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# Problems and Prospects of Implementing Rural Transformation Programmes in Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT [ENGLISH/ANGLAIS]

Policy analysts, policy advocates, and other stakeholders in socioeconomic and political development in developing societies have over years placed more emphasis on rural transformation through the development of the local government areas as the best policy option. Consequently, they have implemented numerous rural development programmes that have largely failed to achieve their set goals and objectives. We explore the reasons for these failures, which include lack of rural dwellers' participation in policy formulation; lack of political will on the part of the policy elites to painstakingly define the problems of rural development within the context of inequality, unemployment and poverty in the society; lack of strong and appropriate network of institutions to support and implement programmes; and incongruity in programmes vis-a-vis the apparent needs and desires of beneficiaries. Others are inadequate financial bases for programmes; misapplication and misappropriation of finances and other programme inputs by implementers; lack of access to requisite technology; adoption of archaic and inappropriate technical knowledge, besides the inclination to cling on to the traditional modes of behavior. However, the paper posits that the situation can be reversed positively by: clearly defining problems of the rural societies in all its ramifications; assessing all possible options for handling the problems with minimum costs; effective monitoring of programmes, effective mobilization of rural human and material resources; and provision of rural infrastructure

**Keywords:** Policy implementation, rural development, poverty alleviation, rural transformation, programme delivery

## RÉSUMÉ [FRANÇAIS/FRENCH]

Les analystes des politiques, des défenseurs des politiques et d'autres intervenants dans le développement socio-économique et politique dans les sociétés en développement ont au fil des ans mis davantage l'accent sur la transformation du monde rural à travers le développement des zones de gouvernement local comme la meilleure option politique. Par conséquent, ils ont mis en œuvre de nombreux programmes de développement rural qui ont largement échoué à atteindre leurs buts et objectifs fixés. Nous explorons les raisons de ces échecs, qui incluent le manque de participation des habitants ruraux dans la formulation des politiques, le manque de volonté politique de la part des élites politiques à soigneusement définir les problèmes de développement rural dans le contexte de l'inégalité, le chômage et la pauvreté dans la société, le manque de réseau solide et appropriée des institutions pour soutenir et mettre en œuvre des programmes; et l'incongruité des programmes vis-à-vis des besoins apparents et les désirs de bénéficiaires. D'autres sont inadéquats bases financières pour les programmes; mauvaise et le détournement des finances et des intrants d'autres programmes par les opérateurs, le manque d'accès à la technologie requise, l'adoption de la connaissance technique archaïque et inadapté, outre la tendance à s'accrocher à des modes traditionnels de comportement. Toutefois, le pose de papier que la situation peut être inversée de manière positive par: définir clairement les problèmes des sociétés rurales dans toutes ses ramifications; évaluertoutes les options possibles pour gérer les problèmes avec des coûts minimaux, le suiviefficace des programmes, la mobilisation efficace des ressources humaines en milieu rural et du matériel les ressources et la fourniture de l'infrastructure rurale

**Mots-clés:** La mise en œuvre des politiques, le développement rural, réduction de la pauvreté, la transformation rurale, la prestation du programme

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on some of the problems faced by policy makers and implementers in their efforts to engineer socioeconomic and political development through rural transformation in Nigeria. It is obvious that

a conscious formulation and implementation of public policies aimed at rural transformation will invariably promote the overall development of any society. Rural development strategies have become imperative for the Third World countries desirous of abandoning their

present state of underdevelopment. Also, it has become strategic considering the fact that more than 2.5 billion people on earth reside in the Third World countries, and of this number, a large percentage engage in agriculture. Most economies in the world have achieved sustainable socioeconomic and political development by embracing agriculture, especially in the rural areas as their major pre-occupation. Agriculture in all societies has traditionally played a passive but supportive role to economic development. In the Western societies, it provided the bedrock on which their industrialization took off [1], hence scholars, policy makers, and advocates emphasize the strategy of developing the rural communities by formulating and implementing rural transformation policies. It is pertinent to note that it is one thing to formulate a development policy or programme, but it is quite a different thing to successfully implement it. Experience has shown that effective policy implementation faces serious challenges in Nigeria

Again, it was believed that such programmes would energize rapid socioeconomic development of Nigeria. In fact developing the rural communities will go a long way in reducing socioeconomic pressures engendered by rural to urban migration, unemployment and crimes in the burgeoning urban sectors. Such hope has tended to be a misplaced one, as most Third World countries have fallen from being net exporters to net importers of not only cash crops but also food crops. Before independence in 1960, Nigeria used to export large quantities of agricultural products, but in contemporary times she imports most of these items to feed both her industries and burgeoning population. The rural areas, where agriculture domiciled have been abandoned by the youths migrating to the cities in their search for better life. The above scenario underscores Nigeria's search for policy options which will likely reverse this trend.

Over the years, political leaders, policy advocates and makers, as well as students have come to place more emphasis on rural transformation as one veritable way out of continued impoverishment, moral and social decay; precipitated partially by mass inequality, unemployment and poverty in the country. It is assumed that rural transformation is a prerequisite for the overall national development of Nigeria. For instance, a scholar has argued that the emphasis on rural development reflects an outward expression of disillusionment of the Third World countries political leadership (and masses) with the development strategies of the past: the apparent failure of Industrialization through the "big-push" spill-over

syndrome [2]. These strategies were simply a prescription of the high economic growth rates of the modern sector of the West for the developing countries to emulate. It was believed that the masses in the developing societies such as Nigeria would gain from the "crumbs" that may trickle down from the developed societies such as Britain or America. The hopes and aspiration of the people for economic advancement raised during the struggle for independence were considerably dashed. The emergent political leadership apparently suffering from acute and disjointed colonial mentality was unable to clearly define and delineate problems of rural development as they were not only busy entrenching exotic perceptions and value orientations, but also siphoning public funds from their countries in collaboration with foreigners. They initiated development programmes that were not appropriate to local needs and aspirations. Most of such programmes have not substantially deliver the anticipated improvement in the standard of living of the vast majority of the rural dwellers. Again, such programmes tended to add little economic growth rather than economic development that would be meaningful to the people. To be specific, these programme failed to provide answers to issues that raised the following questions: what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? [1].

If all of these have declined drastically; it would mean that the society was undergoing development. That, if one or two of these central problems were deteriorating and if the three, "it would be strange to call the result 'development', even if per capita income doubled" [1].

Consequently, it is imperative that policies aimed at improving the level of employment, reducing poverty and inequality in the society are vigorously pursued. Policy makers and scholars as well as other stakeholders hold that such effort must start with rural development. What is rural development? It is perceived as "the process whereby concerted efforts are made to facilitate increases in rural resources productivity with the overall objectives of enhancing rural income, and increase in employment opportunities"[4]. Indeed, increase in rural productivity must encompass mass participation of rural population by mobilizing and allocating resources in such a manner that a balance is achieved between economic and social services. This would eventually result in a better standard of living for the rural population [4]. The above assertion pointed out that this would necessarily involve a redistribution of personal income of rural dwellers

through the provision of job opportunities other than land bound activities for a sizeable proportion of the rural inhabitants [5].

A number of strategies aimed at rural transformation in Nigeria in context and content, as well as problems and prospects provide a rewarding background for this study. Indeed, this explains why governments' efforts at rural transformation fail. It suffices to suggest that the apparent incongruence between policy outputs and outcomes are often highlighted at the programmes implementation stages. Improper programme implementation may arise partially out of incorrect interpretation of programme packages, lack of communication network or husbanding of vital information by competing agencies, etc. Specifically, one of the reasons for economic policies failure in Nigeria include lack of communication and understanding and communication gaps between the formulators of the policies and those implementing them. Accordingly, "some officials did not understand the policies, with the result that each ministry was doing on its own without focusing on the particular objectives of government" [6].

From the foregoing one can safely infer that programmes failures may be either structural, institutional or both. The structural aspects are reflected in its content, while its institutional aspects are reflected in its contextual dimension. We attempt a concise exploration of these structural, institutional and, indeed contextual dimensions of problems militating against effective implementation of rural transformation programmes in Odukpani local Government Area of Cross River State of Nigeria.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This paper attempts to examine the challenges of implementing rural transformation programmes in Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State of Nigeria. It will be useful at this juncture to provide a brief background to the study. Cross River State, one of Nigeria's 36 States is a coastal state in the State Eastern part of Nigeria. The state has been aptly placed in the South-South geopolitical zone of the country. Located in the Niger Delta, it occupies 20,156 square kilometers and she shares boundaries with Benue State to the North, Enugu and Abia States to the west, to the east by Cameroun Republic and to the south by Akwa Ibom and the Atlantic Ocean. Administratively Cross River State is divided into eighteen (18) local government council areas; namely: Abi, Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Bekwarra,

Biase, Boki, Calabar Municipality, Calabar South, Etung, Ikom Obanliku, Obubra, Obudu, Odukpani, Ogoja, Yakurr, and Yala Local Government Areas. The socio-cultural and political as well spatio-temporal parameters of these local government areas can be said to be more of a commonality than of divergence especially in terms of their needs for rapid socioeconomic development. The state is blessed with varied mineral resources and world class tourist sites spread across the length and breadth of the state, which if properly harnessed can transform the state. However, due to the limited public service employment possibilities the state has been described as a 'civil service state'. As regards tourism, Cross River State offers both its visitors and interested indigenes many centres of attraction. The outstanding ones are Obudu Cattle Ranch, Obudu, Old Residency Museum, Calabar, Agbokin Waterfalls, Ikom, Etanpim Cave in Odukpani local government area and Mary Slessor's Tomb, Calabar, Cross River National Park and Kwa Falls in Akamkpa local government area, Obubra Lake, Obubra and the Calabar Cenotaph, Calabar, Beaded works which are a peculiarity of Cross River State are sold in crafts shops. Common works are beaded bags, beaded wall hangings, Shoes, Ekpe masquerade made with raffia, cane chairs, brass trays, raffia clocks, motif work and a lot more. The Calabar Carnival is a delight to behold in the month of December. It is during this period that true manifestations of Calabar, as the 'Canaan City' and the state, as 'the Peoples Paradise' are unraveled. During this period, the state witnesses in flock of both local and international tourists to spend the Christian Festivities. We have chosen the Odukpani Local Government Area as our case study since the local government area is a perfect representation of local government area in Nigeria in general and the Cross River State in particular. The Odukpani Local Government Area is in the Southern Senatorial District of the Cross River State. The local government has thirteen (13) wards; namely: Adiabo Efut, Akampka Okoyong, Ekong Anaku, Eniong, Eki, Obom Itiat, Odot, Odukpani Central, Onim/ankiong, Ikoneto, and Ito/Idere/Ukwa Wards. Most of the local government communities are in the riverine and uneasy terrains. And, to some extent the varied topography and unwieldy nature of the local government has posed serious administrative problems affecting programme delivery.

## THE CONCEPT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL TRANSFORMATION

Though the concept of rural development has been variously defined by scholars and policy makers to mean quite a number of things, this paper adopts a more comprehensive one, *inter alia* .:

A host of multi-sectoral activities, including the improvement, of agriculture, the promotion of rural justice, the creation of requisite infrastructure and social overheads, as well as the establishment of appropriate decentralized structures in order to allow mass participation [7].

Rural transformation in this paper is perceived as a design to improve the economic and social conditions of rural inhabitants, which must involve strategies for extending the benefits of the development of the rural majority [8]. According to them the objectives of rural transformation efforts include the elimination of poverty, creation of rural employment opportunities, elimination of major inequalities, and ensuring adequate participation of the rural populace in the transformation process. A number of strategies have been adopted for this process and these include agricultural development, infrastructural development, industrialization, and integrated rural development and community development in Nigeria. This paper attempts to identify the factors that inhibit the realization of the goals and objectives of transforming the rural subsector of the economy despite instituting of sundry rural development programmes in Nigeria.

## PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF IMPLEMENTING RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN ODUKPANI LGA OF CROSS RIVER STATE

A study conducted on the problems and prospects of implementing rural development programmes in the Odukpani Local Government Areas revealed the following as problems of effective institutionalization and implementation of rural transformation of local government in particular and the State in general [9]:

1. Lack of requisite manpower to manage the agencies created for implementing rural development in Nigeria. For example, most of these agencies such as, the defunct Directorate For Roads and Rural Infrastructure, Directorate for Employment, School on the Wheel, Directorate for Mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Recovery, etc, lacked the requisite managerial skills necessary and sufficient for the realization of programme goals and objectives. In most cases they were staffed by political associates, whose basis of appointment was party loyalty and financial support to those in political power.
2. Lack of adequate funds. Most of the agencies are not adequately funded. There is hardly any rural development programme delivery agency that is funded adequately. Even when funds are budgeted for, the implementers are often denied access to them. Hence, the budgetary process becomes merely an instrument through which political masters have access to public funds. Substantial part of such funds are more often diverted into personal or/and political parties purses. At times, these financial allocations are expended in the cities, and only the "crumbs" may trickle down to the rural areas. A consequence of this is the supposed dearth of funds to implement programmes in the rural areas.
3. The topography of some rural communities creates problems for project execution. For instance, it is difficult and costly to effectively construct, reconstruct or rehabilitate some roads and other infrastructures in communities with swampy and rocky terrain. Differences in geographical attributes are often discountenanced by policy makers. Some rural development programmes fail because of incompatible ecological factors. Consequently, such programmes fail because it may not be congruent with the physical endowment of a particular community. Indeed, it is instructive to note that Odukpani Local Government Area comprises of four main large areas; New Netim, Creek Town, Okoyong and Eniong. It is often difficult to effectively deliver programme packages from the Headquarters at New Netim, which is more proximate to Calabar than to either of the above named sections. The situation is even worse for Eniong section where one has to pass through Itu in Akwa Ibom State to get there.
4. Spatial problems: as noted above Odukpani Local Government area is unwieldy and large in size. It covers wide areas. These spatial features constitute problems in transportation and easy access to target groups. The reverine communities in the local government area such as Eniong Abatim, Ito, Ukwa and some parts of Creek Town communities present typical examples of this problem.
5. Failure of Local Government Councils to act as pivot of rural transformation: Local Government Councils especially with the 1976 Reforms were created to synergize the rapid development of rural sector of the economy, among other functions.

Experience has however shown that most local government councils have woefully failed to do that. Certain reasons account for this state of affairs, among which are: in many instances those who do not reside permanently in the local government areas are either appointed or "elected" into local government Councils, hence they are out of tune with the existing conditions in their supposed locality; most of the "elected" local government officials administer Odukpani local government area from Calabar, the state capital. In fact, the Chairman of Council and most of the Councillors and Council workers reside in Calabar and its fringes.

6. Lack of requisite infrastructure: Some rural communities are yet to enjoy such facilities as roads, markets, electricity, basic health services, extension services rural banking, and co-operative societies, etc. The existence of such functional infrastructure in the rural areas would among others: check the migration of rural dwellers to the urban centres. The establishment of cottage and craft industries, which would provide employment for would-be migrants; encourage private sector investments in the rural communities and, enhance the rapid urbanization of some rural settlements in the country, are dependent on the provision of adequate infrastructure.
7. Lack of or inadequate feasibility studies before projects are undertaken. It is not an over statement to argue that most rural development programme fail because the policy makers did not carry out on the necessary feasibility studies on problem situations and its possible remedies. The poor results often recorded are accentuated by apparent definitional problems of the situations on ground. Problem clearly defined is problem half solved, and a good feasibility study conducted at the outset is a *sine qua non*.
8. Skyrocketing rate of inflation in Nigeria has affected the costs of the projects. This sometimes results in the abandonment of ongoing/approved projects by some delivering agencies, if the initial values of the projects are not reviewed.
9. Wrong choice of communication channel to reach the target population. For instance, the erstwhile MAMSER, and its successor, the National Orientation Agency, to a large extent adopted the use of Radio, Television and Newspapers, as her major media to get to the rural dwellers. This however, impacted

minimally on the rural dwellers due high rate of illiteracy, as well as such inadequate and ineffective infrastructure as electricity, with which to operate the radio or television sets. In most of these communities, the uses of television sets are farfetched. However, the government has immensely improved on this situation.

10. In health service subsector, the pivot for rural transformation is the Primary Health Care system. The Primary health centre is established in New Netim and other sections of the Local Government Area. The factions of PHC revolve around eight components of the programme: good nutrition, control of communicable diseases, treatment of endemic diseases, public health education, provision of drugs, including Delivery, Family Planning, Oral Re-Hydration Therapy (ORT), National Planning on Immunization (NPI). The last two are sponsored by the Federal Government and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF). It is a programme specifically marked out to improve the health of both children and mothers throughout the world, under a collective name of CHILD SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT REVOLUTION (CSDR). The programme was expected to be delivered either free or at affordable fee to everyone in the community. However, these programmes have suffered setbacks due to the following problems:
  - i. High cost of drugs, including shortages of drugs. Most rural dwellers can ill-afford prescribed drugs due to their low level of income. To solve this problem the National Primary Health Agency has provided necessary equipment and drugs to the various primary health centers in the local government area. Nevertheless, there is a problem: that of non-patronage by the rural dwellers of orthodox medicines. They, by and large prefer traditional medicines.
  - ii. Insufficient trained personnel. The Primary Health Centres for instance are still inadequately staffed considering the size and population of most rural areas. The Nursing Officer-in- Charge of the primary health centre at the local government headquarters highlighted this problem thus: that out of at least 25 trained staff required, the Health Centre has only 15, with one Medical Recorder; and no Medical Doctor. One can but imagine a situation of successful delivery

- of health services without the presence of medical doctors, pharmacists, laboratory technologists and other medically allied personnel.
- iii. Lack of accommodation for staff. Most of the health personnel reside in Calabar and its fringes. Consequently, they travel long distances to their place of assignment. Most often they arrive late or may become easily exhausted or fatigued after such distant journey, hence their productivity is invariably eroded. It is a common knowledge that most local government workers go to work at most twice a Week; that is on Mondays and any other day of the week. Even then, on those days, they arrive at their works places as late as 10 am, for the junior workers. The senior ones arrive much later. The political arm of the administration is not spared this malady as the council Chairman and his entire Councillors reside in Calabar. A number of observations can be made from the above scenario: workers are paid for services not adequately rendered; programmes fail because of lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation; Chairman and Councillors are not kept abreast with the immediate needs and aspirations of their constituencies because they do not live there, hence do not contribute to the active development of the area, in terms of constructing residential building as well as cottage industries, and necessary socioeconomic infrastructure in their locality. In fact, it is well known that the statutory constituency development grants made to the Councillors are never expended in their respective constituencies. These funds are rather invested on their properties in Calabar and on cars and frivolous and economically unproductive endeavours.
  - iv. The possibility of local government serving as a veritable instrument for rural transformation in Nigeria in general and in the Odukpani is farfetched for these reasons:
    - a. Sources of internally generated revenue have been assigned to contractors, party supporters and other politicians, and even "Area Boys" for their "unwavering support for parties". A very substantial sum of monies realized at what they refer to as their "Cash Points" go into their own pockets;
    - b. Corruption and related offences is very high as there is the absence of accountability, responsibility and transparency in the local government area; and,
    - c. Sources of local government area are increasingly contracted by the activities of the state government which see the local government council immediate function is that paying wages and salaries to the dwindling number of workers in the local government council area. The state government was in the habit of impounding monthly statutory allocations from the federation account as well as refusing to pay their own share on the pretext that such monies are diverted to develop either the state capital, or to fund state government projects in the state as a whole.
    - v. Inaccessibility to target population due to size and topography. In addition inadequate transport facilities makes it an uphill task to get to the people that reside in the swampy and riverine areas as mentioned elsewhere in this paper.
    - vi. The productivity of workers in the council area is lower due to existing difficult working environment. The offices in the rural communities lack the basic facilities that would make working in these communities attractive to the western educated class. Such facilities would include fans, air conditioners, refrigerators, adequate filling cabinets, class and wrong desks, stationary materials etc.
    - vii. Lack of requisite guidance and counselling personnel in schools. These categories of workers are in short supply in the rural communities.
- In the educational subsector the following problems are encountered:
- a. Non-availability and non-utilization of Introductory Technology equipment. There is secondary school in Odukpani Local Government Area that is equipped with the requisite machinery and materials for effective teaching and learning of Introductory Technology. But then, an aspect of the 6 - 3 - 3 - 4 system of education expects a student to inculcate necessary technical skills that would make him productive in the labour environment. This expectation has not been achieved due the non-availability of teaching equipment. In fact, it has observed that the roadside apprentices are better

trained than the student that has spent three or more years in the school. However, one may ask: supposing these equipment were available, how would they have been used effectively given the poor state of infrastructure such as electricity and water in Odukpani Local Government Area? Or have well trained are Introductory Technology teachers to man and manipulate these equipment effectively?

- b. In most cases, the subject cannot be consummated due to the fact that, students are still being oriented more on theoretical aspects than the practical. Again, the schools lack competent hands to manipulate these equipment. Even then, as some of these equipment are electrically driven, the absence of inadequate supply of electricity make the entire exercise ridiculous.
- c. Irregular payment of teachers' salaries is another constraint. Salaries of teachers come several months in arrears. This acts as a disincentive to hard work. Consequently, the nation had witnessed more spates of strikes by teachers much more than other categories of workers. This does not augur well for the attainment of sound education for the citizens, cum rural dwellers.
- d. Existence of Ghost Workers/Beneficiaries. It is really a disgusting reality to observe that some implementers of rural development programmes submit fictitious estimates and financial reports. We have instances where non existing projects are reported as well as non-existent beneficiaries being "delivered", sometimes, non-existent programme packaged. At the end of the day programme package do not get to the genuine beneficiaries. Also, suppliers and contractors are owed substantial sums of money. Thus, projects are grounded sometimes indefinitely.

To corroborate our findings we draw inferences from what other scholars on the subject matter have remonstrated as follows:

- a. Most rural development projects in Nigeria meant for the rural people are not being delivered to them due a number of reasons which include the level of awareness, income, participation in the implementation phase, etc. Examining the relationship between income and the usage of infrastructural facilities in their studies, it was revealed that there was a significant relationship between the income of the respondents and the usage of integrated rural development facilities. Again, their study revealed that there is a significant

relationship between the level of awareness of the respondents and the usage of infrastructural facilities except for market facilities. Indeed, their studies adumbrated on other challenges faced by the policy makers and implementers to include low income, lack of access roads, lack of involvement of rural people in planning implementation stages of integrated development projects [9a].

To make improvement on the situation, they suggested the following:

- i. Involvement of the rural people in the planning implementation of integrated rural development projects;
  - ii. Providing of means of increasing or at least making their income levels sustainable;
  - iii. Creating greater awareness regarding integrated rural development projects in the local government area;
  - iv. Maintenance of facilities as well as reduce wastage of government resources that emanate from lack of the usage of these facilities [10].
- b. Also, deriving from their studies on corporate social responsibility and community development note with particular reference to relationship between corporate social responsibility functions of PAMOL (Nigeria) Limited ( a transnational corporation) and the community development (felt) needs of its host communities (in Calabar Municipality and Odukpani Local Government Area) observed that there is a disjuncture between what the people want and what the companies provides. The study found that the corporate social responsibility functions carried out by PAMOL in the area include employment building, and equipping of town halls and classroom blocks, HIVAIDS awareness/ prevention campaign, etc. whereas the need of the host communities are construction and maintenance of community roads, employment of indigenes, provision of healthcare facilities and portable drinkable water. To be sure, the study attempted to demonstrate whether the corporate social responsibility functions performed by corporate organization in host communities usually match the community needs or felt needs of the people or whether they only do what they want [11].
  - c. Arguably, health service delivery to rural communities has always been a vexed problem for most government in developing countries [12].

According to them a number of problem issues militate against effective health service delivery in the local government area. These include, as mentioned elsewhere in this paper: corruption, inadequate supply of drugs and poor quality of medical personnel, lack of medical equipment and facilities. Others are high cost (of transportation to hospital, and medical bills) to the patients for obtaining attention and interference by unorthodox medical practitioners. They went on to suggest the adoption of ICT for public enlightenment for preventive healthcare as well as for the implementation of affordable access to curative health. However, the question is how many rural dwellers own computers or sophistication internet-compliant handsets? Again, how many of them are computer literate which will enable them manipulate the computer hardware effectively?

### THE WAY FORWARD

From the foregoing, it is suggested that in order to facilitate rapid, conscious and sustained efforts at rural transformation, the following steps should be taken:

- a. Rural development problems should be properly identified, demarcated and streamlined to enable the formulation and implementation of possible solutions. The uniqueness of demographic, economic, physical, political and psychological structures of the Odukpani Local Government Areas must be considered in programmes initiation and implementation.
- b. Enough funds should be made available, and effective monitoring of implementation process made part of the programme package.
- c. Trained personnel should be recruited and decent accommodations provided for them, to encourage their residing within development areas.
- d. Requisite infrastructure such as roads, drainage, cottage industries, schools and health facilities, credit and banking institutions should be put in place in the rural communities. This will indeed check the rate of rural-urban migration as well as boost industrial and commercial activities in rural areas.
- e. Adequate transport facilities should be provided for staff who at the moment are not living close to programme sites, while efforts are made to accommodate them comfortably in the rural communities.
- f. The local government councils as agents of rural transformation in Nigeria should be adequately funded. As a corollary, they should be granted some levels of administrative discretion as well as legislative and financial autonomy. These provisions should be as enshrined in the constitution and councils' power derivable there from.
- g. Leadership tussle among programme delivering ministries, departments and agencies should be discouraged. This does not augur well for the development of any society. Rather it generates conflicts, violence, loss of property and sometimes loss of lives.
- h. The national leadership should show enough commitments to rural transformation as a pivot on which the overall nation socioeconomic development evolves.
- i. Alongside the modern means of communication, the traditional mode, such as the use of the town-crier should also be adopted as a means of reaching out to the rural dwellers, and in a language that they understand. In other words, appropriate framework for the positive mobilization and education for all Nigerians towards rural development and new social order must be pursued.
- j. Companies operating in local government areas must endeavour to adapt their Corporate Social responsibility functions to the felt needs of host communities, in other words, they must carry out proper need assessment before embarking on the projects.
- k. In order to improve the quality of life of the low income population living in the rural communities on a self-sustaining basis through transforming the socio-spatial structure of their productive activities, the need to set up more microfinance banks in such communities become an imperative. Specifically, rural banking especially through the microfinance outlets provide financial supports through the extension of such facilities like micro credit, loans advances, overdrafts, and investment in rural based industries to rural dwellers; employment of community members and involvement in capacity building within the host communities; and direct involvement in rural transformation programmes such as sponsoring and financing communal self-help projects within the rural environment. Hence, we recommend the setting up of more community banks in the rural to harness and direct local material and

financial resource into durable and sustainable socioeconomic ventures.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that to achieve a sustainable socioeconomic and political development in Nigeria there is the need to emphatically transform the rural sectors. This can only be achieved by undertaking a conscious and systematic formulation of an integrated rural development programmes. Also, we conclude the problem of rural transformation in the country to a very large extent is not particularly that of policy formulation, rather, the problems lie in programme implementation. Consequent, we argue that eliminating these problems will assist a rapid rural transformation of the rural sectors in Nigeria with a view to contributing effectively to the overall national development of the country.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interests was declared by authors.

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