

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A FOCUS ON SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Local government has served as a springboard for progress in the rural areas. Local government administrations are increasingly recognized as primary agents of rural development and as collaborators with both state and federal governments on rural development projects in progress. This study focused on the agriculture sector in Ondo State to evaluate how local government affects rural and grassroots development. The study used a straightforward survey research methodology, with questionnaire administration, focus group discussions, and interviews as the methods for gathering data. Information was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. In each of the twelve (12) selected villages, questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with 10–15 participants were used to gather the primary data. The FGD is to explore issues related to impact of Agricultural Development Programme on farmers in the twelve (12) selected villages, how local government agricultural extension service has been of help to farmers in the study areas and what are the infrastructures put in place by local government. The secondary data came from a variety of sources, including books, journals, government documents, unpublished materials, and libraries. Using SPSS techniques, the gathered data were quantitatively analysed. In the twelve (12) villages that were chosen for the study, the local government's agricultural development programs had little to no effect on farmers, according to the study, which found no causal link between local government and rural development and social infrastructures. The result obtained on Local Government Agricultural Development Programme on farm infrastructure, farm output, farm asset and technology dimensions showed that the programmes were not well monitored and farmer's awareness was very poor. Within the study area, there is a very high degree of variation. A drastic shift in policy is necessary to address the issue of gap closing, while the programmes do not target the original farmers. Sustainable local government agricultural development programmes is unlikely to occur without serious attention from the government.

Keywords: Development, Agricultural programs, Rural arrears, Extension staff, Farmers.

INTRODUCTION

Development has been defined in its broadest meaning as the process by which man increases or maximizes his control and use of the material resources that nature has bestowed upon him and his environment. The elimination of unemployment, the eradication of poverty and want, the eradication of inequality, and the expansion of the availability of labour-saving technologies are the five key components of development, according to Afigbo (2011). As a result, it can be deduced that rural development is a multifaceted process that can improve or transform the quality of life, productivity, income, and welfare of rural people in relation to their health, nutrition, education, transportation, and employment, among other aspects of better living conditions for the rural population. The early attempts at rural development during the colonial era, according to Igbokwe and Ajala (2015), were made through community development and later agricultural extension. In contrast to the agricultural extension strategy, which focused on increasing agricultural output, the community development approach placed a strong emphasis on self-help to enhance health, nutrition, and community welfare. The ultimate objective of both programs was to manufacture primary goods to supply European industries. The construction of railroad systems as a mode of transportation during this time period was especially notable since it predominantly served the interests of European corporations rather than rural residents. However, the early years of Nigeria's independence also saw a significant concentration of development efforts on the modern sector of the economy, to the exclusion of investments in the rural economic base. The local government administration had to be called into action as a result in an emergency. In the decentralized form of government, local government is typically viewed as one of the agents of development, given the legal authority to use its administrative resources to improve the lives of citizens in rural areas. According to Oviasuyi, Idada, and Isiraojie (2010), local government is a subdivision of a regional or national government that is comprised of public entities having the authority to make decisions and carry out public policies within a relatively small geographic area (locality). In this investigation, local government can be referred to as Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) including all the State actors operating at the Local government level.

The goal of local government administration, according to Adeyemi, S. B., Okpala, O., and Dabor, E. L. (2012), is to increase local government level efficiency and effectiveness under representative officials. It is widely acknowledged that no central government can effectively manage its affairs entirely from the capital through civil servants stationed at the headquarters. Therefore, it stands to reason that some type of decentralization is required in order for the government to interact with the populace on a local level.

Significant Of the Study

This study serves as a means of identifying the importance of local government administration in agricultural development. Therefore, this paper sought to review how local government as a third tier of government that is being charged with responsibility of rural development, can however use agriculture to eradicate poverty, create jobs and provide raw materials for industries, by making use of its relationship with Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) as one of the government agencies through its agricultural extension services department to educate the farmer's on the latest technology and modern way of farming, in such a way that it will improve on the economics of the rural environments and also earn them foreign exchange through exportation.

From a policy perspective, the study also demonstrates that, despite its limitations, there are emerging initiatives and interventions, like rural development, that can be used to address poverty reduction, particularly at the local level, in developing nations like Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The agriculture sector in Sub-Saharan Africa is said to have played and continued to play a positive role in the economic development of these nations, this is because the sector has a lot of opportunities with regards to employment, food provision to feed the growing population and raw materials to feed the industries both local and international (Bosompem et al., 2011). The sector also provides the needed foreign exchange for the development of any economy.

According to the World Bank (2012), the sector provides employment to about 65 per cent of the labour force and accounts for about 32 per cent of the gross domestic product in Sub-Saharan Africa. About two thirds of Africans depend on agriculture for their livelihoods (FAO, 2010). It is because this and among others that, the governments of the developing countries majority of which are from SSA were urged at the 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security to allocate at least 10 per cent of national budgetary expenditure to the sector which is aimed at achieving 6 per cent annual growth of the agricultural sector (FAO, 2013). Furthermore, boosting Africa's agriculture can create economic opportunities, reduce malnutrition and poverty, and generate faster growth (Naamwintome, 2008). Given agriculture's role in addressing the challenges of unemployment and underemployment in Africa, Agriculture sector employs more than half of the total labour force in Africa (FAO, 2013).

Agriculture is the major development sector in most of African economies. A country like Zambia for instance, has about 97.4 per cent of the rural households engaged in agriculture, which is equivalent to about 45 per cent of the total population. In Mozambique, about 90 per cent of rural households are engaged in agriculture, which is equivalent to about 80 per cent of the total

population (World Bank, 2012). In Nigeria, about half of the total population is engaged in the sector. According to MoFA (2012), 50.6 per cent of the total labor force in Nigeria is engaged in agricultural sector. Recent surveys suggest that agriculture is also the primary source of livelihood for about 10 per cent to 25 per cent of urban households (Yeboah et al., 2016). National census data indicates that the number of people employed primarily in agriculture has increased over time (Yeboah et al., 2016). It is undoubtedly clear that agricultural sector is the key to addressing the youth unemployment problems which is at alarming rate of 11.6 per cent in Africa (ILO 2015).

However, the agriculture sector offers new opportunities to majority of youth including graduates through; processing, marketing, distribution, and provision of services in the market value chain (Bosompem et al., 2011). It is therefore prudent to put policies and programs in place to attract the youth who are mostly the graduates from the various tertiary institutions in Africa to take up agriculture and its related enterprises as self-employment opportunities. This can be done by increasing access to land, capital, transportation and infrastructure, adoption of new technology and the need for the institutions to provide basic skills and knowledge (Sumberg et al., 2017). Moreover, the perception of the youth must be taken into consideration to avoid policy implementation failure.

The Origin Of Nigeria Agricultural Development Programme (ADP)

According to Omonijo et al. (2014;43). Agricultural Development Programme approach was said to have been originated in Malawi, east Africa, to tackle the problem of poverty. The economy development in the rural areas of the country had been promoted through a strategy which focused on the contribution of improved technologies for food crops enhanced delivery systems for agricultural extension and input supply, and improved infrastructure. A well designed organizational structure with professional staff (hired intentionally) was employed to implement this concept.

This concept was transferred to Nigeria in 1974 with the establishment of the first three (3) enclave projects in the Northern part of the country. This includes: Funtua, Gusau and Gombe Agricultural Development Programmes. The chosen project regions were agro-ecologically favourable areas in the Northern part of the Nigeria. They were located in the domain of several Local Government Council (LGCs) of Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna and Sokoto States. Akinbamiwo (2013). Submitted that the apparent success of these early projects prompted both the Federal Government of Nigeria and the World Bank to quickly replicate the Agricultural Development Programme model in other states. From 1975 to 1980, the number of project grew from the original three a total of nine enclave projects, which include Ekiti-Akoko Agricultural Development project, out of which Akoko Local Governments Agricultural Development

Programme were created. A Federal entity titled Agricultural Projects Monitoring and Evaluation and Planning Unit was established for the purpose of evaluation, measurement and assessment, in other to ensured quality assurance.

The economy of Nigeria, according to Otinche (2014), is also marked by a high rate of rural-to-urban migration in quest of better pastures, leaving the farmland to elderly men who are unable to meet the needs of the expanding population for food. Because of the demand on the little that is produced, food became expensive. The government then created a number of local and national agricultural development policies.

One of the numerous policies developed is the National Policy on Rural Development. The goal of the National Policy for Rural Development captured an ideal scenario of a suitable level of development in the rural sector. Rephrasing these objectives as: promoting social, cultural, educational, and economic. Examples of this include encouraging the sustained and orderly development of rural areas,' abundant resources for the benefit of the rural populace, expanding and diversifying employment options, raising income levels, organizing the rural populace for self-help and self-sustaining development initiatives, and advancing technologically based industries. (Ogbazi, 1992)

Since Nigeria gained independence in 1960, a variety of local government agricultural development programs and policies have been put in place in an effort to increase agricultural productivity in order to feed the nation's rapidly expanding population and supply raw materials for export and the agro industries (Ingawa, 2014). The agrarian sector has a strong rural base, despite the fact that agriculture is a major contributor to the Nigerian economy in a number of ways, including the provision of food for a growing population, the provision of adequate raw materials to an expanding industrial sector, the creation of foreign exchange earnings, and the provision of a market for the industrial sector's products. Therefore, it's crucial to care about agricultural and rural development. The primary goal of this topic is to investigate "The Impact Of Local Government On Rural Development In Ondo State Using Akoko North West, Okeagbe, and Akoko North East, Ikare Local Government Areas As A Case Study." We'll try to demonstrate how local government has developed into a tool for rural development in this section. The impacts of rural agricultural development programs, the value of local government extension employees, and their perspectives on agricultural development programs in the rural areas of Ondo State, through their local governments, will also receive special attention. This will thus serve to illustrate the advantages of decentralization as a strategy for promoting rural development by leveraging local government.

Statement Of the Problem

Toyin (2015) Said most Africa leaders see agriculture as a failing industry; countries in Africa usually give agricultural expansion a low priority. In comparison to the industrial and service sectors, the employment and output proportion of rural and agricultural sectors declines as countries grow. According to Odo L.U (2014), many emerging nations have prioritized urban and industrial sectors over rural ones when allocating resources. In the protracted shift from an agrarian to an urban-industrial society, they failed to appreciate the crucial role of productivity gains and growth in the rural sector. Adefila (2013), however, noted the following characteristics of rural farmers in Ondo state.

- i. Their living standards are stagnant and falling.
- ii. They often cultivate small parcels of land with conventional hand tools in agriculture, much of which is subsistence farming or produces relatively little marketable surpluses.
- iii. They are mainly found in locations that nearly no public utilities adequately serve.

According to Adefila (2013), the state's agriculture faces major challenges in meeting the rising expectations of its population and reversing the social and economic imbalance brought on by the uneven development of its rural and urban areas, which has encouraged youths and other people to leave rural areas to the cities.

In another study, Asante and Ayee (2018b) concluded that decentralized governance in Nigeria has fallen far short of public expectation, by neglecting the important of agriculture activities to local farmers. They pointed out that Ministry Department Agency MDAs have allocated financial resources towards education, health, and local government and rural development programmes which are important aspects of agricultural development, however, the Ministry Department Agency (MDAs) were not able to introduce programmes to improve upon productivity, create employment and generate income.

Bevir (2019); Asante and Ayee, (2018a); Ayee (2018b), have established the linkage between local governance and agricultural development. However, the results are mixed. While some studies indicated that local governance impacted agricultural development positively others indicated otherwise For instance, Asante and Ayee, (2018a) pointed out that even though decentralization positively impacted agricultural development, its impact is dependent on factors such as effective implementation of agricultural development strategies, transfer of financial resources, and targeting agriculture development programmes to reduce level of poverty, Local government institutions encouraging public investment on agriculture . In their view, all the typologies of decentralisation should be considered simultaneously when assessing

the impact of decentralisation on agricultural development.

Research Questions

- i. How are rural agricultural development programs and local government administration relate?
- ii. What connection exists between the Agricultural Development Program and the local government extension staff's attitude to farmers in Ondo State's rural areas?

Objectives Of the Study

The main objectives of this research are to access the Impact of the Local Government on Rural Development in Akoko North-West and Akoko North East Local Government areas of Ondo State. The specific objectives of this research work are as follow:

- i. To examine the relationship between Local Government Administration and Rural Agricultural Development Programs.
- ii. To ascertain the relationship between Local Government Extension staff with farmers and Agricultural Development Program in the rural areas of Ondo State.

Research Hypotheses

To guide the study, the followings hypotheses were formulated for testing.

Ho: There is no relationship between Local Governments Administration and Rural Agricultural Development Programs.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Local Government Extension staff' attitude to work and Agricultural Development Program in the rural areas of Ondo State.

The Scope of The Study

The rural parts of Ondo state are the primary focus of the investigation. It is focused with evaluating how Ondo State's farmers will be affected by local government on rural development. Twelve (12) Villages, six (6) from each of the two (2) designated Local Government areas in Ondo State, were included in the study areas. In addition to Eriti, Gedegade, Igasi, Oge, Afin, Iyani, Italato, Kajola Camp, Surulere, Ojeka, Iye, and Ugbe, the two local government areas that were chosen are Akoko North West and Akoko North East, respectively. These twelve selected villages were pick due to their commitment to farming, despite their deplorable situation and yet they turned out to be the food basket of their local governments; in view of this, the villages were pick as a samples that can be used to access the impact of local government on rural development, using agriculture sector as a focus. The research covered the period of Ten (10)

years 2011 – 2021.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted the simple survey research design where the method of data collection involved the administration of questionnaire, group discussion and interview.

Population of the Study

The population of the study areas, is the total population of the twelve (12) selected villages in Akoko North West and Akoko North East which is given by the National Population Commission 2006 and projected population as at 2021.

- i. Akoko North West population of the six selected villages as at 2006 is 211,867. Projected population as at 2021 is 286,000.
- ii. Akoko North East population of the six selected villages as at 2006 is 176,092. Projected population as at 2021 is 241,700.

Total Population of the study areas as at 2006 = 387,959 while the projected population as at 2021 is 527,700.

Sample Size and sampling technique: The total number of the sample size of this study is one thousand four hundred (1,400). The figure is the total numbers of the farmers' association in the twelve selected villages.

Data collection: Data for the study was collected from both primary and secondary sources.

Primary Source: The primary source of data include questionnaire administration and field observation. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) of 10-15 people in each of the twelve (12) villages selected was also conducted.

Secondary Source: The secondary sources including observation of the infrastructures and examination of documents of the Agricultural Development Project (ADP), in the local government office of the Ondo State. Also consultation of books, journal articles, chapters in books, as well as official government publications and internet sources.

Research Instruments: The research questionnaire was the main tool employed in this study, however an interview guide was also included. Both the closed-ended and open-ended questionnaire questions were employed in the study. Respondents chosen for the semi-structured interview were chosen for their special traits or depth of expertise in a certain

field. The status of the respondent depended on their place in the local government structure and their ability to obtain data that could help resolve a specific research issue. The goal of the focus interview was to acquire information to help in reconstructing some events or identifying a pattern in certain behaviours, not to collect pre-specified facts.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data to be interpreted here are the ones received from the respondent from the (12) Twelve selected villages through the administration of questionnaires. A total number of (1,400) one thousand four hundred questionnaires were administered through (10) ten experienced feed staff, while (1,194) one thousand one hundred and ninety four representing 85% were returned. The one thousand, one hundred and ninety four (1,194) is used for this analysis. Two hundred and six (206) representing 15% did not return. The presentation, analysis and interpretation of data are based on the (1,194) One thousand one hundred and ninety four questionnaires that was returned

Hypothesis Testing

The analysis of the result of the study was presented hypothesis-by-hypothesis and the hypotheses were re-stated in the null form. The variables were identified including the statistical treatment to establish the degree of significance. (ANOVA) was used at 5% level of significance

Hypothesis One

Ho: There is no relationship between Local Governments Administration and Rural Agricultural Development Programs. (ADP)

H1: There is relationship between Local Governments Administration and Rural Agricultural ..Development Programs. (ADP)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	24.016	1	2.183	5.044	.000
Vithin Groups	61.016	372	.433		
Total	85.032	383			

Source: Field Survey (2021)

The p-value of the analysis of significant (0.000) is less than 0.05 therefore; we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that that there is a significant difference in the relationship between Local Government and the Agricultural Development Programmes in the rural areas to the farmers.

Hypothesis Two

- Ho:** There is no significant relationship between Local Government Agricultural Extension staff attitude to work and Agricultural Development Program in the rural areas of Ondo State.
- H1:** There is a significant relationship between Local Government Agricultural Extension staff attitude to work and Agricultural Development Program in the rural areas.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.2.311	11	1.119	3.018	.001
Within Groups	.37.949	372	.371		
Total	.50.260	383			

Level of Significance 0.05

Field Survey (2021)

The p-value of the analysis of significant (0.001) is less than 0.05 therefore; we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there are significant relationship between local government Agricultural Extension Staff attitude to work and Agricultural Development Programmes in the rural areas.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis One

However, about 38.1% of the respondents did not respond on the major types of local government agricultural Development Programmes. This is due to the facts that, majority of the respondents are not aware of the local government agricultural Development Programmes in the study area.

In one of the FGDs a farmer averred that; “We dey this village, we no no if government dey or they no dey. Na when they like na him them they follow us talk, that one na government?” (FGDs Kajola Camp village,2021)

This is the in line with the Asante and Ayee (2018b) Concluded that decentralized governance in Nigeria has fallen short of public expectation by neglecting the important of agriculture activities to local farmers. It pointed out that Ministry Department Agency (MDAs) have allocated financial resources towards educations, health which are also important aspects of agriculture development, however pay less attention to agriculture development program that can create job and alleviate poverty.

Non-involvement of programme's beneficiaries in the design, planning and execution of project and the problem of monitoring and evaluation issues. Also misplace of priority; the manners at which politicians hijack and influence programs to the areas that does not need the programme just to bear record of performance in their constituencies is alarming.

Hypothesis Two.

The below was the FGD with one of the farmers in Ajowa-Akoko, he spoke in Yoruba Language.

Nigba kugba ti awon Osise ijoba ibile ba wa kowa ni eko Nipa bi a se ngbin irugbin oko, n kan oko wa ma n se daadaa Ni odun naa ju igbati aba lo imo ti arawa lo. Nipa bayii a fe ki Ijoba maa ranwon siwa lore koore.

Interpretation:

Whenever local government agricultural extension staff come to educate us on what to do, we had observed that we do have wonderful result that year, than when we use our own traditional knowledge. Hence, we need government to keep sending the extension staff to us for better result all the time (Interpreted by Author).

This is also consistent with Onibokukun's (1987) assertion that the production-oriented rural economy relies heavily on non-productive people who lack modern tools, technical knowledge, scientific training, and access to resources, making it difficult for them to effectively integrate into the modern economic system.

Ukoha (2014). (2014). This hypothesis's outcome was also supported. According to him, small-scale farmers require ongoing, intense extension education programs and capacity-building on pertinent technologies and production practices for agricultural activities that are sustainable. Due to the consequences of climate change, agricultural production in Nigeria and the rest of the world has grown extremely complex, making this vital. As a result, training is crucial to improving human performance in a particular circumstance. Additionally, he claimed that training allows for the methodical development of knowledge and abilities, which in turn aids learners in performing their jobs well. In agricultural extension, capacity building is the process through which pertinent parties and organizations mobilize, reinforce, establish, adapt, and retain capacity over time, typically with the purpose of ensuring stable Agricultural Development Programmes which will improve the lives of the people.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The following recommendations are proffered based on my research finding to help tackle the problems and challenges militating against good management of Local government agricultural

developments programmes in order to achieve sustainable agricultural development in the rural areas of Ondo State. This is because over the years only a few laudable achievements have been recorded given the introduction of a myriad of Local government development agricultural programmes in the rural areas of the state.

1. To ensure that all communities can benefit from the Local Government Agricultural Development Programmes' benefits and assistance, the Local Government Agricultural Development Programmes must carry out their activities in underdeveloped areas. the analysis of the sampled villages revealed that the most frequently implemented program, Agricultural and Skill Acquisition Training Program, was unable to achieve its goal due to a lack of agency monitoring and assessment.
2. The local government agricultural development programmes should be urgently redesigned by the Ondo state administration to place more emphasis on the production of all crops.
3. Because the majority of the aid was provided during the dry season to promote irrigation farming, the Ondo State governments must provide support for both wet and dry season farming.
4. There should be monitoring and evaluation by the official of the programme at least once in a month so that the Local government agricultural Development Programmes in the rural arrears would be sustain sustainable.
5. Since the Agricultural Development Program doesn't create any revenue on its own, some of its professional services ought to be made available for sale.
6. It is important to involve program recipients in the creation, organization, and completion of projects. This will also prevent the top-down coordination of policies. As it fosters a sense of community and ownership among the beneficiaries or host communities, it will also pique their attention.
7. When implementing projects, it is important to identify and prioritize the poor. It is well known that projects intended to help the underprivileged typically wind up helping primarily the wealthy members of society.
8. Local government agricultural Development Programs operators and policy strategists should be aware of the Programmers performance suggested in this work, so as to serve as pointer for a better performance.

Contribution To Knowledge

The study established that some areas have benefited from local government agricultural Development Programmes more than their average shares and this singular factor explains the edge they have over other areas.

The study also established that, there is existence of varying degrees of the indicators of agricultural development among the twelve Village 's areas in Ondo state in terms of farm asset and technology dimension, farm output dimension, infrastructural dimension.

The study established that local government agricultural Development Programmes in the study area are compact and concentrated in the central senatorial zone.

It has been established from the research that the name of Agricultural Extension service in Local Government is strange to some farmers, this question how viable its existent, since is not meeting up with his primary assignment.

CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this study is to investigate impact of local government on rural development in two (2) local government area of Ondo State, with a view towards proposing sustainable agricultural development. However majority of the respondents did not respond on the major types of local government agricultural Development Programmes, this shows that government at all levels have not create enough awareness of the existing local government agricultural Development Programmes. The result showed the level of deficiencies in Local government agricultural development programme extension staffs professional activities toward farmers. The problem of gap- narrowing is one that demands drastic reorientation of policy. It is strongly viewed that after over five decades of independence there is hardly any excuse for the persistence of the wide gap, except on the ground of lack a sound policy to create the right atmosphere for the achievement of local government agricultural Development Programmes in Ondo State and other states in Nigeria.

The challenges facing local government agricultural Development Programmes in the study area were examined. The result revealed that, the major problem of local government agricultural Development Programmes in the study area is that, the programmes do not target the original farmers. Sustainable local government agricultural Development Programmes is unlikely to occur without serious attention from the government. Hence, there is need for proper channels towards implementing necessary local government agricultural Development Programmes appropriate strategies should be strictly adhered to in order to deal with the prevailing challenges.

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