

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD SECURITY AND CITY CONGESTION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper examines the importance of rural infrastructural development in solving the problems of food security and city congestion with probable solutions. It is situated against the background that most Nigerians are dying of hunger while the rural-urban migration is increasing at an alarming rate, as most rural dwellers who should be farming, want to enjoy the little, but inadequate infrastructures which are only available in the cities. In consequence, city congestion and environmental degradation are at their highest degree and constitute a major concern.

Keywords: Rural infrastructure; food security; city congestion

Introduction

The rural areas of Nigeria are inhabited by the bulk of the nation's population. They serve as the base for the production of food and fibre (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005). They are also the major sources of capital formation for the country, a principal market for the country and a principal major domestic manufacture. (Olatunbosun, 1975). Generally, the rural areas engage in primary activities that form the foundation for any economic development. Despite this importance, the vast majority of these farmers who dwell in the rural areas have limited access to modern inputs, other productive resources and the basic infrastructure like electricity, portable water and good feeder roads. Contrarily, the earth is said to be rapidly urbanizing and the developing world of which Nigeria is inclusive has led the way, but this has been characterized by a massive growth in slums rather than by a significant development of urban agriculture (U.N Habitat, 2003). This rapid urbanization

without growth is causing great problems on food security in Nigeria and its environment at large. In search for good living, most rural dwellers who should be farming usually move to the city at the expense of food productions for the large populace. This rural-urban migration has been reducing the rate of local food production and increasing city population, thereby causing environmental degradation in the cities (UNOWA, 2007).

This urbanization (growth without development) is increasing both in the developed and developing countries and it is characterised with the problem of unemployment, inadequate health, poor sanitation, urban slums and environmental degradation as earlier mentioned (PFRN, 2005)

As reported (by UNFPA, 1993 and Angotti, 1993), more than half of the world's 6.6 billion people live in urban areas (crowding into 3 percent of earth's land area). However, large percentage of

these people will remain poor unless basic infrastructures are provided in the rural areas.

Urbanization

Urbanization as the shift from an area to urban society involves an increase in the number of people to urban areas during a particular year. It is also said to be an outcome of social, economic and political development that lead to urban concentration and growth of large cities, changes in land use and transformation from rural to metropolitan pattern, of organisation and government (Rees, 1992; UNDP, 1996; PFRN 2005).

Rural development and urban migration

According to Encarta dictionary, the term rural connotes agricultural which is relating to characteristics of, or involving farming. And development can be described as the process of positive change. Therefore, rural development can be described as the process of positive change in an agricultural environment. Olayiwola and Adeleye(2005) described rural development as the desirability of overcoming deprivation and low quality of natural life. This could be by provision of bridges, schools, electricity and portable water in an area in order to improve the welfare of the people living in such areas. Because of little or no provision of these facilities, most rural dwellers who are mainly farmers as reported by Ale, 2004 do move to the cities.

Food security

The index to measure food security as the ability of individuals in a country to secure enough food to meet their food requirement is the possession of the capacity to produce adequate quantities

and qualities of the food required by her people at any time (Ale, 2004; Haruna,1999; Ercher 1985). For Nigeria to meet the desire for food which is one of the main causes of political event as quoted by Salunkle et al, 1985, much has to be done on the provision of infrastructure facilities that will make life comfortable for the rural dweller. As mentioned earlier, there have been one government infrastructural development programmes or the other but all these have failed the nation.

Rural – urban migration

In 1917 the colonial government promulgated the township ordinances. This ordinance classified settlement into three classes, namely; first, second and third class townships. The first harboured the whites and their workers. There was heavy concentration of infrastructure in these settlements (an example being Lagos). They differ from the second and third class townships which received little or no facilities (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005) forgetting that the dwellers of these areas are the major people producing the bulk of the food and raw materials. This has continued till today and has been encouraging rural-urban migration of the rural dwellers.

The FADAMA world bank project is slow in place for provision of basic infrastructure in the farm settlement, every right thinking Nigerian should be praying for the proper execution of this programme so that the adage of ‘as it was yesterday so it shall be’ will not be the final result of the programme.

Status of rural infrastructure in Nigeria

The necessary infrastructural facilities that should be a catalyst of encouragement for the farmers are of little or no provision. This has been a

result of one factor or the other. Details of these are discussed below;

Portable water

The use of pipe borne water can be said to be a thing of the past in most rural settlements of Nigeria. According to the WHO/UNICEF joint monitoring programme between 1990 and 2004, urban population growth in Nigeria increased from 35% to 48% while rural population declined by roughly the same percentage. At the same time, urban

access to improved water sources actually declined during the same period from 80% to 67% coverage. Rural access to improved water sources also declined during the same period by 2%, still reflecting low level of coverage at 31% as shown below. It was mentioned by water Aid (2009) that house-holds in rural Nigerian spend an average of 26% of their time fetching water. These views were confirmed as shown by tables 1 and 2.

Table1: Distribution of Households by Water Supply in Nigeria Urban Centres (%)

State	Treated Pipe Borne Water	Untreated Pipe Borne Water	Well Water Piped	Well Water Not Piped	Bore Hole	Stream	Ponds	Others
Anambra	56.10	7.00	2.46	5.80	3.60	12.70	10.60	3.00
Kaduna	35.71	11.69	7.14	38.98	0.50	5.84	0.64	0.00
Kano	62.93	12.69	11.53	10.71	2.14	0.00	0.00	0.00
Oyo	79.90	0.00	0.48	15.74	1.94	0.97	0.97	0.00
Lagos	60.50	3.7	13.60	16.50	5.20	0.50	0.00	0.00
Rivers	80.98	6.95	2.46	17.84	6.77	9.03	0.00	0.00
All State	60.04	6.95	2.46	17.84	6.77	3.30	0.87	1.79

Source: Federal Office of Statistics, 1994.

Table 2: Access to Improved Drinking Water Sources

Estimates (%)	Total	Urban (%)	rural
Coverage for;			
2004	48	67	31
2002	60	72	49
1990	49	80	33

Source: DFID 2007; UNICEF, 2005

According to Odomosun, 1995, water supply in Nigeria is generally characterised by

- a) Low level of coverage
- b) Difficult geology strata
- c) Inappropriate technology
- d) Poor workmanship by dubious contractors
- e) Lack of operation and maintenance of existing facilities

With this fact, it is glaring that access to portable water supply is not encouraging

in rural Nigeria. This has therefore been encouraging rural urban migration.

Electricity

Nigeria is endowed with sufficient energy resources to meet its present and future requirement. The current installed capacity of good electricity is about 6000MW (REAP, 2006)

The generating plant availability is thought to be less than 3000MW resulting into wide spread black unit.

This has made most industrialists to install their own power generator of which no average Nigerian rural dweller can afford. Conclusively, access to electricity in Nigeria is low, only 40% of the population have access to electricity and only 10% of some rural areas are connected. (Laurie, 2003; REAP, 2006). The electricity supply as concluded by Adegbulugbe and Seriki, 1991 is unsatisfactory. This is shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: Electricity Supply- Demand Balance Sheet

Plant capacities (MW)			Demand situation (MW)			
	Installed	Effective	Morning Peak	Evening Peak	Highest Demand	Average Demand
Demand	4633	1712	1500	1800	1902	1855
Excesses		–	212	–	–	–
Shortages		2921	–	88	190	143
Remark		Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Source: Adegbulugbe and Zeriki (1991)/ CBN(1998); Energy Issues in Nigeria

Feeder roads

The linkage between Nigerian farms and its cities in terms of availability of food production. Within the few years of existence of Directorate for Food Road and Rural infrastructure (DFRRI), some notable achievement were said to have been made. Though, most of the roads considered as rural were located in the cities. The directorate made road development as the first priority because of the belief that “unless there is access to the rural communities, all other infrastructures like electricity, water and farm input cannot be made available to the rural dwellers (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005).

Basic school and health centres

Most of the public schools in Nigerian cities are not in good order; talk less of the ones in rural Nigeria in which there is little or no supervision. Most basic primary schools in some farm settlements are of either collapsing class rooms, palm front cover or student sitting down under the tree while there is little or no provision for health centres, even the available ones are without necessary personnel and medical facilities.

Conclusion and recommendations

It is quite clear that the level of infrastructural development in rural Nigeria is nothing but poor. If the country continues at this level of lip service to the provision of infrastructural facilities, the country will not be able to meet the 2020 target of providing enough food for her nationals and reducing city congestion (that causes most of the environmental hazards in the city) as indicated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and the seven-point agenda of President Umar, Musa-Yaradua. Thus, there is an urgent need for the urbanization of these rural settlements. This could be done in following ways:

- Public support and investment in rural infrastructure which have fallen in recent years.
- Previous rural infrastructural development projects, like Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI), National Land Development Agency (NALDA), Agricultural Development programmes (ADP), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), e.t.c. should be revisited and restructured with more commitment in their implementation.
- Establishment of law to ban further establishment of industries in urban centres and cities so that such industries be established in rural centres to reduce rural urban migration. This will reduce the congestion and environmental hazard in our cities.
- Measures aimed at decentralization and participation by the poor in the rural development programmes should be introduced.
- Rural financial markets to facilitate access of the poor farmers to credit should be promoted.
- Basic infrastructural facilities like portable water, electricity, Health centres, basic schools, feeder roads and communication facilities should be provided in rural centres of Nigeria.
- Provision of houses in the rural areas through the use of government housing scheme.
- The land tenure system of the country should be revisited and reformed in such a way that there will be much access of individual to agricultural land.
- Unpoliticised provision of agric inputs like chemical, fertilizers and

other farm implements at subsidized prices by the government.

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