INTEGRATED STRATEGY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: THE PAINS AND GAINS

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Abstract
This paper intends to critically assess the impacts of rural development strategies on grassroots development in Nigeria. Suffice it to say that successive governments in Nigeria have introduced several strategies aimed at ameliorating the adverse effect of poverty, depression, destitution, deprivation and degradation in rural areas but the results obtained is a far cry from attaining the millennium development goal(1) of eradicating extreme poverty in 2015. The major cause of high exodus of rural dwellers to urban centre in search of greener pastures is the neglect of rural infrastructures. The rural areas are generally characterized by high level of illiteracy, abject poverty, unemployment, and lack of basic infrastructures such as good road, pipe borne water, electricity, communication facilities, health care delivery, and good schools. The continuous rural-urban drift no doubt poses serious threat to the economy of Nigeria as rural predicament has turned to urban calamity due to high cost of living, overcrowding, mass unemployment, social disorder and wide spread poverty in city centre. However, some of the gains of rural development strategies include; improvement in agricultural production and the formation of co-operative societies. Being that as it may, there appears to be no definitive answer to a most plausible and effective way of improving the lives and conditions of rural dwellers. This is not unconnected with the fact that most previous strategies aimed at enhancing rural transformation were either sartorial or agrarian in nature. The integrated approach on the other hand was a multi-sartorial change strategy which was introduced in late 1974. Two programmes were designed to achieve the objectives of the integrated rural development strategy. They include; the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) and Accelerated Development Area (ADA). Unfortunately, the inconsistency in government policies and programme led to the neglect of such laudable initiatives. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to recommend the integrated strategy for rural development as panacea for rural transformation in Nigeria

Introduction
Rural development is a process through which rural poverty is alleviated by sustained increases in the productivity and income of low-income rural dwellers and households. It can equally be seen as the process of increasing the per capita income and the quality of life of rural dwellers to enable them become prime mover of rural transformation. To this end, series of approaches designed to raise or even change social and economic conditions of rural dwellers were introduced by successive governments in Nigeria. The targeted group is primarily the rural poor who live in abject or absolute poverty. Basically, the strategies of rural development include; bottom up model, self-help approach, self reliance, growth point model, authoritarian handout,
integrated rural development, and the social action process. However, emphasis is laid on the integrated strategy for rural development in this paper.

Sequel to the discovery of oil in 1958, the main stay of Nigerian economy was agriculture. Invariably, the predominant activity of rural Nigerians is farming thus constituting the main pedestal of the economy. Agriculture is consequently the major source of income and sustenance of Nigerians notwithstanding the severe strains and stresses the sector has been subjected. The under-developed rural economic productive process has not been transformed. Rural people use simple implements to produce food and cash crops for their smallholding and are therefore the major participants in their own development in their own environment.

Apart from agriculture, there are other complementary activities that vibrate rural dynamism, diversification, and indeed the entire economy ranging from trading or commercial transaction to small scale industrial enterprises in forms of weaving, food processing, carpentry, carving, pottery etc. Since rural development programmes cannot be attained through agricultural sector alone, it should be stressed that agriculture is prime in transforming rural areas in symbiotic relations or integrated patterns with other sectors. Therefore, a composite of all embracing programmes for rural development should be integrated towards combating rural poverty. Strategies for rural developments have come in various shape and sizes over time. There appears to be no definitive answer to a most plausible and effective way of improving the lives and conditions of rural people. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to critically determine the pain and gain of integrated rural development strategy in Nigeria.

Literature Review

The meaning of rural development has been the subject of much debate and little agreement. The definition of rural development varies from one point of view to the other. The definition of rural development has evolved through time as a result of changes in the perceived mechanisms and/or goals of development. A reasonable definition of rural development would be: development that benefits rural populations; where development is understood as the sustained improvement of the population’s standards of living or welfare. Rural development can be seen as not an outside intervention, but the aspiration of local people living in rural areas for taking the challenge themselves and improving their life circumstances and their immediate environment.

Olayide et al. (1981) see rural development as a process whereby concerted efforts are made in order to facilitate significant increase in rural resources/productivity with the central objective of enhancing rural income and creating employment opportunity in rural communities for rural dwellers to remain in the area. It is also an integrated approach to food production, provision of physical, social, and institutional infrastructures with an ultimate goal of bringing about good healthcare delivery system, affordable and quality education, improved and sustainable agriculture etc. According to Van der Ploeg et al. (2000), rural development is reconstructing the eroded economic base of both the rural economy and the farm enterprise and represents the well understood self-interest of increasing sections of rural population.

In other words, rural development ensures the modernization of the rural society and the transition from its traditional isolation to integration with the national economy. It is essential so as to generate foreign exchange, and to attract revenue to finance public and private consumption and investment. Rural development may also be seen as an ideology and a practice. It may mean planned change by public agencies based outside the rural areas such as the National Government and International organizations. It may also be the bringing of the countryside into an active state, as well as the transformation of the inferior nature of the country side into something more superior in terms of activities. According to the World Bank (1975) rural development must be clearly designed to increase production. It recognizes that improved food supplies and nutrition, together with basic services, such as health and education, not only directly improve the physical well-being and quality of life of the rural poor, but can also indirectly enhance their productivity and their ability to contribute to the national economy.

The most realistic approach to effective rural development in Nigeria is the integrated development strategy. This according to Shiru (2008) seeks to develop all sectors of the rural economy and link them up effectively with their urban components. Integration in rural development can be discussed in various ways. It’s most common understanding concerns the integration of various economic sectors - agriculture, industry,
services. Another frequently mentioned aspect is the integration of those disadvantaged social groups in the development process (women, elderly people, national and ethnic minorities, etc.), which could suffer even more if left out of improvements (Gusztáv, 2006). In order words, this approach seeks to promote spatial, social economic and even psychological linkage not only among the various sector of the economy but also among different aspect of the national economy. Therefore programmes of agriculture, education, health and nutrition, rural electrification cooperatives and the likes must not be conceived in isolation. Each programme must be considered in connection with other. This approach is integral in the sense that all of its components are important and related in the part that they play both individually and collectively.

In an integrated system, according to Gusztáv (2006), local and central development systems should work in a dynamic cooperation with each other. Control, resources, and responsibilities should be dispersed throughout different levels of the system. The existence of advanced local development institutions is a necessary condition in this model. Redistributed resources are still channeled through the central system, although their allocation is quite different. A significant share of resources is still directly spent on tackling access type (mainly physical) disadvantages. However, those resources, allocated for supporting local economic development directly from central sources represent a much smaller share of the budget. They are still normative payments, but rather aiming at the maintenance of public goods (agri-environmental schemes, for example) than simply subsidizing conventional agricultural production. A significant part of central resources is devoted to the reinforcement of the local development institutions and the unlocking of local resources. As a result, the local development system is well advanced and institutionalized. It is able to invest in the protection of rural values and their utilization in the development process. Like this, local resources can be exploited and can contribute with considerable added value to the development process. This value flows into the economic resource base of the local areas, creating marketable products and greatly reducing resource-type disadvantages. At the same time, the local development system can also make a significant contribution against access-type disadvantages, primarily improving business and policy access, for the benefit of the local area. All this can lead to a much more balanced development.

In an integrated strategy, a significant part of the budget is not delivered directly by central policies, but channeled through the local development system. This strengthens this system and allows for the reinforcement of local institutions and social networks, etc. It can also directly provide financial aid for the exploration and exploitation of local resources for local economic development. All this can result in the rapid growth of local added value and the expansion of available development resources, for the development system as a whole.

The integrated strategy equally embraces the development critical infrastructures. Infrastructure facilities consist of three major categories or classes. These categories of infrastructures are physical, social and institutional. The physical infrastructures are composed of transformation facilities consisting of roads, bridges and railways stage facilities made up of warehouse and silos; irrigation and water resources development facilities composed of dams, irrigation, water facilities, drainage etc. soiled conservation facilities and other forms of processing facilities. The social infrastructures are also divided into different segment, which include health and medical facilities. These consist of hospitals, dispensaries, maternity and health centers. Educational components of infra-structural facilities constitute of primary, secondary and technical schools, vocational and adult educational facilities while rural utilities consist of a wide range of welfare facilities such as water supply, electricity etc.

The components of institutional infrastructures include cooperative societies, farmers’ unions , community development programmes/projects through self help efforts, financial institutions like banks, post offices, agricultural research facilities made up of research sub stations, experimental farms, demonstration plants, agricultural extension and training services, marketing crop and animal protection services; post and telecommunication facilities. It should be noted that the improvement of the status of rural residents is greatly influenced by the type, quality and quantity of infrastructures placed there and with regular maintenance. For example, sources of drinking water, condition of personal hygiene, nature of environmental sanitation, nutritional status, literacy levels and the overall socio-economic condition of the community must be the focus of attention and therefore sustained for a viable rural development.
Thus the reasons why many rural development policies and strategies have failed to achieve their stated objective are largely due to the non recognition and non provision as well as non maintenance of the necessary or appropriate infrastructural facilities that need to be put in place overtime and space. Without the appropriate provision, operation and maintenance of basic infrastructures therefore, no rural development policy or strategy can stand the test of time. Rural infrastructures are therefore the fundamental ingredients capable of preventing or at least reducing the phenomenal rural urban drift, which is always accompanied with swelling socio economic and political problems.

The Pain and Gain of Rural Development Strategy in Nigeria

During the colonial era, roads and railway lines were constructed up and across the country, in the name of and ostensibly for the development of rural areas. Perhaps, they were done to open up the hinterland for civilization. However, the real reason for such constructions was to enable the colonialists and the imperialists to tap and evacuate our agricultural products such as groundnuts, cocoa, cotton, and palm produce. In the rural areas within this era, agricultural mechanization was introduced to increase the hectares of food production for export; and also for the maximization and exploitation of the rural areas. The objective of the development of the rural areas during this period is secondary and not of primary objective. Though most appropriate, the colonial administration did not use the village, town and clan unions for purposes of rural development because of fear that they might constitute hotbeds of political propaganda. Rather, they became useful in tax collections and rallies on Empire Days.

After independence, the rhetoric and lip service were even thicker. This time, indigenous politicians and bureaucrats do it and many of who were themselves emigrate from rural areas. The period witnessed colossal concentration of development efforts on the modern sector of the economy to the exclusion of investment in the rural economic base. Government intervention in rural transformation then were in response to lifting urban pressures emanating from rural neglect and improving export commodity earnings (Igbokwe & Ajala, 1995). They now cart away the nation’s wealth for personal savings abroad for security. They started their attack on rural development through the institution of marketing and commodity board. The aim of the marketing board was to help the farmers sell their produce in the world market to the advantage of the farmers, and also to cushion the effects of price fall in the world market. It is now known that not only were the farmers grossly underpaid from their labour, but even the money got from their taxes and levies which supposed to be reserved to cushion the price effects were diverted into other uses. Example of such diversion was the construction of prestigious projects like the Cocoa House at Ibadan. In such way, the exploitative attitudes of the urban elites towards the rural areas continued unabated. The consequences of all these are hunger and famine that have hunted our country forcing the government to import all the foodstuffs that we needed. So, it became more profitable and more sensible to remain in cities even as unemployed than to be enslaved in the rural areas just to feed the nation.

In the 1970s, there was a renewed effort in what was called rural development. The main idea was actually a desperate effort to ensure adequate food supply for the nation, especially for the parasitic urbanites. The efforts really served the needs of the cities through which the best and the choicest food produced were carted away by the middle men who had bought them at ridiculously low prices from the original producers. The policy was in practice, and implementation was exploitative and impoverished to the rural areas because they were aimed at enhancement of food and crop production only. Billions of Naira has been spent on rural development projects, yet the conditions of the rural inhabitants continued to be poorer, abject and pitiable or miserable. This is because the projects were not aimed at developing the rural people, and where they happened to contribute to the development, such contributions were secondary and distant. However, Government of various regimes employed some strategies aimed at developing the rural areas in Nigeria. Some of the tried strategies are:

1. The National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP). This project was launched in 1973 and it continued until 1976 when it was replaced by the Operation Feed the Nation Programme. It was an impact-making agricultural strategy to increase food production in specific areas and sub-sectors of the agricultural economy. NAFPP relied heavily on the cooperative approach as well as on technical assistance for its
success. The scheme was a well-conceived and guided change programme for rural development, especially in the area of food production.

2. Operation Feed the Nation. This programme was launched in 1976 by the then Head of State of Nigeria, Lt. Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo. It was designed to awaken in the generality of Nigerians the advantages of the agricultural occupation, especially, those living in the rural areas. The objectives of the Operation Feed the Nation were as follows:

i. To mobilize the nation towards self-sufficiency and self-reliance in food production.
ii. To encourage the sector of the community relying heavily on food purchase to grow their own food.
iii. To encourage general pride in agriculture.
iv. To encourage balanced nutritional feeding and thereby produce a healthy nation.

The Operation Feed the Nation was not specifically a rural development strategy, but the rural areas benefited through inputs and professional advice. However, Osuntogun and Olufokunbi (1986) observed that the Operation Feed the Nation rather than solving food problems created opportunities for the ruling class to appropriate national funds. They were appointed Board members as well as given fat contracts.

3. The Agricultural Development Projects (ADP). The projects commenced in Nigeria in 1975. The World Bank, the Federal and State Governments jointly own them. The ultimate objective of the Agricultural Development Projects system was to raise productivity, increase farm output, income and standard of living of the rural people. The emphasis was on the promotion of small-scale autonomous projects operated by a multi-disciplinary management unit. Using the cooperative approach, they tackled many aspects of agriculture, which include production, marketing, infrastructure and training. The problem with the Agricultural Development Projects was that they used a mixture of settlement and big-push approaches. As such, their heavy capitalization prevented their adoption by government and organizations.

4. The River-Basin Development Authority (RBDA). It was first launched in 1962, expanded in 1976 and further expanded in 1983. However, it was revised and curtailed between 1984 and 1986. The declared aim of the authority was to make the nation self-sufficient in food production and to uplift the socio-economic standard of the rural dwellers. Accordingly, Federal Republic of Nigeria (1981) reported that government provided in the Third National Development Plan huge sum of money to develop the main rivers of the country to benefit agriculture and rural development. However, the activities of the authority showed that the development philosophy was still the trickle-down approach as rural development was not a serious issue in the objectives of the River-Basin Development Authority, which included:

i. to undertake comprehensive development, both surface and underground water resources for multi-purpose use.
ii. to undertake scheme for the control of flood, and erosion, and for the water-shed management including afforestation.
iii. to construct and maintain dams, dykes, wells, bore-holes, irrigations and drainage systems.
iv. to provide water from reservoir and lakes for irrigation purposes to farmers and recognized associations, as well as for urban water supply scheme.
v. to control pollution in rivers, lakes, lagoons, and creeks.

All the activities of the authorities were geared at the development of material things, objects and gadgets, and not at the development of the people as persons. The activities were only done for the people, not with the people and by the people. Also, the impact of the RBAs was limited due to conflicting policy changes and lack of management know-how. According to Okorie and Umezurike (1990), the RBDA s diverted from their traditional roles to that of food production. Moreover, the increasing cost of running them due to huge capital investment led to several policy adjustments.

5. Green Revolution. It is a crash programme launched in 1980 by Alhaji Shehu Shagari's Administration. It was aimed at boasting food production in a bid to provide food to every Nigerian. The objectives of Green Revolution include:

i. To make the country self-sufficient in food production within 5 years.
To return the country to its pre-eminent crop production stage within 7 years. Unfortunately, it failed because the same government that instituted Green Revolution with the aim of making Nigeria self-sufficient as at 1985, embarked on a large-scale importation of rice from India and America, and essential food items for survival and sustenance (Otohghagua, 1999). Again, the sole intention of the programme was food and crop production so that the physical hunger of urban areas and the impoverished foreign exchange account of the government might be replenished. The presumption was that once agriculture was improved, and the yields per acre were increased, the peasant farmers who constitute the major bulk of the producers would automatically have their economic and social standard improved. It is very clear that there was no mention of how to channel the money back, extracted from the rural areas to develop the area.

6. Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). The directorate was one of the numerous programmes that were instituted by the then President of Nigeria, Gen. Ibrahim Badamosu Babangida in 1985. It was a kind of home-grown social dimensions of Adjustment project for Nigeria. According to Ekpo and Olaniyi (1995), DFRRI has the following objectives:

i. To improve the quality of life and standard of living of the majority of the people in the rural areas by:
   a. Improving greatly the quality, value and nutritional balance of their food intake;
   b. Raising the quality of rural housing, as well as the general living and working environment in the rural areas;
   c. Improving the health condition of the rural people;
   d. Creating greater opportunities for human development and employment; especially self-employment and invariably enhancing rural income levels;
   e. Making it possible to have a progressively wider range and variety of goods and services to be produced and consumed by the rural people themselves as well as for exchange;

ii. To utilize the enormous resources of the rural areas to lay a solid foundation for the security, socio-cultural, political and economic growth and development activities of the rural areas;

iii. To ensure a deeply-rooted self-sustaining development process based on effectively mobilized mass participation, beginning from the grass roots and spreading thereafter to the wider economy (p. 138). The Nigeria's DFRRI can be perceived as a kind of integrated rural development strategy. Its activities can be grouped into the following broad areas: Provision of Economic and Social Infrastructures, Production of Agricultural Inputs, Development and Dissemination of Improved Technology to enhance agricultural and rural housing and Mobilization for Mass Participation in rural development.

a. Provision of Economic and Social Infrastructures: DFRRI developed rural access roads. Government surveys indicated that 60,000km of rural feeder roads were either constructed or rehabilitated under the first phase which was completed in 1987. In 1990, a total of 30,724.34km of rural feeder roads were completed and accepted as having met the required specifications under the second phase of the project. Another 55,576.24km of rural roads were constructed in 1991. However, in 1992, a total of 85,592.82km of rural feeder roads were completed, inspected and accepted as can be found on table I below. Another important infrastructure on which DFRRI's resources were concentrated was rural electrification. The first phase took off in 1987. Two model villages in each local government area of the country were selected for the project so as to serve as reference points in rural development in the country. By 1989, 142 electricity projects were completed in phase 1. In 1990, 114 communities in 11 states were provided with electricity. In 1991, 325 communities were supplied with electricity, and another 506 communities benefited in 1992. Also, on water supply to rural communities, 4,000 wells/boreholes were reported to have been sunk by 1989. Another I, 291; 11, 310 and 18, 680 wells and boreholes were sunk in 1990, 1991 and 1992, respectively (Ekpo & Olaniyi, 1995).

Table 1: DFRRI’s Completed Projects on Economic and Social Infrastructures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount Allocated (₦ Million)</th>
<th>Feeder Roads (km)</th>
<th>Rural Electricity (No. of communities)</th>
<th>Boreholes/wells</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>1,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>30,728.34</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. Production of Agricultural Inputs: With respect to DFRRI's production activities, two special programmes for cultivating 50 million fruit trees and producing improved seeds or mass distribution were launched in 1986. In 1987, various research institutes were engaged in the Directorate's seeds multiplication and distribution, livestock, horticulture and aquaculture development programmes. The end of 1987 marked a total production of 3,624 tonnes of assorted breeder/foundation seeds for livestock. In 1990, 1,633 tonnes of seeds of arable crops, 4,598 million oil palm seedlings and 294,072 tonnes of groundnut seeds were distributed to farmers. Aquaculture also increased through the production of 2,666 million fish fingerlings. In 1991, the achievements improved some 4,033.13 tonnes of improved seeds. 17,112 million seedlings, 2,666 million fingerlings and 14,529 tonnes of fodder seeds were produced and distributed to farmers. In 1992, 846,224 fruit seedlings for horticulture, 5,726.13 tonnes of arable crops seeds and 3,466 million fingerlings were produced and distributed to farmers as shown on table 2 below.

Table 2: DFRRI's Supply of Agricultural Inputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arable crops (tonnes)</th>
<th>Oil palm (million)</th>
<th>Groundnuts (tonnes)</th>
<th>Fodder seeds (tonnes)</th>
<th>Horticulture (tonnes)</th>
<th>Fish (million)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3,624</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1,633</td>
<td>4,598</td>
<td>294,072</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>4,033.13</td>
<td>17,112</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>14,529</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>5,726.13</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>846,224</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


c. Development and Dissemination of Improved Technology: Another important project embarked upon by DFRRI was its collaboration with Nigerian Building and Road Research Institute (NBRRI), Project Development Agency (PRODA) and Bida Polytechnic on research into the ways of using local raw materials, and improving local technology for constructing houses in rural areas, the rural housing unit of the Directorate trained about 250 technical personnel from all the states; on how to use locally available raw materials and technology for building houses. In 1992, a total of 8,024 technical extension workers were engaged in various communities to boost rural housing. The number of rural farmers who were able to go to farm in motorized vehicles increased by 23.6 per cent of the rural population between 1986 and 1993, and 31.4% of the rural dwellers had access to new health facilities built during the periods.

d. Mobilization for Mass Participation: DFRRI encouraged and assisted in the formation of community development associations (CDAs) and community banks (which have metamorphosed into microfinance banks). The CDAs became very significant in rural development. They identified projects, assisted DFRRI, and mobilized the rural dwellers to partake in modernizing their domain. Between 1989 and 1991, a total of 8,108 CDAs were registered. Also, community banks were established in almost all the local government areas of the country.

The above suggested tremendous quantitative achievement by DFRRI in all areas of the objectives. However, the quality of amenities provided posed a lot of problems, which reduced the impact of the Directorate on the rural communities. Furthermore, considering that there are more than 97,000 rural communities in Nigeria, these achievements were far from being adequate to solve the problems of rural life in the country. Some other problems which DFRRI faced was its inability to find a modus vivendi with other executive agencies of government, and ineffective grassroots monitoring and follow-up systems due to the large extent of the areas to be serviced, and the paucity of staff and logistic support.
7. **National Directorate of Employment (NDE):** This programme came into being during Gen. Ibrahim Babangida’s regime. It was established to deal with the rising unemployment in the country. It was structured to offer job seekers an opportunity of finding employment or working on their own through agriculture, industry and handicrafts. Each participant in the scheme was empowered to find jobs or otherwise to benefit from loans guaranteed by the establishment. NDE had its attendant problems, which included low funding for all participants, poor preparation of job seekers and the application of bureaucratic systems.

8. **The National Directorate for Social Mobilization:** Gen. Ibrahim Babangida's Administration established the directorate in 1987. It was popularly called Mass Mobilization for Self-reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER). It pursued aggressively the mobilization and enlightenment of the people towards their rights and duties. It covered the whole nation appealing to the conscience and sense of responsibility of the people, which is considered a most important aspect of rural development. It also stepped up a virile campaign for food production through its food first programme.

9. **The Better Life Programme:** Following the outcome of Beijing Conference of 1985, Chief (Mrs.) Maryam Babangida initiated the Better Life Programme for Rural Women in September 1987. The objectives of the programme, according to Obasi and Oguche (1995), include:
   i. To stimulate and motivate rural women towards achieving better living standards, and sensitize the rest of Nigerians to their problems;
   ii. To educate rural women on simple hygiene, family planning, the importance of child-care and increased literacy rates;
   iii. To mobilize women collectively in order to improve their general lot and for them to seek and achieve leadership roles in all spheres of society;
   iv. To raise consciousness about their rights, the availability of opportunities and facilities, their social, political and economic responsibilities;
   v. To encourage recreation and enrich family life; and
   vi. To inculcate the spirit of self-development particularly in the fields of education, business, the arts, crafts and agriculture.

   The activities of the Better Life Programme were remarkable to the extent that its impact was felt throughout the length and breadth of the country. Some of the achievements of Better Life Programme included that:
   i. It exposed the potentials of women in creativity and management.
   ii. Women became actively involved in all government programmes from the grassroots.
   iii. Credit and other inputs now flow to rural organizations more than ever before.
   iv. It had the establishment of ministries of women affairs in all the states of the federation (Ijere, 1990).

   Ijere (1990) remarked that rural development will continue to be a basic problem to developing countries including Nigeria, because of the following reasons:
   1. **Lack of National Philosophical Base.** The Nigerian rural development strategy lacked a philosophical, ideological and holistic foundation. It had a body (policy-makers and government functionaries) but had no soul to give it life and sense of direction. The usual practice has been to be in office propounding slogans and manifestations for the people below. That was instrumental to the failure of some rural development projects such as Farm Settlement Scheme, Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, etc. A philosophical base is typified by an internal motivating and compelling force or commitment stemming from faith and love of the sapiens in the rural sector and determination to work for their upliftment. Without philosophical super structure, rural development remains an echo of good intentions from government and urban dwellers.
   2. **Lack of Integrated Pilot Demonstration.** Before 1976, there was no national rural development programme in Nigeria. What was in vogue was segmented or unco-ordinated rural development where it is assumed that new programmes in one community will have ripple effects on other communities and institutions. According to Oyaide ((1988), the first Department of Rural Development at federal level was established in 1976 to mobilize people, initiate local projects with local leadership, promote agriculture, rural development and community projects. By 1978, the government was not so sure of what to do with rural development. As such, the term "rural development" was added to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, and
later replaced with Water Resources. All these occur because it is not certain about the place of rural development in the overall development strategy.

3. Lack of Cohesive Identity. Failures have occurred in rural development as people regard the social and cultural aspects of development as subordinate to the economic development. Any innovation that does not guarantee the cohesiveness of the group and respect for their history and beliefs have little hope of survival.

4. Defective Local Economies. People tend to treat rural development projects as charity or welfare packages. Few people are interested in the costing, evaluating and ensuring that targets are met. As such, production is emphasized in rural development policy while marketing and marketing outlets are neglected. For example, Kano State Government in 1983 poured in a huge amount of money (about ₦ 895 million) into Kano River Basin Agricultural Project with little or nothing to show for them on the ground.

5. Lack of Core Project Leadership. The failure of project leadership to come from within to sustain the development projects has led to the falling apart of things in rural development. The tendency has been to rely on official leadership for carrying out rural projects. These official leaders are not prepared to motivate and sustain the enthusiasm of the people in the face of conflicts, depressions and unfulfilled expectations.

6. Inadequate Community Participation. The top-bottom approach to rural development employed by government functionaries whip up enthusiasm among the people, as there is absence of total community participation. Due to the approach adopted, people evoke unwilling response as they are regarded as being incapable of standing on their feet.

7. Lack of Grassroots Planning. There is little or no attempt to allow the rural communities to identify the problems and goals, analyze their own needs, and commit themselves to the achievement of targets. Local experts, Chiefs and community leaders, were taken for granted in deciding what projects to embark upon, and where and how to execute them. The planners do not consult even the interest groups, the co-operatives, and professional organizations.

8. Inability to Optimize Local Resources. Due to Nigeria's penchant for foreign-made goods, local resources are neglected for the imported goods. Local talents and manpower as well as other resources are also ignored, thereby loosing the opportunity of evolving appropriate technology.

9. Neglect of Community Structural Approach. The pattern in Rural Development Programmes in Nigeria centres on the imposition of imported schemes whether or not they are related to the cultural and sociological life of the people. Examples of these areas of neglect include: appointing new leaders where such leaders already exist, not making use of youth organizations, age grades and women's groups in the initiation and implementation of programmes.

Conclusion

One cannot deny the fact that successive governments in Nigeria since independent to-date made frantic efforts towards improving the deplorable conditions of rural dwellers through the introduction of laudable programmes at the grassroots level. However, good policies without proper implementation are as good as bad. It is regrettable to note that most of the rural development programmes introduced by both the Military and civilian administrations in Nigeria were short-lived and unsustainable. There appear to be no clear-cut agenda for ensuring the continuity of programmes introduced by previous administrations. Most successive administrations are culpable of introducing new programmes in alter disregard for completing the project left behind by previous administration. Every foundation laid is usually pulled down in the name of laying new foundations which may not see the light of the day. If all the rural development programmes including the integrated strategy were implemented to the latter, Nigeria’s rural environment would have been a little heaven at the moment.

Recommendations
After thorough analysis of the pain and gain of intenerated rural development programmes in Nigeria, the following recommendations are considered fundamental to this paper.

1. The idea of adopting imperial models which are alien to our rural economic reality should be discarded because such strategies have proved counter-productive in our environment. Emphasis of rural development should shift from “top-bottom” to “bottom-top strategy” since only those who wear the shoes can ascertain the source and location of the pain. To this end, the rural dwellers should be allowed to make sufficient input while formulating and implementing rural development programmes.

2. Nigeria’s rural development strategy should shift from the sartorial approach to integrated approach which takes full cognizance of the systemic nature of the national development landscape in terms of urban-rural, inter-rural, and intra-rural relationships and linkages.

3. There should be an institutional framework for planning and implementation of rural development programmes. This will go a long way in mandating all in-coming administration to complete ongoing projects before introducing new policies and programmes.

4. There is also need for a spatial re-organization of the country’s rural landscape into meaningful units of effective resource mobilization, location, and allocation.

5. There is need for direct allocation of resources to rural areas as against the Joint State Local Government Account system.

6. Federal presences most is felt in all local communities with a view to solve the problems of rural-urban drift.

REFERENCES


