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35. Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-colonization and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1965), 63.
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38. *Moumouni Education in Africa*, trans. Phyllis Nauts (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 180-85; Amin, *Peace Corps in Cameroon*, 121.
39. Busia, *Purposeful Education for Africa*, 17-18, 95-96.
40. *Ibid.*, 75.
41. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 206.
42. Azikiwe *Renaissance Africa*, 135.

## GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

By  
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### Introduction

Rural development is a topical subject in all nations of the world especially in Africa. With reference to Nigeria, national development planners are now taking adequate recognition of the importance of the rural sector. This is why recent National Development plans contain strategies through which the nation aims at transforming her rural communities. This realisation rests on the fact that Nigeria's rural sector occupies a strategic position in the socio-economic systems of the country.

Research indicate that there are three classes of variables that could influence rural development. These are:

- A. Variables in the rural environment:
  - (i) Over seventy-five percent (75%) of the population of this country live in rural areas, (1991 Census figures).
  - (ii) Over seventy percent (70%) of the food consumed in this country is produced by rural small-scale farmers (Okigbo, 1982).
  - (iii) Over eighty percent (80%) of the national resources on which this nation depends, is deposited in the rural areas. For instance crude oil which, at present, is responsible for over 70% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earning is deposited in the rural earth.
- B. Variables in the individuals like the Managerial ability of those charged with the implementation of rural development programmes.
- C. Variables outside the rural areas or non-rural issues that influence rural development such as Government (especially at Federal level) policies. For instance, between 1960 and 1980, government has allocated between N3.0 billion and N13.0 billion for agricultural and rural development respectively. Besides, eleven different national development programmes were established for rural transformation (The Analyst Vol. 2 May 1987). The thrust of this paper is on the third variable. We shall undertake a critical look at the effect of government on rural development in Nigeria.

## **Government Efforts at Rural Development**

Government intervention in rural development in Nigeria is in accordance with conclusions reached by rural development research experts. Adelakun (1989) for example said that the rural area should be seen as the anchor which constitute the very core from which the values of the nation grow and that when rural development programmes are localised, a strong nation will eventually develop. He indicated that for rural transformation to become a reality in this country the phenomenon must not be perceived as an issue that concerns mainly the local dwellers and must be so addressed in all Government strategies.

In spite of measures so far taken by the Government and the billions of Naira voted for rural development, the problems which prompted these actions have not been solved as there still exists a clear difference between the urban and rural standards of living in this country. The socio-economic conditions of rural Nigeria is that of poverty, disease, ignorance, filth and constant threat to life due to non-availability of factors desired for the satisfaction of the basic needs of life. The rate of inequality of life in urban and rural Nigeria is high. This is largely responsible for the increased rate of rural-urban migration. According to a report in the 4th National development plan, "Urban-Rural income differential which rose from 2.6 in 1960 to 4.6 in 1977 was about 5.4 in 1984." With a standard income differential growth rate of 0.1 percent annually, rural-urban differential rate in Nigeria in 1993 was 6.3%. This is an indication that there is a difference between the level of income in rural and urban Nigeria. It also indicates differences in the standards of living in these communities.

Akinbode (1983) in his study on rural development in Nigeria showed that government action contain merely the provision of rural infrastructures through the construction of rural feeder roads, rural electrification, and provision of water bore-holes. However, these projects often break-down almost immediately. This approach to rural development from the top emphasize that the "top-ideas" will trickle down to enhance the quality of living conditions in rural areas. Various government sponsored programmes in rural areas are often headed by people who live in the cities but do not have a good idea of the workings in the rural areas. Most of these programmes have failed to attain the desired objectives because there are duplications and confusion in the various government strategies, that even the rural people who are expected to benefit from them, are confused with regards to what should be their role in the exercise. This has made them to develop non-challant attitude towards the programmes.

Secondly, Ewolua (1990) and Ukwu (1980) noted that government efforts at rural development in Nigeria failed because they do not originate from the needs and

aspirations of rural dwellers, thus what successive governments have done is to pour the nations' scarce resources away from real rural needs into programmes which are designed to meet the socio-economic needs of urban contractors.

Furthermore, factors which hinder development programmes' objectives of rural development in Nigeria relate to those who are charged with the responsibility of implementing the programmes. They perceive the programmes merely as a means of enriching themselves. As noted in the 4th National development plan, "All government rural development policy measures were generally appropriate and in the right direction, yet they failed and the reason for the failure is primarily poor implementation." A general conclusion is that government rural development programmes in Nigeria have failed.

These authors are of the view that the strategies through which government intervene in rural development in Nigeria are not the types that can easily solve the salient constraints to public rural development efforts.

## **Government Intervention in Rural Development in Nigeria - Prospect**

Dijeomah (1972) noted that the real idea of rural development relates to every aspect of rural socio-economic relationships. It is a process of not only increasing the level of per-capital income in the rural areas, but also of raising the standard of living of rural people where the standard of living depends upon such factors as improved food and nutritions, health, education, housing, recreation and security.

To develop rural Nigeria means implementing programmes which will remove the disparity between the per-capita income of urban and rural communities and make rural dwellers have access to welfare amenities. It involves designing policies, strategies, and programmes directed towards the upliftment of rural areas and the promotion of activities usually carried out in the area, such as rural craft, fishing, building as well as transforming the social infrastructure with the ultimate aim of achieving a full utilization of available rural physical and human resources. Thus it relates to having higher income and better living conditions for rural populations particularly the rural poor. It therefore involves effective participation of the latter in the development process.

This explanation is very relevant to Nigeria, since recent development policy perceives rural dwellers as the core of national development. They are not to be regarded as passive recipients of organizational inputs. Instead, they should be actively involved. In the 3rd and 4th National development plans (1975 - 80 and 1980 - 86) respectively, Nigerian governments had programmes which were directed towards the development

of rural communities. While the 3rd National development plan encouraged governments' direct participation in food production as a way of raising the standard of living of rural people, the 4th National development plan efforts were made to prevent this. That is why the plan, had programmes which were designed to make rural dwellers participate in agricultural actions geared towards improving their own productivity. Some major programmes through which government performed significant roles in improving rural agricultural production in recent times *vis-a-vis* the participation of rural dwellers, include among others:-

- i River Basin Development Scheme &
- ii. Rural credit guarantee scheme.

**River Basin Development Scheme:** Ukwu (1988), after a critical analysis of the actions of the Classic Tennessee Valley Authority in U.S.A. said that Nigeria rural development planners, started perceiving the fact that an effective, orderly and optional utilization of the available rural land, water and mineral is a means of enhancing rural agricultural development in the country. This led to the establishments of River Basin Development Authorities from the mid seventies. In 1973 and 1974 the Sokoto and Chad Basin Development Authorities were started respectively. By 1976 the Nigeria River Basin Authority Decree divided the country into eleven River Basin Authorities. This demarcation was based more on geo-political rather than on morphological criteria. The institutionalisation of River Basin development was designed to make the government and ruralites directly involved in agricultural production. It was hoped that through this institution, increased food production would be enhanced thereby enhancing the quality of the living conditions of the rural people.

In attempt to attain the above mentioned goal, the institution was saddled with the following roles:

- (i) Large scale mechanised clearing and cultivation of land for farms.
- (ii) Construction of dams and bore-holes for irrigation and rural water supply as well as construction of rural access roads.
- (iii) Electrification of rural areas.
- (iv) Establishment of agro-service centres with workshop and tractor hire services.
- (v) Large scale multiplication of improved seeds for distribution to farmers.

- (vi) Establishment of grazing reserves for nomadic cattle breeders.
- (vii) Large scale afforestation scheme.
- (viii) Training junior staff for rural development projects (C.B.N. 1980).

### **Institutional Inputs to River Basin Development Schemes**

In the 3rd National development plan the nation sought to promote the performance of the above roles through the promotion of irrigation for import-substituting farm products through the actions of River Basin Authorities. In this regard 28% of the total agricultural spending within the period was allocated to this institution. More than N1.00 billion was spent on only three River Basin development projects in the Northern part of Nigeria between 1975 - 80. This was 2/3 of the originally planned outlay for agriculture in the 3rd N.D.P. The total cost of establishing the eleven River Basin Authorities in Nigeria as noted by Abulu and Silva (1980) was about N2.00 billion. It is now certain that between 1976 - 1983 a huge sum of money was spent in River Basin projects yet the level of food production in the country was not improved. "The annual growth rate of food production in Nigeria (1961 - 1983) lies between 0.5%-1% while the annual population growth rate lies between 2.5% - 3.0%. The food demand growth rate of the population is between 5% - 7%" (Idachaba 1986: 71). Apart from this, the activities of the River Basin Authorities is discovered to have had disastrous effect in rural communities for according to Stock (1978) the irrigation dam project at Orjirami had been considered to have a disastrous effect on the ecology, productivity and reliability of farm lands downstream from the dam. He also noted that communities were dislodged from their traditional settings and their farming patterns disrupted.

Furthermore, other researches revealed that instead of increasing food production and contributing to the development of rural areas, it affected very negatively not only the rural areas but the national economy.

From the foregoing discussion it is correct to conclude that River development schemes failed to attain their goals. This failure is attested to the fact that agricultural contribution to national income started decreasing appreciably during the period of executing the projects of the River Basin Development Authorities. Idachaba (1986) noted that "Agricultural contribution to G.D.P. has fallen from 56% in 1967 to 26% in 1984. Agricultural G.D.P. in real term was declining at an annual rate of 0.4% (1960 - 70) with 1960 base year and at annual rate of 1.1% (1970 - 85) with 1970 as base year while other sectors are indicating a considerable increase. In essence agricultural share of G.D.P. in real terms fell drastically within ten years. This trend

of declining food production is most worrisome precisely because it occurred exactly during a period when the government credit and input policies were instituted into agricultural production. The reason for the failure of this institution is that the actors in the institutionalised public programmes only considered it as a way of getting things from the government and as a means of enriching themselves. This led to mismanagement of inputs. A notable rural development researcher (Idachaba 1983) noted that there was a mad rush to allocate a colossal sum of money to R.B.D.A. without any effort to formulate coherent programmes with the result that Board members in many R.B.D.A. as in the civilian regime reportedly attend board meetings only to collect cheques for contractors in their constituencies.

Also, Essan and Olayide (1985) posit that River Basin development scheme is a strategy associated with highly unproductive use of scarce meagre resources, for it only tends to waste a huge amount of natural resources, tie-down a large number of scarce administrative personnel at high opportunity cost to the economy. It is a colossal waste of the meagre national resources and further underdevelopment of the rural areas in the country.

### Rural Credit Facilities Guarantee Scheme

To enable Nigeria's rural dwellers have access to the capital which they need for agricultural production, the Federal Government established institutions to take care of granting financial loans to them. The institutions were to assist rural people obtain loans on interest rates that are lesser than the ones charged directly by the commercial banks. This led to the creation of the small-scale agricultural credit Guarantee scheme in 1977 under the Central Bank of Nigeria. Through this institution the Federal Government attempted to mobilize private banks to provide capital for rural farmers at lesser interest rate. It was hoped that this will be a means by which rural farmers could purchase important agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides which they needed to increase agricultural productions. It was a scheme which made the central Bank to guarantee loans from private banks to private rural or peasant farmers. Secondly the scheme encouraged private banks to establish certain number of branches in the rural areas. Furthermore, the scheme made or encouraged banks to commit a minimum of 6% of their loan to agricultural purpose in the rural areas.

### Institutional Inputs to Rural Credit Guarantee Scheme

The institutional inputs through this scheme to rural development is encouraging because the amount which private banks loaned out towards agricultural projects between 1977-1984 was about N6.0 billion with N2.00 billion given directly to

rural farmers. This gesture was mainly to raise the level of food crops and live-stock production in the country. The trend of the activities of this institution can be classified as encouraging. For instance, in a previous study by the author in 1990 it is noted that between 1985 and 1987 private banks situated in rural communities loaned out over N1.0 million to small-scale rural farmers in Esan clan of Edo State of Nigeria.

This figure reflects a substantial input but the project cannot be classified as successful because its institutionalisation does not effect a corresponding increase in agricultural production in the country. Besides, the supposed recipient of the loan, rural farmers and fishermen, had many difficulties in the scheme such as inadequate collateral securities. Secondly, there was no real method to ascertain the category of individuals who benefited from the credit guarantee scheme. Therefore, it is doubtful if the loan actually reached the small-scale rural farmers. Idode (1989) stated : "We have found that the administration of farm credit scheme had satisfied the needs of the affluent farmers rather than the peasant producers." As it is now discovered that the loan is concentrated in the hands of urban based (Supposed rural) farmers, the credit guarantee scheme's effects or influence on rural development is considered retrogressive.

### Discussion

The role of government in rural development in Nigeria had been assessed and the non-attainment of the programmes' objectives had been attributed to several factors. The identified constraining factors are mainly those in the situations of actions of the programmes. They include the following:

- i. **Poor implementation:** The 3rd National development plan identified the problem of poor implementation of programmes which leads to a waste of scarce national resources.
- ii. **Duplication of Programmes:** Utomakili (1989) noted that duplication of development programmes under different names leads to confusion in the planning and executing of projects.
- iii. **Foreign Models:** Oloko (1983) and Alo (1987) identified the adoption of foreign theoretical framework and imported development models mostly "modernisation perspective" without modifying it to take care of cultural factors, historical experience (such as effect of colonialisation or slave trade) and environmental variable, as a major factor which hinders the attainment of rural development objectives in the country.

iv. **Bureaucracy:** Idode (1989) highlighted the negative effects of bureaucratisation of programmes as the main constraint to rural developments in Nigeria.

However, the author of this paper agrees with the views of Nwosu and Nwankwo (1983) that these are salient factors (as indicated earlier) which negatively influence government sponsored rural development programmes in this country. They are not properly recognized by policy makers; thus conscious actions are not taken to eradicate them.

Leadership is taken in this article to mean individuals charged with the responsibility of allocating, coordinating, directing and controlling the human and non-human resources that are to be transformed into products for rural transformations. It relates to the management system in the organisation. Onyemelukwe (1966) noted that leadership in government sponsored rural development programmes in Nigeria is not usually compatible with programmes' objectives. Individuals are always appointed to lead in public institutions on the notion of restricted sense of the "Executive Officers". Their appointment is bureaucratised and based on formalised qualities of technical, academics and managerial competence. Thus the main reason for leadership's participation in public projects in the country is monetary rewards. This kind of leadership has nothing at stake in the programmes because the non-attainment of the programmes objectives does not mean termination of his appointment, neither does it affect his status in the society. Utilisation of rewards systems by such leadership is formalised as well. It is not based on the principle of rewards according to performance. Leaders in public development corporations in Nigeria are known to have personified their offices, for according to Onyemelukwe (1966), the general managers in government development corporations, (in spite of the fact that there are other Chief Officers in-charge of production, finance, and personnel), are not prepared to delegate full responsibilities to subordinates. This has made leadership in government enterprises to be "self-oriented". They have no concern for the attainment of organisational goals. The consequence is, usually, that they (leadership) poorly manage ideas; (Human and non-human inputs). This leads to embezzlement of public funds and non-commitment of leaders to organisational objectives. This indicates why leadership in public sponsored rural development programmes in Nigeria don't rationally co-ordinate, organise and utilise organisational inputs. The outcome is failure of programmes.

Further, it has been noted that actors in government rural development programmes in Nigeria do not develop and sustain functional attitudinal qualities that are necessary for the attainment of organisational goals. Some of the functional attitudinal qualities according to Katz and Kabo (1968) include:

- i. Co-operation with fellow organisational actors.
- ii. Making suggestions for the improvement of the organisation.
- iii. Protection of the good name of the organisation from disaster.
- iv. Willingness to undertake self-training with a view of assuming greater responsibilities within the organisation.

The authors noted that the most important attitudinal requirement that will encourage the development of functional attitudinal qualities is loyalty to organisational ideas. Those charged with the responsibility of implementing public rural development projects in Nigeria are not loyal to the organisations. This made a greater percentage of them to develop only "specialised abilities" which results from the techniques of performing their duties. They lack "generalise abilities" which should have made them to love the employing organisations. Therefore, most public employees in Nigeria lack the following:

- i. Alertness to responsibilities,
- ii. preparedness to adjust to changing socio-economic conditions and
- iii. The spirit of courage when it relates to sacrificing for the organisation.

The consequences are that actors in public development corporation in Nigeria are not duty conscious. They are not disciplined, but corrupt, and are circumventors of organisational rules and regulations. They have wrong orientation when it relates to utilising public property. Negative attitudinal qualities as enumerated above have often frustrated highly planned and well articulated rural development programmes in Nigeria. It has also rendered ineffective very many impressive structural and institutional arrangements for rural transformational in this country.

Thirdly, Nwosu and Nwankwo (1983) noted that Nigeria has no strong and relevant ideology along which public issues can be pursued. Ideology in this article refers to the manner of thinking or ideas and characteristics of group of persons which form the basis of the socio-economic and political systems of the group or society. It includes a body of value and belief system both written and unwritten that are necessary for orderly interactions toward the attainment of societal objectives. This relates to how the society should be organised and the mode of mobilising people for the attainment of specific goals. The authors are in support of the above views that Nigeria has no strong and relevant ideology along which rural development programmes can be adequately pursued. What we have at the moment is pronouncements and slogans by successive governments. Such pronouncements cannot motivate individuals to commit themselves to public issues. For an illustration, although the 4th National Development Plan emphasised mass-mobilisation as a means of actualising rural development, the institutions through which it hopes to

attain this, such as DFRRI, made no effort to explain the idea. It does not make concrete attempt to explain how the society should be organised, and the rural mass mobilised. The institutions' ideas of rural mass mobilisation is that rural people should be encouraged to respond to their projects. There are no detailed analysis of how rural people should fully participate in the planning, execution, supervision, monitoring and maintenance of development projects. The consequence is that both the operator of the programmes (government functionaries) and the recipients of programmes products (rural population) are confused. They do not know what should be their respective roles in the programmes. Furthermore, the non-existence of a strong and relevant ideology in Nigeria encourages ethnic politics while formulating development policy in the country. Ethnic politics refer to situations in which those charged with the responsibility of formulating development policies in the country consciously encourage the execution of programmes which favour the social groups of their origin. This results in having rural development projects only in areas of those who have access to political powers in the country. It does not consider areas where the projects are necessary and relevant. The outcome is that many rural development projects in Nigeria become sources of waste.

### Recommendations and Conclusions

Hitherto, most rural development programmes have been government based. It is the opinion of the author that there should be greater involvement of the rural people in the execution of such projects. Therefore, further rural development projects must be designed to be rural-people participation based. Village heads and rural-community leaders if allowed to participate actively in such programmes, through participation in the planning and implementation, to a large extent would ensure its success. The fear that they will lose the confidence of the villagers will ensure commitment from them.

We also recommend the appointment of tested career officers instead of political appointees to head government development programmes in the rural areas. Since port-folio responsibility for different aspects of rural development rests with the executive ministries, rural development programmes should be headed by career officers to ensure institutional coordination. If there must be political appointees, they must be seen in their complementary roles so that political appointees do not feel threatened as to sabotage integrated rural development programmes.

Also, leaders of such programmes should be made to be accountable. At periodic intervals, leaders of governments' rural development programmes should be made to give account of their stewardship, while still in office. When this is done and government finds any officer wanting, it should not hesitate to punish (either through

removal or otherwise) the offenders. Those performing well should also be adequately rewarded by government.

Attempt was made in the article to show that at every point in time in the history of Nigeria (especially since the attainment of independence) rural communities had been adequately considered while formulating development policies. This fact is attested to the array of programmes, which were directed towards the transformation of the nation's rural sectors. In spite of the laudable efforts of the government, which made it allocate several billions of Naira to rural development, the socio-economic conditions of the country's rural area is that of underdevelopment. This indicates that the prospect of government intervention in rural development in Nigeria is not an encouraging one; such efforts have failed to attain the desired objectives of uplifting the standards of living in rural areas. This is so because the problems which most experts highlight as constraints to the issue mainly concern variables in the situation of action. There seems to be complete neglect of variables in the actors systems as well as those in the social systems outside the situation of action.

However, the author is strongly of the view that attempt to develop rural Nigeria will only attain the desired goals if the variables in all the sub-systems that influence the attainment of organisational goals are adequately taken into consideration. Primarily, the strategy must involve the development of people, that is developing Nigerians to have proper orientations with regards to utilisation of public resources. It must be noted that rural development cannot be brought from outside nor can it succeed if imposed on the people. Therefore, rural development efforts in Nigeria which concentrate mainly on the provision of welfare service and rural infrastructure without making adequate provision for the development of man will not succeed. Man and his orientation is the key to development. He is the variable that will influence the basic services needed for the creation of awareness in the individuals. If such venture is vigorously pursued, it will provide the effective machinery that this nation needs for orderly co-ordination, distribution, and control of the scarce national resources. It will greatly reduce the constraining factors enumerated earlier in this article.

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