

IMPEDIMENTS TO THE APPLICATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS TOWARDS RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Linda I. Anyalebechi

Medical Library, College of Medicine, Amaku, Awka, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University

Email: lindaanyalebechi@yahoo.com

Abstract

Application of research findings is a sine qua non to attain sustainable development. There is no gainsaying that development in less development countries of the world especially Africa has not been achieved. This is evidenced in the apparent lack of basic infrastructural facilities and abysmal poor quality of life in the rural areas. It is this noted worrisome situation and the necessity for addressing the problem that inspired the need to put up this paper. In carrying out the study, we had as our basic objectives, to generally overview the underdevelopment state of the Nigeria rural areas and its implications, we also thoroughly examined the impediments to the realization of meaningful rural development in the country and to explore the necessary or imperative measures to enhance the development of this very important sector of the Nigerian society. The basic problem discovered is that the application of research findings as tools for satisfying the yearnings and aspirations of the people is lacking. Very critical again is that research is poorly funded in less developed nations especially in Africa. Finally, the relationship between rural development, research findings and national development as well as sustainability has also been critically discussed.

Introduction

In the dynamic environment in which we live, especially Africa that is still a developing Continent, it is very naïve of any person or institution to think that important decisions can continue to be made by rule of thumb or guess work- hunches. The complexity of the decision to be made and the magnitude of the problems confronting the nations of Africa are such that systematic procedure is required in order to ensure that decisions are made as much as possible with all the facts available. Present day decision contends Osuala (2000) often cost a lot of money. Sometimes what are required in everyday decisions are not right or wrong answers but intelligent decisions that are made possible by research. Success in any enterprise involves the identification of the critical aspects of the dynamic environment, making intelligent forecasts and utilizing those forecasts. All of these involve research and research for many underdeveloped countries of Africa means continued survival.

A growing number of African countries have realized that without investment in science and technology, the continent will remain on the sidelines of the global economy and will find it difficult to bring an end to extreme poverty. (UNESCO, 2014). There has been significant progress

in terms of institutions and policy, Africa contributes to the global research and development effort and this contribution is growing. These are some of the findings of the UNESCO Science Report to be launched at the Organisation's headquarters on 10 November, 2014 to coincide with World Science Day. The report presents a review of the state of science and technology in the world, with a chapter devoted to sub-Saharan Africa.

Encouraging signs in recent years, several countries including South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria and Burkina Faso – have adopted laws supporting biotechnology research. Biosciences are included in the four flagship research programmes in the consolidated plan of Action for Africa's Science and Technology adopted by African Ministers of Science and Technology in 2005. The CPA is one of the most ambitious strategies of recent years and aims to strengthen Africa's research and science and technology capacities. In 2008, 14 countries called on UNESCO to help review their science policy. And, since 2005, six new science academies have been set up in Mozambique, Sudan, Mauritius, Morocco, Tanzania and Zimbabwe compared to just nine in the entire period from 1902 to 2004 (UNESCO Report, 2014).

University-based research and economic development

Universities have frequently been regarded as key institutions in the process of social change and development argues Nebo (2006). Nations across the globe today depend increasingly on knowledge, ideas and skills which are produced in universities (World Bank, 2008). The most expedient role they have been allocated is the production of highly skilled labour and research output to meet perceived economic needs. Nations often invest in university education because society expects it to contribute in national development in three principal ways, namely: (1) To produce highly skilled personnel in technology, engineering, management and other professions, to produce a corps of academic personnel, that is, the intellectual pool that will, through scientific research, generate new knowledge and innovations to solve development problems.

(2) To produce the teachers, administrators and managers for other levels of human resources development institutions (Oni, 1999).

Generally, the strength, productive capacity and competitiveness of a country labour force argues Nebo (2006) depend on the quality of research produced by its universities. Countries with a weak university based research lag behind others in labour force competitiveness. As the labour force drives development, such countries lag behind in development. In new states, university-based researchers are able to monitor global; technology needs, assess their relevance to national needs and assist in developing the national technological capacity for economic growth.

Nebo (2006), Udochukwu (2011), Eze (2013), contend that most countries that have achieved a stable economic growth often rely on a critical mass of scientists in a specified field the scientific community – to drive their growth. For example the emergence of China as a new player in the process of globalization outside OECD can partly be attributed to its development of her scientists. In 2003, China had the second highest number of researchers in the World (862,000) behind United States (1.3 million in 1999) but ahead of Japan (675,000) and Russia (487,000). Eze, (2013). Among the OECD regions, Japan had the highest number of researchers relative to total employment (10.4 per thousand), followed by United States of America (9.3) and the EU (5.8) (OECD Scientific Technology and Industry Score Board, 2005).

Research experience beyond Nigeria

Development of science and technology sector in Africa faces a number of challenges. Starting with budgetary obstacles. Research and development attracts considerably less public investment

in sub-Saharan Africa than defence, education or health. The proportion of GDP devoted to research and development averages about 0.3% on the continent, seven times less than that spent by industrialized countries on this sector. South Africa spends most on research and development with its investment rising from 0.73% in 2001 to 0.94% in 2006 as a proportion of GDP. South Africa also leads in terms of scientific publications, with 46% of the continent's entire share far ahead of Nigeria (11.4%) and Kenya (6.6%) (Ambe (2013).

More effort is undoubtedly required in education. Africa's rate of adult literacy, 62% is still very low. And higher education in sub-Saharan Africa is reserved for an elite minority, with enrolments in the region. Even where there is high demand, as in Benin, an increase in student enrolments means overflowing classes, a lack of laboratory equipment, underpaid lecturers and too few connections between university research and innovation. And, alongside these low numbers of students in higher education there is marked inequality between the sexes. The enrolment rate of females in Sub-Saharan African universities is one of the lowest in the world. And female students are often confined to disciplines such as the social sciences and health, where job prospects are few.

Brain drain, fostered by the absence of measures to promote research and innovation, the gaps in legislation to protect intellectual property and the low wages earned by scientists, constitutes a major concern. In 2009, at least a third of African scientists or those with engineering degrees were living and working in developed countries. Between 1990 and 2005 many qualified medical doctors and nurses from Nigeria were employed by the Saudi Arabian and American hospitals (Kalu, 2013). The absence of measures to encourage innovation, gaps in the legislation regarding intellectual property rights and low salaries paid to researchers have all contributed to the brain drain. Uganda is one of the ten countries most affected: In 2007, 36% of university graduates, doctors and leading researchers were living abroad. In an effort to halt this phenomenon, Uganda has taken energetic measures to improve salaries for university researchers and teaching staff. Cameroon, Zambia and Botswana, among others have also taken measures along the same lines. According to UNESCO (2014), some important changes will need to be implemented if the continent is to reach the suggested target of 1000 researchers per million population by 2025. A key element will be the implementation of national science policies based on the industrial and technological needs of each country. Another indispensable element is to increase the funds allocated to Research and development and necessity of rendering science more attractive to pupils in secondary schools and to students.

The need for research as a tool for socio-economic development has long been realized by African nations and yet nothing serious has been done. The slow pace of pursuit bothering on systematic stagnation of research activities in some sectors in African nations has been largely responsible for the stunted growth and development of Africa as a third world continent.

How can there be breakthroughs and socio-economic development without research. It is only painstaking research that can open up Africa. It is heart-warming to observe that one of the advantages attributed to Africa as a developing continent which would contribute to making it possible for the attainment of a sustainable growth rate capable of positioning it among the 3rd biggest economies in the World by the year 2020 is the establishment of several research centres and universities. It is also gratifying to note that most of the existing research institutions and universities in most African nations do not devote much to research activities. The government of most African nations do not also budget adequate fund for research. Thus the research component of many universities in Africa is weak. In Nigeria for instance, over 99.5% if not all 100% of the university activity and time are devoted to teaching and assessing of students throughout the year,

without definite official time designated for doing research (Nebo, 2006). Those that must do research could only do so by stealing time out of their teaching time or spare time, or leave, if they manage to secure it (Beko, 2005).

For the last one and half decades argues Ede (2013) Nigeria universities have been expending over 98% of their research expenditure on paying salaries and allowances and 2% on maintaining services, with zero allocation for research. Out of the total fund budgeted for research between (1999-2006) less than 20% were actually allocated to the Nigerian University Commission (NUC) by the Government, while out of the fund in question less than 50% were actually allocated to the universities, and out of this allocation, less than 3% of the money were utilized for research. Due to the shortfalls the universities have been experiencing in the payment of salaries and maintenance services, the bulk of the research grants were vied for these purposes. This is why most of the Nigerian universities find it difficult to account for the research money received (Due to the shortfalls the universities have been experiencing in the payment of salaries and maintenance services, the bulk of the research grants were vied for these purposes. This is why most of the Nigerian universities find it difficult to account for the research money received (Research Bulletin, NUC, 1977-200 to Federal Universities). This scenario is obtainable in other nations of Africa. To say the least research in most countries of Africa is merely for academic purposes and thus is not taken seriously. This scenario presented hereunder applies to many nations of Africa:

(1) Researches in many universities in Africa are conducted mostly to earn promotions, thus most researchers are aspiring and relatively new PhD holders. In fact once a university lecturer is promoted to the rank of professor, research ends.

(2) Most researches in African universities are conducted purely to earn academic promotions and have no relevance to the needs of industry. Thus most industries located in Africa rely on their foreign technical partners for research and development.

(3) A disconnect exists between theory and practice of science in most nations education system in Africa and industry needs. In fact, there is chronic imbalance between university science and technology curriculum and the needs of industry. Thus, as stated earlier, employers commit a lot of resources retraining school graduates and sharpening their skills so that they can suit the needs of the industry.

(4) There is no system of match-making or brokering to sharpen and bridge the gap between the technology the university can offer and the needs of the industrial firms that are potential users of the technology. Thus, local industries, which should benefit from the university expertise, are finding it increasingly difficult to retrain/retool their staff and have often taken recourse to bringing in expatriate staff for that purpose. Specifically, the communication between the university and industry is weak. This problem is compounded by the fact that local industries lack a robust Research and Development backbone, making it difficult for them to innovate and produce competitively.

1.1 Highlight of the rural underdevelopment state of the Nigerian rural areas

Even though successive governments in Nigeria have made some efforts towards enhancing rural development, its meaningful realization has remained a mirage. Eke and Oghator (2011) observe this in their comment that most rural development programmes in Nigeria has ended up in the pages of national newspapers and television announcements with the rural areas languishing in backwardness, stagnation, poverty and misery. This is evidenced by the apparent lack of basic infrastructural facilities and glaring presence of general low standard of living among the rural populace (Olatunbunso, 1975). Indeed as FOS (1996) and Nwuke, (2004) observe, poverty is

prevalent among the rural dwellers as about 70 percent of the people in Nigeria living below poverty line are domiciled in the rural areas.

Specifically, the Nigerian rural areas are, for instance, characterized by deplorable road network and absence of all year-round reliable access road. This situation is made more critical as the topography of some rural communities are characterized by ubiquitous valleys and hills and other geological challenges like clayey and swampy areas. This poses enormous challenge in road construction (Olayiwole and Adeleye, 2005). Ele (2006) too observes that there is, indeed, a problem of rural transport as mostly all the rural roads are not accessible and link bridges are dilapidated and in some cases even non – existent. And since accessibility is a necessity for development, its lack in most rural areas holds them

back in the dungeon of underdevelopment. It is noteworthy that most of the road networks in rural areas in Nigeria are maintained through community efforts. This cannot really be effective as the contemporary road development need of the rural areas are such that mere community efforts cannot adequately address.

There is too, very apparently, poor quality education in most rural areas in Nigeria (Ele, 2006). Ijere and (1992) note in this respect too that rural education is characterized by limited functional or work oriented education and disdain for handicraft and technical subjects. Okoh and Onah (2002:159) make similar observation as they note thus:

The privilege of education which, for instance, is supposed to be a birth right of every Nigerian child is an illusion to many poor rural dwellers. In some places, there are no schools at all while in some others the schools are shabby, ill-equipped and poorly staffed.

Nigerian rural areas is equally characterized by apparent lack of health institutions as there are hardly any well equipped hospital health centres, clinics and maternal homes. Onah and Okoli (2002) observe similarly that in most rural areas of Nigeria, no medical institution of any sort exists at all and that where they do, the people have to travel very long distances to get to them.

Water supply in the Nigerian rural areas has also been discovered to be grossly inadequate and with the spread of water borne disease increased by the accompanying poor sanitary conditions (Ele, 2006). Abah (2010) observes too that, rural areas in Nigeria is also characterized by depressingly meager annual per capital income, poor liveable houses and various forms of social and political isolation. In summary, there is apparent lack of development in the rural areas of Nigeria as reflected in the near total lack of basic infrastructure, and social services. In Enugu state of Nigeria, for instance, a survey of the development needs of the 471 communities in the state as at 2009 revealed that 385, 342, and 304 rural communities lack access to accessible road, portable water/borehole and cottage hospitals respectively (Enugu state, 2009).

One major consequence of the rural underdevelopment is urban migration which is daily reducing the active population of the rural areas in Nigeria. Infact, as a consequence of persistent underdevelopment, there has been noticeable high level of rural-urban migration in search of better standard of living and wider opportunities for meaningful economic and social activities (Oghoghousse and Gerry-Eze, 2011). Indeed, as Nwankwo and Apeh (2006) note, rural-urban migration is dysfunctional not only to rural development but retards the over all national development.

Summarily, it is unfortunate as Ijere (1992) observes that the Nigerian rural sector which produces 95 percent of the food crops in the country has been traditionally linked with poverty and underdevelopment characteristics that include comparatively poor standard of living as a result of lack of basic amenities like access roads, portable water access to affordable and quality supply,

basic health care facilities, electricity, functional primary and secondary education facilities, basic agricultural facilities like irrigation storage facilities and other farm inputs like fertilizer for enhanced rural agricultural activities, industrial centers for promotion of rural industrialization, skills acquisition centers for manpower and skills development, developed market and commerce to enhance rural economic activities and the accompanying income.

1.1.1 Constraints to rural development in Nigeria.

1. Relative Neglect for rural development policies: Generally, there has been less emphasis on rural development in Nigeria. The Enugu State Vision 2020 (2009:16); in this respect notes thus;

Over the years, the development strategies in Nigeria generally has been urban biased and for which there exists relative neglect of the rural areas resulting into a dearth of infrastructural facilities in the rural areas

In reality, there is a gross rural neglect in Nigeria's development policies which has resulted to rural underdevelopment as reflected in the lack of rural industrialization and poor physical, social and institutional infrastructures (Mahon, 1992). This prevalent orientation, according to Olasiji (1992), is closely connected with the colonial economy which is still promoted in Nigeria. Olasiji (1992: 38) in this respect specifically observes thus:

The 1960 political independence did not change the pattern of rural/urban polarization. Nigerian leaders have continued to maintain the British colonial development legacy which serves the external economic interest and impoverish the standard of living among rural dwellers.

Olarenwaju and Toyin (1992) note too that such development strategy of concentrating investments in urban areas has resulted to a wide imbalance or gap in rural and urban development. This factor of relative neglect for rural development was reinforced by government's over-reliance on the petroleum economy. Obviously, the petroleum economy has become the main stay of the country's economy and for which government has, over the years, paid less attention to the development of the major activities of the rural areas particularly agriculture. Oshin (1992) in this respect contends that agriculture has continued to divindle more as it loses its economic importance following the greater emphasis on the petroleum sector. In essence and according to Ele (2006), the emphasis on petroleum economy and the subsequent neglect of the agricultural sector has contributed substantially to the current poor state of the rural economy and the general rural sector underdevelopment.

2. Lack of Integration of the various rural development efforts: Beyond, the general neglect of development policies for the rural areas in Nigeria, another factor that significantly militates against rural development is the inability of the rural development institutions to co-operate among themselves and to ensure that their respective initiatives, actions and mandates are co-ordinated to reinforce and support each other and that their activities are streamlined towards effective realization of government's rural development objectives. Idon (1999: 181) observes this impediment to rural development in Nigeria in his comment thus:

The activities of various bodies involved in the development efforts and activities never dovetailed as expected. This is to say that the expected co-ordination among the different departments, ministries, Federal, states and the local governments for instance, on the implementation mechanisms has been very difficult to achieve.

Ele (2006) in his study too notes that the rural development efforts in Nigeria has not been given the integrated and comprehensive approach it requires. This has been dysfunctional to rural

development and as Abah (2010) argues, rural development in order to be effective has to be comprehensive, involving all aspects of rural life and involving the complimentary efforts of the local government, state government and federal government as well as the communities and voluntary agencies. Integration is indeed, necessary as the factors involved in rural development are interrelated and mutually enhance one another in their effectiveness (Okoli and Onah, 2002).

3. Ineffective implementation of rural development policies, projects and programs. As has been recognized earlier in this work, Nigeria has over the years, nonetheless, developed some policies to enhance the development of the rural areas. Realizing the development objectives of those policies and programs has, however, been constrained by the pattern and nature of their implementation which has been characterized by ineffectiveness and inefficiency. As Ele (2006), Ikelegbe, (2006) and Nweke, (2006) contend, effective policy implementation is usually very difficult to realize particularly in developing nations like Nigeria. Implementation of rural development policies have, no doubt, been characterized by similar ineffectiveness and inefficiency. The inability of the relevant rural development agencies to effectively implement rural development policies could be as a result of inadequate resources which, quite often, is a real threat to successful implementation of rural development policies. It could, as a well, be a result of the pervasive corruption in the Nigerian public service bureaucracy. Such corrupt tendencies, most often, significantly increases the possibility that allocated fund for rural development projects and programs would be misappropriated or outrightly embezzled and thus hampering effective implementation and the consequent realization of the policy development goals and objectives of the policy. For instance, the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) that was intended to raise agricultural products and improve conditions of the rural population and the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure intended to transform the rural infrastructure were unable to meet their development objectives due largely to poor implementation (Ajadi 2010). Indeed, rural development strategies do not work in a vacuum. Their effective implementation requires functional and capable institutions with appropriate institutional arrangement for that.

Another major explanation for the ineffective implementation of rural development policies in Nigeria is the discontinuation of rural development policies. Most often, rural development policies or programs are discontinued whenever there is a change in government leadership. Most times, new government abandons the projects and programs of its predecessor even when such programs are appropriate. In this respect, Ajadi (2010) notes that there is usually the absence of sustained, cohesive and conclusive implementation of rural development policies. It is this propensity that led to the abandonment of Better Life For Rural Women program of General Ibrahim Bagangida and to the introduction of the Family Support Programme by the succeeding regime of General Sani Abacha. In the context of this propensity, most rural development policies are not sustainably implemented and to their logical conclusion.

4. Poor commitment of the political representatives, towards enhancing the development of their rural constituencies. The political leaders and representatives in Nigeria, either at the executive or the legislature arm, have all come from given rural areas of the country. These politicians at different points and time, have observed the development needs of these rural areas and even made promises too on how to address these development concerns. However, their will and interest to actually articulate these needs and the strategies or programs for addressing them have, indeed, not been noticeable. The prevalent and common observation is that they hardly pursue conclusively the relevant programs for enhancing the development needs of the rural parts of their constituencies. This lack of interest and political will to project the development needs of the rural areas at the relevant political or bureaucratic power points does not induce government's

prompt attention to addressing the development needs of the rural areas. This scenario is again reinforced by the fact that most political office holders (Local Government Chairmen, Councilors and Supervisors, State Commissioners and State Legislatures and Federal Legislatures) all detest living in the rural areas and have opted to, rather live in the metropolitan state capitals or the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. For this, they do not feel the impact of the gross deprivation obtainable in the rural areas and for which too they tend not to realize the urgent and dire need for enhancing development in the rural areas. These attitudes do not reflect effective political representation particularly for the rural population. Indeed, as Baba (2011) notes, political representation in Nigeria is essentially for private benefit and not for public benefit. This reasonably explains the non-challant attitude by political leaders and representatives towards enhancing national development generally and that of their respective rural constituencies particularly.

5. The Administrative inefficiency of the Local Government Areas: The local government areas occupy a strategic position in the development process of the rural areas. Even though it cannot be reasonably assumed that other higher tiers of government (state and federal tiers) do not have a role to play in enhancing rural sector development, the task constitutionally centres, in a larger part, on the local government. As Anikeze (2012) argues, the primary purpose of local government is to provide essential local services and thus accelerate the pace of social and economic development of the rural and grassroots people. Indeed, the reconstitution of Nigeria into 301, 589 and 774 local government areas in 1976, 1991 and 1996 respectively was meant ostensibly to bring government closer to the local people and to speed up rural development. Sad enough, this objective has not been noticeably realized (Tony, 1995; Baba, 2011). This is even so, despite the huge monthly statutory allocations to the local government areas. The inability of the local governments to work towards enhancing the rural development could, in large parts, be attributed to poor and inept leadership and pervasive corruption in the local government administrative system (Halidu, 2012; Anikeze, 2012). The high level of corruption, for instance, makes it difficult for them to channel adequate funds and energy to effective rural development. As Anikeze (2012) notes, the interest of the local government leadership primarily revolves around trivialities or at best around those schemes for which they hope to derive immediate personal gains. The net effect of this has been general stagnation in the development process of the rural people and their environment.

1.1.1.1 The imperative measures for enhancing rural development in Nigeria

1. Fundamentally, government needs to place rural development at the top of the agenda of the national development in realization of the fact that enhanced rural development is a prerequisite for meaningful and sustainable overall national development policies and programs. Further to this is the need for consistency in the execution of rural development programmes. Indeed, implementation of appropriate rural development programs should continue irrespective of changes in government.

2. Government again needs to de-emphasize total focus on the oil sector and to enhance agricultural development through addressing the needs of rural farmers with functional incentives. This is necessary as increased income from agricultural activities, which is the main stay of the rural economy, improves the quality of the life of the rural dwellers. For instance, when farmers shift from the use of traditional tools like hoes and machetes to the use of modern tools like tractors, their production increases from subsistence to commercial quantities. Another dimension to this is the need for the establishment of agro – allied industries as growth or development drivers of the rural areas. Such agro – processing industries could be in the areas of rice milling and packaging,

processing of cashew and groundnut products, cassava and cocoyam flour packaging, processing of pineapple, oranges and paw-paw into fruit juice etc.

3. The political representatives and leaders need to identify with the development needs of the rural areas of their constituencies. Indeed, they need to articulate such needs and ensure that they become integral parts of the government's development agenda and that policies or programs initiated to address them are monitored to ensure proper implementation. This is necessary in view of the fact that rural dwellers on their own, do not constitute any meaningful political force and so development policy formulations generally ignores them. Again the political representatives like the federal legislators could enhance rural development by actually devoting part of their constituency development allowance to rural sector development. This is necessary as such display of commitment to rural development by the political representatives will, in turn, trigger greater commitment towards initiating rural development projects and programs on the side of the rural communities themselves

4. There is equally the need not only to adequately make budgetary allocation for rural development but, very importantly, in ensuring that such allocated funds are judiciously used to execute rural development projects and programs.

5. There is also the need for monitoring and integrating of the various national, state and local government policies and programmes on rural development and the co-ordination of the activities of all the rural development institutions. It is specifically suggested here that the federal government creates a federal ministry that will have the mandate to ensure the integration and harmonization of the various strategies, policies activities and goals of all the pro-rural development institutions and agencies including private rural community initiatives and those of Non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

6. The local governments in Nigeria need to eschew corruption particularly at the leadership level and emphasize accountability, due process, prudence and diligence. Again, the leadership need to refocus firmly on its primary and statutory duty of administering local and rural development in integrated and sustainable manner. It is expected that the democratization process in Nigeria will aid the coming into existence of visionary and purposeful leaderships in the local government system. Such responsible leaderships will be inclined to developing appropriate policies and programs that can be effectively implemented to address the rural underdevelopment needs in Nigeria. Indeed, with such commitment of government leadership at the state and federal government levels in Nigeria towards enhancing development at the rural areas, the nation would significantly key into the millennium rural development goals and objectives.

T

Obstacles to research Enterprise: The African Experience

Numerous challenges face research efforts in Nigeria and rest of the nations of Africa. They are among others:

(1) **Reliability and validity of data:** One of the greatest problems facing scientific research in Africa is lack of reliable statistical data. In most African nations like Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Botswana, Zimbabwe etc is access to reliable data. Government officials in these countries are always sensitive to official matters, especially those they feel that border on the security of the government. They deliberately obstruct the publication of empirical data about the government and the ruled. This problem is more pronounced in dictatorial regimes. In some other cases, governments in most African states often publish false statistics for political, economic, social or financial reasons.

(2) **Influence of Values:** Science assumes value neutrality but most research in Africa involves value questions. Issues that border on interest, authoritative allocation of values and in which invariably will introduce bias. Even scientists themselves have their own values (interests) which to some extent affect the result of their research.

(3) **Illiteracy:** Illiteracy remains the most serious problem facing the people of Africa. Most countries in Africa have a disquietingly high percentage of illiteracy. According to available statistics the percentage of illiteracy in Nigeria as at December 2013 was put at 51%, Sudan, 81%, Rwanda 79% (Eze, 2014). The scenario is similar to what obtains in most other African states especially Ghana, Sierra Leone, Gambia and Togo. Most of the illiterate African populations are left out of research samples because of the difficulty of obtaining pertinent data from them. Even when they are interviewed in the language they can understand, they still exhibit an apparent inability to supply needed information. They are at times suspicious and reluctant to furnish information that might change their way of life. Illiteracy has worked restrictively in other ways in making research more difficult in Africa. Most empirical research requires the ability to read in order to answer accurately the questionnaire. Inability to read and write makes mail survey difficult.

(4) **Secrecy:** Many African countries argue (Osuala, 2000) tend to have a special liking for secrecy. Even in government ministries, information that otherwise would be for public consumption is considered “secret”. Individuals dislike any activity that appears as “nosing around” or trying to probe them. There is resentment for such questions as: Do you work? Where is your wife? What is your salary level? The prejudices against these types of questions from one whose intentions are not very clear are translated into prejudice for research as a whole.

(5) **Fund:** Virtually all the countries in Africa do not budget adequate fund for research activities. Also the university lecturers and those who work in research institutions are not well remunerated. Most governments think that fund allocated to research component of the economy is a wasted fund and therefore they do not allocate adequate fund for research activities. The government prefers to vote huge sums of money to maintain security and payment of salaries and benefits to political office holders and assembly men (Asakitikpi (2006).

Conclusion

The article has looked at the issues of rural underdevelopment in Nigeria, examined the impediments to enhancement of the rural development and proffered solutions towards improving rural development administration. Also constraints to conducting research in Africa were examined as nexus to rural underdevelopment. In conclusion, the paper posits that the rural areas of Nigeria is so far largely characterized by lack of basic infrastructure facilities and general underdevelopment. This is in spite of their immense contributions to the national development. Enhancing the rural development status is therefore a prerequisite for sustainable national growth and development. Realizing this enhancement depends on how the identified impediments to it are tackled. The adoption of the recommended measures, which are considered imperative in overcoming the impediments, are expected to lead significantly to enhancement in the rural development process in Nigeria.

References

- Abah, N. (2010) *Development Administration: A Multi – Dispensary Approach*. Enugu: John Jacob Classic Publishers.
- Abonyi, N and Nnamani O. (2011) “Development and Food Crisis in Emerging Economy: A critical Appraised of Nigeria”. Nigerian Journal of Administrative science. Vol. 9 Nos. 1 and 2 Pp. 265 – 278.
- Aboyade, O. (1976) *Local Government Reforms in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Ajadi, B. (2010) “Poverty Situation in Nigeria: An Overview of Rural Development Institutions” Pakistan Journal of Sciences Vol. 7 No. 5 Pp 351 – 356.
- Anikeze, N. (2012) “Repositioning The Nigeria Local Government System for Improved Performance” Journal of Policy and Development Studies. Vol. 6 No. 1 Pp 166 – 174.
- Baba, I. (2011) “Local Government and the failure of Rural Development in Nigeria: Explaining the Role of Political Participation”. Journal of Social Development in Africa. Vol. 26 No; 2 Pp 18 – 24,
- Bellow, B. (1989) “Rural Development in Nigeria: A Theoretical. Analysis” Journal of Politics, Vol. 36 Feb.
- Eke, O. and Oghator, E. (2011) “Effective Mobilization of Resources for Sustainable Rural Development in Nigeria” Nigeria Journal of Administrative Science. Vol. 9 Nos. 1 and 2 July Pp 142 – 156.
- Ele, C. (2006) *Evangelization through Rural Development*. Nsukka: Great AP Publishers Ltd.
- Enugu State (2009) *Medium Term Implementation Plan – Enugu State Vision 2020 – (2010 – 2013)*. Enugu State Government Publication.
- Ezeah, P. (2005) *Rural Sociology and Rural Development with Focus on Nigeria*. Enugu: John Jacob Classic Publishers.
- Halidu, A. (2012) Transparency and Accountability in Local Government Administration in Nigeria A Paper Presented at a National Workshop on Performance, Transparency, Accountability and Development at the Local Government level” Organized by the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Abuja, February – March.
- Idowu, S. (1999) *Media in Nigeria’s Security and Development Vision*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Ijere, M. (19992) *Leading Issues in Rural Development* Enugu: Acena Ventures.
- Ikelegbe, A. (2006) *Public Policy Analysis: Concepts, Issues and Analysis*. Lagos: Imprint Services.
- Mustapha, B. (1989) “Local Government as an Instrument of Social Mobilization and Rural Development for self Reliance: The Lagos State Experience” Paper presented at National conference on Social Mobilization and Community Development held at Alvan Ikoka college of Education, Owerri, Imo State Jan, 12 – 13th
- Nwankwo B. and Apeh, G. (2006) *Development Administration: Principles and Practice*. Enugu: Zik Chuks Press.
- Nweke, E. (2006) *Public Policy Analysis: A Strategic Approach* Enugu: John Jacobs Publishers.
- Nwuke, K. (2004) “Poverty Reduction Strategies Towards The Millennium Development Goals: Africa’s Experiences and Lessons for Nigeria”. Paper delivery at the Enugu Policy Forum Organized by African Institute for Applied Economics, Enugu.
- Nyagba, S. (2009) “Review of Nigeria’s Rural Development Policy for sustainable Development” paper presented at Business Round Table at Abuja, 9 – 11 July. Oghoghoiye, R. and Erry – Eze, 1 (2011) “Rural Urban Migration, Social life,

- Ogbughouje and Gerry-Eze (2011) "Agricultural Production and Counseling Challenges in Edo State" Nigerian Journal of Administrative Science. Vol. 9. Nos. 1 and 2 July.
- Okoye, C. (2000) "Democracy – Development Rhetoric in Nigeria: A Critical Discourse". African Political Science Review. Vol. 7 No 7 (Pp. 83 – 99).
- Okoli, F. and Onah, F. (2002) *Public Administration in Nigeria: Nature, Principles and Application*. Enugu: John Jacobs Publishers Ltd.
- Olarenwaju, S. et al (2001) "Evaluation of Programmes and Policies for Supporting Small Side Enterprises in Nigeria" A Publication of Development Policy Centre. Ibadan.
- Olarenwaju, S. (1992) "Overview of Rural Development Problems" in Olarenwaju, S.A and Falola, T. (eds.) *Rural Development Problems in Nigeria* England: Avebury.
- Olatunbosun, O. (1975) *Nigeria Neglected Rural Majority*. Ibadan: Oxford University Press.
- Olayiwola, L. and Adeleye, O. (2005) "Rural Infrastructure Development in Nigeria: Between 1960 and 1970 Problem and challenges". Journal of Social Science, Vol. 11 No 2. Pp 91 – 96.
- Olokesusi, A. (1992) "The Rural Health care Delivery Problems" "in Olarenaju, S. A. and Falola, T. (ed) *Rural Development Problem in Nigeria*. England: Avebury.
- Oshin, O. (1992) The Historical roots of the Rural Development Problem" In Olarenwaju, S.A and Falola, S.A (ed.) *Rural Development Problems in Nigeria*: England: Avebury.
- Oyorbaire, S. and Olagunju, T. (1992) *Foundations of New Nigeria. The IBB Era*. Ibadan: Precision Press.
- Tonye, D. (1995) *Local Government and Administration in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Amitop Books Company.