IMPLICATION OF APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY AND MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT

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INTRODUCTION

National development in all ramifications is affected by pressures, many of which are exerted by globalization. These have practically heightened competition, enhanced rapid changes in products and processes and increased the effective utilization of creative skills to the realization of quality and high productivity. Though, Nigeria is caught in the web of developmental globalization, it leaders has successfully since attaining sovereignty, fail in all modesty to create conditions necessary to facilitate national development. Thus, there is a clear indication of the fact that several government and regimes (civilian and military) has at different occasions created, instituted and implemented one policy or the other geared towards national development and unity. This implies that there has being concerted effort by diverse government in Nigeria to implement different economic, political, social and religious policies that are reformatory in nature with the sole aim of making life comfortable in line with the precept of globalization.

Based on the desire to attune national development in Nigeria to global expectations, governments have come up with economic reforms of different nomenclature in content, context and principles. Fresh in mind are Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) privatization of government assets, deregulations in oil and communication sectors, National Economic Empowerment and Development Programmes (NEED) and the recent agitation for the removal of oil subsidies. Appraising these efforts, it could be subsumed that in content and context, they are of good intentions but over time it has been made practically clear that the government lack the political will to enforce its policies to the realization of its desired national developmental agenda. The reason for this among several others could be aligned to the misconduct and misunderstanding of the principled tenets of governance that could ensure the effective application of the principles of equity and management by objective as instrumental measures for viable national development which is the discourse of this chapter.

UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPMENT

The problem of development has occupied the attention of scholars, activists, politicians, government agents, development workers and international organization for many years with an increased tempo in the last decade. Even though there are different perspectives to development, there is a general consensus that development will lead to good change manifested in increased capacity of people to have control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology; and obtain physical necessities of life (food, clothing & shelter), employment, equality, participation in government, political and economic independence, adequate education, gender equality, sustainable development and peace. This is why some people have argued that the purpose of development is to improve people's lives by expanding their choices, freedom and dignity (Igbuzor, 2006).

This supposition brings to bear the fact that the problem of under development is so recurrent in Africa that the existence of many of its countries as viable national entities is subject to doubt. Thus, under development in Africa visibly serve as threats to cohesion of its diverse national. Africa does not have a monopoly of this problem, but it is fair to say that it has exhibited the most acute cases in contemporary history (The Inter-Africa Group, 1995). The persistent national discord and instability due mostly to lack of development in its right perspectives, renders meaningless the numerous attempts to find lasting solutions to the problems that pervade African development: poverty, pestilence, illiteracy, inadequate social infrastructure, poor health, unemployment and political disenfranchisement. All this and more make difficult the building of structures for solving these problems on solid ground (The Inter-Africa Group, 1995). Yet, the problem of poor national development has not received much attention in development projects executed by both national governments and international agencies working in most countries in Africa (Amienyi, 1998).

However, the reality of the world is that many countries are underdeveloped with precarious development indices. More than 1.2 billion people or about 20 percent of world population live and survive on less that US $1 per day. Wealth is concentrated in the hand of a few people. The UNDP in its 1998 report documented that the three richest people in the world have assets that exceed the combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the 48 least developed countries (Igbuzor, 2006). Nigeria, which was one of the richest 50 countries in the early 1970s, has retrogressed to become one of the 25 poorest countries at the threshold of the twenty first century. It is ironic that Nigeria is the sixth largest exporter of oil and at the same time host the third largest number of poor people after China and India. Statistics show that the incidence of poverty using the rate of US $1 per day increased from 28.1 percent in 1980 to 46.3 percent in 1985 and declined to 42.7 percent in 1992 but increased again to 65.6 percent in 1996. The incidence increased to 69.2 percent in 1997. The 2004 report by the national Planning Commission indicates that poverty has decreased to 54.4 percent. Nigeria fares very poorly in all development indices. The average annual percentage growth of GDP in Nigeria from 1990 -2000 was 2.4. This is very poor when compared to Ghana (4.3) and Egypt (4.6). Poverty in Nigeria is in the midst of plenty. Nigeria is among the 20 countries in the world with the widest gap between the rich and the poor. The Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or in some cases consumption expenditure) among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Gini index of zero represents perfect equality while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality. Nigeria has one of the highest Gini index in the world. The Gini index for Nigeria is 50.6. This compares poorly with other countries such as India (37.8), Jamaica (37.9), Mauritania (37.3) and Rwanda (28.9) (NEEDS, 2004).

Nigeria has had lost decades of development due to negative-to-slow growth and has been one of the weakest growing economies in the world on a per capita basis especially for the period 1981- 2000. The GDP grew by an average of 2.8 percent in the 1990s (leaving per capital growth rate at zero), but the average growth rate for the 1999-2003 period was about 3.6 percent (with a per capita growth rate of 0.8 percent per annum which is far lower than the 4.2 percent per capita growth rate needed to significantly reduce poverty). Relative to its own history and in comparison with other countries in Africa and Asia, especially Indonesia which is comparable to Nigeria in most respects, its level of economic development over the decades becomes more disappointing. With a GDP of about $45 billion in 2001, and a per capita income of about $300, Nigeria has become one of the poorest countries in the world. As at 2000, Nigeria had earned approximately $300 billion from oil exports since the mid 1970s, but its per capita income was 20% less than the 1975 level, and the country has become so heavily indebted (external and domestic debt amounts to about 70 percent of GDP) that it has serious difficulty servicing existing debt. There is great spatial and sectoral unevenness in terms of the share of GDP and growth performance: across regions and geopolitical zones of the country. The real sector is still dominated by the primary production sector-agriculture (41%) which is predominantly peasantry with low and declining productivity, and crude oil (13%) while the secondary sector especially manufacturing has been stagnating (about 5 - 7% of GDP) thereby making Nigeria one of the least industrialized countries in Africa (NEEDS, 2004).

The above features are legacies of decades of corruption and mismanagement especially during the military administrations. The old development models of import substitution industrialization (ISI) and statism--- whereby government assumed the dominant role as producer and controller in the economy--- produced perverse incentives, inefficiencies and waste. In the context of an oil producing economy (with rents from oil as easy source of government revenue), a culture of rent-seeking quickly developed. Government readily became an instrument for instant acquisition of wealth and therefore distorted the incentive to work and to create wealth in the private sector. With government as the major source of patronage and rent-seeking, the fight for public office became a matter of life and death. All these created an incentive framework that did not reward private enterprise, transparency and accountability. Frequent regime changes in governance and frequent changes in policy were defining features of the past. Military dictatorships also meant that weak institutions endured. In summary, inappropriate development frameworks, poor and frequently changing policies and programmes, lack of clear development vision and commitment to the Nigerian project (as well as a citizenry that acquiesced to the patronage culture) were the major causes of Nigeria's failed past culminating into a stagnated developmental drive, focus and purpose detrimental to its citizenry (NEEDS, 2004).

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT

Nigeria is strategically of unique significance to the realization of global peace and industrialization of Africa. A developed Nigeria could serve as a pragmatic focal point for developmental orientation for African Nations. Despite this vintage responsibility, Nigeria over the years has being struggling to surmount the dynamic problems and challenges of underdevelopment such that it finds it very difficult to harness its abundant human and natural resources to its betterment.

It is of note that for a nation to be adjourned developed, indices such as a robust socio-political and economic stability must be visible for all to see and experience. This is farfetched when it applies to Nigeria. In evaluating the developmental indices, Nigeria could be classed as a less developed nation with the over-riding evidence of poverty, urban over-population, rural stagnation, unemployment, insecurity, lack of qualitative education and growing inequalities. Despite the presence of this negative developmental phenomenon, successive government has failed to engineer meaningful development in spite of her huge resource endowment. This has greatly affected her quest to improved quality of life of her citizens. Poverty, unemployment and starvation still pervade the nook and cranny of the country (Tolu and Abe, 2011).

Nigeria seems to be the only country where virtually all notions and models of development have been experimented (Aremu, 2003). Two years after independence, the first National Development Plan policy was formulated between 1962 and 1968 with the objectives of development opportunities in health, education and employment and improving access to these opportunities, etc. This plan failed because fifty percent of resources needed to finance the plan was to come from external sources, and only fourteen percent of the external finance was received (Ogwumike, 1995). Collapse of the first Republic and the commencement of civil war also disrupted the plan. After the civil war in 1970, the second national development plan 1970 to 1974 was launched, the plan priorities were in agriculture, industry, transport, manpower, defence, electricity, communication and water supply and provision of social services (Ogwumike, 1995). The third plan, covering the period of 1975 to 1980 was considered more ambitious than the second plan. Emphasis was placed on rural development and efforts to revamp agricultural sector. The fourth plan 1981 to 1985 recognized the role of social services, health services, etc. The plan was aimed at bringing about improvement in the living conditions of the people. The specific objectives were: an increase in the real income of the average citizen, more even distribution of income among individuals and socio-economic groups, increased dependence on the country's material and human resources, a reduction in the level of unemployment and underemployment (Ogwumike, 1995).

During these periods, Nigeria's enormous oil wealth was not invested to build a viable industrial base for the country and for launching an agrarian revolution to liquidate mass poverty. For instance, the Green Revolution Programme that replaced Operation Feed the Nation failed to generate enough food for the masses. In the recent past, various strategies for development have also been tried with little or no result; among these were the structural adjustment programme (SAP), Vision 2010, national economic empowerment and development strategy (NEEDS), creation of development centres, etc. currently, seven point agenda of the present administration with vision 2020 without any clear methodological approach towards achieving them. It is obvious that the current results so far are not what development connotes (Tolu and Abe, 2011).

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY

There is a growing recognition of the importance of equity to development, and many governments, concern institutions and significant individuals recognizes equity as central to development. Equity comes from the idea of moral equality, that people should be treated as equals. Thinking about equity can help us decide how to distribute goods and services across society, holding the state responsible for its influence over how goods and services are distributed in a society, and using this influence to ensure fair treatment for all citizens (Anderson and Bird, 2006). Applying these ideas in Nigerian context involves hard choices, and embedding discussions of distributive justice into domestic, political and policy debates central to national development and centered on three areas of considerable consensus as thus:

Equal life chances: There should be no differences in outcomes based on factors for which people cannot be held responsible.

Equal concern for people's needs: Some goods and services are necessities, and should be distributed according solely to the level of need.

Meritocracy: Positions in society and rewards should reflect differences in effort and ability, based on fair competition.

Unfortunately, there is considerable inequity in Nigeria. People's access to and interaction with key institutions are shaped by power balances in the political, economic and social spheres, often leading to adverse incorporation and social exclusion. Also, patterns of inequality reinforce each other through intergenerational transmission and various formal and informal institutions, resulting in inequality between groups and geographical regions and chronic poverty passed between generations. The available evidence on the scale of the challenge confirms a worrying picture of life chances dependent on inherited circumstances and inequitable access to services, as well as rising income inequality which may further entrench disadvantage. As well as being a bad thing in itself, this inequity has a negative effect on growth, poverty reduction, social cohesion, development and voice (Harry, 2009). Harry (2009) further asserts that taking equity as a guiding principle brings into focus particular areas of policy. There are existing and emerging areas of policy, but they gain a new importance from an equity perspective. The five core priorities for addressing equity at the national level are:

Providing universal public services for fair treatment: This means prioritizing universal access to public services, such as health and education, and improving their quality by improving their delivery and strengthening underlying institutions. Infrastructure and law and order are also crucial. Services should be free at the point of delivery wherever possible, and where this is not possible, arrangements should be made to ensure that poor people are not excluded.

Targeted action for disadvantaged groups: Government expenditure should favour disadvantaged regions or groups. Quotas can support access to employment for specific excluded groups. Services targeted towards these groups are crucial (e.g. girls' education, normadic cattle hearers, almanjeries), as is providing assistance at key stages of development, such as early childhood. Empowering these groups is also vital, as well as strengthening organizations such as producer organizations, social movements and trade unions.

Social protection: Social protection should be provided to ensure that nobody drops below a minimum level of wellbeing, beyond which unmet need will create cycles of disadvantage. Options include: payments such as social health insurance or basic income grants; conditional transfers to promote human development; minimum wage policies; guaranteed government employment programmes; and labour market regulations to those in employment.

Redistribution: 'Downstream' action is required to improve equity by reducing inequality. Progressive taxation can help, if the additional fiscal space created is used to fund interventions that will support equity. Other priorities include lowering taxes on staple goods and applying taxes on property - inheritance taxes are key. Land reform is also crucial and redistribution may be required to provide the poor with productive assets.

Challenging embedded power imbalances: Power relations can cause and sustain inequity. Tackling harmful power relations takes time, and the empowerment of disadvantaged people must be combined with improving accountability mechanisms and reforming democratic institutions. It is important to build a vibrant civil society and an independent media. Addressing unhelpful attitudes and beliefs can also help foster social cohesion and build a pro-equity social contract.

Moreover, the empirical evidence indicates that equity is instrumentally central to long-term change, through its causal ties to efficiency, growth, poverty reduction and social cohesion. Putting equity at the heart of development programming could potentially have further benefits. As well as adding practical value, the symbolic, normative and political dimensions of the concept promote the recognition of key challenges, resonate with stakeholders North and South, foster empowerment and engagement and promote deeper, more sustainable developmental change (Barros, Ferreira, Vega and Saavedra, 2009).

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES OF MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVE

Management by objective could be thought of as a way of managing an enterprise, its people and resources and concerned with two fundamental and complementary tasks: a) setting and achieving performance objectives, b) improving performance in a planned, systematic way. By implication, MBO is an ex-ray of principle that helps negotiate clarity, define responsibility, emphasize accountability and hold in high esteem the contribution of the individual in the light of both the challenges and constraints of the environment within which he or she works. However, in governance, nationhood and development, MBO could contextually be of significant value as it could help realign people's commitment to development once understood in the context of setting performance goals and improving performance within the system (Mosley and Schütz, 2000).

Management by objectives (MBO) as a management system is gear towards stimulating continuous performance improvement. It puts emphasis on ex ante formulation of explicit operational objectives and ex post measurement of outputs and outcomes. The practical principles of MBO consist, in a nutshell, of target setting, decentralized operationalisation and implementation, monitoring of (ongoing and final) results, and practical conclusions based on a final performance assessment (Miranda and Lerner 1995).

Setting of goals, operational objectives and performance indicators: First step of the management cycle is the establishment of clear goals, ex ante operational objectives (targets) and the development of corresponding performance indicators that measure the extent to which these targets have been achieved. Goals define the main thrust and direction of its activities in order to fulfill the 'mission' in a medium term or long-term perspective, and are usually not quantified. By contrast objectives (or targets) lay down performance expectations or benchmarks in a given time frame and are usually quantitative. Performance indicators specify how achievement of these objectives is to be measured.

Decentralised implementation (delegation and policy discretion): Delegation and enhanced policy discretion - particularly at the implementation level - are also key features of MBO. In the model of management by objectives there is a low density of generally binding rules and procedures as steering instruments and operating units at subordinate levels of the organization (regional and local levels) should be free to allocate resources flexibly between budget items, to vary their policy mix, and even programme design features (e.g. eligibility requirements, implementation structures). In contrast to traditional bureaucratic administration, the emphasis is on outputs rather than on controlling inputs and adherence to rules.

Monitoring of performance targets: Management by objectives requires sophisticated management information systems that regularly measure the progress of indicators towards agreed objectives as a basis for assessing overall organizational performance and that of individual operating units. Besides providing the information for regular reviews, 'real-time' monitoring enables managers moreover to intervene immediately in case of under-performance (i.e. stronger deviations from the 'target track').

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The dynamics of national development could be attained if evolving developmental policies takes into consideration the need to project cardinal human related principles that could engineer commitment and concomitant zeal and patriotism of citizens towards national development. In view of this premise therefore, the issue of equity and management by objective should be given due attention in the policy discourse of national development if our goal of vision 20-20 is to be realized or better still remain a mirage as other visionary policies before now. Developmental reforms should be given human face. This implies that the interest of the generality of citizens should be taken into consideration before policies are initiated and implemented. The government should back developmental policies with political will so that it could be enforce with commitment, character and zeal by those given the responsibility for the betterment of the nation.

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