

RURAL-URBAN DRIFT: IMPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

I. Dialoke

Department of Industrial Relations and Personnel, Management
College of Management Sciences
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State Nigeria
Email: finejoe86@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The predominant numbers of Nigerian People are rural inhabitants who are preoccupied with agricultural farm work and fishery. Also most of the rural dwellers were not favored by the government, hence no presence of basic infrastructural needs that can assist in their day to day living within the rural environs. The study through theoretical investigation was able to deduce that the causes of rural-urban drift in Nigeria hinges on outburst in population growth, lack of basic, social services such as water, electricity, hospitals, roads, etc. In addition lack of information services, poverty and illiteracy were not left out as among the factors that has debilitating effects on community and rural development. In order to overcome this horrible factor that has attendant consequences on community and rural development, the rural inhabitants tend to advance to urban centers where more job opportunities and social amenities are ubiquitous at every corner of the city. Succinctly, the paper highlighted the consequence effects (Positive and negative) or otherwise implications rural-urban drift has on community and rural development in Nigeria. It then concluded that there is no definitive statement on whether rural-urban drift is beneficial or non-beneficial to community and rural development in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

In most historical map of Africa, Nigeria has been noted as the most populated countries in the continent. As such, most of her citizens predominantly found themselves in the rural communities during pre-colonial and colonial times. These periods of predominant living in the rural areas was characterized by their interest in farming and fishing, palm produce, cocoa harvesting, and among other Agrarian farm work as the need arose. Thus the increasing or rising quest for rural-urban drift in Nigeria became a "social slogan" as a result of the state of awareness advanced by the Europeans through institutionalization of indirect rule system using the traditional institutions of various ethnic groups in Nigeria. Touched by this brisk awareness, developmental programmes began in earnest in which government increased their efforts in building industries, roads, educational institutions, railways, hospitals, markets etc at the collapse of European imperialism. However, these laudable efforts of government in developmental processes of independent Nigeria did not extricate the private industrialists and elite thinkers. Nevertheless, today's modern Nigeria has seen an upsurge or mass exodus of people from rural

villages to urban towns in search of white-collar jobs for socio-economic change. Complementing the above view, Olujimi (2009) citing Donk (2006) further asserted that the world is increasingly becoming urbanized and the rate at which city population grows and countries urbanize is indicative of the pace of social and economic change. Thus in 1976, one third of the population lived in cities (Olujimi, 2009) and 30 years later, this rose to one and half of the entire humankind. It is also implied that by another 30 years (2036) the population in urban cities perhaps are estimated to grow to two-third.

With nearly all global demographic growth that is mostly concentrated in developing countries, urban sprawl is becoming a major feature of developing countries. Useful as they may be as demographic absorbers, metropolitan regions by their sheer size, create complex and multi-faceted problems on scales which were never experienced before (Olujimi 2009). The effects of this population dynamics in African cities in particular produce miseries that are often difficult to comprehend (Olurin 2003). Most of the big African cities including Nigeria are faced with the problem of rapidly deteriorating physical and living environment. The deterioration manifests itself in the form of slums, urban sprawl and squatters' settlements, increasing traffic congestion, flooding and erosion, deteriorating infrastructure and short falls in service delivery among others. Therefore, for most developing countries, the governance and management of their towns and cities as a result of rural-urban drift are most daunting as the cities appear to be growing beyond the control of planners, beyond management capacities and beyond available resources (Agbola and Olurin, 1998). Since man's quest for change will continue within his dynamic environment, this points to the fact that rural-urban drift becomes an inevitable phenomenon in Africa, particularly in Nigeria.

DEFINITION OF RELEVANT CONCEPTS

Rural is seen or connected with village or community. Urban is seen or connected with town or city. It is also seen as the process of building towns and cities or making them larger. Also the term urban is derived from the Latin word "urb" meaning a city. This denotes a centre of population larger or more important than the village. For a place to be called a city or urban community, you consider indications like population density, and the people's way of life. Drift is defined as a slow steady movement from one place to another or gradual change or development from one situation to another especially to something bad people from rural communities to urban town Community: The term community can be drawn from five variables or elements, viz: people, place, identity, common culture and social system (Okpata, 2004).

People: A community consists essentially of people who live in it. A community is not just a collection of buildings or a political sub-division or a census unit. While these aspects are not to be overlooked, undue stress on them may lead you to miss this central notion, the first meaning of community is people

Place: A community covers a certain geographical area. This can be discovered by noting the territory served by the major commercial and social organizations in the community centre, by observing traffic patterns or roads and paths, and by considering the people's own senses of who are those that belong to the community.

Identity: A number of people living in a certain place are not community unless they possess a sense of "we feeling" or group identity. It is this local spirits, which forms the common bond needed for community wide action. Note: there are often sub-communities within large communities, particularly if a special occupation or interest forms unifying focus for a number of residents.

Common culture: In a community, people share a large body of knowledge, belief, habits, customs, morals and laws etc. this common culture enables people to live and work together in a harmonious and predictable manner, shared activities to strengthen the bonds of this common culture.

Social system: A community is composed of a number of people living in a certain area, possessing a sense of group identity and sharing a common culture. As a result of these characteristics, the members of a community depend on each other as they work together regularly to solve their problem. Patterns of behaviors develop around such recurring issues as making a living, raising a family and making decisions which affect most member of the community. This is similar to the way in which the human body consists of limbs and organs, each contributing something to the others and each dependent upon the other for the health and efficiency of the whole man. A firm grasp of this notion of system will help you to avoid becoming too unwrapped up in your particular subject or with the segment of the community population.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The general concept or development as "a multi-dimensional process, involving the organization and re-orientation of the entire economic and social system, an improvement and radical change in institutional social and administrative structures," presupposes that the concept is also integrated as there is also an integrated approach in rural development paradigm. (Okpata, 2004). Therefore, a good understanding of the subject matter of rural development stems from having a

good grasp to the characteristics of rural underdevelopment. But this should not divert our attention in putting forward the definition of rural development. Thus, the World Bank (1975, cited in Okpata, 2004) put rural development as the "process of rural modernization, and the monetization of the rural society leading to its transition from traditional isolation, to integration with the characteristics of rural population as from the indices, Diejomaoh (1973, as cited in Okpata 2004) defined rural development as "a process of not only increasing the level of per-capita income in the rural area, but also the standard of living of the rural population" measured in "food and nutrition level, health, education, housing recreation and security." United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 1997 in Okpata, 2004) defined rural development as a process of socio-economic change, involving the transformation of agrarian society in order to reach a common set of development goals, based on the capacities and the needs of the people. According to Bathem (1982 in Okpata, 2004) rural development is a process during which the people in the small community, first through discussion, define their goals and objectives and plan and act together to satisfy them, it is the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve economic, social and cultural conditions of communities in order to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and enable them contribute fully to nation progress.

FACTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR RURAL-URBAN DRIFT IN NIGERIA

Different factors are responsible for rural-urban drift in Nigeria. However, the unprecedented increase in the population in the Nigerian cities continues to put pressures on the existing housing facility (Olujimi and Gbadamosi, 2007). Thus the inability of the housing delivery to cope effectively with the housing need has succeeded in pricing out majority of the low income-earners from the housing market. Most affected groups are the immigrants from the rural hinterland that prefer to settle at the suburbs of the cities. Often a time, this is responsible for development of squatter's settlement at the Peri-urban zones. Consequently, Agbola (2004) notwithstanding the facts remains that the population of Nigerian has been increasing tremendously. This is confirmed by the provisional result of the 2006 National Population Census that indicated the total population of Nigeria which stood at 140, 542, and 032 (NPC, 2007). This population in Nigeria Urban centers However, the increase of this population in urban centers perhaps can be attributed to the number of people in rural areas that are seeking for better opportunities in life. Cities present unlimited socio-economic opportunities, particularly in area of landed property development. Thus, the operations of the economic forces in the supply of land for commercial development within the city centre are encouraging the acquisition of land at the suburb of the city for residential property development.

This has sufficiently propelled the greed for land speculation and hoarding at the suburbs. The quest for acquisition of wealth through purchase of lands in an urban city engineered the rural society in moving to the urban centers. Because the cost of a plot of land in an urban centre, if sold, will be more monetarily advantageous than that one that is sold in the rural areas. This encourage mass exodus of people from rural to urban irrespective of all odds. At the industrial pace of economic development continues to increase in a geometrical form, the quest for white-collar jobs continues to hike in asymmetrical form. This is because the number of people who are predominantly in the rural areas and have basic educational qualification and skills will be looking forward to get employed in a better bureaucratic organization or private sector services.

There is a general saying that a healthy nation is a wealthy nation. The hospitals and maternity centers in rural areas in Nigeria are not well equipped to cater for the health desires of the rural dwellers. For instance, one's health in the rural area can be precarious and required immediate attention by the medical experts, but the person may die as a result of non presence of such medical doctor(s) expected to attend to the patient. More often, most medical doctors refuse to serve in the rural communities, which drag house movement of people from rural to urban cities. Another factor that is responsible for rural-urban drift in Nigeria is the presence of social infrastructure in the urban centers. Hither to there are some rural communities in Nigeria where social infrastructures such as electricity, good roads, water are dearth and yet they are subjected to unwholesome embarrassment by tax collectors. A time the farmers may not export their agricultural produce to the urban centers because of bad road net work linking various communities. In order to enjoy these infrastructural facilities which are most available in urban centers, the rural people tend to advance forth their stay and sustainable living in the urban areas in Nigeria.

IMPLICATIONS (possible effects) OF RURAL-URBAN DRIFT ON COMMUNITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENTS IN NIGERIA

Nigeria has been an independent nation for over 45 years with policies on development of rural communities, but rural areas continue to deteriorate throughout all tiers of government (Federal, State and Local) of both politicians and the military regimes. Thus, Disco (2005) added that Nigerian people are still dominantly pleasant farmers, petty traders, middle-men or commission agents. As such, no serious, active, conscious, sensitive, and organized government would want to neglect rural communities (yahya, 2009). He further asserted that lack of development has a positive correlation with the neglect o rural areas. Therefore, rural neglects brings about negative consequences such as exodus of rural dwellers to

urban areas, with resulting problems of unemployment, proliferation of shanty living areas, spread of diseases, and overstretching of the facilities and infrastructures in the urban areas. In addition several reasons can be suggested for the concentration on urban areas in the discussion of the consequences of rural-urban migration. These include amongst other factors, greater visibility of the consequences to policy makers resident in urban areas. In the less developed countries problems of urban unemployment, traffic congestion, housing shortage and the proliferation of slums, dominate newspaper headlines and arrest the attention of policy makers in a dramatic manner. The seriousness of the problems is usually brought home to decision makers by the magnitude of funds diverted from directly productive projects such as agriculture, for the provision of ever expanding social services. Also rural-urban migration or drift affects urban wage rates through its effect on food supply and food prices (Essang and Mabawonky). Consequently, other writers emphasized the consequences of rural-urban drift or migration on the urban labour market (Todaro, 1969, and 1971), the demand for social services (Mabogunje, 1965) and the emergence of a low productivity, labor-intensive sector in urban areas (Oshima, 1971 and 1973) are the component causes of rural-urban migration in Nigeria.

However, once migration proceeds to a stage at which the marginal product of agricultural labor is positive, continued out-migration from agriculture leads to a fall in agricultural out-put and a consequent worsening of the terms of trade for the urban industrial sector. With respect to the impact of rural-urban drift on rural development generally and development in particular, two contradictory conclusions emerge. On the one hand, some writers pointed to positive consequences in terms of increasing labour scarcity which accompanies migration and resulting productivity and wage increases in the rural areas (Nicholls 1964 cited in Essang and Mabawonku). Thus, Nicholls, for one, stresses the possibility of land consolidation and reduced land values as benefits to rural areas. Also according to Berg (1966) rural-urban migration leads to a better reallocation of labour, especially in countries with regional resource disparities, which raises the efficiency of resource use. Subsequently, Johnson, Whitelaw, and Sabot (1971, 1972, and 1972) pointed to the possibility of regular flows of funds to the rural areas through remittances from urban centers. On the other hand, writers such as Todaro and Harris (1968) are of the opinion that a fall in agricultural output is likely to accompany rural-urban migration, given the existence of a positive marginal product of labour in agriculture, especially in the relatively land abundant economics of Africa, Latin America, and a number of South Asian countries. In connection with Ngoni migration in what was formerly Tanganyika, that the recourse to migration as a source of income saps the

effort and the will of men to work more diligently at home in developing the resources of their own field (Gulliver, 1957). According to this thesis, there was a depressing effect on the economy. In the United States, this is also obtainable in Nigeria, the out-migration of young workers to urban areas leads to a higher age level of the labour force in the area left behind (Hath away, 1964). He regarded this as an important inhibitory factor in the adjustment process. Nevertheless, information services are part and parcel of rural-urban drift which has adverse effects in community and rural development in Nigeria. Information as it is said is the lifeblood of any given society and vital to the sustainable activities of both the government and private sectors. Disco (1994) observes that "the state (Nigeria) defines information service in terms of more enlighten activities and announcements about what the state does and plans to do for the people and justification for that. Even serious information, like disseminating agricultural research results is often subtly reduced to persuasive propaganda to make people appreciate and accept the state's 'benevolence' and 'benignity' for providing farming inputs or new methods of cultivation. In a country, that concept of information service is something to talk about; the rural development has never been a reality. As a result, these types of services lead to poor information environment with inappropriate services, outdated materials, tools, and technologies to making rural communities of Nigeria uncomfortable, disorganized, and with a narrow-minded approach to any new thing that is introduced to them. The dependence upon information to create innovation and change, places a high premium on the ability of (developing countries) nations to access acid use information to create advances in society (Bell, 1979). The development of countries globally cannot be achieved without the development of the rural community.

This is so because seventy five to eighty percent (75-80%) of the people in developing countries live in the rural areas and they need positive relevant and prompt attention through information services in their daily activities, and this is lacking. However, the third world countries have recently come to realize that unless the rural areas are well developed, hardly would meaningful; development occur in these countries (Alegbeleye and Aina 1985). Development can only be effective if rural dwellers have access to the relevant, diverse information for their activities. Hence rural development is a basis for economic development and information is an important ingredient in development process. Therefore, the rural communities in Nigeria are the majority in terms of population, and yet the neglect and sufferings they are encountering presently form the bases for impediment to the effective information policy implementation. Also the rural communities' accessibility to pertinent information becomes extremely difficult and impractical. This sordid situation facing

the people in rural communities constitutes a cog in the wheel of progress of community and rural development in Nigeria.

Despite this, poverty and illiteracy give a major barrier to community and rural development. Therefore, one may be tempted to ask question on this who is to blame for this terrible condition? The rural people or government? The government should take the blame completely, because it is the right of every citizen to enjoy the wealth, resources and services rendered by government of the country without any discrimination or neglect. For the single fact that these resources expected of government are dearth and lacking, the rural people migrate to urban centers where they can seek for solicitude through engagement in daily paid manual labour activities or government jobs. In this respect, poverty is one of the cankerworm that has bedeviled the African man. In an attempt to overcome this situation, it then predisposes the rural dwellers into scrambling for movement to urban centers, so as to break even their poverty line, and subsequently attend to the desired needs of their immediate family, extended relations, friends and well-wishers. By this mass exodus to urban centers, it will dampen the enthusiasm of the remaining youths in the rural community in land utilization, as well as hamper social and economic growth in the rural communities. Predominantly, rural people form the bulk of the Nigeria population. Furthermore, Olujimi (2005) was of the view that the spatial distribution of the population is uneven, with about 64 percent of the population living in the rural areas. It then gives a statistical assumptions that the level of illiteracy would be high (in terms of number) in the rural villages in Nigeria. This is because the number of schools provided to handle such number of people is very meager and the ones available are filled with inexperienced and unqualified teachers. In pursuance of knowledge and current update in science and technology, the rural people will advance to urban centers where they are convinced of the presence of qualified teachers and modern equipments for research and adequate learning to take place. Through this massive avoidance of the rural communities to urban cities, the preservation of cultural values, norms, traditions and artifact's tend to gradually erode and conversely enthrone Europeanized values, norms and tradition because of prevalent presence and interaction of these people (Europeans) in the urban cities pre and post independence of Nigeria state.

Nevertheless, it is not surprising that the discussion of the effects of rural-urban drift on the community and rural development sector should thus lead to two opposite conclusions, given the dichotomy in assumption underlying the discussion, as well as contrast in the stage of economic growth, resource endowment, population density, and character of economic and social organization of diverse communities and or countries. Therefore, if rural-urban drift takes place in a community

characterized by serious diminishing returns due to population pressure and uneconomic land holdings, the consequent reduction in agricultural population among others can hypothetically reduce the tendency to diminishing returns and so raise the productivity of agricultural labour. Where on the other hand, the density of agricultural population is expected to cause reduction in agricultural output unless compensating yield-increasing innovations are introduced or the vacuum created by urban migrants is filled by rural-rural migrants (Udoh, 1970). Consequently the degree of community's dependence on manual labour, especially that provided by males, also influences the extent to which output and income will be affected in the rural areas. For instance, in the heavily forested southern parts of Nigeria, where bush clearing and harvesting of export crops is done almost completely by male manual labour, rural-urban drift can lead to labour shortage and output reduction. With respect to the effects of income transfers to rural residents, it should be stressed that the benefits of such transfers depend on their size and frequency. In most cases, the size and frequency in turn depend upon the level of urban employment and income, the type of jobs on which the rural migrants are employed, the cost of living in the urban areas and the degree of rural migrants attachment to their rural homes. To this end, it is obvious from the foregoing discussion, that no definitive statement can be made on whether rural-urban drift is beneficial or harmful to community and rural development in Nigeria from a priori discussion or conversation.

CONCLUSION

Successes and progress in developing countries such as Nigeria lies within the frame line of their rural communities. This is embedded through government commitment to provision of basic socio-economic and infrastructural services such as electricity, good networks of roads, water, and information services etc vis-à-vis to rural-urban drift. Consequently, the rural populace in Nigeria suffers, among other factors, from acute low productivity, social and economic retrogression due mainly to ignorance and this spur our rural inhabitants into rural-urban migration. However, the study further postulates that rural-urban drift has consequent effects in community and rural development but concluded that no definitive assertions can be adduced on whether the subject matter discussed is advantageous or disadvantageous to community and rural development in Nigeria.

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