



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

NWENEKA EGBO
egboonline@yahoo.com
08038696192

Abstract

This paper encapsulates a comparative analysis of rural development policies in Nigeria and South Africa. The study collected data from the secondary sources and the data were analyzed via the content method of data analysis. The study shows that Nigeria and South Africa share similar patterns and trends in the formulation and implementation of rural development policies with little differences. Rural development policies in both countries have recorded limited successes over time due to poor implementation and discontinuity of the programmes by successive government especially in Nigeria. The study therefore recommends that all and sundry involving in the administration of rural development policies in Nigeria and South Africa should go beyond paying lip service to issues that border on the implementation of these policies so that the policy frameworks can achieve the desired result.

Keyword: Rural Areas, Rural Development, Rural Development Policies

Introduction

Rural development is a major priority of the post-colonial countries of Africa including Nigeria and South Africa. This is so; not only because the rural communities were highly neglected in the scheme of development during the epoch of European colonialism, rather, the rural areas still remain the most underdeveloped part of Nigeria and South Africa respectively. Besides, the leaders of the developing countries in Africa have also come to accept the development of rural areas as sine qua non for national development (Egbe, 2014). Against this backdrop, successive governments of these countries have come up with various rural development policies and programmes to address the problem of underdevelopment in their respective rural communities. Most of these policies are contained in their national development plans. Ering, Eteng and Archibong (2014) opined that the rural development policies of Nigeria since the colonial period were contained in major development plans of 1946-1956, 1962-68, 1970-74; 1975-1980; 1981-85. They added that the primary objectives of those development policies were to increase rural productivity and income in rural areas. In South Africa too, rural development policies such as the Rural Development Programme of 1994, the Rural Development Strategy of the Government of National Unity of 1995, the 1997 Development Frameworks and the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) of 2001 etc: were all contained in the development plans of the central government (South Africa position paper on Rural Development 2010).

Thus, majorly, rural development policies are formulated or articulated by the central governments of the aforementioned countries; after due consultation in most cases with the rural dwellers. Once they are formulated, the policies are jointly implemented by the central government and the sub-national governments with the support of civil societies and international development agencies as the case maybe. Other strategies adopted for rural development planning and implementation includes; the creation of states and local government areas, mobilization of people for local participation in planning and implementation of community development projects in order to create new centres of developments.

However, it must be emphasized that most of the policies and institutional measures which have been put in place by the governments of Nigeria and South Africa respectively in order to improve the lives of the rural communities have recorded limited successes. Extant literature reveal that the policies failed not because of the structure or content; but basically due to poor implementation and abandonment by successive governments. Also, for sure, while there are compendiums of development policies in Nigeria and South Africa, there seem to be no existing work encapsulating a comparative analysis of rural development policies in these two countries.

Concomitantly, this paper is designed to interrogate the patterns and trends of rural development policies in Nigeria and South Africa; and moreover, draw a comparison between the rural development policies in these countries so as to proffer the way forward.

Conceptual Clarification

Rural Areas:

The term rural areas connote a place with agricultural orientation; the houses are farm houses, barns, sheds and other structures of similar purposes. The 1997 rural development framework of South Africa defined rural areas as the sparsely populated areas in which people farm or depends on natural resources including the villages and small towns that are dispersed through these areas. The framework further noted that they include large settlement in the former homelands, created by the apartheid regimes which depend for their survival on

migratory labour and remittances. Olisa and Obiukwu (1992) opined that in Nigeria an area with a population of 20, 000 people and below is classified as rural area. To them, the main features of rural areas are not limited to the above demographic factors or settlement patterns as they also include: depression, degradation and deprivation. The rural areas lack virtually all the good things of life like roads, medical and health facilities, portable water and electricity. These characteristics are not only visible in the rural areas alone as they are also found in urban areas in Nigeria and other developing countries.

Rural Development

Rural development is a process of social change in the rural areas through the alignment of the central governments socio-economic and political goals with those desired by the rural people for their own benefit (Inedu, 2010). It is the integrated approach to food production as well as physical, social and institutional infrastructural provisions with qualitative and qualitative changes which result in improved living standard of the rural population. Thus, it must be emphasized that agricultural development is a component of rural development just as agricultural development policy is a composite part of rural development policies. In essence, agricultural development policies are not synonymous with rural development policies as claim by some scholars.

Rural Development Policies

Rural development policies can be defined as all aspects of government actions that, directly or indirectly, influences the nature of economic and social development in rural areas. It aimed at actualizing the dream of improving the people's socio economic welfare.

Nigeria's Rural Development Policies since 1960

Since Nigeria became independent in 1960, many policies and programmes aimed at the improvement of rural areas have been articulated by successive governments of the country. However, as rightly observed by Inedu (2016) and Jide (2011), the first decade of this era (1960 and 1970) witnessed no radical departure from the colonial conceptualization of rural development. The policy goals and objectives of rural development during the colonial epoch were designated as agricultural policy geared towards the cultivation of export crops. Prompted by the hope enshrined in the sectorial development strategy (otherwise known as the agricultural development model the then planners and policy makers in Nigeria assumed that the development of agriculture is synonymous to rural development.

Concomitantly, the policy objectives of the Nigeria government in the first National Development Plan (1962-1970) were therefore designed to raise the living standard of the small scaled farmers, to increase agricultural output and productivity. Governmental actions employed to promote these goals includes: the distribution of seeds, introduction of more agricultural methods through farm settlements, cooperative plantations and greatly expanded agricultural extension services (Osuntogun and Olufokunbi, 1986).

Although, some lapses were recognized with the first development plan and this gave rise to the Nigeria's Second National Development Plan (1970-1974). The plan specifically stated that the country's rural development objectives include;

- Creating rural employment opportunities with a view to checking rural-urban migration; and
- Improving the level and quality of social services and infrastructural facilities. Nonetheless, these goals were neither adequately provided for in the plan nor were there any specific programmes or projects deigned to achieve them. (Inedu, 2016). A major

strategy designed to improve the condition of living in rural Nigeria during the second National Development Plan was the development of large scale irrigation projects which gained prominence in the various states of the Sudan Belt. Also noted with this period was the recognition of community self-help efforts and the launching of National Accelerated food production programme (NAFPP) in 1973 as a national network of agro services centre, these centres are no longer in the mainstream of rural development. Michael and Ibrahim (2003) and Ibeanu (2008) believe that NAFPP was abandoned due to aftermath of the civil war and the replacement of crude-oil exploration with agriculture as the mainstay of the Nigerian economy.

The Third National Development Plan: 1975-1980 witnessed the establishment of several policies and programs such as Agricultural Development Programme (ADPs), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), River Basin and Rural Development Authorities (RBRDAs), the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS) and the Green revolution Programme. But of all these, the ADPs received better attention and a systematic approach to project planning due to the World Bank support it received. The moment the World Bank withdrew their support, the ADPs became a sham, while the others mentioned above remained as political slogan (Adebayo and Idowu, 2000).

The programme of integrated rural development for the provision of food and socio-economic infrastructures came under focus in 1986 with the establishment of rural development agency- the Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) through Decree No 4 of 1986 with a determined focus on the development of the entire rural areas of Nigeria in order to improve the quality of life of the rural dwellers. Researchers have shown that DFRRI recorded remarkable success in the area of infrastructural development such as federal roads, electricity and water supply, yet DFRRI died a natural death due to the national spirit of policy inconsistency and discontinuity of programmes and projects. After the demise of DFRRI in 1994, its functions were shared among the Line Ministry of Water Resources and Rural Development. But these ministries could not consolidate on the achievements of DFRRI. Since the demise of DFRRI, Nigeria has not been able to articulate another integrated rural development policy.

Moving logically, the Better Life/family Support programme was established in 1987 with a view to alleviate poverty and later transformed into Family Support Programme (FSP) and subsequently to Family Economic Advancement programme (FEAP) in November, 1994: with the same objectives of encouraging rural dwellers especially women to improve their standard of living. There were observable successes such as giving voices to the hitherto voiceless rural women and the establishment of recreational facilities. But the programme also suffered a similar fate to that of DFRRI, as a result of political changes from one person to another.

The National Fadama Development Project was implemented in 1993-1999 in some selected states with the aim of encouraging and facilitating resource poor farmers to embark on dry season fanning in order to generate increased income and alleviate poverty. NFDP was impactful, however, it has failed since the reduction of counterpart funding by World Bank. The Special Programme on Food Security (SPFS) in Nigeria came on board in late 2001. It was a deliberate policy to stimulate the growth of the food sector and facilitate the elimination of poverty, hunger and the host of viciousness that persist in food insecure nations. The programme started well but currently not much has been said about it. Other rural development policies that followed since the inception of this current dispensation include; the National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP), of the Obasanjo regime and the

Commercial Agricultural Development Programme (CADP) of the ‘Yar’dua/Goodluck Administration. Most scholars agreed that the Jonathan’s administration made concerted efforts in agricultural development but issues of high level of corruption and lack of political will to tackle it impacted negatively on the agricultural development. Presently, there is no organized or remarkable rural development policies under the Muhammadu Buhari led Federal Government of Nigeria.

An Overview of Rural Development policies in South Africa

Like the days of colonial in Nigeria, rural developments suffer major setbacks in South Africa during the apartheid regime. The apartheid regime, left a legacy of underdevelopment and poverty in the rural areas. Grassroot development however received attention at the dawn of democracy in 1994- the post-apartheid era. Since then, efforts have been geared towards ameliorating the negative consequences of the socio-economic and political marginalization of the rural dwellers. Concomitantly, many policies and institutional reform measures have been put in place in order to improve the lives of the rural communities and revitalize rural economies but have had limited successes (TT Gwanya; the Director General Department of Rural Development and Land reform 2010).

The first policy framework on development articulated by the African National Congress (ANC) led central government in 1994 was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) document (Government of South Africa, 1994). The programme sought to mobilize all people and country’s resources towards the final eradication of apartheid and the building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future. It also sought to address poverty and inequality. It acknowledged that the people most affected by the economic policy should participate in the decision making. Indeed, fora like the Community Development Fora (CDF) and Local Development Fora (LDF) were organized or convened in all regions to ensure the rural populace participated and contributed to these rural development initiatives. This is unlike Nigeria where rural development policies are superimposed on the rural dwellers. However, as a development policy document, it had a number of shortcomings chief among whom were lack of focus on opportunities and constraints, inadequate planning and implementation capacity of the local government to pursue the programme. Thus, the programme generally did not succeed at envisaged rate.

Sequel to the above, the rural development strategy of the Government of National Unity of 1995 set out the mechanisms by which rural people and their elected representatives at the rural district councils and local councils could take charge of development process in their own areas. It suggested the building of local government in rural areas and placing the rural people at the heart of development strategy as the panacea for rural development. But this document died a natural death as a discussion document.

The 1997 Rural Development Framework states that rural development is everybody’s business. It captures a multi-sectoral nature of the subject-matter and the notion that rural development is basically the business of rural people; they should therefore set the agenda and the priority and method to achieve them. The cardinal objectives were premised on the involvement of rural people in decision affecting their lives through participation in the development process of rural areas, provision of affordable infrastructure and improve services in rural areas and moreover, increasing rural government capacity to plan and implement the process of rural development (Everatt and Safiso, 2000).

Judging from the above, one can argue that, the 1995 and 1997 rural development programmes were more sophisticated than that of 1994. They addressed the capacity problem

of local government that contributed to the failure of the 199 rural development policy. Again, they share similar colouration with the 1976 local government reforms in Nigeria which emphasized the need for the participation and mobilization of the people at the grassroots. The 1976 reforms stated that it was through an effective local government system that human and material resources of Nigeria could be mobilized for local development.

The 1997 Rural Development framework was replaced with the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) in 2001. The objective of ISRDS was to intensify a sustained attack on poverty and underdevelopment throughout South Africa (Government of South Africa, 2001). The programme was designed to transform rural South Africa into socially cohesive and stable communities with viable institutions, sustainable economies and universal access to social amenities. However, the programme did not achieve the desired impact due to lack of enforcement mechanisms.

Gwanya (2010) observed that a process to change the development approach to rural areas began in 2005 with the National Land Summit that adopted and redesigned the land and agrarian reforms. The 2007 ANC (ruling party) National Policy conference identified rural development, land reform and agrarian change as critical pillars of South Africa's programme of economic transformation. The policy conference equally acknowledged that the programmes of rural development, land and agrarian change must be integrated into a clear strategy that seeks to empower the poor, particularly those who already derive all part of their livelihood from the exploitation of productive land. Rural development has since then been included as one of the priorities in the Medium Term Strategic Framework Government of South Africa, 2009). The overall priority was to develop and implement a Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP). The vision of the CRDP was to create vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities through a three-pronged strategy based:

- A coordinated and integrated broad based agrarian transformation;
- Rural development infrastructure and;
- An improved land reform programme

The New Economic Growth Path, 2010 further provide impetus to the vision for a transformed rural sector, prioritized job creation through infrastructure, development, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, green economy and tourism (Ngomane, 2012). The 2011 National Development Plan therefore provides that about 400, 000 people must graduate out of rural poverty every year prior to the vision of zero rural poverty in 2030.

However, like her Nigerian counterpart, there is no doubt that the South African rural development programmes have met with some degree of successes; nevertheless, the government has not achieved its aim of transforming the apartheid geography of rural areas.

Rural development policies in Nigeria and South Africa: A comparative Analysis

Nigeria and South Africa share a lot of similarities than differences in terms of rural development policies. This is obvious when one juxtapose the earlier discussed rural development policies in both countries.

The National Development plans which encapsulates most of the rural development policies are exclusively designed by the federal government in Nigeria. The formulation of rural development policies is based on top-down model; not bottom up approach. So also, the implementation process follows a trickle down approach.

Similarly, South Africa operates a quasi-federal government and a parliamentary democracy with a central government and sub-national governments at the provincial, municipal and local levels (Olaniyi, 2008). This follows that (like in Nigeria), rural development policies are equally formulated by the central government but jointly implemented by the central and sub-national governments. For instance, the RDP of 1994, and Rural Development Strategy of the Government of National Unity of 1995 etc were all formulated by the ANC led central government; although after due consultation of rural communities and local governments councils which were also made to champion the implementation process. This in essence shows that the formulation and execution of rural development programmes in South Africa equally follows a trickle down method. Rural development policies are coordinated by the central government in both countries.

Rural development policies in Nigeria and South Africa are predicated on modern or western democratic ideas. They are geared towards the transformation of major institutions and structures of the society to meet the needs of the people and help transform their lives for better. The idea is that if these structures are transformed in line with modern and western democratic ideas, the rural areas will develop. For instance, the DFRRI of Nigeria and CRDP of South Africa were tailored towards the provision of education, rural socio-economic infrastructure, agrarian transformation and sustainability of democratically elected local government councils to drive development and modernization at the grassroot level.

Rural development in Nigeria and South Africa at some epoch especially after their independence were equated or conceived as agricultural development. The planners and policy makers of the Nigeria's first development plan (1962-1970) were of the opinions that the development of agriculture is synonymous to rural development. It was a continuation of colonial government conceptualization of agricultural policy as rural development policy. Similarly, Ngomane (2012) opined that the debate about agrarian change and rural development in South Africa begins with land as a national asset for food and food security. The rural development policy was premised on the effects of the dispossession of land and systematic deprivation of land use rights of rural black South Africa (by the apartheid regime) and success in land use and agricultural productivity.

As a corollary to the above point, we can state that rural development policies in both countries share similar evolutionary trends. They both transited from the agriculturally based orientation of rural development policy to a more sophisticated and integrated rural development approach. The 2001 ISRDS of South Africa and the 1986 DFRRI of Nigeria all cases in point. Impliedly, they both see agricultural development as a component of rural development and not the latter itself.

The 1995 and 1997 rural development strategy of South Africa and the 1976 local government reforms in Nigeria share similar colouration in the sense that, these policies sought to increase the capacity of rural government to plan and implement the process of development at the grassroot. In the same vein, the policies emphasized that it was through an effective local government system that the human and material resources at the grassroot could be mobilized for local government.

Continuing, rural development policies in Nigeria and South Africa have both witnessed limited or partial successes. The factors responsible for the policy failures are the same. Basically, the reasons for the lack success do not emanate from the structure and content of the development projects rather from the poor coordination and implementation of the projects and activities that would realized the policies.

Conversely, the observable differences include the fact that unlike Nigerian government, the South African government tends to encourage and guarantee massive community participation and involvement in the making of rural development policy. This is evident in the 1994, 1995 and most especially the 1997 South African development frameworks which sees rural development as the business of rural people and as such they should set the agenda and the method to achieve it. In the same vein, since 2010, South Africa seems to have a more Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) that span across to 2030 unlike Nigeria where the federal government has not been able to come up with another Integrated Rural Development Policies since the inception of this current democratic dispensation in 1999.

Conclusion

Following from the foregoing perhaps, it is safer to conclude that Nigeria and South Africa share similar patterns and trends in the formulation and implementation of rural development policies with little or no major differences. The only major difference at present is that South Africa is pursuing a more comprehensive rural development programme capable of transforming the rural areas at the homelands etc by 2030; unlike Nigeria that has no organized and integrated rural development policy under pursuit since 1999 till date. However, the bond of contention here is that rural development policies in both countries have not achieved the desired impact over time due to poor implementation and careless abandonment by successive governments especially in Nigeria. There is therefore the need to establish the method that can guarantee the effective implementation and feasibility of rural development policies in these sub-saharan countries of Africa.

Recommendation

Based on our conclusion, we hereby make the following recommendations which if strictly adhered to will ensure a better tomorrow for rural development policies in Nigeria and South Africa respectively:

1. There is the need for Nigeria to design an integrated rural development policy after due consultation with the people at the grassroot, who of course must be made to champion the implementation of the rural development policy so enacted to ensure its success. In other words, Nigeria must always ensure the involvement of rural communities in the formulation and implementation of rural development policies just as obtainable in South Africa.
2. It is imperative for all and sundry involving in the formulation of rural and agricultural development policies in these countries to go beyond paying lip service to issues that border on implementation of these policies so that the policy frameworks can achieve its objectives. Successive governments should as a matter of necessity and in the interest of the people continue from where the previous government stops in the execution and implementation of policies and objectives of rural development.
3. Good governance and commitment on the part of the government functionaries is a sine qua non to meaningful rural development policies. No miracle could be wrought in rural development where integrity, accountability and discipline are absent.
4. Reducing corruption in these countries will boost the feasibility of rural development policies. Thus, their governments must fight the corruption ravaging these countries to a standstill if rural development policies must achieve desired result.

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