

---

## PUBLIC POLICIES/PROGRAMMES AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

<sup>1</sup>Ali Mohammed Attai, <sup>2</sup>Orokpo, Ogbole F.E & <sup>3</sup>Paul Salisu Ojonemi

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Department of Public Administration

Federal Polytechnic Idah, Kogi State

E-mail: [mohammedattaiali@yahoo.com](mailto:mohammedattaiali@yahoo.com), [orokpogbole@yahoo.com](mailto:orokpogbole@yahoo.com) & [salisunelson@yahoo.com](mailto:salisunelson@yahoo.com)

### ABSTRACT

Nigeria evidently has a history of national economic planning of policies and programmes which spans both the colonial and post-colonial periods as enunciated in this paper. There is however, no gain saying the fact that no country can attain any form of development without putting in place sound policies and programmes. It is on this premise that the paper established the nexus between government policies/programmes and national development. Thus, Nigeria must thrive to put in place sound policies and programmes if the country must attain the much needed national development towards becoming an economic giant by the year 2020. In the context of the foregoing, the paper recommends among others that; Policies and programmes must be a direct reflection of available human and material resources, cultural realities and political persuasions and also policies and programmes must be rooted in deep democratic norms of accountability, transparency and fiscal discipline because of the choking impact of corruption on policies and programmes in Nigeria over the years.

**Key words:** *Policies, Programmes, Development, National Development Plans*

### INTRODUCTION

In any political system, the need for the entrenchment of development is essential and inevitable. The attainment of this goals and objective is anchored on policies and programmes. It is this belief that clearly underscores the imperatives of government policies and programmes in achieving national development. On the basis of favourable statistics, there is no doubting the fact that Nigeria today is one of the less developed countries in the world despite the fact that successive governments in Nigeria between 1960 when the country dethrone colonialization to enthrone self government have put in place various policies and programmes to achieve national development. This paper therefore, seeks to explore the nexus between national development and government policies and programmes in Nigeria. Attempts will also be made to look at the various national development plans in Nigeria and the reasons responsible for the failure of these policies and programmes to engender the anticipated national development.

### Policies/Programmes: Conceptual Issues

Policy has assumed an interesting dimension in recent times that there seems not to be a generally accepted definition of the subject matter. Some scholars refer to public policy as government programme of action. Others defined it as whatever government chooses to do or not to do. Some sees public policy as what government actually do and not what the government intend to do. The conflict as regards to what public policy means shows that it has become an important area of study. According to Jenkins, quoted in Egonmwan (1991),

public policy is a set of interrelated decision by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specific situation where those decisions should in principle be within the power of those actors to achieve. Anderson (1975) on his own part defined policy a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern. To him, public policies are those policies developed by governmental bodies and officials. Public policies therefore stem from officials of the political system namely elders, paramount chief, executives, legislators, judges, administrators, councilors, and the like. These persons engage in the daily affairs of a political system and are recognized by most members of the system as having the responsibility for these matters. Egonmwan (1991) noted that public policy is sometimes referred to as a government programmed of action. It stands for various degrees of goal articulation and normative regulation of government activities, that is, what government intends to do or achieve and how it intend to do it.

Onah (2006) on the other hand viewed programmers as derivatives of National Development Plan (NDP). To him, public programme can be in the form of a project but the difference is that programme cannot be confined to a specific location like the construction of a dam, drainage or the construction of a hospital or health clinic. Public programme is wider and more general in scope. Examples of government programmers in Nigeria are National Programme on Immunization (NPI), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), National Transformation Agenda and many others. It is this understanding that shall guide us in this study. That is policy and programme will be used to mean the same thing.

### **Development: A definition**

The meaning of the concept, development has generated so much controversy that there is no generally accepted definition of the concept. The reason for the controversy is due to the fact that development has come to mean different thing to different scholars. The concept is one that is a heavily value loaded and its operational definition is a matter of what the writer cherishes as the goal or objective of the economy. The crises generated by this concept have made it more interesting, exciting and expansive. Some scholars as noted by Onah, (2006)), assumed that development means a high National income, accompanied by a market economy. To these scholars, development is seen in terms of the structure and growth of the national economy which is indicated by high per-capita income and the annual rate of growth in the national income. The idea of the meaning of development has come under serious attack based on the fact that development is more than per- capita income. To them development should be concerned with mankind. To this end, development is conceived as a state of human –well being. In the word of Rodney (1969) cited by Salami (2004) development is a many sided process which at the level of individual implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Todaro (1982) sees development as a "multi-dimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic and social system. This involves in

addition to improvement of income and output, radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes, customs and belief". Todaro's definition gives the meaning, which the concept of development assumes whenever it is discussed in relation to countries.

Dudley Seers (1979) succinctly define development as appreciable and uniform improvement in the general living standard of people within a nation to the extent of eliminating or significantly reducing poverty, unemployment and inequality. Seer's definition sees development as an exclusive national question. According to Seers, the questions to ask about a country's development are therefore: what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this is a period of development for the country concerned. However, the elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment demand global restructuring of relationship. Salami (2004) sees development as a constant process of transformations and it is a widely participated process intended to bring about social and material advancement, equality, freedom and other valued qualities for the people through their gaining greater control over their resources. Agbakoba (2003), posits that development is a derivative of a country's history, endowments, experience, aspiration, values and vision which underscores the necessity and urgency of improving the well-being of the people through their active participation. This is this definition that shall give vent to our discuss.

### **National Development Plans in Nigeria: An Appraisal**

The quest for development by every country in the world is what has given rise to national development. In Nigeria, the process of achieving this national development has been through the national development plans which started before the country got her independence in 1960. Conceptually speaking, national development planning is a process that entails setting long-range goals and priorities for the country in terms of what it wishes to be in relation to the society, formulating appropriate policies in terms of programmes and projects that need to be executed in order to reach these goals within a specified period of time and mobilizing requisite resources for their effective implementation. These means planning a nation's economy involves three activities in the process. Putting together a credible statement of national objectives and priorities, formulation of the right set of policies and strategies and an effective and efficient implementation of the plan agenda. Against the foregoing, one can assert that, national 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. Economic visions and programmes cannot be realized without looking at developmental issues holistically, which entails improvement in all human endeavours. National planning presupposes a formally predetermined rather than a sporadic action towards achieving specific developmental results. More importantly, it entails direction and control towards achieving plan targets. By and large, planning is the conscious process of selecting and developing the best course of action to accomplish a defined objective.

Nigeria can be said today to have a history of national development planning, an experience that span both the colonial and post-independence periods. The history of conscious planning for development in Nigeria can be traced to the colonial days. To be specific, it has its origin in 1946 when the colonial government introduced what it tagged "Ten Year Plan of Development and Welfare for Nigeria". This was under the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. Under this historic Development Plan, a total planned expenditure of an equivalent of ₦110 million for a period of ten years was earmarked for the period starting from April 1, 1946 to March 31, 1956 (Ogunjimi, 1997). Analyzing the focus of the ten-year Development Plan, Ayo (1998) observes that the plan focused on building a transport and communication system, while little provision was made for industrial development. He notes further that this first development plan was also selective in its focus on agriculture, as attention was concentrated on a limited range of cash crops, which include cocoa, palm products, cotton, groundnut and timber. An important conclusion which one can draw from the analysis given by Ayo is that the Colonial Development Plan for Nigeria was meant to serve the interest of the colonial masters rather than that of the colony.

This foreign-centered development plan, however, did not run its full term because, by 1950, the inappropriateness of charting development over a period as long as ten years in a country experiencing rapid structural changes had become evident. Consequently, a decision was taken to break the plan period into two five-year sub-periods and to formulate a new plan for the sub-period 1950-1956. However, the introduction of a federal system of government affected this revision as each of the regional governments became autonomous and adopted different economic policies. Adamolekun (1983) has attributed the plans failure to the limited financial resources that was then available, the serious weaknesses in the processes of plan formulation and implementation. The factor of non-consultation with Nigerians who were supposed to be the major beneficiaries and the fact that it was prepared by the generalist colonial administrators who lacked the technical skills required for meaningful planning and successful plan implementation. More succinctly Ayo (1988) argues that the programmes suffered from the non-specialized colonial administrators approach to development planning, the inadequacy of the planning machinery and the absence of clearly defined national objectives. Whatever their weaknesses, this era constitute the beginning of the practice of development planning in Nigeria (Okojie, 2000).

The first real national development plan which incorporated all the various government development programmes emerged with the National Development Plan 1962 – 68, two years after independence. The main actors here were still Britain under the close supervision of World Bank – IBRD. The plan was estimated to cost N2.4billion. The main goals of the plan were to raise the rate of economic growth and to increase the standard of living of the people who were to have an increasing control of the nation's economy. To achieve these goals, measures were to be taken to maintain an average growth rate of 4 percent of the Gross Domestic product. Investment of 15% of the GDP each year, develop a rapidly as possible opportunities in education, health and employment and to improve access for all citizens to these opportunities and to target a period of industrial take-off for Nigeria at 1980.

The character of the First Plan made it essentially a continuation of the colonial development policy in Nigeria, for the substance of the economic policy implicit in the plan did not differ significantly from the previous policy of the colonial masters. It was basically an export-oriented policy. The plan period was also characterized by a series of crisis ranging from electoral crisis, sectoral crisis e.g. western election crisis of 1962 – and later at the national level we had the civil war and Tiv riot at the local and other inter ethnic conflict. From the foregoing, therefore this plan had no enabling environment for success.

Though the full implementation of this development plan was however interrupted by two major political events, namely, the military intervention in 1966 and the 1967-70 civil war; consequently, the period of the plan was extended to March 31, 1970. These major interruptions notwithstanding, both the Federal Government and regional governments recorded a number of landmark achievements during the development plan period. During the crisis period, the Federal Government alone successfully executed projects like the Oil Refinery in Port Harcourt, the Paper Mill, the Sugar Mill and the Niger Dam (in Jebba and Bacita respectively), the Niger Bridge, and ports' extension, while it also constructed a number of trunk 'A' roads. It is interesting to note that it was also during this period that the first-generation Universities were established in Ibadan and Lagos by the Federal Government, Ahamdu Bello University by the Northern Nigerian Government, University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) by the Eastern Nigerian Government and the University of Ife (now known as the Obafemi Awolowo University) by the Western Nigerian Government.

T

he federal and regional governments were able to achieve this much in spite of the crisis because, during the period, the annual capital budgets operated within the development plan framework. They were employed as the main instrument of control and allocation of development resources (Ogunjimi, 1997). This was in itself made possible by the existence of a development plan which provided guidelines for meaningful and co-coordinated development during the plan period despite two political crises. The Nigerian civil war 1967 – 1970 disrupted the first national development plan. However, after the civil war the Gowon government decided to introduce the Second National Development Plan. This Second National Development Plan aimed to restore and rehabilitate economic activities adversely affected by the civil war, and to achieve as much development as the available resources would permit. The plan was estimated to cost the sum of N3.3billion. The objectives of the plan are as follows: A united strong and self reliant nation, a just and egalitarian society, a free and democratic society, a land full of bright opportunities. Specifically, the plan aimed to achieve a rate of growth of the economy of 6.6 percent that would lead to increased real income and ultimately to a doubling of real income per capita by 1985, thereby increasing the welfare of the people.

The oil boom of the era made it possible for the government to realize to a substantial level the targets of the plan in terms of economic investments. Like the First National Development Plan, the Second National Development Plan also recorded a number of major projects, which were successfully executed by both the federal and state governments. Such

projects included the successful construction of many federal roads; the successful take-off of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme; the introduction of federal scholarship and loan schemes for Nigerian students, etc. However, most of the social philosophy of the plan was not realized.

General Gowon also launched the Third National Development Plan on behalf of all governments in the country. The plan covered a five-year period from April 1975 to March 1980. Ayinla (1998) describes this plan as a watershed in the evolution of economic planning in Nigeria. It was a unique development plan because, apart from its huge initial investment of about ₦30 billion (which was later revised to ₦43.3 billion), extensive consultations with the private sector of the economy were made in the course of its preparation. The cardinal objectives of this plan were also part of its uniqueness. Such objectives included increase in per capital income during the plan period; more even distribution of income; reduction in the level of unemployment; diversification of the economy; balanced development; and indigenization of economic activities. The projected expenditure of the plan was based on expected oil revenue. However in the first year of the plan, earnings from oil fell by about ₦1 billion thus affecting its implementation. As if this was not enough, the serious inflation experienced at that period and the celebrated congestion at the country's port made the realization of the plan's objectives impossible.

The change of government in July, 1975 barely three months after the plan was launched dealt a further blow to the plans as the new governments (Murtala/Obasanjo) decided to review it. In particular, the change of government led to a reappraisal of some of the cardinal objectives as contained in the plan. Here, more emphasis was placed on those projects which were thought to have direct effects on the living standard of the common man. Sectors that were thus given priority included agriculture, water supply, housing and health (Olaniyi, 1998). The Fourth Plan came on stream in 1981 by the defunct administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. It was the first plan prepared by a civilian government since 1966 when the military first intervened in Nigeria's policies. One unique thing about the plan was that for the first time in Nigeria's history, local governments were allowed to make inputs as a separate tier of government. The plan was estimated to cost ₦82 billion.

The objectives of the plan among others include: Increase 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 under-employment, increase in the supply of skilled manpower, reduction of the dependence of the economy on a narrow range of activities, balanced development – that is the achievement of a balance in the development of the different sectors of the economy and the various geographical areas of the country, development of technology and increased productivity and, the promotion of a new national orientation conducive to greater discipline, better attitude to work and cleaner environment. The plan encountered source problems almost immediately. This resulted from the fall in world oil prices. Since the resources to be used in implementing the plan was to be realized from oil trade. The plan was reviewed in 1984 by the new military government in the light of

the prevailing circumstances then. The economy no doubt performed very poorly during this period which showed that the plan failed to achieve its set aims.

By 1986, it had become obvious that the National Development Plans had hit the rocks. The huge deficits of the third and fourth plans exacerbated the country's external debts situation, which stood at about \$22 billion. Thus, began the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which was basically a 'reform therapy' from the World Bank and International Monetary fund (IMF). SAP was only an economic emergency programme expected to last for two years. SAP underscored a shift from project-based to policy-based planning system, and emphasized a private-sector-led economy rather than the prevailing public sector-led philosophy that had inspired previous plans. SAP therefore, presented an opportunity for reevaluating the country's planning system as the fixed medium term planning system seems to have failed. With the Structural Adjustment Programme which was then projected to last for two years, the government also decided to stop the traditional 5 year planning programme for a 3 year Rolling Plan. SAP was however extended to provide the policy basis for the successive three year rolling plan which will be operated along a 15 – 20 year perspective plan and the annual budget. The estimated cost of the plan is N144.2 billion.

The objectives of SAP as noted by Obiajulu (2004:242) were:

- To restructure and diversify the productive base of the economy in order to reduce dependence on the oil sector and on imports.
- To achieve fiscal and balance of payments viability over the period.
- To lay the basis for a sustainable non-inflationary growth and;  
To reduce the dominance of unproductive investments in the public sector, improve that sectors efficiency and enhance the growth potential of the private sector.

The idea of rolling plan was also shelved in 1996 by General Sani Abacha for Vision 2010, which was launched on September 18, 1996. The plan was to herald socio-economic prosperity for the citizens by systematically improving the quality of life of Nigerians in fourteen years (Ogunjimi, 1997). According to Abacha, Vision 2010 was introduced because the "time is indeed ripe for us to have a definite vision of the type of society we want especially one that is economically prosperous, politically stable and socially harmonious. Accordingly the vision should provide a strategic insight into the direction in which the nation needs to move as well as a proper focus on the formation of the dream". The work of Vision 2010, a 250-member committee of private-sector representatives, government ministries, academics, journalists, traditional rulers, trade union leaders and foreign businessmen, among others, inaugurated by General Abacha on November 27, 1996, was similarly intended to move the country forward. The committee submitted its final report to General Abacha on September 30, 1997, recommending "large-scale deregulation of the Nigerian economy" among others. In other words, the medium term plans in Nigeria was suspended between 1985 and 1999. The dream of Vision 2010 unfortunately died with its originator on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1998 when the then Nigerian Maximum ruler General Sani Abacha died suddenly.

Democratic governance returned to Nigeria in May 1999 with the military handing over to a democratically elected government. The new administration started development planning in 1999 on a clean slate with the initiation of a four-year medium term plan document, the National Economic Direction (1999-2003). The plan had the primary object of pursuing a strong, virile and broad-based economy with adequate capacity to absorb externally generated shocks. While being a new plan document, the objectives and policy direction was not significantly different from that to which the country has followed since the introduction of SAP. According to Donli (2004):

“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 based on internal momentum for its growth.”

However, with the re-election of the Obasanjo administration in 2003, there was a rethink on the issue of development planning which gave birth to the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) - 2003-2007. This heralded the return to serious medium term planning in Nigeria. NEEDS is described as Nigeria’s plan for prosperity. It is a four-year medium term plan for the period 2003 to 2007. Though a federal government plan, the States and Local Governments were also expected to have their counterpart plans- the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and the Local Government Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS) respectively. It was a comprehensive plan that sought to include not only all levels of government towards moving in the same direction, but also, the organised private sector (OPS), the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the general public in cooperative activity in pursuit of developmental goals. NEEDS as a plan, contained all the envisaged policies and programmes of the federal government for the period 2003-2007 and far beyond and served as the fountain of the much touted Obasanjo’s reforms. NEEDS was not only a macro-economic plan document, but also a comprehensive vision, goals and principles of a new Nigeria that would be made possible through re-enacting core Nigerian values like respect for the elders, honesty and accountability, cooperation, industry, discipline, self-confidence and moral courage. The primary goal of making Nigeria a ‘promised land’ would be realized according to NEEDS through four key strategies of **wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value reorientation**. At the twilight of the Obasanjo administration in 2007, printed draft of NEEDS-2 which was expected to cover 2008-2011 was released into circulation. However, the NEEDS plan had only limited successes vis a vis its stated objectives especially as it related to deregulating the economy, reducing bureaucratic red-tapism in governance, creating of jobs, alleviating of poverty and providing welfare programmes and infrastructure such as water, improved health care, electricity and roads, etc (Moti, 2012).

With the handover to a new civilian administration of President Musa Yar’Adua’s in 2007 – although from the same party with a cardinal campaign slogan of policy continuity - NEEDS 1 and 2 were harmonized to give birth to another plan document christened “The Seven Point Agenda”. This can be referred to as the new Medium Term National Development Plan for



2008-2011. The policy thrusts of the seven point agenda are: Critical Infrastructure (Power, Energy and Transport); Land Reform; Human Capital Development (Health and Education); Law, Order and Security; Food Security and Agriculture; Wealth Creation and Niger Delta. With the death of President Musa Yar'Adua in 2010, his Vice Goodluck Jonathan who took over and promised to continue with the policies of his predecessor; however, with the jettisoning of the Seven-Point Agenda, the Goodluck administration introduced what is christened the 'Transformation Agenda'. Running alongside the Transformation Agenda is the Vision 20:2020

Before his death in 2010, late President Musa Yar'Adua launched Nigeria Vision 2020 in 1999, a throwback to late General Sani Abacha's Vision 2020 in 1996 that never saw the light of the day due to Abacha's sudden death. **NV20:2020** is an articulation of the long-term intent to launch Nigeria onto a path of sustained social and economic progress and accelerate the emergence of a truly prosperous and united Nigeria. Recognizing the enormous human and natural endowments of the nation, the blueprint is an expression of Nigeria's intent to improve the living standards of her citizens and place the country among the Top 20(T-20) economies in the world with a minimum GDP of \$900 billion and a per capita income of no less than \$4000 per annum.

The Vision Statement is that: *"By 2020, Nigeria will have a large, strong, diversified, sustainable and competitive economy that effectively harnesses the talents and energies of its people and responsibly exploits its natural endowments to guarantee a high standard of living and quality of life to its citizens".(Moti, 2012).*

From the foregoing, we can rightly assert that the problem of Nigeria is not planning but how well these plans are implemented to the benefit of the citizenry.

### **Policies/Programmes and National Development: The Nexus**

As observed by Onah (2006) public programmes are derivatives of National Development Plans. Programmes and policies are the cutting edge of development. They are the basic building blocks of development as quoted by Onah (2006) from Gutlinger (1981). Policies and programmes are coordinated series of actions resulting from decisions of political actors. For the purpose of achieving developmental objectives, as observed by Salami (2004) programmes and policies are the gateway to National Development and no nation can ever attain any level of development without putting in place some policies and programmes capable of galvanizing the desired development.

It is in realization of the importance of policies and programmes to national development that various governments in Nigeria since independence has come with one policy/programme or the other in other to bring development to the country. Among these policies and programmes are, the indigenization policy of the Murtala/Obasanjo regime, Structural Adjustment Programme of Babangida's regime, Vision 2010 of Abatcha's government and lately the various policies and programmes put in place by the them Obasanjo's government.

The policies and programmes includes: the monetization policy, Universal Basic Education Policy (UBE), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Privatization and Commercialization Policy, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), among others like the GoodLuck Jonathan's Transformation Agenda. The fundamental objectives of these policies/programmes as observed by Salami (2004), was the desire of government to create or rather achieve development. It is an irrefutable fact that the level of development of any nation is tie to the workability of her policies/ programmes. In this regard therefore, it is expedient to not note that there is a close relationship between national development and government policies/ programmes as noted by Egonmwan (1991). Public policy stands for various articulation and normative regulation of government activities.

### **Militating Factors against Effective Implementation of Government Policies/Programmes in Nigeria**

In Nigeria like most developing countries, the performance card for government policies/programmes so far can be said to be far from being satisfactory due to several factors which has hindered them from achieving their aims and objectives. Among these factors are;

- ✓ **Paucity of Data and reliable Statistics:** policy and programmes planning relies basically on data. Accurate data is a very scarce commodity in Nigeria and the success of any policy/programme depends on the reliability of underlying data such as popular try census, national income or output, available resources and so on. The most vivid illustration of the problem of data in Nigeria is the fact that since independence till date, nobody has been able to answer the simple question. "How many are we? A country that does not know it's population would definitely not be in a position to determine the other vital statistics necessary for planning like birth rate, death-rate, number of school age and other demographic changes in the population which are essential for planning. In Nigeria, a comprehensive national database is lacking and conflicting statistics abound, as a result of the lack of collaboration and coordination between various federal agencies involved in data collection. In such circumstance, the planning exercise will be reduce to a mere guesswork.
- ✓ **Inadequate Definition of Goals:** In developing countries including Nigeria, policies and programmes often lack clarity, internal consistency and compatibility with other programmed goals. This affects the chances for successful implementation of policies and programmes. Were multiple goals are pursued, implementation is also complicated. Therefore, inhibiting the workability of government development policies and programmes. Akin to this is the culture and values of most of policies and programmes, only abstract things are been planned for that do not give human values in return. E.g. FESTAC 77. The whole money spent on this programme could have been well channeled into another sector so as to enhance growth and development in the economy.
- ✓ **Financial constraints:** Financial constraints against planning in Nigeria arise from two factors. The first is shortfall in expected revenue. Nigeria is a mono-cultural economy with about 90% of her export earnings coming from crude oil. The vagaries

of the oil market, often affects the Nigerian economy profoundly. Whenever oil prices fall drastically the country's economy suffers and since the earnings would no longer be enough to finance some planned projects it will lead to distortion of the plan. These distortions are very minimal to the realization of the country set goals via development plans. The second fact is cost escalation due to inflation, under-estimation of project cost. Increase in scope and delays in designing and completion of project.

- ✓ **Weak Democratic values and lack of good governance:** This is rooted in public accountability, transparency and fiscal discipline on the part of public office holders who are the shop floor implementers of plans. It is now common knowledge that most of the budget allocations wind up at the end of the day being embezzled and misapplied. Because of the ranging effect of widespread corruption on the nation's corporate image and its choking impact on development plans, policies and programmes the present democratic government has considered it worthy to place the issue of corruption on the front burner of the national agenda (Akpa, 2008).
- ✓ **Frequent change in Government:** resulting from incessant military coups in the past and frequent changes in policies. That is, the long period of political instability and turmoil in the country led to policy inconsistencies caused by the fact that each succeeding government administration would undo and reject what it met. In this scenario, it was not uncommon to find a whole development plan truncated for reasons that are more personal than altruistic.
- ✓ **Plan indiscipline:** Though plans are made to accommodate little variations, various plans in Nigeria in the past were so much altered during the implementation stages to the extent of distorting the overall objectives. This lack of discipline in plan implementation has led to many abandoned projects which litter the country's landscape today. Most of these projects like the Ajaokuta steel complex that ought to play catalyst roles in the country's industrialization drive are still uncompleted, more than two decade after their projected completion dates.
- ✓ **Lack of mass commitment:** Development plans are often prepared without consulting the people, hence the public apathy towards its implementation. Since the plans are 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. This has been a big problem that has contributed to the failure of plans in Nigeria. Perhaps it was in order to solve this problem that made the defunct vision 2010 committee to embark on series of publicity programmes like seminars, conferences and public enlightenment campaigns.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Nigeria evidently has a history of national economic planning of policies and programmes which spans both the colonial and post-colonial periods as enunciated in this paper. There is however, no gain saying the fact that no country can attain any form of development without putting in place sound policies and programmes. It is on this premise that the paper

established the fact that there is a symbiotic relationship between government policies/programmes and national development. Thus, Nigeria must thrive to put in place sound policies and programmes if the country must attain the much needed national development fifty three years after independence.

In the context of the foregoing, the paper recommend among others that;

- ✓ Policies and programmes must be a direct reflection of available human and material resources, cultural realities and political persuasions.
- ✓ Policies and programmes must be rooted in deep democratic norms of accountability, transparency and fiscal discipline.
- ✓ There must be conducive environment via ensuring the availability of basic infrastructural facilities and utilities and national security.
- ✓ Proper monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes remains two key stages which occupy cardinal position in any plan process as noted by Onah (2006). These help to ascertain whether the programme/policy is on track and also to know the impact of such policies/programmes on the people.
- ✓ There must be a match between the choice of plan projects and real priorities of the economy so as to reduce the widespread abandoned and white elephant projects dotting all over our landscape.
- ✓ Corruption remains a very serious problem which had threatened every development policies and programmes in Nigeria. Thus, the anti-corruption agencies such as EFCC, ICPC, should be strengthened and the due process should be maintained.

## **REFERENCES**

- Agbakoba, J. C. A. (2003). *Philosophical Issues in Development*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co Ltd.
- Akpa, A. (2008). *Public Finance and Budgeting (Issues, imperatives and challenges from Nigerian Perspective)*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Anderson, J. E. (1975). *Public Policy Making*. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston.
- Egonmwan, J. A. (1991). *Public Policy Analysis: Concepts and Application*. Benin City: Resyin (Nig) Company.
- Ezeani, E. O. (2006). *Fundamentals of Public Administration*. Enugu: Zik Chucks Publishers.
- IGP Report (2003). *The Nigerian Nation: Towards a New Vision*.
- Ihonvbere, J. (1989). *The Political Economy of Crisis and Underdevelopment in Africa: Selected Works of Claude Ake*. Lagos: JAD Publishers.
- Moti, U. G. (2012). *Development Plans and Visions as a Strategy for Sustainable Development: The Experience Of Nigeria*. Department of Public Administration University of Abuja, Nigeria.
- NPC (2005). *National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)*. Lagos: B3 Communications Limited.
- Obikeze, O. S. & Anthony O. E. (2004). *Public Administration in Nigeria. (A Development Approach)*. Onitsha: Book Point.

- Okoli, F. C. (2003). *Administrative Theories and National Development: A Discourse on Relevance and Comments on the Nigerian Society*. Nsukka: Topmost Press and Consultancy.
- Onah, F.O. (2006). *Managing Public Programmes and Projects*. Nsukka: Great AP. Express Publishers Ltd.
- Otaha, I. J (2010). *Public Policy Analysis and Entrepreneurial Development: Issues, Opportunities and Challenges*. Abuja: Eriba Publishing Company.
- Phillips, D. (1997). *Vision 2010: Nigeria's Search for Prosperity and Advancement*. Ibadan: NISER Publication.
- Salami, Y. (2004). *An Introduction to Public Administration*. Lokoja: Arid Consulting.
- Sani, H. A. (1994). *Public Policy Analysis*. Okene: Desmond Tutu publishers.