

## Prioritization: A Means of Achieving Positive Rural Development In Nigeria.

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**Abstract:** - Rural development occupies a priority place in agenda of Nigeria's national development. However, the gap between scarce and stingy allocation of resources by Governments and rural people's needs calls for prioritization in the areas of investment with regards to rural development. This paper examined the priority areas for rural development in Nigeria. Data on the needs of rural dwellers were randomly collected in 2006, 2008 and 2010 respectively. The rural dwellers were interviewed in each of the years using questionnaire and oral discussions. The questionnaire centered on rural dwellers needs among many alternatives such as Irrigation Facility, Roads, Markets, Portable Water Supply, Clinics/Hospitals, Electricity, Loan, Schools/Education and farm inputs. Analysis of variance, (ANOVA using the general linear models procedure) was used in data analysis. Results show that majority of rural farmers' needs are in order of preference Potable Water Supply, Roads, Farm Inputs, Loan and Schools/Education. The implication is that future rural development projects and Programs if directed towards these areas will help to accelerate the improvement of rural dwellers welfare and help to reduce the number of rural to urban migrating, resulting in rural stability and integrated rural development.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

According to (Ariyo 1991), rural development has been pushed to the top of agenda in Nigeria's national development plan. The possibility of misplaced priority in Nigeria's rural development effort in the context of different political inclinations is now the concern of many rural development experts, implementers and vanguards. The type of political, tribal and religious inclinations has helped to drag back the pace of development in Nigeria (Simpson 1987). Hence in many parts of Africa and Nigeria in particular, many failed rural development projects abound, Signifying waste of scarce resources. Therefore, if we are to attract global assistance or government revenue for rural development, it is important that the priority needs of the rural area in question be first determined. Rural development project cited in any area without consulting the local people do not interest them (Oyalde, 1989, Awolola 1986). Development must meet the needs of the people to be appreciated and to make the people to take responsibility of the security and sustainability of such projects.

The enormous funds wasted on abandoned, unsustainable or failed projects should not be repeated in the face of scarce resources and conflicting needs. According to Landis (2005), the enormous gap between needs and current spending suggest that: however, innovative the funding strategies devised, goals are unlikely to be

met when needs outstrip resources. Priority setting then becomes crucial. This paper therefore set out to determine the priority areas of need for development among rural dwellers in Nigeria.

In view of the gap between resources and needs, a number of strategies have been adopted since independent in Nigeria to address rural development. It has been viewed that agricultural development is synonymous with rural development because majority of most rural dwellers are small scale farmers. In an effort to reverse the slow growth of rural areas in Nigeria, the Federal Government established the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) in 1986, to among other things improve the quality of life and standard of living of the majority of people in rural areas. Ekpo and Olaniyi (1995) evaluated the achievements of DFRRI against its mandate and showed that by 1992, 85,592.82 km of feeder roads were completed. In rural electrification, DFRRI selected two model villages in every local government area of the country, and by 1992, 506 communities were supplied with electricity by DFRRI and 18,680 wells/boreholes were sunk. These achievements have not been due to the activities of DFRRI alone, the agency was able to mobilize rural communities towards self reliance in rural development projects. DFRRI was only responsible for 14.8 percent of the rural access roads constructed, while community efforts accounted for 30.2 percent of roads constructed or rehabilitated. In the area of water supply and health, DFRRI was merely responsible for 17.3 percent and 0.5 percent respectively communal efforts again accounted for the highest number of water project 28.0 percent and 11.4 percent of health projects. These achievements were possible because the projects dwelt on the priority areas of need of the local people and were therefore able to attract their interest and commitment. DFRRI project has long been abandoned, enshrining it on the list of abandoned rural development projects in Nigeria.

According to Ariyo (1991), the Federal and State governments have set up a number of institutions to undertake specific rural development activities on their behalf. The Agricultural Development Program (ADP) system is an example of institutions with specific mandate to develop the rural areas. The ADP system was introduced in Nigeria in the mid 1970s to help improve the traditional system of agricultural production and raise productivity, income and standard of living of small scale farmers. Moreover, the ADP system has been able to survive various governments with varying political inclinations (Eboh 1995), Ayichi (1995). Generally the ADPs in Nigeria has generally improved the agricultural extension service in Nigeria by reducing extension agent – farmer ratio from pre ADP level of 1:3000 to a national average of 1:800 (Patel 1989, Owona 1992). On crop output, Ayichi (1995) noted that crop output increased significantly due to the Programmes activities. The implication is that farmers income and welfare improved. Kwa (1992) reported that average income per hectare from various crops and returns to family labor / man day were over 200% above pre-project situation in most completed ADPs. This political survival of the program and her achievements informed the use of ADP farmers as respondents for this research.

## II. METHODS

The study area is Adamawa State of Nigeria made up of 21 local government areas. According to the 1991 census, the state has a population of 2,102,053 people spread over 38,741 square kilometers. The landform type and climate conditions favor tropical agriculture. The major vegetation formations in the state are the Southern Guinea Savannah, Northern Guinea Savannah, and the Sudan savannah (Akosim *et al* 1999). The onset of rains is normally accompanied by strong devastating wind storms (Amadi and Adebayo 2005). The major food crops grown are mainly cereals, legumes and root crops, while the cash crops grown are mainly cotton, groundnut and sugar-cane (Sajo and Kadams 1999). Adamawa State has a very high concentration of wide variety of livestock. Almost all the traditional industries are agriculturally based and majority of the population are engaged in subsistence agriculture. With the provision of basic rural needs therefore, the rural farmers will be stabilized for sustained food production.

Data on the priority needs of rural dweller collected in 2006, 2008 and 2010 were used for this paper. The primary sources of data were through questionnaires, interviews and oral discussion. A total of 435 rural dwellers in Adamawa State of Nigeria were interviewed. The scope of the interview included age, occupation and priority needs of rural people. However, oral discussion with our respondents centered on their priority needs. The analyses of variance (ANOVA) were used in the data analysis.

## III. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Poverty is lack of basic human needs, such as adequate nutritious food, clothing, housing, clean water, and health services. Respondent's priority areas for rural development are shown in Table 1 and chart 1. Analysis of variance result (Table 2) shows that there is high significant difference in the priority needs of the rural population. This led to further analysis of mean performance to determine areas of significant difference (Table3). Most rural communities needed in order of priority: Portable water supply, good rural roads, farm inputs such as fertilizers, adequate loan facility, and education. In most rural settings in Nigeria, dwellers rely on local streams and tube wells as source of drinking water. Many water borne diseases abound and the rural poor

are sick and weak. Poverty is also expressed as the lack or degeneration of community resources such as inadequacy of water supply, roads, health centers, electricity, and industries (Francis *et al* 1996). Most rural roads are death traps making the evacuation of agricultural products and farm inputs costly. The rural poor meets small needs by drawing on slender reserves of cash, reduced consumption, barter or loans. Disasters such as crop failure, famine, burnt hut, accident, sickness, funeral and wedding expenses have to be met by becoming poorer. This often means selling or mortgaging assets such as land, livestock, tools, trees, jewelry, standing crops or future labor. This explains the need for access to loan facilities to rural farmers. In a simpler form, Akinbode (1988) explained rural development as the stage when people in the villages can turn on their taps and get water inside or near their houses, have medical facilities, schools, markets, transportation facilities, banks, electricity, shelter, clothing, balanced diet, recreational facilities, efficient sewage system, participation in decision making that effect their lives and the pride to remain in those villages.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

With regards to the importance attached to rural development in Nigeria, and the relative scarcity of resources for conflicting demands, it is now extremely important to identify priority areas of rural dwellers needs before investing resources in rural development projects. The era of abandoned projects due to poor feasibility studies and hasty uncoordinated implementation should be over. The conflict between government and rural dwellers in Nigeria on developmental matters will be greatly reduced if investment of resources in rural development is done by taking the priority needs of the rural people into consideration.

#### Tables and Figures

Table 1 Respondents Priority for rural Development.

Years	Road	Water	Elect.	Educ.	F/input	Hosp.	Loan	Mkt.	Irriga.	Total
1991	36	40	7	13	19	5	19	1	5	145
1997	35	37	9	8	21	7	21	1	6	145
2003	35	39	9	9	20	6	20	2	5	145
Total	106	116	25	30	60	18	60	4	16	435
Mean	35.2	28.7	8.33	10	20	6	20	1.33	5.3	-

Source Field Data 2010.

Table 2 Anova Mean value for Priority on rural development

SV	d f	MS
Priority	8	1.623.50**
Error	72	1.22
Total	80	

\*\* Highly Significant (P=0.01)

Table 3 Table of mean performance for priority needs of the rural people

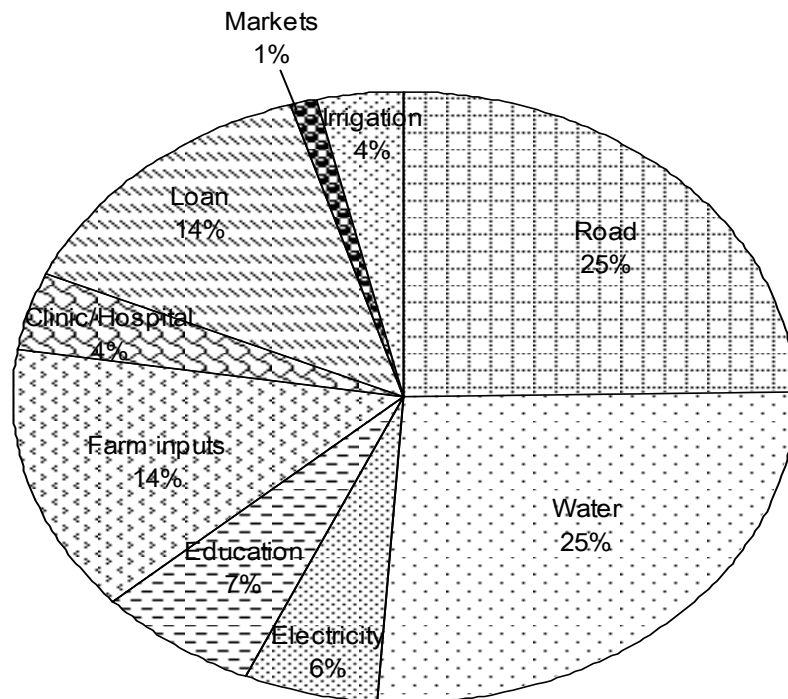
S/No.	Priority Area	Means Performance
1	Water	38.667
2	Roads	35.333
3	Farm Input	20.000
4	Loan	20.000
5	Education	10.000
6	Electricity	8.33
7	Hospital	6.00
8	Irrigation	5.333
9	Market	1.333

LSD = 1.0389

CV = 6.861

(P = 0.05)

□ Road      □ Water      □ Electricity      □ Education      □ Farm inputs  
 □ Clinic/Hospital      □ Loan      □ Markets      □ Irrigation



Chat 7: Respondents priority for rural development in the State

Fig. 1 Respondents' Priority for Rural Development.

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