



## IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN IMO STATE

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### Abstract

It is generally agreed that the rural sector has invariably lagged most in the rate of development and constituted a drag on national development as a whole. Despite the high number of development projects undertaken by national and international agencies within Nigeria, the living condition of the rural areas still remains deplorable as attested by many scholars studying the problem of the rural areas. This study therefore tried to ascertain the impact of governance on rural development in Imo State. Specifically, it tried to trace the relationship between governance and rural development in Imo State, and to ascertain the strategic problems of governance efforts on rural development in Imo State. The study also made efforts to suggest ways of strengthening governance so as to enhance rural development in Imo State. The study adopted qualitative descriptive analysis which is an aspect of content analysis. The findings indicate that good governance encourages rural development in Imo state through good governance by involving all stakeholders in the implementation of its programmes and projects. The findings also showed that one of the glaring problems of rural development in Imo state and other states in Nigeria is formulation of non-functional rural development policies. The study recommended that Imo State rural areas will have to adopt a holistic approach involving both the government (all tiers) and the civil society for it to achieve a sustainable reduction in poverty incidence. Also, provision of basic amenities such as water, sanitation and health services will promote good health, which will invariably increase people's productivity (Since man days lost due ill health will be reduced).

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**Keywords:** Governance, Rural Areas, Rural Development, Poverty Alleviation, Development.

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### Introduction

Generally, development is seen as process by which man increases or maximizes his control and use of the material resources with which nature has endowed him and his environment. Afigbo (1991) affirmed that development consists of five main ingredients: increasing material wealth for the use of individuals and the

modern collectivity known as the nation; eliminating unemployment; eliminating poverty and want; eliminating inequality, and increasing the general availability of labour-saving devices. Development, from its inception, is a kind of totalistic movement and rural development is not an exception. Therefore, rural development is a multi-dimensional process by which the

productivity, income and welfare, in terms of health, nutrition, education and other features of satisfactory life of rural people can be improved upon or transformed. According to Igbokwe and Ajala (1995), the earliest attempt at rural development during the colonial era took the form of community development, and later agricultural extension. The community development approach emphasized self-help to improve health, nutrition and community welfare, whereas the agricultural extension approach was concerned with improving the agricultural productivity. The goal of both programmes ultimately was to produce primary products for the feeding of European industries.

The early years of Nigeria's independence witnessed colossal concentration of development efforts on the modern sector of the economy to the exclusion of investment in the rural economic base. Therefore, the problem has been how to make rural development sustainable. Towards this end, a number of development approaches have been pursued by the various governments in Nigeria. These consist mainly in the establishment of projects, programmes, and capacity-building institutions. One shortcoming of these efforts is the limited local community participation in problem identification, project prioritization, design, preparation and implementation. Suffice it to state that most of these development approaches are elitist and urban-biased, such that the rural areas are often given lip attention in virtually all ramifications of modernization process. The rural sector is still largely characterized by absence of basic human needs and underdevelopment in agricultural and non-agricultural activities (Williams, 1994). In

line with the fore-going, Diejomaoh in Ayichi (1995) asserted that rural development is a process of not only increasing the level of per capita income in the rural areas but also the standard of living of the rural population measured by food and nutrition level, health, education, housing, recreation and security. It is therefore the process of rural modernization and the monetization of the rural society leading to its transition from traditional isolation to integration with the national economy.

Complete eradication or alleviation of poverty is a key imperative development of a country like Nigeria. Poverty is largely situated in rural areas where the poorest people live. For this reason, efforts to reduce poverty have largely targeted rural areas. Theoretically, the rural areas of a region or country lie outside the densely-built up environments of towns, cities and sub-urban villages and their inhabitants are engaged primarily in agriculture as well as the most basic of rudimentary form of secondary and tertiary activities (Adebayo, 1998).

Ariyo (1991) asserts that rural development has been placed to the top of the agenda in Nigeria's national development drive. The upsurge of interest in rural development can be attributed to a number of events which had their origin in the colonial heritage and the unanticipated oil boom of the seventies. There were massive rural-urban drift of able-bodied young men and women declining productivity in agriculture, increasing food imports, growing unemployment and the widening gap in welfare terms between the

urban and rural areas. Related studies affirmed that rural areas of Nigeria are areas where the lack of basic socio-economic infrastructure, low access to the factors of production, poverty, natural disaster and socio conflict have become a strong push factor for rural out migration (Ajadi, 2010). Therefore, there exist large irregularities in the standard of living between geographical areas in Nigeria and pockets of poverty are still common in Nigeria more especially in the rural areas. It is against this backdrop that this study tries to examine the impact of governance on rural development in Imo State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is generally agreed that the rural sector has invariably lagged most in the rate of development and constituted a drag on national development as a whole. Despite the high number of development projects undertaken by national and international agencies within Nigeria, the living condition of the rural areas still remains deplorable as attested by many scholars studying the problem of the rural areas (Gbadamosi, 2001).

However, Nigeria's internal disparity between rural and urban areas still remains very high even after several national and regional development efforts (Onokerhoraye, 1978; Udeh, 1989; Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005). Measured in terms of quality of living, social opportunities, physical facilities, human development and standard of living, the overall score for rural areas still stands very low in comparison with its urban counterparts. Rural population Nigeria have varied over the years in response to rapid urban expansion and accompanying rural-

urban migration. Historically, what is known as Nigeria today was dominantly a rural settlement. Although some semblance of city-type settlements existed in parts of the Muslim north and Yoruba, actual urban settlement evolved along the coast in response to commercial trades.

This explains the emergence of such coastal port towns as Lagos, Port Harcourt and Calabar. With very poor access to physical and social infrastructures, there was no systematic effort at recording the actual population of the rural areas beyond estimation. Although the colonial government did some documentation of the Nigerian population, post-independence effort at estimating the number of people residing in the rural areas started in 1963. The 1963 Census recorded 80.7% of the national population residing in the rural areas. This proportion dropped to 70.13% in 1985 and was estimated to further drop to 69% by 1990s (Muoghalu, 1992). In 2005, it was estimated that 53% of the Nigerian populace resided in the rural areas (World Development Reports, 2005) and in 2011, the World Bank reports recorded 51.6% of Nigeria's rural population. These statistics are, however, countered by some recent reports projecting the rural population above 70% of the Nigerian population (Presidential Report, 1999; Yakubu and Aderonmu, 2010).

Rural areas in Nigeria have generally been associated with agriculture which still depends on manual and local efforts. The implication is that the rural areas depend on agricultural sector for income, employments and other livelihoods opportunities. Despite its contribution to the national economy and

GDP, rural areas in Nigeria remain very poor and deeply neglected (IFAD, 2011). Investments in physical, social and economic infrastructures have been focused largely on the cities. As a result, the rural population has extremely limited access to services such as schools and health centers, while the highest number of the populace lacks access to safe drinking water. In the Nigerian context, the rural areas are associated with poverty and, as such, not attractive to live. This is largely caused by the governance mechanism and machinery in the country. The basic rationale behind governance in any country is to ensure that administrative mechanism put up by the government to administer the society is based on the principle of equity and accessibility by the people. Grindle (2007) contends that there is harmonious connection between the concept of governance and rural development in any country. We can thus infer that governance, if all necessary components are included as variables, has the capacity to transform a society to the threshold of development, which is a favourable fertile ground for poverty alleviation and reduction. However, the reverse is regrettably the case in Nigeria. Governance is bedevilled with some serious problems ranging from corruption to ethnicity. This has made rural development in Nigeria a dream which might never come true.

It is therefore based on these salient issues raised above that this study tends to answer these questions:

- (i) How does governance affect rural development in Imo State?

- (ii) What are the major problems of governance efforts on rural development in Imo State?
- (iii) In what ways will governance be strengthened to enhance rural development in Imo State?

### Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to ascertain the impact of governance on rural development in Imo State. The specific objectives are to:

- (i) Examine whether there is any significant relationship between governance and rural development in Imo State.
- (ii) Ascertain the strategic problems of governance efforts on rural development in Imo State.
- (iii) Suggest ways of strengthening governance so as to enhance rural development in Imo State.

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are posited to guide this study:

- (i) There is a significant relationship between governance and rural development in Imo State.
- (ii) There is a significant relationship between fund mismanagement and poor infrastructure, and rural development in Imo State.

### Significance of the Study

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, this study will contribute greatly to the existing theories by helping to enrich its bank of knowledge through its reliable findings on the role of

governance on rural development in Nigeria.

Empirically, this study will serve as a foundation and base for further researchers that will embark on study of the effects/role of governance on rural development in Nigeria. In other words, it will serve as a reference point and stimulus to scholars and researchers who are interested or desirous of answers to the myriad of governance issues on rural development in Nigeria.

This study is also considered significant as it will help to educate scholars, students and the masses to better understand the mystery behind the concept of governance through its elucidations on their mission, objectives and functions. It will also help to expose the advantages and dangers of government policies on the development of the nation.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study focused on the role of governance on rural development in Imo State Nigeria, from 2006 to 2015. This study therefore focused on ascertaining the role of governance on rural development in Imo State Nigeria and also tried ascertain the problems of governance efforts on rural development in Nigeria.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitation of the study stems from the fact that the study focused and extensively made use of data from secondary sources as the researcher could not have access to the rural areas as it constitutes large number of people of which getting a good representative sample might not be easy for the researcher. However, the researcher was able to successfully conduct this research through extensive use of internet files and

documents, newspaper publications, and relevant publications.

### **The Concept of Rural Development**

The definition of “rural” differs by country, though it is usually used in contrast to “urban”. For instance, this word is defined based on population density in Japan, indicating an area other than “an area with over 5,000 people, which consists of each district with a population density of over 4,000 per square kilometer”. However, we cannot simply apply this definition to other countries. Moreover, due to the fact that the concept of “rural” varies from Asia to Africa, it is difficult to define it uniformly. Therefore, the use of “rural” (including fishing and mountain villages) as a relative concept to “urban”, based on social, economical, and natural conditions in each country may be most adequate. The term could also be used to describe areas where a majority of the residents are engaged in agriculture in a broad sense (including livestock farming, forestry, and fisheries)

According to Conference on Regional Planning and Economic Development in Africa (1972), rural development means the outcome of series of quantitative changes occurring among a given rural population and whose conveying effects indicate, in time, a rise in the standard of living and favourable changes in the way of life of the people concerned. Lele (1975) viewed rural development as the improvement in the living standard of the rural dwellers by engaging them in productivity activities such as establishment of rural industries that will increase their income. This is the only means of raising sustainable level of the

rural poor by giving them the opportunity to develop their full potentials. Mabogunje (1981) adds that meaningful rural development must be on “self-sustaining basis, through transforming the socio-spatial structures of the productive activities (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005).

As a means on the other hand, the World Bank (1977) defines it as “a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group – the rural poor”. The United Nations (1978) cited in Ukwu, (1995) defines it as: “A strategy designed to transform rural life by extending to the masses of the rural population the benefits of economic and social progress, it stresses fundamental principle: process through equitable access to resources, imputes and services and participation in the design and implementation programmes.” In his view, Diejemach, (cited in Ijere, 1992) argues that, rural development is a process of not only increasing the level of per capital income in the rural areas but also the standard of living of the rural people, depending on such factors as food, (nutrition) level, health, education, housing, recreation and security. Similarly, this socio-economic development approach is simplified by Jir (1995:84) where he explained rural development to mean; “the improvement of living conditions in rural areas through increased productivity of agriculture and related enterprises which constitute the main economic activities of the population”. Towards achieving this, he emphasizes the centrality of inter-sectoral linkages where he argues that:

The rural economy of the country has also been largely hampered by the absence

of an effective methodology for integrating agriculture, which is the main economic activity with the other sectors (industry and services) and also with many other factors affecting rural life. The simultaneous planning of the three sectors – agriculture, industry and services – at the level where development activities take place is one sure way to attain complementarity. This is a multi-dimensional and comprehensive approach, the strength of which lies in the achievement of inter-sectoral linkages.

In a nutshell rural development is concerned with raising the quality of life of low income rural majority on a self-sustaining basis through a fundamental transformation of the rural mode of production (NRSA, 1987). This means rural development must be clearly designed to increase production of the poor and their ability to contribute for the national economy. Towards achieving this change of mode of production, the Directorate of FRRI perceived it to be:

- a. To improve the quality of life and standard of living of the majority of the people in the rural areas by:
  - i. Substantially improving the quality, value and nutritional balance of their food intake;
  - ii. Raising the quality of rural housing as well as the general living and working environment in the rural areas;
  - iii. Improving the health conditions of the rural population;

- iv. Creating greater opportunities for employment and human development;
  - v. 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.
- b. To use the enormous resources of the rural areas to lay a solid foundation for the security, sociocultural, political and economic growth and development of the nation.
  - c. To make rural areas more productive and less vulnerable to natural hazards, poverty and exploitation, and to give them a mutually beneficial linkage with other parts of the national economy.

### **Rural Development in Nigeria**

Nigeria's internal disparity between rural and urban areas still remains very high even after several national and regional development efforts (Onokerhoraye, 1978; Udeh, 1989; Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005). Measured in terms of quality of living, social opportunities, physical facilities, human development and standard of living, the overall score for rural areas still stands very low in comparison with its urban counterparts.

Rural population in Nigeria have varied over the years in response to rapid urban expansion and accompanying rural-

urban migration. Historically, what is known as Nigeria today was dominantly a rural settlement. Although some semblance of city-type settlements existed in parts of the Muslim north and Yoruba, actual urban settlement evolved along the coast in response to commercial trades. This explains the emergence of such coastal port towns as Lagos, Port Harcourt and Calabar. With very poor access to physical and social infrastructures, there was no systematic effort at recording the actual population of the rural areas beyond estimation.

Although the colonial government did some documentation of the Nigerian population, post-independence effort at estimating the number of people residing in the rural areas started in 1963. The 1963 Census recorded 80.7% of the national population residing in the rural areas. This proportion dropped to 70.13% in 1985 and was estimated to further drop to 69% by 1990s (Muoghalu, 1992). In 2005, it was estimated that 53% of the Nigerian populace resided in the rural areas (World Development Reports, 2005) and in 2011, the World Bank reports recorded 51.6% of Nigeria's rural population.

These statistics are, however, countered by some recent reports projecting the rural population above 70% of the Nigerian population (see Presidential Report, 1999; Yakubu and Aderonmu, 2010). Rural areas in Nigeria have generally been associated with agriculture which still depends on manual and local efforts. The implication is that the rural areas depend on agricultural sector for income, employments and other livelihoods opportunities. Despite its contribution to the national economy and

GDP, rural areas in Nigeria remain very poor and deeply neglected (IFAD, 2011). Investments in physical, social and economic infrastructures have been focused largely on the cities. As a result, the rural population has extremely limited access to services such as schools and health centers, while the highest number of the populace lacks access to safe drinking water. In the Nigerian context, the rural areas are associated with poverty and, as such, not attractive to live.

Developmental dichotomy of this dimension raises important challenges bordering on social security and spatial equity. This background has been the rationale for rural development basically aimed at promoting standards of living and as a pre-condition for minimizing high incidence of rural poverty.

### **Principles of Rural Development**

The following principles are suggested to implement rural development programmes (FAO, Undated).

- a) Access: Try to ensure that the programme and its benefits can reach those in need, and beware of the consequences if some farmers have access to the programme while others do not.
- b) Independence: Devise a programme which helps and supports the farmer but which does not make him or his livelihood dependent upon the programme.
- c) Sustainability: Ensure that the programme's plans and solutions are relevant to the local economic, social and

administrative situation. Short-term solutions may yield quick results, but long-term programmes that are suitable to the local environment have greater success.

d) Going forward: Technological aspects of rural development programmes should help the farmer to take the next step in his development and not demand that he take a huge technological leap. It is better to secure a modest advance which can be sustained than to suggest a substantial advance which is beyond the ability of most.

e) Participation: Always try to consult the local people, seek out their ideas and involves them as much as possible in the programme.

f) Effectiveness: A programme should be based on the effective use of local resources and not necessarily on their most efficient use. While efficiency is important, its requirements are often unrealistic. For example, the maximum use of inorganic fertilizer is beyond the means of most farmers. But an effective use of resources, which is within the capabilities of most farmers, such as agricultural waste as organic fertilizer will have a better chance of a wider impact.

### **Rural Development Programmes in Nigeria**

Because of the economic crisis in Nigeria in the early 1980s, which worsened the quality of life of most Nigerians, the government embarked on determined effort to check the crisis through the adoption of SAP. However, the implementations of SAP according to Ogwumike (1998) further worsened the living conditions of many



Nigerians especially the poor who were the most vulnerable group. For this reason, the government had to design and implement many rural development programmes between 1986 and 1993 as well as under the guided deregulation that spanned the period 1993 to 1998. In summary form, these programmes had varied impacts on rural development. The various programmes initiated and chiefly targeted at the rural sector by government include the following:

- ✓ National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP)
- ✓ River-Basin Development Authority (RBDA)
- ✓ Agricultural Development Programme (ADP)
- ✓ Operation Feed the Nation
- ✓ Tahe Green Revolution
- ✓ Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS)
- ✓ Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI)
- ✓ Better Life for Rural Dwellers (BETTER LIFE)
- ✓ National Agricultural Insurance Corporation (NAIC)
- ✓ National Directorate of Employment (NDE)
- ✓ National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA)
- ✓ Naational Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)
- ✓ National Rural Roads Development Fund (NRRDF)
- ✓ Rural Banking Scheme (RBS)
- ✓ Family Support Programme (FSP)
- ✓ Universal Basic Education (UBE)
- ✓ Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS)

A cursory look at the introduction, establishment, implementation and the

objectives of majority of the above programmes will reveal that they are mainly targeted at rural development in an attempt to better the lives of rural dwellers, stimulate and enhance economic growth, as well as get the rural sector to contribute meaningfully to the national economic and social development. The programmes have direct or indirect impact on rural development and can broadly be grouped into specific and multi-specific programmes. The specific programmes are those directed mainly at agriculture, health, education, housing, transport, infrastructure, finance and manufacturing. Such programmes were initiated in the early 1970s and 1980s. On the other hand, most of the multi-specific programmes were put in place in the early 1990s and thereafter to handle general projects, such as NDE, DFRRI, Better Life, Family support etc.

Many of the specific programmes had some positive effects on rural development although Laah *et al* (2013) says the target population for some of them was not specified explicitly to be poor people (rural dwellers). Examples of such as the RBDAs, ACGS, RBS, etc., which were designed to take care of such objectives as employment generation, enhancing of agricultural output and income, and streaming rural-urban migration, which no doubt impair rural development. Other development programmes such as OFN, Green Revolution, Free and compulsory primary education, low cost housing schemes etc. impacts positively oan the rural dwellers but most of them could not be sustained due to lack of political will and commitment, policy instability and insufficient involvement of the intended beneficiaries of the

programmes hence according to Chiloikwu (2006), most of them died with the government that initiated them.

SAP is a development from the World Bank's Sectoral Adjustment Loans (SECALs or SALs) that were first introduced in 1980 and then adopted by the IMF in 1986 to become the joint cross-conditionality of SAP (Laah et al, 2013). However, no adjustment and transformation programmes, howsoever sound and innovative in their blueprints, can achieve the objectives of development if they are not properly implemented. Indeed, half-hearted commitment to programmes often leads to policy discontinuity and the same is true if programmes are under-financed, especially in terms of external resources. This was the exact dilemma of the SAP regime. Implementation, thus, constitutes one of the most vital elements in the transformation process. One has, therefore, to accord as much importance to the organization of the implementation machineries and monitoring systems as to the design and formulation of programmes and policies themselves.

### **Rural Development Approaches**

The overall aim of rural development efforts is geared towards the improvement of the lives of the rural population. However, several approaches aimed at arresting the ugly under-development situation in rural areas have been put forward. According to Ijere (1990: 52 – 54), they include the following:

(i) **Growth Pole Centre Model:** This model is also known as "Growth Point Model". The model involves the

development of a few strategic towns, communities and industries likely to activate other sectors. The model focuses attention on the development of few towns leading to the neglect of the rural areas.

(ii) **The "Big Push" Policy:** This approach is similar to the growth pole centre model except that it is more concentrated. It takes a few sub-sectors and expends most of the resources on them in the hope that in the long run, their multiplier effect will salvage the whole economy. The flaw in this model is that "in the long run" is not a specific period.

(iii) **The Selective Approach:** This model/approach involves the selection of certain sectors for development based on economic, political, social or religious grounds, which may not necessarily be related or inter-connected.

(iv) **The Protectionist Approach:** In this approach, the government carries out the development process on behalf of the people believing that it knows everything and that the people are not yet ripe to participate, in the management of their own affairs.

(v) **The Top-down Approach:** It is also called the Top-bottom approach. It is a strategy based on passing down to the poor certain policies and directives from the governing bureaucracy. This type of rural development approach requires force to maintain and sustain it.

(vi) **The Decentralized Territorial Approach:** This approach centres on the dispersal of benefits to the rural area. It has minimum linkage with the city but with settlements of various sizes to act as service and market centres. The defect in this approach is the undue fear of towns being exploitative and parasitic, and the

consideration that size alone could determine the performance of a settlement.

(vii) The "Laissez-faire" Policy: In this model, the authorities use the role of thumb, past experience, hind-sight and the free market mechanism to manage the economy, with the hope that the invisible hand of God would ensure optimum happiness for everybody.

(viii) The Key Settlement Strategy: This model is closely related to growth pole centre model except that its focus is on settlement. It assumes a focal point for a given rural area, and the concentration of all rural development resources in such a settlement. This in turn will serve other regions through its network of roads and communication. This model requires a long time to mature, and therefore it is more expensive.

(ix) The Adaptive Approach: It is a combination of selective approach and Laissez-faire policy and any other approach. It gives the people the opportunity to decide on their own lives, sometimes, under the guidance of the government.

(x) The "Bottom-Up" Approach: It is also called Bottom-top approach or Rurism strategy. This approach implies that development starts with the people. It is a new political development strategy. Rurism is a coherent national and social-value system in which human and material resources are mobilized and allocated from the lower echelon of the economic and social strata to the top. It is free from any foreign ideology and infection. It promotes self-reliance, self-consciousness into balanced development of human and material resources. It is the ideal approach. However, it is costly and rather slow.

## Structural Issues in Current Rural Development Agenda

The following structural issues are therefore central concerns in the current rural development agenda:

a) The Role of Agriculture: It is generally accepted that agriculture alone does not have the capacity to be the engine of rural growth and there is yet no convincing and comprehensive alternative strategy for rural growth. With a decline of funding to the rural sector, the search for a renewed direction in rural development is a major structural concern.

b) Diversification: Rural populations have become more occupationally flexible, spatially mobile and increasingly dependent on non-agricultural income generation. This has become the norm of rural livelihoods rather than the exception, there is an increasing policy trend in support of diversification, and which appreciates its potential as a means to reduce risk and vulnerability.

c) Sustainability: The sustainability of current development continues to be a major concern with mounting empirical evidence of the trade-offs that exist between the environment and development.

d) Globalization: The livelihood strategies of the poor are increasingly exposed to global processes of change, over which the rural poor have little control. International trade agreements, commodity chains, global capital flows and rapid technological change are some of the factors that have changed the superstructures of development. The

consequences for poverty are complex and the subject of much debate. However, the very fact of globalization is indisputable and is central to the current development agenda and related approaches.

e) Communities: The community, for long the focus of development planning, is increasingly amorphous and hard to define. It has for long been argued that, whilst communities are heterogeneous, and constituted of unequal power relations, they are still essentially identifiable units. These assumptions are now being reconsidered; the geographical territory-based community is no longer assumed the best entry-point for development planning.

f) Decentralization: There is widespread consensus that decentralization is an essential component of future development. There are several reasons for this extensive support for decentralization. Chief amongst them are the widespread failure of centralized planning; an appreciation that self-governance is a human right; and the notion that decentralization will be both more efficient and more equitable and;

g) Institutional Linkages and Partnerships: Institutional linkages and partnerships between the public sector, the private sector, the voluntary sector and local communities building synergies and drawing on their complementarities is central to the current development agenda. This marks a change from previous phases of development thinking when the preference was for a clear demarcation of the functions of each sector.

## Gap in Literature

Much has been written by scholars on the concept of governance and rural development in Nigeria. Much has also been written on the problems of rural development and its causes in Nigeria. However, there seems not be much effort geared towards discussing governance and its effect on rural development in Nigeria. Most of the works consulted dwelt mainly on good governance and its impact on rural development in Nigeria. This work was therefore initiated to fill this existing gap.

## Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Modernization Theory. Modernization theory is a macro-theory with a historical and sociological inspiration, developed in large-scale historical research investigating the effects of the modernization process on human communication. Modernization means the appearance of “modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence” (Giddens, 1991). Modernization theories explain the changing ways of communication and media use in traditional and (post) modern societies. According to modernization theories, internal factors in the countries, such as illiteracy, traditional agrarian structure, the traditional attitude of the population, the low division of labour, the lack of communication and infrastructure, etc., are responsible for underdevelopment. Modernization theory is a theory used to explain the process of modernization within societies. The theory looks at the internal

factors of a country while assuming that, with assistance, "traditional" countries can be brought to development in the same manner more developed countries have.

Modernization theory attempts to identify the social variables which contribute to social progress and development of societies, and seeks to explain the process of social evolution. Modernization theory is subject to criticism originating among socialist and free-market ideologies, world-systems theorists, globalization theory and dependency theory among others. Modernization theory not only stresses the process of change but also the responses to that change. It also looks at internal dynamics while referring to social and cultural structures and the adaptation of new technologies.

Also, modernization, industrialization, and development are often used interchangeably but in fact refer to distinguishable phenomena. Industrialization is a narrower term than modernization, while development is more general. Industrialization involves the use of inanimate sources of power to mechanize production, and it involves increases in manufacturing, wage labor, income levels, and occupational diversification. It may or may not be present where there is political, social, or cultural modernization, and, conversely, it may exist in the absence of other aspects of modernization.

Development (like industrialization) implies economic growth, but not necessarily through transformation from the predominance of primary production to manufacturing, and not necessarily as characterized by modernization theory. For

example, while modernization theorists may define development mainly in terms of economic output per capita, other theorists may be more concerned about development of autonomous productive capacity, equitable distribution of wealth, or meeting basic human needs. Also, while modernization theories generally envision democratic and capitalist institutions or secularization of belief systems as components of modern society, other development perspectives may not. Indeed, dependency theorists even talk about the "development of underdevelopment" (Frank, 1966).

### **Major Tenets of Modernization Theory**

Although there are many versions of modernization theory, major implicit or explicit tenets are that:

- (1) Societies develop through a series of evolutionary stages;
- (2) These stages are based on different degrees and patterns of social differentiation and reintegration of structural and cultural components that are functionally compatible for the maintenance of society;
- (3) Contemporary developing societies are at a pre modern stage of evolution and they eventually will achieve economic growth and will take on the social, political, and economic features of western European and North American societies which have progressed to the highest stage of social evolutionary development;
- (4) This modernization will result as complex Western technology is imported and traditional structural and cultural

features incompatible with such development are overcome.

### **Contributors to Modernization Theory**

Among the scientists who contributed much to this theory are Walt Rostow, who in his *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960) concentrates on the economic system side of the modernization, trying to show factors needed for a country to reach the path to modernization in his Rostovian take-off model. David Apter concentrated on the political system and history of democracy, researching the connection between democracy, good governance and efficiency and modernization. Seymour Martin Lipset in "Some Social Requisites of Democracy" (1959) argued that economic development sets off a series of profound social changes that together tend to produce democracy. David McClelland (*The Achieving Society*, 1967) approached this subject from the psychological perspective, with his motivations theory, arguing that modernization cannot happen until a given society values innovation, striving for improvement and entrepreneurship. Alex Inkeles (*Becoming Modern*, 1974) similarly creates a model of modern personality, which needs to be independent, active, interested in public policies and cultural matters, open for new experiences, rational and being able to create long-term plans for the future. Edward Said's "Orientalism" interprets modernization from the point of view of societies that are quickly and radically transformed.

### **Application of the Theory to the Study**

Modernization theory is a description and explanation of the processes of

transformation from traditional or underdeveloped societies to modern societies. Historically, modernization is the process of change towards those types of social, economic, and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and North America. Primary attention has focused on ways in which past and present premodern societies become modern (i.e., Westernized) through processes of economic growth and change in social, political, and cultural structures. This study is focused on governance and rural development in Imo State, which is also trying to shift to a more modernized state.

According to modernization theories, internal factors in a state, such as illiteracy, traditional agrarian structure, the traditional attitude of the population, the low division of labour, the lack of communication and infrastructure, etc., are responsible for underdevelopment, and that is apparently seen in Imo State which is our major focus.

Most of the rural communities are characterized by high illiteracy level, as most of the rural dwellers do not have the resources to finance their wards education, and where they can afford a little, the schools are either dilapidated or do not have qualified teachers. Infrastructural development in Imo state rural areas is relatively poor, as they lack good access roads to transport their goods, low electricity supply and lack adequate supply of pipe-borne water.

Also, modernization theory attempts to unearth the contradictions in the modernization process and to explain the consequences of modernity for individuals in contemporary society (Giddens, 1991).

Giddens opinion also affects Imo State in the sense that the citizens are becoming more concerned and aware of the ills of bad governance, thereby making it somehow difficult for corrupt politicians to use them to carry out their corrupt practices. The local dwellers are now more exposed and most times express their anger towards the state of the rural communities. They express their dissatisfaction through their interest groups and their leaders.

### **Research Design**

To meaningfully undertake the validation or otherwise of our hypothesis, this study utilized the documentary research method or the use of documentary sources in social research. The use of documentary methods refers to the analysis of documents that contain information about the phenomenon we wish to study (Bailey 1994). Payne and Payne (2004) described the documentary method as the techniques used to categorize, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources, most commonly written documents whether in the private or public domain.

### **Sources and Method of Data Collection**

For the purpose of generating data for this study, we made use of documentary sources which is also known as 'Secondary Sources'. By documentary sources, we mean any written material (whether hand-written, typed or printed) that is already in existence, which was produced for some other purpose than the benefit of the investigator (Nwana cited in Obasi, 1999). In other words, the researcher mainly made use of secondary sources of data generation for the purpose of this study.

The sources of data for this study include electronic official documents from Imo State Government, Reports of Committees, etc. Also, the researcher extensively made use of relevant data derived mostly from journals, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, textbooks, seminar and conference papers and the internet websites that dwelled on governance, good governance and rural development.

### **Method of Data Presentation and Analysis**

The study adopted qualitative descriptive analysis which is an aspect of content analysis. According to Asika (2006:118), "qualitative descriptive analysis essentially has to do with summarizing the data generated in the research."

Being a non-experimental research, the use of qualitative descriptive analysis was employed to analyze and present the data generated from our sources. This was done through a careful analysis of the hypotheses with the data generated from the reviewed literature.

### **Findings and Discussion**

The researcher extensively discussed the findings of this work as generated from the sources of data collection. This was carefully presented under the following sub-headings:

- Governance and Rural Development in Imo State
- Constraints of Rural Development in Imo State

### **Governance and Rural Development in Imo State**

Historically, agriculture and, therefore, rural areas have been considered by the governments of many countries as an

exceptional case for interference. Consequently, dilemmas concerning the appropriate role of governance in the development of agriculture and rural areas as well as suitable institutions and policies to fulfil this role have been debated in the economic literature for a long time. Obviously, in the developed countries, rural development is no longer synonymous with agricultural development since agriculture, generally, is not the principal sector in their rural economies. However, it still plays the crucial role in managing land and other natural resources as well as in the expansion of many rural activities, goods and services depending on agriculture, so remains vital for rural prosperity.

Recently, there is an observation about the growing interest of researchers (particularly institutional and political economists) in the quality of government institutions, governance and related concepts. As a result of this concern, a quite large body of empirical evidence has been collected to show that strong economic and political institutions at the domestic level as well as effective ways by which they are enforced (for example, property rights, the rule of law and democracy) are (or might be) good for economic performance, economic growth and social welfare of rural communities, both in developing and developed countries. Governance contributes to the enhancement of rural development in diverse ways that will be discussed below.

Firstly, participation in development cooperation means developing and implementing activities jointly, based on the realisation that the active participation of those directly involved increases the

sustainability of development, strengthens its legitimacy and promotes capacity-building. Governance encourages this kind of participation in Imo state rural development through good governance by involving all stakeholders in the implementation of its programmes and projects. Clear and transparent decision-making processes at the administrative level of rural development activities in Imo state are an important element in the realization of the participation principle and are essential for a functioning democracy.

Secondly, governance ensures the concept of ownership in rural development activities of Imo State. Ownership means that any measure should be designed from the outset in such a way that those directly concerned can take it over and participate actively on their own responsibility. Governance in Imo state endeavours to make its programmes, projects and programming processes in its rural areas transparent for all concerned and to carry them out with the participation of all relevant social groups in these rural areas. This also means that governance in Imo state works with existing institutions in the rural areas, in accordance with their potential and capacities rather than building up parallel rural structures.

Also, governance in Imo state encourages empowerment of the rural dwellers so as to enhance their developmental capabilities. Empowerment is a process enabling disadvantaged groups to assert their rights. It also means enlarging the base and enhancing the potential of disadvantaged groups (particularly the poor) so that they can call institutions that affect their lives to account, negotiate with them



and participate in them. On the basis of its past focuses and experience, governance in Imo state concentrates on local governance as an important area of intervention in rural development as it enables citizens to assert the rights that affect them directly, such as the elaboration of decentralized development plans.

Rural development in African countries can hardly be achieved without accountability on the side of the government. Accountability calls on the actors (government, ministry, project manager) to bear responsibility for their actions. It is the opposite of arbitrariness and demands openness and the assumption of responsibility towards the rural population. This entails an obligation to transparency and traceability and to the effective provision of basic services. Governance in Imo State also acts transparently and accountably in its rural development activities and facilitates the functioning of control levels at the micro and macro levels. This increases the effectiveness and efficiency of rural development projects and strengthens their administrative and political framework.

### **Constraints of Rural Development in Imo State**

Agriculture is an important component of most rural economies especially in the developing countries. Therefore, any successful rural development strategy will contain an agricultural development component; but they are not the same thing. While agricultural development aims at improving the welfare of populations through sustained improvements in the productivity of the

agricultural sector, rural development aims at the improvement of welfare of rural populations through the sustained growth of the rural economy, which includes agriculture, but may not be its only component and not necessarily the most dynamic. Agriculture contributes immensely to Imo state economy in various ways; provision of food for the increasing population; supply of adequate raw materials to a growing industrial sector; a major source of employment; generation of foreign exchange earnings; and, provision of a market for the products of the industrial sector. However, it has not received so much attention by the government despite its importance in rural development of Imo state. The farmers do not have access to mechanized farming equipments and do not have the needed exposure to apply for agriculture loans.

In terms of level of economic development, quality of life, access to opportunities, facilities and amenities, standard of living and general liveability, the gap between the urban and rural areas in Nigeria is very wide. This leads to what is appropriately characterized as the rural urban dichotomy. The rural areas in Imo state are usually grossly neglected as far as development projects and infrastructure are concerned. As a result of the relative underdevelopment of the rural areas when compared with the urban centers, rural areas are usually zones of high propensity for out-migration, and this causes a problem for the development of these areas.

Another glaring problem of rural development in Imo state and other states in Nigeria is formulation of non-functional rural development policies. The challenges

and prospects of rural development in Nigeria have been of great concern to the different tiers of government due to the rate of rural-urban migration. The various policies of the Nigerian government on rural development are to improve the living condition in the rural areas with a view to curbing the streaming rural-urban migration. These policies show the zeal of different governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which has led to the proliferation of development agencies.

Despite the countless numbers of rural development policies introduced at different times by successive governments coupled with the huge financial and material resources employed, little or nothing is felt at the rural level as each policy has often died with the government that initiated it before it starts to yield dividends for the rural dwellers.

Another problem of rural development in Imo state is lack of basic needs. The basic needs referred here are food, shelter and clothing. They are the most important needs for human survival. Most families cannot afford three meals a day. The situation is so bad that most families hardly eat to satisfaction, which is due to low income earning. The effect of malnutrition on our rural population is quite adverse. Apart from resulting to low agricultural output, it is also responsible for the poor health conditions too. In the rural areas, shelter affects the health, welfare and productivity of the individual. Rural areas are characterized by small huts with inadequate ventilation. Families cook and sleep in the same hut. Once a member of the family is infected with by a sort of disease then all members are at the risk of

been infected as well. Since people hardly feed and live in uncomfortable shelter, they will also not have enough for their clothing.

In terms of occupation, Agriculture is the dominant occupation in the rural area but the level of food production is low. This is due to low yields, decreasing soil fertility with limited use of fertilizer, unimproved crop varieties and breeds of livestock, lack of credit, inadequate extension services and use of very crude tools. About 70% of the inhabitants engage in agriculture and 30% on other activities such as animal husbandry, fishing, cottage industry etc. Malnutrition has also contributed to low agricultural productivity, as people are not strong to cultivate large areas since they use manually operated tools. Other problems of rural development in Imo State include, Vicious cycle of poverty, Poor infrastructure, High population density, High level of illiteracy, Low social interaction and local politics and Rural-urban migration.

### Summary

In summary, the study set out to examine the role of governance on rural development in Imo State. It also tried to ascertain the strategic problems of governance efforts on rural development in Imo State. In the study, we hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between governance and rural development in Imo State. Using the secondary sources in our data collection and qualitative descriptive analysis to analyze our findings, we discovered that governance ensures the concept of ownership in rural development activities of Imo State.

Ownership means that every rural developmental measure should be designed from the outset in such a way that those directly concerned can take it over and participate actively on their own responsibility. We also hypothesised that there is a significant relationship between fund mismanagement and poor infrastructure, and rural development in Imo State. The study observed that poor infrastructure, high population density and high level of illiteracy negatively influence rural development in Imo State.

### Recommendations

Deriving from the conclusions of this study above, we proffer the following recommendations:

Poverty reduction in Imo State rural areas will have to adopt a holistic approach involving both the government (all tiers) and the civil society for it to achieve a sustainable reduction in poverty incidence. Given the nature of the social structure in the urban areas, government, NGOs, international agencies, organized private sector and households (including individuals) could play active part in the provision of basic social services. The Institutional Framework for poverty alleviation in the country need to be revisited.

Also, provision of basic amenities such as water, sanitation and health services will promote good health, which will invariably increase people's productivity (Since man days lost due ill health will be reduced). Moreover, government expenditure on the social sector needs to be more focused on social priority areas that

affect the poor. This calls for budget restructuring in favor of basic social services; the share of administration (including defence and security) in public expenditure needs to be critically examined and changed.

Poverty reduction programmes and projects should not be supply driven, effort should be made to integrate the views of the poor into developmental efforts in order to address the actual needs of the poor and thus make development planning and management sensitive to their needs.

### Conclusion

The study set out to examine the role of governance on rural development in Imo State. It also tried to ascertain the strategic problems of governance efforts on rural development in Imo State. Our findings, through the literature reviewed, apparently signified that there is a significant relationship between governance and rural development in Imo State. It also observed that several problems influence the efforts of governance in enhancing rural development in Imo State. However, there is no doubt that there might have been some issues in the study that were not adequately discussed. These inadequacies might have been caused by the limitations of this study. We therefore plead that future research should be geared towards these inadequacies.

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