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Nigeria's Poverty Reduction Scheme: Spreading Herself Too Thin?

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Abstract. The Nigerian government expects to effectively pull 100 million Nigerians out of poverty by 2030. Without a doubt, the government was compelled to intervene because of the country's severe poverty, as seen by the large number of out-of-school children, gender-based difficulties, and the residents' pitiful socioeconomic realities. And, in order to get out of these mudslides, the government decided it was time to create a plan capable of resolving these concerns in less than a decade. However, tracing the Nigerian government's track record of developmental failure, misplaced priorities, hasty policy formulation, and poor policy implementation that have remained recurrent feral flaws in the system, the paper expresses a cynical view about the plan's realization; relying on historical accounts of vision failures and the country's economic realities, it sees the scheme as an overzealous project taken too far and submits that it will be nothing different from the failed visions of the past.

Keywords: Nigeria poverty reduction, scheme, hasty-policy, Nigeria

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Introduction

Since surpassing the Peoples Republic of India in 2018, Nigeria has proven to be a haven for the world's largest number of people living in extreme poverty. The failure of the economy to grow as a result of internal conflict (Boko Haram activities in the North, Militant's operations in the Niger Delta Region, and Farmers/Herders incessant clashes in the North-Central/South-West), corruption, over-dependence on crude oil, and unemployment/underemployment are the major reasons attributed to the alarming rate of poverty. Releasing a statistical data showing poverty dearth among Nigerians, the National Bureau of Statistics stated that a stunning 82.9 million Nigerians translating 4 out of 10 individuals in Nigeria have real per capita

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expenditures below 137,430 Naira (\$381.75) per year, an amount that is below the country's poverty line [1]. This figure represents 40.10 percent of the country's total population estimated to be 211, 400,708 by the World Bank in 2021 [2].

Intermittently in every society, there must be some problems... to solve these problems as they might exist at given point in time, the government are always seen formulating policies in response to them and with the objectives of growth, national development and well-being of the citizens [3. P. 60]. However, in what appears as an expression of seriousness, the Buhari administration constituted a National Steering Committee (NSC) to be chaired by the Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo on the implementation of the schema. Expectedly, the committee was inaugurated; machineries have been set in motion by the government towards making the birthed idea becoming a reality. As such, Federal ministries, departments, and agencies as well as states and local governments, development partners, civil society organizations and private sector actors have been identified to play prominent roles towards successful realization of the strategy. The early composition from the government is largely attributed to the dearth of poverty radiating the citizens' face, and thus requires genuine emergency reaction as against the traditional 'window dressing/palliative' measures, the common antidote at the Nigerian government disposal for every ensuing issue.

Apart from the window dressing/palliative trademark that Nigerian government is known for is the fact that the country is often on the front burner of agenda-setting. Shockingly, many of these projections are destined to produce no real answer to the tailored goals. Using the Millennium Development Goals MDGs as the basis for expressing pessimism [4] gave an account that, at the end of the MDGs plan, an assessment of the implementation in Nigeria revealed that the country had varied outcomes across the objectives, geographic areas, and gender groups—some significant progress was achieved on key indicators, while many goals and targets were not fulfilled. The trajectory narrative behind the flip-flopped MDGs programme and too numerous visions' summersault remains the attitude of never showing genuine sincerity, spirited concern and incisive commitment to make striking visions become a reality.

Expertly, the nation has been distinguished for flight of the imagination of visions that has to be taken with pint salt optimism because it will ever remain existent only in theoretical perspective as against the empirical compass. The Punch Newspaper publication of March 4, 2020 captured the proposed vision figment as nothing different but a replica of the failed vision 2020, "economic targets sound hollow when juxtaposed with the abject failure of the vision 2020 plan that once riveted the national attention. Pretty little was achieved under it... its ambition included massive infrastructure provision, millions of new jobs, export diversification, investment in human capital and effective governance [5]. Nigeria has been turned into a laboratory where at least every decade, a certain vision baptized with jaw-breaking slogans, axioms and phrases have to be hatched or incubated and the result of the vision meant to produce becomes ciphers immediately the vision gets launched or inaugurated.

In what appears to be another hollow decennia target, President Muhammadu Buhari once again threaded the path of erecting castle in the sky tradition, having made it an article of faith by superfluously promising the enlivening of 100 million Nigerians out of poverty within the space of 10 years. Making this public, the Minister of State, Budget and National Planning, Clem Agba, revealed that, “the government has already started collating stakeholders’ inputs to guide a new 10-year national development plan [5]. Conversely, hope seems to be fast-rising among the susceptible members of the public who do not take into cognizance that these styles of words are mere empty political statements adorned reassuringly, metaphorical tones meant to dowse tension and high reverberating mantras that innumerable lack substance coming from the Nigerian government.

Putting into perspective that ‘a leg moving in a shady motion; an eye also moving in a shady motion will see it’, this unsuccessful ploy to outsmart everyone accounted for a lot of questions left unanswered: What is the history of ideation like in Nigeria? Will the projection float above cynicism? What are the drawbacks to planning in Nigeria? These riddles and many more the paper seeks to interrogate.

Methodology

The qualitative method was used in the study to examine Nigeria’s Poverty Reduction Scheme. Nonetheless, the study’s research design was fastened on a descriptive study because the phenomenon under investigation would not have been properly explored and a complete description of the state of affairs achieved without the use of this method. As a result, the study obtained data from a secondary source for data collection. Hence, written materials from sources such as books, journals, magazines, periodicals, conference papers, mass media reports, and other materials were found useful to the study following careful examination. In addition, some internet resources related to the study were used, which animatedly added thrust to the study. Furthermore, content analysis was performed. The data analysis process began with organising data, sorting through it, looking for and finding patterns, presenting data, and deducing a valid conclusion.

Research Results and Discussion

Poverty Reduction Scheme and the Past History of Ideating in Nigeria

Disturbed by the prevailing poverty in the country, the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting presided over by the President, on April 28th, 2021 approved the schema to accelerate the reduction in poverty via economic growth, redistributive programmes and shared prosperity as highlighted in the proposal submitted by the Presidential Economic Advisory Council (PEAC) led by Dr. Doyin Salami and other members: Dr. Muhammad Sagagi (Vice-Chair); Prof. Ode Ojowu; Dr. Sheu Yahaya; Dr. Iyabo Masha; Prof. Chukwuma Soludo; Mr. Bismarck Rewane;

Dr. Mohammed Adaya Salisu (Secretary) Equally, the government averred that the schema is anchored on macroeconomic stabilization, industrialization, structural policies and institutional reforms, and redistributive policies and programmes that cater for social protection. Impressed by the template, the government released a statement expressing optimism that “the National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy (NPRGS) will support the Buhari administration’s goal of lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty within a decade [6].

Before the approval of the Presidential Economic Advisory Council (PEAC) proposal, as one of the members of the United Nations, where poverty is severely the lot of citizens, the Nigeria government had earlier rephrased the SDGs number one goal; ‘End poverty in all its forms everywhere’ and makes it a national policy that by the year 2030, 100 million Nigerians must have been invigorated out of poverty. The promise was first echoed in the President’s opening statement on implementation of the SDGs: A National Voluntary Review:

As a first major step towards national ownership, integration and implementation of the SDGs, I established a special office on the SDGs and had it placed right within the Presidency, this special office is headed by a Senior Special Assistant to the President on the SDGs (SSAP-SDGs) charged with the onerous responsibility for intergovernmental coordination; planning; partnership; resource mobilization, as well as ensuring seamless and robust strategic communications and advocacy around the SDGs agenda [7].

Though, the pledge seems assuring, but will it not be a usual case of typical prophecy coming out of a government turned soothsayer which have often characterized the previous failed visions in the country? Chronological-wise, history jog our memory that Nigeria has always been a country that has never for once been found wanting in daydreaming or ideating stunning visions, agendas and projections horned with mind-blowing phrases. But the problem has for eternity been that the soothing and promising transformational policies have always been in perpetual proposition configured to end like a car conveying its passengers to no destination. [8] Cleverly remarked that “Nigeria has been in a permanent state of socio-economic and political transition”. Casting the mind back to the pre-colonial era, the 1945–1955 Development Plan served as the starting point of agenda envisioning in the country. The decennia strategy was chiefly targeted at helping the British colonial administration in expediting development and expending welfare funds to the citizens with the ultimate goal of improving people’s livelihood across the three regions.

Following the regionalization of Nigeria in 1951, the development plan became obsolete and another agenda repealed the previous one. A move that despised the previous pattern saw a five-year Development Plan (1955–1960) emerged and a strategy that was developed by each region. However, these ideas were unable to stand the test of time because their ‘immature eagle’s feathers were not well trained’. These factors: narrowed in scope as it was fully centered on public sector expenditure; hurdle of inadequate funds; implementation challenges as there were duplication of contents and unavailability of content developers/qualified technocrats

who would have made the development plan work surely served as the ‘final straw that broke the camels’ back’.

Moving on to post-colonial Nigeria, the same trend continues to be the lot of the nation. Immediately the independence was gotten, there had been moves and strategies to fine-tune another development plan that would usher in the fast development of the three regions at a corresponding pace. Hence, in 1962, a six-year (1962–1968) development plan was birthed, launched and codenamed ‘the first national development plan’, the nickname was arrived at because it was the first development plan after independence. The agenda was comprehensively set out to accommodate both the public and private sectors. But again, the plan failed to address the target as it was brought to its knees as a result of uniformity in the organization of the ideas which was exposed and compounded by the configuration of the nation under the provisions of the independence constitution 1960 that places so much power in the hands of the regions as against the weak center.

The post-civil war era (1970s) saw Nigeria’s government under General Yakubu Gowon launched the Second National Development Plan. The main crux of the plan according to the forecast made by Gowon’s administration was to rapidly reconstruct and develop the country which was gravely ravaged by the country’s civil war that lasted 1966–1970. [9. P. 2] recounted that:

The dream dubbed the National Development Plan, which was supposed to rocket Nigeria from the abyss of underdevelopment to a high degree of development, was realized in the early 1970s. The plan had five primary development goals: a strong and self-sufficient nation, a large and dynamic economy, a just and egalitarian society, a place of pride and opportunity for residents, and a free and democratic society.

However, given that in the period of late 1970s and late 1990s, Nigeria experienced tripartite democratic dispensation, military regime and Interim National Government (ING). So also, the period jumbled with plethoric dreams beautifully baptized in appealing clichés and names. For instance, in 1979 and early 1980s under the civilian administration of President Shehu Shagari there were the trendy Economic Stabilization Acts and Austerity Measures meant to guide against financial recklessness and promote frugality of resources. The popular plan was put together to guarantee prudence as an answer to recklessness and also jumpstart the economy, which had been badly hit by the misfortunes in the oil market, and finally rescue the Nigerian nation from the lowest ebb of economy.

Structural Adjustment Programme SAP was implemented by General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida’s military dictatorship in the late 1980s and early 1990s. SAP was viewed as the greatest way to save the country’s declining economy from further disaster. Though a harsh action that severely impacted people’s livelihoods, it was viewed as a sacrifice that everyone had to pay and the only option available to the government at the time. The following measures were central to the program: the elimination of subsidies, the deregulation and depreciation of the local currency, tax hikes, privatization and commercialization, and the abolition of commodities boards. Rather from being a cure for economic development, it was a marketing

tactic that eventually crippled the economy by ensuring the extinction of many small enterprises, both domestic and international. Again, the measure choreographed the progressive poverty of a significant number of residents, as many of them were intended to earn lower emoluments or were outright fired from industries where they were eking out a living. In short, Babangida's Structural Adjustment Programme SAP was a miscalculation that afflicted the whole nation.

General Sanni Abacha upon successfully staging the coup that ousted the Interim National Government ING on 17 November 1993, put mechanism in the pipeline and subsequently launched the popular concept of "where we are, where we want to be and how to get there", into the Nigerian political firmament vicariously embedded in the popular Vision 2010 [10]. In a move that was seen as a sincere resolve to better the economic lot of the country geared towards making the nation an economic colossus by the year 2010, the head of state assembled a team of economic experts, technocrats, political elites and intellectually gifted individuals in the nation's capital city of Abuja to deliberate on how the objective of the project would be actualized at the projected year of 2010. However, the death of Sanni Abacha could not afford the vision to see the light of the day as the whole idea was made to suffer untimely demise just like its initiator. According to [11] the entire concept of Vision 2010 was consigned to the dustbin by the Obasanjo regime upon its emergence in 1999, and none of its protagonists could muster the audacity to ask him to pursue the product of the much-touted vision, and none of the experts could muster the intellectual courage to defend the principles and ideas in Vision 2010.

At the inauguration of the democratic administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 which signifies the commencement of the Fourth Republic, there were no traces of intention by the government to pursue a new set of vision at least for the first four years. However, in the second term, Obasanjo deemed it fit to launch a medium-term development target. Obasanjo selected a team of World Bank and International Monetary Fund-inspired professionals to form his economic team. The team developed the National Empowerment and Economic Development Approach, NEEDS, which its authors identified as a 'Policy Support Instrument' (PSI) authorized by the IMF as a medium-term poverty reduction strategy [9]. Disappointingly, the agenda too turned out to be another failed agenda in the series of abysmal visions in the country. It was further contended that, in the end, NEEDS proved to be a ghost initiative in the long sequence of deception politics that the Nigerian government enjoys playing with the populace NEEDS, as well as its variations SEEDS and LEEDS (for state and municipal governments), failed to meet any of its objectives [9].

Towards the hindmost part of the Obasanjo's second term, he came up with the vision 2020 which was an adaptation of the research conducted by economists at an American Investment Bank that projected Nigeria to become one of the first 20 economies in the world by the year 2020 and one of the members of the league of top 20 economies come year 2025. The econometric used by the researchers to express this optimism was the presence of abundant human and material resources in the country with the hope that such resources would be properly harnessed, managed

and channeled to set economic goals. Following the expiration of the target in December 2020, it is obvious that the vision was nothing but a botched agenda like its forerunners. In all the visions that have been conceptualized in the country, there is a common feature in all of them and the feature has to do with the fact that they were designed and planned by the Nigerian government at some varied point to address certain public concerns, but copiously lack commitment that could have seen the nation move from pits of retro-gradation to acme gradation. Therefore, the spelt-out objectives which most of the visions were designed to address were never actualized.

Again, a cavernous look at them all suggests that they were grand ploy deception set out to give vain hope to the citizens who unconsciously believed those policies as panaceas needed to boost their confidence, welfare and growth. This position was earlier emphasized by the duo as this, in most cases, the formation of such overly ambitious programs is born not of real or earnest endeavor to bring about speedy and dramatic growth, but just to inflate the ego of the political leaders... Such policies have as their primary goals the provision of free education or free health care to all people, or the ultimate eradication of poverty among citizens [3].

On the heels of vision 2020 failing to yield the required target at its expiration in December 2020, the nation was also badly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with the all-time low economic performance and the daredevil poverty steering Nigerians in the face, the government knowing full well that another decade has just begun so also the need to carve another decade-long agenda pretending to bring a halt to the pushy poverty condition of more than half of the total population of the country. According to a recent survey, “62 percent of Nigerians live on less than \$1.25 per day, 55 percent of the Nigerian population is under-nourished; Nigeria ranks 14.8 on Global Hunger Index (GHI) and Nigeria ranks 114 out the 193 nations on the Human Capital Index [10]. The foregoing informed the government to fine-tune the “2030 projection” that has at its heart the pledge to lift 100 million Nigerians out of extreme poverty in the next 10 years.

Going by the antecedences of vision failures, there is nothing to suggest that the current agenda is entirely novel and devoid of shared traits from its precursors which have all turned out to be an absolute letdown. Having opened the seemingly enshrouded fact, that 2030 poverty reduction schema is nothing but a re-embodiment of visions of the past, the question that pops up in the mind is that, is 2030 agenda not ending in the way of previous agendas? The answer to this question seems to be of more categorical affirmation than negation, and why this affirmation? The basis for this response may abound in the number of ensuing issues that the crux of analysis to be examined next.

Poverty Reduction Scheme and Recourse for Cynicism

Nigeria’s poverty reduction schema envisioned to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty has encountered cynical opinions right from the announcement of such intention by the government. For instance, Punch Editorial of March 4th, 2020,

argued that “as long as planning... does not tie expenditures to specific, realistic revenue sources, all plans will go the way of the bungled Vision 2020...Likewise, the ambition to free 100 million citizens from poverty over the next decade will be another mirage [5].

With barely six months into the commencement of the ‘Decade of Action Plan’, the government herself started expressing pessimism about meeting the target. It was evident in the opening address presented by President Muhammadu Buhari during Nigeria’s Integration of the SDGs into National Development Planning: A Second Voluntary National Review:

While modest progress has been achieved across the goals and indicators, challenges remain in the achievement of many of the goals. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic and its health and socio-economic impacts will slow down progress on the achievement of the SDGs in Nigeria. Nevertheless, as a government, we are committed to lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty by the year 2030 [12].

Judging the statement oozing out of the oasis’ mouth, it is unambiguous to decipher that there is no clearer indication of admitting defeat than the foregoing statement which of course was stylishly covered in a hope-assuring compartment to not let the hell loosed totally. All things being equal, some substantive factors may perfectly hinder the realization of the 2030 agenda in a decade. Such factors hang around economic, opacity in governance, the express gaps sandwiched between formulation and implementation and total misplacement of priority.

Gaps Sandwiched between Formulation and Implementation

Investigating from the perspective of fissure between formulation and implementation of policies in Nigeria over the years, it is a discernible reality that derives no information from a rocket scientist or a superfluous clairvoyant that this has been the major problem faced by past administrations in their quest to make dreams and projections become reality. However, the point is not to take away the grandeur and the extraordinary brilliance of Nigerians at scheming visions that would make any nation become the pace setter for others to try to be like. This dexterity is further exemplified in the fact that Nigerians are seen as the best policy formulators in most and if not all sectors in the world. With the endowed talent of projecting policies meant to better the lot of the people, the correlation or nexus between the formulation and implementation has always been the case of a car ran out of gas in transit and the passengers had to walk the country’s journey because it could not convey them to their destinations. It is essential to stress that the disappointment has never for once come from the art of fathoming principles (formulation), but eternally lies with the vertical implementation of policies becoming realities.

However, in an investigative bid to unravel what could have been responsible for implementation failure relentlessly bedeviling most agendas in Nigeria, Olaniyi identified the following four issues as the bane: Multiplicity of agencies involved in implementation; Lack of coordination or inadequate communication; Policy

or programme implemented by agencies whose interests do not coincide with those of the policymakers; Implementation of policy not seen as intention to action [13].

The gap between formulation and implementation has always been profoundly widened as a result of ‘*sui generis*’ policies (wide scope of policy). In other words, many of the envisioned agendas have failed to yield the desired result for which they were designed because they are structured and tailored at addressing too many things at a time or put differently, as a result of the over-ambitious nature of the agendas. Makinde rightly observed that the majority of these too ambitious and overly numerous agenda initiatives are not the result of real or earnest efforts to bring about speedy and dramatic growth, but rather of political leaders’ egos [14]. If this assertion about the political elites weeding powers abhors no negation, then, the 2030 agenda with the magnificently dressed mantra of “lifting of 100 million Nigerians” out of poverty in a decade is nothing but a grandiose deception and a pretentious ploy to fortify its non-resourcefulness and make it appear as unassumingly working towards changing their terrifying conditions.

Weak Economic Base

Another hindrance to vision realization in the country is the weak economic base to which the vision is structured around. According to the study conducted by (Atisophon et al. [15]) the inquiry focused on the financing gap of developing countries under the MDGs and concluded that weak financial flows represent the major constraint for countries with slow progress. Closely associated with the aforementioned is that the Nigerian economy is majorly weakened by the attendant population of unemployed and underemployed individuals who are redundant, unproductive and contribute nothing to the system. The stagnation of a large population of poor people is mostly intensified by factors like bad leadership, corruption, dependency on white-collar jobs and lack of entrepreneurial skills.

From a broader perspective, the economy has also not been helped as a result of dependency on oil as the only viable source of income generation. This has more or less subjected the country’s economy to a mono-economy where other sectors are relegated to play a second fiddle. For instance, Ajiboye & Awe asserted that “the reliance and dependency on oil by producing states and, by extension, the entire nation is evident to the degree that all other sectors have become almost nonexistent [16. P. 239]. The duo too avowed that, without equivocation, one might even assume from the aforementioned fact that, sans the profits from the sale of oil from the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), what Nigeria would usually be left with is a shambles in terms of account [16. P. 239].

The awful condition is auxiliary represented by the calculation that, “oil receipts still accounted for 65 percent of government’s revenue according to OPEC and World Bank put it at 70 percent, while manufacturing contributed a meager 9.5 percent to the Gross Domestic Product, infrastructure is horrible and external debt stood at \$26.94 billion by September 2019 and rising in geometric proportions [5]. The indices that the economy is so weak are manifested in the way we manage

our debts, borrow funds for consumption rather than accruing revenue through the export of goods and commodities.

There is no doubt that the economic strength of the country is often not put into proper perspective before government rolls out agendas and visions which primarily and largely the life-cord, sustainability and realization depend upon. According to the indices published by the Punch Editorial of March 4th, 2020, which was meant to clarify how plummeted the economy has become lately “poverty rate increased from 52 percent in 1999 to almost 70 percent by 2019 and the country became the world’s poverty capital by 2018, unemployment hit 23.1 percent in 2019, up from 7.7 percent in 1990 and 13.6 percent in 2008 [5]. Equally, the economy has been held back by these indices and enjoys no heydays as a result of uncertainties in terms of improvement and as of 2020, more than half of the country’s population is steadily striking by poverty, it does appear that only a government magic would lift the humongous number (100 million Nigerians) out of poverty in a decade.

Opacity in Governance

One factor that has also remained a monster and a clog in the wheel of agenda realization in Nigeria is opacity in governance. The penchant for obscurity and clarity of idea has been an ever-present theme in most and if not all of the various initiatives and policies since the country attained independence. The problem emanates from the fact that government visions and agendas over the years have been more of political statements lacking real intent and purpose than of intellectually founded ideas meant to solve real-life problems. In other words, the precursor visions and to a sizable extent, the reincarnated 2030 projection will fail to produce the desired result because they are far-off from the Nigerian realities, peculiarities plus the citizens’ tribulations and ambitions.

Therefore, there appears to be a lot of questions hanging on the government’s neck because the government’s technical ability and candor in terms of well-articulated goals does seem to be an issue as no appreciable results have been recorded ever since envisioning started in the country. For instance, vision 20:2020 designed to catapult Nigeria to the status of the first 25 biggest economies in the world never materialized due to the vagueness of the vision; instead, it was a case of the economy continuously experiencing doldrums during the period predicted. [9. P. 5] observed that:

The various MDG projects (2007 Water Project, 2008 Blue Health Facility projects, and 2009 Water Pipeline projects, all geared toward realizing the Vision 2020 that were originally slated to be executed at the various wards and local governments to have a direct impact on the lives of the people were poorly executed.

To this end, if the 2030 projection does not hit the snag that Vision 20:2020 and other visions did, the government must replace the opacity problem inherent in governance with clarity of purpose, demonstration of resolve in the face of every challenge the project may face on its way to realization, and transparency in all ramifications, not just as much as possible.

Lack of Continuity of Vision

Another poser to visions becoming reality in Nigeria is the difficulty of continuity. Ordinarily, government and governance should coexist in a continuum, with neither abhorring the other. However, in Nigeria, this concept has never received the attention it deserves. It is clear from successive governments and their patterns of mantra and ideology that whenever they take over the mantle of leadership from their predecessors, the encoded normative for them is to render mechanism, apparatus, and agenda insignificant, regardless of how vital such agenda is to the welfare of the citizens. For example, late President Umaru Musa Yar'adua's 7-Point Agenda is a famous example of vision suffering from continuity. Despite the fact that the former President, Goodluck Jonathan, was the Vice President who later succeeded the late Umaru Musa Yar'adua, as soon as he was sworn in as President on May 29, 2011, he embarked on a radical departure from the 7-point agenda and replaced it with his transformation, a 5-year development plan covering 2011–2015, which also coincides with the duration of his term in office. As a result, the new government declares its program, which becomes national policy, no matter how reasonably or badly envisioned. The continuity disaster is ascribed to elements such as ego, a change in administration, the influence of powerful persons, and godfathers. The nosedive of numerous visions as a result of strong personalities' influence over the country's weak institutions has also been a curse to the masses, because when a particular agenda begins to yield and a change of government coincides with the transformation in progress, such policies and agendas are more often than not brought to a halt, and the masses become the vanquished. According to the March 4th, 2020 Punch Editorial, 'they suffered from policy reversals as well, as succeeding governments, rather than seeing to their proper execution, devised new programs, primarily slogans that do not outlive the administrations that devised them... These included the Seven Point Agenda, Transformation Agenda, and Economic Growth and Recovery [5].

Reckoning with the various antecedents plummet agendas, plus the last vision 20: 2020 that failed to hurl the nation among the 25 biggest economies as was envisaged, one is therefore compelled to believe that Nigeria's poverty reduction schema to lift 100 million citizens out of poverty is one in the series of bogus agendas of the Nigerian government, whose realization has always been predestined in an optical illusion.

Government's Failure to Learn from the Past

Indeed, as the saying goes, 'once battered, twice shy'. That is, after making a mistake, one is continually warned not to do the same mistake again. The Nigerian government, on the other hand, has frequently rejected this dictum. Successive administrations have failed to learn anything from prior failed visions; an accompanying indicator that was obvious in all previous plans is that the same flaws continued to resonate in following plans. For example, the vision 20:2020, which aimed to place the country among the top 25 economies in the world,

failed miserably, and the ambition proved unattainable. Despite the fact that it was evident to the Nigerian government, they were unwilling or unconcerned to form a review committee to at least shed light on why the vision could not become a reality. Instead, it was their customary ‘haphazard decennia program’ that gave rise to the present ten-year development plan envisioned to eradicate poverty among residents with the theme motto of ‘lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty by the year 2030.’

On average, before the government would propose new agenda, the following questions should have been reviewed for legitimate responses. What went wrong with such visions, for example? Where did we get stuck? What can we take away? And how can we implement the modifications that have been highlighted? These should have served as the foundation for evaluation or appraisal in order to complete tasks appropriately before moving on to the next stage of agenda scheming.

Conclusion

It is often said and believed that ‘if one fails to plan, one has also planned to fail’. But, if this assertion is unarguably true, then the case of Nigeria planning relentlessly yet, failing in her developmental strides rightly challenged the irrefutability of this aphorism. Or could agenda escapades in Nigeria have better been represented with the phrase ‘Planning to fail’? By this we can decipher that to plan is trivial and to guide against failure becomes the major undertaking. And how do we guide against failure? The answer to this question seems embedded in the plan. Therefore, such posers like the effectiveness of the plan, articulation of the plan, unambiguousness of the plan, political will and commitment with the plan, firm implementation of the plan, constant monitoring of the plan and feedback of the plan must all be appreciated to have a far-reaching agenda that fulfills visualization.

Whilst envisioning as a mental picture of thought is a genuine scaffold for development and usual practice for many nations. The majority of the innovations in the world are harvest of dreams and imagination. However, its prepared reality goes a long way in its realization. The Nigerian project 2030 happens to be a plan that is not realizable owing to the reasons heralded in the preceding breakdown. Nevertheless, for a sensible envisioning, it must progress out of the citizens and personify their realities, idiosyncrasies and ambitions. Furthermore, it must be rooted in philosophical intellectualism as well as sincerity of intention. It is not feasible to realize the goal of lifting 100 million people out of poverty by 2030 in Nigeria, which is rife with massive corruption, infrastructural decay, and the persistent despondency of the majority of the Nigerian population, as well as widespread dissatisfaction and a lack of quality governance. Specifics on the ground give no indication of the possibility of achieving the lofty goals of Project 2030. Firmness in its pursuit is equivalent with wanting what is neither practicable nor workable; it is just eating more than the system can digest or spreading herself too thin.

Previously, this was an issue in most of the visions hatched in the country, and it has now been expanded to the Federal government's plan to elevate 100 million residents out of poverty in a decade. However, in order for the schema to avoid optical illusion, several fundamental difficulties must be abandoned. There must be a significant investment in infrastructure upgrades. It is alarming that Nigeria, with a population of over 211 million people, continues to rely largely on road transportation as the sole feasible mode of transportation for products and services. The modern transportation system is more than just a road. In essence, railway networks must be aggressively built to provide as an alternative enhancing the road system. Not only that, but Nigeria must spend extensively on electricity generation in order to power cottage businesses, which are primarily needed for job prospects, which are critical to raising 100 million Nigerians out of poverty.

Similarly, the problem of corruption must be tackled headlong. Corruption is a huge problem in Nigeria, and it has effectively pushed progress to the back burner. People must actively participate in the plan to the point that they regard the initiative as belonging to them. In addition, the government must have the political will to see the idea through to completion. As a result, if the Nigerian government is to envision a future developmental agenda, it must address all the veils and chaff that have flawed ensuing visions before going all out to have its whippersnapper slogan blown.

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Программа сокращения бедности в Нигерии: хватит ли ресурсов?

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Аннотация. Правительство Нигерии рассчитывает эффективно помочь 100 миллионам нигерийцев справиться с бедностью к 2030 году. Без сомнения, правительство было вынуждено вмешаться из-за крайней нищеты в стране, о чем свидетельствует большое количество детей, не посещающих школу, гендерные трудности и бедственное социально-экономическое положение жителей. С целью выбраться из этого бедственного положения правительство Нигерии разработало план, способный решить эти проблемы менее чем за десятилетие. Однако исследования указывают на целый ряд неудач нигерийского правительства в этой области, неуместных приоритетов, поспешных утверждений государственных политических программ и их неэффективной реализации. На основе анализа этого опыта и выявленных слабых мест политической и управленческой систем, в статье рассматривается перспектива реализации государственного плана по борьбе с бедностью. Проект рассматривается в контексте прозвучавших отчетов о неэффективности предыдущих программ и экономических реалий страны. На основании предпринятого анализа в статье строится предположение о чрезмерной и даже фанатичной попытке реализовать проект, который не опирался на опыт прошлых подобных проектов и может привести к тем же результатам.

Ключевые слова: сокращение бедности, Нигерия, государственный план, государственная политика

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