VISION 20: 2020 REALITIES AND CHALLENGES
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Abstract
Development planning is a pre-requisite for achieving national development in the world. However, the Nigeria experience in development planning has been a failure. A recent effort initiated by the government in realizing national developmental goal in Nigeria is the Vision 20: 2020. Vision 2020 is expected to place Nigeria in the comity of one of the developed 20 economies in the world by the year 2020. It is just eleven years to the end of the time frame for realizing the vision. But the question is could this vision be realizable within this time frame? This question is imperative considering some of the developmental challenges in Nigeria. This paper examines some of these challenges and their implications in realizing Vision 20:2020. The paper identified the following challenges which could be an impediment to the realization of Vision 2020. They include: low development of science and technology, inadequate infrastructural facilities i.e. roads, power, low level of industrialization, lack of budget discipline, lack of virile and ineffective fiscal and monetary policy, lack of policy consistency and continuity, decay and ineffective educational sector, ineffective human resource development, high rate of corruption, high rate of poverty and unemployment and lack of good governance. The paper concludes that unless drastic and urgent measures are taken to overcome these challenges, the Vision20: 2020 will be a mere dream. The paper believes that the only way out is for the leaders to be more committed, honest, self disciplined, transparent and more accountable to the people. The present effort to bring about attitudinal change tagged, ‘Re-branding’ is appreciated. But the re-branding needs to start from the leadership.

Keywords: Development, vison 20:2020, planning, challenges, corruption

Introduction
Development Planning involves deliberate and conscious efforts on the part of the government to accelerate the process of economic and social development. Development Planning is more popular in developing countries because it was seen as the best strategy for transforming the economy and narrowing the gap between them and the advanced industrial countries.

In Nigeria, various developmental plans have been initiated to achieve National Developmental goals, but experiences had been that of a failure. Apart from the various developmental plans, other projections in Nigeria include, Vision 2000, Vision 2010, Vision 2015, were initiated to give hope to the common people. The Contemporary Longman Dictionary defined Vision from six perspectives, i.e., as a sight, an idea, a dream, a future plan, beauty and television. As a future plan, vision was defined as the knowledge and imagination that are purpose. The dictionary further defined 20-20 vision as a ‘perfect vision’

The problem in Nigeria is not that of initiating good and perfect ideas, but turning these ideas into concrete result is always lacking. The effective implementation of government policy constitutes one of the major impediments to national development in Nigeria. As the developed countries of the world are trying hard to consolidate on their achievements, developing nation like Nigeria is yet to find its feet. Various committees had been inaugurated towards the implementation and achievement of Vision 2020. According to Shamsudden (2009) the implementation of Vision 2020 marks the beginning of the translation of the nation’s aspirations into concrete strategies, targets and deliverables, as well as specific timelines and delineated responsibilities. However, considering some major needed in planning for the future with a clear developmental problems in Nigeria, would it be
possible to achieve the Vision 20: 2020 target? This question informs the basis of this paper.

Development planning in Nigeria

The 1945-1955 Development Plan marked the beginning of development planning in Nigeria. The ten year plan was aimed at assisting the British colonial government in disbursing the colonial development and welfare funds. The plan which was intended to last for ten years was however modified in 1951 due to the regionalization of the Nigeria federation into three regions. This was followed by the 1955-1960 Development Plan in which each region developed its own plan. These plans were bedeviled by implementation problems due to overlapping in the contents of the plans of the three regions which created conflicts and confusion. There was also the problem of inadequate funds and highly qualified and experienced professionals, technical and administrative personnel to effectively implement the plans. The plans were also limited in scope as they only concentrated on Public Sector expenditure.

With the attainment of independence in 1960, there were moves to develop and launch a truly national plan that would take care of the interest of all the three regions in Nigeria. Thus, in 1962, a six year (1962-1968) Development Plan was conceived. The plan was described as the first national development plan due to the fact that it was the first post-independence plan. The plan was also comprehensive as it took care of both the public and the private sector. Although each regional government had their separate plans, some attempts were made to integrate the programmes of the various governments in one plan document and within a framework of projections of the entire economy. However, one major limitation of the 1962-1968 Plan was the lack of uniformity in the organization of the plan. This was added to the structure of the country and the provisions of the independence constitution of 1960 which left the regions in a relatively power position viz-a-viz the central government. Due to this intergovernmental relation, the central government was too weak to impose its will on the politically powerful regions.

The Second National Development Plan (1970-1975) was aimed at reconstructing the war from 1966-1970. It was based on Five development objectives i.e. establishment of Nigeria as; a strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy, a just and egalitarian society, a land of pride and full opportunities for all citizens, a free and democratic society. The Third National Development Plan was from 1970-1980. In the plan, the five cardinal objectives of the Second Development Plan were modified and increased in per capital income, more even distribution of income, reduction in the level of unemployment, increase in the supply of high level manpower, diversification of the economy, balance development, and indigenization of economic activities.

In preparation for the advent of a new civilian regime in 1979, the federal government issued the guidelines for the Forth National Development Plan. However, this plan could not be launched until 1981. The major objectives of the plan included; increase in the real income of the average citizens, more even distribution of income among individuals and social-economic groups, reduction in the level of unemployment and under employment, increase in the supply off skilled manpower, reduction in the dependence of the economy in a narrow range of activities, balanced development of different sectors and geographical areas of the country, increased participation by citizens in the ownership of and management of productive enterprises, greater self-reliance development of technology and the production of a new national orientation conducive to greater discipline, better attitude to work and cleaner environment.

One common feature of the second, third and fourth development plans was that they were designed by Nigerian planners. However, most of the objectives of the plans other than some macro targets were not realized.

Apart from these plans, other road maps like Vision 2020, 2010, 2015 and now Vision 2020 were projections used by the government to give hope to the citizens in form of short, medium and long term plans to improve the welfare of the citizens. This implies that the nation has never been lacking in terms of initiating ideas towards enhancing the welfare of the citizens, what was lacking is the commitment to turn these ideas into concrete results. Based on the experiences with past plans, what is the hope of achieving Vision 2020? Would
it fade away as one of the good and elusive paper works in Nigeria? What are the major barriers or obstacles to achieving this vision? These are questions that need immediate answers, if Vision 20 20 is to be achievable.

**Vision20: 2020**

The Vision 2020 is an economic plan aim at making Nigeria one of the 20 most developed and largest economy in the world in the year 2020. The Vision was introduced in 2007 at the tail end of the Obasanjo regime. But no concrete action was taken towards actualizing the vision. The coming of Yar-Adua administration gave the Vision an impetus by making it a cardinal objective in achieving its Seven – Point Agenda.

A Steering Committee was inaugurated in April 2008 to come up with a working document that would serve as a guide in actualizing the Vision 2020. Other major stakeholders were also involved in articulating the Vision. The aim was to integrate the efforts of the state, LGAs, public and private partnership for accelerated development through the Vision. The various stakeholders were also involved in designing a working partnership for the articulation of the Vision. The Committee is expected to coordinate the various activities of the stakeholders in the effective delivery of the mandates.

The Vision 2020 document was submitted and approved for implementation by the Federal Executive Council on October 14, 2009. The document is expected to be implemented through three medium term development plans. The first plan will run from 2009-2012. The second will be from 2013-2016, while the third plan will be from 2017-2020. For now, a 60-member committee has been set-up to develop a Four year development plan towards achieving the first medium- term development plan. However, due to some developmental challenges in Nigeria Vision 20: 2020 remains a Herculean task. As far as the Public Service remains the implementing organ of government, implementation of the Vision 20: 2020 might go the way others went. This is because the Nigerian Public Service remains an obstacle to effective implementation of government policies and Programmes.

**Developmental challenges in Nigeria**

The following constitute major challenges that could impede the effective implement and achievement of Vision 20: 2020.

**Absence of science and technological development**

The development of science and technology is the pivotal through which the economic development of a nation can be achieved. The development of science and technology no doubt constitute the engine-room through which a nation could achieve any meaningful economic, political and social development. Despite the absence of any substantial natural resources, developed nations like Japan, Korea and China take pride in their technological development. In Nigeria, technological development is still very low and at a rudimentary stage. The country, despite its human resources capacity, financial and other resources is still a consumer of technological products, not a producer. One important fact to note is that developed economies of the world are not consumers of technology alone, they are also producers. Furthermore, the so-called technological transfer and adaptation have not been possible in Nigeria. The country cannot boast of any productive industry. Most of the industries in the country are mostly packaging industries. Even most of the existing industries had collapse. A vivid example is the textile industries. Other vital manufacturing industries in Nigeria had relocated to other neighboring countries due to some obvious reasons that are detrimental to their effective and efficient functioning in the country.

**Inadequate infrastructural facilities**

The collapse of infrastructural facilities and social services i.e. road, power, education, healthcare, railway etc constitute a major constraint to developmental efforts in Nigeria. These constraints, apart from discouraging any investment, whether local or foreign, make industrial development difficult. For instance, Nigeria Power generation is below 4000 mega bite with a 0.03kw per capital consumption. This is grossly inadequate for local and domestic consumption, not to talk of industrial usage. With the advent of the Yar Adua regime, he promised to declare a state of emergency in the power Sector. He also promised that before the end of the year 2009, Nigeria will generate about 10,
0000 power MV. It is disheartening to note that electricity generation in Nigeria as at the last quarter of 2009 was blow 4000 MV. Due to the epileptic and inadequate supply of electricity, industrial and other economic activities have been adversely affected. The transport sector in Nigeria has been ineffective. The roads are bad and are not adequately maintained. The roads in Nigeria have become a death trap considering the number of people who die daily due to accidents. The roads are also congested as they are either narrow or full of pot holes which make it difficult for vehicles especially the big Lorries to move effectively. The railway transport in Nigeria had totally collapse. The rail lines, trucks, locomotive engines and communication equipment have deteriorated and out modern. A visit to any of the major railway stations in Nigeria will gave vivid picture of the dilapidated nature of these rail facilities. Furthermore, the Inland Waterways are not fully in place. The dredging of River Niger and Benue is just on course. The aviation industry is yet to meet international standard as it is in a stage of comatose. The industrial nations of the world operated an efficient effective modern transport system. How possible is this in Nigeria even in the next two decades?

Decay and ineffective educational sector
Education constitutes an important tool for national development. As Jones (1975) rightly asserted “educational sector in any country particularly in developing country is very strategic as a proportion of government budgets, as a supplier of trained manpower, and as the main sector through which national identity and national goals and aspirations are given meaning and reality among people. However, in Nigeria, one of the most visible decay in social services is in the educational sector. This is evidenced in the devastating nature of the structure, obsolete and inadequate infrastructural facilities in public schools. Other features of the decayed educational sector include, the quality of products of the educational system, who are most time unemployable, the level of learning achievement, the desperation on the part of the students to succeed due to the over- emphasis on educational certificates, which is evidenced by the high rate and unabated incidences of exam malpractices and falsification of academic certificates, faulty recruitment which brought about the employment of unqualified teachers and coupled with the constant teachers strikes, poor funding and high rate of corruption in the educational sector, mismatched between augured skills and Labour market requirements among others. These numerous and insurmountable problems have rendered the educational sector ineffective and non-functional.

Human resources development
Manpower resources constitute an indispensable means of converting other resources to mankind’s use and benefit. How well a nation develops and employs her human resources skills is fundamental in deciding how much it could accomplish. Developed nations like Japan, Korea, Israel, and Italy attained high level of developmental despite the absence of mineral resources of any significant due to the caliber of human resources they have. The major capital stock of any industrially advanced country is not its physical equipment; it is the body of knowledge amassed from tested findings and discoveries of empirical science, and the capacity and training of its population to use this knowledge (Koontze, 1984).

In Nigeria, despite the astronomical growth in the number of educational institutions, especially at the tertiary level, the country is still lacking in terms of effective manpower. Although, the country is blessed with abundance human and material resources, its effective utilization for the development of the country had been the major problem. Questions have been asked why most of our intellectuals especially in the fields of medicine, sciences and technology ran to other developed countries to take jobs. The answer cannot be far from the above assertion.

Lack of policy consistency and continuity
The Vision 20: 2020 as earlier said is expected to be through three medium – term development plans. The first plan is from 2009-2012, the second and the third are from 2013-2016 and 2017-2020 respectively. The implication of the above plans is that NEEDS has been abandoned. The second stage of NEEDS, which was also a medium- term plan supposed to end in 2010. So the question remains, what has happened to NEEDS. It has become a common norm in Nigeria, where every regime that comes to power quickly abandoned policies and
programmes of its predecessor without recourse to their prospects and cost implications.

A cursory examination of past plans shows that there was Vision 2000 during Babagida regime, Abacha came with Vision 2010, there was NEEDS during Obasanjo regime, and it is now Seven-Point Agenda and now Vision 20: 2020 by Yar Adua administration. One common feature of the formal Visions was that they were not implemented to the end, as they were quickly abandon by each regime that comes to power. The question still remains that, what will be the faith of Vision 20:2020 when Yar Adua tenure is over probably in 2015? The problem of lack of policy continuity and consistency could hinder the effective implementation and achievement of Vision 20: 2020 unless there is a change of attitude.

**Lack of virile and effective fiscal and monetary policy**

Fiscal and Monetary policy constitutes an important instrument for influencing macroeconomic performance of a nation. The goal of macroeconomic policy is to achieve target levels of inflation, unemployment and economic growth. Fiscal and monetary policies are aimed at achieving these economic objectives. Fiscal policy defines the scope and structure of services to be financed by the government, adjust the distribution of income through taxes and maintain stability, reduce unemployment and maintain a balance of payment equilibrium by regulating the level of money and liquidity in the economy.

A cursory look at macroeconomic performance in Nigeria in the past one decade had been that of a failure. Table 1 in the appendix shows the macroeconomic indicators from 1919-2007 in Nigeria. The data in the table showed that GDP growth rate has been low and inflationary rate is high. Also the rate of poverty and unemployment was still on the high side. This is an indication that macroeconomic policies have not been achieved. With this trend, the goal of Vision 20: 2020 might not be realized.

**Lack of budget discipline**

Budget constitutes an important instrument for achieving the various developmental plans. Budget constitutes one of the instruments for achieving the fiscal policy of the government. The three medium term plans by which the Vision 20:2020 is to be achieved will be implemented through the annual government budgets. One major bane of budgeting in Nigeria is lack of budget discipline. Budgets in Nigeria are either not implemented as proposed or are haphazardly implemented. Recently, the government announced that the 2009 budget implementation has been extended to March, 2010. This was to ensure its full implementation (NTA, Network News).

Another aspect of the above problem is that of the budget profile. The annual budgets for the past decades have continued to record a high budget profile. The budget deficit in the year 2000 was #211 billion constituting 5.1 percent of the GDP. In the year 2001, it was #90.1 billion constituting 4.0 percent of the GDP. In 2002, the budget deficit increased to #301.4 billion. In 2005, budget deficit was #100 billion, this constitute 0.8 percent of GDP. The budget deficit for 2006 was #357 billion, equivalent to #2.4 percent of GDP. As at 2007, the deficit was #0.5 trillion representing 2.9 percent of the nations GDP (New Nigeria, 2006).
expenditure was #508,768,350,687.00 billion, while capital expenditure was #256,363,677,292.00.

in 2004, recurrent expenditure was 737 billion, while capital expenditure was 617 billion. As at 2006, capital expenditure was 569 billion, while recurrent expenditure was #789 billion. The implication of the above trend is that more than 50% of the annual budgets were used for administrative purposes. Nations aiming at economic development will spend a substantial amount of their annual budgets on capital projects.

With the above anomalies in the budget structure and implementation in Nigeria, realization of Vision 20: 2020 might be very difficult.

Monolithic nature of the economy

The overdependence on oil as the country’s major source of revenue constitutes another major constraint to achieving any meaningful developmental objective in Nigeria. Oil revenue constitutes more than 70% of the total revenue of Nigeria. Also the revenue constitutes about 80% of the total GDP. Agriculture which hitherto constitutes the main stream of the economy had since been neglected with the discovery of oil. Various governments in Nigeria have continued to pay lip service to the issue of diversifying the economy. The implication of this over dependence on oil is that whenever there is a fall in the oil price in the international market, the entire economy is adversely affected. Developed economies of the world are highly diversified.

High rate of poverty and unemployment

Poverty is no doubt very high in Nigeria. Although, considering the abundant resource and wealth in Nigeria only a Thomas’ will doubt the potentials of every Nigerian to be averagely rich. The federal government statistics indicates that the poverty incidence in Nigeria is 54% (FGN, 2005). Recent data from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) indicated that more than 70% of Nigerians are poor. All anti-poverty efforts of the government and Non governmental Agencies had failed to yield positive result. The standard of living of average Nigerian is deteriorating an evidence of the lack of basic necessity of life i.e. food, shelter and clothing and lack of assess to essential services like, education, health, good transportation. This is also evidence in the high rate of unemployment, inequality, and political denials.

One major factor that increases the high rate of poverty in Nigeria is the high rate of unemployment and underemployment. This cut across the urban and rural areas, and among the skilled and unskilled, educated and uneducated Nigerians. In the rural areas the major source of income is farming. The farming activities are done during the rainy season, thus during the dry season most of them remain without any tangible source of income. Among the educated ones, many graduates of
tertiary institutions are roaming the streets looking for any job to do. The secondary school leavers are losing out in the employment market due to the fact that their knowledge and skills are no longer required. Even those who are skilled in one form of trade or the other were not spared as the jobs available are inadequate to go round. In recent times, most of the manufacturing companies are closing down or relocating to other neighboring countries due to cost of production, problem of pricing, security competition, government policy among other reasons. These situations have no doubt aggravated the unemployment situation and invariably the incidence of poverty in the country.

**Lack of good governance and leadership**

There is that general agreement among observers of Nigerian politics; especially in recent times that one vital thing that is lacking in Nigeria right from independence is purposeful leadership that could chart a good direction for human and economic development. The major problem in Nigeria is that of a purposeful leadership and good governance. That was why despite all the abundant resources, it has become very difficult to utilize them for human progress and economic development. All the previous challenges can be overcome in an environment of good governance an purposeful leadership. Countries like Britain, France, Japan, Germany, and China have done it after the Second World War. Developing countries like Singapore, Brazil, India, Taiwan, and South Africa were able to overcome their developmental challenges within a period of ten years. But this was made possible because their leaders were purposeful, honest and committed to their idea national goals.

**Conclusion/recommendation**

Nigeria can overcome its developmental challenges if there is that political will on the part of the government to address these issues. The leaders should provide good governance and exemplary leadership which will serve as an environment conducive for any developmental goal or objective to be achieved. They should ensure corruption and greed and instead they should be honest, committed and accountable to the people. The recent “Rebranding Project” should start from the leaders. Unless there is a change of attitude starting from the leadership, nothing will work well in Nigeria. As asserted by Clinton on her recent visit to Nigeria, Nigeria is blessed country, but what were missing are honest and visionary leaders.

**References**

