



## Public Policy and Rural Development in Nigeria: An Appraisal of the Federal Government Fadama Program

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### Abstract

*Rural development is at the heart of sustainable national development of developing nations. It is a means of ensuring that the rural sector of the population have fair share of socioeconomic activities and gains that makes life habitable for rural populace without resulting to mass rural-urban migration in search of social amenities and quality life. As such, public policies should drive rural development as pragmatic means towards providing public facilities and economic opportunities for the relative comfort of rural dwellers. However, due to absence of well articulated programme or poor implementation or inconsistency of policy programme on rural development, there has been much variation in the administration and performance of rural development programme in Nigeria. The efforts made by successive governments have been at its worse more of propaganda as much of the rural areas are rather characterized by dearth of infrastructure, roads, health, water and poor electricity supply including the impacts of all of these on food production. Meanwhile, there has been a federal government initiative for rural development through agriculture called FADAMA. FADAMA is a World Bank assisted programme designed to promote simple and low cost improved agricultural technology and farm support for rural farmers. This paper is an appraisal of this FADAMA program especially that since 2017 that FADAMA III terminated, there has not been any public expression of interest by the federal government to proceed to phase IV of the programme. Therefore, this paper is an advocacy for the resumption of the FADAMA IV program as a rural development policy through agricultural practice. The paper adopted the endogenous theory of rural development and utilized historical and descriptive approaches in analysing data and information sourced mainly from secondary domains. The paper found that FADAMA in its first three phases have contributed meaningfully to the transformation of rural areas in the local governments that have benefited from the program. And that whereas there were certain impediments to the full realization of its core objectives, FADAMA programs contributed to the uplifting of lives of rural farmers, their dependents and the rural populace. The impediments observed in literature include chronic political interference and serious leadership deficit at the local governments that are suppose to be the primary drivers of the programme in their areas. The paper strongly recommended the resumption of phase IV of the initiative by the Federal Government, after strengthening the legal and institutional frameworks for the design and implementation of the programme in a way that it can achieve far more results than the previous phases by transforming the lives of the rural settlers through improved agricultural interventions.*

**Keywords:** Agriculture, Development, FADAMA program, Public Policy, Rural Development, Rural Populace,

## **Introduction**

Development is a necessary aspect of societies, indeed any society without development could be said to be static. Hence all societies are dynamic. Sustainable development for its part involves the use of natural resources as well as national infrastructures in such a way as to avoid the exhaustion of those resources. Rural socio-economic transformation is a means of ensuring that the rural sector of the population has some share in the fruits of economic activity. It is the most pragmatic means of bringing government facilities and services to the door steps of the population of rural areas. But rural areas are rather characterized by dearth of infrastructure, roads, health, water and poor electricity supply.

It is an eyesore that development efforts over the years have been in favour of urban centres, leaving the rural areas devoid of modern attractions that characterize the urban centres with huge differentials in employment, income, power, education, health and general material well-being between urban and rural areas in Nigeria. The rural economy depends much on road transportation in that it facilitates agricultural and other socio-economic activities, the provision and maintenance of the access roads is a sine qua non for the development of the rural economy, most especially the development of a small scale business which has been recommended as strategy for improving the rural economy hinges on access roads (Aliyu 2004). Due to the lack of a well articulated programme on rural development, there has been much variation in the administration and performance of rural development programme in Nigeria.

Efforts made by successive Nigerian governments have been at its worse more of propaganda. Indeed it is safe to say that Nigeria has no rural development programme until 1976 when national strategy for rural development was first initiated (Kamar et al, 2014). Before this time, governments idea of plough back some revenue to the rural sector was through; large sales plantation of cocoa, rubber, oil palm, subsidy approach which allows the public sector to provide infrastructure which include transport and

irrigation facilities and that of agrarian called reform in a package called "Integrated Rural Development" (IRD) (Agwunobi, 1993).

Since Nigeria gained her political independence in 1960, there has been a less impetus attached to the rural community development as a factor that advances the overall socio-economic development of a developing country like her. Althoguh, Alege (2005) observed that governments at different times had set up various programmes and specialized credit institutions in an attempt to transform and develop rural areas in all its ramifications and thereby moving rural dwellers from abject poverty and squalor to economic and social prosperity and while some of those programmes and credit institutions are yet on-going, some are moribund and others have gone with the regimes that initiated them. Even though successive governments have indicated desire to transform the country, be it in terms of provision of infrastructure, human capacity development and even in the realm of social cum political development particularly in the rural areas. In this wise, Nigeria has experimented with several development plans from pre-independence era till date.

Ebienfa and Paki (2013) observed that policies play crucial role in rural development and underdevelopment. Whereas, there has been no lack of public policies in Nigeria since independence, the paradox of public policy implementation has continued to militate cum mar the realization of public objectives in the country. The reason being that most government policies either end prematurely only at the formulation stage; or are purposely designed not to be religiously implemented or simply ill-implemented to benefit only a section of the society.

Okhankhuele and Opafunso (2013) claimed that several methods to remove rural-urban development gap have been carried out in Nigeria with little success, therefore the rural areas still remain highly underdeveloped in comparison with the urban areas. They believed that numerous studies have been carried out on the causes and consequences of rural-urban migration and also related the consequences of rural-

urban migration on the urban centers to serious problems such as overpopulation, insufficient physical and social infrastructural amenities. Some of the past studies linked the causes of rural-urban migration to unbalanced government policies in support of urban development, response to disparities in income, employment and other socioeconomic services available within the metropolitan and country sides, with the urban areas being fortunate. Others associated it with impulsive, emotional, structural, and traditional factors (Paul et al, 2014).

Moreover, it can be deduced that the cost of depopulation of rural areas is in reduction of rural agricultural produce. Agriculture is the engine that stimulates economic processes when it comes to national development. Historical facts show that before the oil boom in the 1970s, agriculture was the mainstay of Nigeria's economy. Each region was known for a particular agricultural produce – the Northern region was known as groundnut pyramid; Western region for cocoa, one of the world best commercial viable seeds; the Eastern region was the home of palm nut and cassava, and collectively, the proceeds from these agricultural products made Nigeria the beauty of Africa.

The enormous challenges befalling the rural areas prompted the Nigerian government to inculcate many programmes and policies at the various level of government. For example, in 1993, the federal government of Nigeria in collaboration with the World Bank and State government started a new programme referred to as the National Fadama Development programme. This in an attempt to alleviate poverty among rural Nigerians and also to increase the incomes and productivity of the rural inhabitants as an approach of meeting up with the millennium development goals (MDGs) of food sufficiency, poverty eradication and development of the rural areas. The First National Fadama Development Programme (FADAMA I) is a World Bank assisted programme designed to promote simple and low cost improved irrigation technology. The widespread adoption of the technologies enabled farmers to increase production. Federal government impressed by the achievements,

approached the African Development Fund (ADF) of the African Development Bank (ADB) for support in expanding the achievement of Fadama in scope and size. This led to the formation of Fadama II programme (Agbarevo and Okwoche, 2014).

This paper thus took a look at the FADAMA III projects in Nigeria and challenges to its implementation. In other words, the paper takes a critical look at major strategies, approaches or theories taken so far by Nigerian governments with FADAMA III to change the rural landscape and what has been their practicability in terms of social change and improving the socioeconomic well-being of the rural poor.

## **Literature Review**

The paper adopted a conceptual review approach to exploration of extant literature on its subject. It reviewed the concepts of public policy and rural development. For public policy different definitions are abound, and it may simply be futile trying to discover which is correct or proper. One of the widely quoted definitions of public policy is that of Dye (1979:1), where he defines public policy as "what Government choose to do or not to do. He went further to explain that:

Government do many things, they regulate conflicts within society, they organize society to carry on conflicts within other societies, they distribute a great variety of symbolic rewards and material services to members of the society and extracts money from the society, most at times in the form of taxes. Thus policies may regulate behavior, organize bureaucracies, distribute benefits, extract taxes, or all of these things at once..(Dye 1979).

Egonwan (2004) sees Public policy is a future oriented inquiry into the optimum means of achieving a given governments programme found in a nation's laws or in public statements by a functioning of government. Other conceptualization of public policy includes; it is a government programme of action which stands for various degrees of total articulation and normative regulations of government activities, that is what government intends to do to it.

Shankansky (1970) contended that, public policy refers to important activities of government. The reality however is that public policy embraces all government activities or outputs as it affects members of the society, and cannot be limited only to important activities of government. Public policy is also defined as a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern.

For Nnajiofor et al (2013), public policy has to do with the fact that, it is a product of government process and activities; it affects a large spectrum of issues and sectors of the society which government have something to do. This includes the economy, housing, defense, transportation, health care, education, etc. and expression of public policy embraces, laws, judicial decisions, executive orders and rules government budgets, organizational directives or any rule of conduct behind which stands the enforcing power of the principal system.

Public policies are in essence designed to resolve societal problems. Particularly those considered to require public or collective action. Again public policies can be categorized as being distributive, regulatory and constituent respectively in accordance with the purpose they are created to serve in the society. Henry (2005) offered a dimension that sees public policy as a course of action adopted and pursued by government. This view does not tell us the philosophical basis of this government course of action. It is in this light that Ikelegbe (2006) analysed public policies are made by among others; political institutions such as: parliament, political executive, political parties and the judiciary.

Akhakpe (2014) made the point that in representative democracy, the enterprise of public policy making and implementation are facilitated and made wholesome by non-governmental actors and agencies which can be referred to as interest groups. In advanced democracies, they play principal roles in ensuring that their members' interests are factored into every policy coming from government. In the United States of America, government officials desirous of the success of government policies, go out of their way

to ensure that the interests of these groups are sought and represented in major government policies. To bridge the gap in popular representation created by the movement from direct to indirect democracy, consultations with stakeholders on every policy issue are required for such policies to get the support of the targeted group and its effectiveness realized.

Honadle (1976) identifies the problems associated with policy implementation as that of social carpenters and mansions who fails to build to specification and thus distort the beautiful blueprint. He was equating policy with a building plan. To this he said:

Implementation is the nemesis of designers; it conjures up images of plans gone awry and of social carpenters and mansions who fails to build to specifications and thereby distort the beautiful blueprints for progress which were handed to them. It provokes memories of "good" ideas that did not work and places the blame on the second (and second-class) member of the policy an administrative images..." (Honadle 1976:21).

Nnajiofor et al (2013) argued that the above quotation shows the importance that is attached to policy implementation and those that are responsible for implementing these policies. It also shows that no matter how beautiful the blueprint of a programme is, a defective implementation of it will make nonsense of the whole programme. Unfortunately, the situation as described by Honadle (1976) is what goes on in most developing countries including Nigeria.

The concept of rural development on the other hand is often synonymous with agricultural development; others views it from a much more comprehensive stand point which includes; the creation of opportunities and incentives for savings, credits and investment at the local level for the provision of rural facilities, roads, agro-industries and agro-services centre. Rural development is therefore a concerted effort to increase production, create and spread employment as well as rooting out fundamental causes of poverty, ignorance, hunger and diseases Akpomuvie (2010). It is aimed at awakening in the people the

urge to develop their own potentials for progress in order to achieve sustainable development.

In the view of Abdulrazak et al (2015), rural development is a comprehensive mode of social transformation, a socioeconomic change seeking to bring about more equitable distribution of resources within the society, and a veritable acceptance of the principle of growth from below. This emphasized on the need to ensure socioeconomic balance and equitable distribution of wealth and resources among people and among the rural populace. Failure to do so makes an economy yet underdeveloped. Nigeria for example experienced an unprecedented economic growth in recent times; but without commensurate development.

Olayide et al. (1981) see rural development as a process whereby concerted efforts are made in order to facilitate significant increase in rural resources productivity with the central objective of enhancing rural income and creating employment opportunity in rural communities for rural dwellers to remain in the area. It is also an integrated approach to food production, provision of physical, social and institutional infrastructures with an ultimate goal of bringing about good healthcare delivery system, affordable and quality education, improved and sustainable agriculture etc. According to Van der Ploeg et al. (2000), rural development is reconstructing the eroded economic base of both the rural economy and the farm enterprise... (and) represents the well understood self-interest of increasing sections of rural population.

Paul et al (2014) believed that rural development is action that helps people to recognize and develop their ability and potential and organize themselves to respond to problems and needs which they share. It supports the establishment of strong rural community development agencies that control and use assets to promote social justice and help improve the quality of community life. It also enables community and other public agencies to work together to improve the quality of government. And for Adelakun (2013), rural development is the general process of improving the quality of life

and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. He stated further that rural development has traditionally centered on the exploitation of land-intensive natural resources such as agriculture and forestry. However, changes in global production networks and increased urbanization have changed the character of rural areas. Increasingly tourism, niche manufacturers, and recreation have replaced resource extraction and agriculture as dominant economic drivers.

Lastly, Abah (2000) viewed rural development to include the provision of social and physical infrastructure, the provision of financial services in non-urban areas, non-farm and small-medium enterprises activities in rural communities and market towns that are more closely linked to the rural economy than they are to the economies of the larger urban cities, as well as the development of traditional rural sectors, such as agriculture and natural resource management. It noted the key elements that will facilitate the realization of rural development to include social infrastructure, physical infrastructure and financial services.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on the endogenous theory of development. The theory was developed in opposition to the 'modernist' notion of development. Endogenous theory of development stated that the socio-economic well-being of disadvantage areas such as the rural areas can best be brought about by recognizing and animating the collective resources of the territory (Ray 2000). According to Bassand et al (1986) the new meaning of development, that is, qualitative and structural indicators, and not just qualitative and monetary measure, are used as criteria but also cultural, social, political, and ecological value as well as social costs and long effects are combined for endogenous development.

According to Lowe et al (1998), the basic characteristics of the endogenous model of rural development are - Key Principle: the specific resources of an area i.e. (natural, human and cultural) hold the key to its sustainable development; Dynamic Force: local initiative and enterprise; Function of

Rural Areas: diverse service economies; Major Rural Development Problem: The limited capacity of rural areas and social groups to participate in economic and development activity; Focus of Rural Development: capacity building (skills, institutions and infrastructure) and overcoming social exclusion.

Ray (2000) stated that the main characteristics of endogenous development are threefold. First it sets development activity within a territorial rather than sectorial framework, with the scale of the territory being smaller than the nation-state. Second, economic and other development activities are reoriented to maximize the retention of benefits within the local territory by valorizing and exploiting local resources (physical and human). Third, development is contextualized by focusing on the needs, capacities and perspectives of local people, meaning that a local area should acquire the capacity to assume some responsibility for bringing about its own socio-economic development.

Keane (1990) points out two main ways in which endogenous development differs from exogenous: first, it is seen not only as an economic concept, but also as a process dealing with the total human condition; and second it accepts numerous possible conceptions of development and pitches the objectives and paths on an appropriate local level. He also stated that endogenous approach represents a significant change from investment on physical capital to investment in developing the knowledge, the skills and the entrepreneurial abilities of local population.

The theory of endogenous development emphasized the efficient use of rural resources to develop the rural areas, it opposed extraction, annexation and exploitation of local resources to the disadvantage of its own population.

### **Public Policy and Rural Development in Nigeria: an Overview of Federal Government FADAMA Programme**

The FADAMA project was introduced as a strategy to tackle rural development problems “Fadama” is a Hausa word which translates to Irrigable land in English Language and it means “akuro” in Yoruba

language. Fadama can be described as a local word for low lying flood plain usually with easily accessible shallow groundwater (Balogun and Yusuf, 2011). It is especially suitable for crop irrigation and fishing which traditionally provides food and water for livelihood. Fadama also refers to a seasonally flooded area used for farming during the dry season. It is defined as alluvial, lowland formed by erosion and depositional actions of the rivers and streams. They encompass land and water resources that could easily be developed for irrigation agriculture.

Fadama are typically waterlogged during the rainy season but retain moisture during the dry season. The areas are considered to have high potential for economic development through appropriate investments in infrastructure, household assets and technical assistance. When Fadama spread out over a large area, they are often called ‘Wetlands’ (Nkonya et al 2008). The first National Fadama Development Project (NFDP-1) was established in the 1990s to promote simple low cost improved irrigation technology under the World Bank financing (Agunloye et al, 2017). The main objective of NFDP-1 was to sustainably increase the incomes of the Fadama users through expansion of farm and non-farm activities with high value-added output. The programme covered twelve’s states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Imo, Kaduna, Kebbi, Lagos, Niger, Ogun, Oyo, Taraba including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). NFDP adopted community driven development (CDD) approach with extensive participation of stakeholders at the early stage of the project.

The relative success recorded in FADAMA I led to the establishment of FADAMA II. The strategy for Fadama II was aimed at contributing to food security and increased access to rural infrastructure facilities. Consequently, Fadama II programme was assisted by World Bank and co-financed with loan from African Development Fund (ADF) (Agunloye et al, 2017). Fadama II was more of agricultural diversification programmes providing financing for the diverse livelihood activities which the beneficiaries themselves identify and design, with appropriate facilitation support. Fadama II was implemented in 12

States including the Federal Capital territory, Abuja. The 12 Fadama II states were carried out in three major agro-ecological Zones, the humid forest (Lagos, Ogun and Imo), moist savannah (Adamawa, FCT, Oyo and Taraba) and dry savannah (Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, Kebbi and Niger).

FADAMA III was introduced and implemented nation-wide from March, 2009 to December, 2013. An integral part of the Fadama III project was the provision of support to up-stream and down-stream activities aimed at streamlining input and output marketing, including ensuring efficient transportation of inputs and outputs, processing, storage (conservation/or preservation), thereby ensuring that beneficiaries' efforts translate to sustained and increased income (NFDP,2003).

FADAMA III, like Fadama II, adopted a community-driven development (CDD) approach. Under this approach, various Fadama resource users, including crop farmers, pastoralists, fishermen and women, and on-and off-farm entrepreneurs, operating through their respective Fadama user groups (FRUGs) and their apex bodies and Fadama community Associations (FCAs) would reach consensus on how to use the common resources for their mutual advantage (NFDP,2003). It also assert that through this process, communities would decide on which advisory services and infrastructures they need to enable them attain development goals they set for themselves based on their own efforts. The consensus so reached would be articulated in the local development plans (LDPs) drawn on the level of Fadama community associations.

The FADAMA III operation will support the financing and implementation of five main components designed to transfer financial and technical resources to the beneficiary groups in: (i) institutional and social development; (ii) physical infrastructure for productive use; (iii) transfer and adoption of technology to expand productivity, improve value-added, and conserve land quality; (iv) support extension and applied research; and (v) provide matching grants to access assets for income-generation and livelihood

improvements. The main objective of the Fadama III Project was to increase the income of users of rural land and water resources on a sustainable basis. By increasing their incomes, the project helped reduce rural poverty, increase food security, and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG). The specific objectives were to:

1. Sustainably increase the incomes of Fadama beneficiaries by directly delivering resources to them (i.e. the beneficiary rural communities), efficiently and effectively;
2. Empower beneficiaries to collectively decide on how resources are allocated and managed for their livelihood activities and to participate in the design and execution of their sub-projects.

Whereas, the key indicators and targets for tracking progress toward the project development objective of Fadama III are:

1. Income of participating households: 75 percent of Fadama user households, who benefit directly from project-supported activities, would have increased their average real incomes by at least 80 percent by 2017.
2. Yields of primary agricultural products of participating households: 20 percent increase in yield of primary agricultural products of participating households.
3. Savings of participating groups: 10 percent of the replacement value of the common asset used for income-generating activities of the FUGs is saved annually (with effect from year 2).
4. Physical verification of operations, maintenance and utilization of assets at midterm and at project closing by surveys of random selected sites (NFDP, 2018)

The Project initial implementation is for period of five years, from July 2008 to June 2013 but was extended to 2017. Community organizations decide on how the resources are been allocated among the priorities that they themselves identify and they manage the funds. Extensive facilitation, training, and technical assistance were provided through the Project to ensure that poor rural communities, including women and vulnerable groups, especially the physically challenged, participate in the

collective decision-making process. The Project helps by giving voice to the communities as well as promotes the principles of transparency and accountability in planning and management of public investments within the LGAs (Bature et al 2013).

The strategic choices of FADAMA III include:

- (i) To address constraints to productive infrastructure: Inadequacies in rural infrastructure and essential support services, road access and dry season irrigation, and availability of relevant agricultural and land management technologies constrain growth and adoption of more sustainable approaches to land management. The core activities funded by this Project address this constraint.
- (ii) To improve livelihood opportunities: The Project supports productive activities, technical assistance and investment in assets and land quality and services identified by communities as relevant to generation of higher incomes and better livelihoods.
- (iii) To empower the rural poor: The poor lack power and voice to access basic services, identify opportunities, and exercise legal rights. Information is scarce. Household, village, and local government decision-making processes are often opaque and exclusionary. Mechanisms to ensure accountability in delivery of state and local government services are weak. The Project's facilitators working with the Fadama groups will help them overcome barriers deriving from lack of knowledge or insufficient cooperation among groups.
- (iv) To promote socially-inclusive and community-based approaches: Integration of social inclusion and community-driven principles has proven to be cost-effective, responsive to local priorities and effective in reducing conflicts over use of natural resources. This proven approach has demonstrated that the key is to promote investments that bring both private profitability and public benefits.
- (v) To accord adequate attention to technical quality assurance: Limited

capacity in supervising the technical aspects of community subprojects contributed to delay in implementing local development plans and subprojects funded under the Fadama II Project. The Fadama development facilitators and service providers will receive adequate training before they are deployed in the communities. The Facilitators' training program will be designed to increase their sector-specific technical skills and provide them with the skills to perform feasibility work and technical supervision with the participation of the farmer groups. The Agricultural Development Program (ADP) offices will train the service providers (NFDP, 2018).

The FADAMA III Project coverage was national. It included the 19 states that did not benefit from the ongoing IDA Fadama II Project and the Fadama II states that meet the eligibility criteria for continued participation that include: (i) satisfactory disbursement performance as indicated by at least 75 percent of the IDA credit disbursed by appraisal of the proposed Fadama III Project; (ii) demonstrated pro-poor impact from the resources disbursed directly through community subprojects (as indicated by impact evaluation and beneficiary assessment studies, including the mid-term review (MTR) of Fadama II Project); (iii) establishment and funding of the operations of the core teams of the State Fadama Coordination Offices (SFCOs) and (iii) commitment to the Project as demonstrated by payment of counterpart contributions towards the costs of the project preparation work and implementation (Bature et al 2013).

The Project covers up to 20 Local Government Authorities (LGAs) for the 19 states that did not benefit from the Fadama II operation. In the Fadama II states, up to four LGAs were added to the ten LGAs that have already benefited. The GEF support focussed especially but not exclusively on the states of Borno, CrossRiver, and Osun, selected by the Government's newly founded National SLM Committee for their ecological and geographic diversity. The beneficiaries were assisted to organize themselves in economic interest groups, named Fadama

User Groups (FUGs), each having on average around 20 members (plus these individuals' households). The FUGs establish Fadama Community Associations (FCAs), which are apex organizations of 15 FUGs on average at the community level (Bature et al 2013).

### **Impediments to the Effectiveness of Public Policies Towards Rural Development in Nigeria**

The common setbacks or bottlenecks limiting the effectiveness of rural and agricultural development policies in Nigeria include:

#### **1. Ineffective Implementation of Rural Development Policies, Project and Programming.**

As stated earlier in this paper, Nigeria has over the years nonetheless developed some policies to enhance rural substantially; reaching the development objectives of those policies and programs is bordered around the pattern and nature of their implementation which has been characterized by ineffectiveness and inefficiency.

Ikelegbe (2006) argued that ineffective policy implementation is usually very difficult to realize particularly in developing nations like Nigeria. The inability of the relevant rural development agencies to effectively implement rural development policies could be as a result of inadequate resources, which quite often is a real threat to successful implementation of rural development policies. It could as well be as result of the pervasive corruption in the Nigeria public service bureaucracy. Such corrupt tendencies most often, significantly increases the possibility that allocated fund for rural development projects and programs may be misappropriated or embezzled and thus hampering effective implementation and the consequent realization of policy development and objectives.

For example, the Agricultural Development Fund (ADF) that was intended to raise agricultural products and improve conditions of the rural population, the Directs rate of food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure intended to transform the rural infrastructure were unable to meet their development objectives due largely

to poor implementation (Ajadi, 2010). Indeed, the rural development strategies do not work in a vacuum. Their effective implementation requires functional and capable institutions with appropriate institutional arrangement for their effective implementation.

Another major explanation for the ineffective implementation of rural development policies in Nigeria is the high level of policy instability characterized by frequent reversal of policy associated with governance result in serious distortion in full implementation and actualization of policy goals and objectives (Inedu 2016). Most often, rural development policies or programs are discontinued whenever there is a change in government leadership. Usually, new government abandons the projects and programs of its predecessor even when such policy is appropriate. Thus, Ajadi (2010) notes that there is usually the absence of sustained cohesive and conclusive implementation of rural development policies. It is this propensity that led to the abandonment of better life for rural women of General Ibrahim Bagangida to the introduction of the family support programme by the succeeding regime of General Sani Abacha. In the context of this most rural development policies are not implemented to their logical conclusion (Chukwuemeka et al 2013).

For Malon (1992), there is a gross rural neglect in Nigeria's development policies which has resulted to rural underdevelopment as reflected in the lack of rural industrialization and poor physical, social and institutional infrastructures. This prevalent orientation is closely connected with the colonial economy which is still promoted in Nigeria. Olarenwaju and Falola (1992) also noted that such development strategy of concentrating investments in urban areas has resulted to a wide imbalance or gap in rural and urban development. This factor of relative neglect for rural development was reinforced by government's over-reliance on the petroleum economy.

Obviously, the petroleum economy has become the main stay of the country's economy and for which government has, over the years, paid less attention to the

development of the major activities of the rural areas particularly agriculture. Agriculture has continued to dwindle more as it loses its economic importance following the greater emphasis on the petroleum sector. In essence, the emphasis on petroleum economy and the subsequent neglect of the agricultural sector has contributed substantially to the current poor state of the rural economy and the general rural sector underdevelopment.

## 2. Lack of Integration of The Various Rural Development Efforts

There is a lack of cooperation among rural development institutions to ensure that their respective initiatives, actions and mandates are coordinated to reinforce and support each other and that their activities are streamlined towards effective realization of government's rural development objectives. Idowu (1999:181) observes this impediment to rural development in Nigeria in his comment thus:

The activities of various bodies involved in the development efforts and activities never dovetailed as expected. This is to say that the expected co-ordination among the different departments, ministries, Federal, states and the local governments for instance, on the implementation mechanisms has been very difficult to achieve.

Rural development efforts in Nigeria have not been given the integrated and comprehensive approach it requires. This has been a challenge to rural development and rural development in order to be effective has to be comprehensive, involving all aspects of rural life and involving the complimentary efforts of the local government, state government and federal government as well as the communities and voluntary agencies. Integration is indeed, necessary as the factors involved in rural development are interrelated and mutually enhance one another in their effectiveness (Okoli and Onah, 2002).

## 3. Poor Commitment of the Political Representative, Towards Enhancing Rural Development

The political leaders in Nigeria, either at the executive or the legislature arm, have all come from given rural areas of the country. These politicians at different

points and time, have observed the development needs of these rural areas and made promises too on how to address these development concerns of the respective rural areas of origin. However, their will and interest to actually articulate those problems and the strategies or programs for addressing them have, indeed, not been noticeable.

The prevalent and common observation is that they, hardly pursue conclusively the link to the development needs of rural parts of their constituency. This lack of interest and political will to project the development needs of the rural areas at the relevant political and bureaucratic power points does not induce government's prompt attention to the development needs of the rural areas (Chukwuemeka et al 2013). This is again reinforced by the fact that most political office holders (local government councillors and Supervisors, state commission and chairman of local government areas, state legislatures and federal legislature all detest hiring in the rural areas and have opted to ranker. Live in the metropolitan state capital or federal capital territory, Abuja. For this, they do not feel the impact of the gross deprivation obtainable in the rural areas and for which they tend not to realize the urgent and shire need for enhancing development in the rural areas (Chukwuemeka et al 2013).

These attitudes do not reflect effective political representation particularly for the rural population. Indeed, as Baba (2011) noted, political representation in Nigeria is essentially for private benefit and not for public benefit. This reasonably explains the nonchalant attitude by political leaders and representatives towards enhancing national development generally and that of their respective rural constituencies particularly.

## 4. The Inefficiency of the Local Government Areas

The local government areas occupy a strategic position in the development process of the rural areas. Even though it cannot be reasonably assumed that other higher tiers of government (state and federal tiers) do not have a role to play in enhancing rural sector development, the task constitutionally centres, in a larger part, on the local government. The primary

purpose of local government is to provide essential local services and thus accelerate the pace of social and economic development of the rural and grassroots people.

Indeed, the reconstitution of Nigeria into 301, 589 and 774 local government areas in 1976, 1991 and 1996 respectively was meant ostensibly to bring government closer to the local people and to speed up rural development. Sad enough, this objective has not been noticeably realized (Tonye, 1995; Baba, 2011). This is even so, despite the huge monthly statutory allocations to the local government areas. The inability of the local governments to work towards enhancing the rural development could, in large parts, be attributed to poor and inept leadership and pervasive corruption in the local government administrative system (Halidu, 2012; Anikeze, 2012).

The high level of corruption, for instance, makes it difficult for them to channel adequate fund and energy to effective rural development. As Anikeze (2012) noted that the interest of local government leadership primarily revolves around trivialities or at best around those schemes for which they hope to derive immediate personal gains. The net effect of this has been general stagnation in the development process of the rural people and their environment.

### **Conclusion**

The rural areas of Nigeria are largely characterized by lack of basic infrastructure facilities and general underdevelopment enhancing the rural development status is a prerequisite for sustainable national development. The various policy measures are developed to enhance development in the rural areas by successive governments in Nigeria have not translated with visible and meaningful

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transportation of the rural sector. One of these public policies on rural development is the Fadama III programme.

In conclusion, the Third National Fadama Development Project has progressive impacted rural development in Nigeria which needed to be consolidated in the subsequent phases ahead. The project has impacted positively on the following areas; input support, assets base of participants, impacted on participant's yield output and economic status of participants. However, the project performed minimally in terms of overall development of rural areas and this calls for tremendous need to sustain the programme so as to maximise the gains that are derivable from its lofty objectives. In the end, this paper recommended that:

- Federal Government needs to sustain the FADAMA programme in phases as it has been to support food production and sustain food security in Nigeria. And also to make rural development the top of the agenda of the national development in realization of the fact that enhanced rural development is a prerequisite for meaningful and sustainable overall national development.
- Furthermore, there is need for consistency in the execution of rural development programmes. Indeed, sustenance of appropriate rural development programs such as FADAMA should continue irrespective of changes in government.
- Since FADAMA program is a policy towards agricultural revolution and drive towards economic diversification from total dependence on oil, an overhaul of the institutional and legal framework for the design and implementation of subsequent phase of FADAMA program should be considered a utmost priority by the current administration.
- Lastly, the framework for implementation should centre on registered Farmers cooperatives.

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