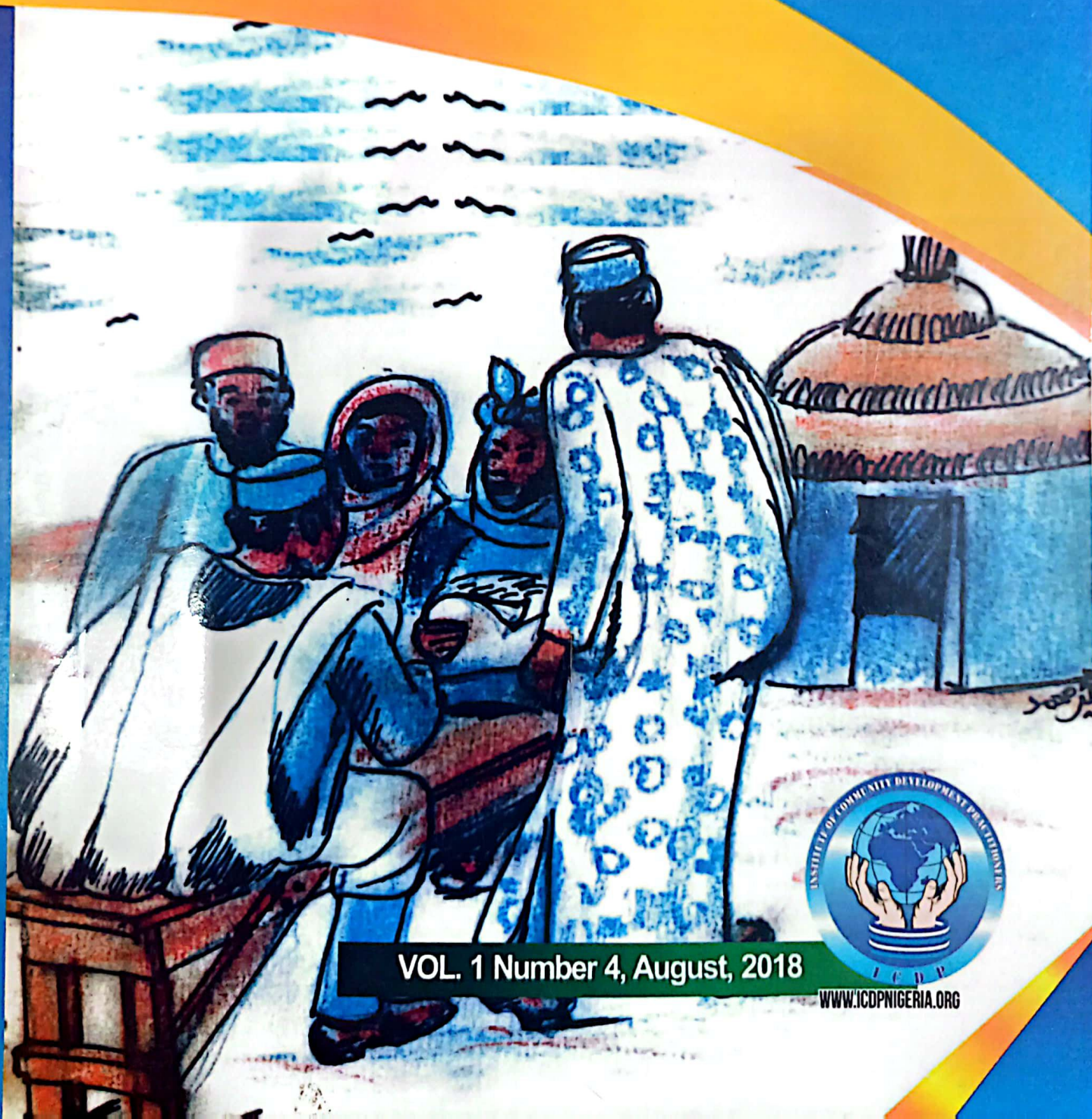


NIGERIA JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT (NJCLAD)

A MULTI DISCIPLINARY FORUM OF THE INSTITUTE
OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS, NIGERIA

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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

NJCLAD is an annual journal published by the Institute of Community Development Practitioners Nigeria. It is a multidisciplinary forum which seeks to promote productive scholarship and contribute to effective practice of community development in Nigeria. The journal shall ensure that innovative practices in Community Development studies in the Nigerian context are promoted. The broad focus of the journal is on theory, research, policy and practice in Community Development. It is intended for both professional Community development practitioners, volunteers and academics.

The journal welcomes articles on any of the following subject areas: Community/Rural Development, Extension Education/services, Community service learning, Social work and Welfare Education, Literacy Studies, Community Psychology, Non-Formal Education, Social Entrepreneurship, Youth work, Innovations Diffusion, Cooperative Studies, Financial Literacy, Community Health, Environmental sustainability, public service, Public-Private Partnerships and other related topics presented in a community learning and development context.

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

This journal has been growing in terms of thematic focus, readership and acceptability by the community development movement in the academia and practice fronts across Nigeria. The present volume focuses on strategies for third sector engagement in sustainable community development. The article by Ayeye and Abdulqadir explore voluntary organisations' role in evolving alternative path to sustainable development paradigm. Quadri et. al. and Tanko shared some working model based on practice showing public- third sector engagements. Quadri's paper provided sustainable ways of addressing rural unemployment using youth agri-preneurship. Third sector challenges and opportunities were discussed by Garba and Deborah while third sector involvement in Non-Formal Education was discussed by Mamman and David. The journal volume number 4 also contains article which looked at community mobilisation and ICT towards managing third sector initiatives in Nigeria.

The relevance of the issues and its contexts in Nigeria's quest for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) makes the current volume a must read for academics and community development practitioners.

Prof. M.B.Shitu
Editor-in- Chief

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

CONTRIBUTOR	
Maryam A. Ayeye Abdulkadir I. Isa	Department of Education, Ramat Polytechnic Maiduguri Pensioners' Right Project, League for Human Rights, North West Zone, Kar
S. Quadri; F. Kanampiu; N. Kamai; I. Kadafur; & A.Y. Kamara	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)
Tijjani Alhaji Garba Abiodun Deborah Yetunde	Dept. of Planning, Research & Stat. Ministry of Health, Kano State Lecturer, Dept. of Edu Foundation, University of Jos, Plateau State
Tanko Ahmed fwc	Senior Fellow (Security & Strategic Studies) National Institute (NIPSS), Kuru – Jos
Dr. Idris Wada Aujara	Is a Lecturer in the Department of Adult Education & Community Service Bayero University Kano, Nigeria
Mairo Sai'd Muhammad	PhD Student, Department of Adult Education and Community Service Bayero University Kano
Mr. Sholagberu A.O., Mr. Kayode S.T. Mrs. Najeem A.H.	Dept. of Educn Foundation, Kwara State Coll of Educ. Ilorin Dept. of Adult and Prim Educ., University of Ilorin, Kwara State Det.of Curr. Stud and Educ Tech., Kwara State Coll of Edu, Ilorin
Hassan Muhammad Lemu & Hafsah Muhammad D.	Are Postgraduate Students, Department of Adult Education and Communit Services, Bayero University, Kano.
Bilyaminu Bello Inuwa	Is a Lecturer in the Department of Adult Education & Community Service Bayero University Kano, Nigeria
Kolo Alfa Idris	Dept. of Continuing Education and Community Development, IBB Universi Lapai, Niger State.
Lakan, M. J, Kolo, A. I Dr. Usman, I. G	Are with the Faculty of Education and Arts, IBB University Lapai, Niger Stat
David Usuwe	Is a Lecturer in the Department of Adult Education & Community Service Bayero University Kano, Nigeria
1. Mahmud, Abbas 2. Sa'idu, Hadiza	1. Lecturer, Dept. of Adult Educ and Extn Services, UDUS, Sokoto 2. Dept. of Foundations School of Education F.C.E(T), Gombe
Abubakar Usman	Dept. of Adult and Non-Formal Education, F.C.E. Zaria, Kaduna State
Dr Usman Abba Idris Abdulkareem M. Tasiu Sani Shuaibu Rogo	Is a lecturer, Dept. of Adult Edu and Comm. Services, BUK Found Dept. Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare, Bauchi. Kano State Local Education Authority
Mamman Ali David Uriah Daniel	Is a lecturer Department of Educational Foundations, University of Jos Department of Adult and Non- Formal Education, F.C.E. Pankshin
Muhammad Shehu Hussain, Ph. D	Dept of Educational Foundation and Curriculum, Ahmadu Bello Universit Zaria, Kaduna State.
Mohammed Wakili, Hadiza Saidu Isa Bango	PhD student, Dept. of Adult Edu & Comm. Serv. BUK Dept. of Foundations School of Education F.C.E(T), Gombe
Abdurrauf Idris Yusuf Ahmad Kuyello Uthman Shehu Lawal & Awaisu Musa	Department of Social Development, Shehu Idris College of Health Scienc and Technology, Makarfi, Kaduna State.
I.I. Dalhatu; Prof. A.K. Tukur Boor, C. H. M.	Dept. of Educational Foundations & Curr. ABU Zaria Dept. of Curr. Studies and Educ Tech. UDUS, Sokoto Medial Library Section, ABU Teaching Hospital, Zaria
Abbas Mahmoud	Is a Lecturer, Department of Adult Education and Extension Services, Facu of Education and Extension Services, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Soko

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INSTITUTIONAL AGENCIES ROLE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

BY

Mr. Sholagberu A.O., Mr. Kayode S.T. & Mrs. Najeem A.H.

Abstract

The paper examines community development in Nigeria with emphasis on the institutions, agencies, policies and strategies employed to bring about the much-needed community development in the country. In the attempt to do this, clarification of concepts like development, community, and community development was carried out, which formed the theoretical basis of the analysis. It was found out that efforts made by the Nigerian government though several strategies like the nation's development plans from independent to date which were ex-rayed did not bring about meaningful development. Similarly, international organizations and regional strategies have not led to any significant improvement in the living conditions of the community dwellers and community development in general. The paper therefore concludes among other things that for rapid and sustained community development to take place, the lopsided and urban based development process must be reversed to community based and bottom-up approach, government to continue to create conducive environment for community development to thrive, change of attitudes and orientation by all and sundry, particularly the leadership class in Nigeria in order to minimize corruption and mismanagement of resources.

Introduction

Nigeria gained independence in 1960 from the British colonial government. Ever since then, community or community development has been declared a priority by the successive governments, be it civilian or military. In this regard, several organizations, institutions and agencies have been set up to undertake and monitor the complicated process of nation-building, development and integration. This post-colonial orientation is a deviation from the erstwhile colonial arrangement whereby development efforts in all spheres were concentrated in the urban areas to the neglect of community areas. Hence, projects such as the construction of roads, bridges, schools, railway lines, air trip, ports and marketing boards, among others, were all aimed at opening the community areas as a link for the easy exploitation of export raw materials.

However, the declared objectives and policy statements of various governments in Nigeria have been mere rhetoric and smoke-screens intended not only to diffuse criticisms but to hide what the whole thing has been i.e. a systematic exploitation and dehumanization of the community dwellers. In spite of this criticism, there is no doubt that the Nigerian government and its leaders have not only recognized the fact of the important roles which the community sector plays in the generation of national wealth but also that over 70% of Nigerians live in community areas. It is to be noted that Nigeria is not alone in the recognition of these facts.

Leaders of the developing countries in Africa have also come to accept the development of community areas as a sine qua non for national development.

In Nigeria, over the years the stated objectives and strategies of community and community development have been pronounced by policy makers and those concerned with the issue of development. But there still exist enormous gap between policy formulation and implementation and the reality of the level of the development of the community populace. For example, several approaches in terms of community development planning and execution have been adopted. Some of these included the creation of states, local government areas, mobilization of people for local participation in planning and implementation of community development projects in order to create new centres of development, and thus stem the drift from community to urban areas. A look at the National Development plans of Nigeria from 1975-1985 and other community development programmes like Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution, River Basin Development Authorities, Agricultural Development Projects and many others have emphasized the need to tackle the problem of community under-development. On the part of government therefore there is the realization that there is need to bring the neglected community areas into the mainstream of national development.

The thrust of this paper therefore is to examine the pattern of community and community development in Nigeria, especially in those areas which have the greatest impact on the lives of rural dwellers. We intend to establish that the pattern of development of the rural areas was not meant to improve the lives of the rural dwellers. On the contrary, this process has been geared towards their exploitation and impoverishment despite their enormous contribution to national wealth and the fact that over 70% of Nigerians live in the countryside. It is further argued that the bane of Nigeria's development process is the neo-colonial, dependent economic system operating in the country. This system breeds mass poverty and deprivation, social unrest and political instability like the types Nigeria is facing today-uprising of Boko Haram, ethnic militia, armed robberies, and kidnappings, among others. The rest of the paper will be dedicated to conceptual clarification, theoretical basis of the work, in dept analysis of the strategies and efforts towards community and community development in Nigeria, and the assessment of these efforts, and finally recommendations and conclusion.

Concept of Development

The concept of development is very difficult to define because it is value loaded. It is often equated with economic growth or economic development. Indeed, the two concepts are often used interchangeably, but they do not mean the same thing. Economic development is an essential component of development, yet it is not the only one. There are many other aspects of development. Development is conceived as a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structure, attitudes and institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty. In essence, development must represent the entire gamut of changes by which the entire social system, turned to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within the system moves away from the conditions of life regarded as materially and spiritually "better".

This means that development involves the reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic and social system. This also involves, in addition to improvement of income and output, radical changes in institutions, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes, customs and beliefs. The implication of these two definitions is that "development" goes beyond economic indicators. It is both a physical process and a state of mind. The institutions or structures like construction of railways, schools, hospital etc are aspect of development. The second aspect of development is that the people must change their attitudes for good. It therefore means that development per se cannot be tied to economic advancement only but a general improvement in the living conditions of the people over time. Development is also aimed at improving the living conditions of the people through the effective management of both the human and materials resources. Thus, Gana (2002) noted that "Development concerns the capacity and creative capability of a people to effectively transform the natural resources of their environment into goods and services through the imaginative and practical application of their creative talent and productive power". This implies that the people must be empowered to be able to meet their basic needs of food, housing, health, transport, education, employment, reduction in poverty level and increased per capita income among others. This is what is lacking in the community areas of Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa where about eighty percent of the population live in the community areas.

Concept of Community

The word "community" connotes a place with agricultural orientation; the houses are farm houses, barns, sheds and other structures of similar purposes. In the opinion of Olisa, (2002) population is the main characteristic that differentiates community from urban areas, especially in the developing countries. In this regard, in Nigeria an area with a population of 20,000 people and below is classified as a community area. However, this is not adequate to explain a community area. Therefore, according to Olisa, (2002): The main features of community areas are depression, degradation and deprivation. Many community villages are immersed in poverty so palpable that the people are the embodiment of it. In most rural area in Nigeria, basic infrastructure where they exist at all, are too inadequate for meaningful development. In other words, the community areas lack virtually all the good things of life like roads, medical and health facilities, portable water, electricity etc.

As pointed out above, these characteristics are not limited to community areas alone but are also found in urban areas in Nigeria and other developing countries. The people engage in subsistence agriculture, their standard of living is very low, earning only a few thousands of naira annually, they are poorly served by almost all public amenities and they generally show considerable resistance to change in any form.

Community Development

The concept of community development is very wide. It is a multi-dimensional process involving such areas as agriculture, health, education, provision of community infrastructures, social life, political and economic issues, commerce and industry, among others, and their integration with the national economy. Since the scope of the concept is wide it is the pivot on which a sound national development in all its ramifications can effectively be achieved. It is, however often assumed by policy makers and development

planners that community development is synonymous with agriculture. To correct this impression, it is very necessary to carry out a detailed conceptualization of the concept by scholar in the field of community development. Since the concept of "community development" is very wide in scope, it is necessary to write about an integrated approach to the definition of the concept. Thus, according to the United Nations (2010): The concept of integrated community development implies that it is a composite or comprehensive programme for community development in which all relevant sectors such as agriculture, education, housing, health and employment are conceived as interlinking elements in a system having horizontal as well as vertical linkage in operational and spatial terms. According to Aziz, (1999), the concept of community development should be viewed as a holistic concept, which recognizes the complexity and inter-relatedness of the many variables which influence the quality of life in community areas. It is a complex process, which involves the interaction of economic, social, political, cultural, technological and other situational factors.

Hence for the actualization of the concept, these factors have to be integrated with local government policies and plans with the objectives of improving the quality of life of the people in the community sector. Furthermore, according to Mabogunje, (2011), community development is concerned with the self-sustaining improvement of community areas and implies a broad based re-organization and mobilization of the community masses so as to enhance their capacity to cope effectively with the daily task of their lives and with the changes consequent upon this. In the opinion of Gana, (2006), community development is important not only for its impact on community places and people but also for its contribution to the overall development of the nation. In the Nigerian experience where the bulk of the people and land are community, and where the level of community output is very low, community mobilization provides the quickest and most direct route to national development. This would require the adoption of appropriate technology for raising community productivity and efficient utilization of resources, creation of efficient transport network for community and urban areas to ensure easy transportation of agricultural produce for massive food production and supply of industrial raw materials. It is to be observed that the ambit of community development is very wide indeed, and it requires a comprehensive approach. It includes generation of new employment, more equitable access to arable land, equitable distribution of income, widespread improvement in health, nutrition and housing, creation of incentives and opportunities. It also involves the ability of the local government to create wider opportunities for individuals to realize their full potentials through education and sharing in the decisions and actions which affect their lives.

Institutions, Agencies and Strategies for Community Development in Nigeria

It is imperative that we examine the institutions, agencies and strategies that Nigeria has adapted over the years to tackle issues relating to community development and their impacts on the society generally. It is often erroneously believed that community development through the instrumentality of local government was considered almost synonymous with increased agricultural output of productivity. Thus, government policies and strategies towards the community areas had always started with the premise that a forward thrust in agriculture is one of the essentials for initiating a broader community development process. This misconception had led to a series of inappropriate policies and strategies such as

agricultural extension approach, the community development programmes, notably among which were the River Basin Development Authorities and the Agricultural Development Projects. Experiments with the various agricultural development programmes showed that they could not improve even agricultural production, which was their main focus, let alone the living conditions of the community sector. It is therefore important at this point to review the institutions, agencies, policies and strategies of Nigeria's development planning from colonial era to the present time to see how they affect community development.

Institutional agencies is an organization is a collection of people working in a coordinated manner to achieve a common purpose. There are many types of organizations, which may be classified as either for-profit or not-for-profit (nonprofit), large or small. Non-Governmental organizations are organizations that operate across national boundaries, that have a membership composed of private individuals, and that do not answer to any government. In essence, NGOs are organized interest groups that operate single or in combination with one another to promote their causes. Globally, there are well known NGOs such as Amnesty International, Green Peace, Red cross, save the children, CARE and Oxfam. There are also Community Based Organizations (CBO), City wide Organizations and National NGOs contribute significantly to the development of the community. Such organization pull their resources together through self-help and felt need toward alleviating the suffering of their society.

Non-Governmental Organizations: A General Overview

Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) are civil organizations that are largely or totally independent of government and which function as charitable or religious associations, mobilize private funds for development initiatives and programmes, raise awareness and influence policies in pursuance of the ideals of democracy and good governance as well as undertake diverse humanitarian projects that could better the lots of the grass-roots (Sandberg, 1994; Chalmer, 2002).

Iriye (2004) defines Non-Governmental Organizations as a voluntary, non-state, non-profit, nonreligious, and non-military associations. It is an independent voluntary association of people acting together on a continuous basis for some common purpose other than achieving government office, making money or illegal activities. In his view, two main types of Non-Governmental Organizations are recognized according to the activities they pursue:

(i) Operational NGOs that deliver services; and (ii) Campaigning NGOs.

A non-governmental organization is a legally constituted organization created by natural or legal persons that operates independently from any form of government. The term originated from the United Nations (UN) in 1945 and is normally used to refer to organizations that are not a part of a government and are not conventional profit businesses. In the cases in which NGOs are funded totally or partially by governments, the NGO maintains its non-governmental status by excluding government representatives from its membership.

Michael and David (1992), see non-governmental organizations as an organization that is not part of a government and was not founded by states. They maintained that NGOs are

typically independent of government. The term is usually restricted to social, cultural, legal and environmental advocacy groups having goals that are non-commercial. They are usually non-profit organizations that gain at least a portion of their funding from private services. The World Bank (1990), sees Non-governmental organizations as private agencies; indigenous groups organized regionally or nationally and member groups in villages that support international and national development and partnering with governments in global development initiatives.

Non-Governmental organizations are classified by orientation and/or level of co-operation. NGOs by orientation include charitable orientation, service orientation, participatory, professional association, and empowering orientation. While NGO type by level of co-operation comprises of community-based organization, city wide organization, national NGO, and international non-governmental organizations. The structure of NGOs remains the same even if their operations vary. The structures of NGOs are discussed under the following headings:

- **Methods:** NGOs vary in their methods. Some act primarily as lobbyist while others conduct programmes and activities.
- **Staffing:** Some NGOs are highly professionalized and rely mainly on paid staff. Others are based around voluntary labour and are less formalized.
- **Funding:** The sources of funds available to an NGO determines its budget. The major sources of NGO funding are membership dues, grants from international institutions or national grants, and private donors.
- **Project management:** Generally, non-governmental organizations have either a community or environmental focus. They mobilise public support and maintain strong link with community groups in developing centres.
- **Public relations:** Foundations and charities use good measures of public relations to raise funds. They also employ standard lobbying techniques with governments.
- **Consulting:** Most NGOs have a consultative status with United Nations Agencies relevant to their areas of work.

The vital role of NGOs and other major groups in sustainable development was recognized in chapter 27 of Agenda 21, leading to intense arrangements for a consultative relationship between the United Nation and non-governmental organizations.

Community Development Efforts in Nigeria

Having looked at the institutions, agencies, policies and strategies for community development in Nigeria, it would be necessary to discuss the community development efforts in the country. To start with, it must be stated that the community development initiatives

by the government have created a culture of dependence on the part of the people rather than the people themselves initiating development orientations. While it is the responsibility of government to create the enabling environment for community or community development, the attendant corruption, greed and mismanagement associated with these institutions and agencies have not allowed them to achieve their desired objectives.

In this connection Okpaga (2004) asserted that "Rather than making these institutions vehicle for community transformation, they become conduit pipes from where public funds are siphoned into private pockets". Added to the above is the fact that the British colonial administration did not concern itself with planning for the development of the community areas. Indeed, development is the very antithesis of colonialism. The few amenities and infrastructures that were available were concentrated in the few urban towns particularly in the "European Quarters" or "White Reserved Areas". The community popular that constituted over 70% of Nigerians and who produced the bulk of the colonial wealth only felt the impact of government in the form of tax drives, occasional visits by colonial officials and their agents and stories fed them by few urban dwellers or those who had been there. Thus, Onimode (2001) rightly observed that:

The rural dwellers who were impoverished by multiple taxation, broken by colonial police and court repression, and submerged in a culture of silence' through illiteracy, were undoubtedly among the most brutally exploited by the savage colonialism of Britain". This situation has not radically changed even after independence from British rule. The exploitative and western oriented policies and programmes of the colonial era have continued since flag independence. One area that the western oriented policies and programmes have persisted since 1960 is in the area of agriculture. Emphasis was placed on the production of cash crops and the importation of foreign foods to the neglect of local staples. The continued pursuance of this policy with the resultant neglect of the community areas and the exploitation of peasant farmers has proved disaster for the country.

The urban-based nature of Nigeria's development process led to a gradual deterioration in the quality of life in the community areas, thus stimulating community-urban migration on a massive scale, especially when mineral oil over took agriculture as the mainstay of the national economy. The helpless situation of the community communities was accentuated by the exploitative tendencies of the Nigerian Marketing Boards of the 1950s, lack of incentives to farmers, antiquated farming techniques, lack of storage facilities, poor transportation network etc. fastened the decline in agriculture generally (Nnadozie, 1986:11). Another area in the Nigerian agricultural policies and programmes where community dwellers and farmers are being marginalized is the area of big agricultural schemes in various parts of the country. The policy pursued by government since mid 1970s ostensibly to boost agriculture started with Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) launched in 1976, the Green Revolution in the second Republic and various budgetary incentives in large-scale agriculture. Similarly the Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) and big irrigation dam schemes were ostensibly to improve community development. All these projects scattered in different part of the country and jointly financed by the World Bank and Nigerian government did not help much in the improvement of the living standards of the

community populace. Rather it has worsened the plight of peasant by depriving them of their lands as happened in Bakolori project in Sokoto state.

Conclusion

From the foregoing analysis it is obvious that community or community development in Nigeria has not received its fair share in the scheme of things. The institutions and agencies charged with the responsibility for community development and the policies and strategies adopted to meet these objectives have not lived up to expectation of the community dwellers in particular and the nation in general. It has been shown that in spite of the numerous natural resources that Nigeria is endowed with, majority of the citizens, particularly in the community areas live below 'absolute poverty line'.

Therefore, there exists mass poverty as a result of the lopsided and urban-based development process which the governments in Nigeria have pursued till date. For instance, the various World Bank, IMF and other multinational corporations-sponsored large-scale agricultural projects were not intended to better the lot of the community dwellers. These projects and schemes are based on obsolete trickle-down theory by which the main beneficiaries are supposed to diffuse information and motivate the small peasant farmers, who would then follow their example. It would be difficult for Nigeria to attack its poverty unless it stops discriminating against peasant farmers and community population. The above situations revolve on the neo-colonial and dependent nature of Nigerian economy and society. This appears to be the crux of Nigeria's development and other problems, including that of political instability currently ravaging the country.

The point should be made that as long as we operate this economic system, development in the real sense of the term, will remain a mirage. Mass poverty and deprivation currently facing the community people will worsen and our independence will remain a sham. Indeed, the contemporary Nigerian state can be described as a comprador state – a state in which its institutions and officials operate as agents of capitalism and imperialism under this social system, Nigerian development programmes, particularly the so-called new strategies for 'community development' are only smokescreens intended to cover the real thing, which is the continued domination and exploitation by western or foreign investors.

Recommendations

Arising from all the above, this paper offers a number of recommendations as a way of solving the lingering problems of community underdevelopment in Nigeria. These include the following:

1. Since over 70% of Nigerian population live in the community areas and produce the greatest wealth of the nation, the community areas should be accorded more recognition in terms of budgetary provisions and provision of social and economic amenities.
2. The production needs of rural dwellers centre around poor infrastructural facilities, inadequate extension services, and lack of financial credit. Therefore, feeder roads are urgently needed to effectively link and integrate peasants scattered all over the country with the urban centres to enable them to evacuate their products from the farms. They also need adequate water supply for drinking and irrigation, especially in the arid parts of the country.

3. Government should provide the inability environment to foster community and community development in Nigeria. Facilities such as education, health services, electricity supply, improving literacy, health and general quality of life are acutely inadequate in the community areas.
4. There is also need to adequately train the farmers in the use of new techniques of farming and for them to be provided with farming equipments like tractors, fertilizers and pest control chemicals at subsidized prices that those peasants can afford. In this regard, the current practice of absentee farmers living in the urban areas trading in fertilizers meant for real farmers should be stopped. Government should endeavour to deal directly with the real farmers in the community areas if community development is to be achieved.
5. The so-called "agricultural credit guarantee scheme" under which commercial banks are encouraged to give peasant farmers loans guaranteed by the federal government through the Central Bank need to be reviewed. This is because the processes involved, including feasibility studies- required to secure those loans are beyond the capability of peasant farmers. The fact of the matter is that agricultural credit facilities in Nigeria have been designed for the big capitalist farmers. This policy should be reviewed to favour the peasant farmers who live in the community areas.
6. The rampant and endemic corruption, greed and mismanagement associated with institutions for community development should be ripped in the bud. This requires the intensification of the crusade against these vices by the government and her agencies like EFCC, ICPC, among others. This requires the change of attitude by the political leaders to deal with the situation squarely. Therefore, the Nigerian state should make deliberate efforts to create a virile and credible institutions and structures that would enhance community development.
7. Furthermore, it is advocated that Nigeria should try to break away from the neo-colonial and dependent nature of the economic and social system. As long as we operate these social and economic systems of dependence, development in the real sense of the term will remain a mirage. In the long run what we would witness will be continued exploitation and domination by western or foreign investors.

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