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## Rural-Urban Migration And Agricultural Development In Nigeria

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### Abstract

Driven by the lack of opportunities for remunerative work, despairing of even the most minimal social amenities, and dreading the prospect of a life time of back breaking labour for pitifully meager economic rewards, hundreds of thousands of young men and women abandon the countryside and migrate to the cities. This paper therefore examines this trend of events and the multiplier effects as people move from the countryside to the cities in search of white collar jobs and the severe effects this has had on agricultural production in rural Nigeria. The study is both exploratory and descriptive using both content analysis and survey research involving descriptive statistics and chi-square analysis. The findings revealed that rural-urban migration is selective of age, marital status, and educational background while the primary reason for the movement is to better themselves economically. Also, that the massive influx of people to the urban centres is due to the dearth in rural infrastructure and economic opportunities and the neglect suffered by the agricultural sector. The position of this paper is that more proactive measures be adopted in rural infrastructural development. It further recommends that government should adopt and enforce policies that will create the enabling environment for rural transformation and agricultural development in Nigeria, especially in terms of policy formulation, articulation and implementation that would eventually enhance the living conditions of rural dwellers.

**Key Words:** rural agricultural development, rural sector, rural-urban migration, socio-economic infrastructure.

## Introduction

Like most themes in social change and development, the problem of rural-urban migration and its impact on agricultural development is a complex subject. One thing however is clear; the phenomenon of rural-urban migration is grounded in the persistent inequality in the allocation of social and economic infrastructure such as pipe borne water, good roads, electricity, health facilities, and industries, among others in rural and urban communities. This has been experienced since the colonial era.

To Braun (2004), people tend to be pulled to the areas of prosperity and pushed from areas of decline. Migrants are usually concerned with the benefits they hope to gain by moving and usually give less thought to the problems that they will incur as a result of the migration process. Migration is an inevitable part of human existence, with a long history. However, its pattern has changed considerably over time, from the search for space, especially in the middle ages, to that of congestion in large cities (rural-urban migration) in the modern age, especially in the last millennium.

Useful natural resources, which can be harnessed for socio-economic development, abound in Nigeria particularly in the rural areas. Coincidentally, Nigeria has a large proportion of both rural sector and rural people, which is a quintessential feature of developing countries (Akande, 2002). The most distinct characteristic of Nigeria's rural areas is the widespread involvement of the inhabitants in agriculture. Agriculture is the most important economic sector in terms of its contribution to the GDP of the Nation after Oil. The sector contributes about 41 percent of the country's GDP, employs about 65 percent of the total population and provides employment to about 80 percent of the rural population (ADF, 2005).

In Nigeria, the rural sector is distinguishable from the urban sector in terms of the respective volumes of agricultural and non-agricultural components of economic activity that take place in the two sectors. Thus economic activity in the rural milieu revolves around the exploitation or utilization of land. It centres principally on farming, animal husbandry, poultry, fishing, forestry, food processing and cottage industry. It has been estimated that agricultural activity occupies four-fifth of the rural population in Nigeria (Olatunbosun, 1975:10). The unavailability of basic economic and social infrastructure such as water, roads, electricity and health facilities due

to rural-urban investment imbalance is one of the major causes of low rural employment, low agricultural productivity and low standard of living of rural people. It is mainly in the rural sector that much under-spending of planned expenditure occurs, as evidenced in the relatively low level of private and public investments in the rural areas. Unfortunately, rural dwellers bear the brunt of the incidence of fluctuating prices of their agricultural products on the world market. The consequent effect of this is the depreciating levels of income generated by rural dwellers.

The decision to migrate may involve contextual factors, such as 'push factors' which force migrants out of rural areas and 'pull factors' which attract migrants to urban areas. These factors typically reflect the relative strength of the local economies (such as the availability of public goods, or even institutional factors such as the introduction or enforcement of a system of land property rights which could act as push factors and encourage migration from rural areas for displaced workers (Katz and Stark, 1986).

While it is true that most urban centres in Nigeria are an amalgam of two contrasting levels of urbanization – a traditional, almost medieval, pre-industrial urbanization and an advanced, industrial urbanization, the fact remains that even in Nigeria, the trend is clearly towards a preponderance of secondary and tertiary activities in the country's urban centres. These occupational differences between rural and urban Nigeria have grave implications for the heavy dependence of the urban on the rural sector and therefore for the need for greater attention to rural agricultural development.

Rural-Urban migration has long been recognized as one of the main problems of rural development in Nigeria. Yet, Government efforts to deal with it have not been successful (Nwosu, 1979; Makinwa, 1975 & 1988). In relation to agriculture, by far the greatest problem has been that of low production. This problem has been heightened by a large section of the Nigerian population which has taken to other non-agricultural occupations in the urban areas (Nwosu, 1979). As a result of this, the food security situation in Nigeria and other African countries has over the years deteriorated and many people now face the problem of hunger and malnutrition (Ojiako, 1999). Migration process, especially rural-urban often has grave consequences as it affects food production, agricultural exports, the rural demand for manufactured goods and future economic surplus in agriculture available for investment elsewhere in the economy.

Due to rural-urban migration, rural communities suffer from a loss of manpower necessary for agricultural development. The impoverishment of rural areas in Nigeria is partly explainable by out-migration of able-bodied

youths in search of white collar jobs in the cities. Agriculture which was the mainstay of Nigeria's economy prior to the discovery of Oil has been relegated to the background leading to the country's mono-economy status. The impact of rural-urban migration is indeed a rapid deterioration of the rural economy, leading to chronic poverty and food insecurity (Mini, 2001).

The Nigerian government's efforts in agricultural development over the past three decades have failed to improve the country's economy. A review of the sector depicts a gloomy picture. Performance is reflected in environmental degradation, mounting food deficits, and decline in both gross domestic product and export earnings, while retail food prices and import bills have been increasing. These effects have further impoverished the smallholder farmers, thereby placing them in a poverty web.

Government concern with this situation has given rise in the past to various plans and projects aimed at checking the inflow of migrants from the rural to urban areas. Most of the schemes established by the federal government failed, due, to a large extent, to the inadequate specification of the problem and the target population of the migration-influencing programmes. Such programmes have included the "farm settlement schemes" patterned after the Israeli Moshav, which involved the building of rural houses with urban amenities (electricity and pipe-borne water supply) and the provision of modern farming machinery which were aimed at primary school leavers.

In 1973, the National Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB) was established to facilitate agricultural financing to farmers. The National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) was initiated with emphasis on agricultural research and extension support to farmers. With massive exploration of crude oil, the oil boom came and stood astride the Nigerian economy contributing more than 98% of total export value and 73% of GDP (Opara, 2006). With focus on crude oil, the agricultural policies and programmes were clumsily executed and virtually abandoned by succeeding military regimes (Osakwe and Ojo, 1986). The cocoa plantations suffered serious setback, the cotton and groundnut pyramids disappeared, hides and skin became food for the embattled Nigerian populace, and the oil palm plantations which were battle fields during the Biafra/Nigeria Civil War died a natural death due to neglect. The disaster on agriculture was enormous, and Nigeria has not ameliorated the effects till date.

The oil boom precipitated massive rural-to-urban drift made up mainly of the younger generation. Several food crop farms suffered "death" because of inadequate or zero maintenance and there was serious deficit in

food production (Alatise, 2001). In 1976, the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) programme was inaugurated by the Obasanjo Military government. This major agricultural policy pronouncement and effort by the Government generated awareness among Nigerians about the consequences of an empty national food basket. The programme focused on building the spirit of dignity of labor and re-engaging the idle hands back to land.

Other policy and strategic measures taken by Government during this period were the establishment of River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), National Seed Multiplication Scheme, Agro-Service Centers, Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs). Many research and tertiary institutions were established to formulate and implement research programmes aimed at improving agricultural food production. Even with all these policies, the total Capital allocation to Agriculture by both Federal and State Governments further declined to 7.1 percent (Osakwe and Ojo, 1986).

The civilian government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari saw the emergence of the Green Revolution in 1980 which tried to give more powers and impetus to the River Basin Development Authorities and the ADPs to produce more food for the nation with more Capital (12.7%) allocated to the agricultural sector (Osakwe and Ojo, 1986). Even though these efforts seemed to have been guided by genuine concerns, they failed to make the necessary impacts in the agricultural sector because of fundamental structural problems in the economy. There was obvious decline in the agricultural sector due to underdevelopment of the sector; frequent changes in government policies and implementation strategies; no serious agricultural mechanization policy; poor infrastructures and facilities; poor research and development work. There was increasing shortage of food evidenced by increased food imports and increased high prices. Agricultural exports dwindled at an alarming rate as well as decline in labor force for agriculture.

In 1986 the Federal Military Government introduced the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Importation of major foods was prohibited to enhance local production and price competitiveness of locally produced foods compared to those imported (Bangboye and Jekayinfa, 2006). The Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) was established to provide the Nigerian rural populace with infrastructural facilities (roads, electricity, water boreholes and pumps, agricultural inputs) to enhance food production, processing and evacuation of their produce to urban markets and to stem rural-urban migration. Interest was aroused in farming but labour became very expensive and most often difficult to get at peak season, as it followed the law of supply and demand.

The increased farm labour cost increased the cost of agricultural produce. Due to untimely operations of manual land preparations, hand planting, manual weeding and fertilization, as a result of labour shortage the expected yields declined. However, because of its rural target, this latest policy options produced an increase in overall agricultural production with an understandably high cost of food. Nigeria's agricultural production rose by an estimated 2.5% in 1987, 4.58% in 1989 and 4.8% in 1991, while grains alone increased by 4.8%, 6.9% and 7.5% respectively (CBN, 1991).

The Directorate of Employment (NDE) was established in 1988 to address unemployment of graduate school leavers. It provided training and some initial take-off grants to participating beneficiaries who wanted to go into food crop as well as animal production and processing (Igbeka, 2003). In 1988, the Federal Government published the first ever agricultural policy document for Nigeria aimed at redressing the underdevelopment of agriculture, streamlining policies in all tiers of government and ensuring policy stability (Opara, 2006).

Again, the implementation of this policy ran against many problems including: poor funding and poor state of infrastructure; poor administration of government support to agriculture and abandonment of projects mid-stream due to political reasons; poor private sector participation and investment in agriculture due to inconsistency and instability of macro economic policies which tend to discourage medium and long term investments in agriculture; lack of appropriate technology to reduce drudgery in agricultural production and processing and inadequate availability of inputs such as improved seeds and breed stock. Despite these problems, agricultural production in Nigeria increased steadily at the rate as high as 6.4% annually between 1988 and 1992 (Okunmadewa, 2002).

From 1992 - 1998, succeeding governments saw that the problem of food shortages was grim and since women involvement in agriculture was high, government policies then centered on women. Programmes such as Better Life for Rural Women; Family Support Programme (FSP); Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) were initiated. These were meant to empower the women for more and better involvement in agriculture and other rural activities. The programmes were aimed at providing some form of mechanization to agriculture by way of cottage industries in rural areas. It was hoped that these would enhance the production of food and agricultural raw materials. The National Land Development Agency (NALDA) was established in 1992 to provide support for land development for agriculture. The National Agency for Science and Engineering

Infrastructure (NASENI) was established in 1992 to establish and nurture an appropriate and dynamic Science and Engineering Infrastructure to help empower Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in agriculture (Onwualu and Pawa, 2004).

Since 1999, the government in Nigeria has been implementing different reform programmes on privatization, commercialization, deregulation, corruption and financial crimes. These are meant to stabilize the economy and make it more productive. In 2001 a New Agricultural Policy and the Integrated Rural Development Policy were initiated to ensure national food security, attain self-sufficiency in basic food production, enhance employment opportunities and achieve high growth rate for the economy. These were to be achieved through the introduction of and adoption of improved technology, efficient utilization of resources by the farmers and a broad based organization and mobilization of the rural masses so as to enhance their capacity. These policies are being implemented by the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) set up by the Federal Government of Nigeria in March 2004. This is a medium term economic reconstruction agenda aimed at value reorientation, wealth creation, poverty reduction, job creation and elimination of corruption.

In order to fast track the gains of the 2001 New Agricultural Policy, there came the Presidential Initiatives in Agriculture (PIA) (2004) and the National Special Food Security Programme (NSFSP) and FADAMA II (2005). In 2006, the National Agricultural Development Fund was established with a take-off capital of N50 billion with a view to address the problem of inadequate funding of agriculture on a sustainable basis. The above policies lend support to The New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as well as the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) acknowledgement that agricultural mechanization and environmental stability are a *sine qua non* for increased food production and food security (Faborode, 2005).

All of these programmes no matter how laudable they may be, have to a large extent failed in reducing the high migration of the active population from the rural to the urban areas. The question therefore relates to, how to improve the general living conditions in rural areas and how best to retain more youths who might otherwise migrate to the urban centres as a way of enhancing agricultural production in the country.



## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used here is the "Dependency Theory", which is an underdevelopment model. The dependency theory arose as a result of the inability of the Modernization theory to properly explain why some countries are poor and some are rich, or why the gross disparity between the rural and urban areas of the developing Nations of the world.

The Modernization theory states that, there are certain factors that have helped some countries to develop, either at the individual level, cultural level, or at the level of the social structure. In addition, it states that to develop, underdeveloped countries must assimilate what is present in the developed world, such as its technology, institutions and ideas. It also defined development in terms of per capita income, measured simply by the Gross National Product (GNP) of a nation. Some of its theorists include Parsons (1937), Rostow (1960), McClelland (1961) and Hagen (1962).

There has however been a change in orientation because, inspite of physical growth, many people in developing regions live in abject poverty and squalor, making it difficult to talk of development in such areas. Hence the introduction of the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) in response to the need for a supplement to Per Capita GNP in measuring the level of progress achieved by any country in meeting basic human needs. The Dependency theory emanated from the Marxian school of thought. Its proponents are mostly Latin American and African Scholars, such as, Frank (1973), Furtado (1973), Amin (1974), Rodney (1972), Onimode (1980), Offiong (1980), and many others.

The central theme of the Dependency theory is that, the current socio-economic condition of Third World Countries are the product of certain historical forces, which have originated from European expansion of Economic dominance. Thus, the Periphery (Underdeveloped Nations) play a satellite role which Amin (1974) called 'hypertrophy of the tertiary sector'.

The implication of this sketch of dependency model shows that historical dependency has been the root problem of Nigeria's underdevelopment due to the effect it has had on the peoples' customs and economy. The dependency theory further contends that as a result of our colonial heritage, our indigenous system now exist peripherally as rural communities in relation to state capitals and Local Government Headquarters, all of which are urban in character. In addition, this model shows clearly that due to the neglect of the rural areas despite their contribution to food security and raw materials for industrial purposes, there is a continuous influx of people to the cities in search of white collar jobs.

It further shows that those at the helm of affairs do not see it as necessary to consult with rural people to know what their needs are, especially in areas requiring urgent attention. Policies of government are made by the elites, for the betterment of the elites, to the detriment of the masses majority of which reside in the rural areas, comprising mostly the vulnerable groups in society. The insensitivity and corruption of those in government has been made worse by the lack of consciousness on the part of the weak, poor and voiceless in society, hence their inability to determine adequate measures to address their situation and the rural sector for enhanced living condition.

Consequently, exponents of the Dependency theory have argued that the present state of poor agricultural production in Nigeria, is due to the forces of underdevelopment arising from the colonial experience, and the continued existence of that system. For Agricultural development to take place, they argued that this structure has first to change Agbonifo, 1984; Abdullahi, 1985; Nzimiro, 1985).

### **Rural-Urban Migration Process**

Rural-Urban migration in Nigeria assumed prominence in the Oil boom era of the early 1970s (Olatunbosun, 1975; Adepoju, 1979). The situation has become more intractable with the obvious dichotomy in access to modern facilities and living standards between rural areas and the urban centres (Fadayomi, 1992). This trend has continued unabated in spite of so much orchestrated efforts at rural transformation. It is estimated that four of every five rural Africans are without reasonable access to safe water (Rimmer, 1988). And for Deavers (1992), most rural areas in developing countries especially in Africa, lack several social amenities and human resources, which contrast sharply with what is obtainable in urban centres.

Traditionally, migration studies were devoted to investigating frequency, patterns and flows, distance and typologies of people's mobility and their assimilation in host societies. Recent explorations, however, have begun to venture into studying the effects of migration and the various meanings of the migration for people themselves (Rigg, 2003). There is increasing interest in the 'migration process', which involves studying the lived reality of migrants; their migration, settlement, ethnic relations, public policies and identity construction as closely related and overlapping segments in a single process (Castles, 2000). The migration decision has been shown to be selective. Migration mainly concerns young adults who are more likely to have a positive net expected return on migration due to their longer

remaining life expectancy, or because social norms require that young adults migrate in search of a better life (De Haan and Rogally, 2002).

It is imperative to understand that researches in the field have come to show that the reasons for migration have moved away from the economic causes and effects of migration streams to the problems of identity, ethnic conflict and changing self-identification of migrants (Bates, 2001). Also, studies on labour migration from rural to urban areas from a political economy perspective has similarly revealed that much of the migration has been circular, and does not really involve one-way movements. Most migrants maintain close links with their place of origin, thus rendering a view of migration as a 'series of exchanges between places' (Breman, 1996; De Haan and Rogally, 2002; Locke, Adger and Kelly, 2000).

Migration not only arises as an option premised on the need to diversify livelihoods due to dwindling natural resources and weakening returns from farm activities, it also arises from the configuration of entitlements to resources and assets, life cycle factors, divisions of labour by gender, gender norms on mobility and individual aspirations that often determine which members are released for migration by households and which are retained. In addition, migration is largely network-mediated, and often its costs are offset by social networks that help a migrant work out the complex requirements and processes of migration. So households and social networks mediate the relationship between the individual rural migrant and the world at large (Brettell, 2000; Battistella, 2003).

Attempts to integrate the multiple causes of labour migration into a single framework have been made by Gulliver (1955) and Mitchell (1959). In his studies of the Ngoni and Ndendeuli of Southern Tanzania, Gulliver christened and dismissed the 'bright lights theory' and emphasized instead that the main factors pushing men to seek work is economic. Other factors, a final quarrel with a brother or yet another dispute with a neighbour, some real or supposed injustice suffered at the hands of the chief or an adverse court decision, appeared to be no more than 'last straw' causes affecting only the timing of migration. Other causes of migration are relatively unimportant and are generally of the 'last straw' type such as difficulties which affect individuals in their family and social life and which go to tip the balance and induce a man to leave home for a spell at a particular time. A review of part of the considerable literature on the causes of labour migration led Mitchell to emphasize also the importance of economic factors in inducing movements.

Although men have tended to dominate migration flows, women are becoming an increasing part of labour migration streams in Nigeria and other African societies (Agesa and Agesa, 1999; Thadani and Todaro, 1984). Some studies have shown that women are less likely to migrate alone than men, but with increasing urbanization, they are becoming a more important component of the labour migration streams to urban areas (Guilmoto, 1998; Chant 1992).

### **Rural – Urban Imbalance And Effect On Rural Development**

Rural communities are cherished because of their sense of community and their closeness to nature, and because of their values of traditional simplicity and hospitality. However, thousands of young men and women in search of job opportunities, a better education and living conditions, and freedom from the restrictions of the more conservative way of life, migrate to the cities. The fundamental condition for rural growth is that, the rural and urban sectors are regarded as aspects of the same community and that the rural areas are no longer isolated from the urban mainstream of political, economic and social activity.

Agricultural development involves people, their available resources and institutions. However, its greatest problem has been that of low production. This has been heightened, among other things by the desertion of farming by a large section of the Nigerian population which has taken to other non-agricultural occupations in the urban areas. In recent years, the volume and pace of rural-urban migration has greatly increased. The direction of the move has been unilateral, decided for the migrants who see the city as the only place where their aspirations for better living conditions can be satisfied.

Many developing countries such as Nigeria have adopted discriminatory policies towards agriculture, making its profitability lower than what is warranted by its social comparative advantage. Thus, with a reduction in earnings from agriculture, what is induced is a higher rate of migration than would be desirable (FAO, 2006).

Historically, rural-urban imbalance in Nigeria can be traced to British colonial influence and a rather coercive colonial administration. Certain structural changes were introduced in the Nigeria economy such as the introduction of a monetary system, enforced laws, communication network such as roads and railways, and the presence of large foreign owned firms who offered cash rewards for the sale of particular crops, notably, Palm produce (palm oil and kernel), cocoa, cotton and Groundnut. On the

aggregate, these factors completely changed the scale of social and economic values.

Infact, "irrespective of their size, traditional urban centres which were not on the rail line or on other major route ways found themselves shunted into the backwater of economic decadence, losing many of their virile young men to centres now better favoured locationally. While producing the bulk of investment capital, the rural areas received no commensurate return of resources. Compared with the urban centres, rural areas in Nigeria are noted for their lack of electricity, pipe borne water supply, and health facilities.

Also, not only was government's focus on urban development concomitant with rural neglect in the immediate post-independence period in Nigeria, a significant proportion of rural earnings for agricultural exports was also diverted to investments in urban centres. For example, in the six-year period, 1955-1961, over one billion pounds sterling from the earnings of Commodity Marketing Boards in Nigeria was diverted into urban investments (Makinwa, 1975).

It is important to state that due to the rural-urban investments imbalance in the past and in spite of the laudable contributions of the rural sector to the national economy, the consequent effects have been low rural employment, low productivity of available rural labour and low standard of living of rural people. Studies across developing countries have revealed this massive movement of able-bodied men and women into non-agricultural sectors in the cities. In recent decades, Thailand, its border towns and cities, have been the chief destination of Lao, Burmese and Cambodian migrants, many of them subsistence farmers entering wage labour markets seasonally or permanently. Growing numbers of other Southeast Asian migrants such as Filipino professionals, entertainers and domestic workers have also gradually moved into the urban centres of Thailand. Estimates of total labour migrants reached around one million or more in 1996-1997, of which 70-80 percent were from Myanmar and the rest from Cambodia and Laos (Athukorala, Manning and Wickramasekara, 2000). Similarly, the urban centres of Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam and Lao are also destination points of rural migrants. Studies in the area show that women made up 56 percent of the migrants to Phnom Penh from Cambodia's rural areas (Acharya, 2003).

Thus, driven by the lack of opportunities for remunerative work, despairing of even the most minimal amenities, such as clean water, health care, good roads, electricity and fairly decent shelter and dreading the prospect of a life time of back-breaking labour for pitifully meager economic rewards, hundreds of thousands of young men and women abandon the

countryside for the cities. And in the cities, many of them create and live in urban slums, engage in criminal and other anti-social acts that debase human nature, and thereby deface and endanger urban environment and life.

The depth of the feeling of alienation as well as a full understanding of the issues involved by intending rural-urban migrants in Nigeria are soundly reflected in a sample study of the socio-economic aspects of rural-urban migration conducted in Western Nigeria by Olusanya (1969). In it, over three-fifths of the respondents said in sheer desperation, that they would not recommend farming as an occupation to their children. The reasons given include the following:

- i. Farming is tedious
- ii. Farming is not lucrative; and
- iii. Methods of farming are out of date.

It is pertinent to state that the rural-urban dichotomy, though useful as a statistical convenience, simply implies an artificial separation. Thus, the central point in the Nigerian situation which cannot be over-emphasized is that, culturally and socially, the rural and urban areas are not two separated and closed systems, but are the geographical expressions of the country's dual economy where the rural areas are characterized by traditional agrarian subsistence economy and the urban areas with their government offices, factories etc, employing modern means of production.

Today, the rural sector contains most of the poverty, and most of the low-cost sources of potential advancement; but the urban sector contains most of the articulateness, organization and power. Thus, the urban classes have been able to 'win' most of the rounds of the struggle with the countryside; but in so doing, they have made the development process needlessly slow and unfair.

Consequently, this urban bias in social and economic infrastructure has left an indelible mark, a spatial distribution pattern that concentrates more than 90 percent of social and economic infrastructure and services in the Federal Capital Abuja, Lagos and the different state capitals. This underscores the economic realities that make agriculture the less important and less prestigious sector of the national economy.

Agricultural development indeed deserves priority attention in view of the complementarity of the sector to both non-agricultural rural sector of the economy, and the urban industrial sector. It is important to understand the problems of agricultural development in Nigeria; the prevailing agricultural situation and the factors in the social system that are conducive to or which inhibit agricultural development.

### **Factors Affecting Development Of Peasant Agriculture In Nigeria**

Some of the critical factors which affect the development of peasant agriculture in Nigeria are rural labour shortage, poor prices of farmers produce and transportation bottlenecks. With regards to rural-labour shortage, before the advent of colonial rule, the extended family system played a significant role in the lives of the people. The family saw themselves as one, but colonialism brought in its train, the Western mode of living as people were taught to have one wife and wage labour was introduced as a means of getting quick money to pay colonially imposed taxes and levies.

In consequence, the towns began to attract young men in large numbers since it was in the cities that better social services and jobs were to be found. The drift of the population to the cities had begun and so also the decline in rural labour (Idode, 1989). In terms of poor prices for farm produce, the peasants (especially cash crop producers) received inadequate payment for their farm produce. A chain of middlemen and monopolistic State Marketing Boards played exploitative roles in produce marketing in Nigeria. As Igbozurike (1977:24) puts it, the marketing boards have now become an instrument for widening the gap between the rich and the poor farmers, for appropriating the products of the farmer by the upper class and for taxing farmers and therefore causing disincentive to productivity.

A third factor detrimental to peasant agricultural development in the rural areas is transportation problem. The absence of good feeder roads in many parts of the country, most especially in Southern Nigeria has led to movement being made on foot, and by bicycle along foot paths and at best on narrow roads. Carrying load on the head or shoulder is still the traditional form of Cargo transportation in many rural areas in Nigeria. Loads of about 30 to 50 kilograms can be transported to a distance of 16 kilometers or more to meet the road points where motor or bicycle transport are available.

In the riverine areas, small water craft and canoes are used instead of lorries and motor cars. In the Northern part of the country, animal (horse, donkey and camel) transportation is widely practiced. In order to facilitate the evacuation of farm produce more effectively, as well as feed the urban areas with essential commodities, there is a dire need to improve the transportation system in rural Nigeria (Idode, 1989).

### **Impact Of Rural-Urban Migration On Agricultural Development**

One of the studies to show the impact of rural-urban migration on agricultural development was by Essang and Mabawonku (1974). This confirmed the

observation that the incidence of migration is highest among the most productive age group (15-30 years) than any other. This leads to a heavy drain on the supply of rural family labour and in addition, pulls out the individuals, the essential elements for agricultural development programmes.

Rural-Urban migration has been associated with certain disadvantages that portend major hindrances to rural productivity and farm sector growth (Olayide, 1975; Fadayomi, 1994). A strong pointer to such disadvantages is the selectivity of rural urban migration with regard to human resources. This is in consonance with the view of Makinwa (1981), that rural-urban migrants are usually more educated, young and mostly males. Agricultural development cannot make any substantial progress if allowed to remain bereft of requisite human capital. To achieve a reasonable growth rate in the rural sector would require active participation of a sizeable, informed, healthy, economically and socially motivated population. The form of economic dualism that emerges from long decades of selective rural-urban drift is such that complicates development because of its drag on overall national productive propensities (Djavad, 1993).

In a study carried out by the Researcher in 1991 very similar results were found. The study was on some selected villages in Owan West Local Government Area of Edo State. Three hypotheses were put forward namely:

- i. That an increase in the migration of the active labour force leads to a decrease in farm output.
- ii. That migration results in the loss of the educated who ought to adopt new innovations to boost agricultural development.
- iii. That migration results in the loss of the most enterprising youths with organizational ability to take to farming as a rewarding occupation.

A questionnaire was designed for the collection of relevant data for the study. While sampling procedure was a multi-stage sampling. The tools for analysis were the simple percentage method and the chi-square ( $X^2$ ) method.

The results showed that:

1. An increase in the migration of the active labour force actually leads to a decrease in farm output. This is because, as more people move from the rural areas, there is usually a consequent decrease in farm output, because only the aged and the very young are left behind to do the farming.
2. Rural-urban migration did result in the loss of the educated who ought to adopt new innovations to boost agricultural development. This is true because the propensity to migrate is usually among the educated



who are only interested in going to the urban centres to seek for white collar jobs.

3. Migration also results in the loss of the most enterprising youths with organizational ability to take to farming as a rewarding occupation. This was necessitated because of the meager economic rewards from farming, and the consequent desire of these youths to move to the urban centres in search of wage employment.

This has therefore affected agricultural development because apart from having the physical strength, they are those who also possess the ability to manage farm yields and their prices, organize co-operatives, and are also those who can make use of better farming methods and implements.

### **Conclusion And Recommendations**

This paper focused on the migration of people from the rural-urban areas and how this has affected agricultural development. This was necessitated because it is the active labour force who usually move in search of wage employment in the urban centres. It was consequently discovered that agriculture which is the main stay of the rural areas suffers. Farmers are now compelled to grow only as much food as they can handle alone, or with their little children for lack of sufficient supply of labour.

Also discovered is that single or unmarried persons predominate among rural-urban migrants including those with some level of formal education. The motives for migration are primarily economic, including the desire for education, training and apparently high earning prospects in the urban formal and informal sectors.

In terms of recommendations, it is pertinent to state that agriculture is the foundation of the rural economy. It is involved in the supply of food to both rural and urban markets, generating needed foreign exchange through export of farm products and supplying raw materials needed in the urban centres. Thus, for a total transformation of the rural areas, agriculture which is the main stay of the rural economy must be improved and modernized.

Problems of rural poverty and neglect can be solved through well designed and effectively implemented community development programmes, integrated rural development strategies that focuses on the interest of rural dwellers in their various communities, pragmatic agricultural modernization programmes and adequate extension facilities and good roads to far away farm land. In addition, Government must create easy and quick avenues through which rural farmers can get credit facilities, fertilizers and agro-chemicals which must be made available directly to rural farmers.

Appropriate monitoring mechanisms should be set up to ensure that these inputs get to the real rural farmers so as to guarantee the desired improvement in agricultural production.

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