

Nigeria as a Case Study of Africa's Agricultural and Rural Development Challenges

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Abstract

The African economy benefits greatly from agriculture in a number of ways, including the provision of food for the country's growing population, the supply of sufficient raw materials to a developing industrial sector, the creation of jobs, the creation of foreign exchange earnings, and the creation of a market for the industrial sector's goods. This essay contends that because the agrarian sector has a strong rural foundation, concerns about agriculture and rural development become synonymous and have a common root. It also contends that rural development is the cornerstone of agriculture and agricultural development in Africa, without which all efforts at agricultural development would be pointless. It notes that the majority of African agriculture is still traditional and controlled by smallholders and pastoralists.

Neglecting agriculture has led to a large-scale migration of rural residents, which has depopulated the area both qualitatively and quantitatively and made it less appealing to socioeconomic investors. It talks about the issues and difficulties this presents as well as how the government responds to the rural residents' requests for infrastructure. Therefore, it suggests that in order for the government's agricultural policies to succeed, there must be a sufficient amount of strategically targeted investment in agriculture, improve rural infrastructure, increase productivity, and make farm output more competitive, in addition to combating corruption. According to the report, the government should implement an integrated rural development approach, which is a multifaceted strategy for raising rural residents' quality of life, in order to promote agricultural growth. It comes to the conclusion that better agricultural growth and development in Africa depend on rural development.

Keywords: Agriculture, Agricultural development, Rural Development and Integrated Rural Development

Introduction

Concerns for the 75% or more of people who live in rural regions are growing as a result of current global events. This is supported by the strong link between poverty and rural life, which is especially severe in emerging nations (World Bank, 1994). The degree of economic development, how growth impacts the poor, the structure of government expenditure, and the starting distribution of income are some of the elements that may be said to determine poverty. In emerging nations, about half of the workforce is employed in agriculture. Indeed, via farming, food processing, fishing, forestry, and commerce, a large portion of rural communities—particularly the rural poor—are either directly or indirectly reliant on agriculture (Muhammed, 2007). Africa's economy is based mostly on agriculture. Roughly 70% of Africans and 80% of the continent's impoverished are rural dwellers who mostly rely on agriculture for their living. About 20% of Africa's GDP, 60% of its work force, and 20% of all goods exports come from this sector (ECA, 2004). For 90% of Africa's rural population, agriculture is their primary source of income. A significant portion of Africa's global commerce is derived from agriculture. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 60% of the top 20 importers of agricultural and food commodities in 2004. According to ECA (2007), 50% of the top 20 nations in terms of the world's share of total

agricultural and total exported goods are African nations.

There are significant changes in agriculture. The demand for food and other agricultural goods is rising due to the expansion of the human population, rising incomes, and changing eating habits. However, as risks to genetic variety and the degradation of land and water resources increase, the foundation of natural resources supporting agricultural output is also under jeopardy. Food security is enhanced by agriculture in a number of ways, chief among them being the production of more food and the ability to buy it. The rural poor may earn more money to buy more food, including a wider variety of foods, thanks to increases in agricultural output and farm earnings.

The narrative is unchanged despite the approaches used by several Nigerian administrations to deal with the issue of agricultural and rural underdevelopment. Poverty and inequality persist, especially in rural regions. Nigeria's goal of ranking among the twenty strongest economies by 2020 is threatened by the widespread public concerns about the underdevelopment of many rural regions (vision 2020). Financial resources have been poured in, but in vain (Yakubu, 2009).

Agriculture And Rural Development: Conceptual Issues

Agriculture's definition evolves throughout time. Agriculture is the management of living things and ecosystems in order to create commodities and services for human use. It includes the cultivation of plants and the husbandry of animals. Farming, ranching, aquaculture, apiculture, horticulture, viticulture, animal husbandry, which includes, but is not limited to, the care and raising of livestock, equine, and fur-bearing animals; poultry husbandry and the production of poultry and poultry products; dairy production; field crops, tobacco, fruits, vegetables, nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees, flowers, sod, or mushrooms; timber; pasturage; and any combination of the aforementioned.

It is impossible to separate the sustainability of African agriculture from the sustainability of regional and global development. There are also many additional similar definitions that are often used. For instance, according to the American Society of Agronomy, sustainable agriculture is defined as one that, over time, improves the quality of the environment and the resource base that agriculture depends on, meets basic human needs for food and fiber, is economically feasible, and improves the standard of living for farmers and society at large (Uptal, 2001).

According to a different definition provided by MacRae et al. (1990), Sustainable agriculture is an agricultural method as well as a concept. It is based on a set of principles that demonstrate an understanding of social and ecological realities as well as a dedication to reacting suitably to those realities. In order to preserve and increase farm profitability while conserving all resources and reducing waste and environmental harm, it places a strong emphasis on design and management practices that cooperate with natural processes.

As a subset of economic development, agricultural development entails a steady rise in output and productivity over a respectable period of time, as well as an improvement in farmers' well-being as shown by their better quality of living and per capita income. Rural development results in a sustained improvement in the physical, social, and economic aspects of rural communities in addition to a sustained increase in the level of production and productivity of all rural residents, including farmers, and a sustained improvement in their well-being, as evidenced by rising per capita income and standard of living.

Rural development is another idea that is essential to our discussion in this article. A better knowledge of rural development may be obtained by comprehending the notion of development. According to Simon (2004), development is defined as an increase in both quantitative and qualitative aspects of life, not merely a material standard of living. According to him, growth must be seen as really and temporally related, and it must be suitable

for society, culture, time, and location. Development is the process of making or constructing something new; it is the slow development of anything to make it stronger, more sophisticated, etc. (Hornby, 2001). According to this concept, growth entails incremental changes that lead to steady progression.

There has been significant discussion and little consensus over the definition of rural development. Different perspectives have different definitions of rural development. Due to changes in the perceived methods and/or objectives of development, the meaning of rural development has changed throughout time. Development that helps rural communities, where development is defined as the continuous improvement of the population's welfare or standards of living, would be a suitable definition of rural development. Rural development may be seen as the desire of rural residents to take on the challenge and improve their immediate surroundings and quality of life, rather than as an external intervention.

According to Olayide et al. (1981), rural development is a process that involves coordinated efforts to enable a notable increase in the productivity of rural resources, with the primary goal of boosting rural income and generating employment opportunities in rural communities to encourage rural residents to stay in the area. Additionally, it is an integrated strategy to food production and the supply of institutional, social, and physical infrastructures with the ultimate objective of bringing about better and sustainable agriculture, inexpensive and high-quality education, and a decent healthcare delivery system. Van der Ploeg et al. (2000) state that rural development reflects the well-known self-interest of growing segments of the rural population and is rebuilding the damaged economic foundation of both the rural economy and the agricultural sector. The modernization of rural society and its shift from traditional isolation to interaction with the national economy are guaranteed by rural development. It is necessary to create foreign exchange and draw in money to support both public and private investment and consumption. It is also possible to see rural development as a practice and an idea. It could include deliberate action by governmental entities with headquarters outside of rural regions, such as the national government and international organizations. It may also be the change of the rural area's inferior character into something more superior in terms of activities and the turning of the countryside into an active condition. The World Bank (1975) said that in order to boost productivity, rural development must be well planned. It acknowledges that better food supplies and nutrition, along with essential services like health and education, can not only directly improve the rural poor's physical health and quality of life, but also indirectly increase their productivity and capacity to contribute to the country's economy. It is possible to differentiate rural development from agricultural development, which it includes and goes beyond. Successive administrations have mistakenly believed that rural development is exclusively related to agricultural growth. For the benefit of rural residents, efforts should be made to include the provision of modern infrastructure, primary health care, food and shelter, employment opportunities, recreational facilities, affordable and mandatory primary and secondary education, loans, and other incentives as part of rural development, since such governments' attempts to pump money into agricultural development failed to produce the significant change desired (Ogidefa, 2010).

To put it simply, rural development may include a widespread reorganization and mobilization of the rural populace to improve their ability to manage everyday tasks and the ensuing changes (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005). The aforementioned makes it clear that rural development is neither a singular event or an instantaneous phenomena. Instead, it is a methodical approach to excellence with a predetermined benchmark in mind.

Agriculture And Rural Development In Africa

With sensible policy, Africa's plentiful arable land and workforce might result in higher productivity, higher earnings, and more food security. Due to inconsistent policies and/or ineffective implementation techniques, this has not happened. Therefore, agriculture continues to get little attention even though it employs 70% of the workforce, contributes more than 25% of GDP, and accounts for 20% of agribusinesses in the majority of nations.

Additionally, agriculture has a large multiplier impact, meaning that investments in agriculture may boost social development and economic diversification while producing substantial economic and social benefits. Rural development is the cornerstone of agriculture and agricultural development in emerging sub-Saharan African nations; without it, all agricultural development initiatives would be pointless. Intensive agriculture is rare, and the vast majority of farmers work at the subsistence, smallholder level. The fact that a disproportionately high amount of the agricultural output is held by these smallholder farmers, whose average holding is between one and three hectares, is a defining element of the agricultural production system in such nations, including Nigeria. Additionally, access to contemporary, updated technology is very restricted, and their overall situation does not necessarily justify material expenditures in labor, capital, or inputs (Ogunlela and Mukhtar, 2009).

There are many reasons why agriculture and rural development in Africa have been ignored, but three stand out as crucial: inadequate commitment and capacity in partner nations; lack of interest in rural concerns on a global scale; and inadequate commitment and poor prior performance in the bank. The main elements of this rural sector plan are initiatives to address these reasons for low commitment (Muhammed, 2007). However, the rural regions have long been overlooked despite their significance. Infrastructures that enhance quality of life, such as motorable roads, power, and water supplies, are often lacking. The buying power is low in rural regions. In fact, the disparity between rural and urban regions in terms of social and economic prospects, physical development, and accessible infrastructure services is growing due to the continued neglect of rural communities (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005).

Muhammed (2007) claims that since African nations see agriculture as a failing industry, they often give agricultural expansion and rural development little priority. In comparison to the industrial and service sectors, the rural and agricultural industries' contribution of GDP and employment decreases as nations grow. Resources have been concentrated on the urban and industrial sectors in many emerging nations, often at the cost of the rural sector. They overlooked how crucial productivity gains and expansion in the rural sector are to the protracted shift from an agricultural to an urban-industrial civilization. Complacency toward the agriculture industry has resulted from declining real food costs over the last 20 years. Real grain prices have decreased over the last 20 years, which has decreased the returns on irrigation and other agricultural investments. While technology advancements have contributed significantly to the price drop, protectionist agricultural policies implemented in the majority of African nations have also played a role. The impoverished in rural areas are not very powerful in politics. Due to their geographical dispersion and sometimes inadequate communications and transportation facilities, rural residents find it very difficult to organize and utilize political procedures to voice their opinions. There is limited political representation for the impoverished in rural areas, especially women. Policies that hurt the agriculture industry are pursued by urban elites. Export taxes, industrial protection, low urban food prices, and excessive taxation via inflated exchange rates are some of these policies. In many nations, this policy set—often referred to as urban bias—has been widespread. Although some compensation is sometimes available to rural elites, it is inadequate to counteract urban bias and frequently exacerbates its effects on the rural poor.

According to Muhammad (2007), the following issues are impeding rural development in Africa:

The state's and the traditional public's responsibilities in rural development and agriculture have been ambiguous. Due to their control over land markets, input and product markets, and financial access, governmental institutions or parastatals have dominated the agricultural industry in many nations. These organizations have often given advantages and rent to a select few while being very ineffective and insensitive to changes in the market.

A small number of people own the majority of the resources. Resources like land, money, and access to information and technology have been concentrated in the hands of elites in some nations. In addition to overcapitalization of agriculture and inefficient use of valuable land, this distribution has sometimes resulted in

significant unemployment and low productivity among rural residents. It is intrinsically challenging to design incentive systems for shared property resources. Because they are often seen as open access resources with little constraints on who may use them, natural resources including water, pastures, forests, and fisheries are being overused and destroyed in many nations. Effective community-based resource management systems are challenging to design and execute, and many nations are only beginning to do so.

According to Onibokun (1987), agriculture and rural development in Africa are confronted with the paradox that the production-oriented rural economy heavily depends on unproductive people who lack modern tools, technical knowledge, scientific and cultural training, and whose traditional roles and access to resources make it difficult for them to be effectively incorporated into modern economic systems, while the consumption-oriented urban economy is flooded with people who are either unemployed or unemployable, or marginally employed or underemployed in the urban areas where they choose to live. Due to this huge migration, metropolitan areas are becoming physically crowded, socially unpleasant, and typically expensive to maintain, while rural regions have been qualitatively depopulated and are becoming less appealing for social and economic investments.

Challenges Of Agriculture And Rural Development In Nigeria

Agriculture is an important component of most rural economies especially in the developing countries. It was shown above that the size of agriculture within the local economy is sometimes used to define rurality. Therefore, any successful rural development strategy will contain an agricultural development component; but they are not the same thing. While agricultural development aims at improving the welfare of populations through sustained improvements in the productivity of the agricultural sector, rural development aims at the improvement of welfare of rural populations through the sustained growth of the rural economy, which includes agriculture, but may not be its only component and not necessarily the most dynamic (Anríquez and Stamoulis, 2007).

Agriculture in Nigeria is the most important sector of the economy from the standpoint of rural employment, sufficiency in food and fiber, and export earning prior to the discovery of oil. The above assertion is based on the fact that as at independence in 1960, little was known of petroleum as a source of revenue for the Nigerian economy. There was sustained emphasis on agriculture to the extent that Nigeria was a major exporter of such agricultural products as palm produce, cocoa, groundnut, cotton and rubber. In addition to these cash crops, the national agricultural system was able to produce enough of food crops like yam, cassava, maize, millet, sorghum and soya beans to the extent that there was almost no need for food importation. Hitherto, agriculture accounted for over 60% of the Nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, with the advent of petroleum in the early 1970s, petroleum became the country's major foreign exchange earner and agriculture became grossly neglected (Oni, 2008a).

Anazodo (1982) identified the characteristics of rural dwellers in Nigeria to include;

- ❖ Their standard of living is static and declining
- ❖ They are generally engaged in agriculture, working small plots of land with traditional hand tools.
- ❖ Most are engaged in subsistence farming or generate only small marketable surpluses
- ❖ They are mostly located in areas poorly served by almost all public utilities.
- ❖ Their family incomes are unlikely to exceed more than a few tens of naira a year.

The objective of the National Policy on Rural Development encapsulates an ideal situation of an acceptable level of development in the rural area. These objectives can be paraphrased to include; promotion of the social, cultural, educational and economic well being of the rural population; promotion of sustained and orderly development of the vast resources in the rural areas for the benefit of the rural people, increase in and diversification of job

opportunities and improvement of income in the rural areas, mobilization of the rural population for self-help and self-sustaining programme of development, and up-lifting of the technological based industries in the rural area (Ogbazi, 1992).

Agriculture contributes immensely to the Nigerian economy in various ways, namely, in the provision of food for the increasing population; supply of adequate raw materials to a growing industrial sector; a major source of employment; generation of foreign exchange earnings; and, provision of a market for the products of the industrial sector (Okumadewa, 1997; World Bank, 1998). The agrarian sector has a strong rural base; hence, concern for agriculture and rural development become synonymous, with a common root.

The major problems of rural areas in Nigeria are summarized as, inadequate levels of agriculture productivity particular in food crop; high levels of absolute and rural poverty; and poor level of infrastructure facilities (Shiru, 2008). The fundamental problems facing agricultural mechanization in Nigeria include adoption of mechanization strategies which are often proffered by government and international agencies that do not pay sufficient attention to the interests of the local farmers and to the processes of technological change (Kutte and Tya, 2001).

Since independence, Nigeria has spent, billions of naira on agricultural development. An assessment of different development plans and annual budget shows that there is no corresponding evidence of what the huge sums of money were spent on especially when we critically look at human development. Nigeria has essentially remained a poor country (Onwalu, 2003).

Budgetary Allocation to Agriculture in Nigeria (N Billion), 1990-2002

YEAR	TOTAL BUDGET	ALLOCATION TO AGRICULTURE	% OF AGRIC TO TOTAL
1990	39.76	1.96	4.95
1991	38.66	0.67	1.74
1992	52.03	0.92	1.78
1993	112.10	2.83	2.53
1994	110.20	3.71	3.37
1995	153.49	6.92	4.51
1996	337.21	5.71	1.69
1997	428.21	8.66	2.02
1998	487.11	9.04	1.86
1999	947.69	12.15	1.28
2000	701.05	13.60	1.94
2001	1,018.02	64.94	6.38
2002	1,018.15	44.80	4.40

Sources: CBN Statistical Bulletin and Annual Report

The picture of budgetary allocations and actual expenditures for the period covered showed that though the government put up ambitious policies their financial commitment and consideration has been inadequate. It is therefore not surprising that these policies have not achieved the food self sufficient, self reliance, reduction in poverty and rural development goal. The Nigeria Agriculture Public Expenditure Review (NAGPER), a collaborative study carried out by a research team from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the World Bank (2008), showed that public spending on agriculture in Nigeria is less than 2 percent of total federal expenditure during 2001 to 2005 (Christopher et al., 2010).

Inadequate funding of agriculture in Nigeria has aggravated rural poverty in Nigeria. Some social indicators can be used to emphasis this point. These include population growth rate (3.5%), life expectancy (50years), adult literacy rate (45%), human development index (0.2%), and percentage of labor force in agriculture (60%) (Shiru, 2008). The values of these indices show that Nigeria among the least developed countries of the world.

In order to achieve the broad goals of agricultural and rural development, the Nigerian government usually focuses on specific objectives. While the attainment of specific agricultural goals encompasses the provision of adequate food, fibers and industrial raw materials, employment and foreign exchange generation, the goals of rural development embrace in addition a systematic improvement of the other institutional, physical and social infrastructures in such rural communities (Titilola, 2008).

The Nigerian agricultural sector is predominantly dominated by resource-poor farmers who still practice the traditional or subsistence agriculture in which simplest traditional tools are being used, output and productivity are low, capital investment is minimal while land and labor constitute principal factors, thus culminating in the “law of diminishing return” – high labor and input applications but low returns. In order to reverse this trend, agriculture in Nigeria needs to be practiced and managed on a sustainable basis (Titilola, 2008).

Umebali and Akuibilo (2006) note that oil exploration and agricultural activities are carried out in rural areas and both yield the highest revenue for the nation. Interestingly, as revealed by Umebali (2006), literature shows that greater percentage of the total population live in rural areas and most of them are enhanced in agriculture. If we must make the rural areas attractive to live, then meaningful effort geared towards sustainable rural development must be aggressively and vigorously pursued as this will alter the certainty of poor quality of life in the rural areas. It is universally acknowledged that rural areas are very important to the nation. They serve as the base for the production of food and fiber. They are also the major sources of capital formation for the country and a principal market for domestic manufactures (Olatunbosun, 1975). The neglect has resulted to the mass exodus of rural dwellers and in turn has made the rural area qualitatively and quantitatively depopulated, and progressively less attractive for socio-economic investment.

The rural areas are usually grossly neglected as far as development projects and infrastructure are concerned. As a result of the relative underdevelopment of the rural areas when compared with the urban centers, rural areas are usually zones of high propensity for our-migration (Ogidefa, 2010). Stock (2005) laments that as a result of the neglect of agriculture and the rural areas; Nigeria now imports farm products to feed its (her) people with untold hardship on the rural people. He continues that Nigeria remains one of the world’s poorest countries in terms of per capita income and rural development. There is an overwhelming need to accord rural development a priority on the ‘must-do-list’ of government at different levels if the rural communities must contribute meaningfully to the social, cultural and economic development of Nigeria. The challenges and prospects of rural development in Nigeria have been of great concern to the different tiers of government due to the rate of rural-urban migration.

It is pertinent to note that rural development plays an important role in the Nigerian economic development both at the micro and macro level. Overtime, successive government have embarked on several programmes targeted at rural development. Other approaches have been by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), cooperatives, individuals through private initiatives, corporate bodies as well as International Organizations (Ogidefa, 2010). The various programmes initiated and chiefly targeted at the rural sector by government according to him include the following:

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

A quick glance at the introduction, creation, execution, and goals of most of the aforementioned programs will show that they are primarily focused on rural development in an effort to improve the lives of rural residents, promote and strengthen economic growth, and encourage the rural sector to make a significant contribution to the social and economic advancement of the country.

The Nigerian government's many rural development initiatives aim to enhance rural communities' quality of life in order to reduce the rate of rural-urban migration. These policies demonstrate the fervor of many governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which has resulted in the growth of development agencies. Little to nothing is felt at the rural level despite the numerous rural development policies that have been introduced at various points by successive governments, along with the enormous financial and material resources used, because each policy has frequently died with the government that started it before it begins to pay off for the rural residents (Ogidefa, 2010).

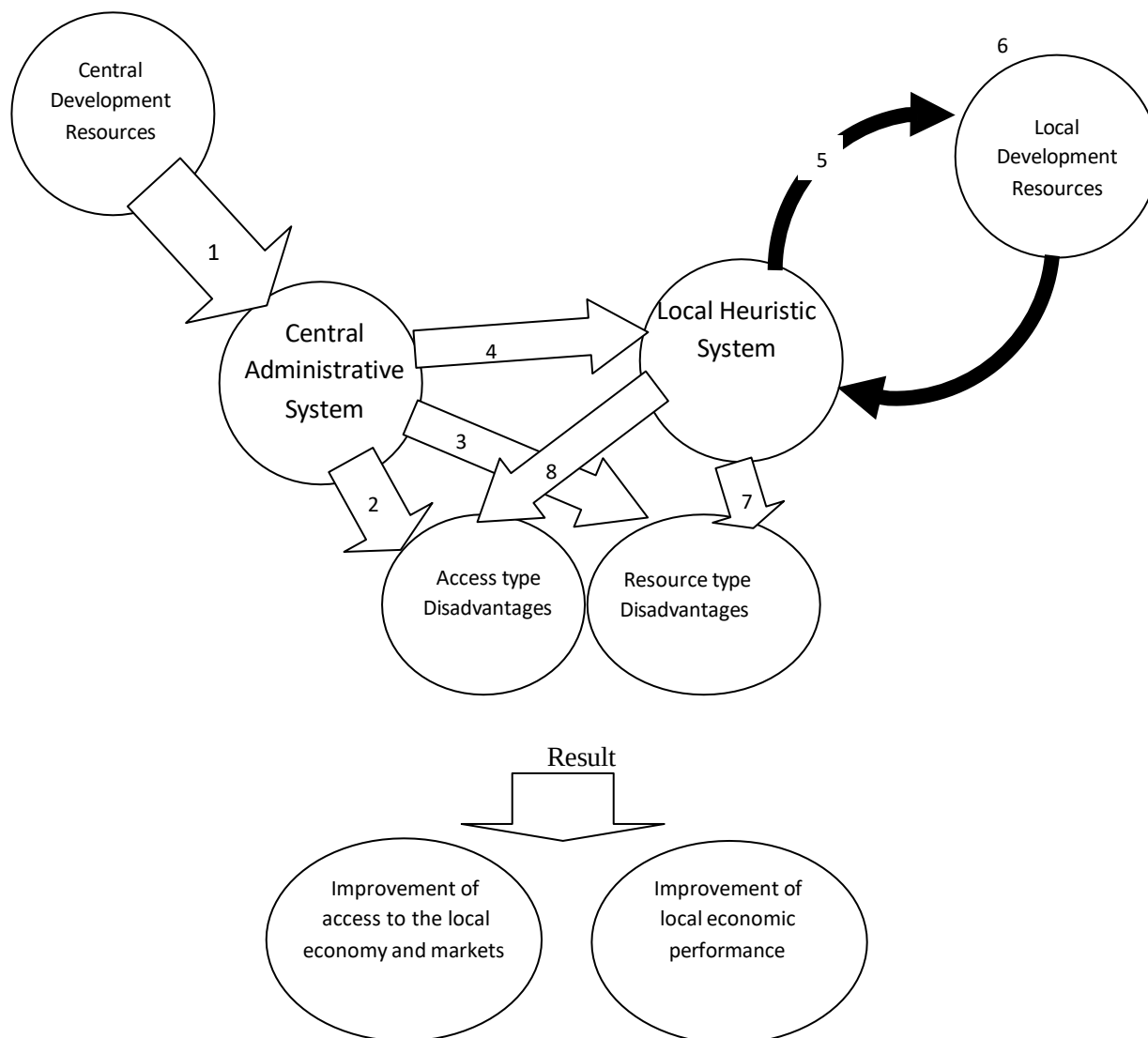
Agricultural development, rural-based industrialization, infrastructure development, and integrated schemes that include all aspects of infrastructure, industry, and agriculture have all been used in Nigeria's previous rural development initiatives. According to a review of the literature (Oladipo, 2004), planning rural projects that are planned and carried out in an integrated way has resulted in a better degree of success. We now have additional options thanks to the recent experiences of private companies involved in agroindustry processing, such as Presco Plc, Okitipupa Oil, and Okomu Oil. Because Nigeria has a variety of ecological circumstances that provide a broad range of chances for agro-based enterprises, this has a natural predisposition.

Integrated Rural Development Model

The integrated development plan is the most practical method for successful rural development in Nigeria. According to Shiru (2008), this aims to improve every aspect of the rural economy and successfully connect it to its metropolitan components. There are many ways to talk about integration in rural development. The integration of several economic sectors, such as agriculture, industry, and services, is the most well understood aspect. The inclusion of underprivileged social groups in the development process—such as women, the elderly, members of national and ethnic minorities, etc.—is another often cited factor. If these groups are excluded from advancements, they may suffer even more (Gusztöl, 2006).

To put it another way, this strategy aims to foster geographical, social, economic, and even psychological connections between the various economic sectors as well as between the various sectors of the national economy. As a result, initiatives pertaining to agriculture, education, health and nutrition, rural electrification cooperatives, and similar topics should not be developed in a vacuum. Every program has to be evaluated in relation to the others. This method is essential since each of its elements is significant and connected to the role they each perform, both separately and together.

The Integrated System of rural Development



In an *integrated system*, according to Gusztáv (2006) local and central development systems should work in a

dynamic cooperation with each other. Control, resources and responsibilities should be dispersed throughout different levels of the system. The existence of advanced local development institutions is a necessary condition in this model. *Redistributed resources (1)* are still channeled through the *central system*, although their allocation is quite different. A significant share of resources *(2)* is still directly spent on tackling *access type* (mainly physical) disadvantages. However, those resources, allocated for supporting local economic development directly from central sources *(3)* represent a much smaller share of the budget. They are still normative payments, but rather aiming at the maintenance of public goods (agri-environmental schemes, for example) than simply subsidizing conventional agricultural production. A significant part of central resources *(4)* is devoted to the reinforcement of the local development institutions and the unlocking of local resources. As a result, the *local development system* is well advanced and institutionalized. It is able to invest *(5)* in the protection of rural values and their utilization in the development process. Like this, *local resources* can be exploited and can contribute with considerable added value to the development process *(6)*. This value flows into the economic resource base of the local area *(7)*, creating marketable products and greatly reducing *resource-type disadvantages*. At the same time, the local development system can also make a significant contribution against *access-type disadvantages (8)*, primarily improving business and policy access, for the benefit of the local area. All this can lead to a much more balanced development.

In an integrated model, a significant part of the budget is not delivered directly by central policies, but channeled through the local development system. This strengthens this system and allows for the reinforcement of local institutions and social networks, etc. It can also directly provide financial aid for the exploration and exploitation of local resources for local economic development. All this can result in the rapid growth of local added value and the expansion of available development resources, for the development system as a whole.

Concluding Remarks

The necessity for agricultural and rural development methods to be economically feasible, as well as their flexibility and adaptation throughout time to meet the needs for food and fiber (both high and low), are often the focus of sustainable national development via agricultural and rural development. This objective necessitates the effective use of technology in a way that promotes sustainability, its reliance on natural resources for production, and its capacity to safeguard the resources and soil. Changes in market and resource decisions in other sectors and areas have an impact on agriculture, thus it's critical that these changes don't justify the local depletion of the agricultural and rural resource base (Oni, 2008b).

In every economy that aims to reduce poverty, agricultural output undoubtedly plays a significant role. However, only when the productive forces are sufficiently outfitted with contemporary methods and abilities will optimum agricultural output be attained. According to Ujo (2005), agriculture and rural development need the following: An active policy of social services and the improvement of social relations; a political and administrative capacity for the planning and aid implementation of community development strategy to provide linkages with the rest of the economy and protect the legitimate interest of the rural population; a more equitable distribution of land and other rural resources to give the poorest segment of the rural population more opportunities to meet their basic needs; and the organization of rural producers and rural economy activities on a cooperative or communal basis to ensure a further reutilization of available physical and human resources.

Over the years, the Nigerian government has developed sound agricultural policies to promote food production, but these policies have been deemed useless and wasteful since the desired outcomes were not achieved. Agricultural growth must return to the top of the development agenda in order to achieve the Millennium Goals of reducing poverty and hunger, but "business as usual" is insufficient. In order to effectively assist agriculture in the future, a thorough re-analysis of the dynamic changes now affecting agricultural output, diversification, and competitiveness is necessary.

Understanding what rural development is should be the first step in solving the issue. Increased rural income, decreased poverty and unemployment, decreased inequality, increased rural value-added production, improved health and education, improved quality of life through potable water, electricity, and good roads, increased integration of rural residents into the political and economic processes, and good telecommunication services are all necessary for rural development to take place and last (Oladipo, 2008).

Low investment and productivity, inadequate infrastructure, a lack of funding for agricultural research, insufficient use of yield-enhancing technologies, weak connections between agriculture and other sectors, unfavorable policy and regulatory environments, and climate change are all issues that must be addressed in strategies for transforming African agriculture.

By fostering a positive economic climate and investing in the "prime movers" of agricultural development—human capital, agricultural research, biophysical capital creation, and rural institutions—significant progress in agricultural development may be accomplished (Eicher, 1994). Investing in the aforementioned sectors may lead to significant advancements in smallholder agriculture, as shown by Asia's experience of altering its long-term comparative advantage in export commodities.

The government should implement an integrated rural development approach, which is a multifaceted strategy for raising the standard of living for rural residents, in order to support rural development, according to this study. It is predicated on the idea that integrated rural development strategies should be created to alter this framework and encourage structural changes since the socioeconomic component of the old rural system is out of date.

Rural residents ought to be actively engaged. In order to get financing for the establishment of small-scale companies, rural residents should be encouraged to band together to create cooperatives. Rural residents must get training and retraining in order to improve the spread of new knowledge and concepts about the creation, administration, and expertise of small-scale businesses.

Over time, rural development strategies have taken many different forms. There doesn't seem to be a clear solution for how to make rural residents' lives and circumstances better. The production and processing of biological raw materials in the form of agro-industries has recently increased due to the ecological conditions of the tropics. It has been a major area of attention for rural development (Oladipo, 2008). Sustainable development in Africa requires a comprehensive view of rural development and agriculture.

Empowering rural residents via their jobs is the most effective strategy to empower them. Our rural residents' primary source of income is agriculture, which has to be maintained. Increased agricultural output boosts rural residents' productivity and income and draws businesses to rural areas. The government must provide extension workers all the incentives they need to do their jobs well.

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