

Assessing Nigerian Media Assimilation in National Planning for Social Development

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Abstract

The focus of this research is to take a review of the National Development Plans of Nigerian government, 1975 to 1980 and articulate its concept of social development and the level in which the media has been assimilated in the implementation of the policies. It therefore, explores the concepts of media, development, development planning and social development in Nigeria. It in adopts the empirical research approach to evaluate the components, achievements and failures of the Third National Development plan with generalizations to cover subsequent development plans in Nigeria. A survey of the views of residents of Akwa Ibom State, South South, and Nigeria is taken as a unit of the entire country. Responses of 300 residents are drawn from the three senatorial districts and a statistical percentage of views on each of the research questions are assessed. Recommendations are that if development plans are to achieve expected ends, the policy makers must take adequate involvement of the media to disseminate the needed information, accept a private sector driven national development plan, and institute an entirely comprehensive development plan with regulating models under the control of experts, while future development plans require the setting up of meaningful goals.

Keywords: *Assessment, Assimilation, Development, Media, National, planning, Social.*

The Preamble:

The primary duty of governments all over the globe under the control of either the military or civilian, lie in the desire of making available changes in the living conditions of people.

In that regards countries, not minding the location tries to have set goals and objectives for the people under its rule and governance. The accomplishment of the objectives demand for calculated arrangements of deeds to direct the government. The chart mainly covers dreams, focal points and rules expected to direct largely the pathways of the government, the anticipated gains, the trend of state and personal undertakings as well as the speed of infrastructural and non-infrastructural development. Since the plan of developing a country is merely a guide it is usually subject to review to suit prevailing economic and social situations. The non-availability of any plan or design set for development can be make things difficult for implementation in countries.

Consequently, the significance of development chart or visualization for sustainable progress cannot be ruled out for social development of nations and countries.

1.1 Statement of the problem

1.2 Many countries are presently facing an economic emergency which obstruct the living circumstances of inhabitants, and heighten socio - political anxiety.

The continued suffering of people from economic crisis has led to the initiating of policies to reduce daily travails. There is hardly an era African nations including Nigeria has not embark on plans of development spread over a period of time to boost social and economic living. But the prevailing recession and economic down turn has caused many countries as well as Nigeria to either rely on other nations or from prominent nongovernmental organizations.

Looking at the condition of social and economic living in Nigeria, it means that the huge natural and human gifts are not properly channeled to make life reasonable to the people. The conditions which the people face raise doubts about effective implementation of plans by the government to bring growth and progress.

In all the respective attempts using short, medium, long term programmes, the underdevelopment status of the country has not been reversed, living more difficulties in homes. It therefore means that it is either the programmes are not done in consonant with the aspirations of the people or the people do not understand the programmes for due participation. These are questions the research work intends to unveil.

1.2 Objectives of the Paper

The aim of the research is,

- To unravel the main reason that development plans fail in Nigeria
- To know the outstanding means of communication that the Nigerian governments adopt in disseminating national development plans.
- To find out the perception of Nigerians about social development and national plan programmes through the media of information.

1.3 Research Questions of the study

- What is the major reason contributing to the failure of national development plans in Nigeria?
- What is the most outstanding means of communication that the Nigerian government adopts in disseminating national development plan?
- How do residents of Akwa Ibom state, South-South Nigeria perceive the concepts of social development through the media of information?

2.0 Review of Research Literature

This research literature review is approached through the clarification of the following concepts: (a) development, (b) development plan and (3) social development.

2.1 Development

In a simplest form, development is to attain progress, move ahead, be more matured, inclusive, ordered, and be changed. In the view point of Todaro (1982), “development is a multi-dimensional process involving the reorganization and the reorientation of entire economic and social systems”.

In his context, development means in addition, the upgrading of earnings and productivity, deep-seated changes in institutions, community and organizational structures including well liked thoughts, traditions and principles. To Ibezim (1999,) development goes beyond bodily and monetary advancement but also expansion in the opinionated and collective feature of countries. Development was, and is, by Moti (2010, p.4), “a national, systemic and planned programme of intervention for improvements”. Development as a concept spreads to cover the model of national growth to local community plans. Development plan should be implicit as a

procedure of making positive changes in the life of the people. Things are not always static in societies. While some plans bring improvements, others fail to bring advancements.

That is why development in the views of Ibezim (1999, p.40) is “aimed at explaining the processes of planning and implementation of the set goals and objectives”.

From all angles, development goal is the ability to improve the welfare of the population using purposeful, mindful, tactically calculated programmes.

To say without being immodest, development cannot take place haphazardly. It must be planned.

2.2 Development Planning

Marcellus (2008, p.23) posits that the idea of development has inference to planning. Consequently, Jhingan (2005) stated that in drawing up development plans, “the fundamentals depend on forming a purposeful track of the economy by a central authority for the purpose of achieving definite targets and objectives within a specified period of time”.

In that sense, planning is to boost the speed of economic development in resources pattern earnings, cutback and ventures. In all ways, progress scheduling is a means applied by many administrations and societies to set hopes, tasks and goals. Salawu (2000 P.4) indicates, “Development plans of any sort involve deliberate efforts on the part of government to speed up the process of social and economic development of a country” . In the light of the above postulations, plans of development require broad forecasting of policies and programmes covering social, human, political, environmental, technological interest.

2.3 Social Development

To understand the concept of social development is to find out what is social problem? Today, there are several happenings that affect the social living and the economic lives of Nigerians. These are lack of jobs, inadequate health care facilities scarcity of food, and sex for money, illegal carrying of weapons, brutality, insurgency, ethnicity, early marriages, inaccessibility to schools, bribery, divorce, single parenting and religious fanaticism. They have entered the society, imprisoned community attention, concern or fear. Suffice to mention that not all the problems that be taken as a social problem across all the societies. Except a problem poses a hazard to the well-being, continued existence, success it is not a social problem in a nation.

2.4 Development Planning Goals: A Global Perspective.

Diajomaoh (2008, p.10), trace national development planning goals to issues of communism in the Soviet Union, which were initiated to control production and cost. According to the author, the idea of this category of planning was to get together the monetary and material needs of the people and to attain an egalitarian society.

The World tends to turn around on the setting up of a task for development through cost effective formula, to gain macro-economic stability through deregulating of charges, foreign direct investments and the execution of the Millennium Development Goals, (MDGs), which highlight workers’ rights and enhance societal participation.

Munasigbe and Sheaffer (1995, p.17) said “Development require a steady course of adjustment, an ongoing idea expressing change, with three different aspects of life sustenance, confidence and freedom”. In the notion of the authors, life sustenance is all about basic needs, self-confidence consists of feelings of respect and liberty and freedom the self-liberation from desire, unawareness and meanness.

2.5 Development planning in Nigeria

Nigeria has never lacked behind in planning since the pre independence era.

2.5.1 The Pre Independence Era

The beginning of real preparation for improvement in Nigeria started before independence in 1946 with ten year plan of development and welfare for Nigeria. In the writings of Ogunjumi (1997, p.45) “ this was under the colonial development and welfare fund. Under this historic plan, a total expenditure of an equivalent of N110 million for a period of ten years was earmarked from April 1,1946 to March 31,1956”. Analyzing the focus of the ten year development plan, Ayo (1998,p. 56) observed, “the plan focused on the building of a transport and communication system while little provision was made for industrial development”. Ayo also noted that the plan served the interest of the Whites instead of the entire Nigerian society. This foreign centered development was not carried out completely. By 1950, the challenges of implementing development plans for a longer period of ten years became known to the policy makers of the country. In that regards, the ten year plan was divided into five year subs-periods. However, Okojie (2000, p.5) said, “the introduction of a Federal system of government in Nigeria affected this revision as each of the regional governments became autonomous and adopted a different economic plans”.

This era constituted the beginning of the practice of development planning in Nigeria”.

2.5.2 The Fixed Medium-Term Plans

The next phase of development plan began in 1975-1980. This is known as the Third National Development plan with N30 billion and later rose to N43.3 billion capital. According to the Federal Ministry of National Planning, The Third National development Plan was not like the previous one but it was seen as the fundamental in planning for development. The plan was all-inclusive to improve lives socially and economically.

The plan sheltered the public and private sectors of the economy with projects related to overall economic targets. Each segment of the Third national development plan had its own focus with far-reaching effects on the development. In spite of unexpected breaks, the Nigerian Federal government made signpost accomplishments. The federal government used the arrangement to achieve annual real growth rate of nine percent, and expanded on agriculture, heavy and petrochemical industries, infrastructure, housing and education. As at then, major agricultural policies and programmes to boost food production were the River Basin development Authority Schemes, the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme, the land Use Decree and the Commodity Board. Agricultural outputs in palm produce, cotton, groundnut, and cocoa caused exportations to rise meaningfully which made Nigeria to be recognized as a major World producer and exporter. In the area of industrial progress, steel plant was built at Aladja, Oshogbo and Ajaokuta; oil refineries at Warri and Kaduna respectively, and ports and airport complexes, increasingly contributed to the Gross Domestic Product. The adoption of foreign technical expertise and managerial acumen made industrialization generally focused on plant assemblage of cars, quality education and cultural promotions. Ayinla (1998, p.18) described the plan as “a turning- point in the development of economic planning in Nigeria”. According to him the cardinal objective of this plan was to: (a) Increase per capital income (b) even distribution of income (c) Reduce joblessness (d) Diversification of the economy; (e) Balanced development; (f) indigenization of economic activities.

The goals were remarkable, the accomplishments were affected negatively by the change in the leadership of the government in July 1975, three months after it was launched. The change brought an reassessment of some objectives with attention to projects claimed to have straight effects on the people. Olaniyi (1998, p.21) said “this plan marked a watershed in the history of National Development planning for several reasons”. Firstly, its sheer size was very large. It has been put roughly by Ayo (1988,p.34) to be almost times the size of the second national development plan. Secondly, it was handled by the Nigerian National Economic Advisory Council with wide discussion with other bodies and organs. This comprised government officials of various technicalities and backgrounds and representatives of various bodies such as private organizations, trade unions, chambers of commerce, manufacturers associations, agricultural associations and other professionals. The Third plan was supposed to be a blue-print for the industrial development of Nigeria (FRN 1975). The plan also classified the policy into three namely: fiscal policy, monetary policy and incomes policy. The fiscal policy was meant for the curtailment of imports and generation of government revenue, the monetary policy and the incomes policy were meant for the control of inflation and the reduction of income inequality respectively. In essence, according to Udoji (1975, p.3) the plan recognized the need for improvement in the lot of the rural people. However, Olubowale (2010, p.15) notes “these efforts were associated with income centered development pattern, short-term and lacked official confidence, not connected to the essential civil society and grassroots contributions. It failed to be sufficiently realizable. It was not symmetrical enough in scope and coverage to pursue the inclusive goals of social development with traditional planning efforts; it amounted to abysmal ends in themselves”. This means that the multifarious social problems of Nigeria were not entirely resolved from the implementation of the Third National development plan.

2.5.3 An Appraisal of the Third National Development Plan

Assessing Nigeria’s development plan performances require respond to some relevant questions. What has been the story of unemployment so far in Nigeria?. Has the country made any headway in the health care sector or in the improvement of the economy? These questions are here answered from the perspectives of what the third national development plan had intended to achieve.

2.5.3.1 Per Capita Income Assessment.

Among Nigerians the conditions of living has no positive story. To the majority of the population in Nigeria, the income level has been poor and gets poorer each day due to the failing standard of the local currency at the international Exchange market. The National Human Development Report, 2008-2009 indicated that, “inequality in Nigeria is on the peak in the World with 65 percent of the property in the hand of 20 percent of the population”. The United Nations has projected that the World population would climb to over 8 billion persons in the next three decades and a sizable portion of it will come from eight countries including Nigeria. Nigeria has a large collection of crops, from the agricultural production systems. The foremost foodstuffs produced are cereals, yams, cassava, legumes, fruits and vegetable which have significance in tackling food security. Yet, the top occurrence of malnutrition is established in sub Sahara Africa, with persistent hunger, barrenness and death rates. This development put serious pull on social development ability of people to get away from poverty and deal with difficulties.

2.5.3.2 Income Distribution:

There is inequality in the distribution of wealth just as it happens to power. A number of Nigerians struggle to take home an income. But those in the high class as chiefs, politicians, and high ranking civil servants amass wealth. Economic inequality has made children to die before the age of five, from several illnesses. Few Nigerians in the rural and urban centers have right to safe water supply, health care due to long distance from hospitals and high charges. Poverty is persistent as well-paying jobs are in short supply. Food is characteristically costly and accommodation is expensive, causing people to build in shanties. Dirt removal methods are archaic, leading to dirty streams, wells, gutters that cause the risk of communicable diseases.

2.5.3.3 Level of Unemployment:

Joblessness is a burning matter in Nigeria causing frustration. In the estimate of the World Bank, the number of unemployed Nigerians has risen to 80 percent of the total population. For example, in March 2014, 16 unemployed persons lost their lives in a stampede of over 500,000 anxious job-seekers to have space in 5,000 vacancies declared by the Nigerian Immigration Service. Joblessness has become a primary reason for misdemeanors among graduates. On yearly basis thousands graduates from tertiary institutions, but only very few are able to secure employment. Against the international recommendations of a sizeable part of budgets to go to education for relevant impacts, the Federal government expenditure on education has not been above 10 percent of the overall budgets. This abuse has caused a greater percentage of school age children to be still out of school.

2.5.3.4 Balance Development

Development has remained poor in Nigeria. This is because a greater number of the workers have no correct skills or education. Domestic manufacture of goods suffer in the country, overseas companies find it difficult to carry out production because of recurrent power shortages. Stealing and the misappropriation of monies set aside for industrialization has become a recurring matter. As far back as 2011, the World Bank has in its record that roads are not in good conditions. Similar issues of shortfall are noted in the water supply, environmental control, and healthcare and railway systems. The leaders of the Nigerian nation are expected to confront the problem in infrastructure by ensuring that the funding and cracking down on the stealing of public funds is checked. The coastal communities experience plenty of oil spills because of sabotage in the vandalizing of pipelines and flagrant disregard of responsibilities by crude oil exploring and firms. At most parts of Nigerian streets, it is common to find waste at locations that are close to homes. This improperly disposed trash, add to the increase of sickness.

2.5.3.5 Diversification of the Economy

The Nigerian government since independence has depended sole on the proceeds of crude oil exploration. Agriculture and the manufacturing of local goods keep suffering. Factories that attempt making diversification are not receiving enough patronage. The lots of people do not prefer to buy the goods made in Nigeria due to perceptions of poor quality. In the situation the Nigerian government devotes huge funds to the importation of goods for domestic and industrial needs.

2.5.3.6 Indigenization policy

This guiding principle of the indigenization plan was a clear rebellion against the British administrators and their business acquaintances in Nigeria. Etim (2014,p. 3) states that “it is one of the biggest mistakes that the policy makers made at that time, which turned out to be a greatest undoing as far as industrialization of the nation is concerned” . According to him, maybe the plan makers merely measure what they stood to get, but never gave any consideration to what the country stood to lose. From that time, the policy makers are still making alike mistakes even in the enacted Nigerian Content Acts of the oil and gas industry.

One of the chief errors in the indigenization plan was the effort to have forced economic relationships with other countries. Arising from the policy, the foreign companies decided to divert their technology, management expertise, funds, and connections.

3.0 Methodology

The research design taken was the survey method in which residents of Akwa Ibom state, SouthSouth, Nigeria were given questionnaire to pick options as answers. The population of the research work was the entire population of Akwa Ibom State at 3.92 million based on 2006 National population Commission Census figure. However, the sample was drawn using 100 residents from each of the three senatorial districts to arrive at 300 persons whose responses to questionnaire with ten different questions formed the basis of the analysis. The data from the responses were calculated in percentages to arrive at the findings per each of the objectives and research questions.

4.0 Data Presentation/ Analysis

Table 1: The major reason that development plans fail in Nigeria.

Reasons	Men	Women	Total	%
Manpower	19	11	30	10
Framework	43	30	73	24
Politics	21	2	23	8
Media Exclusion	102	72	174	58
Total	185	115	300	100

Table 1 shows that 19 men, 11 women mentioned manpower problems at 30 or 10 percent, lack of framework had 43 from men, 30 from women or 73 or 24 percent, political interest drew 21 from men,2 from women making 23 or 8 percent while media exclusion had 102 from men, 72 from women making 174 or 58 percent as reasons for the failure of national development plans.

Table 2: Medium of communication most Nigerians gather information about national planning for social development.

Medium	Men	Women	Total	%
Newspapers	87	36	123	41
Radio	39	6	45	15
Television	32	39	71	24
Interpersonal	28	33	61	20
Total	186	114	300	100

On the medium through which most Nigerians gather information about national planning for social development, newspapers had 87 men, 36 women or 123 at 41 percent, Radio attracted 39 men, 6 women to make 45 or 15 percent, Television had 32 men, 39 women at 71 or 24 percent and interpersonal 28 men, 33 women.

Table 3: The perception of Akwa Ibom State residents about national planning in social development of Nigeria.

Perception	Men	Women	Total	%
Very High	-	-	-	-
High	25	17	42	14
Average	60	31	91	30
Low	92	75	167	56
Total	177	123	300	100

The perception was answered using table 3 through Very high perception which had nil, High recoded 25 men, 17 women, to make 42 or 14 percent, Average, 60 men, 31 women making 91 or 30 percent and low 92 men, 75 women or 167 at 56 percent.

4.1 Discussion of Findings

4.1.1 Research Question 1:

What is the major reason contributing to the failure of national development plans in Nigeria?

From the data gathered in Table 1, it is noted that national planning policies failed in Nigeria due to the following factors: manpower, lack of framework, political interest and exclusion of the media. Data indicated that 30 or 10 percent of the 300 respondents agreed that lack of manpower contributed to the failure of national plans. Investigations show a big dependence on foreign personnel who were not familiar with the plan philosophy and thus gave the least commitment to the scheme.

Presently, the defective staffing process in the public service has weakened depressingly on the plan designs, appraisals, implementation, monitoring and evaluation since the arrangement call for stereotypes with limited opportunities to add value.

Equally, lack of policy framework affected development plans from the response of 73 persons or 24 percent of the 300 respondents.

Rather than creating the frame work of policies, the government took to the trend of creating of states and Local councils, with their separate problems to plan designs and implementation.

From the first three regions, the policy makers created 12 states and later increased it to 19 states. In that order, Nigeria now has 36 states and 774 Local government councils. Therefore it turns to be very complicated to have a integrated and convenient development policy. This caused actual trouble in balancing development goals across the country. This confirm the position of Udonquak (2015, p.23), that “although the third national development plan had superior goals, there were inconsistencies between the plans and actual implementation. The lapses are accountable for the high digit of discarded projects littering the landscape of Nigeria”.

In addition, ethnic interest caused poor implementation of plans. Out of more than five decades of nationhood, Nigeria was governed for 35 years by the military rulers mostly under the control of the North with frequent violent change of leadership. This came from the perception that a region without a leader in uniform cannot secure development. In the trend to draw projects home, each state or region desire to control the power against seeking ways of implementing

development plans. This was made difficult by the intervention of foreign powers in the governance of the country. This is in line with the works of Ekpeimo (2003, p. 13) “No deliberate attempt was made to tap into successes of previous plans”

Many years after, Nigeria has not been able to review itself, her principles, ideas and targets and accept that something was basically incorrect. Furthermore, responses of 174 or 58 percent showed that media exclusion made difficulties in development plans. In actual senses, development plans not are expected to be handed over to the people without seeking suggestions and contributions through meetings. The imposition move towards changing the attitude, awareness and participation of the people on issues of development has become a pattern in Nigeria. When consultations are made, they are limited to a few persons at the urban communities where there are partners, allies and political friends of the government. The policy makers look at themselves as persons selectively given the wisdom to offer the way out of all socio-economic problems without using appropriate means of communication effectively. Communication between government authority and the people involve keep failing as a result of communication gaps. The people do not know the direction of cooperating with the government in tackling social problems. Hence, funds, assistance, and donations meant for the development of communities as the bedrock of the society is getting to wrong hand. Government failed to direct communication networks to the masses by encouraging rural radio, television and newspaper stations for the people to have access to effective communication.

4.1.2 Research Question2

What is the most outstanding type of media that the Nigerian governments adopt in disseminating national development plan programmes to articulate social development in the country?

Using data in Table 2 it is clear that of the different media of communication, newspapers had the highest response of 124 or 41 percent, against Radio with 45 or 15 percent and Television at 71 or 24 percent and inter personal medium with 61 or 20 percent. The implication is that newspapers are read by the elites and not the masses which development programmes and policies are meant to serve. Generally, there is low level of education in Nigeria, so a lot of information about need to develop is passed from man to man which is the interpersonal means of communication. There are few television stations and there are no absolute community radio stations in the country. The television and radio stations are located in the urban centers serving the interest of the owners, sponsors and advertisers. More so there is poor electricity supply to power the televisions and radio appliances at homes. So the means through which information are disseminated on development are not for the peoples’ interest but that of the town dwellers and the elites at the expense of the medium which the majority of people are familiar. This contributes greatly to the failure of plans on development. The improper utilization of the appropriate medium of communication as shown by the research reemphasizes the postulations of Lagaerwey (1990, p.1) which states, “for any real development to happen, communication as a tool should be used appropriately for service, to bring an inner change of the mind of the people, to be willing to participate in matters that affect their lives.”

4.1.3 Research Question 3

How do residents of Akwa Ibom state in Nigeria perceive the concepts of social development through the media of information?

From the data in Table 3, the perception of Nigerians particularly those in Akwa Ibom State was rated based on the variables of Very High with no scores, High at 42 responses or 14 percent, Average 91 or 30 percent and low at 167 or 56 percent responses. The non response with scores on very High shows that people do not have the expected awareness about development plans. The low level response with 167 or 56 percent indicates that people without knowledge about development plans are many particularly among the women. The outcome of the research is in tandem with the position of Lagerwey (1990,p.2) that “there is an enormous gap between the aim which is good, and the people for whom it is intended as many people want involvement which is never possible”.

5.0 Conclusion

In all nations, it is important to state that planning to have a meaningful development is not a mean matter taking into consideration the complexity of the societies. The third national development plan of Nigeria between 1975 and 1980, came and gone with subsequent other plans but the mass of people are still living in scarcity, under pressure to provide for their family, losing loved ones to illnesses and unconfident of the future. In conclusion, it means that development policies are nothing to rely on in Nigeria. The situation calls for the reviewing of development plans that take care of all sections and interest. Such a development policy and plan has to consider the possibility of making it simple, measureable, attainable, realistic and timely for implementation. There ought to be visible changes in the health education, infrastructure, housing and agriculture. This will need a purposeful leadership with the objective to concentrate on the upgrading of welfare, value of life and common idea of tackling social problems. Development plans need not be inconsistently implemented as exemplified by the Nigerian government in the Third National Development Plan.

6.0 Recommendations

The following are recommend for implementation of nation development plans for social growth.

- (a) The National Development Plans should be made simple rather than being complex with media and private sector integration in the scheme of implementation.
- (b) The government should relook at the policy of privatization and concentrate on critical aspects of electricity supply, means of communication to sustain the skilled manpower.
- (c) Set realistic and achievable targets aspirations to achieving a Gross Domestic product growth rate without being over ambitious.
- (d) The policy makers have to understand and take in confidence the significance of the media institutions in building national values and protection of the economy.
- (e) The leadership of the country must embark on the diversification of the economy by shifting attention to crop growing, hospitality and tourism, natural resources exploration, sports and games education, to boost export-oriented production.
- (f) Authentic and enhanced stakeholders’ participation is needed at the subordinate level of government, using the organized private sectors, the non-governmental and community based organizations, specialized bodies, etc to ensure an acceptable plan.
- (g) Ensure that a reliable data foundation is set up at the local and state levels of the government, while also putting in place a healthy method of monitoring and appraising development policies

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