



Local Government and Challenges of Rural Development in Delta State of Nigeria

¹Edonyabo, Fidelis, ²Sokoh, Gbosien Chris

^{1,2}Department of Political Science, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The yearning and aspiration of rural people must be improved to give them a sense of belonging. This aspiration has made several governments to geared concerted efforts to provide basic social amenities that have direct bearing to rural people. Hence, this study was designed to examine local government and the challenges of rural development in Delta State. In achieving the specific objectives of this study, two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The Efficient-Service Delivery Theory was adopted as a theoretical framework to explain the relationship between rural development and efficiency of service delivery in Delta State. The descriptive survey designed was employed with a population of One Million, Four hundred and Seventy Eight thousand, Two Hundred (1, 478, 200) according to 2006 population census in Delta State. The sample frame of this study includes inhabitants of Ughelli North and South, Bomadi and Burutu, Aniocha North and South local government areas with a sample size of Four Hundred (400) people purposively selected for this study. The researcher adopted the multiple stages sampling of simple random and purposive sampling techniques to achieve the aim and objective of the study. Questionnaire serves as the major instrument of data collection. 400 questionnaires were distributed to the local government areas with return rate of 220 while not returned rate of 180. The descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for data analysis in which descriptive statistics of simple percentage was used to analyze the demographic data of respondents in form of converting the raw scores into percentages for easy understanding about the data used. While the inferential statistics of Chi-Square tool was used to test the hypotheses in order to established or determine the degree of freedom and relationship between variables of the study. Based on the analysis, the study recommends among others that concerted efforts need to be made to ensure rural development policies are executed and implemented, local government funds should adequately used to provide social amenities for rural people.

KEYWORDS: Local Government, Development, Rural Development, Efficiency, Service Delivery

INTRODUCTION

The accomplishment of human needs and aspirations has always been the major objective of progress. For quite few decades, and particularly in the last century, economic growth and development had resulted in significant improvements in the quality of life for many people especially in the western countries (Umehai, 2020). However, it has become very obvious that the global community, over these decades, has pursued a path of development which is undoubtedly not sustainable. It is sufficiently evidence and proven that development is multi-dimensional approach involving reorganization and re-orientation of entire economic and social systems (Umehali, 2020)

Generally, development is seen as process by which man increases or maximizes his control and use of the material resources with which nature has endowed him and his environment (Sokoh, 2013). Development is a method of improving the quality of all human endeavours with significant emphasis to raising of people's standards of living, creating conditions conducive to the growth of people's self-esteem through the establishment of social, political and economic institutions which promote human dignity, freedom, respect and accelerated development, increasing people's freedom to choose by enlarging the range of their choice variables (Hornby, 2020). Emphatically, it denotes the process of social change which is required to produce economic advancement, examines changes in social, psychological and political processes (Hornby, 2020).

No nation attains its development potentials without providing adequate supports mechanism that enhances rural potentials for positive progress in rural areas. This is because; the rural areas are the suppliers of the means in which the national government feed it budgets (Onibokun, 2020). Thus, rural development is very fundamental and crucial in national development. Rural development is further concerned with the improvement of conditions of the low income populace living in the rural areas on a self-sustaining basis through transforming the socio-spatial structures of their productive activities (Mabogule, 2021). It implies that a broad based reorganization and mobilization of rural masses and resources to enhance the capacity of rural population to cope efficiently with the daily tasks of their lives.

Rural development is mainly concerned with enhancement and transformation of social, mental, economic, institutional and environmental conditions of low income dwellers through the enlistment and rational utilization of their human, natural and institutional resources aimed at improving their capacities to cope with tasks of life and demands of contemporary times (Okoli and Onah, 2020). Rural development involves multi-sectorial activities including advancement in agriculture, promote rural- industrial actions and the establishment of appropriates decentralized structures that fosters mass participation

in development process. Rural development is faced with the paradox that the production oriented rural economy relies heavily on non-productive people who are all ill-equipped with outdated tools, technical information, scientific and cultural training and whose traditional roles and access to resources pose significant threat to their effective incorporation into modern economics systems (Onibokun, 2020). These and many reasons led to the creation of local government in Nigeria.

The creation of local government in any nation stems from the need to facilitate development at the grassroots. The importance of local government among others is a function of its capacity to generate sense of belongingness, safety and satisfaction among its populace. In Nigeria socio-political context, with multiplicity of culture, diversity of languages and differentiated needs and means, the importance of local government in ensuring unity and preserving peculiar diversities cannot be overlooked. In spite of the relevance of local government, there are some problems that impede the performance of its functions especially in areas of service delivery at the grassroots.

In terms of economic development, quality of life, access to opportunities, facilities and amenities, standard of living and general viability, the gap between the urban and rural areas in Nigeria is very wide. The rural areas are grossly neglected as far as development projects and infrastructure are concerned. The challenges and prospects of rural development in Nigeria have been of great concern to the different tiers of government due to the rate of rural-urban migration

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The key problem facing most local governments is lack of adequate finance to implement various developmental programmes. It would be recalled that since early 1990s, there have been tremendous increase in the total amount of funds available to local governments in Nigeria. The reasons for the lack of adequate finance can be attributed to the fact that local government allocations are being hijacked by state governors, used for electioneering campaigns and shared among political God-fathers and members of state assemblies. Also, state governors have used the joint Account to siphon local government allocations from the federation account.

Akhabue in his account, (2020) pointed out that the last criminal fad was that state governors redistributed allocations to local government from the federation account and gave less than #20million to each council to pay salaries, and take care of their overhead costs. All these corruptive activities had added in no small measure to the problem of inadequate finance which has made effective services delivery at the rural areas to be impossible. This study therefore intends to address this problem of inadequate finance and corruption, misplacement of priority and mismanagement which has posed serious challenge to the development at the rural areas. Thus, the buogous allocation to local government does not get to the hands of local government practitioners for proper service delivery.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to examine the Challenges of Rural Development in Delta State. The specific objectives of this study are to examine:

- rural development in the Fourth Republic and efficiency of service delivery in Delta state
- the challenges of rural development and efficiency of service delivery in Delta State

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following research hypotheses shall guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between rural development in the Fourth Republic and efficiency of service deliver in Delta State
2. There is no significant relationship between the challenges of rural development and efficiency of service delivery in Delta State

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Clarifications

Development

Development can be seen as bringing about social change that allows people to achieve their human potential. It is the attainment of socioeconomic and political increase in the society. Developments over the years have been conceived as a process of economic and social changes with the aim of achieving better life. Cockroft (2019) stated that, it is extremely helpful to maintain the optimistic value placed on the term development and see development as first of all the getaway of man out of the circumstances of exploitation, poverty and oppression. Olaoye (2021) noted that, development is the method by which people generate and recreate themselves and their life conditions to realize higher levels of civilization in accordance with their own choice and values. He further stated that, development involves changes in the basic institution and structures of society.

Todaro (2016), development is a multi-dimensional process involving the reorganization and re-orientation of the entire economic and social system. In addition to improvement in income and output, it typically involves radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as in particular attitude and in many cases even customs and beliefs. Hornby (2020) defines development as the gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced, stronger, etc, the process of producing or creating something new. This definition implies that development involves a gradual or advancement through progressive changes.

Umehali (2020) sees development as multi-dimensional process involving changes in structures, attitude and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty. He asserts that development involves economic growth component, equality or social justice component, and socio-economic transformational component which are all on a self sustaining basis. Viewing the concept differently, Simon (2021) sees development as an improvement in quality of life (not just material standard of living) in both quantitative terms. An understanding of the concept of development is relevant in explaining rural development. Olaide (2021) defined development as rapid increase in per capital output, attendant shift in technology and demographic character of the society. Gana (2020) asserted that development concerns the capacity and creative ability of a people to effectively transform the natural resources of their environment into goods and services through the imaginative and practical application of their creative forces.

This study will adopt the definition of development by Alanana (2021) who opined that development involves changes in structure, composition and performance of the forces of production as well as qualitative improvement in the living standards of the people through the eradication of poverty, hunger, squalor and social deprivation. From the forgoing, a country desirous of development should have the capacity and ability to harness the material and human resources at its disposal to improve the living conditions of its people on as sustainable basis.

Rural Development

Different schools of thought had given different definitions to rural development. Diejomah (2021) defined it as a process of increasing the level of living of rural population, measured by food and nutrition level, health, education, housing, recreation and security. Adegboye (2020) defines it as the development of the rural people in such a continuous manner as to enable them to most effectively and efficiently utilize their intellect, technology and other resources for further development of both themselves and their resources.

Uwakah (2020) sees development as a change process which involves moving the rural people from what is to what ought to be. From the definitions above, it is clear that the object of rural development is the rural people who Olatunbosun (2021) called Nigeria's neglected majority and Anthoni (2021) called them the stagnant sector in the Nigerian economy while Ijere (2021) called them the other Nigeria with poverty linked characteristics. Maboguje (2021) posit that rural development is the improvement of the living standards of the low-income people living in the rural areas on a self-sustaining basis through transforming the socio-spatial structures of their productive activities. It implies a broad reorganization and mobilization of the rural masses and resources to enhance the capacity of the rural populace to cope effectively with the daily task of their lives and with the consequent changes.

Williams (2020) the ambit of rural development is very wide and includes generation of new employment, more equitable access to arable land, equitable distribution of income, wide spread improvement in health, nutrition and housing, maintenance of law and order, creation of incentives and opportunity for saving, credit and investment. It also involves creating wider opportunities for individuals to realize their full potential through education and sharing in decisions and actions which affect their lives. All said and done, the salient point in the definition of rural development is raising the standard of living of the rural people through their own efforts coupled with government assistance.

Local Government

The concept of local government involves a philosophical commitment to democratic participation in the governing process at the grassroots level. This implies legal and administrative decentralization of authority, power and personnel by a higher level of government to a community with a will of its own, performing specific functions as within the wider national framework. Agagu, (2020) says local government is a government at the grassroots level of administration meant for meeting peculiar grassroots need of the people. Lawal (2020) Local government can also be defined as that tier of government closest to the people and vested with certain powers to exercise control over the affairs of people in its domain.

Akpan (2019) defined local government as the breaking down of a country into smaller units or localities for the purpose of administration in which the inhabitants of the different units or localities concerned play a direct and full role through their elected representatives who exercise power and undertake functions under the general authority of the national or state government. Emezi (2020) noted that local government as a system of local administration under local communities that are organized to maintain law and order, provide some limited range of social amenities and encourage cooperation and participation of inhabitants towards the improvement of their conditions of living. Odalonu (2018) defined local government as a unit of government established by law to exercise political authority through a representative council with a defined area or space. Ogunna (2020) expressed that local government as a political authority which is purposely created by law or constitution for local communities.

Abe and Omotosho (2020) local government is defined as the level of government with constitutionally defined rights and duties to regulate and manage public affairs which are also constitutionally defined for the exclusive interest of the local population. It is seen as the third tier administrative structure created in Nigeria to decentralize governance, bring government closer to the people at the grassroots and render social services pivotal in engendering national development. Fatile and Adejuwon (2018) stated that local Government is basically seen as the government at the grassroots level. Local government can be seen as "non-sovereign community possessing the legal right but which are essentially administrative agents of the central government.

Adeyeye, (2020) noted that Local Government can be defined as A political subdivision of a nation (in a federal system) state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs including the powers to impose taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected. (FRN, 2002).

Rural Development in the Fourth Republic and Efficiency of Service Delivery in Nigeria

The efforts to improve rural development started shifting to poverty alleviation and sustainable development in the mid 1990's. Poverty alleviation became a critical issue in Nigeria were weakened by lingering conflicts and economic liberalization policies and lost their capability to implement rural development projects (Takeuchi, 2019). Because of the lingering issue of poverty in Nigeria, the World Bank announced its intention to revitalize activities of rural development during the Mid 1990's (World bank Annual Report, 1997). Rural development bodies also agreed to take measures to address challenges of poverty when Nigerians realized that about half of its population was living on less than \$ 1 per day. Subsequently, poverty alleviation and employment issues dominated rural development programs from the democratic era beginning from 1999 to date. These programs includes the National Poverty Eradication program (NAPEP), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and the Local Government Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (LEEDS). All this programmes were created towards the development of rural areas in the Fourth Republic

There is no doubt that rural development policies have brought about several limps towards rural development. The establishment of the programmes like the Rural Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) under the Nigerians third development plan can only suffice more (Adedayo, 2017). The aim was to increase rural productivity and quality of life, encourage large scale irrigation and mechanized farming technique which involved the construction of dams, use of tractors for land preparation, application of modern inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.

The Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) was a conscious attempt to move away from past narrow sectional pre-occupation to overall formulation of the national rural development strategies with emphasis on alleviation of rural poverty and enhancement of the quality of rural areas. Abass (2019) opined that the Directorate (DFRRI) was established with the aim of rehabilitating various categories of roads in the country and especially for the development of rural feeder roads in order to strengthen the massive efforts of food and agricultural self-sufficiency in the shortest possible period. The Directorate conceived its programme as having three broad aspects of social Mobilization, infrastructural development and productive activities .It was intended that the Directorate would have within its first year rehabilitated 60,000 km of rural feeder roads.

Similarly, the Green Revolution (GR) was launched by the government to provide all the necessary agricultural inputs and devices which should lessen the drudgery of farming operations and boost production generally such that apart from abundance of food, the rural incomes which were almost exclusively dependent on agriculture could increase coupled with the peasant's standard of living in tandem with those by the urban dwellers. The Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) of General Olusegun Obasanjo was also introduced towards actualizing rural development through making food available to all through agriculture. Programmes like Better Life for Rural Women, Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) and the (NAPEP) were aimed at improving the living standard of the rural women under the chairperson of Maryam Babangida.

The Family Economic Advancement programmes (FEAP) are some of the programmes towards achieving the development of rural areas. In spite of the fact that the rural areas have been the focus of these policies and the laudable objectives to alleviate their sufferings, most Nigerians that dwell in the rural areas, are still experiencing the stink realities of underdevelopment. There is rural backwardness in all its manifestation: declining food production; poor transportation and health care delivery; rural urban migration, squalor and ignorance and non-existing and decaying infrastructural facilities. Most of these programmes could not live to actualize their missions of establishment. Abass (2019) observed that the OFN failed not only from the operational inefficiency in the supply of inputs to the large section of the population and at the appropriate time but because the crucial agrarian issues in Nigeria were overlooked or side-tracked with a misallocation of resources. However, the adopted Green Revolution Programme had no relationship with the societal values and levels of development. The new technology introduced was primarily assumed, from the official circles, to offer solutions to agricultural problems, which nonetheless produced new problems without solving the previous ones.

Abass (2019) stated that much of what these policies had outlined to do were focused on the wide scope of activities and on problems of co-ordination, an integration with other agencies, especially the state and local governments. By creating DFRRI for instance, government intended to circumvent existing bureaucracy to implement programmes that aimed at solving problems of stagnation and poverty in the rural areas, but the first year of the directorate was spent on laying administrative infrastructure of both federal and state levels. Actual implementation of the policies did not battle with the myriad of complex problems besieging the rural areas, but also the high degree of cynicism and scepticism with which government slogans and programmes were being perceived by the rural masses (Abass, 2019).

The likely consequences of the implementation processes of these programmes can be interpreted as a manifestation of an urban-biased and anti-rural development strategy in Nigeria. Also, Iwachukwu and Igbokwe (2020) observed that the implementations of these policies created resource market imperfections and monopoly power which biased the pattern of resource allocations in favour of the large-scale capitalist farmers against the small-scale farmers. The programmes increased the degree of income and wealth distribution inequality in the rural areas. As a consequence, as extremely low wage economy was created, rural poverty was heightened, and a process of mutual poisoning was generated whereby, the desperately poor rural dwellers took their revenge by mass integration into the urban areas, not only caused them to expand to unmanageable proportions, but aggravated the urban food shortage and urban unemployment problems, and thus worsened the problem of urban mass poverty.

Rural development policies as a practice, with some significant exceptions do not achieve its ostensible goals. The RBDA did only succeed in nurturing capitalist tendencies among the peasants as only a few had the capacity to afford the modern machineries. Though the DEFFRI were to develop the infrastructure of the rural areas focusing on rural feeder roads yet rural farmers had no roads to convey their products to the market due to no roads. It is obvious that DEFFRI performance was negligible. Abass (2019) hinted that this failure is the result of the incompatibility both between different goals and between the goals and the means which are almost universally promoted as the ways to achieve rural development. This incompatibility is concealed by a rhetoric which asserts the mutual interest of rural development agencies, governments and rural population and masses. This rhetoric of common interest obscures the reasons for failure of the outlined rural development policies in Nigeria.

The Challenges of Rural Development and Efficiency of Service Delivery in Delta State

In Nigeria, corruption is rife in both public and private life. Most Nigerians see official positions in or outside government as avenues for self-enrichment, an opportunity to get rich overnight. Corruption has therefore, deprived many local government councils the needed resources for development. Corruption manifests at the local government level through the award of inflated contracts to cronies for projects, which may either not be executed or abandoned once the contractor is paid huge percentage of the contract sum as mobilization fee. Corruption is also perpetrated at the local governments through dubious expenses in the form of duty tour claims, hospitality allowances, financial assistance, among others. Through these means, large quantum of the local government resources is siphoned by both elected and career officials of the local government.

Also, corruption poses a very big threat to rural development. There is lack of integrity, accountability and transparency on the part of people who are supposed to implement development projects in the rural areas. Nwakoby (2017) laments that public funds (made for rural projects) are stashed away in bank vaults in Europe and America, while an overwhelming proportion of the population live in abject poverty. Another challenge is the lack of political will and commitment, policy instability and insufficient involvement of the intended beneficiaries of the programmes hence Chiloikwu (2016) most of them died with the government that initiated them. For example, development programmes like Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, Free and Compulsory Primary Education, Low cost Housing Schemes which impact positively on the rural dwellers could not be sustained.

Onibokun (2020) sees rural development to be faced with the paradox that the production oriented rural economy relies heavily on non-productive people who are well - equipped with outdated tools, technical information, scientific and cultural training and whose traditional roles and access to resources pose problems for their effective incorporation into modern economic systems, whereas the consumption oriented urban economy is flooded with people many of who are either unemployed or unemployable or marginally employed or underemployed in the urban centres where they choose to live. As a result of this mass exodus, the rural areas have been qualitatively depopulated and are progressively less attractive for social and economic investments while the urban areas are becoming physically congested, socially unhealthy and generally uneconomic to maintain. In addition, rural development is faced with challenges which have made the effect of government's efforts at different levels, NGOs, private initiatives and international involvement not felt by the intended beneficiaries.

Umehali and Akubuilu (2019) list such challenges like: Vicious cycle of poverty, poor infrastructure, high population density, high level of illiteracy, low social interaction and local politics and rural - urban migration. Rural dwellers have been considered as the thermometer through which one determines the impact of rural development. A lot of rigours, bottlenecks and unnecessary bureaucracy are often attached to rural development process. This is evident in the history of most of the rural development programmes which are often saddled with disappointments. Another challenge is the issue of proliferation of development programmes. Some are so superficially implemented that the average targeted population (rural dwellers) doubt the sincerity of the initiators. Such proliferation can easily be noticed from the many number of such that died with successive government that initiated them. The problem of implementation is another glaring challenge. Obot (2018) justified this claim when he writes that the development policies geared towards the improvement of the rural dwellers remained almost a house hold word without corresponding success especially at the implementation stage. To this end, some of them are haphazardly implemented as a result of poor supervision. Perhaps this is why water taps abound in so many rural communities but without water since their installation. Local governments being small may not be able to attract competent and efficient persons to perform the services they render to the public. Since the area of their jurisdiction is small and their capacity to pay is limited by their limited resources, they may find it difficult to hire specialists.

Since governments are concerned with their respective local communities, they may degenerate into myopic, narrow - minded, selfish and ignorant institutions. They cannot provide services of a uniform standard. Local governments are bound to differ in resources, efficiency, etc. They are to work and survive in the face of centralizing tendencies. Modern technological revolution has led to speedy communications, industrialization, urbanization etc. "Local initiative and the independence of action have been undermined by the ease and quickness with which the state government and the town government may talk over the telephone and settle the matter, (Maheshwari, 1999). Local governments may especially be prone to corruption and malfeasance, much more than the central government.

The state of development in rural Nigeria is unacceptably grim with slow overall economic growth and development. The indices of this sordid situation include poor agricultural productivity; gross infrastructural deficit; rapid population increase; unemployment; lack of social amenities; among others, which had culminated in dehumanizing rural poverty and under development in all ramifications. The people live on the fringe of starvation, destitution and ignorance, which undermined their immunity and natural resistance to diseases; such that epidemic continued to kill thousands every year (Ekpe, 2016). Local governments in Nigeria are bedeviled with a legion of problems, which tend to weaken their capacity and ability to achieve developmental goals and objectives. They have thus, failed to respond positively to local needs. Often times, most qualified politicians do not vie

for positions in the local government councils; hence unqualified individuals are elected to become councillors, supervisory councillors and chairmen of the councils. As Ganduje (2018) rightly observed, it is not uncommon to find in some local government councils, school dropouts serving as councilors or chairmen. This caliber of people cannot conceive and formulate development policies and programmes that will transform their local government areas. Party politics at the local level tend to promote parochial rather than broad community interests. It divides instead of uniting the diverse rural communities, which had made even modest progress difficult at the local level. Accordingly, instead of the political parties making positive contributions to grassroots development through aggregating the demands and interests of the people, they have acted in the negative. The excessive politicking at the grassroots level has therefore, continued to make local governments ineffective and ineffectual in grassroots development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Efficient-Service Delivery Theory was adopted in this study as a theoretical analysis of the challenges of rural development in selected local government in Delta State. The essential point of this theory is that the primary purpose of the local government systems is to provide social services such as law and order, local roads, primary education, sanitation and others efficiently. Machenzie (1954), the leading advocate of the efficiency service theory, quoted in Adeyemo (2019) notes that service delivery to the local people is expected to pre-occupy the resources, power and time of the local government. Kafle and Karkee (2003) notes that the core argument of the efficient-service delivery theory is that local government exists to help to ensure efficient-service delivery. Some scholars find this need so important that they argue that it should override other functions of the local government and contend that the need or the function of encouraging democratic participation is not as crucial as the need for efficient-service delivery. For this, the proponents of the efficient service delivery theory argue that all is well even if there is less democratic participation in the governance process as long as the local or grassroots people get efficient services from the local government. Shape (1970) in this respect notes thus; whereas the value of local government as a bulwark of liberty or at least as a handmaiden of democracy has been recognized, its role as an agency for providing services has evoked no comparable enthusiasm.

Generally, the argument by the efficient service delivery theory is that local government, because of its closeness to an area, can provide certain service far more efficiently than the state or central government. Actually, local government, in some instances, serves a better channel through which policies and programmes from the central or state government are implemented. Usually, some functions that are cumbersome for the state or central government to perform are better and more conveniently performed by the local government. Such functions may include collection of rates, radio and television licences, registration of births, deaths and marriages etc. Nico (2008) argues again that by the nature of local government, it brings government closer to the people, making translation of community preference into responsive policy and programmes more likely. Indeed, locally based decisions and development programmes are often more practical and sustainable in that they acknowledge and accommodate local diversities and historical complexities that may exist within a particular locality. In such circumstance, the provision of local public goods and services will reflect more, the local tastes and preferences. Again, in view of the fact that all problems are not central in nature, such problems that are not central in their incidence requires decision as to how to address them by the person(s) within the area where the incidence is most deeply felt. Local government is about the best framework for doing this (Laski, 1982).

Local government also forms a good base for effective mobilization of the support and resources of the people towards government projects and programmes.

For instance, local government can generate revenue internally and use it alongside the funds made available to it by the state and national government to improve on the lives of the people within their areas of operation. Again, local government can use the voluntary sector, including nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) better than any of the higher governments to expand and improve its services to the people (Horste, et al, 2008). It is, to a large extent, the zeal and need to reposition the local government for greater and more effective service delivery that perhaps provides the impetus and imperative for the various local government reforms in most political systems. In Nigeria, for instance, there have been various local government reforms to strengthen the capacity of the local governments to deliver services effectively and efficiently to the local and grassroots people. This is why the local governments usually takes the blame where local roads are bad, where there are no market stalls, no functional motor park, no health centres, no portable water, no drugs in local dispensaries and where refuse is littered around the places.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted. The descriptive survey design was appropriate because, it enable the research to investigate the "Local Government and Challenges of Rural Development" in Delta State. The population of this study was One Million, Four Hundred and Seventy Eight Thousand, Two Hundred (1,478, 200) residents drawn from the selected local government areas in Delta State. Two local governments were selected from each senatorial District across Delta State. Below is the breakdown of the population. The multiple-stage samplings of simple random and purposive sampling techniques were adopted for the study. In the first stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select the Three (3) senatorial Districts in Delta State. In the second stage, purposive sampling technique was employed to select Six (6) Local Governments Areas cross Delta State. The sample population of this study was 400 and it was distributed to the local governments selected for this study. Descriptive statistics was used to examine the responses derived from the respondents. The descriptive statistics of simple percentage and Chi-Square statistical tool was used for the analysis of data and testing of research hypotheses

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Research Hypotheses

- 1) There is no significant relationship between rural development in the Fourth Republic and efficiency of service deliver in Delta State
- 2) There is no significant relationship between the challenges of rural development and efficiency of service delivery in Delta State

Hypothesis 1

Table 1: Chi-square (χ^2) Analysis of Relationship between Rural Development in the Fourth Republic and Efficiency of Service Delivery in Selected LGAs in Delta State

Source of Variation	Responses		Df	X ² -Cal	X ² -Crit.	Alpha Level	Decision
	Observed	Expected					
(SA)	575	220	12	728.39	21.03	0.05	Significant
(A)	310	220					
(SD)	150	220					
(D)	65	220					

Source: Field Work 2022

As presented in the Table above, the calculated chi-square (χ^2) value of 728.39 is greater than the chi-square (χ^2) table value of 21.03. The null hypothesis which stated that, there is no significant relationship between rural development in the Fourth Republic and efficiency of service delivery in selected LGAs in Delta State is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between rural development in the Fourth Republic and efficiency of service delivery in Selected LGAs in Delta State

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between the Challenges of Rural Development and Efficiency of Service Delivery in Selected LGAs in Delta State

Table 4.11: Chi-square (χ^2) Analysis of Relationship between the Challenges of Rural Development and Efficiency of Service Delivery in Selected LGAs in Delta State

Source of Variation	Responses		Df	X ² -Cal	X ² -Crit.	Alpha Level	Decision
	Observed	Expected					
(SA)	450	220	12	365.11	21.03	0.05	Significant
(A)	340	220					
(SD)	205	220					
(D)	105	220					

Source: Field Work 2022

As presented in the table above, the calculated Chi-square (χ^2) value of 365.11 is greater than the Chi-square (χ^2) table value of 21.03. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between the challenges of rural development and efficiency of service delivery in selected LGAs in Delta State is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between the Challenges of Rural Development and Efficiency Service Delivery in Selected LGAs in Delta State

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

There is significant Relationship between Rural Development in the Fourth Republic and Efficiency of Service Delivery in Selected LGAs in Delta State. In the Fourth Republic of Nigeria, efforts were geared towards improving Agricultural production in the rural areas was shifted to poverty alleviation and sustainable development. With this lofty objective in mind, the National Poverty Eradication Programme, National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy was created to address rural development and other related rural issues like training of Youths in vocational Trades to support internship, Micro-Credit, create employment industries and provide a social welfare schemes for rural people. These findings are in line with the study of Adoyi (2021), who said, the general vision of the schemes was to bring a participatory and sustainable development which completely eradicate poverty in the rural areas.

The insincerity of government agencies and development partners who are responsible in the implementation of rural development policies in the Fourth Republic contributed to not achievement of the objectives of most rural development policies in Nigeria. Abraham (2020), whose study also in agreement with the above findings said that, the failure of these programmes was the glaring contradictions in the activities of government agencies saddled with

the responsibility of implementing the policies and the inability of reconciling the interest and need of the rural people. He further explains that this issue compounds the persistent problem of poverty and squalor in the rural communities constitutes a barrier to rural development efforts in the rural areas.

The issue of corruption, mismanagement of resources, accountability and transparency at all level of government hindered effective and efficient rural development efforts in the Fourth Republic of Nigeria. The above finding was also in line with the report of Transparency International (TI, 2015), that corruption, mismanagement of resources, accountability and transparency at different level of government has greatly hindered the efficient and effective utilization of resources that would have been channeled towards developing the rural areas. The report further stated that despite being exporter of crude oil for decades and receiving assistance from international organizations, the living condition of the rural people and the general populace has not improved because of endemic corruption and mismanagement of resources.

There is significant relationship between the Challenges of Rural Development and Efficiency of Service Delivery in Selected LGAs in Delta State. The challenges of rural development range from inadequate funds, proliferation of development programmes to few areas, lack of political Will and commitment, policy instability, corruption, mismanagement of resources and absence of social amenities that limits rural development efforts. These findings are in collaboration with the study of Chiloikwu (2016), who explains that lack of political Will and commitment, policy instability and insufficiency involving the intended beneficiaries of the programme. He further noted that programmes like Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, Free and Compulsory Primary Education, Low Cost Housing Schemes which impact positively on rural people could not be sustained due to lack of funds, political Will and commitment.

Onibokun (2020), who noted that rural development efforts are faced with the challenges of production oriented rural economy which heavily on non-productive people who are well- equipped with outdated tool, technical information scientific and cultural training and whose traditional roles and access to resources posed significant challenge to effective incorporation into modern economic system is flooded with people many of whom are unemployed.

CONCLUSION

The study has clearly identified the challenges of rural development in selected local government areas in Delta State. It has been established that efficiency of service delivery in the selected local government areas are in horrible state. The attention of government and well- Meaning individuals and cooperate organizations are needed to provide development that would have direct impact on lives of the rural people. The hypotheses tested showed that there is significant relationship between rural development policies and efficiency of service delivery in selected local government areas in Delta State. Therefore the study concludes that local government allocations and the internally generated revenue should be used adequately to provide basic social amenities to 6th the rural areas for more delivery of robust social services to the people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having identified the factors responsible for the failure of past rural development policies and programmes, the following recommendations was made:

- i. A well-articulated and balanced interaction should be established between the government and the various relevant stakeholders in the local government areas to identify grey areas that need attention.
- ii. Concerted efforts need to be made to ensure that any policy or programme initiated is accomplished to the letter to achieve reasonable level of development in the rural areas
- iii. Government should formulate and implement adequate policies and programmes that have direct bearing to the lives of rural people
- iv. The existing rural development policies should be re-evaluated and strengthened to meet current realities.
- v. Local government as the government of rural people should provide adequate resources and development measures that help to improve the living conditions of the people in the rural areas

REFERENCES

- Abass, I. M (2019). The Challenge of Rural Development Strategies In a Deregulated Economy. *Being a paper prepared for a National Seminar on Rural Development "Doing more less Developing Rural Resources in a Deregulated economy"* organized by New Nigerian Newspapers Limited in collaboration with Arthur Green Consultants held at Shiroro Hotel Minna, Niger State.
- Abe, T. and Omotosho F. (2020). *Local Government/Governance System in Nigeria: in Ajayi R. & Fashagba J.O., Understanding Government & Politics in Nigeria (pp. 183-215). Kwara State, Nigeria: Landmark University.*
- Adedeyo, A. (2017) An Evaluation of Public Policies for Rural Development in Nigeria. *Africa: Revista do Centro de Estudos Africanos. USP*, pp 141 - 152
- Adegboye, R.O. (2020) Redemption of Pledged Property Through Credit. *Rural Development in Nigeria*. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Nigeria Economic Society Pg 181
- Adeyemo, A. (2019). Rural Development in Nigeria: which way forward? Lecture paper delivered under the auspices of DFRRRI, Lagos.

- Adeyeye, M. (2020). *The Dynamics of Administration Reform: An Analysis of Nigerian Local Government*. Being Paper Presented at the Mid. Term International Conference organized by IPSA Rc 4 in Association with the NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria and Centre for Democratic Governance (AFRIGOV) Abuja.
- Agagu, A. (2020). Continuity and Change in Local Government Administration and the Politics of Underdevelopment. In Agagu, A. & Ola, R. (eds). *Development Agenda of Nigeria State*. Ibadan: Fiag Publishers.
- Akpan, N. S. (2019). Rural Development in Nigeria: A Review of Rural Development Policies in Pre and Post-Independence Practice. A Journal of Sociological Research. Macrothink Institute.
- Alanana, O.O. (2021). *Rural Sociology. An introduction: Kaduna*. Joyce Graphic
- Anthoni, QBO in Ijere M.O. (2021) *Leading Issues in Nigeria Rural Development*. UNN Pg 30-35.
- Diejeomah V.P. (2021) Rural Development in Nigeria. *The Role of Fiscal Policy* Proceedings of the 1972 Annual Conference of the Nigeria Economic Society FACU (n.d.) ADP in Nigeria, A Decade and Half Ibadan, Federal Agricultural Coordinating Unit.
- Ekpe, A. N. (ed.) (2016), *Management in Local Government*, Lagos: Abbot Graphics.
- Emezi, and Oni (2020) Local Government in Historical Perspective. *Nigeria Journal of Public Administration and Local Government*. Vol. 2(2).
- Gana, J. (2020). A Strategy for Rural Development in Nigeria. A Paper Presented at a Seminar O Organized by the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI). Lagos
- Ganduje, A. U. (2018), *Democracy and Local Government Administration in Nigeria*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Ibrahim, U. I. (2020), "Local Government and Rural Development" in Kumo, S. et al. (ed.), *The Report of the conference on Local Government Reforms in Nigeria held at the Institute of Administration, ABU, Zaria, 14 – 17th May, 1979*.
- Ijere, M.O. (2021) *Leading Issues in Nigeria Rural Development* UNN Pg 16-19.
- Iwuchukwu J. C. And Igbokwe E.M (2020) Lessons from Agricultural Policies and Programmes in Nigeria. *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization*, Vol 5,
- Kafle, S. & Karke, K. (2003). —Towards Ideal Local Government: Strengthening Participatory Development. Unpublished Memoir.
- Laski, H.J.(1982). *A Grammar of Politics*. London: Allen Press Limited.
- Lawal, S.(2020). *Local Government Administration in Nigeria: A Practical Approach in Ajayi, K (ed). Theory and Practice of Local Government*. Ado Ekiti: University of Ado Ekiti Press Limited.
- Mabogunje, A.L. (2021), *The Development Process: A Spatial Perspective*, Hutchinson University Library.
- Nico, S. (2008). —Enhancement of Democracy Through Empowerment of Disadvantaged Groups. In John, K. and Rupak, C. (eds.) *Local Government in Federal System*. New Delhi Viva Books Ltd.
- Odalonu H.B (2018). Challenges confronting Local Government Administration in Efficient and Effective Social Service Delivery: *The Nigeria Experience*, 2 (5), 12-22.
- Ogunna, A. E.C. (2020) *Handbook on local government in Nigeria*, Owerri, Versatile Publishers
- Olaide W. J (2021). Rural Development: The Neglected Sector: *Nigerian Journal of Rural Sociology*. Volume 1. No 1& 2
- Olaoye, C.O. (2021) *Analysis of Local Government Finance*. 1st Edition, clemart. Publishing, Ijagbo, Kwara State.
- Olatunbosun, Dupe (2021) *Nigerian's Neglected Majority*. NISER Oxford University Press Ibadan Pg 7-8.
- Sharpe, L.P. (1970). —Theories and Values of Local Government. *Political Science Studies*, Vol. 18 Pp 153 – 174.
- Sokoh, G.C (2013) Rural development trends in Nigeria: Problems and prospect., *Journal of Social and Management Science*, Vol. Pages:
- Todaro, M. P. (2016) *Economic for a Developing World*, London: Longman Ltd.
- Uwakah, C.T. (2020) *Agric. Extension Education*. Unpublished UNN.
- Williams SKT (2020) Extension, Research and Rural Development Strategies in Aid of Agric. Development in Nigeria. Bullion Central Bank of Nigeria Organized. *News Agric Finance Seminar* Vol. 6 No 4 Oct.-Dec. Pg 26.