yet completed after two decades of their projected completion dates.

Lack of Commitment: Development plans are often prepared without consulting the people, hence public apathy towards its implementation (Obi, 2006). Since the plan is meant for the people, but they are not even aware of its existence or objectives, they do not feel duty bound to contribute to its success (Obi, 2006). This has made many development plans fail in Nigeria. It was an attempt to address this problem that made the defunct Vision 2010 Committee to embark on series of publicity programmes, like seminars, conferences and public enlightenment campaigns (Obi, 2006).

Absence of Relevant Data: Development planning depends basically on availability of data. This is due to inadequacies of Federal Office of Statistics, the unwillingness of Nigerians to reveal information and outright manipulation of data for pecuniary or other gains. A striking example of the problem in Nigeria is that until today, nobody is sure about the exact population of Nigeria. A country that does not know its population would definitely not be in position to determine the other vital statistics necessary for planning life, birth rate, death rate, number of those of school age and demographic changes in the population which are essential for planning. (Ejumudo, 2013). The absence of reliable background data has made the use of social indicators difficult and inadequate for plan preparation, implementation and monitoring of national development (Ejumudo, 2013).

Over Ambitious Development Plans: National Development Plans are over ambitious trying to achieve many objectives at the same time without considering the conflicting and competing priorities. Again, they are often grandiose in design but vague on specific policies needed to achieve stated objectives (Onah, 2010). In most cases, policy objectives are contradictory.

Lack of Continuity of Government Programmes: Lack of continuity of government programmes has retarded development plans in Nigeria. Most of the development programmes are usually abandoned once the government that introduced them are out of power. Government officials did not feel committed to the national plans of their predecessors and subsequently sought to change by introducing major projects not incorporated in the original plan or introducing new ones (Oladapo, 2004). This is the reason for uncompleted projects in different parts of the country today. The situation is worsened because of political instability to which the country has been subjected since independence. Arguably, the frequent and unpredictable changes in the government especially during the military regimes, created room for uncertainty and for the retardation of development process articulated in various plans.

Public Service Inefficiency: Public service is an institution that is responsible to execute development plans. It is worrisome that Nigerian public service is beset with many problems which militate against its efforts in the implementation of development plans. Some of these problems are: corruption, inadequate working materials, poor communication system, red-tapism and political instability. It is imperative to address these problems to enhance the capacity of Nigerian public service to serve as appropriate instrument for implementing development plans in Nigeria.

Public and Private Sector Partnership: There is poor collaboration between the public and private sectors in development planning process in Nigeria. In fact, development planning has largely followed bureaucratic process with little private sector participation so much so that such efforts can be appropriately described as lacking in synergy (Ejumudo, 2013).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We have examined various development plans embarked by successive Nigerian governments since independence and identified the problems that militate against these plans as instrument of sustainable growth and development. The failure of National Development Plans in Nigeria is manifested in the crisis that besets Nigerian economy. All economic and social indicators have shown that our economy is in doldrums. Acute unemployment, widespread poverty, illiteracy, decayed social and physical infrastructure, technological backwardness, urban congestion, excessive debt burden, poor growth of agricultural production and high incidence of diseases are common features of Nigerian economy. Therefore, it is imperative to address all the problems that bedevil Nigerian Development Plans to enable it serve as appropriate instrument of national transformation. The political leaders and top bureaucrats should be disciplined to ensure that the objectives of national plans are realized. The developments plans will be worthless if the political executives and senior administrators are not committed to implement it sincerely. Many development plans in Nigeria have suffered in this respect. The objectives of National Development Plans can be achieved if the government, the private sector, civil society organizations, multi-national corporations, work as a team to ensure its success. The implementation of the suggested measures would enhance the efficacy of our development plans and ensure that they are viable instruments of sustainable development in Nigeria.

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