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THE PARADIGM FOR ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

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SUMMARY

Nigeria recently earned the inglorious status of containing the highest number of the poorest people in the world in the face of available human and material resources. This has made the need for a change in the development paradigm in Nigeria a categorical imperative. This study then identified an accelerated development paradigm anchored on 'the plantain theory of development' as the driver of accelerated development for Nigeria. The problem was addressed through the descriptive approach where secondary data were obtained from the available published materials for application and directive analysis. The study canvassed that all projects selected for development in Nigeria should be those, which have the quality of the plantain plant. It further proposed for the robust involvement of the state in the economy in spite of the current ideology of 'Washington Institutions' that the private sector

should be the drivers of the economy. It was revealed that the private sector in Nigeria are mostly SMEs hence Nigeria cannot ignite accelerated development through a weak private sector. The study further prescribed that projects selected for inclusion in the accelerated development plan, should have the nature of the plantain plant. A purposeful leadership driving the accelerated development plan as enunciated herein would lead to the development of Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The lack of development of the rural areas and economy in Nigeria since independence is legendary. Nigeria's enormous resource endowment, measured against its level of development seems a great paradox. The USAID Website described Nigeria as one of the largest economies in sub-Saharan Africa, but it must overcome significant development and governance challenges by adopting and apply the appropriate paradigm for accelerated development. According to the UNO, the country has one of the world's lowest per capita social spending levels resulting in 65 per cent of the 186 million citizens living in extreme poverty (USAID Website, 2018). This situation is complemented by negative instances of unwarranted displacement, destruction of agricultural farmland and lack of agricultural practices in many areas as a result of the constant security threats. These combined with the poor initiatives towards rural, urban and general economic

development has placed Nigeria in backward position in all the UN development scale.

Since 1990 when the UN Human Development Report (HDR), was launched, Nigeria has often found itself in the bottom rung of the scale. The global report used indices such as Human Development Index (HDI), Gender-related Development index, Gender Empowerment Measure, Human Poverty index, Gender Empowerment Measure and Human Poverty Index. The top 10 Mover countries highlighted in the 2010 Report out of 135 countries that improved most in HDI, did not include Nigeria. In all the reports Nigeria had fared poorly, none had Nigeria even in the 50th position. Nigeria had about 10 million out-of-school-children (UNICEF, 2007). This was before the Boko Haram insurgency and the incessant herdsmen attack on agricultural locations. All these put together have pushed Nigeria to overtake India as a nation with the highest number of the poorest people in the global scale. Nigeria had performed poorly all through the reports, making the need to review Nigeria's development paradigm a categorical imperative.

This study was conducted to explore a paradigm for accelerated development pattern for Nigeria, given the failure of all the past approaches to lead Nigeria out of the state of underdevelopment given that her contemporaries have been able to pass the level of providing basic existential amenities to its citizens. It

aimed at identifying the approach that would not only aid the development of the state but would also assist in achieving sustainable growth and development in the country. It thus, was an exploratory study which adopted 'plantain theory as a means of accelerated growth'.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was about the fact that Nigeria has not been able to define and adopt an appropriate paradigm of development for its growth, which would create public values and progress in Nigeria. Consequent upon this, Nigeria with so much resources, has just been crowned the nation with the largest concentration of the poorest people in the world, ahead of India. It has recently been reported, that Nigeria has 92.1 per cent of its population living under 5.5 dollar per day. India has 86.8 per cent and Ethiopia 84.7 per cent (World Bank, & Brookings Institute, 2018)

It is instructive to note that without an appropriate development paradigm, it would be impossible to guide the state towards achieving any of the United Nations defined development trajectory such as the Sustainable Development Growth (SDG). Therefore, the proposed paradigm considered suitable in the face of dwindling natural endowment would be 'the plantain theory of sustainable development' developed by Frank (2015).

Plantain is a common food plant dominant in Africa, Latin America and many parts of the world and serves as a staple food crop for some countries, some of which are; Uganda, Rwanda, Ghana, Cameroon and Nigeria. Its scientific name is '*Musa paradisiaca*'. *Musa* being the genus name and '*Paradisiaca*' being the species name. They are large perennial, herbaceous plants that consist of underground stem the 'corm', 'bulb', or rhizome with 200-500 fibrous roots from which it propagates by sprout or suckers. This is an illustration of sustainability. Thus, any policy pursued by the state, and investment meant for Sustainable Development, should have the capacity for reproduction like the sucker of '*Musa paradisiaca*', for sustainable human development.

It is lower in sugar and rich in protein contents (it is recommended as staple food for diabetic patients). Its process of fruit production is known as parthenocarpie that is, without cross-pollination. Genetically Plantains are triploid with three (3) sets of chromosomes which aid its propagation by suckers. It has the ability to regenerate from the corms and quickly recover when damaged by fire, flood and even wind (sustainability). Each corm (bulb, rhizome, and tuber) of the plantain is able to propagate between three and nine suckers. This is an illustration of sustainability. Thus, any policy pursued by the state, and investment meant for Sustainable Development, should be able to act like the sucker of '*Musa paradisiaca*' that is, augment itself, for sustainable human development (Frank, 2015).

The theory was meant to attempt to balance the development equation where there is a growing population which is faced with degrading environment, decreasing food index and finite natural resources.

The principal issues are that; (i) the current development approach in Nigeria is not sustainable because the major source of income is but expendable, that is, it would finish someday. (ii) It requires an educated and selfless leadership which would understand the economics of sustainable investments devoid of politics.

(iii) The investment decisions should select the sectors for investment which would reproduce itself in all conditions such as the plantain plant, example education. (iii) The investments would augment itself as capital does hence accelerated development would be attained within a specific period. (iv) The accelerated paradigm of development would require strong state institutions for public value creation. These should be created and operated on merit while being insulated from political interference.

The logic of the Plantain Theory: An Analysis

The logic of sustainable Development derivable from the nature of *Musa Paradisiaca* aka Plantain, stressed the situation in which a leader generate and execute social and economic development policies in which every project duly implemented serves as the plantain 'bulb' or 'rhizome' and sprout into several other positive indices in terms of human development which

are beneficial to the society. Thus; by fixing the stem in the environment (this imply leadership, which planned to keep hunger away), because it is perennial, it last, for a very long time before it could be destroyed. Each stem of Plantain has 200-500 fibrous roots, which feeds it from the soil, rich in protein and low in sugar. Plantain is a crop, which illustrates the concept of Sustainable Development. Anything done in the name of Sustainable Development should be enduring and exhibiting the property of a Plantain tree. As stated earlier, it withstands adverse conditions such as flood, wind and fire, and sprout to continue to feed its own with high protein content as diet.

Consequent upon this, a state in pursuit of accelerated and Sustainable Development should produce a leadership with along-term plan, which would serve as the Plantain roots. The Planning or 'forethought' for this purpose should generate the elements of Sustainable Development being human capital accumulation from educational institutions (well -funded, where its human inputs would not be selected by ascription- strong institutions). As the Plantain is planted, as the Government, it initiates a programme of intervention in all the sectors of the economy, which would extract resources and create a value-chain. This would lessen the pressure of extraction. The right technology would be supplied from the intervention in the educational sector (it is expected that, the first step, in the theoretical processes of sustainable development would supply this).

The leadership should have good governance as its ideology and practically manifest this by mobilizing everyone along this line. All these in the long run would lead to the attainment of 'Pareto Optimality'. Inequality would have been reduced considerably, while Self-reliance on the economy would be incrementally realised. In all these, the state should be the initial driver along with private concerns to show the way to go and continually supervised by occasional interventions. The domestic consumption would be centred on the goods produced locally in order to minimise the rate of foreign exchange flight through the excessive consumption of imported goods. There can be no accelerated development in Nigeria without the State playing significant role in the very globalised economy.

Framework of Analysis: Operculum Metaphor

The concept of operculum metaphor means that, all those who reside in the coastal zones or regions of most states within the littoral zones have one similar occupation. This is fishing. In the fishing community, when people go to the market to buy fresh fish, what they do often is to lift the mouth cover of the fish or open the operculum of the fish up by the side of the mouth, to check the colour of gill of the fish.

When the gill of the fish is reddish, it means the fish is still alive and the blood is circulating. However, when it turns grey, the fish is bad because the blood is no longer flowing through it. This is because the gills of the

still circulating and when grey, blood had stop to circulate and the fish is soft and may be bad.

The spectacular thing about the operculum is that it is located at the head. Thus, when the head of the fish is bad or rotten, it affects the entire body of the fish. Accordingly, when it becomes bad, it starts from the head and affects the entire body. When an organization is not effective, it requires a change in leadership.

Similarly, it is the leader who shows the way, which the country should go, and provide for the welfare of the entire citizens, and lead the country right. This is leadership. One of the conditions for accelerated development is to have the right leadership, that is, the type who is committed to the welfare of the entire citizens and not a section of it. One who is ready to share the pains and gains of development of the state equitably. The second condition is the capacity to identify and select investments projects which have long lifespan and which are able to augment itself like the plantain plant. Another is the clear definition of the goal of the accelerated development. It must be defined with clarity, while the capacity and commitment to the goals would have to be developed. In all things the society would be mobilized along the line of the goals set. The political economy of the state is the direct sector that should be subjected to this paradigm of development because it would direct all other sectors and invariably the entire economy.

Method of Study

The descriptive approach was employed in the study, whereby the three main components of the technique, observation, case study and survey were deployed to obtain and analyse data. In this regard, the observations reviewed secondary resources, the past and current approaches to development were observed. It revealed that; fiscal and monetary policies manipulations, exchange rate adjustments, balance of payments and income policies deficits. These never accelerated the economy. The National Development Plans, which spanned from the ten-year plan of development and welfare for Nigeria, (1962-68) colonial strategy of development, to the second National Development Plan 1970-74, 1975-80, the third, 1981-85 being the fourth, and 1986-89 as the fifth. It was further observed that Nigeria adopted Perspective Planning with a three (3) year Rolling Plan 1989-1990-1991 (Ayo, 1988). In all these attempts, the principles plantain theory was hardly adopted hence the projects were not sustainable. The case study, revealed that the observed strategies could not be sustained because of shortage of professional planners, financial constraints, plan indiscipline, paucity of data for planning, lack of mass commitment to the plan and inadequate public/private sector consultation (Ayo, 1988) among others. The survey component showed Nigerian preferred the return of National Development Plan as a guide to accelerated national development. The survey exposed the inadequacy of all previous and current approaches to development.

Accelerated Development Paradigm

The first step to accelerated development is to ensure that the state is robustly present in the economy, in order to stimulate the economy through investments in all the sectors along the line of 'the plantain theory'. This would involve selecting certain programmes in each sector for investment. The state is to drive the process because of the weak private sector, most of which are 'Small and Medium Enterprises'.

The State should drive the process because the money governments spend over the budget would eventually come back to the national treasury in the form of enhanced tax revenue collected from increasingly profitable businesses and a rising number of well-paid employees as the economy grows (Sodaro, 2008:354). This is against the backdrop that market forces and private enterprise alone are not enough to generate accelerated increase. The state would occasionally intervene in the market either as direct fiscal cost of subsidies or as forgone revenue in the form of implicit taxation. Thus, where taxes are collected through effective tax administration, the State inadvertently recovers its investments.

Project selection is yet another element of the accelerated development paradigm suggested herein. This is because only projects which have the nature of 'musaparisica'(plantain) that is

appropriate for accelerated development style. The state should go for projects which can augment itself through the years.

Another element of accelerated increase of production in the economy would be the sourcing of high calibre manpower into the public sector. In order to stem the dearth of competences in the public sector to manage the numerous State Enterprises (Parastatals) that are in existence and may be created, public sector salary of ministers/politicians/top civil servants are to be harmonised with that of top professional in order to recruit and retain the best brains in the public sector as it was done in Singapore by Lee Kuan Yew. This is one way of ensuring strong institutions rather strong men, in order to drive the public service sector.

The funding of science-based education and techniques is a *sine qua non* to fast-tracking development. This is required for scientific knowledge to manage the degraded environment, seed multiplication, create genetically modified seedlings towards food security, and redress the imbalance in the growing population on the one hand and decreasing food index on the other. It would be recalled that Nigeria has already become the world capital for very poor people. The corollary of this, is that education must be funded. The institutions must be monitored to ensure the proper use of the funds allocated to them.

An additional factor in the paradigm to activate accelerated development is the establishment of industries, which would process the various natural resources into finished goods in each sector of the national economy. Where this is done, the agriculture sector of the economy would have meaning thereof when the value chain is created to process raw materials into more value goods. This generate income into the economy and would reduce the population of those in the poverty class.

In all these, the project selected should assumed the form of '*musaparadisiaca*' (plantain) with an elaborate value-chains to generate public value creation at all levels. In so doing, the projects selected would ignite the 'Spinoff effect when deliberately sited in the rural area to generate development in the area from where it would cause changes in the environment which would aggregate into development (Frank 2015:3). The logic is that proper planning prevents poor performance which would build up development and prevent the creation of 'rural-urban migration' and aim at balance development. This is the ultimate aim of the application of the 'plantain theory of sustainable development' towards the accelerated growth of Nigeria.

The Challenges

The proposal to choose an accelerated development system for Nigeria in a globalized world cannot be without challenges but we must always find a way around these trials. First, it is imperative to note that

everything rises and falls on leadership. The greatest challenge is to have leaders who understand the essence and principles of the paradigm of accelerated increased development. Leadership is having the authority to evolve vision, take initiative and go ahead of others. For the society to fulfil its purpose in an orderly manner. Leadership has responsibility to ensure that vision is drawn out and pursued with a sense of purpose, discipline and commitment. The leadership being implied in this context are those leading the country and in corporations, organization, state or government who, are perceived as assuming the position of authority... can provide direction for other people. It is about giving direction, coordinating people and providing the motivation to move towards a destination. It is about steering people to provide the cooperation required in the pursuit and realizing of specific objectives from which they will equally benefit (Akinkuowo, 2013). Nigeria is, however, bereft of leaders with these qualities who could understand and follow the paradigm of accelerated development as discussed herein towards its development. The reform of the leadership recruitment system in politics would address this challenge.

The second challenge is that of seeing the private sector as the only driver of development to the detriment of strong State-Owned-Enterprises (SOEs) which often are the catalysts for public value creation. One author has posited that no matter the philosophy of development that the SOEs would remain an

enduring element in all polities hence they must not be discountenance, no matter the recommendations of donor institutions (Frank, 2018). Leadership initiative is required here, given the fact that the private sector is dominated by Small and Medium Size companies, many of which do not have the capacity to mobilize fiscal resources for investment on their own.

Industries are necessary for both upstream and downstream utilization of all crude products extracted from the earth and to produce others from the laboratories to meet the basic needs of the people and move them towards self-reliance. According to the Lagos Plan of Action, Nigeria like other African countries has been classified as non-industrial countries, in which industry accounts for less than 10 per cent of the Gross National Products (GNP). By these standards, in 1977 no African country was industrialised, 16 were in course of industrialisation, 21 were non-industrialised and the rest semi-industrialised (Lagos Plan of Action, 1982). This situation is compounded by the prevailing ideology of the Washington Consensus, which sees the private sector as the engine of growth in the economy, yet the bulk of the private sector is made up of mostly Small and Medium-Term Enterprises (SMEs). The demonstration of leadership and understanding of the issues would balance the pressure of globalization and national development, just as the High Performing Asian Economies (HPAEs) had done in

the past. The investments here should have the character of 'plantain' which would sprout out with advantages to the economy.

The other challenge is that of corruption which could therefore be termed 'arrested development'. This is because each time resources are corruptly taken away, then development is arrested from taking place. Deliberate effort must be made to arrest and prosecute those who are involved in this, to serve as deterrence to those who might be contemplating it. This is one way of freeing resources for accelerated development of the Nigeria state, and not doing so pretentiously. The current Auditor General of the Federation Report, indicate enormous loss of resources which are investible. Corruption must be reduced in the economy through the creation of strong institutions.

Finally, all projects selected for accelerated development of the state should be predicated on the basis of 'plantain theory' to generate 'Return on Investment' (ROI). All projects selected for funding in this context, must be one which would create 'a Pareto Optimality' improvement defined as a change in economic organization that makes everyone better off-or more precisely, that makes one or more members of society better off without making anyone worse off. It is in other words, a change, which produces gains that exceed in value the accompanying losses (Mishan, 1974). The point here is that projects selected should have multiplier effect

and catalyst public value creation. Citizens would then build on this to increase their salary and income, increase their spending and improve their savings. These challenges are surmountable because the high performing Asian economies did and Nigeria can do so too.

CONCLUSION

It is a truism that one cannot do the same thing all over and expect a different result. In order to drive the processes of development in Nigeria, there should be a paradigm shift. This is the only way to get Nigeria to try to pull the bulk of its citizens out of the poverty bracket which they have graduated into, and get close to the level of development of its contemporaries. The accelerated development approach to development base on the 'Plantain theory of Sustainable development', entails critical steps which must be taken as a nation because it's shameful that given all the human and material resources available, Nigeria has become the poverty capital of the world.

The simple details include; leadership, robust state investment in the economy, selection of projects for investment which have the character of '*musaparisica*' and of course the creation of strong institutions that are insulated from political interferences as well as deliberate reduction of corruption. In the globalized environment, the leader would balance the options and approaches available. The leadership recruitment system needs a redefinition, while governance must change along the

lines prescribed herein to obliterate the present conspiracy of the political elites to misgovern in their common interests, thereafter, every area of development should select projects and programmes with life as the '*musaparisica*', the plantain plant. This is to take Nigeria to the level of development its peers have attained especially in the Asiatic regions of the world and in Africa to be specific.

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