

Mass Participation and Involvement of Rural Dwellers in Rural Developmental Gaits: A Panacea for Rural Development in Nigeria and Other African Countries

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Abstract: The failure for the provision of rural development in Africa has been a source of worry to Africans and it is attributed to various factors such as the up-down approach of the elites theory; and the principal victims of these developments have been rural people without having any individual means of becoming literate, due to the level of illiteracy, making the young, and old, too poor or too ill because of the economic conditions in the rural setting. Within the conceptual framework, the study explains rural areas and rural development. Findings showed that rural dwellers can help increase output, create employment, increase revenue, enhance peace and reduce rural-urban migration among other things if the government follows the prescribed strategies in this paper. The paper provided highlights on the occupations of rural dwellers, strategies to be put in place to encourage mass participation and the implications of mass involvement in rural development; and tried to establish the correlation between mass participation and its effect on developing rural areas through good management and improving the standard of living in rural communities. The premise of the paper is that promoting the role of mass participation through the prescribe strategies will strengthen and empower the rural people to be among global players in the knowledge-based economy and also it will provide the opportunities for rural community development in general. This entails that the development of any rural community is a positive indicator for the development of a nation. We, therefore, recommend mass participation and involvement of rural dwellers in their community developmental gaits to bring about a stabilized development of the rural community and the nation in general. Also, rural areas should be developed and the government should create enabling environments for rural entrepreneurs through their policies and other assistance among others.

Keywords: Development, Rural Areas, Rural Dwellers, Rural or Community Development, Environments, Rural Entrepreneurs, Rural-Urban Migration, Mass Participation, Peace, Employment, Revenue, Government.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Rural communities in Africa constitute the larger percentage of the population whose information and developmental needs are not adequately met and consequently, they have not been able to productively participate in the development process and enjoy the benefits thereof (Chester, & Neelameghan, 2006). Equity and justice require that any programme for socio-economic development, whether general or in a specific sector, should cover and benefit all sections of the society, irrespective of race, caste, colour, religion, culture and other social, economic or political differences. For long, history has shown that rural communities' in Africa has suffered from enjoying any meaningful development due largely to policy implementation gap artificially created by the African governments and leaders. The consequence of these neglect resulted in rural communities lacking access to basic needs such as water, food, education, health care, sanitation, information and security, leading to low life expectancy and high infant mortality. These conditions are considered harsh by the majority of the rural dwellers, resulting into massive migration of the rural populace to urban areas in the search for greener pastures, and often in search of formal employment, as the only option for survival. However, the literacy level of these rural dwellers is quite low when compared with the general populace in the rural settlements.

In Nigeria, over the years objectives and strategies of rural and community development have been pronounced and set in place by policymakers and others concerned with the implementation of rural development was set up. But there still exists an enormous gap between policy formulation and implementation; with the low reality of the level of the development of the rural populace. For example, several approaches in terms of rural development planning and execution have been adopted; such as the creation of states, local government areas, mobilization of people for local participation in planning and implementation of community development projects in order to create new centres of development, and thus stem the drift from rural to urban areas, but what can be shown as developmental stride in the rural areas? A look at the National Development plans of Nigeria from 1975-1985 and other rural development programmes like Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution, River Basin Development Authorities, Agricultural Development Projects and many others, have all emphasized the need to tackle the problem of rural under-development, but nothing has really shown development. The government, therefore, have the impetus to bring the neglected rural areas into the mainstream of national development.

Development, therefore, is a necessary aspect of societies, and any society without development could be said to be static or still living in the Dark Age or better still living in the medieval era. Societies are and must be dynamic. The development has been defined by many writers with different views and Walter Rodney (1973) viewed development in human society as a many-sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being.

Abubakar, (1981) sees development as qualitative improvement in all societies and in all groups of individuals within societies. He asserts that all men must surely have enough goods in order to be men and to develop themselves.

Forest, (1981) stated that development is creating the condition for the realization of human personality. He noted that development has to be marked with a reduction in poverty, unemployment and inequality a high level of nutrition, high health standard, low infant mortality rate etc.

According to a radical scholar Rodney (1972:9), "development" is "a many-sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being".

Todaro (1977:96-98) says that: Development must, therefore, be conceived as a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structure, attitudes and institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty. In essence, development must represent the entire gamut of changes by which the entire social system turned to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within the system moves away from the conditions of life regarded as materially and spiritually "better".

The United Nations tries to distinguish the difference between Urban and Rural areas. United Nations argues that rural locality is a locality with less than 20,000 inhabitants. Conversely, urban area are areas with more than 20,000 inhabitants and that for census purposes, a locality should be defined as a distinct population cluster (also designated as inhabited place, populated centre, settlement and so forth) in which the inhabitants live in neighbouring sets of living quarters and that has a name or a locally recognized status. It thus includes fishing hamlets, mining camps, ranches, farms, market towns, villages, towns, cities and many other population clusters that meet the criteria specified above. Any departure from this definition should be explained in the census report as an aid to the interpretation of the data.

We must not confuse ourselves over definitions of Localities especially with the smallest civil divisions of a country. The smallest civil division may contain two or more localities whereas; some large cities or towns may contain two or more civil divisions, which should be considered as segments of a single locality rather than separate localities.

A large locality of a country (that is to say, a city or a town) is often part of an urban agglomeration, which comprises the city or town proper and also the suburban fringe or thickly settled territory lying outside, but adjacent to, its boundaries. The urban agglomeration is therefore not identical with the locality but is an additional geographical unit, which may include more than one locality. In some cases, a single large urban agglomeration may comprise several cities or towns and their suburban fringes. The components of such large agglomerations should be specified in the census results.

Also, the United Nations defines the rural area by its sizes, they classify rural locality as less than 20,000 (twenty thousand) inhabitants and, urban and metropolitan cities as more populated. This definition was given due to the rural-urban migration and also, due to the lack of job and support from the government.

This article argues that the ineffectiveness of the policies, programs and project of the government to develop rural areas has been attributed to the Elitist theory of top-bottom approach. The programs and policies of government overtime have not come from the masses, and this is as a result of lack of mass participation.

Development, therefore, cannot take place in any rural locality without the cooperation of the people. There must be a sense of belonging on the part of the rural dwellers or else and project sited in the rural area shall be regarded as a foreign intruder. The under-development of the rural areas breeds mass poverty and deprivation, social unrest and political instability as is common in Nigeria, the various uprisings like that of Boko Haram, ethnic militia, armed robberies, and kidnappings, among others.

2.0 Literature Review and Conceptual Issues

The following key concept - development, rural areas, and rural or community development will be defined as we progressed.

2.1 Development: The concept of development is very difficult to define because it is value loaded and is often equated with economic growth or economic development. The two concepts are often used interchangeably, but they do not mean the same thing. Economic development is an essential component of development, yet it is not the only one. There are many other aspects of development.

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This means that development involves the reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic and social system. This also involves, in addition, improvement of income and output, radical changes in institutions, social and administrative structures as well as popular attitudes, customs and beliefs.

The implication of these two definitions is that "development" goes beyond economic indicators. It is both a physical process and a state of mind. The institutions or structures like the construction of railways, schools, hospital etc. are an aspect of development. The second aspect of development is that people must change their attitudes for good.

Seers (1969:3) asked certain questions regarding the concept of development. He says that: The questions to ask about a country's development are, therefore, what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these problems has been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the resulting development even if per capita income increases. It, therefore, means that development per se cannot be tied to economic advancement only but a general improvement in the living conditions of the people over time.

Development is also aimed at improving the living conditions of the people through the effective management of both human and material resources. Gana (1986:2) noted that "Development concerns the capacity and creative capability of a people to effectively transform the natural resources of their environment into goods and services through the imaginative and practical application of their creative talent and productive

power". This implies that the people must be empowered to be able to meet their basic needs of food, housing, health, transport, education, employment, reduction in poverty level and increased per capita income among others. This is what is lacking in the rural areas of Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa where about eighty per cent of the population live in the rural areas and in abject poverty.

A critical examination of the definition of "development" by the scholars quoted above means that "development" must necessarily include, the reduction or elimination of poverty, illiteracy, disease, malnutrition, joblessness, etc. It is a programme which has the objective and strategy aimed at transforming the citizens in the rural areas from being the victims of poverty, ignorance and disease into a contented human beings, able to earn an income capable of sustaining a reasonable standard of living for themselves and their families and sketch out modalities that is capable of providing the basic necessities of life such as food, jobs, affordable and accessible health care, good roads, water, electricity and education, among many other things for the people, which one of such modalities is the mass participation of rural dwellers in rural development.

2.2 Rural Area: The word "rural" connotes a place with agricultural orientation; the houses are farmhouses, barns, sheds and other structures of similar purposes. In the opinion of Olisa et al (1992:65) population is the main characteristic that differentiates rural from urban areas, especially in the developing countries. An area in Nigeria with a population of 20,000 people and below is classified as a rural area. However, this is not adequate to explain a rural area. Therefore, Olisa et al (1992) went on to say that, the main features of rural areas are depression, degradation and deprivation. Many rural villages are immersed in poverty so palpable that the people are the embodiment of it. In most rural areas in Nigeria, basic infrastructure where they exist at all, are too inadequate for meaningful development. In other words, the rural areas lack virtually all the good things of life like roads, medical and health facilities, potable water, electricity etc. As pointed out above, these characteristics are not limited to rural areas alone but are also found in urban areas in Nigeria and other developing countries. The people are engaged in subsistence agriculture, and their standard of living is very low, earning only a few thousands of naira annually, they are poorly served by almost all public amenities and they generally show considerable resistance to change in any form.

2.3 Rural Development: The scope of the concept of rural or community development is very wide. It is a multi-dimensional process involving such areas as agriculture, health, education, provision of rural infrastructures, social life, political and economic issues, commerce and industry, among others, and their integration with the national economy. Since the scope of the concept is wide it is the pivot on which a sound national development in all its ramifications can effectively be achieved. It is, however often assumed by policy makers and development planners that rural development is synonymous with agriculture. To correct this impression, it is very necessary to carry out a detailed conceptualization of the concept by scholars in the field of rural development.

Since the concept of "rural development" is very wide in scope, it is necessary to write about an integrated approach to the definition of the concept. Thus, according to the United Nations (1976:4): The concept of integrated rural development implies that it is a composite or comprehensive programme for rural development in which all relevant sectors such as agriculture, education, housing, health and employment are conceived as interlinking elements in a system having horizontal as well as vertical linkage in operational and spatial terms.

2.4 Distinction of Urban and Rural Areas by United Nations

As national differences in the characteristics between urban and rural areas, so also the distinction between the urban and the rural population exist, and this difference is not yet pliable to a single definition that would be applicable to all countries or, even to the countries within a region. Where there are no regional definitions on the matter, countries must establish their own definitions in accordance with their own needs.

The traditional distinction between urban and rural areas within a country has been based on the assumption that urban areas, provides a different way of life and usually a higher standard of living than that of rural areas. In many industrialized countries, this distinction has become blurred and the principal difference between urban and rural areas in terms of the circumstances of living tends to be a matter of the degree of concentration of population. Although the differences between urban and rural ways of life and standards of living remain significant in developing countries, and rapid urbanization in these countries has created a great need for information related to different sizes of urban areas.

Although the traditional urban-rural dichotomy is still in vogue, and classification by size of the locality can usefully supplement the dichotomy or even replace it where the major concern is with characteristics related only to density along with the gamut from the most sparsely settled areas to the most densely built-up localities.

2.5 Strategies to Encourage Mass Participation For Rural and Community Development

From above definitions of development, it can be deduced that development is virtually changing the life of an individual, group of people or community in terms of social amenities, such as good health, good road network, adequate and clean water, education etc.

Due to the lack of a well-articulated programme in the development of rural areas, there have been many variations in the administration and performance of rural development programme in Nigeria and West African countries. Efforts made by successive Nigerian governments have been at its worse more of propaganda than implementation. The idea of governments ploughing back some revenue to the rural sector was from measures of large sales from plantation, cocoa, rubber, oil palm, subsidy approach which allows the public sector to provide infrastructure which indeed transport irrigation facilities etc and that of agrarian called reform knew as "Integrated Rural Development" (IRD). Agwunobi, (1993) stressed that great damage was inflicted by financial agencies that persuaded Nigeria into multi-sectorial development programme under the pretence of integrated rural development programme (IRD) even though Nigeria has often do not have a well-defined rural development strategy.

Rural development has not been centrally planned; and instead of institutionalizing rural development ministry, the federal government has rationed the development programmes on several ministries and departments at both federal and state levels. The crucial role of the local government system as a link between the government and the rural people remains unrealizable. These lapses have prompted a continued search for a new strategy for rural development in Nigeria (Okeh, 2010).

Participation which has become an article of faith is a fundamental principle for any successful project or programme and the single most important key to improving the livelihoods of the word "poor" has not been highlighted and encouraged at a high level. It has been a fiction and paper participation rather than functional participation in rural development programmes. Participation implies the involvement of a broad spectrum of the community in all phases of their rural development programme. Participation implies the involvement of a broad continuum of the community in all phases of developmental activities from project selection and design through to execution and ex-post evaluation participation which involves improvement of the poor so that they may exert their own influence independent of government direction on decision making and related activities of development projects (Hall & Midley, 1988). The strategies should, therefore, be on development by the people rather than by elites.

Increasing the level of beneficiary involvement in the planning and execution of official projects are deemed to fail even from the very start. It has been argued that authentic participation is largely incompatible with state guidance except on small scale and locally based schemes projecting the idea of state guidance. Apart from the technical assistance, the government must make resources available to the local organization through revenue sharing in the form of a local grant.

2.6 Occupations of Rural Dwellers

In West African region, there are some rural areas where their citizens or people's way of life is solely depended on tiling the ground as we have in the Northern part of Nigeria and some parts of Akwa Ibom and Rivers States while some villages' occupation is solely fishing. Every one of their actions depended on their demographic location.

Farming: Some of these rural areas have enormous land mass and they cultivate food and even some of the urban dwellers consume like cassava, garri, rice, beans, tomatoes etc.

- (i) **Fishing:** These are people who catch fishes casting their nets into the river or sea. Most of the fishes we see and use in the urban areas like Uyo and Port Harcourt came from such areas; some of them smoke the fishes to preserve them from getting rotten before it gets to the city.
- (ii) **Miners and quarrymen:** These are people involved in blasting rocks or chippings. These rocks are used for road construction, the building of houses etc.
- (iii) **Craftsmen and process workers:** These are people involved in basket weaving, blacksmiths, carving woods, pottery, carpentry etc.
- (iv) **Service workers:** Those involved in bicycle repairers, cobblers (shoemakers) and dry cleaners.

2.7 Strategies For Developing Rural Communities

The government cannot develop rural areas without the participation and engagement of the rural dwellers. The government have to apply different approaches like the government/people partnership approach to engage its citizenry for rural developmental projects. To make policies and program yield the propose needs of the people, the government has to adopt the following strategies to attract mass participation.

- (i) **Manpower Development:** The rural development agencies should recruit staff base on merit and competence. There is also a need to develop the workers by training and retraining them to update

their knowledge and skills annually. Without adequate staff strength and necessary components, policy objectives cannot be achieved. In Nigeria, many of the techniques and programme are of course the initiative of developed countries. These programmes can be effectively carried out only when trained teams of workers are in action. As observed the resources are not being utilized properly because people in the villages are ignorant about many scientific innovations. African countries like Nigeria should establish more institutions where rural development will be offered as a course of study at degree or higher national diploma levels.

- (ii) **Mobilization and Participation:** The government and cooperative bodies are to mobilize the rural dwellers by encouraging them through giving out of fertilizers, subsidizing the local production; which will encourage participation and increase the output of the rural dwellers. Participation which has become an article of faith is a fundamental principle for any successful project or programme and the single most important key to improving the livelihoods of the poor has not been highlighted and encouraged at a high level. It has been a fiction or paper participation of the people rather than functional participation in the rural development programme. Participation is the involvement of a broad spectrum of the community in all phases of developmental activities from project selection and design through to execution and ex-post evaluation. Participation involves improvement of the condition of the poor so that he (poor) may exert his own influence independent of government direction on decision making and related activities of development projects (Hall & Midley, 1988). The strategies should, therefore, be on development by the people and for the people, rather than by elites.

Increasing the level of beneficiary involvement in the planning and execution of official projects from the start are deemed to succeed. On the contrary, it has been argued that authentic participation is largely incompatible with state guidance except on small scale and locally based schemes projecting the idea of state guidance may be to throw out the baby with the bathwater (Essenfor, 1990). Apart from the technical assistance, the government must make resources available to the local organization through revenue sharing as local grant arrangements.

- (iii) **Community Banking System:** although 'Akawo' or the informal banking helps in some ways it is never effective as some people can abscond with these contributions. The setting up of Community Banks has so far helped in a great measure and be established in all the local governments of the federation and should have a suitable frame network operation for accountability. The staff of the Banks should be exposed to special training in rural development, which will enable them to assess effectively the visibility of development projects by recognizing factors for improvement rather than traditionalism.

- (iv) **Promoting Viable Cooperatives:** In Nigeria, cooperatives are being managed by government officials and the authorities of local government, community leaders, and have often been used as channels for state ruling political party's patronage and grounds for recruitment. Some of the findings of the performance of the Nigerian cooperative movement show that cooperative movements in Nigeria have not been used as vehicles for democratic participation of the ordinary citizens in rural production. The lofty objectives of government cooperative policies remain a mirage unless government recognizes the strict adherence to the internationally attained principles of the cooperative movement with little or no interference by the government, and in this way only can cooperatives become a veritable vehicle for accelerating and sustaining rural development in Nigeria.

3.0 Implications for Mass Participation in Rural Development

Agriculture has been the mainstay of the Nigerian economy before the discovery of crude oil, and these agricultural activities are carried out in rural areas.

The implications for mass participation have enormous benefits to the government, the entrepreneurs and the rural dwellers. Below are some of the tangible functions it renders to society.

- (i) **Food Security:** Mass participation in agriculture enhances food production for both local and international consumers.
- (ii) **Tame rural-urban migration:** when the local dwellers are being treated well by the provision of basic amenities, supplied with fertilizers, provided with loans and grants etc., they will become motivated and will be diligent in their respective duties. This will reduce the migration of rural dwellers to urban cities in search of greener pastures.
- (iii) **Poverty elevation:** increasing the incomes of the rural dwellers will bring about equality and poverty elevation.
- (iv) **Reduce Unemployment Rate** as the vibrant youths will be engaged in local crafts etc.

- (v) Mass participation in rural development activities will reduce youth restiveness and will rather promote peace and accruing revenues.

4.0 Conclusion:

From the foregoing analysis, it is obvious that rural or community development in Nigeria has not received its fair share in the scheme of things. The institutions and agencies charged with the responsibility for rural development and the policies and strategies so adapted to meet these objectives have not yielded dividends enough to the expectation of the rural dwellers in particular and the nation in general. It has been shown that in spite of the numerous natural resources that Nigeria is endowed with, the majority of the citizens, particularly in the rural areas live below the 'absolute poverty line'.

Therefore there exists mass poverty as a result of the lopsided and urban-based development process which the governments in Nigeria have pursued over the years. For instance, the various World Bank, IMF and other multinational corporations sponsored large-scale agricultural projects were not intended to better a lot of the rural dwellers but for themselves. These projects and schemes are based on an obsolete trickle-down theory by which the main beneficiaries are supposed to diffuse information and motivate the small peasant farmers, who would then follow their example. It would be difficult for Nigeria to attack its poverty inoculation syndrome unless it stops discriminating against peasant farmers and the rural population. The above situations revolve on the neo-colonial policies and dependent nature of the Nigerian economy and society. This appears to be the crux of Nigeria's developmental and other problems, including that of political instability currently ravaging the country.

In as much as Nigeria follows neo-colonial policies and having the dependent nature, The Nigerian economy and societal development will remain a mirage. Mass poverty and deprivation currently facing the rural people will get worse and Nigeria's independence will remain in shambles. Indeed the contemporary Nigerian state operates as agents of capitalism and imperialism and under this social structure, Nigerian development programs, particularly the so-called new strategies for 'rural development' are only smokescreens intended to cover the real thing.

Governments in developing countries have now come to the realization that no development will be meaningful except when the rural communities are also carried along. This realization is born out of the reality that rural dwellers constitute a significant component of their population. Nigeria's rural dwellers constitute 53% of the country's total population (World Bank 2015). The bulk of Nigeria's food and fibre supply comes from the rural areas, whose production of cassava, palm produce, etc. has long contributed significantly to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). However, poverty and infrastructural deficits are a common phenomenon in Nigeria's rural sector. African countries like Nigeria still falls far short of the economic and social progress required to impact the well-being of the average Nigerian, given that over half of Nigeria's population live on less than 1 dollar a day. These obviously suggest the need for attention to rural areas for sustainable development. Taking cognizance of the level of economic activities in rural development, it becomes apparent that action must be taken to ensure mass participation for sustainable rural development.

But rural development cannot be achieved unless certain strategies are used to encourage mass participation as I explained in the body of this literature.

5.0 Recommendation

To have reasonable rural development the following recommendations are fostered since the Government cannot develop the rural areas without the participation and attention of the rural dwellers. The government has to apply the Local content law in the constitutional provision to engage its citizenry. Below are methods and strategies to encourage mass participation for the development of the rural communities in West Africa.

- (i) **Mobilization and Participation:** The various governments are to mobilize the rural dwellers by encouraging and giving out fertilizers and subsidizing the local production, which will encourage rural participation and increase the output of the rural dwellers because of the incentives so provided.
- (ii) **Mobilizing the Women Group:** Amain, (1998) stressed that to reach all the people one has to reach the women. Once you have reached the women, you have reached the children, you have reached the family, and you have reached the nation in home, in the school, in the university, in the city, in the village, on the farm, at local government level, at the rural community level. You have to meet the people of the nation on their own ground. Once they understand you, they will follow. Education for women should be both formal and informal. It should be not only aimed at enlightening the women but should also seek to liberate them from the yoke of superstition, ignorance, inferiority complex, indifference or any factor which makes them think they are

equipped with a lesser degree of competence than their male counterparts. Male dominance ideology used to protect male claims has been identified as the major barrier to the full mobilization of the rural women. Williams (1998) said there is no real freedom one can have, so long as women are handicapped by men's legal privilege. The societal restrictions and religious belief which have rendered the female as second class citizens and mere spectators in rural development should be combated. Women in purdah would be mobilized through their village heads and religious leaders so that they could engage in productive and economic activities. However, the desire to work out their problems themselves which were considered as blasphemy has been broken partially through women organizations. For example, the National Council of Women Societies is a unique umbrella to coordinate women activities. The financial arrangement should be made to promote the work of the council. A better life for rural women initiated by the late Hajiya Maryam Babangida, wife of Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida is yet another aggressive move to position women better in the country. Women Cooperate with Societies such as Women in Agriculture, and many others should further be encouraged for the good and general progress of the nation.

- (iii) Manpower Development: To accelerate and sustain rural development, agencies should recruit professional staff; develop the workers by providing training facilities to update their knowledge and skills. Without adequate staff strength and necessary components, policy objectives cannot be achieved. In Nigeria, many of the techniques and programmes are of course the initiative of developed countries. These programmes can be effectively carried out only when trained teams of workers are engaged to implement them. As observed the resources are not being utilized properly because people in the villages are ignorant about many scientific innovations. Nigeria should establish more institutions where rural development will be offered as a course of study at degree or higher national diploma level. Village extension workers should also be trained through the government approved and provided educational extension classes. Training rural dwellers in extension classes make rural development easy and achievable as the people so trained understands basic education, knows what is expected from the correct use of an extension, known how to apply extension methods and finally to know how to evaluate the effectiveness of the extension methods so taught. According to Solomon, & Adeyemi (2005) the village extension workers who should be from the immediate community should be given training in the field of agriculture, health, sanitation, principles of rural development, functional literacy etc. as these are the "first aid" assistance to village groups. The implementation of the rural development programme is technical and this should be recognized. Therefore, the availability of trained and dedicated staff is a pre-requisite for the successful implementation of the rural development programme.
- (iv) Establishment of "Parent" Rural Development Directorate: Okeh, (2010) suggested that besides the trial and error which rural development drive is based, there are also administrative and structural bottlenecks that have to neutralize most efforts made towards executing rural development plans in Nigeria. Rural development has not been centrally guided. Instead of institutionalizing rural development ministry the federal government has rationed the development programme meant for rural communities in many industries. The rationing of various aspects of the rural development programme at the same time is without a body (Parent agency) to oversee and coordinate various sectors and their programmes. No doubt the success of rural development programme lies in building the structural and institutional bodies that will provide the necessary linkage of different planning and action levels (Ajayi, 1996). Essenjor, (1991) pointed out that today, one hears that rural development is under the Ministry of Agriculture in a particular state, while in another state it is under the Ministry of Social Development. Tomorrow in the same state the programme is shifted to Ministry of Rural Development, Youth and Sports. This continuous flexibility of this sector in the country has manifested no guarantee on rural development in Nigeria in the nearest future. This makes it more of trial – and – error after more than 50 years of independence. The present agency would ameliorate the duplication of duties and functions of the various ministries assigned to rural development. Most people argue that Ministry of Agriculture, International Fund for Agriculture Development, Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI) and even Ministry of Works perform the same functions. The open ministerial clash between Ministry of Information and National Orientation Agency is another clear duplication of role and duties in Nigerian governments, which is one of the major problems of International Fund of Agriculture Development (IFAD) and DFRRI is that they don't recruit or employ their own staff directly, rather rely on staff seconded from other government ministries and departments. One would say that the components of IFAD and DFRRI staff are weak to put the professional touch to the test of

rural development as a greater number of their staff is weak and are the reluctant staff of other ministries. No ministry gives out its best staff on secondment rather the weak and redundant. The organizations at the local level are rootless and need to be recognized and equipped with professional staff. The agencies are also not well funded for the uphill task of the parent agency. The yearly fund allocation seems to be merely paper allocation rather than in practice with lots of misappropriations (Shehu, 2011).

- (v) **Effective Community Banking System:** Community Banks should be established in all the Local Government Areas of the federation and should have a suitable frame network operation. The staff of the Banks should be exposed to special training in rural development. This will enable them to assess effectively the visibility of development projects by recognizing factors not traditionally considered by levelling on commercial banks (UNO, 2004). Community organization, self-help groups and other social clubs should be directed to open and operate current accounts with the community banks to enable them to obtain loans for developmental projects.
- (vi) **The use of Local Content be encouraged:** The government has to apply the Local content law in the constitutional provision to engage its citizenry. The government and project supervisors should increase local content in project implementation at the rural communities which will increase the sense of belonging among rural dwellers, which will also improve the local economy as well as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- (vii) **Promoting Viable Cooperatives:** Cooperatives have been described as a method of working together according to laid down principles which those taking part agree to observe (Ladele, 1991). As Umaru, & Tyem, (1995) explained, cooperative was conceived as the answer to the injustice of capitalism and was developed as its antidote. Poorer men saw in it a price of economic advantage, a new incentive to efficiency and the utopian socialites a method of developing a completely new society (Yang, & An, 2002). A successful cooperative offers each member and the general public an opportunity to maximize their economic wellbeing (Yang, & An, 1983). Zinnah, (1997) believes that the Nigeria cooperative movement suffers from excessive central control and bureaucracy and lacks financial independence. Similarly, Yang, & An, (2002) and Ladele (1991) report that with government guaranteed bank overdrafts, Nigeria cooperatives depend on management by government officials and the authority of local government, community leaders, and have often been used as channels for state ruling party, political patronage and recruitment. They went on to say, cooperative policies in Northern Nigeria effectively keeps rural development under government control. They further observes that the Nigerian cooperative movement has failed to provide any means of expression for ordinary members. Some of the foregoing references revealed that, the performance of the Nigerian cooperative movement have not supported democratic participation of the ordinary citizens in rural production. The above lofty objectives of government cooperative policy will remain a mirage unless government recognizes the strict adherences to the internationally attained principles of the cooperative movement and, only in this way can cooperatives become a veritable vehicle for accelerating and sustaining rural development in Nigeria.
- (viii) **Establishment of Community Viewing Centres:** Famoniyo, (1980) suggests the establishing of viewing centres of television programmes that have direct bearing on the life of rural communities which will greatly assist in mobilizing the support of rural audiences in developmental projects. The trained village level workers could operate the audio visual aid system. To be more useful, meaningful, the village level work should be able to translate and interpret most of the programmes into local languages in a large viewing centres built by government. Rural Radio Broadcasting Cooperation (RRBC) should also be considered as a complementing strategy of rural broadcast to a largespectrum of the rural dwellers. The rural information officer's corps could be recruited to facilitate the basic information needs of the rural people. Community-based newspapers should be encouraged and more space should be given to local news. This will improve the literacy level of the rural dwellers. Mobile cinema, radio and other audio-visual facilities should be exploited to the full scale to improve the literacy level in the rural communities.
- (ix) **The use of Direct Labour as opposed to the use of Contractors:** According to Aman, (1998) the involvement of business class, elites and politicians in decision making, regarding project implementation makes the idea of award of contract in rural development projects have become the order of the day. Instead, local people and their labour should be used with their resources to develop their rural areas. The matching grants given to assist local communities should not be diverted to contractors' selfish use; but rather used to buy the materials required, while the bulk of the labour force in these projects should be the rural people themselves. Greater numbers of the

- abandon projects are projects awarded to contractors who have no concern with such projects and the rural communities. Another benefit to be realised in the use of direct labour is the reduction of overall cost of the project if the local and direct labour is used, while the safety of the project is guaranteed with technical advice and supervision to prevent mass waste of resources.
- (x) **Rural Development Centres (RDC):** Nigeria is well known for its thousands of villages that are scattered and neglected for decades. The scanty success made in rural development calls for the introduction of Rural Development Centres (RDC) in every local government area of the federation to facilitate and built the nation from the bottom (rural areas). As noted, the initiative of the rural people has to a great extent not encouraging. What is needed is the awakening of the rural dwellers for mass participation in social services.
 - (xi) The state and local government joint account should be stopped and give local government autonomy and full responsibility to control their own share of federal fund allocation.
 - (xii) International agencies who want to invest in projects that have a direct bearing on the life of rural people should have direct access to those communities, rather than passing through the Federal or State governments.
 - (xiii) Self-help project should be encouraged among the rural communities by both the federal and state government, with adequate recognition of such bodies.
 - (xiv) The joint account operated between state and local government over rural development should be discouraged; rather, the state government should monitor the spending of the local governments as it concerns the development of the rural area.
 - (xv) Only projects that have a direct bearing on the lives of rural communities should be of priority.
 - (xvi) Youth and women organization must be involved in the programme of rural development.
 - (xvii) Developmental projects should not be concentrated in the local government headquarters. Let the projects be spread to cover rural communities within the local government.
 - (xviii) Private companies should be encouraged to invest and build industries in rural communities with abundant raw materials.
 - (xix) Since over 70% of Nigerian population live in the rural areas and who produce the greatest wealth of the nation, the rural areas should be accorded more recognition in terms of budgetary provisions and provision of social and economic amenities.
 - (xx) The production needs of rural dwellers centre on poor infrastructural facilities, inadequate extension services, and lack of financial credit. Therefore feeder roads are urgently needed to effectively link and integrate peasants scattered all over the country with the urban centres to enable them to evacuate their products from the farms and sell them in the cities and urban towns.
 - (xxi) The rural area should be provided with adequate water supply for drinking and irrigation, especially in the arid parts of the country.
 - (xxii) The government should provide the enabling environment to foster rural and community development in Nigeria. Facilities such as education, health services, electricity supply, improving literacy, health and general quality of life are acutely inadequate in the rural areas. There is also need to adequately train the farmers in the use of new techniques of farming and for them to be provided with farming equipment's like fertilizers and pest control chemicals at subsidized prices so that those peasants can afford to pay back. In this regard, the Government should endeavour to deal directly with the real farmers in the rural areas if rural development is to be achieved.
 - (xxiii) Rural development in Nigeria should not be the concern of only Federal, State and local governments. It is important that individuals, communities, corporate organizations, non-governmental organizations and international organizations and agencies must be deeply involved in the efforts at eradicating poverty, enhancing rural development and the overall national development of the country.

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