

AN APPRAISAL OF THE NATIONAL POLICY ON INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: SALIENT ISSUES FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL-URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Arising from the dismal performance of the rural sector in Nigeria owing to several years of neglect, degradation and increasing poverty cum urban bias, this study appraised the integrated rural development policy and sectoral strategies, identified issues bordering on the current rural development policies, with a view to coming out with key adjustments needed to enhance the growth and development of the rural areas, along-side sustainable urbanization, within the context of the on-going National Transformation Agenda. To achieve the aforementioned objectives of the study, secondary data and output of documented empirical studies were used. Data collected were analyzed using Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analytical tool, Scoones' Framework for Sustainable Rural Livelihood and descriptive analysis involving percentages and tabulation of data. While recognizing the context of the rural-urban development of the country and the associated challenges, the study recommended the need to (i) focus on sustainable livelihood approaches to rural development which will emphasize the cross sectoral and multi-occupational diversity of rural livelihoods; (ii) simplify the institutional structure for rural development coordination in the country; (iii) put in place a framework which recognizes simultaneous development of the rural and urban areas based on equity; (iv) ensure focused involvement to achieve scaled interventions that can effectively reduce poverty; (v) take advantage of the advancement in the communication sector and promote the use of sustainable, manageable, affordable, resource efficient technologies (SMART) for sustainable development of the rural areas.

Keywords: National policy, Integrated, Rural Development, Sustainable, Rural-Urban Development.

Introduction

In spite of the vast resources available to Nigeria and the efforts directed at poverty reduction, 69.0 percent of the 163 million estimated population of the country still lives in poverty (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2012). Nigeria, with land mass of 923,768 km² is largely agrarian and endowed with diverse natural resources including oil, minerals and gas (NBS, 2012). It is a federation of 36 states comprising a total of 774 Local

Government Areas and the Federal Capital Territory. Rural population is about 50.2 percent, while urban population accounts for 49.8 percent (Index mundi, 2010). In spite of its rich endowment however, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2006) affirmed that past attempts at national development have divided the country into two distinct socio-economic dichotomies-the urban and rural sectors, each of which show great diversity in natural resources endowment, aggregate

investments, and the quality of life of their respective inhabitants. Five decades (1960-2012) of interventions in the rural space by successive governments however have not produced the targeted benefits to the rural dwellers.

According to Omonona (2010), rural poverty is more pronounced in rural areas than in the urban centers in the period of 1996 and 2004, while the NBS (2012) in its current poverty profile reported that absolute poverty was about 66.1 percent in the rural areas and 52.0 percent in the urban areas. Recent developments within the country suggest that the ensuing scenario may not be unconnected with the decades of rural neglect arising from an urban-biased approach to development (Omonona, 2010). Thus, the dismal performance of the rural sector arising from several years of neglect and degradation and the need to enhance the impact of development efforts and alleviate rural poverty, alongside sustainable urbanization, prompted the review of the existing rural development policy. The study critically appraised the integrated rural development policy, the sectoral strategies and identified issues bordering on the rural-urban development nexus, with a view to coming out with key adjustments needed to enhance the growth and development of the rural areas, within the context of the Federal Government Transformation Agenda.

To achieve the objectives of the study, secondary data and output of documented empirical studies were used, which included information from the National Policy on Integrated Rural Development and the Nigeria Rural Development Sector Strategy, National Bureau of Statistics Poverty Profile and Needs Assessment Study of the National Programme for Food Security (NPFS). The data collected were analyzed using SWOT Analysis and the Ian Scoones' Framework for Sustainable Rural Livelihood, descriptive analysis involving percentages, tabulation of data, amongst others.

Conceptual framework and literature review

Concept of Rural Development and Urbanization

The term rural development is defined as a strategy and process designed to transform the nation's rural life and landscape by ensuring progressive social, economic, cultural and political improvements (FMARD, 2001). It argued that rural development must share fully in the development process through equitable access to resources, inputs and services and participation in the design and implementation of development programmes. It further posited that meaningful development of the rural people must be on a self-sustaining basis, through transforming the socio-spatial structures of their productive activities. Urbanization on the other hand is the process whereby the amenities and the facilities of urban life are provided to the inhabitants of a rural area. It is the opinion in some quarters that if the urban way of living is made available to the rural mass without raising their income through land and agriculture development, their consumption, traditions and living become urban. This therefore becomes urbanization and not rural development.

Dimensions of Rural Poverty in Nigeria

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development identified two dimensions of poverty on the basis of available data on the rural condition in Nigeria. These are the rural mass deprivation and individual deprivation. The rural mass deprivation is manifested in terms of: (i) inadequate access to socio-economic infrastructures and basic social amenities; (ii) limited employment and income generating opportunities due to the absence of commercial and industrial facilities; (iii) inadequate access to agricultural resources, especially land, credit facilities, extension services, and input; (iv) environmental and natural resource degradation such as

desertification, loss of soil fertility, environmental pollution and over-population. The individual deprivation is manifested in terms of: (i) inability to sustain and house oneself adequately, afford basic necessities to meet social and economic needs and to obtain gainful employment; (ii) physical insecurity, lack of skills, inadequate assets, ignorance and powerlessness to improve one's situation (FMARD, 2001).

Theories of Rural Development

Ellis and Biggs (2001) employed the device of a timeline (Table 1) to elucidate a number of theories, theme, policy thrust that have been influential in rural development since the 1950s. As detailed, these development ideas are not trapped in time capsules conveniently organized in decades. Ideas that first appear in a decade gain strength in the following decade and only begin to affect rural development in a widespread ten to fifteen years. In retrospect however, agricultural growth based on small-farm efficiency paradigm dominated the rural development thinking throughout the last half century.

Towards the 70s however, this idea was gradually undertaken with the thought that large scale farming using mechanized technology was more efficient than the small-scale sector. The second paradigm shift occurred during the 1980s and 1990s with the change from the top-down to the bottom up approach (Rondinelli, 1983; Mosse *et al*, 1998). This era ushered in the farming systems research, indigenous technical knowledge, actor oriented approach to rural development, structural adjustment, market liberalization, rise of NGOs amongst others. Stohr and Taylor (1981) opined that development from below considers development to be based primarily on maximum mobilization of each area's natural, human and institutional resources with the primary objective being the satisfaction of the basic needs of the inhabitants of that area. They argued that development policies must be oriented directly towards the problems of

poverty, and must be motivated and initially controlled from the bottom. International Fund for Agricultural Development Assisted Community Based Agricultural and Rural Development Programme (2012) also revealed that some assumptions of the community driven development (CDD) are at variance with the socio cultural setting of the people. Binswanger-Mkhize and Regt (2012) observed that local and community-driven development (LCDD) has emerged over the past 20 years in response to the advent of integrated rural development and difficulties with centralized service delivery. They posited that LCDD approaches generally have better outcome ratings than centralized approaches and deliver more sustainable infrastructure at lower costs.

In Nigeria, the approach constituted the hub of the current integrated rural development policy; however, the concept was popularized by the International Fund for Agricultural Development through a pilot CDD programme introduced in the 1980s in Sokoto and Kebbi States (International Fund for Agricultural Development Assisted Community Based Agricultural and Rural Development Programme, 2012). Other development projects have since embraced and institutionalized the approach in the implementation of their various projects and programmes.

Perroux (1951) in his growth pole model, opined that growth does not occur everywhere at the same time; but manifests at points or growth of poles with variable intensities and it spreads through different channels with variable terminal effect on the whole economy. Baker (1990) observed that the sustainability of growth pole concept in solving rural poverty has been disappointing. Charting the way forward, Carney (1998) and Scoones, (1998) posited that the so called sustainable livelihood (SL) approach could provide a challenge to the small farm orthodoxy, while at the same time being

entirely compatible with progress made in bottom up rural development. This approach was noted to have significant economic benefit in food security and famine analysis, asset vulnerability framework and also engages with the factors that make rural families vulnerable to shocks and the policies and processes that can improve their resilience in the face of disaster. However Ellis and Biggs

(2001) argued that if the paradigm of rural development is to emerge; it will be that in which agriculture takes its place along with a host of other actual and potential rural and non-rural activities that are important to the construction of viable rural livelihood, without undue preference being given to farming as the unique solution to rural poverty. See Table 1 below.

Table 1: Rural Development Ideas Timeline

1950s	1960s	1970s-1980s	1980 -1990s	1990s-2000s	2000-2013
Modernization	Transformation approach	Redistribution with growth	Structural adjustment	Micro credit	Sustainable livelihood
Dual economy model	Technology transfer	Basic needs	Free market	Participatory rural appraisal	Good governance
"backward agric"	Mechanisation	Integrated rural development	Getting prices right	Action oriented rural development	Decentralisation
Community development	Agricultural extension	Strategic policies	Retreat of the state	Stakeholder analysis	Critique of participation
Lazy peasant	Growth role of agric	State led credit	Rise of NGOs	Rural safety nets	Sector-wide approaches
	Green revolution (Start)	Urban bias	Rapid rural appraisal	Gender & development	Social protection
	Rational peasant	Induced Innovation	Farming systems research (FSR)	Environment & sustainability	Poverty eradication
		Rural growth linkages	Food security & farming analysis	Poverty reduction	Transformation Agenda
			Rural Development as process not product		
			Women in Development		
			Environment & sustainability		
			Poverty reduction		

*Adapted from Ellis and Biggs (2001) and Updated in 2013 in the light of the current transformation agenda in Nigeria

On the rural urban nexus, Baker (1990) affirmed that the growth of small urban centers is a necessary conditions and prerequisite for rural transformation. Thus, from this point of view, the role of small urban center may have a very positive influence on rural development and agriculture through the provision of a great range of goods (agricultural inputs, consumer items and many others). Claeson and Hjort (1988) noted that a good deal of the foreign assistance (including much Nordic aid) has been directed to rural development in the narrowest sense to imply agricultural change and this suggest that rural development is an autonomous process which can be divorced from the urban component. They argued that this dualistic approach must be rejected as it fails to understand the inherent and complex interplay of the rural and urban economy. Having said this, it is highly encouraging to note that a number of African countries, including Nigeria are implementing programmes which focus on urban development on rural context approach. Baker (1990) hinted that a good deal of ambiguity has surrounded the subject of small town-rural relationship. He revealed that the debate on rural-urban issues has been dominated by a consideration of very large cities, often primate cities and their influence on the development of the national space. Authors such as Hoselitz (1955) have also raised the important issue regarding the potential role of urban centers for rural development, known as the top-bottom strategy.

Concept and Evolution of Integrated Rural Development in Nigeria

According to Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2006), Nigeria did not have a coherent development strategy until 1991 when a first draft was prepared in 1991 by Directorate of Food Road and Rural Development (DFRRI) and updated by the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Rural Development (FMWR&RD) in

1996. The draft was finalized in the year 2000 by Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development after extensive consultations with all relevant national and international development partners. The articulation of a Rural Development Sector Strategy came on board to facilitate the efficient and effective implementation of the National Policy on Integrated Rural Development. The overarching objective of the rural development strategy was to reduce poverty, increase productivity, reduce unemployment, improve rural and urban food security and promote competitiveness. This objective draws from the national objectives of developing the rural areas, raising the quality of life of the rural people, alleviating rural poverty and using rural development as a cornerstone for national development. The guiding principle for the strategy was premised on five principles, namely: (i) non-intervention; (ii) consistency; (iii) participation; (iv) sustainability; and (v) greater equity.

Overview of the integrated rural development policy

The National Policy on Integrated Rural Development focused on five priority areas of intervention, namely Promotion of Rural Productive Activities; Supporting Human Resource Development and Utilization; Enhancement of Enabling Rural Infrastructure; Special Programme for Target Groups and Rural Community Mobilization. The first priority was on diversifying and expanding employment and income generating activities at the level of rural communities; the second focused on raising the quality of life of rural communities and enhancing the quality of education; the third covered priority areas such as transport infrastructure and facilities, communication infrastructures, housing, (iv) environment, (v) energy and water sanitation; the fourth encompassed special programmes for special like women,

youth, children, the elderly and retired, handicapped, emergencies and natural disasters; disadvantaged and border areas, while the fifth placed emphasis on promoting and supporting the formation and strengthening of community based rural development organization, among others.

Implementation Strategies

The implementation of the strategy was to involve a combination of approaches with the participation of the three tiers of Government, Communities, NGOs, CBOs and Donors. The strategies covered: (i) Policy and Institutional Reform Issues; (ii) Investments at Federal, State, LGAs and Community Levels; and (c) Investments at Sub-sector Levels. In all, about 18 strategy issues were proposed covering key areas like (i) inappropriate price and trade policies, inadequate public spending and Institutional framework; (iv) Low level investment in rural infrastructure; (v) Limited access to financial services; (vii) poorly targeted intervention; and (viii) Low level of capital amongst others.

Institutional Framework

The policy also delineated roles and provided for proper environment for co-operation for the three tiers of government and other stakeholders. The roles of the FGN are to define national policy and ensure that all relevant agencies work harmoniously and effectively towards the attainment of its objectives. The state is to effectively focus on the peculiar challenges of rural development, while the LGAs are to function primarily as a rural development agency. The LGAs through their Community Development Departments are to provide adequate institutional framework for mobilizing, liaising and working with the communities

in promoting rural development. The communities on the other hand are supposed to lead the initiative for rural development, while the NGOs, Non Profit Organizations and Private Sector were to amongst others adequately address the needs of the rural dwellers in their policies, methods and operations. The external agencies were to assist government in developing institutional capacities for rural development programme/project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; facilitate the provision of financial and technical assistance in the area of rural sector data collection, processing and storage; and support in the provision of financial and technical assistance to strengthen rural sector institutions and sustain rural development programmes. The policy recognized that the attainment of the desired level of development will require very heavy investment and thus employed a participatory funding arrangement involving all the stakeholders, the federal, state, local governments, the communities, the private sector and external support agencies. Monitoring, evaluation and review of the policy at national level is to be the responsibility of the Federal Department of Rural Development.

Capacity assessment of the rural development policy

The assessment was undertaken using the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) technique which is one of the basic approach used in strategic planning, development interventions and identifying competitive advantage, with a view to achieving better understanding of the rural development policy environment within the Nigerian context. See Table 2 below.

Table 2: Capacity Assessment of Rural Development Policy using the SWOT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Institutionalization of an Integrated approach to development	Weak provision for sustainable, manageable affordable and resource efficient technologies (SMART) (Nyagba, 2009)	Introduction of SMART Technologies	Unstable environment
Self-sustaining basis for rural development through transforming the social-spatial structures of their productive activities.	Lack of a visible framework for urban-rural complementary development initiatives.	Expectations that sustained democracy will guarantee stability of rural development interventions	Irregular funding pattern by government through budgetary sources.
Participatory policy involving the mobilization of the rural areas.	Insufficient provision for rural intervention scale and phased approach to implementation.	Large population of the country, with reference to the growing youth and work force.	Erratic and non-payment of counterpart funds for the implementation of donor-supported rural development projects/programmes, for example, the National Programme for Food Security.
Emphasis on sustainable livelihood approach to rural development	Inadequate specific targets and goals to guide implementation of the proposed strategies and initiatives.	Diversity of agricultural resource base and huge market for local trade in food and non-food agricultural commodities.	Urban bias to fiscal allocation and the intense competition amongst the various sectors.
Recognized and incorporated the complex linkages between the social sectors, infrastructure, governance and farm and non-farm economies.	Complex institutional arrangement for development and numerous levels of government and organization.	Presence of several development bodies in trade and finance as well as human right advocacy.	Inadequate energy supply, particularly renewable energy.
Encouraged decentralized monitoring and evaluation system	Duplication of efforts and inefficient use of scarce human and financial resources.	Gains from the on-going Agricultural Development Agenda in the area of communication, agriculture, transport.	
Articulated a rural development strategy matrix incorporating strategic issues.	Inadequate attention to regional differences in policy development.	Opportunities for enhancement of efficiency of production and marketing activities.	
Delineated roles for the various stakeholders within the rural development sector.			

Source: Outcome of desk review by Authors (2013).

Salient Issues for Rural - Urban Development

Studies have been undertaken on the rural-urban linkages especially as it relates to the development of these two sectors. Moreover, given that about 55.4 percent of Nigeria's population is likely to reside in the urban areas by 2015 (Table 3), it is important to take account of the following salient issues in rural and urban development.

(i) Urban factor in any sustainable rural development;

- (ii) Dynamic flows of commodities, capital, natural resources, people and pollution in the peri-urban interface;
- (iii) Independent treatment of urban rural development;
- (iv) Rural urban linkages;
- (v) Agricultural expansion as crucial to growth in non-farm sectors of rural and urban and
- (vi) Economic interdependency between agriculture, including the linkages between household farm income and the development of town and city economies.

Table 3: Nigeria's Population from 1990 and Projection to 2015

Year	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
Total Population ('000)	96,154	111,721	128,786	147,21	168,369	190,922
Urbanization level (%)	35.0	39.6	44.0	48.2	52.0	55.4
Urban Population ('000)	33,664	44,184	56,651	71,121	87,557	105,699
Urban growth rate (%)	5.53	5.44	4.97	4.55	4.16	3.77
Rural population growth rate (%)	1.65	1.55	1.32	1.17	1.10	1.06

Source: UN Habitat 2004

Review of Sustainable Livelihood Outcomes in the Nigeria (Rural-Urban Nexus)

The review of the sustainable livelihood outcomes within the country's rural development sector was undertaken within the Scoones (1998) sustainable rural livelihood analytical framework. However, focus will only be on the analysis of sustainable livelihood outcomes, covering livelihood and sustainability. With regards

to livelihood, available data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that the relative poverty head count for the country increase sharply from 1980 to 2010 by about 153.7 percent within thirty years (Table 4). NBS (2011) noted that despite the fact that the Nigerian economy is paradoxically growing, the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty is increasing yearly, with the rural population accounting for 62 percent of this figure.

Table 4: Relative Poverty Headcount in Nigeria from 1980-2010

Year	Poverty Incidence (%)	Estimated Population (m)	Population in Poverty (m)
1980	27.2	65	17.1
1985	46.3	75	34.7
1992	42.7	91.5	39.2
1996	65.6	102.3	67.1
2004	54.4	126.3	68.7
2010	69.0	163	112.47

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, HNLSS 2012

Further on livelihood assessment, NBS (2012) noted that the scourge of poverty goes beyond mere measurement of a household's expenditure or welfare. It explained that poverty has many dimensions and may include inadequate access to government utilities and services, environmental issues, poor infrastructure, illiteracy and ignorance, poor health, insecurity, social and political exclusion. It affirmed that in the urban areas, the burden of demand of services has effects on

school enrolment, access to primary health care, growth of unsanitary urban slums, while in the rural areas; poverty manifests itself more in the agricultural sector and food security. It thus recommended the need to enhance and improve access to social services, including health and education for any meaningful economic growth and poverty reduction. Details of urban-rural poverty incidence by different poverty measures as at 2010 were as detailed in Table 5.

Table 5: Urban/Rural Incidence of Poverty by Different Poverty Measures

Sector	Food Poor	Absolute Poor	Relative Poor	Dollar per Day
Urban	26.7	52.0	61.8	52.4
Rural	48.3	66.1	73.2	66.3

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2012)

Assessment of the livelihood sustainability in the rural areas was based on the empirical data collected on the needs assessment exercise in respect of the National Programme for Food Security, a national survey undertaken in 2007, which covered about half of the 774 LGAs of the country. The exercise revealed that livelihood sustainability amongst the rural farmers (covering rural and peri-urban sites) varied according to the food security status of the respondents (food secured, medium food secured and food insecure). Even though, majority had

livelihood adaptation means and measures, many are still vulnerable with weak resilience, particularly the women headed households and youth, aside this, viable measures to sustain natural resource base are lacking, given the weak capacities of these households. However, the food secured households were observed to have been involved in many off-farm generating ventures like blacksmithing, barbing, trading, commercial motorcycling, vulcanizing, hunting, etc (Appendix 1; sample farm household classification for Orin Site in Ekiti State Nigeria).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that the current integrated rural development policy and rural development strategy may not have been effective owing to the dismal performance of the rural sector. While acknowledging the associated problems of unstable policy background, weak implementation, irregular funding support and the effect of natural factors, the study is of the opinion that sustainable integrated rural development must be regarded as a catalyst for urbanization in Nigeria. Arising thus, the study recommended the need to (i) focus on sustainable livelihood approaches to rural development which

will emphasize the cross sectoral and multi-occupational diversity of rural livelihoods; (ii) simplify the institutional structure for rural development and effectively situate the National Programme for Agriculture and Food Security (NPAFS) under the Federal Department of Rural Development for the coordination of donor supported rural development programmes and projects in the Country; (iii) put in place a framework which recognizes the simultaneous development of the rural and urban areas based on equity; (iv) ensure focused intercession to achieve scaled interventions that can effectively reduce rural poverty and

enhance food security; (v) take advantage of the advancement in the communication sector and promote the use of specific manageable affordable and resource

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APPENDIX 1: A SAMPLE RURAL FARM HOUSEHOLD CLASSIFICATION IN ORIN SITE, EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

CRITERIA	FOOD IN SECURED	MEDIUM SECURED	FOOD SECURED
Farmland size	0.06-0.2 Ha	0.2-2.0 Ha	2-5 Ha
Type of crop	Cassava, Yam, Maize, Pepper and Vegetables	Cassava, Maize, Yam, Cocoyam and Tree Crops	Yam, Tree Crops, Cassava, Plantain, Maize, Vegetables, etc
Cropping patterns	Mixed cropping	Mixed & mono cropping	Mixed and mono cropping
Farm power sources	Family labour	Family and Hired labour	Hired labour & mechanization
Fallow period	1-2 years	3-4 years	Above 4 years
Ability to cultivate all their land	Fairly able	Able	Strongly able
Financial assets	None	Savings and Cooperatives	Savings, cooperatives and loan
Type of livestock owned	Local Poultry, Sheep and Goat	Exotic Poultry, Piggery, Goats/Sheep	Exotic Poultry, Rabbit, Cattle, Goats/Sheep
System of rearing	Extensive	Extensive and Semi-Intensive	Intensive
Fishery activities	Captured	Captured and Cultured	Captured and Cultured
Tools and implements used	Cutlasses, hoes	Cutlasses, hoes and sprayers	Cutlasses, hoes, sprayers, tractors and other farm machineries
Agro-forestry activities	Gathering of firewood and hunting	Logging and charcoal making	Bee keeping and snail rearing
Off farm activities	Non agricultural labour work	Artisanal, Salary work and trading	Politics and salary/contract jobs
No of meals/day	2	3	3 and above
Quality of meals (protein content)	Low	Moderate	High
Remittance	Nil-Low	Moderate	High
Total HH Distribution (%)	35%	57%	85
Female headed households (%)	605	11%	6%
Male headed households' distribution (%)	40%	89%	94%
Factors associated with upward movement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disposal of family land. 2. Election of a farmer to a political office. 3. External assistance in form of financial remittance from overseas-based wards. 4. Assistance either in cash or kind by government agency or NGO 		
Factors associated with downward movement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Massive destruction of crops especially by flood. 2. Destruction of artisanal fishing inputs either by the trawlers or storm 		

Source: Ekiti State Agric. Development Programme (2007)