

# Rural Development Policies in Contemporary Nigeria; With a Special Reference to Eggon-Nassarawa and Its Environs; 1999-2019 A.D

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Article History	Abstract
<b>Original Research Article</b>	<p><i>This scholarly work titled "Rural Development Policies in Contemporary Nigeria with a Special Reference to Eggon and its Environs, Nassarawa State; 1999-2019 A.D." has been established purely to examine the inception, development, impact, successes and failures associated with the studied subject matter for a proper historical reconstruction and balanced study to be attained. In another related development, it is of great relevance and importance to bring into notice that in the course of conducting the study both scholarly published, unpublished sources and oral traditions were utilized for accurate historical data collection. Further to the above, qualitative and quantitative techniques of data collection, analysis and presentation have been put in place where relevant and necessary for the attainment of positive targeted goals of the study. The study has in the long run come up with some major findings such as; the percentage which agricultural sector contributes to gross domestic product steadily declined from 1972 consequent upon the non-challent attitude towards rural sector development and the partial relegation of the agrarians and rural dwellers to the core. For instance, (16% in 1970, to 15.7% despite the case of urbanization on massive scale. The study here in justifies the aforementioned findings as some of the fundamental causes of contemporary social, financial, economic and political development crises and the subject matter of study has in the tail end recommends the way forward. Among which include; the need for the policy making bodies, stakeholders and relevant agencies to rise to the responsibility ahead for the well-being of human's society.</i></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Rural, Development, Policies, Contemporary, Nigeria, Nassarawa-Eggon.</p>
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<p><b>Copyright © 2025 The Author(s):</b> This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.</p> <p><b>Citation:</b> Kabir Mohammed PhD, FHSN, FNSS; Usman Mua'zu Alhassan PhD; Mr. Abdullahi Mohammed; Binta Muhammad Yarinchi; Firdausi Aliyu Muhammad; Yahuza Aliyu. Rural Development Policies in Contemporary Nigeria; With a Special Reference to Eggon-Nassarawa and Its Environs; 1999-2019 A.D. UKR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (UKRJAHS), volume 1(issue 7), 117-131.</p>	

## General Introduction of the Studied Area:-

The concept of Rural Development (R.D.) as an alternative strategy to overall development of the economy, have become a World-Wide Acceptable Phenomena in both developed and developing countries, particularly during the last three decades, there is hardly any state policy or programmes that do not have a direct bearing on the rural sector. In Nasarawa Eggon Local Government Area, present and past governments (Central,

State and Local levels) formulated a good numbers of policies and programmes with rural focus and implications for improving rural life and the participation for rural people in National Development and Progress.

The dichotomy between urban and rural areas in terms of development can be traced back to the colonial days when Government Reservation Areas (GRAs) were established at various stations.<sup>4</sup> When the urban Acts were used to

seize local lands for white settlement and when the introduction of the capitalist mode of production led to the designation of some settlements. Similarly, like the rest of developing Local Government Areas a bulk of Nasarawa -Eggon Local Government wealth is derived from agriculture which lies in abound quantity in rural communities. The percentage contribution of agriculture to gross domestic product steadily declined from 1972 due to the less attention paid to the rural sectoral development. (16% in 1970, to 15.7% in 1971 it becomes clear that despite the high level of urbanization, Nasarawa-Eggon local government remains largely rural. Thus, there is the realization that a dangerous gap exists in the development levels of both the urban and rural areas threatens the political and social stability of the local government. Hence, the development of a local government cannot be completed with the singular act of developing the urban areas at the detriment of the rural area, which supplies to the urban areas with food and labour.<sup>5</sup> Contemporarily, rural development has become a national impetrative in the local government, thus, the importance of rural development in contemporary Nasarawa -Eggon society cannot be overemphasized, as much as it cannot be relegated to the background as it's significance stems from its recognized role in the process of achieving the improvement of economic, political, social and cultural conditions of the communities. Finally, rural development is one of the major plank upon which national development policies and their implementation are hinged.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Statement of the Research Problems of the Studied Area:**

The goal of development planning in Nasarawa-Eggon local government is the achievement of rapid increase in the local government productive capacity with a view to improving the standards of living of the people in the area. As it relates to rural areas, promotion of economic growth and the provision of social amenities to enhance the standard of living of the rural people.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the efforts made in the past to effect development at the rural areas, the conditions of the rural dwellers have not improved, rather they have further deteriorated. The rural areas, are areas of depression, degradation and deprivation, children with distended tummies and spindly legs are a common sight and both these children, their siblings and their parents are often oblivious of a better miler.<sup>8</sup>

*"The rural population constitutes the local government peasantry, the local government poor and the local government's largest illiterate groups. Their typology that Frautz Fanon referred to as "the wretched*

*of the earth"*, whose endless striving for survival has not been helped by low incomes, inadequate infrastructure, lack of industry and lack of innovations. The major problems of rural development in Nasarawa-Eggon Local Government Area are non-implementation of projects, leadership factors, insufficiency of financial resources, intra and inter-communal disputes and corruption.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to appraise Rural Development Policies in Nasarawa -Eggon Local Government Area of Nasarawa State from 1999 to 2019 A.D. The specific objective of the study are:

- i. To find out the extent to which the projects being implemented in Nasarawa-Eggon local government are in line with the felt needs of the people.
- ii. To find out how the rural development projects are financed in Nasarawa-Eggon local government area.
- iii. To find out the major challenges affecting smooth implementation of rural development projects in Nasarawa-Eggon local government area.
- iv. To recommend ways and means of encouraging effective implementation of rural development projects in Nasarawa-Eggon local government area.

#### **Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. To what extent the projects being implemented in Nasarawa-Eggon local government are in line with the felt needs of the people?
- ii. How the rural development projects are financed in Nasarawa-Eggon local government area?
- iii. What are the major challenges affecting smooth implementation of rural development projects in Nasarawa-Eggon local government area?
- iv. What are the ways and means of encouraging effective implementation of rural development projects in Nasarawa-Eggon local government area?

#### **Significant of the Studied Subject Matter to Existing Knowledge of the Field/Literature**

This study is significant as it will take an in-depth analysis into the rural development policies of Nasarawa-Eggon local government area of Nasarawa State. The finding of the study will prove an insight into the historical and geographical survey of Nasarawa-Eggon and also reveal brief cultural norms and religious of Eggon people. Also, this study will contribute in no small way to the literature

in this area of study.

### **Scope and Limitation of the Studied Area:**

The study or research work will deal with the appraisal of rural development policies in Nasarawa-Eggon local government area of Nasarawa state from 1999 to 2019 A.D.

The availability and use of appropriate information on which, to base the findings will be a constraint similar to any other Local Government Area of this type in the country (Nigeria). The aspect of constraint and time factor which aids a bit in the set-back process will also be considered, as they all affected the process of this research work in general.

### **Research Methodology**

The method used in gathering data for this study are primary sources and secondary sources. The primary sources include data from direct responses to interviews with selected respondents, participant observation, structured questionnaires and reports from research assistants that will be recruit by the researcher. The secondary sources of data include textbooks, government documents and publications, resource materials from the Internet, journals, conference/seminar papers, "archival" materials, etc.

### **Related Reviewed Literature:**

Several studies have been conducted on Rural Development Policies in Nigeria, but studies with specific focus on Nasarawa -Eggon local government area is very minimal. Therefore, a lot of relevant references have been sorted out about the concept of Rural Development Policies. Rural development as part of development that seeks to enhance the quality of life in the rural areas by providing basic infrastructural facilities.<sup>10</sup>

A study carried out by Ering (2014) titled "Rural Development Policies in Nigeria: A Critical Appraisal" have maintained that Nigeria rural communities have ever before the advent of colonization indulged in various forms of community self-help schemes such as construction of village moats, shrines, village squares, markets and a host of other activities. In other words, development activities have been part of Nigeria's cultural heritage. But the institutionalization of modern rural development schemes can be traced to the 1920s when the British colonial office adopted the strategy of community development as a special development model for the rural areas of all colonial territories. The concern then was to make up for the short comings of traditional British school system by imparting skills such as carpentry, house building, shoe repairing, etc in community development centres.<sup>11</sup>

According to Oluseyi (2018), Rural Development is a process of change, by which the efforts of the people themselves are united, those of government authorities to improve their economic, social and cultural conditions of communities in to the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national programme. Rural Development is a process of bringing change among rural community from the traditional way of living to progressive way of living. It is also expressed as a movement for progress. Thus, rural development may mean any one of these, depending upon our focus.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, for the avoidance of ineffective floundering among the myriad definitions we shall define rural development as a process of developing and utilizing natural and human resources, technologies, infrastructural facilities, institutions and organizations, and government policies and programmes to encourage and speed up economic growth in rural areas, to provide jobs and to improve the quality of rural life towards self-sustenance. In addition to economic growth, this process typically involves changes in popular attitudes, and in many cases even in customs and beliefs. In a nutshell, the process of rural development must represent the entire gamut of change by which a social system moves away from a state of life perceived as unsatisfactory towards a materially and spiritually better condition of life.<sup>13</sup>

Laah *et al.*, (2013), opines that Rural Development is a process of providing opportunities, services and amenities to the rural people so that they can improve their social, economic, political, cultural and physical well-being and environmental consciousness. Rural development is a desired state for people residing in the rural areas. It is characterized by increased agricultural productivity and incomes, good governance, improved people empowerment, good health and nutrition, has dignity and honor to live in a sustainable environment and free society.<sup>14</sup>

Awojobi (2014), defined rural development as follows: A process through which rural poverty is alleviated by sustained increase in productivity and incomes of low-income rural workers and households. A process of change among hundreds of thousands of rural people development refers only to those changes which are seen as desirable among rural people who are changing. Rural development may be regarded as an integrated approach to food production as well as physical, social and institutional infrastructural provisions with an ultimate goal of bringing about both quantitative and qualitative changes which result in improved living standard of the rural population.<sup>15</sup> Rural development has scope that is broad and elastic, and it depends on the interaction of many forces such as the objectives of the programme, the

availability of resources for planning and implementation. Rural development projects will include agricultural set-up projects, rural water supply projects, rural electrification projects, rural feeder-road and maintenance projects, rural health and disease control projects, rural education and Adult education campaign, rural telecommunication system, and rural industrialization.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Rural development policies created a big bias against the peasantry and did favour the local and urban petty-bourgeoisie. Consequent upon this most of the peasants that could not afford the price of the equipment were displaced and deprived of their possessions and their means of livelihood while those who remained, ended up as labourers for the petty-bourgeoisie.<sup>17</sup>

However, recent past studies have pointed out that a vast majority of people across local government live in the rural areas, Nasarawa-Eggon local government area has 60% of her population living in the rural areas. Bearing this in mind, the roles which the rural sector plays in the generation of national wealth and national development cannot be underestimated. In view of this, there has been synergy between all agencies, government organizations and institutions to undertake and monitor the complicated process of nation-building, development and integration with particular reference to rural settings.<sup>18</sup> This orientation is a deviation from the erstwhile arrangement whereby developmental efforts in all spheres were concentrated in the urban areas to the detriment of the rural areas. The intention of government is to bring the neglected rural areas into the mainstream of national development. Despite the enormous contributions of the rural dwellers to national wealth, it appears ironically as if successive developmental programmes implemented by the government were geared towards their exploitation and impoverishment; as they yet suffer mass poverty and deprivation under the programs.<sup>19</sup>

Conclusively, this one serve as an introductory section which contains general background to the study, general introduction, statement of research problem, aim and objective of the study, significant of the study, research methodology and literature reviewed as relevant scholarly sources for historical reconstruction.

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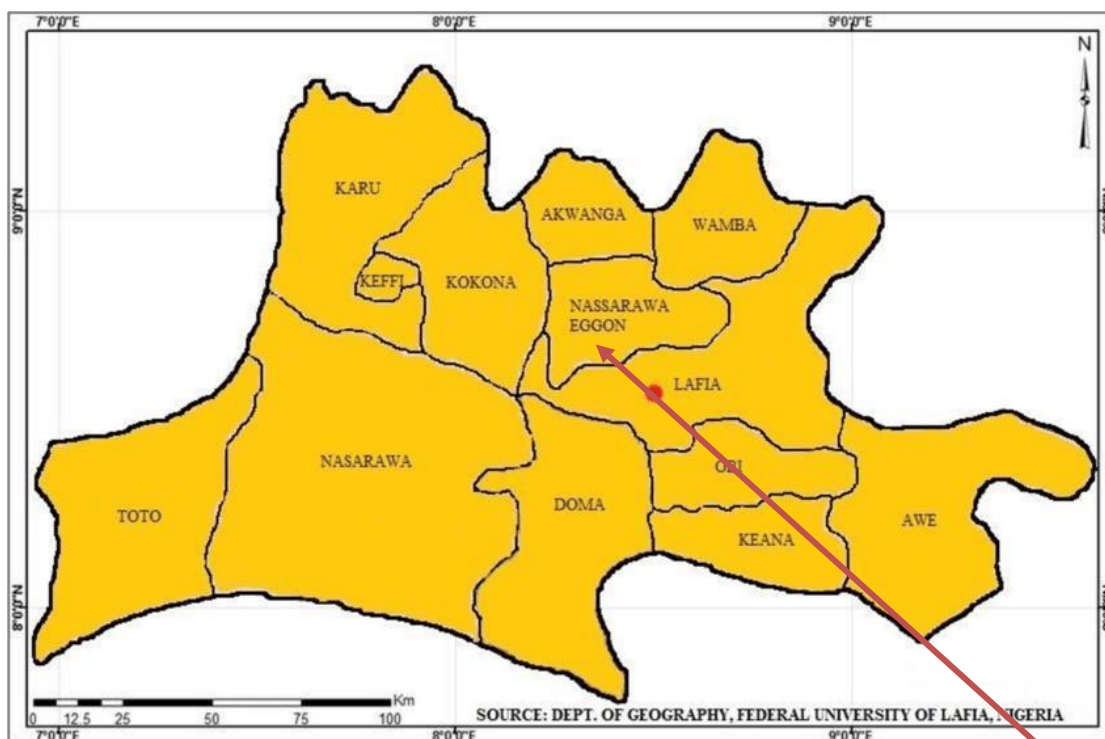


## Geographical Survey of Nasarawa-Eggon Local Government Area

Nasarawa-Eggon local government area is situated in Nasarawa state, North-central Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The headquarter of the LGA is in the town of Eggon and the LGA is made up of several towns, districts, and villages which include Kagbu, Alongam, Mada station, Umme, Agunji, Ogba, Wogan, and Arikpa. The estimated population of Nasarawa Eggon LGA is put at 176,542 inhabitants with the area mostly populated by members of the Eggon tribe (Population Census, 2006).<sup>1</sup>

Nassarawa-Eggon Local government has a tropical savannah climate with two clearly marked seasons, wet and dry that is suitable for cultivation of different varieties of crops.<sup>2</sup> It has a mean temperature of 15.60c and 26.70c with an annual rainfall between 1317mm and 1450mm. it rains April to October.<sup>7</sup> Thus, any alteration on this climate will certainly have negative impact on food production within the area studied. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcing, or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 1: Map of Nasarawa State



Map of Nasarawa State showing Nasarawa Eggon Local Government area

### Land and People of the Studied Area (Eggon):

Nasarawa-Eggon LGA hosts a number of hills and elevations such as the popular Eggon Hills which is a major tourist attraction in the area, Nasarawa-Eggon LGA covers a total area of 1,208 square kilometres and has an average temperature of 30 degrees centigrade. The total precipitation in Nasarawa-Eggon LGA is put at 1340mm of rainfall per annum. The Eggon language is commonly spoken in Nasarawa-Eggon LGA while the religions of Islam and Christianity are practiced in the area.<sup>4</sup>

### Occupation of the Inhabitants of Eggon:

The occupations engaged by the residents of Nasarawa-Eggon Local Government Area include leather works, blacksmithing, and auto repairs.<sup>3</sup> Another major occupation of Nasarawa-Eggon local government people is farming, because the LGA is an agrarian society and is known for the cultivation of a number of crops such as

yam, millet, cowpea, and rice. Nasarawa-Egon LGA is also a hub for the rearing and sales of a number of domestic animals such as cows and sheep. Trade also flourishes in the LGA with the area hosting a number of markets which provide the platforms for the exchange of a variety of goods and services.<sup>5</sup>

### A Historical Survey of Nasarawa-Eggon Ethnicity:

The people of Eggon are inhabitants of Nasarawa State in the mid-belt of Nigeria. Predominantly located in Lafia, few more at Akwanga, Keffi, and Eggon local government areas of Nasarawa. Research shows that before the advent of the colonialists, a rundown on the migration of the people of Eggon shows that; they were inhabitants of Ngazargamu, now known as Borno State. They migrated and joined the Kwararafa kingdom, after the dissipation of the kingdom they crossed the Benue River.<sup>6</sup> In their

journey's they made several stops in various settlements (this is the predominant reason for their dispersed distribution within the mid-belt of Nigeria), they finally arrived at Eggon hill of Nasarawa State and were known to be settlers on a hill top before coming down to the grasslands towards urbanization.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, relevant studies conducted have stressed that the people of Eggon were governed by traditional religious laws by a caretaker Chief Priest Adanashim. With strong adherence to their beliefs, they have kept the statutes of old and regarded the position of a ruling clan in each settlement called (Tsaḡbeju). Today they have restructured their ruling patterns and the first class chieftain title is called the Aren Eggon (Father/Chief of Eggon). This chieftain title is open to all indisputable Eggon men; basically from the three (3) major clans of the Eggon people Anzo, Eholo, and Eggon Ero. Twelve (12) kingmakers are selected from the clans who serve as scrutiny for the selection of the first class chief (Tsaḡbeju).<sup>8</sup>

### **Ethnic Compositions of Nasarawa Eggon Local Government Area**

The Eggon people predominantly located in Lafia, few more at Akwanga, Keffi, and Eggon local government areas of Nasarawa. They are also found in little settlements like Kokona, Doma, Obi, Keana and Wamba.<sup>9</sup> The general population of the Eggon people using current statistical analysis ranges from approximately 237,000 inhabitants, with 20% as Christians, 65% still practicing ethnic religion passed on from generations, and 15% practicing Islam.<sup>10</sup>

Further to the above, an intensive interview with of Clan's Head in Aku Village of Nassarawa state, Chief Baba Aku, described the Eggon people as the first settlers in Nassarawa. With the advent of the colonialists in the Nasarawa province, they saw the need to establish district and local authority headquarters in each of the provinces. This development further gave rise to the beginning of the urbanization that currently exist in Nasarawa State.<sup>11</sup> The local government reforms of 1976 gave rise to the structure of Nasarawa state that makes Lafia, Keffi and Akwanga as major urbanized settlements. According to Chief Baba Aku, the mode of life style of the Nasarawa people have been passed on from generation to generation such as; mode of exchanging pleasantries "Agba" (I welcome you).. "*Mi-o-ma-gu*" (Are you in Peace?).<sup>12</sup>

### **Religious Beliefs and Socio-Cultural Norms of the People of Eggon**

However, studies have highlighted that the general population of the Eggon people using current statistical analysis ranges from approximately 237,000 inhabitants,

with 20% as Christians, 65% still practicing ethnic religion of ancestral origin, and 15% practicing Islam.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, their mediums of reverence vary depending on individual preference; in forms of sticks, cowries, beads, selected stones and clay pots. Example objects like the Ashim (represents the Supernatural as it rids off all forms of evil from the possessor; it is also known to extract truth from liars and thieves), other popular supernatural deities include; Akuk, Arikyā, Gango and Yamba and used by various families depending on the needs for survival, childbirth, bountiful yield, protection etc.<sup>14</sup> Their traditional religion believes that all men and women who die transcends to the spirit world, and can only see Angbashim, not the god head, Ahogben. Thus, to attract bountiful yield before planting seasons, the people offer sacrifices to the god head through Angbashim. From January to April sacrifices of animals are made to the gods to ensure rainfall for the cultivation season, and a renewal of sacrifices to appease the gods in September.

Studies have shown that just like other cultures, festivity is an integral part of the Eggon way.<sup>15</sup> Annually, the people of Eggon come from various locations all over the world to feast and show love to one another.<sup>16</sup> The chief priest releases the "dodo" (masquerade) on this day as all the young maidens and men come out in colossal numbers; making beautiful traditional renditions to their gods. The men and maidens dress in traditional regalia, the men also display armories (knives, spears, shield made out of wild ox skin, bow and arrow) used in the past to fight the local wars.<sup>17</sup>

Recent past studies have revealed that modern trends have changed the modes of marriage rites within the Eggon people. Traditionally, during child birth, the midwife who is already familiar with the family chooses betrothed male or female from her clan depending on the sex of the child being born. If the sex is a girl, a special dry wood would be given to the mother to boil water and bath the child as a sign of interest in betrothing the girl. After consent, foodstuff would be assembled by the suitors on agreement of the girl's parents. This food stuff gifts would be presented each year until the girl is ready and of due age for marriage as stipulated by her parents.<sup>18</sup> On the period of her wedding the friends (25) of the young man must cultivate a farm land of the bride and her parents. Due to the nature of the predominant occupation of the Eggon people (agriculture), they are polygamous in nature, their wives and children help in tilling and cultivating the soil for a massive yield of farm produce.<sup>19</sup>

However, as for the Burial rites for the Eggon people is unified and have been passed on through generations. In the case of demise of an Eggon individual, the corpse is treated with due respect. The corpse is cleaned up and

dressed up awaiting the rites of the chief priest or prominent clan's men. The Makpngibi men digs the grave; dug up to four feet like a round tube with a parallel passageway leading out of it.<sup>20</sup> The corpse would be laid in, heading the east wards as they believed that all men migrated from the east. The family members of the deceased shave half of their heads as a symbol of mourning and prevention of being attacked by the dead. The deceased's immediate family members can be inherited by the brothers of the late and they believe also in reincarnation (Inkiya).<sup>21</sup> From the western shores to the Northern plains, from the Southern creeks to the eastern hills of Nigeria there is an ample rich cultural heritage that dates back to several generations. There is no doubt that the Eggon people of central Nigeria has this similar rich cultural values that cannot be extinct but will bask and extend to generations yet unborn.<sup>22</sup>

Conclusively, it has been surveyed in this section that Nasarawa Eggon Local Government Area is situated in Nasarawa state, North-central Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria and has its headquarter in the town of Eggon, it covers a total area of 1,208 square kilometres, the research also shows that before the advent of the colonialists, a rundown on the migration of the people of Eggon shows that; they were inhabitants of Ngazargamu, now known as Borno State. The Aren Eggon (Father/Chief of Eggon) the chieftain title is open to all indisputable Eggon men; basically from the three (3) major clans of the Eggon people Anzo, Eholo, and Eggon Ero. The research also revealed that the occupations Nasarawa Eggon people are leather works, blacksmithing, and auto repairs and farming. It is also revealed that Eggon people predominantly located in Lafia, few more at Akwanga, Keffi, and Eggon local government areas of Nasarawa. The general population of the Eggon people using current statistical analysis ranges from approximately 237,000 inhabitants, with 20% as Christians, 65% still practicing ethnic religion passed on from generations, and 15% practicing Islam. The cultures, festivity is an integral part of the Eggon way. Annually, the people of Eggon come from various locations all over the world to feast and show love to one another. It is revealed that Nassarawa Eggon Local government have tropical savannah climate with two clearly marked seasons, wet and dry, It has a mean temperature of 15.60c and 26.70c with an annual rainfall between 1317mm and 1450mm.

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### **Inception, Growth and Impact of Rural Development Policies on Nasarawa-Eggon and Its Populace**

However, herein the study examines the inception, growth, development and impact of the studied matter on Nasarawa-Eggon Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. It is worthy to note that studies have indicated that there a series of obstacles confronted by this subject matter of study because<sup>1</sup> less attention has been given to human capital development, political inclusion, infrastructural development and industrial growth. It was found that radio and television, farmers and traders associations and collaboration with traditional councils are ways of creating awareness on rural development. However, exclusion of rural dwellers at the planning stage and absence of rural needs assessment were the major challenges to inception and growth of rural development in Nasarawa-Eggon Local Government Area.<sup>2</sup> Thus, to enhance the involvement of rural people in rural development decisions, the contractors of projects should be sourced from communities where they are to be sited and development programmes should be based on rural realities, and a workable strategy for rural development should emphasize the bottom-top approach, empowerment of youth and women on greater investment in human capital development. The strategies for rural development of Nasarawa Eggon local government area of Nasarawa State have not been effectively designed and implemented because the emphasis has always been on agriculture only.<sup>3</sup>

Notwithstanding, studies have shown the importance and relevance of Green Revolution (GR), which was launched in 1967 and lasted till 1978 by the Federal Government in Nasarawa-Eggon Local Government Area and Nigeria at large to provide all the necessary agricultural inputs and devices which should lessen the drudgery of farming operations and boost production generally such that apart from abundance of food, the rural incomes which were almost exclusively dependent on agriculture could increase coupled with the peasant's standard of living in tandem with those by the urban dwellers.<sup>4</sup> The Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) of General Olusegun Obasanjo was also introduced in (1976-1980) towards actualizing rural development through making food available to all through agriculture. Programmes like Better Life for Rural Women in (1987), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) there

were aimed at improving the living standard of the rural women under the chairperson of Maryam Babangida in (September 29, 1997).<sup>5</sup>

In another related account studies also revealed that the Family Economic Advancement programmes (FEAP) are some of the programmes towards achieving the development of rural areas particularly in Nasarawa Eggon local government area. In spite the fact that the rural areas have been the focus of these programme and the laudable objectives to alleviate their sufferings, most Nasarawa Eggon people that dwell in the rural areas, are still experiencing the stink realities of underdevelopment.<sup>6</sup> There is rural backwardness in all its manifestation in Nasarawa Eggon local government and Nigeria at large: declining food production; poor transportation and health care delivery; rural urban migration, squalor, ignorance, non-existing and decaying infrastructural facilities.<sup>7</sup> Most of these programmes could not live to actualize their missions of establishment. The Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) failed not only from the operational inefficiency in the supply of inputs to the large section of the population and at the appropriate time but because the crucial agrarian issues in Nasarawa Eggon local government were overlooked or side-tracked with a misallocation of resources. However, the adopted Green Revolution Programme had no relationship with the societal values and levels of development. The new technology introduced was primarily assumed, from the official circles, to offer solutions to agricultural problems, which nonetheless produced new problems without solving the previous ones.<sup>8</sup>

The study discovered that much of what these policies had outlined to do were focused on the wide scope of activities and on problems of co-ordination an integration with other agencies, especially the state and local governments. By creating DFRRI for instance, federal government intended to circumvent existing bureaucracy to implement programmes that aimed at solving problems of stagnation and poverty in the rural areas, but the first year of the directorate was spent on laying administrative infrastructure of both federal and state and local government levels.<sup>9</sup> Actual implementation of the programme did not battle with the myriad of complex problems besieging the rural areas, but also the high degree of cynicism and skepticism with which government slogans and programmes were being perceived by the rural masses.<sup>10</sup> The consequences of the implementation processes of these programmes can be interpreted as a manifestation of an urban-biased and anti-rural development strategy in Nigeria, Nasarawa Eggon in particular. Also, the implementations of these programmes created resource market imperfections and monopoly



power which biased the pattern of resource allocations in favour of the large-scale capitalist farmers against the small-scale farmers in Nasarawa Eggon local government. The programmes increased the degree of income and wealth distribution inequality in the rural areas.<sup>11</sup> As a consequence, as extremely low wage economy was created, rural poverty was heightened, and a process of mutual poisoning was generated whereby, the desperately poor ruralites took their revenge by mass integration into the urban areas, not only caused them to expand to unmanageable proportions, but aggravated the urban food shortage and urban unemployment problems, and thus worsened the problem of urban mass poverty.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Impact of Rural Development Policies Nasarawa-Eggon and Its Populace:**

The term Rural Development connotes overall development to improve the quality of life of the rural people. This means a comprehensive and multidimensional concept, and encompasses the development of socio-economic infrastructure, community services and facilities and above all, human resources in rural areas.<sup>13</sup> as a phenomenon, rural development is the end result of interactions among various physical, technological, economic, social, cultural and institutional factors, its impact on human cannot be over emphasis. One of the impact of rural development in Nasarawa-Eggon is the general upliftment of the living conditions of Nasarawa-Eggon people by some of the government rural development programme in the study area. Emphasizing the aspect of human development as an essential part of rural development, rural development implies a broad-based re-organization and mobilization of the rural masses so as to enhance their capacity to cope effectively with daily tasks of their lives with it consequent changes. It was discovered in the research that the rural development programmes have contributed significantly to the development of rural areas in Nasarawa-Eggon local government.<sup>14</sup>

However, it is worthy to state some governments rural developments programmes which contributed tremendously to the development of Nasarawa amongs others include: Green Revolution (GR), which was launched by the Federal Government in Nasarawa, Eggon Local Government Area and Nigeria at large to provide all the necessary agricultural inputs and devices which should lessen the drudgery of farming operations and boost production generally such that apart from abundance of food, the rural incomes which were almost exclusively dependent on agriculture could increase coupled with the peasant's standard of living in tandem with those by the urban dwellers.<sup>15</sup> The Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) of General Olusegun Obasanjo was also introduced towards

actualizing rural development through making food available to all through agriculture. Programmes like Better Life for Rural Women, Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) there were aimed at improving the living standard of the rural women under the chairperson of Maryam Babangida.<sup>16</sup> The Family Economic Advancement programmes (FEAP) are some of the programmes towards achieving the development of rural areas particularly in Nasarawa Eggon local government area all these programmes impacted immensely to the development of Nasarawa Eggon.<sup>17</sup>

In recapitulation, in Nigeria and Nasarawa Eggon Local Government, Rural Development Programmes as a practice, with some significant exceptions do not achieve its apparent goals. It is obvious that some of these programmes performance was negligible. The study discovered that this failure is as a result of the incompatibility both between different goals and between the goals and the means which are almost universally promoted as the ways to achieve rural development. This incompatibility is concealed by a rhetoric which asserts the mutual interest of rural development agencies, governments and rural population and masses. This rhetoric of common interest observes the reasons for failure of the outlined rural development programmes in Nigeria and Nasarawa Eggon local government in particular.

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### **Post-Colonial Rural Development Policies in Nasarawa-Eggon Local Government Area in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Recent past studies conducted have stressed that there has been a series of rural development policies in Nasarawa-Eggon Local Government Area right from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and has on the whole also identified there was a renewed effort in what was called Rural Development. This involved a conscious and desperate effort to ensure adequate food supply for the local government, especially for the parasitic urbanites. The

efforts was to satisfy the needs of the cities through which the best and the choicest food produced were carted away by the middle men who had bought them at ridiculously low prices from the original producers.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding, approaches to rural development started receiving some significant conceptualization in this century, when a holistic look was taken of rural development by subsequent policies, programs and regimes. Recently there was some improvement in the conception of what constituted rural development.<sup>2</sup>

However, rural development at policy and practice levels was conceived in a way that transcended mere agricultural development to incorporate the development and expansion of rural infrastructures, emphasis on poverty alleviation and socio-economic empowerment of the rural inhabitants. Over the years, the development strategies and efforts in Nasarawa Eggon local government and Nigeria at large 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.<sup>3</sup> There was a National Integrated Rural Development Policy and Strategy under the auspice of Rural Development Strategy for Nigeria (RDSN) which was also a collaborative project with the World Bank in 2015 was not unique in objectives, Nasarawa-Eggon local government area was one of the beneficiaries.<sup>4</sup> The policy had four priority areas of; Enhancement of enabling rural infrastructure, Promotion of Rural Productive Activities, Support Human Resource Development and Special Programs for Target Groups. In recent time agricultural policies have undergone changes which are basically a reflection of changes in governments and administration. Despite the different policies, similar objectives keep reoccurring like: to provide food for the inhabitants of the nation (food security and sufficiency) and export excess to other countries and to provide rural dwellers and farmers with extension services, agricultural support and rural development services etc. In a conscious effort at achieving the rural development, several programmes were formed aimed at developing the rural areas.<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt that rural development policies have brought about several limps towards rural development in Nasarawa Eggon local government area in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The establishment of the programmes like the Rural Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) under the Nigerians third development plan can only suffice more.<sup>6</sup> The aim was to increase rural productivity and quality of life, encourage large scale irrigation and mechanized farming technique which involved the construction of dams, use of tractors for land preparation, application of modern inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. The Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) was a conscious attempt to move away from past

narrow sectional pre-occupation to overall formulation of the national rural development strategies with emphasis on alleviation of rural poverty and enhancement of the quality of rural areas, all these programme were benefited by Nasarawa Eggon local government area. The Directorate (DFRRI) was established with the aim of rehabilitating various categories of roads in the country and especially for the development of rural feeder roads in order to strengthen the massive efforts of food and agricultural self-sufficiency in the shortest possible period. The Directorate conceived of its programme as having three broad aspects social mobilization, infrastructural development and productive activities. It was intended that the Directorate would have within its first year rehabilitated 60,000 km of rural feeder roads.<sup>7</sup>

Studies have pointed out that amongs the major rural development programmes benefited by Nasarawa-Eggon Local Government Area in 21<sup>st</sup> Century is the Family Economic Advancement Programmes (FEAP) these are some of the programmes towards achieving the development of rural areas. In spite the fact that the rural areas have been the focus of these policies and the laudable objectives to alleviate their sufferings, most Nigerians that dwell in the rural areas, are still experiencing the stink realities of underdevelopment. There is rural backwardness in all its manifestation: declining food production; poor transportation and health care delivery; rural urban migration, squalor and ignorance and non-existing and decaying infrastructural facilities.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Factors Responsible For the Failure of Policy Implementation in Nasarawa-Eggon Local Government Area**

Nasarawa-Eggon local government and Nigeria at large rural development polices created a big bias against the peasantry and did not favour the local and urban less privilege individuals. Consequent upon which most of the peasants that could not afford the price of the equipment were displaced and deprived of their possessions and their means of livelihood while those who remained, ended up as labourers for the petty-bourgeoisie.<sup>9</sup> For emphasis, reasons responsible for the failure of these policies are explained below;

#### **Delays, Embezzlement, Misappropriation and Lack of Funds To Empower the Weaker Class of the Populace:**

Studies have shown that the present dismal condition of the rural areas admits several developmental policies have been traced to partly to corrupt practices, community and rural development policies recorded perpetual failure due to corruption and embezzlement of fund, demanding of percentages from contractors over an awarded contract (i.e

kick back); under and over invoicing, bribery, etc. These forms of corruption had become salient decimal in the implementation of rural development policies of every administration for over the years. As can be seen that abrupt withdrawal of fund by the government in National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) contributed to its failure and lack of fund delayed implementation of ADP schedule. These problems of lack of fund persist in ADP till today.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Misapplication of Techniques and Inappropriate Approaches:**

Studies have argued that top-bottom Approach to rural development exercise is the bone of rural underdevelopment in Nigeria in general and Nasarawa-Eggon LGA in particular and developing countries at large thus making the rural dwellers distances themselves from such plans and the subsequent failure. The failure of these policies has primarily resulted from absolute exclusion of the rural dweller. This has been the missing link of success of these policies.<sup>11</sup> The policies and plan have always been designed and devised by government and brought down for implementation in rural areas. This is the unpopular Top-Down approach where local resources are not adequately utilized and when new techniques are forced on the rural people, they tend to show resentment and apathy to these new methods hence making sustainability of rural development programmes and policies more strenuous.<sup>12</sup>

The DFFRI Programme was unsuccessful as it was regarded as government project while those formulated by the communities were considered Rural Development Policies in Nigeria were not successful in the rural areas because the rural dwellers have been neglected and exploited by government. Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that Governments of local development councils generally have persistently and historically neglected their overall National Development Policies.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Narrow Scope**

The emphasis mainly on food and animal production was a basic point of departure from achieving the whole aims of rural development. Most agricultural growth and development policies were not holistic but streamlined to food and in most cases animal farming hence the limited success. Also some of these factors to include: narrow conception of rural development, poor socio-economic structures, social differentiation, neglect and exploitation thesis, wrong policies and high cost of implementation. Narrow concept of rural development and separation of rural development policies from overall national development policy are identified as the failure reasons.<sup>14</sup>

## Inadequacy of Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Lack/inadequate monitoring and evaluation of programme/project is the gap in the success of Nasarawa Eggon local government Rural Development Policies. Monitoring and Evaluation is purposely done to determine achievements of rural development programme vis-a-vis the set aims/objectives. Evaluation techniques can serve to improve implementation and efficiency of programmes after interventions have begun, provide evidence as to the cost efficiency and impact of a specific intervention within and between policy sectors. Evaluations are more so important because they expose lapses associated with achievement of programme objectives thereby affording opportunities for adjustment. Unfortunately importance of monitoring and evaluation has not gained full recognition in Nigeria and during the implementation of these policies which warranted careless implementation and not to specification. This is evident in Green Revolution where there was no monitoring and evaluation of programme which huge sums of money was spent on executing.<sup>15</sup>

## Lack of Coordination

Lack of coordination has also been identified as a major gap to the policies. The lack of Integration of the various rural development efforts as another factor that significantly militates against rural development in Nasarawa Eggon local government. This is due to the inability of the rural development institutions to co-operate among themselves and to ensure that their respective initiatives, actions and mandates are coordinated to reinforce and support each other and that their activities are streamlined towards effective realization of government's rural development objectives.<sup>17</sup>

Conclusively, this section of the study revealed the general overview of rural development policies in Nasarawa Eggon Local Government Area of Nasarawa State in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Some of the rural development policies benefited by Nasarawa Eggon local government area were National Integrated Rural Development Policy and Strategy under the auspice of Rural Development Strategy for Nigeria (RDSN), Rural Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) and Family Economic Advancement programmes (FEAP) some of these Programmes failed to be implemented due some factors such as delays, embezzlement, misappropriation and lack of funds, wrong approach, narrow scope, no monitoring and evaluation plan and lack of proper coordination and as well failure of the relevant authorities concerned to reciprocate against the expected gestures positively in the studied area and Nigerian state and society by and large.

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## Conclusion

However, in any case, it is interesting to note that in all ramifications, development is purely for the people and therefore must be designed to meet their needs. This means that all rural development policies must be derived from the felt-needs and aspirations of the rural people with their equal participation. This study strongly recommends the need for government to involve the rural dwellers and significant stakeholders in rural development policies. This means that more opportunities should be given to the rural people for participation in decisions that govern their lives. The study strongly debunks the view which assumes that the rural people are passive and fatalistic, uninterested in improvement of their lives, and incapable of making initiatives for improvement. More importantly also is the utilization of local resources and farming equipment which all the rural dwellers are aware of and can afford. This will not only create sustainability but will also destroy capitalist tendencies and create a break from the tied of the Western States.

Further to the above it is obvious to note that most of the rural development policies have failed owing to the

conditions of the rural areas presently. It is therefore imperative that rural development policies should have been clearly stated with its aims, targets for measurement of achievements. Specifically, rural development policies should focus on the following; since corruption has been identified as sting to rural development, its correction will be highly valuable to the rural areas. Emphasize that reducing corruption would boost the future of rural development policies in Nigeria. Misplacement of priority or misdirection of fund to unnecessary components of agricultural programmes should also be avoided to avoid wastage of resource that will hamper programme success. Adequate need assessment and private sector participation will be handy in solving this problem. Inclusion of various stakeholders including farmers/rural people should be pertinent in planning and execution of agricultural policies and programmes. Also agricultural policy and programme should be open, transparent and must be framed within a context in which agricultural development policy and programme are national issues that are based on a consensus broad enough to guarantee continuity and freedom of expression of individuals opinions on decisions.

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S/N	NAME	AGE	PLACE	OCCUPATION	DATE OF INTERVIEW
1	Mallam Farouq Muhammed Alkali	76	Nasarawa Eggon	Retired Civil Servant	March 29, 2024
2	Mr. Godwin Joseph	50	Nasarawa Eggon	Civil servant	March 29, 2024
3	Mr. Emmanuel Kigbu Akabe	54	Nasarawa Eggon	Civil servant	March 30, 2024
4	Mallam Inusa Yahaya	75	Nasarawa Eggon	Farmer	February 8, 2024
5	Mr. Moses Awazi,	75	Nasarawa Eggon	Farmer	February 8, 2024
6	Mr. Solomon Ubugadu	49	Nasarawa Eggon	Trader	February 9, 2024
7	Mallam Saidu Ibrahim	45	Nasarawa Eggon	Civil servant	February 9, 2024

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