

**ASSESSMENT OF THE RURAL INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORT OF ABUJA
MUNICIPAL AREA COUNCIL, AMAC, OF FCT**

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Abstract

The thrust of this study is the assessment of the rural infrastructural development effort of Abuja Municipal Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, FCT. The survey sets out to specifically examine the strategies that are employed by AMAC to bring about rural development and the extent to which AMAC involves the rural dwellers in its rural development activities. Two hundred and twenty questionnaires are distributed to both the staff members of AMAC and the rural settlers in AMAC. The study finds that AMAC has not fared well in some areas of rural development, especially in area of health service delivery. This is so as the respondents disclosed that many rural communities in AMAC do not have health care and dispensary centres. And the ones that are established in some rural settlements are eyesore and are in rickety state with characteristic lack of qualified medical personnels and medical facilities. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that AMAC administration has inspired rural development in AMAC by providing potable and accessible water to the rural people therein. The study reveals that the rural people are not given the privilege to participate in the process of development programmes that are meant to benefit them. This explains why many of the projects that government brings to them are not sustainable. The study has been able to reveal that AMAC has not done much to inspire agricultural activities of the rural people. This explains why they are not getting good reward for their agricultural activities. Consequently, this work recommends that AMAC administration should employ more medical staff such as doctors, nurses, laboratory experts to man the hospitals in the rural areas.

Introduction

The rural popular that constituted over 70% of Nigerians and who produced the bulk of the colonial wealth only felt the impact of government in the form of tax drives, occasional visits by colonial officials and their agents and stories fed them by few urban dwellers or those who had been there. Thus, Onimode (1981:33) rightly observed that: "The rural dwellers who were impoverished by multiple taxation, broken by colonial police and court repression and submerged in a culture of silence' through illiteracy, were undoubtedly among the most brutally exploited by the savage colonialism of Britain".

This situation has not radically changed even after independence from British rule. The exploitative and western oriented policies and programmes of the colonial era have continued since flag independence. One area that the western oriented policies and programmes have persisted since 1960 is in the area of agriculture. Emphasis was placed on the production of cash crops and the importation of foreign foods to the neglect of local staples. The continued

pursuance of this policy with, the resultant neglect of the rural areas and the exploitation of peasant farmers, has proved disaster for the country.

The urban-based nature of Nigeria's development process led to a gradual deterioration in the quality of life in the rural areas, thus stimulating rural-urban migration on a massive scale, especially when mineral oil overtook agriculture as the mainstay of the national economy. The helpless situation of the rural communities was accentuated by the exploitative tendencies of the Nigerian Marketing Boards of the 1950s, lack of incentives to farmers, antiquated farming techniques, lack of storage facilities, poor transportation network etc, which fastened the decline in agriculture generally (Nnadozie, 1986:11).

Another area in the Nigerian agricultural policies and programmes where rural dwellers and farmers are being marginalized is the area of big agricultural schemes in various parts of the country. The policy pursued by government since mid-1970s, ostensibly to boost agriculture, started with Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) launched in 1976, the Green Revolution in the second Republic and various budgetary incentives in large-scale agriculture. Similarly the Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) and big irrigation dam schemes were ostensibly to improve rural development. All these projects scattered in different parts of the country and jointly financed by the World Bank and Nigerian government did not help much in the improvement of the living standards of the rural populace. Rather, it has worsened the plight of peasant farmers by depriving them of their lands as happened in Bakolori project in Sokoto state. The beneficiaries of these capital intensive agricultural programmes and schemes were the big barons who live in the urban area. The monies they get as loans never went to agriculture but to other businesses. The neglect of the peasant farmers has obviously led to faster decline in agricultural production with attendant negative consequences for rural development (Nnadozie, 1986).

It is also disheartening to note that in the area of investment and government provision of amenities, the urban areas are more favoured than the rural setting. Studies by Diejomaoh (1973:100-103) have shown that over the years the beneficiaries of government expenditure on education, health, water supply, electricity, industries and road construction are mainly urban dwellers and that less than 30% of total government development expenditure is designed for the benefit of rural communities. In spite of the importance of and potentialities of the rural sector in terms of its workforce, and its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the estimated private sector investment amounting to about N1,632 million in the second national development plan period (1970-1974), only N246 million or 15% was spent in the rural areas. This pattern is basically the same in the Third and fourth Development plan periods, 1975-1985 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1970-74).

It is regrettable to also observe that the various aids and assistance to Nigeria by international organizations and institutions like UNO, USAID, DFID, WHO, and others have not been utilized to the benefit of rural development in Nigeria. This has been due to rampant corruption and gross mismanagement at all levels of governments in Nigeria.

The net effect of the above analysis is that the rural areas of Nigeria are greatly neglected in various spheres of human endeavour. They lack the basic needs of life, they are deprived and exploited; and hence rural development in Nigeria has remained a mirage.

Rural Development

The concept of rural development or community development will be used interchangeably to mean the same thing. The scope of the concept of rural or community development is very wide. It is a multi-dimensional process involving such areas as agriculture, health, education, provision of rural infrastructures, social life, political and economic issues,

commerce and industry, among others, and their integration with the national economy. Since the scope of the concept is wide, it is the pivot on which a sound national development in all its ramifications can effectively be achieved. It is, however often assumed by policy makers and development planners that rural development is synonymous with agriculture. To correct this impression, it is very necessary to carry out a detailed conceptualization of the concept by scholars in the field of rural development.

Since the concept of "rural development" is very wide in scope, it is necessary to write about an integrated approach to the definition of the concept. Thus, according to the United Nations (1976):

The concept of integrated rural development implies that it is a composite or comprehensive programme for rural development in which all relevant sectors such as agriculture, education, housing, health and employment are conceived as interlinking elements in a system having horizontal as well as vertical linkage in operational and spatial terms (p.65).

According to Aziz, (1999), the concept of rural development should be viewed as a holistic concept, which recognizes the complexity and inter-relatedness of the many variables which influence the quality of life in rural areas. It is a complex process which involves the interaction of economic, social, political, cultural, technological and other situational factors. Hence for the actualization of the concept, these factors have to be integrated with local government policies and plans, with the objectives of improving the quality of life of the people in the rural sector.

Furthermore, according to Mabogunje, (1981), rural development is concerned with the self-sustaining improvement of rural areas and implies a broad based re-organization and mobilization of the rural masses so as to enhance their capacity to cope effectively with the daily task of their lives and with the changes consequent upon this.

In the opinion of Gana, (1996), rural development is important not only for its impact on rural places and people but also for its contribution to the over all development of the nation. In the Nigerian experience where the bulk of the people and land are rural, and where the level of rural output is very low, rural mobilization provides the quickest and most direct route to national development. This would require the adoption of appropriate technology for raising rural productivity and efficient utilization of resources, creation of efficient transport network for rural and urban areas to ensure easy transportation of agricultural produce for massive food production and supply of industrial raw materials.

It is to be observed that the ambit of rural development is very wide indeed and it requires a comprehensive approach. It includes generation of new employment, more equitable access to arable land, equitable distribution of income, widespread improvement in health, nutrition and housing, creation of incentives and opportunities. It also involves the ability of the local government to create wider opportunities for individuals to realize their full potentials through education and sharing in the decisions and actions which affect their lives.

Diffusion Model of Rural Development

The approach assumes that there are differences in agricultural practices and that these differences account for the success or otherwise of farmers. The thrust of the model is that innovations to farmers require re-orientation and habituation made possible through communication and other support services. Farmers need to be educated on the application of modern techniques, equipment, improved seeds and inputs. Farmers appreciate these modern

innovations in terms of their concept, application and gains when they are practically exposed to same.

The approach emphasizes the need for administrative framework in ensuring availability and timely delivery of new inputs to farmers. It also underscores the existence of credit facilities in tackling funds problem or inadequacy in adapting to innovations. The role of Demonstration/Experimental farms, agricultural extension agents/officers, and credit facilities to farmers and research institutions in encouraging local adaptive methods cannot be overemphasized in this approach to rural development.

Methodology

The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods to elicit the required data for this study. Aliaga and Gunderson (2002) defined quantitative research as “ explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics). The choice of quantitative method was informed by the fact that it helps to compare data in a systematic way. It also makes generalizations of study to a whole population possible. This is particularly so, when a researcher wants to compare or generalize information extensively within a specific population or between different population (Aliaga and Gunderson, 2002).

Population of the Study

The population of this study is the staff of Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC). There are 1200 staff working in AMAC and Rural population in some selected 11 rural communities in AMAC. There are 8 departments in AMAC namely, Admin, Health, Finance, Works, Education, Agric, Environment and Audit. Sample size of 100 was drawn from all the above mentioned departments in AMAC secretariat. The reason for drawing sample from all the departments is to ensure the representativeness of the sample. Ujo (2000) pointed out that inclusion of all the elements of a sample frame enhances representativeness of a sample. And that a representative sample size fosters the generalization of the finding of a study.

Sampling Technique

The researcher used simple random sampling technique to draw the sample of 100 from the staff population of AMAC and 100 from the rural communities in AMAC . Simple random technique is a sampling procedure in which each element in the sampling frame has equal chance of being included in the sample size (Ujo, 2000). In the light of this, 100 sample size was drawn from each of the departments in AMAC., while 100 sample size (comprising household heads) was drawn from the rural settlements in AMAC. Thereby bringing the total sample size to 200. Furthermore, the researcher selected 5 key informants each from both AMAC secretariat and rural settlements in AMAC and posed oral interview to them on the subject matter of the study.

Instrument of Data Collection

Two instruments were used for this study: structured questionnaires and unstructured interview in order to collect the required data for this study. The choice of structured questionnaires was informed by the following reasons: Firstly, the population of the study is fairly large. It will be more convenient and time saving to administer questionnaires to them than to engage them in in-depth interview. Secondly, structured questionnaires will facilitate data analysis and estimation of validity and reliability for the instrument (Ujo, 2000). Finally, structured questionnaire is easier and

demands less time to complete. On account of this, most respondents will not feel reluctant to complete and return the questionnaires.

Similarly, the choice of qualitative interview method was informed by its ability to capture issues and details such as voice tone, facial expression that cannot be obtained through questionnaires. These will help to further enrich the content of the work.

Method of Data Analysis

The data for this study were analyzed through the use of frequency distribution table that contained the percentages of the respondents' responses.

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents Based on Availability of Rural Development Project

Agricultural Intervention	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	60	30
Agreed	40	20
Undecided	20	10
Strongly Disagreed	40	20
Disagreed	40	20
Total	200	100

Source: survey 2017

Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there is presence of rural development projects in rural areas in AMAC; 20% agreed that there is rural development projects in AMAC; 20% are silent about the presence of rural development projects in AMAC; 20% strongly disagreed that there is availability of rural development project in AMAC, while 20% of the respondents disagreed that rural development projects exist in AMAC. Inferring from these responses, it is safe to say that there are availability of rural development projects at rural settlements. For examples, there are rural water projects that are meeting the needs of the rural dwellers for water; there are primary schools and health centers at rural areas in AMAC which were made possible through the rural development initiative of AMAC.

Table 2: Respondents' Views on the Provision of Potable Water in AMAC

Water project	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Very adequate	75	37
Adequate	40	20
Undecided	5	3.0
Inadequate	40	20
Very inadequate	40	20
Total	200	100

Source: survey (2017)

Majority of the research participants (37%) overwhelmingly attested that the water project in AMAC is very adequate; 20% of the respondents admitted that it s adequate; 3% are undecided, while 20% said it is very inadequate. In-depth interview with key informants revealed that AMAC administration has done very well to address portable water problem in AMAC. "If there is any visible area which AMAC administration has fared very well and performed creditably, it is in the area of potable water supply. Water supply in AMAC has largely been the efforts of several successive administrations in AMAC and of other well-endowed private individuals who have the financial resource ."

This submission illustrates that the AMAC administration is doing very well in the area of potable water supply to the rural community in AMAC. Absence of potable water has the capacity to expose the rural people to the menace of water borne diseases like cholera and typhoid which come with fatal epidemiological risks. The rural development activities of AMAC in the area of potable water supply have saved the rural people in AMAC from health risks. This largely explains why water borne diseases are not usually recoded in AMAC as it applies in other northern states of the federation.

Table 3: Respondents' View on the Satisfactory Nature of Primary Health Care Facilities

Respondents	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	20	10
Agreed	40	20
Undecided	5	3.0
Strongly Disagreed	95	47
Disagreed	40	20
Total	200	100

Source: survey (2017)

The survey shows that 10 % of the respondents strongly agreed that the state of primary health care facilities in AMAC are satisfactory; 20% agreed that it they satisfactory; 3% are undecided; majority of the sampled population (47) % overwhelming attested to the fact that AMAC provided little or no health care services to the people. Interview with the key informants revealed that the only service that is provided by the local government in the health sector is the mobilization of people for National Immunization Days for polio and other children killer diseases. A worker in the health department of the local government who responded to the oral interview questions on the basis of anonymity maintained that, almost all the local government owned health care centers are dilapidated, lack drugs and have very few health personnel.

Another interview with a key informant to qualitatively enrich the content of the work revealed that the state of primary health care service delivery in AMAC is both in a sorry and deplorable state.

One of the informants grimly remarked thus:

“ the primary health care centers in Abuja Municipal Area council is neither qualitatively or quantitatively satisfactory. By this I mean, the primary health centers here don't have adequate staff. In some centers, there is no single medical doctor there. The only available health personnel in an entire primary health care center are a junior health extension officer. The sight of the health centre is a health hazard in itself. This is not to talk of absence of drugs and other basic medical facilities. It may surprise you to know that several districts or rural settlements in AMAC, like Nyanya, Karshi, Gui don't have any structure that can be called primary health centre. And where they exist, they are in rickety shape”.

This revelation suggests that AMAC is not measuring up in area of primary health delivery services. Little wonder therefore that general hospital in AMAC for instance, Nyanya, Asokoro, etc are too congested and overcrowded such that they cannot handle the number of women that turn in there for antenatal cares. Some of them are usually rejected; many of them are discharged from delivery beds immediately after delivery so that there can be spaces for others. This situation is sickening and it calls for urgent intervention so that avoidable health risk and damage that people pass through can be addressed. Instances abound where rural people who cannot afford the costs of medical services at private hospitals recourse to the service of traditional birth attendants and other quack health service alternatives which are cheaper and accessible. This has skyrocketed the numbers of people whose lives were lost to maternal mortality, a situation that is uncalled for in this 21st century of improved technology in area of medical services.

Table 4: Views of the Respondents on AMAC Administration Efforts Towards Rural Electrification

Respondents	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Very high	20	10
High	40	20
Undecided	5	3.0
Very low	95	47
Low	40	20
Total	200	100

Source: survey (2017)

Going by the survey, 10% of the research participants are of the view the AMAC administration efforts towards rural electrification is very high, 20% claimed that it is high. Just 3% of the respondents did not make decisive comment on government efforts towards rural electrification. Majority of the respondents however, admitted that the government effort is both weak and low (47% and 47%). This signifies that rural electrification effort of AMAC administration is nothing to write home about.

Table 5: Respondents' Views on AMAC Source of Revenue

Respondents	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Federal statutory allocation	20	10
Internally generated source	40	20
Grant	5	3.0
Loan	95	20
All of the above	40	47
Total	200	100

Source: survey (2017)

Among these sources, the majority of the sampled population (47%) were of the opinion that all of the above sources of revenue are available revenue for the local government. This implies that the Council has high revenue generation potential to bear the cost of both governance and rural development.

Table 6: Respondents' Views on the Utilization of the Revenues for Rural Development

Respondents	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	20	10
Agreed	40	20
Undecided	5	3.0
Strongly Disagreed	95	47
Disagreed	40	20
Total	200	100

Source: survey(2017)

Just 10% of the respondents strongly agreed that the revenues are used for rural development project; 20% agreed that the revenues are used to support rural development; 3% are undecided; many of the respondents disagreed with the fact that the revenues generated are used for development purpose, while 47% of the research participants overwhelming disagreed in strong terms that the revenue are used for rural development. This means that the revenues that are generated do not bear much on the welfare of the rural people in AMAC.

Commenting on the utilization of the revenues that are generated by AMAC, one of the informants disclosed thus: “All that the AMAC officials know how to do is to extort the general public through all manners of revenue collection that do not bear much relevance on the lives of the common man on the street. The multiple revenues that are collected ended up in the pockets of private individuals and corrupt government officials”.

This scenario is not different from what obtains in other States of the federation where the tax payers cannot see the evidence of their taxes. The revenues that are meant to foot recurrent and capital expenditures of the government are being diverted into personal pockets of individuals. This explains why the salaries of workers and pensioners are not paid; roads are in deplorable states generally, this is not without some heavy costs on the members of the public. Bad roads are the harbour of criminal elements who lay siege and pounce on people from time to time. Bad roads have also claimed millions of lives more than any single epidemic. These all result from lack of proper utilization of revenues that are generated from the government of the suffering masses.

The researcher sought to know the employment generating efforts of AMAC administration and learnt from the key informants interviewed that AMAC has not done well in the area of employment generation just as the government at the national level has not done any better either. For example, the total numbers of people who are in the employment of Abuja Municipal Area Council are not up to 2000 people. This is inclusive of those who are indirectly employed by them as casual staff. The rural people who are to be empowered through agricultural sector of the economy are not being empowered due to failure of the AMAC administration to support the farmers with agricultural inputs like tractors, seeds, fertilizers, etc.

One of the key informants painfully revealed that the few white collar jobs that are available are reserved for the Gbagy people who are the major ethnic group in the council. Other minor ethnic groups like the Gwandara, Gede, Hausa, etc that are in AMAC are made to play second fiddle to the Gbagy people. The few jobs that are available are hijacked by ethnic bigots and jingoists in favour of the Gbagy ethnic extraction in AMAC.

Table 7: Distribution of the Respondents on whether they are Involved in Development Programmes or Not

Water project	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Very adequate	75	37
Adequate	40	20
Undecided	5	3.0
Inadequate	40	20
Very inadequate	40	20
Total	200	100

Source: Survey (2017)

The research investigated to know if the AMAC administration conducted a preliminary or pilot survey to empirically validate their area of needs for development. 37% of the respondents strongly agreed that the government conducted a preliminary survey on them; 20% agreed the government did; 3.0% are undecided; 20% disagreed with the claim that government conducted a preliminary research to ascertain their needs. Majority of the respondents disagreed and maintained that the government did not conduct any preliminary investigation about the rural people to ascertain the areas of their needs before embarking on development activities in their localities. This explains why there are many development

projects that are not useful to the rural people that they are meant to serve. The projects are foisted on them without sufficient consultation. Federal Low Cost Housing projects in Nigeria ended in failure because the rural people that were meant to benefit from it were not carried along in any sense.

The researcher sought to know if the administration of the AMAC had, in the recent time, from 2006-20013, organized workshops for the rural people to address their needs and to enhance their stand in development scheme of things. All the respondents, (100%) disclosed that the local government had not organized any workshop of that nature for them. This shows that there is a gross misplacement of priority on the part of AMAC.

Table 8: Views of the Respondents on AMAC Government Intervention in Agriculture

Agricultural Intervention	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Farm inputs	15	8.00
Agricultural loans	15	8.00
Enlightenment campaigns/lectures	5	3.00
Improved varieties of seedlings	25	13.00
Agricultural extension service	15	8.00
Mechanization services	10	6.00
None of the above services	100	54.00
Total	200	100.00

Source: survey (2017)

The researcher sought to know the direction of agricultural intervention activities of AMAC administration and observed that 8% of the respondents said that agricultural intervention of AMAC is noticed in the area of farm input assistance. Similarly, 8% of them said the government gives the agricultural loan to boost their farming enterprises. 3% said that AMAC intervention comes only in the area of campaign and enlightenment lectures on the importance of agriculture and that nothing has been done tangibly to empower the rural farmers. Thirteen percent of the research participants disclosed that they have witnessed government intervention in area of distribution of improved varieties of seedlings. Just 6% percent of them affirmed that they have received assistance from AMAC administration in area of mechanization facilities. Majority of the respondents, (54.%) revealed that they had never received assistance in area of agricultural inputs from the government.

The interviewees unanimously said that AMAC administration has not done so much in the area of agriculture, apart from giving farmers maize seeds. They admitted that AMAC administration provides fertilizers to farmers at subsidized rates and lamented that the so called subsidized fertilizers are not much, as a result, not many people access them. The way and manner in which people scramble for the few bags that are being thrown at them is a depiction of Herbert Spencer notion of survival of the fittest. The paucity of the fertilizers don't provide opportunity for fair or level play ground in the distribution process. Scarcity of fertilizer has grossly compromised the agricultural prowess of the rural dwellers in AMAC. Consequently, they cannot harness results that are commensurate to the efforts they have put into the farming activity. Any sustainable and meaningful rural development effort should be oriented towards radicalizing agricultural activities of the farmers. This is so because agriculture is their economic mainstay.

The researcher sought the views of the respondents on other services that are rendered by the AMAC administration to enhance rural development. The respondents listed

the services to include the provision of primary health care services, provision of schools, agricultural intervention, establishment of markets and motor parks, provision of slaughter houses, immunization of the indigenes from killer diseases, political education, construction of roads, streets and numbering of streets. These efforts of AMAC administration have helped to enhance the development of rural areas in AMAC as well as their mobilization and integration into the global socio-economic arena.

Table 9: Distribution of the Respondents on Rural Education Efforts of AMAC

Rating	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Very high	30	15
High	100	50
Very low	35	16.5
Low	35	16.5
Total	200	100

Source: Survey (2017)

From the survey, 15% of the respondents averred that AMAC's effort towards education is very high. Fifty percent of the participants revealed that it is high; 16.5% and 6.5% disclosed that AMAC efforts towards rural education are very low and low respectfully. From the foregoing, it will be safe to maintain that AMAC efforts toward rural education are moderate and fair.

Table 11: Respondents' Views on the Quality Teachers Employed in AMAC Rural Schools

Rating	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Very qualified	50	25
Qualified	100	50
Not qualified	45	22
Others	5	3
Total	200	100

Source: survey (2017)

Twenty-five percent of the respondents said that AMAC rural schools have very qualified teachers; 50% of the research participants disclosed that there are qualified teachers in rural schools in AMAC. Just 3% of the respondents said that rural schools in AMAC have statutorily qualified teachers who have the least minimum teaching qualification which is NCE, but complained that the best brains are not employed into the service because the selection process is marred by favoritism, nepotism and corrupt practices. This explains why many of products of the schools are not sound enough to compete creditably with their peers from other schools where teachers' selection procedures are based on competence than on sentiments.

Table 12: Respondents' View on the Rating of the Classroom in AMAC

Rating	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Very good	35	18
Good	50	25
Very poor	30	15
Poor	75	42
Total	200	100

Source :survey (2017)

Judging from the survey, 18% of the respondents averred that the classrooms in AMAC are in very good conditions; 25% said the classrooms are good; 15% said that the classrooms are in very poor shape in AMAC rural areas. Majority of the research respondents, 42%, disclosed the classrooms are in poor shape. This is so as many of the classrooms in rural areas are in rickety state. The roofs of some of the classes have been removed by winds and breezes and no effort has been made to fix them. The classes are not motivating for learning activities .

Discussion of the Findings

The study noted that state of primary health care service in Abuja Municipal Area Council is grossly unsatisfactory. This is so as larger percentage of the respondents strongly pointed out that it is not in good shape. They pointed out that the building of the primary health centers in the rural areas in AMAC are in rickety state and are characteristically understaffed amidst acute shortage of medical facilities, including drugs and other consumables. This finding is congruent with the report of Daily Trust Newspaper (2014) which revealed that Secondary healthcare facilities are the first point of contact for residents of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), leading to congestion and other attendant problems. The FCT's primary healthcare system over time has been perceived to be characterized by infrastructural decay, loss of health inventory and increasing cost of healthcare. The status of PHC scheme implementation in the FCT is low as the state of PHC infrastructure and services was adjudged poor with documentary evidence from various surveys, including National Health and Demographic Survey 2003 and most importantly, the FCT Multivariable Community Survey 2008 by FCT MDGs Project Support Office.

The FCT area councils statistics in 2007 revealed that only 179 (20%) of 859 communities had PHC facilities, meaning that 80% of the communities in the Federal Capital Territory are without primary healthcare. By 2008, only 30 (17%) of the total facilities could deliver some PHC services.

Furthermore, the study found agricultural sector of the economy is not prioritized by AMAC administration. This is evidence as majority of the respondents grimly disclosed that the AMAC administration has never assisted them in key areas of agricultural inputs like agricultural loans, farm inputs such as fertilizers, herbicides. Services of agricultural extension workers which are supposed to be provided by the government to boost agricultural innovation and consequently, production, are not available to the rural communities in AMAC. This has limited and constrained their farming potential. The farmers, as a result, are not getting appreciable rewards from their efforts. This explains why rural- urban migration is at its peak in Nigeria. A situation where able bodied youth that should engage in farming move in their droves to the cities in search of greener pasture. This finding is in line with the work of Ogen (2003) which pointed out that agricultural sector has been suffering from neglect during the hey-days of the oil boom in the 1970s. Ever since then, Nigeria has been witnessing extreme poverty and the insufficiency of basic food items. Historically, the roots of the crisis in the Nigerian economy lie in the neglect of agriculture and the increased dependence on a mono-cultural economy based on oil. Olagbaju and Falola (1996) further maintained that the agricultural sector now accounts for less than 5% of Nigeria's GDP as a result of its neglect as against the significant role it played before the dawn of oil era .

The respondents rated the rural development efforts of AMAC as being low. This is evidenced in the responses of the majority of the respondents, 44% (see Table 15),who revealed that the rural development efforts of AMAC is low and weak. This is so because many indices of rural development, which manifests as good medical facilities like hospitals and rural dispensary centres, are quantitatively and qualitatively lacking in many of the rural settlements in Abuja Municipal Area Council. The class room structures in public schools are eyesore. This is not to talk

about the “qualified unqualified” teachers that are in their services. The schools in rural areas are in disrepair and despicable state such that even civil servants who are the policy makers themselves cannot risk the destinies of their children to attend such schools. This finding is a depiction of typical rural neglect that has been characterizing governance in Nigeria as captured in the work of Chinsman (1997) which noted that the rural people are visibly ravaged by an excruciating poverty, ignorance and disease. In addition, rural areas of Nigeria are virtually associated with depression, degradation, poverty and deprivation. In most rural areas in Nigeria, like in other rural settings in developing economies, basic infrastructure, where they exist at all, are too inadequate for any meaningful development. They often depend on shallow wells with untreated water for their water need. The villagers, most of whom are farmers, work on the land from sunrise to sunset only to produce food for the uncontrollable teeming city population. The rural poverty is such that inhabitants, groups, communities and societies at any given point in time experience a level of income below that which is needed to provide a desirable minimum living standard. Adalemo (1987) sees the certainty of poor quality of life in the rural areas as the main phobia that has often pushed migrants to the perceived opportunities in the urban centers.

Conclusion

This study has been concerned with the role of local government in rural development. This study has shown that rural areas can be developed through agricultural interventions. This is so because the economic mainstay of the rural people is agrarian sector of the economy. To develop rural areas is to engage in agricultural revolution. And that is exactly one of the areas which AMAC has not done very well over the years. Rural development has largely been achieved through the provision of basic infrastructural facilities to include building of schools, construction of roads, rural electrification projects, granting of scholarship and bursary allowances to the indigent students in the rural areas, the establishment of primary health care centers, building of slaughter houses and markets/motor parks among other feats. The government however needs to go extra mile to make its services to be more qualitative by staffing the hospitals and schools with good hands without allowing sentiment and nepotism to dictate its operations.

Recommendation

Based on the findings that have been made by this study, the researcher wants to make the following recommendations:

1. AMAC administration should employ more medical staff such as doctors, nurses, laboratory experts to man the hospitals in the rural areas. Medical experts should be wooed to the rural areas by paying special allowances such as rural areas allowances in order to motivate them to live and work in the rural areas.
2. The government should encourage more youths and young school leavers to engage in agricultural activities through agricultural incentives like loans and provision of farm inputs at affordable, accessible amount. The activities of middlemen who normally hijack government agricultural intervention should be kept at check through good monitoring and supervision, to ensure that the inputs get to the rural famers they are meant for.
3. Agricultural banks should be established in the villages so that the rural farmers can have access to loans at little or no interest rates and with minimal collectoral requirements.
4. Scrupulous and principled men/ and women should be used in rural development agenda of AMAC so that issues of corruption and tribalism that characterized the administration of dividends of governance can be kept at minimum check.

5. Policy makers should involve the beneficiaries of the rural development activities from the point of conception to implementation of the projects. This will enable them to know what the people really need.

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