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RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: THE TANZANIAN EXAMPLE

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Abstract

Rural development is the spring board to galvanise and achieve national expansion and developmental goals the aim of both the millennium and sustainable developmental goals were to address the huge social political and economic gaps that exist among developing countries. Nigeria as a country have also developed various templates aimed at developing rural communities, such programmes like Green Revolution, the river Basin development agencies. Operation Fed the Nation (OFD) and Directorate of foods; Road and Rural infrastructures (DFRRI) among others. However, despite of all these programmes, rural development remained a mirage. Again the Tanzanian model or approach which is bottom-up was essential a grassroot strategy that focused on the rural dwellers in Tanzanian and gave them a sense of belonging. The introduction of Ujamaa village and farm settlements were adopted by the citizens as the centre of planning and execution of projects and this positively impacted on the lives of the people. In contrast, the Nigerian approach appears more reactionary and mundane because it achieved little interm of meeting the needs and aspirations of the citizens. This study however, recommends among others, that state and local governments should allow the citizens to participate and initiate policies and programme that are affect their lives directly.

Introduction

Scholars have always been interested in the rural area. This is because the rural areas of Nigeria are: Inhabited by the bulk of the nation's population; they serve as the base for the production of food and fiber. They are also the major sources of capital formation for the country, and a

principal market for domestic manufacturers (Olatunbosun, 1975). In general terms the rural areas engage in primary activities that form the foundation for any economic development. Yet, despite the importance attached to the rural areas, they are not attractive to live. There is absence of infrastructure, which

improves the quality of life. Usually, there is absence of potable water, electricity and good feeder roads. The rural people have low purchasing power and standard of living. (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2004). The Federal Government of Nigeria has made many attempts at developing the rural areas over the years. This has included the Operation Feed the Nation, establishment of River Basin Authorities, Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure {DFRRI} e t. c. In spite of all these, the rural areas in Nigeria are still areas where public/infrastructure facilities are poor, where the governments' policies are least felt in terms of development where poverty is highest and social indicators of development such as doctor - patient ratio, teacher - pupil ratio etc. are low, (Oluranti.2001). The state of Tanzania however has been able to witness considerable improvements in indicators of development over fifteen years period when it launched the Ujamaa, a policy of Comprehensive Rural Development incorporating rural education, rural healthcare, agriculture and rural infrastructural improvement.

Thus, while literacy rate averaged 55.2% within the same period (1969 - 1985) in Nigeria, Tanzania was able to achieve more than 85% literacy rate by teaching in Swahili language, a language indigenous to the rural people (Njonjo, 2000). During the same period, Tanzania also witnessed considerable agricultural improvements with production of sisal doubling. By and large, Tanzanian experience at rural development is a success. This paper therefore evaluates the Tanzania model of rural development and lessons Nigerian development planners can learn if Nigeria is to have sustainable rural development.

Methodology

The study adopts descriptive review of Tanzanian and Nigerian Rural Development Strategies, information were mostly derived from published works, books, dissertations and monographs. The findings were presented in descriptive form to capture the essence of the study.

Models of Rural Development

Several countries have embarked on different models of rural development, many of which take the form of land reforms. Some however have gone beyond mere land reform to include a whole range of political, economic, administrative, and institutional reforms. Some of these countries include - China, Israel, Egypt, India, Tanzania, Nigeria and now Zimbabwe, where the Mugabe government is in the process of re-distributing land wrongly acquired by the white minority during white minority rule. Rural development to some extent is socialism (Arimah, 1997) since it involves intervention following the failure of market forces to guarantee balanced urban and rural development. No wonder therefore that the process is embraced by socialist and communist countries as a means of ensuring balanced and equal development in the urban and rural areas.

Need for Rural Development in Africa

Rural development is a problem that is of concern to both Developed and Underdeveloped Nations of the world. Rural development can be viewed as the outcome of a series of quantitative changes occurring among a given rural population and whose emerging effects indicate a rise in the standard of living and favorable changes in the way of life of the people

concerned. According to Lele (1978) rural development implies improving living standards of the mass of the low income population residing in rural areas and making the process of their development self-sustaining. It involves the desirability of overcoming malnutrition, poverty and diseases which are the most immediate and widespread aspect of human suffering being witnessed in most rural setting. Rural development goes more than improving agricultural productivity; it entails the creation and fair sharing of social and economic benefits resulting from growth.

Thus according to Seers (1969), rural development involves diversification of rural productive base.. However, the developing countries are most affected, because it is clear that the dire problems of poverty compound other problems of rural development. Many rural areas in Africa lack good infrastructural facilities and social services. Since these are the arteries and channels of rural development, it has been difficult to get some of the rural areas or convince them that they are part and parcel of the government of the day. Many rural areas lack some of the basic facilities such as roads, water, electricity supply and community facilities hence - rural development. Moreover, many rural areas in Africa have poor natural resources as land, forest, wild-life, minerals, and good climate and so on. For example, the poor quality agricultural land in parts of Eastern states of Africa, Imo and Cross River constitute one of the insurmountable problems of rural developments in those states. The Sahara and the Kalahari Deserts of Africa are areas that are not attractive to investment.

Moreover, under human resource problems, we have low productivity of some segments of the rural population through possible under - utilization of the available labour. Moreover, many rural peasant farmers and craftsmen are operating at a level of technology that has not kept abreast with modern changes. The implements have remained the traditional hoe and cutlass and majority of the farmer's still operates at subsistent level by operating crude agricultural practice, like shifting cultivation and bush fallowing. Many of the rural poor are permanently indebted. There is poor response to rural self-help projects etc. In terms of socio-economic problems, issues like poor investment, poor crop yield leading to poor income, rural unemployment and under employment, rural poverty, rural depopulation as a result of rural - urban migration, low doctor-patient ratio, low teacher-pupil ratio, poor innovation e.t.c. have all been identified. All these have necessitated rural transformation, hence rural development. The institutional problems confronting the rural areas in the developing countries include non-existence or ineffective co-operative societies, financial institutions, research institutions, extension services, trade and distributive services institutions (Idachaba, 1980). The presence of these institutional infrastructures contribute significantly to rural development by ensuring production, income, employment, welfare, quality of life and educational progress of rural communities.

Unfortunately this is not so. Moreover, in many rural areas of Africa, there is abundant evidence of poor organization, administration and execution, or rural enterprise production and distribution. The

administration of rural development is on the whole beset by problems of continually evolving structures, institutional dynamics, effective coordination, structural flexibility, personnel training and control, programming management, and effective programme evaluation.

Conceptual Issues Behind Rural Development in Tanzania

The Tanzania model of Rural Development follows the bottom-up approach that seeks to engender growth from below rather than the top-down strategy {Stroh, 1967}. This model emphasizes citizen participation, community effort, participatory democracy and poverty alleviation at the grass root level. {Olayiwola, 2005}. The strategy opines that the failure of development strategies in the developing countries is traceable to lack of emphasis on community participation in the process of development. It therefore emphasizes that man should be central in any development effort for such initiatives to be sustainable.

From below development could spread from the bottom leading to be balanced regional development. This approach provides alternative to the Top-down strategy, which might even engender more regional inequality through backwash and polarization effects.

Evaluation of the Success Rate of the Model

Tanzania is one of the few African countries that embraced socialism immediately after its independence. Nyereye who assumed power from the British colonialist encouraged the amalgamation of Tanganyika and the Republic of Zanzibar. The union produced the Republic of

Tanzania in 1964. Prior to independence and immediately after independence, Tanzania was a typical African country, characterized by extensively underdeveloped rural areas. Except for the Arab province of Zanzibar and colonial cities like Dar es Salaam and Gold Mining towns of Geita and Mpanda as well as administrative cities Arusha and Oldeani, much of Tanzania can only be described as Rural. What made matters worse is the fact that the population of 10 million people was dispersed, except for some coastal cities as well as cities along the bank of Lake Victoria. At independence, the Tanzanian illiteracy rate was more than 90%. The country had less than forty doctors to ten million people. The only University in East Africa was the Makerere in Uganda. Except for Dar es Salaam and some few cities, the people had no access to treated water supply, health facilities and other social infrastructures. What compounded the problem was that the Massais that constituted the majority of the population were herdsmen. Being herdsmen, they had no permanent settlement, so planning became difficult. This situation was worsened by intermittent drought, which made maize, the staple food to be in short supply in 1967 and 1972.

This was the gory situation that Tanzania found itself at independence. {Bernstein, 1978}. Nyereye in response to this adopted a unique administrative and political approach to organization, which he named Ujamaa Villages. Nyereye conceived Ujamaa as the socialist attitude of mind, typical of African societies of old which must be brought back if the principle of self-reliance that Africans the principle of self-reliance. This he thought could only be achieved

through the revival of communality in the Africans. Nyereye was being influenced by his socialist orientation borrowed from his friendship with the old Soviet Union, the Peoples' Republic of China and the Republic of India. Nyereye rejected rural capitalism. He adopted the Swahili language as the lingua franca, this made literacy rate to increase by 80% within a short span of time. The hallmark of the Ujamaa involves attempts at the transformation of society through the framework of villagization that implies the concentration of peasants into villages, the encouragement of cooperative agriculture and the principle of self-reliance. In the rural areas, agricultural technicians work to assist the political arm of government - the Ministry of Rural Development. The Ujamaa villages, which were basically, a form of communal social organization based on the concept of the indigenous extended family came into being. Farmers in the Ujamaa villages received governmental assistance encouraging them toward collectivism in farming operations (Hewes, 1974). Government farms were also established in the Ujamaa villages. The Ujamaa villages as conceived by Julius Nyereye were a bold attempt at alleviating rural poverty and rural animation as well as a grass root attempt at rural development. It is a classic example of the Bottom-up approach rather than the Top-down model, which has failed in many countries Nigeria inclusive because it involves citizen participation in planning, and execution of projects that have direct impacts on their lives. No wonder therefore that Tanzanian was able to achieve one of the highest literacy rates in the Sub-Saharan Africa.

Tanzanian model of rural development incorporated participatory

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democracy, citizen empowerment, principle of self-help and community development, which were the hallmarks of African indigenous communities. The implementation of the Ujamaa progressed until 1974. It was estimated that about 3 to 4 million people were resettled into new farming communities. However, as at 1971, ninety percent of the settled villages were classified as stage 1 villages, that is, without significant communal productive activity.

Nevertheless, as observed by Okafor and Onokerhoraye (1978). The Ujamaa villages still have a long way to go in raising rural welfare and narrowing the gap between village and town life.

The Lesson of the Tanzanian Ujamaa to Nigeria

The Nigerian model of rural development recognized the peasant farmer as the dominant factor in food production (Okafor, 1985). Efforts were therefore concentrated on improving productivity per farmer, while de-emphasizing other components of rural development. Efforts at encouraging communal organizations were recent. The Nigerian approach takes the form of the establishment of River Basin Development Schemes, establishment of Agricultural Bureau such as the defunct Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI), National Agricultural and Land Development Authority (NALDA), establishment of research institute, agric related banks, subsidy on fertilizers etc. These efforts although good in themselves have not yielded the desired impacts because they were designed and prescribed from without, not from within i.e. they follow the Top-down approach. The government has been the initiator and

executor of these programmes. Therefore in some cases, they have only served to create a new set of rural capitalists, who through their connections with the authority have cornered some benefits to meet their selfish desires. The Nigerian Land Reforms i.e. the Land use Decree of 1978, which was designed to improve access to land for agriculture by the landless have not achieved its aims. Rather it has been a clog in the wheel of rural development because the customary right of occupancy required by farmers to have access to land without stress became politicized to the extent that the perceived enemies of governors were denied. In contrast to the above however, the Ujamaa has recorded significant successes because it emphasized citizen participation. This model adopted co-operative agriculture and communality rather than the capitalist individualistic nature of the Nigerian agriculture. The Ujamaa is aimed at self-reliance rather than export-based orientation of the Nigerian agriculture. The Ujamaa concept of rural development is all embracing i.e. aimed at agricultural productivity, literacy, administration and transformation of rural institutions etc. The Nigerian model was mainly aimed at improving agricultural productivity, until recently. Moreover, Nigeria had experienced policy inconsistency due to instability of government (Chibuzor, 2005).

The little progress that could have been achieved in terms of rural development was not attained due to instability in government. Laudable rural development initiatives such as DFRRI, Operation Feed the Nation and Green Revolution etc. could not be sustained since new governments that come in place tend to discontinue its

predecessors programmes preferring to introduce new ones. In contrast, Tanzania up till today has had stable government under the Chama Chama Mapinduzi party. The stability of government means policy continuity. Since rural development takes time to mature, the process could not be consolidated in Nigeria. However it little impacts on policy inconsistency since rural development initiatives would be community based and so be in the consciousness of people at the grass root level regardless of the government at the centre.

Conclusion

The main advantages of a comprehensive rural development embrace restricting the drift to the towns and relieving the dissatisfaction of poor peasants in overpopulated areas. The rural inhabitants are assured steady income as they come to areas where basic services such as roads and electricity have already been provided on a wider scale. The opening up of new lands increase the productive area of the country, contributing to the national economy, and the planting of established export crops increases the Gross National Product and form important source of revenue for the government.

The Ujamaa villages as conceived by Julius Nyerere was a bold attempt at alleviating rural poverty and rural animation as well as their grassroots attempt at rural development, this is a classic example of the bottom-up model, involving citizen participation in planning and execution of projects that have direct impacts on their lives. In contrast with the individualistic nature of the Nigerian agriculture, the Ujamaa concept of rural development which was aimed at agricultural productivity, literacy, administration

and transformation of rural institutions was a success which could be imbibed if Nigeria is to have sustainable rural development.

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