

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AS INSTRUMENTS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA, 1976-1991

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Abstract

The plight of the rural dwellers and living conditions in the rural areas were issues of concern to governments of developing countries. Several strategies were adopted to address the challenges these conditions posed. Of significant importance in this regard were government agencies. With respect to Nigeria, these agencies were the River Basin Development Authority, (RBDA), The Agricultural Development Project (ADP) and the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). This paper seeks to demonstrate the suitability of these agencies as instruments of rural development, with a focus on Anambra State, during the period, 1976-1991. The consideration for this paper derives from the fact that temporal and spatial perspectives provide the accurate lenses through which the rural development agencies can be studied. This paper adopts a historical analysis of data, based on the mixed-method approach. Data derived from primary and secondary sources are presented thematically. It does not rely on theoretical constructs, but critically engages the available data to substantiate the kernel of its arguments. From the evidence available, the paper contends that while the RBDA and ADP projects were skewed towards agricultural transformation, those of the DFRRI was more holistic in approach. However, the projects executed by the agencies proved not to be sustainable.

Keywords: Government Agencies, Rural Development, Suitability, Sustainability, Anambra State, Nigeria

Introduction

The imperativeness of integrated rural development in the development process of African countries can hardly be overstated. This is against the consideration that their rural areas “are characterized by depressing meagre per capita, endemic poverty made manifest in widespread hunger, malnutrition, poor health and general lack of access to formal education, unlivable houses and various forms of social and political isolation.”¹ Again, the gravitation of the active work force to the urban centres tended to cripple agricultural production which is the mainstay of rural economy. Furthermore, the drift to urban centres was a matter of concern because of the increased rate of urban poverty and unemployment, housing challenges, increasing crime rate and other social vices in the urban centres. There is also the widely held view that priority to rural, particularly agricultural production would stimulate the production of raw materials for industrial purposes² provide employment for the youth, thereby stem the rural-urban drift and address the food challenges that threaten the continent.

Finally, scholars realized that development of the rural areas is central to national economic development. As Smock and Smock assert, “the economic health of the total economy depends largely upon the vigour of the rural sector.”³ Lending his voice to this perspective, F.C Okafor posits:

Even at the international level, it has become widely accepted by International Development institutions, such as the World Bank, as well as National Development Agencies, that if the developing countries are to be able to feed their very-growing population, and to close the gap the gap between themselves and the developed world, a major upgrading of the standard of living and productivity of their rural sector is an absolute necessity.⁴

In corroboration of this view, Todaro and Smith are of the opinion that;

If development is to take place and become self-sustaining, it will have to include the rural areas in general and agricultural sector in particular, the core problems of widespread poverty, growing inequality, rapid population growth and rising unemployment all find their origins in the stagnation and too often retrogression of economic life in rural areas.⁵

In realization of the urgent need for rural development, Nigeria articulates its rural development objectives thus,

The main objectives of rural development are to increase rural productivity, diversify rural economy and generally enhance the quality of life in the rural areas. ...in addition to increasing agricultural productivity, efforts should be made towards the provision of social amenities, such as pipe-borne water, feeder roads and electricity. The combined efforts should be to abridge the overwhelming gap between the urban and rural population.⁶

Thus, rural development was a subject of interest to federal and state governments. The federal and state government bodies saddled with the task of rural development were; the ministries of agriculture, the rural development division of cognate federal and state ministries, the ministry of public utilities which supervised the Rural Electrification Board, and the Water Corporation, part of whose task was the execution of the Rural Water Scheme. However, these programmes were provincial in outlook and devoted to specific aspects of rural development. The concern of this paper is the agencies devoted to integrated rural development. Integrated rural development is the development strategy that adopts a multi-sectoral approach. It places significant importance on the following components of rural development: transformation and development of the agricultural sector and practices, promotion of rural industrialization; creation of, and increasing the income-generating capacities of rural dwellers and the provision of basic infrastructure and social amenities. The rural dwellers are also partners with policy makers and administrators in the design and implementation of the rural development strategies and programmes. S.K.T Williams sees it as "... a multi-purpose rural development programme." In his view, "programmes of agriculture, education and training, health and nutrition, rural electrification, portable water, cooperatives and the like must not be considered in isolation; each programme must be considered in connection with every other."⁷ This programme is integrated in the sense that it seeks to develop all sectors of the rural economy and effectively link them to the urban and national economy. Onokerhoraye affirms that temporal and spatial arrangements provide useful basis for integrated rural development planning.⁸ It is in this regard that this paper studies integrated rural development agencies in Anambra State, Nigeria, during the period, 1976-1991. It presents the historical origins of the agencies involved in integrated rural development, discusses their overall achievement and appraises their performance as instruments of rural development.

There exists a plethora and motley of studies on rural development in Nigeria. For instance, some of these studies broach topical issues and provide theoretical insights on rural development.⁹ Others discuss rural development agencies and policies without recourse to spatial and temporal considerations.¹⁰ Furthermore, scholars also discuss it in spatial perspective without an eye on the temporality.¹¹ In the same vein, the subject has been discussed in spatial perspective without examining temporal dimension.¹² These studies, no doubt, provide useful insights on the subject of this paper and contain data invaluable to it, yet they provide incomplete pictures that do not warrant an in-depth and dispassionate assessment of the performance of the agencies as instruments of integrated rural development in a geo-political setting. This appears to be at variance with the time-honoured espousal of Onokerhoraye that spatial and temporal benchmarks provide the basis for the study of integrated rural development. It is in deference to this that the study embarks on understanding the suitability of government agencies as instruments of integrated rural development in Nigeria, with focus on Anambra State from 1970-1991. These agencies are the River Basin Development Authority (RBDA); Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) and the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI).

To do justice to this task this paper is organized in three sections. The first is the introduction which provides the requisite information that guides the reader to the essence of the paper. The second discusses each of the agencies while the third presents the concluding reflections.

The River Basin Development Authority (RBDA)

This is the maiden federal government agency devoted to integrated rural development. It has a historical backdrop that dates to 1973. The concept in which the River Basin Development Project (RBDP) was extended nationwide was conceived in the country's Third National Development Plan.¹³ The mandates of the programme were the infrastructural and agricultural transformation of the rural areas. The government established River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) for this purpose. The Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority (AIRBDA) served the state.

The major functions of the RBDA in infrastructural development over time, were;

- to undertake comprehensive development of both surface and underground water resources for multi-purpose;
- to undertake schemes for the control of floods, erosion and for watershed management;
- to supply water from the Authorities completed storage schemes to all users for a fee to be determined by the authorities concerned with the approval of the minister;
- to provide water from reservoirs, wells and boreholes under the Authority concerned for urban and rural water supply schemes on request by the state governments when directed to do so by minister;
- to construct, operate and maintain infrastructural; services such as roads and bridges linking projects sites, provided such infrastructural services are included and form part of an integral part of the list of approval projects; and
- to assist states and local governments in the implementation of rural development projects. The area of assistance include; the construction of dams, feeder roads and the sinking of well and boreholes, provision of water for rural water supply scheme, establishment of grazing reservoirs and training of staff for the running and maintenance of rural development schemes.¹⁴

With respect to improvement and transformation of the agricultural sector, the authorities were;

- to develop irrigation schemes and lease the irrigated land to farmers or recognized association in the locality of the area concerned for a fee to be determined by the Authority concerned with the approval of the minister;
- to undertake mechanical cleaning and cultivation of land for the production of livestock, etc;
- to undertake large-scale multiplication of improved seedlings for distribution to farmers and for afforestation schemes;
- to undertake large-scale rearing of improved livestock and poultry for distribution to farmers;
- to process crops, livestock products and fish produced by farmers in the authorities area in partnership with state agencies and any other person.¹⁵

The concepts of the RBDP were modified severally as a result of which the Authority underwent reorganizations, some of which were minor while others were radical and fundamental, resulting in major shifts in its original philosophy. For instance, in 1984, the Buhari/Idiagbon-led federal government reorganized the RBDA's by raising their member to 18 (eighteen), mainly on geo-political profile. Each state (then) with the exception of Lagos and Ogun had its RBDA. The AIRBDA was split into Anambra River Basin Development Authority (ARBDA) and Imo River Basin Development Authority (IRBDA). The former, as the name implies, served Anambra State and the headquarters was located at Aguleri. The reorganization also enlarged the functions and responsibilities of the Authority in include rural development. Consequently, their nomenclature changed to River Basin and Rural Development Authority (RBRDA)- the Anambra River Basin and Rural Development Authority, for the state.

The General Babangida regime also introduced its own reorganizational measures. These measures were embodied in Decree No. 35 of 1987. The hallmarks of these measures were; the restoration of the Authority to its pre-1984 eleven Authorities' structure, divesting it of rural development and direct agricultural production functions and partial privatization of the Authorities by the sale to the public all their agricultural projects, tagged 'non-water' projects by the technical committee on privatization and commercialization.¹⁶

From the foregoing, it is evident that the RBDA had rural development content. But the pertinent question is; to what extent did the RBRDA, in relation to Anambra State, discharge its rural development functions. Certainly, the Authority engaged in the provision of infrastructure, social amenities and improvement of agricultural production in the state. A few examples could be cited. With respect to rural water supply, the RBRDA played marginal role in the provision of potable water to rural communities. Through its Underground Water Resource (borehole) Development programme which began operation in 1981, it drilled boreholes where geo-physical investigations confirm the feasibility of drilling boreholes. It also offered borehole drilling services on commercial basis. Typical examples of the borehole projects were those located in Omor, Ikem, Mgbakwu in Uzo-Uwani, Isi-Uzo and Awka LGAs, respectively. It developed access roads that lead to its major project installations and projects, located in Ikem, Omor and Aguleri. These installations were also provided with electricity. Furthermore, its Lower Anambra Irrigation Project (LAIP) was instrumental to the transformation of Omor from a rustic, backwater community to one with bustling economic and social activities. The contributions of the Authority to agricultural production and improvement

of rural farmer's condition have been discussed extensively by the writer elsewhere,¹⁷ and therefore needs no rehash here.

Be that as it may, these activities need interrogation for the perceptive observer to have a clearer picture of the contributions of the RBDA to integrated rural development as well as its suitability for the purpose.

It is unfortunate to note that all the infrastructural facilities provided by the Authority were located at its project sites and basically to serve such installations. The adjoining rural communities only benefitted indirectly from such infrastructures and social amenities. With respect to the commercial aspect of its Underground water (borehole) Development Programme, there is no accurate record on the communities and individuals that benefitted for this service. Nonetheless, it could not be disputed that quite few of these projects were executed. A source is of the view that the prohibitive cost of such services as rendered by the Authority was the major inhibitor to mass patronage of the programme.¹⁸

The projects of the Authority were mixed blessings to the host communities. Beside the tangential positive impact already mentioned, they also had negative or adverse effects on such communities. In the first place, the expropriation of land for the Authority's project led to the scarcity of land in host communities and generated dispute over the sharing of the compensation paid for the land acquired. With respect to the former, there was drastic reduction in the land available for farming and drop in the number of years land laid fallow in order to recover its fertility. This negatively affected the agricultural output of the people and their income-generating activities, thus engendering poverty. A cross-section of the elders in Mgbakwu bemoaned the loss of their farmland to the Authority's crops, livestock and poultry project in the town.¹⁹ On the latter, it is a common knowledge that compensation paid by government or its agencies is often not commensurate with the damages done, the land acquired and also not equitably distributed. This often led to conflict within and between affected communities. The case of the LAIP appears quite outstanding. A few examples can be cited. In 1987, the accusation by members of a section of Umumbo community against their leaders of misappropriating the compensation paid by the Authority almost tore the community apart. Again, in 1988, there was a conflict between the two farming communities of the LAIP, viz; Omor and Ikpakwu, which resulted in project farmers almost abandoning their homes and rice farms.²⁰ Also, LAIP impacted negatively on the ecology of some communities in its catchment area. The construction of the hydro-agricultural (irrigation) project resulted in massive displacement of the rural farmers and members of such communities as a result of the alteration of the ecosystem of the lower Anambra River Basin by the dislocation of the flow of the Do and Anambra Rivers. This had adverse impact on the environment of the area. It tended to jeopardize their economic and socio-cultural life. E.E. Emeghara's study reveals that at the face of the acquisition of 3580 hectares of land for the LAIP, alternative lands were not provided to the displaced farmers that hitherto held titles to them. Such people were not only displaced from their farmlands, but also their traditional abode.²¹

Having discussed the projects executed by the Authority, it is pertinent, at this juncture to evaluate the suitability of the RBDA as a rural development agency. A worthwhile feature of any rural development agency is the tendency to integrate, include and involve the rural dwellers in the selection, planning and execution of its projects. The RBDA appears to be thoroughly deficient in this respect. The choice of its project was determined by the minister of the supervising ministry and board of the agency without recourse to rural dwellers who were expected to be the greatest beneficiaries of such project. In this respect, the RBDA adopts the Top-Down Approach to rural development planning. The major shortcoming of this approach is the provision of the 'assumed-needs' of the rural dwellers, which in most cases, may not be the immediate and priority needs of the rural dwellers. Consequently, it would be seen as an 'imposition' from above. As a result, some of the benefiting communities may not have a sense of ownership of the project-hence there could be a lack of commitment and dedication in their management. Again, the RBDA functions tilt heavily towards agricultural transformation and improvement with just a scant attention to the provision of infrastructure and social amenities.

The Agricultural Development Programme (ADP)

This is another government agency engaged in integrated rural development. It was inaugurated in the state on 5th August, 1985 and commenced operations in the 1986 farming season. Its establishment came under the First Phase Multi-State, ADP (MSADP-1), which included six other states in the country. The MSADP-1 was jointly financed by the World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the federal government and the state

government at the following proportions, 61.8 percent, 6.8 percent, 15.5 percent and 15.9 percent, respectively.²² The world Bank and IFAD contributions came piece meal, in tranches and in the form of fund and capital goods. The major of these donor agencies' contributions to the state ADP, came in 1990, during which most of the project vehicles, motorcycles and tractors were delivered and the ADP recruited most of its field officers.²³ No sooner were these items delivered than the state was, on 27th August, 1991, split into Enugu and Anambra States, which marks the terminus of this paper. Therefore, its overall impact on Anambra State, our study area, would appear short-lived and slender. However, we shall attempt an analysis and exposition of the ADP as a rural development agency.

The broad objectives of the ADP, J.O. Mozie observes "was to improve the standard of living and welfare of the small holder farmers by raising their productivity and farm incomes through integrated rural development."²⁴ This was to be achieved through the following means:

- strengthening agricultural services through a unified extension services and on-farming adaptive capacity;
- provision of farm inputs to farmers at the village level at reasonable and affordable prices;
- establishment and organization of a disciplined and support performance-oriented Unified Extension Services capable of monitoring the small holder farmers and extension staff for adoption of relevant technologies;
- encouraging adequate maintenance of agricultural lands by good conservation methods;
- sponsoring and encouraging agro-processing, farm credit, farm storage and marketing of farm produce;
- undertake the rehabilitation, implement and maintenance of factor roads, and provision of potable water to the rural areas.²⁵

For effective service delivery, the ADP was organized in eight functional units, otherwise referred to as sub-programmes. These sub-programmes are further constituted into core sub-programmes and support sub-programmes. As their names imply, the core sub-programmes were responsible for the planning and execution of the ADP projects while the support sub-programmes provide support services which facilitate the task of the core sub-programme.

An assessment of the ADP as a rural development agency tends to reveal that its activities were centered primarily on the improvement and transformation of the agricultural sector, with very minimal concern on the development of infrastructures and social amenities. The achievements and contributions of the ADP to the transformation of agricultural production have been discussed elsewhere by this writer.²⁶ Suffice it to say that the ADP transformed agricultural production in the state through revitalized extension service, input distribution and technology development, transfer and adoption. It also made some progress in incorporating gender perspective in research and extension through the Women-in-Agriculture programme. This programme attended to the specific needs of rural women's active participation in agriculture.

The ADP's achievement in the areas of rural infrastructure was quite minimal. It made only scant contribution towards rural/access road construction and maintenance and in the provision potable water. With regard to access roads, it embarked only on the maintenance of seven roads, the most popular of which was the Aguleri-Aguleri-Otu road. The potable rural water projects were the Akwa-Ihiala; Okofia, Otolu Nnewi, and Ndiakparata-Izzi, projects.²⁷

From the foregoing analysis, it would seem that the rural development functions of the ADP were skewed in favour of agricultural transformation and development. A typical rural development agency should be holistic, inclusive and designed to give equitable attention to all sectors of the rural economy as the basis for the integration of the rural economy to urban and national economy, thereby contributing to the overall growth and development of the nation's economy. But the ADP appears totally flawed and deficient in this respect. Again, it tended to promote the Top-down approach to rural development as the design and implementation of its programmes were the exclusive preserves of the major foreign donors without input from the local/rural farmers that benefited from the projects.

The Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFFRI)

Following the poor results from the previous rural development agencies which placed great emphasizes on agricultural improvement and transformation, the federal government conceived an innovative and comprehensive scheme to improve the life of the rural dwellers and uplift the living conditions in the rural areas. As the Head of State, General Ibrahim Babangida declares in his 1986 Budget speech;

Rural development will move away from the past narrow sectoral preoccupation with the generation of food and fibre surpluses to overall formulation of a national rural

development strategy with emphasis on the alleviation of rural poverty and enhancement of the quality of rural life.²⁸

Consequently, the federal government, on 6th February, 1986, commenced the operations of the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures. The Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure Act, Decree No. 4 of 1987. Its principal broad objectives, Njoku observes,

were to enhance rural income levels, empower the rural population to produce wide range and variety of goods and services for both rural consumption and exchange, and to bring about and ensure a deep rooted and self-sustaining rural development process based on the purposively mobilized masses.²⁹

The activities of DFRRI could be grouped into the following broad areas; provision of economic and social infrastructures, production of agricultural input, development and dissemination of improved technology to enhance agriculture and rural housing; and mobilization for mass participation in rural development. However, the DFRRI identified the development of agriculture, local industries and provision of rural infrastructures as critical areas of concentration for the fulfilment of its objectives. Its programmes were organized in phases and through the state governments. A state could only key into a new phase of a project on the successful and satisfactory completion of an ongoing one. The Directorate did not embark on direct execution of its projects. Rather, it used appropriate ministries, government departments and parastatals as well as the three tiers of government for this purpose.

The state government adopted the Task Force Approach in the execution of the projects. In justification of this approach, an official government document declares;

A Task Force by its very nature is a body which is set up to deal with a particular crises situation and once the situation disappears or normalizes; the Task Force itself is dissolved. It is usually set up where an abnormal situation has arisen and it is felt that the usual government machinery cannot deal with it within a set time frame. Again, the Task Force permits the setting up of an interdisciplinary team which can work together to solve a particular problem which would have taken a much longer period through the consultative process.

Finally, since Task Forces are not necessarily bound by civil service rules, they can work any hours, co-opt anybody, cut through red tapes and achieve the objectives within a much shorter time frame.³⁰

The Government's major concern was the integrated development of the rural areas. And because of the worsening economic situation of the time, coupled with the privations from the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), the problem of rural development was of crises nature and speed of solution might not be feasible with the typical ministerial method of operation. Some of the Task Forces established for this purpose were: the State Water Corporation and Government Task Force on Rural Water Supply, executed the rural water supply project; The Task Force on Rural Roads, for the rehabilitation of access roads; Task Force for Erosion Control, among others. Some of the state agencies that coordinated its specific projects were State Rural Electrification Board for its rural electrification projects; and the specific departments of the ministry of Agriculture for the relevant agricultural projects, the local government councils galvanized the Town Union Organizations for community development projects, among others. It also worked in synergy with the ADP.³¹

The Directorate has been buffeted for its mandate being in conflict with the functions of the local government, which as the key agent of development at the grassroots, is better placed to bring about rural development; helping to entrench the paternalistic attitude of urban-based Bureaucrats towards the rural population, in other words, an adoption of the Top-Down Approach to rural development; graft and pervasive corruption on the award of contracts, thereby serving as a source of primitive method of accumulation of capital for Nigeria's elites, and bogus claims on projects executed.³² With specific reference to its rural electrification projects, which commenced from the second phase of the DFRRI projects, that commenced in 1987, Njoku asserts boldly that, "It remains an ambition hanging in the air."³³

These criticisms need to be qualified and clarified. It is incontrovertible that DFRRI like most Nigerian agencies and establishments, was beset with corruption and sundry ills. The poor quality of projects executed by the Directorate

were readily seen in the way most of the asphalt roads it did turned to pathways for sheet erosion; failure of most boreholes drilled under the rural water projects, not too long after completion; the agricultural projects now in utter desolation. Typical examples of these were the Ukpok-Ebeanator Road in then Nnewi Local Government Area, the Amegu borehole project in Izzi, LGA and its agricultural installations in Enugu-Aboh Ufuma then Aguata LGA. The implication of the above is that the projects were sloppily executed and also not sustainable.

Again, due to centrality of planning and design, little or no consideration was made on geo-climatic conditions of different parts of the country. This led to uniformity of project designs. For instance, the earth-surfaced roads which the DFRRI approved for its access and communal roads as well as the asphalt roads without side drainages, ostensibly to reduce cost, are not appropriate and suitable in the rainforest regions of the country, in which the state belongs. This area experiences, torrential and prolonged rains which make it susceptible to erosion. No wonder the DFRRI roads in these places were washed away by flood at the onset of the rainy season.³⁴

Another major weakness in the conceptualization of DFRRI projects was the application of federal character principle, which implies an allocation of equal sum to states for the execution of projects. A few examples could be cited. In 1986, an equal sum of ₦5m was allocated to the states for rural water supply. Similarly, ₦2.5m was allocated to the states for the First Phase of rural electrification programme. In the case of road construction, there was no consideration for the varying cost in road construction as a result of geographical and climate variations and even the pattern of rural settlements to which the roads provide linkage and interaction. As it relates to rural electrification, no consideration was given to the spatial organization and structure of rural settlements as well as the cost of clearing of obstructive trees on the path of high tension wire. Thus, in these circumstances, such 'disadvantaged' areas may hardly meet the national target due to high overhead cost of projects.

In spite of the shortfalls already mentioned, some of the criticisms of the DFRRI could be disputed. For instance, the claim that DFRRI did not enjoy grassroots mobilization may not scale critical scrutiny. Its activities and projects had the communities as their unit of operations. It achieved this through the mass mobilization approach. DFRRI identified 97,000 rural communities in the country and these were mapped out by top geographers and the physical planning unit in each state. There was a total of 441 officially recognized communities in the state. The communities were directed to institute democratically elected town union organizations. These organizations coordinated DFRRI activities in their respective communities. By 1987, each of the communities was directed to identify and execute a project that addressed its most pressing need.³⁵ The state government established the Rural Development Fund (Management) Board. The enabling edict and its Amendment clearly spell out the role of Town Union Organizations and social clubs in the execution of DFRRI projects.³⁶ As section 7(3) of the DFRRI Act declares;

The Directorate should encourage communities to form their own village, community or town improvement or development union or association under their own democratically elected leaders to serve as the apex organization for mobilizing their communities for the successful participatory implementation of all rural development programmes as initiated by the Directorate, each tier of government or by the communities themselves.

This also debunks the charge that the DFRRI entrenches the Top-Down approach to rural development planning and execution. The participation of grassroots communities as a result of the mass mobilization approach would suggest that the DFRRI method was the Mixed Method (Top-Down, Bottom-Up) Approach to rural development. With respect to the DFRRI usurpation of the rural development functions of the local governments, section 6(2) and (3) of the DFRRI Act succinctly declares;

... all local governments councils shall be constituted into communities for the development of the rural areas as envisaged in this Act.

The chairman of each local government be the chairman of the committee constituted (above).

It could be seen from the above that the DFRRI, in its intentions and operations, sought to integrate the local government system in its rural development scheme by assigning to it specific role and functions.

It is also pertinent to note that some criticisms of the DFRRI are made without recourse to realities on ground. Contrary to Njoku's assertion that the DFRRI rural electrification programme "remains an ambition hanging in the air," the Directorate had, by April, 1989, released the sum of ₦2.5m promised each state for the First Phase of its rural electrification programme. Some of the beneficiary communities were Mbaukwu in Awka LGA, Lejja, Nsukka LGA, Abima, Ikwo LGA, among others.

From the foregoing, it could be stated that the governments vision for establishing the DFRRI were met with minimal success. An on the scale assessment of the Directorate's project would seem to reveal that their cost for out-stripped work done and the projects were not sustainable; one would only see the projects in ruinous and dilapidated state.

Concluding Reflections

This paper has identified the government agencies engaged in rural development. These were the River Basin Development Authority (RBDA) the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) and the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures. It put in perspective their origin and beginnings in the state, thoroughly discussed the achievements each recorded and assessed their performance and suitability as rural development agencies. It observes that these federal agencies operated in synergy with state government agencies, the local government and the grassroots communities in the execution of their projects. Although, part of the functions of the RBDAs and the ADP were rural development, the major thrust of their activities was agricultural development and transformation. In other words, their activities were skewed in favour of agricultural development. A worthwhile rural development agency ought to give equitable and fairly equal attention to all sectors of the rural economy and facets of rural development. Another shortcoming of the RBDP and ADP is the adoption of Top-Down Approach to rural development which neglected and excluded rural dwellers-the major project beneficiaries, from the project design and implementation. The DFRRI, on the other hand, was holistic in its approach. Its programmes encompassed all facets of rural development and employed the mixed method (Top-Down, Bottom-Up) approach. But it would be stated that government's vision of DFRRI were met with minimal successes and most of its projects were not sustainable.

It could be gleaned from the foregoing analyses that government's intentions for establishing the agencies were not fully achieved. They failed in their bid to significantly improve agricultural production, the income generating activities of rural dwellers and uplift their living conditions through the provision of sustainable social amenities and basic infrastructures.

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