



Theories, Approaches and Models Of Rural Development In Nigeria - A Thematic Review

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a theoretical paper. The study examined the roles theories, approaches and models play in the understanding of rural development as an academic field. The study, employed qualitative data gathering technique and analyzed the data so gathered using qualitative descriptive analysis. On the strength of available empirical evidence, we validated our models, approaches and theories. The study nonetheless noted that though their uses are relevant in rural development as both useful and desirable, such interventions do not provide sufficient alibi for the state's abdication of its primary responsibility of providing for the well-being of the citizens as currently the norm. It therefore recommended the strengthening of state institutions to perform their constitutional responsibilities and the provision of enabling environment for private businesses to stimulate enduring development.

Keywords: Theories, Approaches, Models of Rural and Community Development, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Rural development in the world generally and in the Third World in particular has assumed the front-burner status since early eighties. Indeed, it remains incontrovertible that unless rural development is given the seriousness it deserves, in terms of closing the gap between theory and practice, the goals of achieving accelerated national development will remain elusive in the developing States { Egbo, E.A, Obi, M.A.O., Okeke, M.I. and Eme, O.I. , 2009).

Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013) argue that even though successive governments in Nigeria have made some efforts towards enhancing rural development, its meaningful realization has remained a mirage. Consequently, other means of community development are being considered. Matanmi, Adesiji, and Awojobi, (2007) asserted that many community development associations have been known to have the social and economic development of their various communities as their major objective where they are located. For example, in the area of education, many community development associations have been involved in building classrooms in primary and secondary schools, although, these were later handed over to the government. Community Development Associations also played prominent roles in the provision of infrastructural facilities such as roads, culverts and social services like hospitals, markets, pipe-borne water, boreholes and electricity {Ijere, 1992}.

Given the contributions of the rural sector to the national economy, enhancing the development of the sector should be central to government and public administration. This is necessary as such would further

enhance the ability of the sector for increased contribution to the overall national growth and development (Ugwuanyi & Chukwuemeka, 2013). Unfortunately, over the years, the development strategies and efforts in Nigeria has been more urban-based or focused resulting to relative neglect of the rural areas as evidenced in the apparent dearth of basic infrastructural facilities in the rural areas (Abah, 2010). Eke and Oghator(2011) lamented that most rural development programmes in Nigeria have ended up on the pages of national newspapers and television announcements with the rural areas languishing in backwardness, stagnation, poverty and misery.

The interest of researchers in rural development has been on the various ways of enhancing development in the rural areas. Knowledge of theories, approaches and models play crucial role in this quest. They are the major tools to deal with intervention at the rural level, oriented towards improving or changing rural community institutions and proffering solution to rural development. Obviously, no single theory, approach or model has been considered the best option. They are rather situation specific. However, a combination of two or more theories or approaches and models have been found to be useful in the execution of rural development projects. Chukwuezi (2000) noted that there are over-lapping in the approach to community development, which would cut across various approaches in a particular community development approach.

A number of approaches or perspectives have evolved over the years, geared towards the actualization of community development. According to Omofonmwan and Odia, (2009:248), one of the most popular approaches to community development is:

The provision of basic social amenities to communities by government. Others include: Community Development Associations (CDA): that does initiate, mobilize resources and execute community project. Cooperative Societies: they mobilize credit facilities for members and build small scale industries in the community. Community Elites: These are individual community members or groups, who support the community in areas of felt needs as well as influence the government and other development agencies in sitting of projects in their communities. And the most recent in the course of institutionalizing stakeholder participation in community development is the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO).

People and agencies involved in rural development in various areas have been trying out new forms of organization, new techniques and new methods in order to enhance the development of the rural areas. Theories, approaches and models have yielded positive results in the pursuit of rural development aims and objectives. Current researches are anchored on sound theories, approaches and models. They offer explanation to certain questions in rural development.

One of the major problems of all developing countries is rural development. This means how to give to the average community the basic satisfaction necessary for the improvement of their socio-economic and cultural life in the rural areas where they feel neglected by their government in development programmes. Rural communities are denied social and economic amenities that are conducive to good living. This is so because the government of the people tends to embrace development programmes that accord low priority to rural communities where in fact the great majority of the people live. Due to the method of setting out programmes of development, communities are faced with the arduous task of planning development projects without the government taking heed. As a result, the whole burden of community development is heaved on the community and its voluntary organisations. They have to construct and mend their roads, think of building hospitals, schools, clinics for the benefit of the entire community.

Some of the discouraging problems that exist in developing nations Nigeria inclusive include improvement of educational standards, improving the socio-economic status of the people and instigating community development consciousness in order to stimulate the people to develop their immediate environment so that it will suit their practical needs. When this is achieved, the mass exodus of people from the rural areas to the more developed urban cities will be reduced.

To meet such challenges, however, members of various communities have to mobilize themselves to provide these amenities. Amenities cannot only be provided by the government owing to limitations of financial resources and perhaps total neglect of some rural areas by the government. In most cases, projects become so many that some communities cannot execute them without resorting to aids from the Non-Governmental Organisations. It is the approaches or strategies to the understanding of rural and community development this chapter seeks to address.

As we have noted earlier, community development has not been subjected to a single generally recognized suitable theoretical framework. The writings on community development have been concerned with various ways of trying to enhance development in the communities. This paper would like to discuss the various approaches that could be applied in community development. It is difficult to have a single streamlined concept of method of community development. Various approaches have been discussed. Some of the approaches are not categorized distinctly as water-tight compartment. There are over lapping in the approach to community development, which would cut across various approaches in a particular community development project.

RESEARCH METHODS

Methods of Data Collection

Research methods are of utmost importance in a research process. Research method describes the various steps of the plan to be adopted in solving a research problem. Thus, Koul (2011:78) noted that “the selection of a method and the specific design within that method appropriate for investigating a research problem will depend upon the nature of the problem and research questions, and the kind of data that the problems entail”. He noted further that the method selected should be in harmony with scientific principles and adequate enough to lead to dependable generalization. According to him, in any specific study, although it is a common practice to use one method, yet there is no reason why two or more methods cannot be applied effectively in combination in certain research situations.

Similarly, he remarked that a researcher must have a thorough understanding of all research methods with particular reference to their strengths, limitations, applicability and appropriateness. According to him:

... to describe in detail the specific method being used, incidentally, constitutes a very good way of determining whether the method chosen has been worked out properly and is likely to prove effective. If the scholar cannot describe his method, the chances are that it is vague and general to yield him satisfactory result (Koul, 2011:78).

In this study we employed the qualitative method of data collection, which according to Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008) constitutes one of the two major approaches to empirical research in social sciences. The other is labeled quantitative method because it uses number to try to understand the social world. Essentially, there are three major sources of data for a qualitative research study — interviews, observations and documents. Data for this study were collected using documents.

Qualitative descriptive studies have as their goal a comprehensive summary of events in the everyday terms of those events. Researchers conducting qualitative descriptive studies stay close to their data and to the surface of words and events. It is therefore the method of choice when straight descriptions of phenomena are desired. As (Patton, 1988 quoted in Brennan, 2005: 5) posited,

...the human element of qualitative inquiry is both its strength and weakness - its strength is fully using human insight and experience, its weakness is being so heavily dependent on the researcher’s skill, training, intellect, discipline, and creativity. The researcher is the instrument of qualitative inquiry, so the quality of the research depends heavily on the qualities of that human being.

The data for this study was analysed using content analysis analysis. In qualitative research, data analysis begins immediately with data collection (Merriam, 2002). With that caveat in mind, data analysis is essentially an inductive strategy. One begins with a unit of data (any meaningful word, phrase, narrative, etc.) and compares it to another unit of data, and so on, all the while looking for common patterns across

the data (Merriam, 2002). The purpose of analysis therefore is to understand and explain how the constitutive elements of a complex whole are related in order to gain a better knowledge of the unit or subject being studied. In this wise, the data used in this study were analyzed qualitatively and critically, in order to arrive at a valid argument and make valuable deductions. Also, tables and pictures were used where necessary to enhance clarity of presentation.

Rural Development Theories

There are diverse views on the phenomena of rural development whereas some people see rural development as an approach, other see it as method, programme or process. Many strategies have been designed to address the problem of rural development. Some of the theories that influence rural development are basic Resource theory, System Theory, Power Structure Theory and Growth Centre Theory.

i. Basic Resource Theory:

The basic resource theory is a rural development theory that is based on the basic natural resource or environmental resources in a given area. The assumption of the theory is that the development of any given locality is a factor of the presence quality and magnitude of basic natural resources within the stipulated area. Essang (1975) reported that the development of these natural resources attracts investment capital to these areas and increases income and employment.

The endowment of natural resources in a given region or locality plays a crucial role in the overall development of the area. The availability of this valuable asset in an area helps to improve the quality of life of the people. The extraction of natural resources in any given area provides employment. The inhabitants of the area tend to have a higher income and grow faster in terms of development than those with meager natural resources.

Okoye (1994) noted that in Nigeria, cocoa, groundnut and cotton growing areas, and the palm belt and mineral rich areas of the country experienced until recently, much faster growth than other areas not so endowed. Presently, it has been argued that states in the south-south and South-East geo-political regions are experiencing rapid economic growth based on the production of petroleum from crude oil, a highly valuable natural resource. Furthermore, the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1999 set up the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to serve as a government agency that will foster development in the Niger Delta region where there is crude oil deposit. The availability of natural resources in some areas explains the disparities in the development of rural areas.

ii. Systems Theory:

Ecological Systems Theory is a form of general systems theory in which there is concern with the relations among "living entities" and "between entities and other aspects of their environment." This theory can be applied to community development by or through the environment because the developer has to check out the environment and its surroundings first in order to build successfully. The theory can adapt the other disciplines like Ecological psychology and general systems theory.

A system is a complex organization of parts or elements, which continually generate, elaborate, and restructure a pattern of meaning, pattern of action and pattern of interaction. Rural communities function as a system. Therefore, to achieve meaningful development, the various components of the rural community must come together under one system. The leadership, groups and individuals must come together to interact as a system toward action for the development of the rural community. Warren (1974) posits that systems theory has come to be used not only in the analysis of small groups and formal organizations, which constitute the area of operation of many communities or organization workers. Systems theory provides explanation to certain initial questions, such as the nature of the community, the sections, tension and boundary. Warren further noted that system analysis helps to locate and understand these particular networks and constellations that are especially relevant to the venture at hand to discover and give appropriate consideration to relationships that do not appear on any formal organizational chart. It is particularly helpful in approaching the complex "wheels within wheels" characteristic of the many networks and formal organizational relationships within which the community workers deals, both

horizontally; across the structure of the community; and vertically taking into consideration the relationships of neighbourhood to community; to metropolitan region, to state, interstate region, federal and international organization and networks.

Ocheoha (1998) enumerated the verity of purposes and the advantages of systems theory to include the following:

- a. it makes for a thorough investigation of objectives and provides ways to ensure effectiveness and criteria to choose from objectives.
- b. It analyses alternatives to be investigated for feasibility, risk and cost compared in terms of outcomes.
- c. Following from above, it designs new goals and objectives.

Systems theory in rural development helps to ensure effective planning, execution and evaluation of projects. It also creates room for sustainability.

iii. Power Structure Theory:

Power structure plays a crucial role in rural development. Power structure refers to the way and manner in which power is built, organized or structured. The question of who holds power and who calls the shots has been a source of fascination for a wide range of people especial at the community level. In many areas, power structure has remained an uphill task, truth however, remains that power is never static.

Hunter (1980) noted that various kinds of power exist and May be distributed unevenly among so-called power figures; that communities vary considerably in the extent to which their power wielders tend to be the same people for government, economic, educational and social service matters, or whether these areas tend to have relatively discrete power structures. He upholds that people who wield power in actual communities' issues are not necessarily those who are reputed to be the power figures; that there are different kinds of power. Power structure theory stipulates that power cannot be conceived statically; that at any point in time, there can be 'slack' in power structure, and that new power structures can emerge at any point in time. For example, the creation of new local government of new actors in the power system, in addition, in rural development, civil right leaders and self-help groups have emerged as formidable force to reckon with.

iv. Growth centre Theory:

Boudville (1960) saw growth centre as a region which is characterized by the dominance of a regional center (growth space) to which all flows, such as goods, services, capital ideas or political allegiance are predominantly directed. Okoye (1994) noted that the regional centre or growth centre links a heterogeneous continuous area into inter-dependent and interregional units. The spatial investment-strategy of growth centre purports to advance development efficiency equality goals, and has thus become the predominant investment policy strategy in many countries, especially, the development ones (Gaile,1978).

A growth centre has been defined as an urban centre f economic activities, which can achieve self-sustaining growth of the nation (Nicholas, 1969).A growth centre foster development at the rural areas through t 'trickle down' process. Growth impulses generated from the development centre are transmitted to the surrounding areas. Friedman and Alonso (1964) observed that the spatial incidence of economic growth is a function of distance from a center city. The growth potential of an area situated along an axis between two cities is a function of the density of interaction between them. Therefore, the intensity of interaction between the growth center and its surrounding region helps in determining the growth potential of an area.

Gana (1977) posits that the spread mechanism may take the form of stimulation of food production for urban industrial market; increased production of industrial raw material for processing industries; employment opportunities for any surplus rural labour following agricultural mechanization within the growth-space; financial remittances to the rural areas by migrant workers; diffusion of innovations into the 'growth space' and subsidiary investments made by rich firms located the growth centre in surrounding region. Growth generated in the growth centre 'trickle down' to the hinterland.

v. Empowerment Theory

Empowerment Theory refers to the experience of personal growth and an improvement in self-definition that occurs as a result of the development of capabilities and proficiencies (Staples 1990). Another definition suggests that empowerment is a combination of personal strengths, initiative, and natural helping systems to bring about change (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). This theory can be applied to community development by empowering the people within the community to develop their own community. The theory can adapt to other disciplines like Sociology.

Approaches and Modes to Rural Development

There are various approaches and models to rural development. These approaches and models are aimed at addressing rural development problems. However, for the purpose of this paper, six major approaches and models have been delineated.

These include:

- 1 Multi Disciplinary or Team Approach
- 2 Integrated Approach
- 3 Locality Participation Model
- 4 Social Planning Model
- 5 Social Action Model
- 6 Diffusion Model

1. Multi Disciplinary or Team Approach:

This approach lays emphasis on the need for a team or group of experts in the development process. It encourages the involvement of two or more disciplines in rural development. To ensure effective planning in rural development, the cooperation of disciplines such as history, economic, sociology, psychology and religion among others is necessary. The input of the various disciplines in the planning process helps to facilitate meaningful development. The improvement in the agricultural productivity of a given area or community would require the services of not only agricultural experts. Other experts like economists would be required to assess the cost. Educationists would be needed to help educate the people on the need for their participation in the desired improvement. More so, the services of other experts such as structural Engineers and water Engineers would also be needed. All that is needed is the cooperation of these experts in the development process.

2. Integrated Approach:

This approach has a broader view of rural development. It has the assumption that rural development is more than just the provision of physical infrastructures and social amenities like roads, culverts, bridges, electricity and hospitals through self-help or external assistance. Integrated approach does not emphasize one aspect of development; rather, it sees rural development as a comprehensive programme that utilizes available human and natural resources to improve the quality of life of the people. It helps in the overall improvement of the socio- cultural, economic and political conditions of the people

The Adani rice farm in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State is a good example of integrated approach to rural development. The then Anambra State government built the farm to help in improving the quality of life of the people of the area. Roads, hospitals, electricity and schools were constructed within the farm settlement to improve the welfare of the farmers. Chukwuezi (2000) noted that the integrated approach was quite popular with Dr. M .I. Okpara, one time premier of Eastern Region of Nigeria before the Nigerian civil war in 1967. According to him, Okpara, built some farm settlements in areas like Erei in Cross River State, Obudu Cattle ranch in Cross River state, Igbariam farms in Anambra State, Ikwo farms in Ebonyi State and Ahoada farm in Rivers State. In these farm settlements, the people were provided with some basic infrastructure like roads, water supply, electricity, schools and farmland in order to encourage them to develop themselves. These amenities were essentially to improve agricultural production by improving the quality of life of the people who produce food.

3. Locality Participation Model:

This approach adopts democratic principles in rural development. The participation of individuals and groups are of paramount importance in the development of the area. Through democratic principles, members are involved in all stages of the development. Firstly, they identify their felt needs; plan on how to address the needs; execute the plan and carry out the evaluation.

Locality participation is the oldest approach to rural development in Nigeria. Before the emergence of colonization in Africa, 'we' consciousness that existed among the people and the communal lifestyle made them to discuss their problems together and resolve on the way forward. The participation of the people led to the successful execution of various projects like bridges, market squares, village squares, clearing of streams and roads.

This approach addresses the felt needs of the rural areas though the effective participation of the local people. It emphasizes the need for self- help, self- determinant and self- reliant. Therefore, it is a non- directive approach to rural development. The approach is a necessary prerequisite for the sustainability of rural development projects. Among other, the approach provides for voluntary cooperation, development of indigenous leadership and the attainment of educational objectives.

4. Social Planning Model:

This approach has the primary objective of delivering goods and services to the people. It addresses certain specific problems such as housing. In most cases the project embarked upon by the social planners does not address the felt needs of the local people. They are left out of the planning and their participation may vary from much too little.

Social planners are usually involved in projects that require huge sum of money which the peasants in the rural communities may find difficult to address. Rothman (1970) argues that the approach presupposes that the society or local community is very complex, so, to effect a change requires experts who, through the exercise of technical abilities, including the ability to manipulate large bureaucratic organizations can skillfully guide complex change processes.

The social planning approach is a situation by which the government or other external agents evolve a rural development programme for the people. Chukwuezi (2000) cited the Nigerian Bakolori dam project in former Sokoto state as a good example of social planning approach to rural development. The Akolori peasants were visibly and forcefully forced to relocate by imposition of irrigation project on them, which they resisted. They were not consulted and they were displaced without due recognition of their various social problems. There was fierce repression and violent attack on the peasants, which saw many peasants, killed. However, the problem here is that since the local people were not involved in the planning and execution of the project, they will have problem in sustaining it.

5. Social Action Model

Social action model of rural development upholds that there exist a disadvantaged segment of the population that needs to be well informed and organized perhaps, in alliance with others to make adequate demands on the larger community. These demands when accomplished will in turn lead to increased resources or more treatment in accordance with democratic principles and social justice. It sensitizes the people towards action to improve their living conditions in the community. Moreover, it strongly advocates for the equitable distribution of powers, and decision making in the community.

Social action model helps to alleviate the problem of ignorance in rural communities. The campaign against female circumcision could be a form of social action where the people are sensitized towards the ignorance of the health hazards of the problem. Labour unions demanding for an increase in wages to cope with high rate of inflation could also be seen as a social action.

6. Diffusion Model of Rural Development:

This model of rural development explains why there exist differences in productivity among rural farmers in the same economic and geographic area. The view of model is that such differences are due to the differences in farmers' adoption of innovations, such as, the use of modern techniques like tractors, fertilizer, improved varieties of crops and other chemical inputs. Proponents of the model believe in bridging the gap in productivity differences through the diffusion of innovations. Improved

communication systems are the channel through which technological innovations could be diffused from the developed countries to the developing countries like Nigeria.

In many communities, the diffusion model has led to greater input in farm yields. It has prompted the adoption of extension services, experimental farmer, and demonstration stations among others as techniques of innovations to rural farmers. Over the years, the productivity of our rural farmers has remained relatively low. However, through the process of diffusion of innovative technologies which has led to the introduction of new varieties of crops and improved agricultural methods, the problem of low productivity would be addressed.

Relevance and Limitations of the Theories, Models and Approaches in Rural Development

To a large extent, the theories, approaches and models discussed above have contributed to rural development. They provided the basis for the formulation of rural development policies and strategies. They are the pivot on which various research and empirical studies revolve. Theories, approaches and models have also prompted the testing of some hypotheses and assumption underlying them. Their applications have guided our rural development policy formulation. They have also brought to the limelight certain critical variables in rural development. Essag, (1975) observed that among such variables are research, education of the local farmers, rate of return, agricultural price policy, technological innovation, the growth of urban industrial sector and expansion of export opportunities.

Despite the advantages of the theories, approaches and models discussed above in rural development, they are limited to a number of factors. In Nigeria, we have failed to distinguish between our rural communities and those of the developed countries of Europe and America. For example, various results in rural development outside Nigeria have failed to yield the desired result in Nigeria. The reason for their failure to produce the desired result could be the socio-economic and political differences between their place of origin and their new environment.

Taking the basic resource theory of rural development as an example in further buttressing the limitation of the theories and models, there are areas where the availability of abundant natural resources failed to stimulate development. There are also areas where limited resources have led to rapid development. The argument is that, what really counts is the availability of a technically labour force rather than a mere natural resource in a given area. In addition, non-availability of appropriate technology to facilitate the exploitation and utilization of the natural resources would make them to be of little or no use in the community.

CONCLUSION

Theories, approaches and models have helped immensely in the overall transformation of our rural areas. In most of our rural communities today, there is a shift from the hoe and cutlass technology to the modern methods of agriculture. However, considering the failure of some of these theories and models to yield the desired result in rural development, researchers in rural development are faced with the challenge of coming up with more theories and models that are based on the political, economic and social conditions of the developing countries like Nigeria. Such theories, approaches and models that are deeply rooted in our socio-economic and political conditions would serve as a panacea to the problem of rural development.

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