

## Rural Development Projects in Nigeria: The case of Rivers State

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### Abstract

*The recent over flooding in about 20 States in Nigeria, throws up the age old question of the rural development efforts. Many of the affected areas are rural and many of the displaced are residents of rural areas. Many of these displaced people are more likely to migrate to the urban areas, therefore compounding the challenges of the over populated urban areas. The levels of destruction in these rural areas also reinforce the need to question public efforts towards rural development. This work examined rural development efforts in Rivers state, Nigeria and observed that though governments had made concerted efforts to address challenges confronting rural areas, there are still major difficulties. To sum up some of these are social, economic, psychological, attitudinal and natural. Governments should always appraise and concert efforts to complete any project it initiates.*

**Keywords:** Rural Development, community projects, Appraisal.

### 1. Background

One of the greatest problems of third world countries today is the high rate of rural urban drift, making the population in the cities, more difficult to manage. This rural urban drift poses serious challenges to the third world countries as only very few city governments have the resources and facilities to cope with such rapidly growing population (Otto, 2008a). The major cause of the high exodus to the urban areas is the neglect of rural areas, in spite of the fact that over 65 per cent of Nigerians are rural dwellers. The rural areas are generally characterized by high level of illiteracy, abject poverty, unemployment and lack of other basic infrastructural facilities including housing, electricity and inadequate communication facilities, though in 2002 President Obasanjo introduced the GSM services which have been extended to semi-urban areas (Otto, 2008b). The standard of living is generally low, this has partly informed the drift to urban areas where basic facilities are relatively more available and standards of living are higher.

The continued rural drift no doubt poses a serious threat to the economy of third world countries in general and Nigeria in particular. It is in the spirit of reversing these structures that governments in Nigeria especially the Rivers State initiated policies, projects and programmes that would provide succour for the rural dwellers. This was clearly enunciated in the Third National Development Plan (1975 – 1980) as follows:

The rural areas in general would require a new deal in the provision of social services. In almost every state, sizeable communities still exist without basic amenities, like clean water supply, hospitals and health centres, schools and electricity. (See Ihonvere 1987, Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) 1975)

This view was also re-stated in the Fourth National Development Plan (1981 - 1985). According to the plan (i.e. 4th Development Plan),

Although the current housing problem is undoubtedly more acute in urban centres, government realises that the majority of the population still lives in the rural areas, and that their housing needs should also receive adequate attention. To this end, government intends to pursue vigorous policy of integrated rural development, which has an important component, the provision of many housing units. In addition, some units of those to be made available under the National Housing Programme have been earmarked for rural areas (FGN, 1985).

It was actually in pursuance of the above objective, that the then civilian government of the 2<sup>nd</sup> republic

commissioned the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), Ibadan and some Institutions of higher learning to conduct comprehensive and detailed research into rural housing problems in the country. In addition government set up different agencies to deliver different programmes and projects aimed at rural development. It was believed that providing modern facilities in rural areas would mitigate rural-urban drift, reduce unemployment in cities and make people living in the rural areas happier (Johnarry, 1987, Ihonvbere, 1987). Moreover, if these facilities affect productivity, then the bulk of Nigerians would have benefited. However, data has shown that not all these programmes and projects are actually sustainable. Quite a number of these projects have failed, and government dreams in changing the living conditions of rural areas are far from being realised. This work reviews some of these rural projects and programmes with a view to isolate sources and militating factors inhibiting the realization of government dreams in Rivers State. To do this, a sample of such projects was used, which served as basis for the analysis. This work therefore attempts to identify problems affecting rural development initiatives by the government in Rivers State from 1967 to 2009.

Rivers state was created in 1967 out of the then Eastern region. However in 1993, Bayelsa state was carved out from the state. As it is now, the state has over 6 million people spread in 23 Local Government Areas (FGN, 2006). The state produces 100 per cent of Gas supply and about 60 per cent of crude oil supplies in Nigeria (Ameachi, 2009). It is rich in agricultural potentials and was a major source of palm produce before the oil boom in Nigeria. According to Governor Ameachi in his Independent Broadcast on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, the state has a land mass that is more than Switzerland and its size is greater than 130 countries in the World (Ameachi, 2009). Its tourism potentials are yet to be fully exploited. The state is divided into riverine and main land areas. The state has only one Urban City, namely Port Harcourt, a high level of urban employment and intense rural poverty amidst a high concentration of petroleum and oil production activities (Otto, 2008a).

## 2. Conceptual Framework

### 2.1 Rural Development Defined

Rural development is a means of bringing about enduring changes in the structure of the rural sector in a manner that productivity and output are increased, the technology and techniques of production are radically revolutionized with enhanced standard of living (Izeogu, 1987; Nkorn, 2000). The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA, 1972) defined rural development as "The outcome of a series of qualitative and quantitative changes occurring among rural population". It is a process "by which a set of technical, social, cultural and institutional measures are implemented, for the inhabitants of rural areas with the aim of improving socio- economic conditions of rural populace (ECA 1972). From the foregoing therefore, rural development constitutes a development effort to raise the level of awareness and living conditions of rural dwellers. Thus rural development encompasses radical improvement in social relationship governing land tenure, access to land, technology, labour, physical infrastructures, access to services and political organization of society. The central objectives of rural development revolve around the productivity, welfare and quality of life of the rural dwellers (Todaro and Smith, 2009).

### 2.2 Rural and Community Development

Rural and Community Development are generally concerned about improvements in the quality of life but community development may not be restricted to rural areas alone. Community development is about *self-help development efforts* from members of the community (Agiobenebo, 1987). Thus an urban community that identifies a need for a transformer in its locality and takes initiative to raise the required funds and other resources with which to provide for itself is actually undertaking community development. Similarly, community development can also occur in the rural areas. In fact, many rural communities are often found with one form of community development project or another. These include community roads, markets centres, village squares among others. In point, whereas rural development is all about the transformation and improvement of welfare in rural areas, irrespective of the source of development, community development is specific (Otto, 1999, Amringe 1998). It is development that is 'self-started' or self-engineered within the community. For example a community in Port Harcourt as Federal Housing Estate around Mile 4, may choose to install additional electricity transformer to meet the increased power needs of that community. In fact, around the Mgbuoba area in Port Harcourt, several roads were worked on in terms of resurfacing or other repairs by members of the community themselves. These are examples of community development programmes in urban areas.

### 2.3 Programme

Basically, a programme is an outline or collection of planned activities that will lead to a specific goal. For instance, a wedding reception programme is an outline of related events in a sequence, ultimately leading to the reception of the newly wedded couples and their visitors. The programme shows the plan of events. A computer programme is a set of instructions in code ultimately leading to attainment of specific goals. Similarly, an academic programme is a detailed outline of related courses leading to the achievement of a specific degree (that is, an objective). In the same vein, Agricultural Development Programme as a compendium of related agricultural projects that are aimed at agricultural development. In other words, a programme is a set of related activities that will lead to the achievement of a specific goal or objective (Tamuno and Otto, 2006). A programme may also be defined as a series of related events that accomplish to a specific project goal.

### 2.4 Project

A project may be defined as capital investments to develop facilities, to provide goods and services which will increase the aggregate consumption benefits of people (Fubara 1975, Little and Mirlees 1980; Ayo 1988 also see Ugoh and Ukpere, 2010). It may also be defined as any scheme or part of a scheme for investing resources which can be reasonably analysed and evaluated as an independent unit. However, according to Tamuno and Otto (2006), a Project may be defined as any planned activity with definite realizable expectation of returns. Usually projects are characterized by some factors which include (a) projects absorb resources such as labour, capital, time, land and materials. (b) Projects have capability to be independently analysed as a specific activity or item of investment. (c) Projects are undertaken because they provide some form of benefits. Benefits may include benefits in cash, in kind, in comfort, social benefits or market oriented benefits or political expediency. (d) A project starts at some point in time and ends at another point. It has a time dimension. These are very basic characteristics of projects. A series of projects could form a programme if they lead to the achievement of a specific goal. In this work, as stated earlier, the essence is to examine the rural development projects and programmes in the Rivers State from 1967 to 2009.

### 2.5 Government Rural Development Programme Initiative in Rivers State

Various rural development agencies and programmes have been initiated at one time or the other with the aim of changing the condition of living of rural dwellers. These rural development agencies and their programmes embrace all aspects of rural life such as health, education, water supply, good roads, good housing, job opportunities, electricity and agriculture, amongst others (Agrawal, 2009). Some agencies attempt to provide several services in integrated form, namely attempting to deal with more than one aspect of rural life. Below is a brief review of some of these government rural development programmes, and their impacts on rural development. In the analysis below, these projects or programmes have been classified by their areas of focus.

### 2.6 Agricultural Projects

Agriculture has been the bedrock of development in many countries. It is a source of food, employment, aesthetics, medicine, tourism and raw materials. Its importance has made different administrations in Nigeria to pursue programmes aimed at motivating agricultural output in the rural areas. Some of these programmes include the Green Revolution, Operation Feed the Nation and Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP) (Moro, 2008). The attainment of self-sufficiency in food production and improvement of the quality of life of the rural population, were the basic objectives of the aforementioned programmes. Here in Rivers State, the bulk of traditional farming and fishing is carried out by rural uneducated population, who use crude and outdated implements. The common feature of this system is subsistence farming with its resultant low output.

This state of affairs of the rural dwellers has been a matter of serious concern to the government. Consequently, the state Government through relevant state agencies tried to increase food production as a way of not only providing food for the teeming population, but also providing employment opportunities in our rural areas. The state set up several agricultural projects and programmes. One of these programmes was the school to land programme (Moro, 2008). Other agricultural programmes set up in the state include: Accelerated Development of Oil Palm Initiative (ADOPI) in 2008, the Risonpalm Projects set up in 1978, Delta Rubber Company Limited established in 1975, Roots and Tuber Expansion

Project (RTEP), which was part of the International Funding for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was launched by the Federal Government in 2002, of which the Rivers State paid its counterpart funding in 2008 (Nwanyanwu, 2010). Below are the locations for the RTEP.

**Table 1:** Roots and Tuber Expansion Projects in Rivers State

Location of Project	Local Government Area
Rumuoro	Emohua
Rumucho	Emohua
Isu-Umindla	Etche
Okpu-Olakwu	Etche
Abalama	Asari Toru
Tema	Asari Toru
Umuebalu	Etche
Rumuada-Ogbakiri	Emohua

**Source:** Nwanyanwu, (2010).

In January 2006, the Rivers State Sustainable Development was established by the State Government to act as an adhoc implementation committee to accelerate grassroots development in Rivers State (Pepple, 2013).

### 2.7 School to Land Programme

The State Government established of the “School to Land” programme in 1985 with a view to providing employment opportunities in rural areas for the youth and also to evolve a dynamic agricultural policy for the cultivation of large acres of land, since the extant farmers were incapable of actualising the aims and aspirations of the government. The rationale was to create a new breed of farmers, who want to be career farmers, who were young and vibrant (Rivers State Government (RSG), 1985). This informed the birth of the School to Land programme, a programme designed to train and utilize young school leavers who are interested in forging a career in farming. An edict, the School to Land Authority Edict No 4 of 1985 was promulgated to give the programme a legal backing (RSG, 1985). The long run objectives, apart from improving food production, also included providing employment opportunity for young school leavers, thereby reducing rural urban drift. The school to land project is now moribund, if not completely dead. Its farm in Egbeke was acquired by Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency in 2008. It was moved to the ADP farm at Rumuodumaya (Nwanyanwu, 2010).

Data on school to land farm as at 1986

s/n	Farm Location	LGAs	Farm size in Hectre	No of Farmers	No of Staff
1	Bunu-Tai	Otelga	314	258	14
2	Iriebe	Oyigbo	500	311	17
3	Kpoa	Khana	455	191	16
4	Egbeke	Etche	300	190	14
5	Bori	Khana	260	116	6
6	Agbeta	Otelga	3000	129	1
7	Okordia	Yenagoa	300	146	8
8	Ogbia	Brass	300	176	-
9	Sagbama	Sagbama	300	41	1
10	Bukama	Degema	500	78	-

**Source:** Nwanyanwu (2010).

### 2.8 Roads and Rural Infrastructure

The Federal Government working with the states directed its attention to the rural sector with a view to generating quick transformation and development in the rural areas. It established the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural

Infrastructures (DFRRI) in 1986 with the basic objectives of effectively promoting grass root social mobilization, and in close collaboration with the state government, mounted a vigorous programme of rural development in all the then 304 local government areas in the country (RSG, 1987). Such a vigorous programme of action was aimed at achieving integrated rural development, especially in improving the quality of life and standard of living of the rural population, laying a solid foundation for economic, political and social transformation of the rural areas and ensuring a deep rooted and self-sustaining development. DFRRI was decentralised into states and the states had the mandate to execute projects that were relevant to it, since each state was more likely to have peculiar challenges in its bid to rural development (Johnnary, 1987). To realise the above dreams, the Directorate earmarked on the implementation by the opening of rural feeder roads, provision of rural water and sanitation, food and agriculture; adult education, rural electrification, rural industrialization, rural housing, rural land use mapping among others. Based on these objectives and available means of achieving them, the programmes of the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures, should have enhanced and accelerated the development of the rural economy, and ipso facto, the overall development of the state and the nation. However these objectives and aspirations were not met. DFRRI is now defunct.

### 2.9 *Integrated Rural Development in Rivers State*

In keeping with the broad national objectives of DFRRI, and the need for full participation of all the citizens of the Rivers State, the then Military Governor, Col. S.I. Ukpo on 14th December 1986, launched the Rivers State Government initiatives for Integrated Rural Development Christened, Accelerated Integrated Rural Development Programme (RAIRDEP). According to the Governor, RAIRDEP was a new philosophy of rural based development programme and was designed to upgrade the rural communities to a semi urban status by providing communication network and a grand plan of infrastructural facilities equitably distributed to all the geographical components that make up Rivers State (Okowa, 1987, Johnnary, 1987).

The Governor went further to describe RAIRDEP as the policy blue print of accelerated integrated rural development to be undertaken by his administration with the cardinal focus on the following agents of implementation: Ministry of Works and Transport, the State Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural infrastructure, Community Development Committees (CDC) of various villages and towns in the local Government Areas, and private organizations including clubs, companies, unions, associations, philanthropists among others. On the whole, the overall policy objectives of RAIRDEP could be summarized as:

- a) To create employment opportunities in rural areas by encouraging improved agricultural production.
- b) To maximize the use of existing social, health and educational facilities and to provide new ones where necessary.

However, it is clear that RAIRDEP was not very successful. The rural areas still remain rural in outlook with very few modern facilities and a high level of poverty. The in-coming Governor who took over the state's Administration did not continue with the programme.

### 2.10 *Projects Engineered by Wives of Chief Executives (First Ladies)*

In recognition of the immense role of rural women in the nation's economy, the Federal Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure DFRRI, organized and sponsored a workshop on 'Women in Rural Development' in Abuja on September 1987. This workshop was initiated by the then first lady, Mrs. Maryam Babangida, and it served as launch pad for the take-off of the 'Better life for Rural Women' programme in Nigeria. Arising from this workshop, the first lady of Rivers State, the then wife of the Military Governor, Mrs. Ufuoma S. Ukpo, inaugurated on September 30, 1987, the implementation committee for the 'Better Life for Rural Women Programme, with the prime objective of improving the life of rural women of the state (Ukpo, 1987). The River State Chapter of this programme was formally launched on October 18th, 1987 by the Military Governor Col. A.S.I. Ukpo, at Kaani, a rural community in Khana/Oyigbo Local Government Area as was then called.

However with the change in leadership, Mrs. Jane Adeleye introduced a new structure and a number of far reaching ideas that yielded the expected dividend and enhanced grass root mobilization (Adeleye, 1989).

In summary the goals of the programme were as follows.

1. To improve the economic status of rural women by establishing cottage and small-scale industries,
2. To encourage the rural women to form themselves into cooperatives,
3. To establish multi-purpose women centres among others.

With the change of governments and the assumption of office by subsequent Administrations, the first ladies recreated and engineered new projects. Consequently, the Better Life for Rural Women was replaced with Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) and later Family Support Programme (FSP), and then the Adolescence Project (TAP) (Adeleye, 1989) and so on. Hence, from the precedent set by the wife of the then President Babangida, all subsequent wives of Governors and Presidents have had to introduce one programme or another. Usually the focus of interest of these projects includes rural women, children or the adolescence. Whether these projects and programmes achieved their objectives or were just conduits to transfer public resources to private hands is now for the public to judge.

### **3. Intervention Agencies**

#### *3.1 1.5 Per cent Derivation Fund*

The first visible interventionist agency created post civil war as applicable to Rivers State was the 1.5 per cent derivation fund (UN, 1996). This interventionist agency was aimed at addressing ecological problems in the deprived rural areas of the oil producing Niger Delta Communities. The agency which was initiated as a result of agitations from oil producing communities especially the Ogoni, (thanks to Ken Saro-Wiwa) (Ukpere, 2007). This later metamorphosed to an elaborate agency; the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC). The volume of funds for the agency was very much inadequate for the massive challenges it had to contend with. Consequently it had to be replaced with the OMPADEC and the volume of funds rose to 3 per cent of the National Budget.

#### *3.2 Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC)*

Arising from meetings held by the Federal Government of Nigeria, Oil Companies and Community leaders of Niger Delta areas in Port Harcourt, in Rivers State, the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) was set up by President Ibrahim Babangida in 1992 (Babangida,1992). This Commission was established to cater for only oil producing communities in eight Oil Producing States. Primarily, OMPADEC was established as a physical and human development agency for oil producing communities, with a view to compensating materially, the communities, local government areas and states which have suffered damage, or deprivation as a result of mineral oil prospecting in their areas. In other words, it was an interventionist agency.

The commission's major goals in respect of inter-community projects include provision of portable water, provision of electricity and opening up of roads, improvement and supporting of farming, fishing methods and encouragement of private entrepreneurship, among others. As events proved, the agency under the Abacha regime was starved of funds, its contractual obligation could not be met and its activities dwindled until its cessation in 2000. Nevertheless, the Nigerian corruption bug may have also affected it.

#### *3.3 The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)*

The Niger Delta Development Commission was established by Act of Parliament and signed by the Obasanjo Administration in 2000. It took over the assets and liabilities of its precursor the Oil Minerals Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) with a higher volume of funding, namely 13 per cent. Its mandates were:

- a) Formulation of policies and guidelines for development,
- b) Conception, planning and implementation of projects and programmes for sustainable development of the Niger Delta Area including, roads, jetties waterways health Education, employment among others,
- c) Surveying the Niger Delta Region in order to ascertain measures which are necessary to promote its physical and socio-economic development,
- d) Implementation of all measures approved for the development of the Niger Delta Region by the Federal Government and the member states of the Commission, and
- e) Preparing master plans and schemes designed to promote the physical development of the Niger Delta Region.

The first major problem of the Niger Delta Development Commission was over Staffing of the agency and the consequent large salary bill. The commission has not performed, though it is argued that its resources cannot cope with the volume of problems in the Niger Delta.

### **3.4 Other Programmes of Rural Development**

Apart from the above mentioned programmes, there were quiet a number of other projects and programmes initiated and executed by government in the Rivers State. These programmes include Poverty Alleviation Programme, such as the Odili housing project delivered within his first 100 days in office and the ambitious Ameachi schools project among others (Ebri, 2013:5, Oloja, 2013:52). These programmes and projects were aimed at reaching out to the rural dwellers with one type of development programme or the other. However, their impacts were often not fully felt at the rural communities. In the case of the housing project, the core aim was to sell them to willing buyers and thus improve rural housing but the cost of those houses though moderate were at that time too expensive for the rural dwellers to patronize. Moreover, people generally view such projects as government largesse and expected that the government should generously provide these as rewards for political patronage. In all, these houses were not bought in the rural areas and these have now been converted to other uses which were unforeseen at the time of planning. Poverty alleviation programmes as applicable in the state was also not fundamentally successful in the rural areas (Otto, 1999). It would appear people in the urban areas hijacked the programmes' benefits, such that the programmes were not popular in the rural areas.

## **4. Problems of Government Initiated Projects in Rural Development**

From the analysis above, it is obvious that many of these projects did not succeed to deliver the pre-designed objectives at the right time in accordance with government plan. The following factors can largely be identified as problems hindering development programmes:

### **4.1 Poor Programme Implementation and Monitoring**

No doubt government rural development agencies have always come up with well worded and beautiful programmes that if properly implemented could actually assist in mitigating the drift to the urban areas and change the situation in the rural areas. However, many of these programmes were poorly implemented by people who may have different objectives from those of the chief executives. Thus most projects aimed at developing the rural areas remain very laudable projects at drawing boards and at pages of newspapers and radio broadcast but when the implementation starts the ground facts portrays something different. Even when monitoring officers visit the projects, the reports they bring back to the offices quite often may not be exact. These reports may also not be read.

### **4.2 Planning defects**

Planning is looking ahead, setting goals and considering ways of achieving the goals. A precondition for successful project execution is a proper and adequate planning. Proper preparations are part of the planning process. These ultimately help to identify a realistic cost of the projects, executing patterns and possible constraints including likely agents that will align themselves to the project. Preparation is very essential for its successful implementation. Project preparation must cover technical, institutional, economic and financial components necessary to deliver the project at the right time and right quality. However, either due to poor capacity of bureaucrats or lack of will, the necessary planning is sometimes not adequate. This ultimately leads to failure at the time of implementation. Some of these programmes are politically motivated and government embarks on them without adequate planning and preparations. This usually led to their failure and the projects are abandoned half way through. For instance, the Odili rural housing scheme did not accurately forecast demand for the project before embarking on the project.

### **4.3 Lack of Continuity of the Programmes**

Lack of continuity has also in no small measure acted as a setback in the operations of rural development projects. Each government often abandons the development projects or programmes of previous governments but rather sets up its own in most cases with different targets and direction of activity, for example, Better life for Rural Woman was replaced by Family Support Programme, the Community Banks were replaced by Micro Finance Banks. What it then means is that the implementations of the programmes of the previous administrations were abandoned when they are yet to have full effect on targets. This lack of continuity badly affects flow of rural development programmes. In most cases, no link exists between the old and new programmes.

#### 4.4 Weak Project Appraisals

Times without number governments embark on projects without proper appraisal. Appraisal checks and compares the appropriateness for project preparation and helps to rank the *worthwhileness* of projects. The purpose of proper appraisal is to confirm that the project has a satisfactory economic rate of return, and if the project is to be financed by a third party such as banks, necessary arrangements concerning timely release of funds should be considered as well as ways of procuring materials. This major emphasis of project appraisal is to examine the feasibility of sensitive sections of the project especially financial projections. In civil construction, appraisal ensures that appropriate technically acceptable standards are adequately provided for, and because of the frequency of rains in Rivers state, that an efficient critical path analysis had been done to forestall project delays and its consequent cost overruns. In other words, a wrong project scheduling pattern can cause pains on society as observed in many road projects in Rivers state, which reflects a bad image on the government and a drain on limited resources of the contractor and the state.

#### 4.5 Poor Funding

As earlier noted, many of these rural development initiatives have political undertone, with the result that they may be embarked upon even when there is actually insufficient money for them. Thus, the project may be abandoned or allowed to die especially when the initiator is no longer in office. For instance, one of the reasons why the rural housing programmes failed is because of poor funding. There was no functional financial institution to service rural housing since individual savings could not cope. The result was that agencies engaged in rural development programmes became short lived or ineffective.

#### 4.6 Hijacking of Programme Benefits

This problem of diverting the benefits of rural development programmes by urban dwellers remains a matter of great concern. Quite often rural development projects are processed by government functionaries. These people mainly live in urban areas but are better able to understand the workings of these projects including the processes, the potential benefits and how to access these benefits. Thus, for many construction projects, the contractors are urban based, the bankers or financiers are urban based and even projects such as Better Life for Rural Women, the key drivers were urban based. For instance, most of the activities of DFRRI were felt in urban areas with just little presence in rural areas. This is why the Better Life for Rural Women could better be called better life for urban women because the actual rural women were either too busy in fishing ports or farm sites or may not have been sufficiently exposed to tap the benefits of these programmes in a meaningful form. The same is applicable to Poverty Alleviation and Family Support Programmes. Records show that the actual beneficiaries were not the rural people they were meant for. The rural dwellers do not have sufficient access to the rural development agencies meant for the development of their rural areas.

#### 4.7 Corruption

Part of the reason for project failure in Rivers State is disconnect between inspection reports in the offices and the actual work statuses on the project sites. In many projects, field officers are sent out to monitor projects especially those being executed by contractors. Sometimes these contractors may not have executed their work in line with the volume of payments they had received or in line with their contractual schedule. The tendency at such times is to influence the monitoring officers to present positive reports about the execution status of the projects. There are cases where contractors have met the contractual obligations and actually done a good job but had neglected the 'public relations' role. The report on the projects of these agents may not be as good as the actual situation or better than the inefficient contractor who had not neglected public relations. Thus, it is difficult to get the true value of project monitoring from some reports usually submitted to the offices.

### 5. Recommendations and Conclusion

Having identified the major sources of the failure of public rural development project initiatives, it is imperative to recommend that:

- i. Public rural development initiatives whether politically or socially motivated should be subjected to proper,



social cost-benefit analysis before implementation. These projects should continually be monitored and reviewed when necessary especially when inflation has set in.

- ii. Part of proper planning and preparation is the availability of fund, and technical knowhow among other considerations. Adequate provision should be made to monitor all aspect of project implementation and execution to ensure strict compliance.
- iii. To ensure continuity, it may be important to suggest that governments should concert efforts to complete abandoned projects. New projects should be fully discussed before commencement and once started, the initiators must take responsibility for the completion of the projects.

There is no doubt that if the above are adhered to, the efforts of government towards rural development will bear the desired fruits.

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