The relevance of infrastructural facilities to rural housing development in lagelu local government, Oyo State, Nigeria

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In Nigeria, rural areas are experiencing neglect in connection with the provision of infrastructural facilities despite all the efforts being made by all tiers of past government in the country. This study is aimed at assessing the relevance of infrastructural facilities to rural housing development as it applied to Lagelu Local Government in Oyo State. The specific objectives of the study among others, include; identification of various rural development strategies or programmes embarked upon by the local government; examine the socio-economic importance of rural development projects executed by the Lagelu Local Government, an assessment of the existing infrastructural facilities in the area among others. The study made use of both primary and secondary sources of information. Data were collected from households and local government officials of the study area which was centered on the rural development projects the various types of projects embarked upon, their stages of construction, mode of execution and associated problems. The descriptive statistical technique was used to analyze the information. The findings reveal inadequacy of infrastructural facilities, absence of economic empowerment programme, poor housing quality to mention a few. Therefore, appropriate sustainable measures should be put forward in order to improve infrastructural facilities coupled with relevant programmes of reducing poverty in Lagelu local government area.

Key words: Rural, housing, infrastructure, development and empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Rural areas exist in all countries, developed and developing alike (United Nation. 1971). In the developing countries of Africa, especially Nigeria where about 50% of the population live and work in the rural areas, a sizeable proportion of the urban dwellers work and depend much of their livelihood on the surrounding rural districts. However, in terms of spatial development, more emphasis is placed on urban problems resulting in the relegation of the rural sector to the background. Ajaegbu (1976) observed that very little has been done to reverse the situation thereby creating a wider rural–urban dichotomy. The rural areas are thus be set with a lot of...
problems. Moreover, development programmes in Nigeria are heavily biased in favour of urban areas to the neglect of rural areas. An area in which this bias is manifested is housing and infrastructure. Not only are housing programmes more concentrated in urban centre, loan facilities are also urban based. Little is done to improve housing infrastructure for the rural areas and this does not achieve the desired results in terms of functionality and improved living standards for the rural people. The housing infrastructure problems of rural areas are different from those of the urban areas, so physical layout and design concept used for the latter are not successfully applicable in the former. Any policy aimed at improving the living environment of the rural population must take into account the physical attributes of housing infrastructure because they reflect the living patterns and socio-cultural condition of the people (Yinusa, 1995).

Since the colonial period, agriculture is considered to be synonymous with rural development. Most of the strategies adopted in Nigeria emphasized increase in agricultural production and very little attention was paid to the provision of rural housing and infrastructural facilities. Nevertheless, several attempts have been made by past governments in Nigeria to tackle the problems of rural areas. These include setting up of rural development projects and programmes such as River Basin Development Authority (RBDA), farm settlement schemes, deep freeze range intrusive (DFRI) and host of other approaches.

The basis intention of these approaches was to make rural areas more attractive and actively performing its necessary complimentary roles to the development of rural housing and infrastructure. Despite efforts made by government the rural areas are characterized by illiteracy, abject poverty, high infant mortality and low life expectancy. The case of Lagelu Local Government in Oyo state is not an exception. It is one of the local governments that have embarked on series of developmental strategies in revitalizing the rural areas in order to improve the economic situation which in turn has affected rural housing and infrastructural development in the area. The study is focused on the importance of infrastructural facilities on the development of rural housing with particular reference to Lagelu local government area in Oyo state.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Rural: According to the united nation organsation (UNO) standard refers to rural settlement as an area with less than 20,000 population. Rural settlements engage on primary activities such as farming, hunting, fishing, weaving, blacksmithing and other informal occupations.

Housing: Housing connotes more than shelter. It means the condition under which people carry out their daily living in their houses and in their neighbourhoods. It also means the general environment as well as the buildings (Hopkins, 1970). This view is also shared by the World Health Organization (WHO). According to (Salau 1981). Housing is more than the physical structure, but includes all necessary services, facilities, equipments and devices needed or desired for the physical, mental health and social well-being of the family and individuals.

Infrastructure: According to WHO (2000) define infrastructure as necessary services, facilities, equipments and devices needed or desired for the physical, mental health and social well-being of the family and individual. These include sewages, sanitation, roads electricity, drainage, waste disposal and other public transportation systems.

Empowerment: is essentially a political concept that means more equitable sharing (or redistribution) of power and resources with those who previously lacked power. It also refers to any activity that leads to increased access and control over resources and the acquisition of new skills and confidence so that people are enabled to initiate action on their own behalf and acquire leadership is an empowering activity.

Development: Refers to the carrying out of any building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under any land on the making of any environmentally significant change in the use of any land or demolition of buildings including the falling of trees etc. (Obialo 1999).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Brief of the study area

The study area is Lagelu Local Government in Oyo State, It has total land area of about 355.50 hectares and falls between latitude7°20’ and 7°50’ east of Greenwich meridian. It is bounded in the North by Iwo local government, in the East by Ibadan North-East local government, while in the West by Akinyele local government area. Lagelu local government has more than 96 villages under its area of jurisdiction for the purpose of effective management and easy administration. The entire local government is divided into four zones namely: Lalupon, Olorunda. Igbo-elerin and Oflu.

The climate of the study area is influenced by two major air masses (winds). These are the northeast trade and southwest monsoon (winds). The former (S.W monsoon wind) is a moisture bearing air mass, which is responsible for the April to October rainfall, while the latter (N.E trade wind) is cold and dry wind that blows from the Sahara desert. During the wet season which starts in April and end in October, the rainfall is usually heavy recording an average of 137 centimeters while the minimum rainfall of 2.5 centimeter is recorded in December. The settlement is located on the area which is relatively flat between 500 to110m above the sea level. It is characterized by pervious soil.

The vegetation of the area is a ‘derived forest’. This type of vegetation has resulted from shifting cultivation, farming, bush burning and other type of human activities. The population of the whole of Lagelu local government area is 69,272 (National population commission, 1991 provisional result). The traditional
occupation of the people is farming and trading. They are well known for crop cultivation such as cassava, maize, oranges, yam and trees of commercial value. They are also traders, civil servants and artisans.

Methods of data collection analysis

Four major methods were used to collect data for this study. They are:

1. Administration of structured questionnaire using random sampling procedures in order to collect data on the socio-economic characteristics of the people, and the physical development of infrastructural facilities in the area.
2. Collection of documentary data from government offices.
3. Field survey to check the validity of the data collected.
4. Oral interview with village heads, opinion leaders and a review of literature.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Infrastructure and its impact

Sida (1996) defines infrastructure in terms of physical facilities (road, airports, utility supply systems, communication systems, water and waste disposal systems etc), and the services (water, sanitation transport, energy) flowing from those facilities. Fox (1994) on his part defines public infrastructure as those services derived from the set of public work traditionally supported by the public sector to enhance private sector production and to permit household consumption. The absence of rural infrastructure in an area serves as a push factor of migration leading to rural depopulation. This simply means that the provision of infrastructure will discourage rural-urban migration and increase the working force, and boost agriculture production which is the mainstay of any rural economy and nation.

There is no gain saying the fact that infrastructure is vital in a community. The research of Arndt (1999) on Mozambique shows positive effects on trade and transport cost, and on agriculture and growth. DFID (2000), Fox (1994), Sida (1996) and Kessides (1993b) affirm that better rural infrastructure and human development programmes for poor people promote economic growth and social development, reduce poverty and may lead to better employment.

Ravallion (1990) and Lothies’ (2000) work (cited in DFID, September 2002) noted that infrastructure can provide forms of social protection that move people beyond safety nets through the opportunities it creates for economic growth. McNeil (1993) rightly puts it when he observes that, "When infrastructure works, productivity and labour increase and when it does not work, economic reward is halted".

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Survey of infrastructural facilities and services

Provision of infrastructural facilities is very important for the improvement of the standard of living of rural dwellers and also to boost housing development in rural areas. The study revealed that virtually all the study areas were provided with necessary infrastructural facilities, though, most of these facilities were not in full operation as at the time of survey, for example, some borehole pumping machines were faulty, while there were potholes in some roads visited.

Health facilities

The survey revealed that a health centre was located at Lagun Township to serve villages like Ore, Apatere, Alape, Ogboro, Ogidi and some other villages within the area. Similarly Oyedeji and Olode were served by a health/maternity centre located at Kutayi. Lalupon and Olorunda townships were also served with a dispensary. As at the time of field survey, majority of these health centres and dispensary were inadequate due to lack of drug, dilapidating structures, qualified personnel (nurses and medical doctors) and funds.

Educational facilities

Education is both a major tool of development and a means of achieving the interrelated goals of higher labour productivity and improved rapid gross domestic product (GDP) growth. It also involved the broader goal of social integration, including participation in cultural and political affairs. However, the survey conducted revealed that all the study areas have more than two primary schools, two secondary schools except Olorunda area which has only one secondary school. Furthermore, the study revealed that majority of these schools lack adequate classroom furniture and standard classroom structures.

Water supply

It was observed that most of the houses in the study area have no pipe borne water.-They solely depend on boreholes sunk by the local government. As at the time of the field survey, it was discovered that virtually all the study areas have more than three boreholes sunk by government. Notable water project in one of the study areas was Apatere water supply project which serves as a greater relief to the people in the area. The water project aims at encouraging people to be residing in the area and promote more housing developments.

Electricity Supply

It is pertinent to note that one of the basic requirements for achieving complete rural area transformation is constant supply of energy to enhance housing development and industrialization. The survey revealed that little achievement were recorded before the advent of the
present administration. For example, the local government has embarked on rural electrification in some areas such as Olorunda, Apatere and Lagun. Inspite of all the efforts of government, 60% of the respondents have no electricity supply in their homes, while only 40% of the respondents are accessible to electricity supply.

Provision of roads

Accessibility is very important in development of rural areas. Good and motorable roads are very important to enhance housing development in rural area. Provision of good roads also enhances transportation of food, movement of agricultural produce, agro-based industrial raw materials etc. from the rural to urban areas. Good motorable road lessens the cost of transporting building materials from urban center to the rural areas. It also reduces the cost of transporting farm produce from rural to urban centers. The study reveals that majority of roads in the area were very bad, but with the government policy mandating every local government in the state to grade and tarred at least 10km roads within their respective vicinity, there is a lot of improvement. For example, (the local government had done a lot of road patching and constructing of new roads in the study area.

EFFECTS OF INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE ON THE PEOPLE AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT IN THE STUDY AREA

Based on the information gathered through the questionnaire distributed and collected, the following effects of infrastructure were recorded in the study area. The study reveals that inadequate of infrastructure increases the transaction cost and discourages trade within and between the rural settlements, and economic actors is discouraged from responding to new types of demand in these places. The costs of inputs used in the production of almost all goods and services also increase.

Inadequate supply of electricity in many of these rural areas discourages the opening up of new opportunities for entrepreneurs and does not make existing ones profitable. This also creates unemployment/underemployment. Unemployment is created since economic actors cannot respond to new types of demand in these places and also does not enhance human capital, for example by not improving access to potable water, the level of health keeps on deteriorating and rural people die prematurely because of bad roads. Vehicles in the rural areas only unpaved and rugged roads, the dwellers fetch water from running or stagnant water bodies whose hygienic conditions are not certain. These result in huge sums of money being expended in the maintenance of properties and health. The cost of maintenance rises during severe dry season when every nook and cranny is dried up. Those who cannot afford the cost of buying water from borehole in the area die of water related diseases.

Many of the rural settlements can scarcely afford any economic service. Invariably, they rely on the nearby towns and cities for these services, thereby overstretching the facilities in these towns. The survey reveals that the poor are mostly affected by environmental health problems. The greatest is the fecal contamination of water and food due to poorer non-existing excreta disposal systems compounded by unreliable and unsafe domestic water supply. The rural dwellers in the study area were affected by diarrhea and malaria, Due to lack of public enlightenment, the poor rural dwellers use pesticides without training thereby exposing themselves to hazardous chemicals.

The survey also reveals that inadequate of infrastructure increases environmental problems such as, soil and land degradation, desertification, declining biodiversity, deteriorating water and air quality through excessive use of felled trees for fuel wood. It also leads to severe water shortages, which in some cases escalate and result in conflict. With adequate provision and maintenance of these infrastructure in rural areas, there will invariably increased food security and employment, less or adequate use of pesticides and improved yield and nutrition, thereby minimizing rural-urban drift.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

It is a general believe that socio-economic development covers almost all human activities and it involves the provision of basic human needs. However, the following measures are suggested as a way of boosting housing development of rural area in Lagelu Local Government.

Construction of more road networks

It was observed that most of road network linking the towns and villages in Lagelu local government are in very bad shape. Lagelu local government should embark on grading and rehabilitation of some roads in the area. 18.5 kilometres Apatere/Lagun/Oyedcjji roads were just graded and tarred. This, has boosted the provision of housing development in the area.

It is advisable for the Lagelu Local Government administration not to relent on her efforts in the provision of more roads. Though, the present administration policy of yearly construction 10 kilometers road by every local government of the state should be adequately implemented.

Rural water project

In spite of the numerous efforts by establishing rural
water developments programmes by the federal and state governments in order to boost the housing development and improve the quality of life of the rural populace, the situation remains unchanged. No doubt there is an acute water problem in Lagelu Local Government. This has adverse effects on the provision housing in the area. Government should intensify efforts in the provision of more boreholes and hand-pump wells in the study area.

Provision of quality educational facilities

Education is an important determinant of housing, health and productivity. Education increases -the quality of labour force and consequently the level of productivity, investment in education must be increased and emphasis must be placed on education that helps individuals to acquire skills that will assist them to initiate self-employment opportunities. The existing primary, secondary and higher institutions in the study area should serve adjoining villages in each district in order to meet the threshold population requirements of these educational facilities. Lagelu Local Government should compliment the efforts of the state government in carrying out renovation of dilapidated structures and classroom furniture. This would serves as an incentive to migrants and which will further boost housing development in the area.

Provision Of High Quality Health Services

Government at all level should invest more on health and direct resources towards services that benefit the larger number of people. To achieve this, Lagelu Local Government should also compliments the c! forts of the state government in carrying out renovation of dilapidated structures and classroom furniture. This would serves as an incentive to migrants and which will further boost housing development in the area.

Involvement of community participation in the provision of infrastructure facilities

In as much as government alone cannot provide all the infrastructural facilities needed by the people. Rural infrastructural facilities also need to be provided and maintained through self-helps efforts. This is a realistic way of ensuring availability of essential infrastructure in the various communities. The people should be assisted to form themselves into (CDA) Community Development Association, Cooperative Societies so as to develop infrastructure to satisfy their needs. This would also serves as solid basis for social, economies, cultural, political and housing development in such communities without exception to all the communities in Lagelu Local Government.

Village Regrouping

Village-regrouping strategy needs to be adopted for some villages which are scattered to put in place a necessary infrastructural facilities for the area. This will create more conducive settlements that will be large enough to justify the provision of basic amenities in the area and also enhance housing development.

Environmental planning and management

Environmental planning and management strategy is recommended not only for Lagelu Local Government but the entire local government areas within the state to develop rural areas. The concepts include the followings:

1. Involvement of all stakeholders (inhabitants) in problem identification, priority setting, project implementation and fund sourcing and project maintenance and monitoring
2. Identify all the stakeholders in the rural areas with a view to harnessing their resources to move toward to a collectively desired end.
3. Recognizing inter-governmental cooperation and puts in place a machinery to promote and ensure their cooperation and collaboration in rural development and management.
4. Creating meaningful partnership, which includes participation consensus building, accountability, transparency and bottom-up development.
5. Introducing flexibility to the planning process whereby problems, priorities and strategies respond to progamation in a dynamic way.
6. Constant consultation, information dissemination, mobilization and capacity building for all stakeholders to achieve meaningful participation in development and management of their areas.

Maintenance Culture

Maintenance is a vital issue which needs to be addressed by all tiers of governments in Nigeria. The provision of infrastructural facilities by the Lagelu Local Government has been so far appreciated. Culture of maintenance need to be imbibed to sustain the present achievements of the local government.

CONCLUSION

Rural neglect coupled with the host of other factors has
adversely affected the functioning of the social, economic, political life of people. The result has been the migration of the potentially most productive and innovative individual from rural areas which indirectly affects housing development. However, the provision of basic and adequate infrastructural facilities at all levels of government and private participation in infrastructure development couple with other social facilities should act as a catalyst in facilitating growth and development of Nigeria's rural area.

**Conflict of Interests**

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

**REFERENCES**


