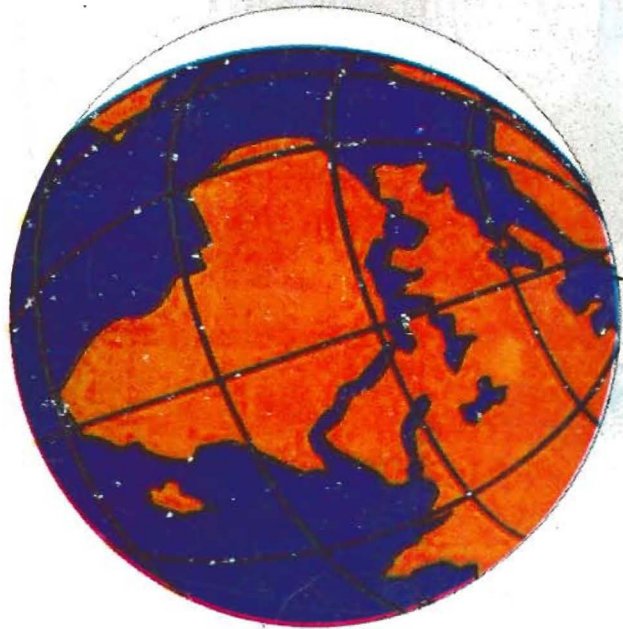


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NEGLECTING THE RURAL SETTLEMENT AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT  
PLANS AND STRATEGIES: A CHALLENGE TO THE GROWTH AND  
DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

*The majority of poor people lives in the rural areas and depends on subsistence farming for their livelihood. The role of agricultural growth and development for the rural economy remains central to reducing poverty and enhancing food security. Agricultural problems are mounting, especially when limited resources have been diverted to that sector by government at all levels, including inadequate trained staff for extension services and inadequate priorities and operational procedures needed to help rural farmers. The challenge of strengthening linkages between policy makers, extension workers and farmers, so as to understand their real problems and constraints and how to alleviate them are indeed central in determining feasible choices for improved agricultural development. Over the years the country has experienced some agricultural plans and projects that have been poorly articulated and implemented. This paper therefore evaluates the underinvestment in rural infrastructure, services, agricultural research and living conditions of the rural poor and how they have seriously impaired agricultural growth and productivity gains and the way forward.*

**Key Words:** Development Plans, Food Security, Migration Trend, Rural Agricultural Development, Rural Settlement.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is an important occupation in Nigeria with over 70% of her population depending on it directly or indirectly for livelihood. It provides the bulk of employment, income and food for the rapidly growing population as well as supplying raw materials for agro-based industries. World current agricultural production has an average growth rate of 1.8% as compared to the 3% in the 1960s and therefore at a lesser pace than the demographic growth. The World Bank has shown that in Sub-Saharan Africa (to which Nigeria belongs) the annual food increase needs to reach 4%, which is more than double the current figure in order to achieve food security (IBRD, 1989). She suggests that this can be reached through a significant progress in plant and animal breeding that plays a key role in the development of the agricultural sector as well as a significant impact using appropriate farm mechanization (Pawlak et al., 2002).

Due to a number of factors, which include rising population, increasing pressure on land resources, natural and man-made disasters such as drought, desertification, soil erosion and degradation, the problem of sustainable agricultural production in Nigeria has assumed greater importance than ever before (Raoult-Wack and Bricas, 2001). If a properly articulated



agricultural development plan is given priority in practice, it will lay the foundation for modernizing the entire economy. The rate of growth of agricultural production in Nigeria should increase appreciably in order to mitigate hunger, starvation, diseases, raw materials dependence on foreign sources and food importation, as well as to improve on the quantity and quality of food per person and the well-being of the farmer and his family. This can be done by increasing agricultural productivity through mechanization. This has been done in such other countries like in China (Li, 2005) and in Oman (Ampratwum et al., 2004).

Mechanization of agriculture helped transform American agriculture from the situation where one farmer fed 5 people in 1880 to that where one farmer could feed 80 people in 1982 (Ani and Onwualu, 2002). With 90% of Nigeria's agricultural work done with hand tools, 7% with animal-drawn tools and only 3% with engine powered technology, it is understandable that with the over 70% of the population engaged in agriculture, self-sufficiency in food is still a mirage (Onwualu and Pawa, 2004).

Nigeria's agricultural sector has been very internationally uncompetitive in terms of quality, quantity, grades, hygiene, pricing and markets and will remain so until infrastructures are upgraded, and policy and institutional measures favouring it are put in place. Improvements in infrastructure – particularly productive investments in land improvements and water control, markets, processing and roads – are a key to overcoming the constraints imposed by high levels of population growth, combined with a shift in the ratio of rural to urban population. It is mechanization that will completely revolutionize the agricultural sector in Nigeria.

#### **AN EVALUATION OF THE PROBLEM**

The over reliance on local tools and implements such as hoes and cutlasses by majority of rural farmers for agricultural production is one of the greatest problems facing Nigerian farmers. This is because of its arduous and inefficient nature such that rural farmers can hardly produce enough food to feed their families not to talk of the one for sale. Coupled with this is the high occurrence of rural-urban migration by the youths and the active labour force in search of white collar jobs in the cities because agriculture is seen as a back breaking job offering very little remuneration.

It is often thought that the African Continent, especially sub-Saharan Africa with good arable land could feed the population of the whole world. The potential is enormous, but the present production falls far short of the potential and appears to be declining in many areas (Bunting, 1987). This picture captures the situation in Nigeria where potential prospects for agriculture could have been very promising if not for the mono-economy structure of the country with emphasis on Crude Oil.

Besides, the country is littered with poorly planned and executed projects that have achieved little and in some cases eventually failed completely due to poor planning and implementation strategies. In addition, infrastructures in the rural areas have been very poor or largely non-existent such as good roads, pipe-borne water, electricity, housing and cottage industries which ought to have enhanced agricultural and rural development.

Low productivity is especially severe for small farmers who have constrained access to capital and inputs such as fertilizers and high yielding seeds. Sustained agricultural productivity is indeed very essential and requires a strong boost because of increasing population in the country. Agricultural growth is of crucial importance for enhancing food security and nutrition, including the growth and development of the rural areas.

The current global food crisis emphasizes the need for agriculture to move to the top of the development agenda in low income countries like Nigeria. More importantly, the vision and design of specific strategies must mainly come from the countries themselves, and must be adapted to country-specific conditions and also must meet the needs and expectations of the people, most importantly those who reside in the rural areas and find their livelihood there.

### **NIGERIA'S AGRICULTURAL POLICIES AND ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS**

In the Ten Year Development Plan (1946 – 1956) the Colonial masters emphasized commodity crop production mainly oil palm, cocoa, rubber, cotton and groundnuts. The document contained very little or no proposal for increased food production. The first National Development Plan (1962 – 1968) sought to increase the production of export crops through better seed distribution and more modern methods of cultivation as well as through the increase in area under cultivation. Farm settlements and Tractor Hiring Units were established as well as a greatly expanded agricultural extension service. The component regions were largely autonomous in terms of agricultural policy formulation and implementation. This Plan Period was a success. Agriculture was a major sector of the economy, the major source of income and employment to both the Government and the rural people (Agric. Policy, 1988). Cash crops accounted for about 80% of Nigeria's export and 45% of the gross domestic product (GDP). However, no mention was made of the food sector in this plan that had 11.6% capital allocation by both Federal and State Governments to Agriculture (Osakwe and Ojo, 1986).

The Second National Development Plan (1970 – 74) specified the creation of rural employment opportunities with no definite programme for their achievement. Capital (9.9% of the Budget for both Federal and State Governments) allocated to agriculture (Osakwe and Ojo, 1986) for crop production, irrigation, research, credit (as loans or subsidy), mechanization, man-power and agricultural extension services, declined. In 1973, the National Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB) was established to facilitate agricultural financing to farmers. The National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) was initiated which laid emphasis on agricultural research and extension support to farmers. With massive exploration of crude oil, the oil boom came and stood astride the Nigerian economy contributing more than 98% of total export value and 73% of GDP (Opara, 2006).

With focus on crude oil, the agricultural policies and programmes were clumsily executed and virtually abandoned by succeeding military regimes (Osakwe and Ojo, 1986). The cocoa plantations suffered serious setback, the cotton and groundnut pyramids disappeared, hides and skin became food for the embattled Nigerian populace, and the oil palm plantations which were battle fields during the Biafra/Nigeria Civil War died natural death due to neglect. The disaster on agriculture was enormous, and Nigeria has not ameliorated the effects till date.

The Third National development Plan (1975 – 80) was the first to spell out provisions for food production because there was obvious decline in national food supplies due to poorly executed or neglected past agricultural policies and the effects of the civil war. The oil boom precipitated massive rural-to-urban drift made up mainly of the younger generation. Several crop farms suffered "death" because of inadequate or zero maintenance and there was serious deficit in food production (Alatise, 2001). In 1976, the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) programme was inaugurated. This first major agricultural policy pronouncement and effort by Government generated awareness among Nigerians about the consequences of an empty national food basket. The programme focused on building the spirit of dignity of labor and reengaging the idle hands back to land.



In the same year, and consequent upon the plan document, Marketing Boards were abolished. Production and Marketing Companies were established such as National Grain Production Company for food grains and National Root Crop Production Company for root crops. Other policy and strategic measures taken by Government during this period were the establishment of River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), National Seed Multiplication Scheme, Agro-Service Centers, Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs). Many research and tertiary institutions were established to formulate and implement research programmes aimed at improving agricultural food production. Even with all these policies, the total Capital allocation to Agriculture by both Federal and State Governments further declined to 7.1% (Osakwe and Ojo, 1986). This goes further to show that Government was not supporting the agricultural sector with adequate financial backing for proper execution of the programmes.

The Fourth National Development Plan (1981 – 85) saw the emergence of the Green Revolution which tried to give more powers and impetus to the River Basin Development Authorities and the ADPs to produce more food for the nation with more Capital (12.7%) allocated to the agricultural sector (Osakwe and Ojo, 1986). Even though these efforts seemed to have been guided by genuine concerns, they failed to make the necessary impacts in the agricultural sector because of fundamental structural problems in the economy. There was obvious decline in the agricultural sector share of the GDP to about only 20% in the 1981 -1985 Plan period (CAADP, 2004); underdevelopment of the sector; frequent changes in government policies and implementation strategies; no serious agricultural mechanization policy; poor infrastructures and facilities; poor research and development work. There was increasing shortage of food evidenced by increased food imports and increased high prices. Agricultural exports dwindled at an alarming rate as well as decline in labor force for agriculture.

In 1986 the Federal Military Government introduced the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Importation of major foods was prohibited to enhance local production and price competitiveness of locally produced foods compared to those imported (Bangboye and Jekayinfa, 2006). The Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) was established to provide the Nigerian rural populace with infrastructural facilities (roads, electricity, water boreholes and pumps, agricultural inputs) to enhance food production, processing and evacuation of their produce to urban markets and to stem rural-urban migration.

Interest was aroused in farming but labour became very expensive and most often difficult to get at peak season, as it followed the law of supply and demand. The increased farm labor cost increased the cost of agricultural produce. Due to untimely operations of manual land preparations, hand planting, manual weeding and fertilization, as a result of labor shortage the expected yields declined. However, because of its rural target, this latest policy option produced an increase in overall agricultural production (higher than pre-intervention period) with an understandably high cost of food. Nigeria's agricultural production rose by an estimated 2.5% in 1987, 4.58% in 1989 and 4.8% in 1991, while grains alone increased by 4.8%, 6.9% and 7.5% respectively (CBN, 1991).

The Directorate of Employment (NDE) was established in 1988 to address unemployment of graduate school leavers. It provided training and some initial take-off grants to participating beneficiaries who wanted to go into food crop as well as animal production and processing. Experience from the above three Plan Periods convinced Government that there can be no alternative to well-designed and articulated agricultural policies as instruments for promoting agricultural growth and development in Nigeria (Igbeka, 2003). In 1988, the Federal Government published the first ever agricultural policy document for Nigeria aimed at redressing the

underdevelopment of agriculture, streamlining policies in all tiers of government and ensuring policy stability (Opara, 2006).

Again, the implementation of this policy ran against many problems including: poor funding and poor state of infrastructure; poor administration of government support to agriculture and abandonment of projects midstream due to political reasons; poor private sector participation and investment in agriculture due to inconsistency and instability of macro economic policies which tend to discourage medium and long term investments in agriculture; lack of appropriate technology to reduce drudgery in agricultural production and processing and inadequate availability of inputs such as improved seeds and breed stock. Despite these problems, agricultural production in Nigeria increased steadily at the rate as high as 6.4% annually between 1988 and 1992 (Okunmadewa, 2002).

From 1992 - 1998, succeeding governments saw that the problem of food shortages was grim and in a bid to control population decreed the one man four children policy. Since women involvement in agriculture was high, government policies then centered on women. Programmes such as Better Life for Rural Women; Family Support Program (FSP); Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) were initiated. These were meant to empower the women for more and better involvement in agriculture and other rural activities. The programmes were aimed at providing some form of mechanization to agriculture by way of cottage industries in rural areas. It was hoped that these would enhance the production of food and agricultural raw materials. The National Land Development Agency (NALDA) was established in 1992 to provide support for land development for agriculture (Onwualu and Pawa, 2004).

Since 1999 different reform programmes on privatization, commercialization, deregulation, corruption and financial crimes have been undertaken in Nigeria. These are meant to stabilize the economy and make it more productive ensuring that the era of subsidies and over-protection of key sectors of the economy including agriculture is over (Van Otterdijk, 2005).

In 2001 a New Agricultural Policy and the Integrated Rural Development Policy were initiated to ensure national food security, attain self-sufficiency in basic food production, enhance employment opportunities and achieve high growth rate for the economy. These were to be achieved through the introduction of and adoption of improved technology, efficient utilization of resources by the farmers and a broad based organization and mobilization of the rural masses so as to enhance their capacity. These policies are being implemented by the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) – a medium term economic reconstruction agenda aimed at value reorientation, wealth creation, poverty reduction, job creation and elimination of corruption. In order to fast track the gains of the 2001 New Agricultural Policy, there came the Presidential Initiatives in Agriculture (PIA) (2004) and the National Special Food Security Program (NSFSP) and FADAMA II (2005).

The PIA gave priority to four different crop-based expansions of production and utilization programmes (e.g. cassava, rice, tree crops and vegetable oil) and livestock and fisheries programme with a view to curtail the huge foreign exchange expended in their importation and their importance in the revival of industries based on their raw materials. The NSFSP and FADAMA II are targeted at the resource poor rural farmers and aimed at raising their agricultural productivity and production to eliminate their poverty and through them attain food security. In 2006, the National Agricultural Development Fund was established with a take off capital of N50 billion with a view to address the problem of inadequate funding of agriculture on a sustainable basis.



The above policies lend support to The New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as well as the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) acknowledgement that agricultural mechanization and environmental stability are a *sine qua non* for increased food production and food security (Faborode, 2005). The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of NEPAD Protocol was expected to respond to the widely recognized crisis situation of African agriculture especially as it pertains to food. This Protocol focuses on investment into (i) extending the area under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems; (ii) improving rural infrastructure and market access; and (iii) increasing food supply and reducing hunger. Nigeria's agriculture and its sub-sectors have for long been starved of funds/investments. The prolonged neglect has resulted in a poorly productive, uncompetitive and declining sector (Mijinyawa and Kisaiku, 2006).

### **MIGRATION TREND AND THE CHALLENGE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Rural development refers to improvement of the economic and social well-being of the rural population. The benefits of rural development must be widely shared among the rural populations, especially the rural poor (Cleaver, 1997). The need for rural development becomes very compelling when it is understood that about 70% of Africa's poor are rural.

The process of migration in Nigeria is mostly that of rural-urban migration. Its impact on agricultural development is a complex subject. It is also grounded in the persistent urban bias in social and economic infrastructure such as pipe borne water, good roads, electricity, health facilities, industries, etc, which we have experienced since the era of colonialism. Nigeria as a country is blessed with diverse natural resources which can be harnessed for various beneficial purposes, the bulk of which can be found in the rural areas. Coincidentally, Nigeria has a large proportion of both rural sector and rural people, which is a quintessential feature of developing countries (Akande, 2002).

The decision to migrate may involve contextual factors, such as 'push factors' which force migrants out of rural areas and 'pull factors' which attract migrants to urban areas. These factors typically reflect the relative strength of the local economies (such as the availability of public goods, or even institutional factors such as the introduction or enforcement of a system of land property rights which could act as push factors and encourage migration from rural areas for displaced workers (Katz and Stark, 1986).

Due to rural-urban migration, rural communities suffer from a loss of manpower necessary for agricultural development. The impoverishment of rural areas in Nigeria is partly explainable by out-migration of able-bodied youths in search of white collar jobs in the cities. Agriculture which was the mainstay of Nigeria's economy prior to the discovery of Oil has been relegated to the background leading to the country's mono-economy status. The impact of rural-urban migration is indeed a rapid deterioration of the rural economy, leading to chronic poverty and food insecurity (Mini, 2001).

The Nigerian government's efforts in agricultural development over the past three decades have failed to improve the country's economy. A review of the sector depicts a gloomy picture. Performance is reflected in environmental degradation, mounting food deficits, and decline in both gross domestic product and export earnings, while retail food prices and import bills have been increasing. These effects have further impoverished the smallholder farmers, thereby placing them in a poverty web. Government concern with this situation has given rise in the past to various plans and projects aimed at checking the inflow of migrants from the rural to urban areas. Most of the schemes established by the federal government failed, due, to a large extent, to

the inadequate specification of the problem and the target population of the migration-influencing programmes.

Traditionally, migration studies were devoted to investigating frequency, patterns and flows, distance and typologies of people's mobility and their assimilation in host societies. Recent explorations, however, have begun to venture into studying the effects of migration and the various meanings of the migration for people themselves (Rigg, 2003). There is increasing interest in the 'migration process', which involves studying the lived reality of migrants; their migration, settlement, ethnic relations, public policies and identity construction as closely related and overlapping segments in a single process (Castles, 2000). The migration decision has been shown to be selective. Migration mainly concerns young adults who are more likely to have a positive net expected return on migration due to their longer remaining life expectancy, or because social norms require that young adults migrate in search of a better life (De Haan and Rogally, 2002).

Agricultural development involves people, their available resources and institutions. However, its greatest problem has been that of low production. This has been heightened, among other things by the desertion of farming by a large section of the Nigerian population who have taken to other non-agricultural occupations in the urban areas. In recent years, the volume and pace of rural-urban migration has greatly increased. The direction of the move has been unilateral, decided for the migrants who see the city as the only place where their aspirations for better living conditions can be satisfied.

Many developing countries such as Nigeria have adopted discriminatory policies towards agriculture, making its profitability lower than what is warranted by its social comparative advantage. Thus, with a reduction in earnings from agriculture, what is induced is a higher rate of migration than would be desirable (FAO, 2006). Historically, rural-urban imbalance in Nigeria can be traced to British colonial influence and a rather coercive colonial administration. Certain structural changes were introduced in the Nigeria economy such as the introduction of a monetary system, enforced laws, communication network such as roads and railways, and the presence of large foreign owned firms who offered cash rewards for the sale of particular crops, notably, Palm produce (palm oil and kernel), cocoa, cotton and Groundnut. On the aggregate, these factors completely changed the scale of social and economic values.

In fact, "irrespective of their size, traditional urban centres which were not on the rail line or on other major route ways found themselves shunted into the backwater of economic decadence, losing many of their virile young men to centres now better favoured locationally. While producing the bulk of investment capital, the rural areas received no commensurate return of resources. Compared with the urban centres, rural areas in Nigeria are noted for their lack of electricity, pipe borne water supply, and health facilities. Also, not only was government's focus on urban development concomitant with rural neglect in the immediate post-independence period in Nigeria, a significant proportion of rural earnings for agricultural exports was also diverted to investments in urban centres (Makinwa, 1975).

It is important to state that due to the rural-urban investments imbalance in the past and in spite of the laudable contributions of the rural sector to the national economy, the consequent effects have been low rural employment, low productivity of available rural labour and low standard of living of rural people. Today, the rural sector contains most of the poverty, and most of the low-cost sources of potential advancement; but the urban sector contains most of the articulateness, organization and power. Thus, the urban classes have been able to 'win' most of the rounds of the



struggle with the country-side; but in so doing, they have made the development process needlessly slow and unfair.

Consequently, this urban bias in social and economic infrastructure has left an indelible mark, a spatial distribution pattern that concentrates more than 90% of social and economic infrastructure and services in the Federal Capital Abuja, Lagos and the different state capitals. This underscores the economic realities that make agriculture the less important and less prestigious sector of the national economy. Agricultural development indeed deserves priority attention in view of the complementarity of the sector to both non-agricultural rural sector of the economy, and the urban industrial sector. It is important to understand the problems of agricultural development in Nigeria; the prevailing agricultural situation and the factors in the social system that are conducive to or which inhibit agricultural development.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **The Conflict Theory**

Conflict theory is oriented towards the study of social structures and institutions. It emphasizes the fact that there are fundamental differences of interest between social groups. Due to these differences, conflict has become a common and persistent feature of society. The greatest influence on the conflict theory is based on the contributions of Karl Marx. According to Marx, mankind has created much of the physical world, and the social and political institutions that order it. The world is produced and reproduced through man's labour. To him therefore, the motivating force in history is the manner in which human beings relate to one another in their continuous struggle to extract their livelihood from nature (Labinjoh, 2002).

So, a conflict theory of society derives essentially from Marxist sociology. It is regarded as an economic theory of society. The core of the Marxist argument is that relations and forces of production determine other relations such as those in the political, religious, judicial, cultural and other spheres of the society. Conflict is seen to exist when people and groups with different economic and other interests and roles interact in a society.

Every society contains elements of contradictions. These contradictions involve the exploitation of one social group by another. In feudal societies, lords exploit their serfs; in capitalist societies, employers exploit their employees. Conflict involves struggle between segments of society over valued resources. Marx asserted that the group which owns and controls the means of production also enjoys the support of laws which are framed to protect and further their interests. In addition, equality and social justice are illusions due to unequal social relationship, oppression and exploitation of one group by another. Indeed, according to Donovan (2000) one of Marx's central insights is the idea of materialist determinism, usually called historical materialism, which holds that culture and society are rooted in material or economic conditions.

The social conflict paradigm therefore sees society as an arena of inequality that generates conflict and change. Thus, this model investigates how factors such as social class, race, ethnicity, gender, status and age are linked to the unequal distribution of economic resources, power, education and social prestige. In other words, it emphasizes how social patterns benefit some people while depriving others.

In terms of the level of neglect suffered by the rural settlements and how this has affected rural and agricultural development in Nigeria, it is quite obvious that majority of rural people are poor, hungry, voiceless and powerless and the situation seems to be getting worse. They have been so alienated by those at the upper echelon in society, some of whom are in positions of authority at the Federal, State and Local Government level. These rural communities produce majority of the

raw materials needed for industrial development in the cities. Yet, they have been so marginalized, exploited and discriminated against since the urban areas often enjoy the lion share of all government development efforts.

This also has heightened the rural-urban drift of the active labour force due to a dearth of infrastructural facilities and neglect in the rural areas, including the over utilization of facilities and high criminal activities in the urban areas. This has been compounded by the fact that, policy decisions of government are often not properly implemented, especially when rural dwellers are usually not considered before such decisions and policies were initially made. Hence, except concerted effort is made by those in authority to carry rural dwellers along, the path towards sustainable rural development will be very unrealistic.

### **THE WAY FORWARD**

Agriculture is the most important economic sector in terms of its contribution to the GDP after Crude Oil. The sector contributes about 41% of the country's GDP, employs about 65% of the total population and provides employment to about 80% of the rural population (ADF, 2005). Interestingly, 75% of Nigeria's population resides in rural settlements where poverty has been observed to be rampant. This is due to among other things, neglect of the agricultural sector, economic mismanagement and policy inconsistencies by successive governments including a dearth of basic infrastructure and amenities.

The millennium development goals of the United Nations placed emphasis on minimizing poverty, with the rural poor and other vulnerable groups as a major area of focus. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and previous development and empowerment strategies have been laudable programmes, but implementation has been the critical challenge. There is therefore need for concerted efforts at programmes implementation which must be action oriented and less of rhetoric.

In terms of rural infrastructures, several rural settlements have been cut off due to poor and inaccessible roads, electricity, adequate pipe-borne water, health facilities market outlets, food processing activities, modern farm tools, implements and many others. Except these issues are properly handled, we will continue to witness incessant rural-urban drift which will ultimately affect the contribution of the rural sector to the growth and development of Nigeria.

The National Planning Commission has identified some strategies through which the agricultural sector can be revamped. The key issues here are input supply, research and training, promotion of integrated rural development involving agricultural and non-agricultural activities including access to credit facilities at affordable cost so as to make agriculture an attractive occupation.

Development strategies should also be people oriented and not based on some faulty assumptions. This implies that rural people must have a say in what affects their lives, especially as it relates to specific strategies for accelerating the process of rural and agricultural development. In addition, there must be a shared, bold and realistic vision so that our potentials for socio-economic development can be actualized.

### **CONCLUSION**

Agriculture is indeed an important occupation in Nigeria with over 70% of her population depending on it directly or indirectly for livelihood. It provides the bulk of employment, income and food for the rapidly growing population as well as supplying raw materials for agro-based industries.



Agricultural development involves people, their available resources and institutions. Unfortunately, for several decades, Nigeria has adopted discriminatory policies towards agriculture, making its profitability lower than what is warranted by its social comparative advantage. The expectation is that with properly articulated agricultural development policies, plans and projects, the rural settlements will not only be suitable and attractive to live in, especially for the youths and active labour force, but would go a long way to enhancing agricultural production and improving the quality of life of the citizenry.

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