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BOOK REVIEW

Book Tittle:

Development Economics and Planning in Nigeria.

Author:

Ekpung G. Edame

Year of Publication:

2001

Reviewer:

Patrick Agbor Assibong

Publishers:

Harmony Books Benin City

Pages or size:

288

Price:

N800.00

The book <u>Development Economics and Planning in Nigeria which</u> could be rightly described as the author's best, contains extant and current materials on the highly explosive, vexing and contentious issues of planning, Development and Underdevelopment taking Nigeria as a point of departure.

The author's presentation is a trifurcation of the dialectics of development economics, underdevelopment, and planning in Nigeria which is geared towards

- Satisfying the revenous quest for knowledge by students in the social sciences and other disciplines in the Humanities;
- Providing valuable teaching or pedagogic materials for the lecturers in Europe and Nigeria and
- iii. Serving as a useful study guide to the non professional or layman in economics.

From the first page of the book under review, the author took-off by presenting the definitional polemics consisting what other scholars say about development and Rodney's definition from How Europe underdeveloped Africa was a ready example thus: "A many sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies, increase skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing" (Rodney, 1960)

The definitions of Todaro in his 1985 book <u>Economic Development for 3rd World Countries</u> and that of professor. Seers in his 1969 book though differed in style and content in that Todaro saw development as a "physical process and a state of mind" (Edame 2001.) and Seers as the "improvement in the living condition of the individual" the three scholars (Rodney, Todaro and Seers) all agree that the definition of Development goes beyond economic indicators, hence any attempt to restrict the definition of development to solely economic terms would be a mirage, dysfunctional, unempirical, futile and a wasted academic enterprise.

On the process of development planning, which is exhaustively treated in chapter 19, the author opined that we have to start by "...thinking before acting" here planning is a sin qua non or raison d'etre of development planning in any political, social and economic system in the

world. In satisfying the reader on the above particulars, the author added that for "a development plan to record any success at the evaluation stage, it must provide for "institution building" like DFRI, NDE and MAMSER which should be administered via the utilization of policy instruments like operation Feed the Nation (OFN), War Against Indiscipline (WAI), and the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP).

In trying to differentiate economic development from growth, Edame had this to say "Economic development ...is the process of growth in total real national income and of real per capita income of a developing country over a long period of time" (Edame, 2001, p. 17) while growth was seen as": change in the structure of the economy as a whole such as increase in industrial production vis-a'-vis the agricultural sector and a more equitable distribution of income within the confines of a given state, (emphasis mine).

Most of the 20 chapter book was devoted to the empirical analysis of the subsequeny growth models and economic theories: Harrod-Domar, Solow, Adam Smith, Mathus, Keynes, Steady-state growth, Rostow's stages of economic development and the Rosenstein-Rodan Big Push theory.

While the Harrod-Domar Model dwelt on the importance of three variables: Capital, savings and investment, Rosentein-Roden's theory recommended the injection of massive doses of capital in order for the LDCS to launch themselves into the orbit of development. Once this is consummated, the less Development Countries (LDCs) would become developed Countries (DCs).

The author's searchlight was focused on the principle of Balance and Unbalance growth with Professor Nurke's circle of poverty being identified as one of the reasons for the underdevelopment of the LDCs.

This was later striped naked by Hirschman, Singer and Kurihara who identified numerous loopholes in the theory whose "God-father" was Rosenstein-Rodan who introduced the theory around 1943. Hirschman and his henchmen saw the balanced growth doctrine as being wasteful and unrealistic.

Price policy, population growth, the role of Foreign Capital, that of Agriculture, the Central Bank, industry, the 1972 Indigenisation Decree and the Structural Adjustment Programmes in developing countries was exhaustively treated in that the author presented both side of the coin, i.e. facts first, followed by the limitations or criticisms.

CAVE THE DRAGON-CRITIQUE

While the author has provided the University students, development administrators and the general reader or layman up-to-date information, a good picture laced with examples and easy to use text book, he however neglected certain trajectories which would have given the book sharp teeth to bite the twin concepts of development and underdevelopment in LDCs.

From his preface, the author seem to shy at his responsibility as a scholar to "Chart a new course of development economics and planning theories" and he characteristically (Bourgeois scholars) crucified himself on the alter of orthodox scholarship thus "This book while <u>not charting a</u> new course of development economics and planning theories, attempts to present the main issues in orthodox theory in a form that is intelligent to the <u>Nigerian student</u>" (Edame, 2001 p.v) emphasis mine.

Methinks it is high-time African scholars start disseminating their own idiosyncratic academic materials to the western Universities for how long shall we continue to be brain washed by the London, Chicago, Frankfurt and Paris schools?

It was permissible for our forefathers to embrace the crusades and worship like Europeans, it is no longer permissible for us to accept social science literature without separating the grains from the chaffs. The author would have satisfied his audience more, if he had treated both the orthodox and Marxian genre equally. He took the Marxian theory with a pinch of salt while using one liberal scholar like singer to criticize another like Nurkse. (Edame, pp. 100-103). This cannot expose the limitations of both.

The book should not have been restricted to the Nigerian students (Edame P.V) because even Rostow's five stages of development which had been described by Fishlow writing in Leading Issues in Economic Development edited by Gerald M. Meier as "Empty stages" (Meier, 1984, pp. 94-100) was rammed into the heads of African university students since the publication of Rostow's book in 1960. Nor has the most celebrated western political economist-Adam Smith which the author treated with kid gloves empirically addressed the issues involved in development economics in his "Magnum opus" The Wealth of Nations. In it, the British hero used most of the pages comparing the lifestyle of an African king to that of a British factory worker and concluded that the British factory labourer, has a higher standard of living then an African king. Yet the book is serving like "The Bible" for orthodox political economist all over the world. The learned professor spent his time comparing uncomparable entities.

Despite the definitional polemics, the book failed to synthesize a working African definition which would have exposed Europe's undeveloped status because if development is defined as the ability to control nature using available resources to live a comfortable life, the so call LDCs would not see themselves as underdeveloped because before westernization of the African continent, (Palmer and Colton - The History of Modern Europe) Africans used what they could find and live happily. In this context, they were developed.

Again, if our traditional medicines were not developed, the imperialist would not have met any African alive for them to colonize.

When examining the philosophy of Development Administration, the contributions of one of the strongest pillars in that field (Professor Riggs) with his prismatic model was omitted.

Chapter one where the above issue was addressed, would have been properly focused if the author had revisited Rigg's contributions.

The policy instruments cited by the author like OFN, WAI and SAP had their limitations, which were not addressed in the analysis. We all know that President Obasanjo's OFN fell flat on its face, WAI started and ended with "the wretched of the Earth" (the peasants) while the SAP "had no human face" because it was introduced to serve the interest of a tiny fraction of the elites in Nigeria and their masters in Europe to the detriment of many Nigerians.

The use of per capita as an economic indicator is far becoming moribund because it is deceptive and heuristic for example Cameroon with a 1978 population of 10 million people pride herself of having one of the highest per capita in Africa after Gabon. The truth is that only 2% of the population earn salaries from gainful employment. This despicable and deceptive situation forced Professor Rene Dumont in his book <u>FALSE START IN AFRICA</u> to remark that in the Cameroon, the monthly salary of a civil Servant is higher than the yearly income of an average farmer. The Professor concluded thus "A Deputy Works (?) three months out of the year and receives 120,000 to 165,000. In six months of salary or 12 months of work, he earns the average peasant in thirty-six years, a whole life time of hard labour" (Domont 1962:8).

If economic development is measured from the per capita of the 2% population, then we are either deceiving ourselves or Europe is deceiving us as usual.

The Tanzanian, Lybian and Senegalese experience with development economics would have been given enough treatment which would have helped us to juxtapose their experience with Nigeria. Lybia and Tanzania have a lot to offer while the Senegalese experience which was hinged on negritude had nothing to show before Senghor left office.

On the treatment of dualism as peculiar to LDCs, the author ignored to point out that even the DCs have a melange of modernity and traditionalism because though the USA, Britain and France are DCs, they have slums in the cities and millions in the country side who are as poor if not worst than the African peasants.

The author struck a familiar cord where he rehearsed the bourgeoisie prescription which holds that population growth retards capital formation. China is highly populated, yet China is one of the developed countries in the world. China is an emerging super power after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The author would have cited the over 400 years of the human cargo leaving the shores of Africa for Europe and the unequal exchange which has shaped and directed Africa's relationship with Europe over the centuries as factors responsible for the poverty and underdevelopment of Nigeria and the African people. One would have also thought that the author would have recommended the policy of auto-centric generation of capital in Nigeria which Kaplinsky and Henley aptly recommended after their research on Kenyan capital formation/generation. Capital should come from within!

CONCLUSION

Despite the above negligible limitations, the author succeeded to carry his message across to readers in very clear and unambiguous language. For the Institute of Public Policy students, the general reader, the Department of Political Science, that of Economics, Law and all those in the social or policy sciences, Development Economics and Planning in Nigeria remains an authoritative volume which would be of inestimable worth.

For years-to come, this volume will be widely recognized as the outstanding work on Development Economics and Planning.