

POVERTY AND RURAL-URBAN HABITATS IN NIGERIA

Isah Mohammed Abbass

*Department of Political Science
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria
E-mail: isaabbas@yahoo.com*

ABSTRACT

Given the tremendous explosions of urban settlements and the crises of rural areas during the past two or three decades, the myth, reality and hope of a sustainable human settlement pattern seem to have been unraveled by the two UN Habitat Conferences of 1976 and 1996. Even though the unresolved human settlement issues have for long been grappled with by public policies in Nigeria, solutions to problems have continued to remain a mystery; with condition of living being ravaged by poverty. This paper attempts to examine and analyze general problems of development of urban and rural settlements as well as various shifts in policies and strategies by the Nigerian oil-based political economy with the ascendancy of endemic poverty. The method of analysis employed in this study is based on data entirely obtained from secondary sources especially government policy documents, published books and periodicals relevant to the subject. The major results of the findings indicate that the tragedy of the situation is structurally the inadequacy of the policy thrusts. Hence, the direction of the economic development dictated by western institutions based on neo-liberal economic options do not favour the poor. The study further contributes by asserting the irreversible need to put people, not markets, first at the centre of development where the designs and implementation must be done in collaboration with the target beneficiaries as all the previous and current programmes were designed to fail.

Keywords: *Poverty, rural, urban, habitat*

INTRODUCTION

The trends, challenges and impacts of rural-urban migration in Nigeria have continued to generate great debates since the last three decades or so. Those moving from rural to urban areas constitute certain classes of the society that are basically plagued with certain social and economic problems in which poverty ranks highest and most fundamental. Debates on rural-urban gap have, since the 1960s, been one of the major focus areas that continued to produce insights on precarious condition of people in both rural and urban settlements with attendant consequences in many forms and dimensions. Migration is not a recent human phenomenon. Over time however, human beings have moved and established settlements in stratified socio-economic and geo-political compositions called either 'rural' or 'urban'. Given the significant disparities that have emerged and developed between and within rural and urban settlements, migration phenomenon should be strategically used for development; designed to solve problems: the problems that have emerged out of population pressures to handle or balance resource demand, resource availability and resource management.

Considerable attention and resources should be focused on improving deteriorating condition of rural settlements with a view to alleviating poverty and reducing the spate of rural-urban migration. It is important to note that even urban settlements are seriously hit by the plague of poverty, principally amongst hitherto wage-earning class which has practically regressed from proletarians to peasant-proletarians. Thus, the reverse of the spiral of rural-urban migration has turned out to be part of the emerging trends and salient phenomenon in under developed economies. This shows how and why efforts are concentrated more explicitly on urban settlements. These top-down manifestations of the growth centre strategies, with a 'trickle-down' pattern, (either in a spontaneous or induced manner) have evoked a reminiscence of other development paradigms and the futility of the approaches adopted, which are urban and industrial in nature, externally oriented and characterized by a highly advanced and capital intensive technology. Thus, artificially created urbanized settlements are therefore not free from the intricacies of international dependency position, masterminded by Multi-National Corporations (MNCs), sanctioned by the State and collaborated through the political and economic elites (Abbass, 1993).

Thus, rural-urban inequality, resulting in the phenomenal rural-urban migration, has become the prevailing orthodoxy in conceptualizing problems and trends of development policy and strategy in Nigeria. However, with the eclipse of the post-independence euphoria in Nigeria, expectations, hopes and visions were eluded and thus clouded with cynicism, apathy and despair; as much had been expected but with little achievements; largely due to official and other forms of corrupt practices in the poliity. With the evaporation of hope and enthusiasm within the environment, the unfavorable economic conditions facing rural and urban habitats have degenerated in weakening the basic foundations of the economy. On political angle alone, the situation is simultaneously affected by complete breakdown of political capacity to apply expedient public policy measures to avert impending political turmoil.

CRISIS IN RURAL NIGERIA

There is no disputing or denying the fact that rural Nigeria is engulfed in chronic and endemic crises. The background to Nigeria's rural crisis, the socio-economic and political impacts of the crisis date back to the colonial era. This was when colonialism exploited resources of rural areas thus increasing levels or degrees of rural poverty and changing the entire structure of the rural economy. By transforming the nature of land holding etc, it further affected the nature and system of social production and productivity, the social and physical provision of infrastructure, the ecology and labor force recruitment as well as worsened the overall poverty level amongst rural residents. Hence, the crisis in Nigeria's countryside centres essentially on productivity, food shortages, particularly for the urban dwellers, and dwindled per capita income which, no doubt, manifest a serious crisis of poverty,

apathy and despair within the rural communities. What is the nature and magnitude of this crisis? The nature and extent of rural malaise are, of course, immense and perhaps immeasurable. While rural poverty is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria, it has nevertheless persisted despite the fact that the country is richly endowed in oil and other mineral resources (Karl, 1997). Jamal and Weeks (1993) have noted that before the discovery and production of petroleum, Nigeria was a state characterized by a relatively narrow rural-urban gap, and therefore urban bias during that period was hardly a topical issue of debate. But with the emergence of oil as the main pedestal of the economy, urban oriented economy swiftly characterized the political economy and the public policy orientation (Karl, 1997). Urban privileged groups quickly monopolized and benefited from whatever gains that came along with oil. (Jamal and Weeks, 1993). Nigeria is predominantly rural, less than a quarter of Nigerians lives in towns or urbanized settings. While the trend in the Nigeria's oil economy is characterized by rural exodus, rural economy in agricultural pursuits is undermined by migration due to long history of Nigerian urbanization spree.

Whereas the nature of rural crisis in Nigeria has taken a new dimension to the extent that even the peasant has failed to produce enough food for himself, let alone produce, in excess, to be appropriated by the state. Thus, food shortages, lower productivity, lower income and increased poverty have ravaged rural Nigeria. These are partly and directly due to the inability of the peasants to have access to fertilizer for the predominantly fertilizer-responsive High Yielding Variety (HYV) crops, inputs and other infrastructural facilities. However, high marketing costs, labor shortages due to rural-urban drift, infertile soils, pests, diseases due to increased chemicalization of soil and mechanization of agriculture have produced further impetus to new rural crisis (Martinussen, 1988).

Hence, since the Sahelian drought of the 1970s, rural Nigeria has continued to capture the attention of scholars on unprecedented trends of rural poverty and its consequences on rural residents and the national economy as a whole (Mortimore, 1989). But despite all the seeming attempts to alleviate rural poverty by both the state and international agencies through many ambitious programs they have nevertheless failed to transform rural life; either through agriculture or industrialization (Puttaswamaiah, 1990). While a plethora of constraints could certainly be identified as factors responsible for the current rural malaise in Nigeria, the solutions seem to be as elusive as ever since both domestic and international dimensions of the issue were completely jettisoned.

The structure of Nigeria's rural economy has made it even more vulnerable with increased state intervention in the rural agricultural economy, particularly through the introduction of a variety of agricultural programs and strategies (Fayemi, K. Algbuzor, 2005). In addition, accelerated land alienation in rural areas has accentuated rural crisis and therefore become a serious trend that affects the entire peasantry. Thus, large tracts of land were forcefully acquired by the state and held by the urban bourgeoisie. In direct league with foreign partners, the entire activities had, over

time, been transformed into commercialized and mechanized farming. This constitutes one of the factors that brought about the state-peasant stand-off in the recent times. As the land so acquired is so extensive, rural inhabitants have inevitably been reduced to wage labor, particularly in the River Basin and Development Authority (RBDA) and Agricultural Development Project (ADP) areas where land had been acquired for diverse purposes.

The state of poverty in Nigeria is deep and widespread. In 2002, the Human Development Index ranking places Nigeria as 148 on a hierarchy of 173 countries. Not only has the Nigerian State failed to provide basic or needed services but has accrued huge and astonishing local and foreign debts. Poverty and debts in Nigeria have been the phenomenal norm in the political economy. These issues and concern have been apparently expressed by the past and current Nigerian leadership because the actual quantum of the debts cannot be ascertained. The impacts of these debts on the rural and urban habitats in Nigeria cannot be easily quantified. For example, the growing and huge size of Nigerian local debts was expressed by President 'Yaradua soon after his inauguration. These debts have grown from about N795 billion in 1999 to about N2.0 trillion by June 2007 (Zenith Economic Quarterly, Sept. 2007). The greatest culprits are the state and Federal Governments that engage in continuous borrowing but without executing corresponding projects to transform the urban and rural conditions of living.

Table 1: Yearly Total and Distribution of Nigeria's Local Debts (1999-2007)

Instrument	1999 (N) bns	2000 (N) bns	2001 (N) bns	2002 (N) bns	2003 (N) bns	2004 (N) bns	2005 (N) bns	2006 (N) bns	2007 (N) bns
Treasury Bills	361.758	465.536	584.54	733.76	825.10	871.57	854.83	695.00	698.11
Treasury Bonds	430.608	430.608	430.61	430.61	430.61	424.94	419.27	413.60	413.60
FGN devt Stocks	2.44	2.11	1.83	1.63	1.47	1.25	098	0.72	0.72
1st FGN Bonds	-	-	-	-	7256	72.56	72.56	16.83	-
2nd FGN Bonds	-	-	-	-	-	-	178.27	178.27	754.00
3rd FGN Bonds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	448.84	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	794.806	898.254	1,016.98	1,166.00	1,329.74	1,370.32	1,525.91	1,753.26	1,866.43

Source: Debt Management Office/Research & Economic Intelligent Group, 2008.

With agricultural pursuits becoming more and more unbearable and unaffordable by the rural peasantry due to, among others, high costs of inputs, fertilizers, labor etc the peasants have, by and large, been systematically forced out of farming. They pathetically abandoned farming by selling or mortgaging their farmlands to move out of rural environment for urban life to earn wage labor or engage in other lumpen-proletarian works. The Bakolori peasant revolt was a clear demonstration of a response on how the state actually alienated land from peasants; resulting in the 1980 peasant massacre by the state coercive agents.

Over time, rural labor structure has experienced a radical change. The Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) labor force sample survey carried out between 1966 and 1987 indicated that 80 percent of rural dwellers were generally employed in

agricultural activities. However agricultural employment in rural areas dropped from 80 percent (1966 - 1967) to 65.5 percent in 1983. Furthermore, wage labor is predominantly in use with fifty percent seasonally acquired through migrant labor (FOS, 1966-1987). This, more often than not, indicates that

...Of the migrant workers, 70 percent had land in their places of origin where 30 percent were landless. Of permanent workers less than 10 percent had their own land, the rest being landless (Bonat and Abdullahi 1989).

By 1985, the number of peasants that had been unsettled and rendered unemployed in the RBDA areas was as high as 500,000. However, between the 1970s and 1980s, the rural-urban migration of the rural labor force had completely shortened agricultural pursuits and productivity in Nigeria's countryside and what was left to cater for the land were mostly the aged women and children (Bonat and Abdullahi 1989). This unsettlement resulted partly from the large scale projects undertaken as they were all accompanied with ecological upset in the fragile rural areas. The threat of desertification makes movements to urban areas inevitable. Deforestation, through woodland clearance, makes soils to erode and land to deteriorate thereby threatening people to live around and engage in productive activities.

While the crucial question of what is the nature and magnitude of rural crisis must be stressed. It should be noted that rural communities in Nigeria have continued to suffer immeasurable crisis as manifested in multifaceted forms and dimension: crisis of nature, crisis of state intervention, crisis of maladjustment and so on ad infinitum. Poverty has become endemic, a norm rather than exception, in Nigerian rural society. It has continued to persist over time, at least since colonialism. Decades, since independence, have not produced concrete and tangible demonstration of its alleviation. Again, neither programs of development aids nor local drive for industrialization and transformation of agriculture has ameliorated the crisis from the rural sector of the economy even during the bubbling economy of the 1970s and the second chapter of Obasanjo regime. The solutions so far advanced seem to be as elusive as ever.

Ecological constraints are generally associated with low rural productivity and are usually caused by infertile soils. These were as a result of chemical pollution through intense application of chemical fertilizers, pesticides etc, as well as soil erosion. These came about partly due to intense deforestation through the introduction of new agricultural programs like RBDAs, ADPs and Dam constructions. Other ecological constraints consist of droughts and floods while pests and diseases are directly associated with public policy which sanction pollutions into the hitherto 'natural soils' relatively immune from foreign incursions.

The crisis of labor shortages in rural Nigeria is demonstrated by rural-urban migration, as rural ecological constraints become highly unbearable to the rural residents. What further bedevils the rural setting is the wrong diagnosis to the problems of rural areas. As wrong solutions are being applied, they in turn produce

wrong results due to the faulty understanding of the problems. For example, the so-called traditional farm management is adduced to be the causal factor for the so-called technical backwardness, caused by the vicious circle of inputs scarcity and the ageing farm population without giving further impetus to the young in agricultural pursuits (Ajeagbu, 1976). Consequently, rural environment has become highly characterized by low or under-investment of resources. The result of this has invariably caused serious scarcity of credits; bringing about low farm prices sequel to, among others, the vacillating price policies and unfavorable terms of trade between rural and urban sectors. However, the huge marketing costs, caused by inadequate rural infrastructures, have made further assaults on rural condition of living. The worsening of rural socio-economic condition is not only a crisis affecting it but also the national economy as well. While the direction of policies and attitudes, over time, of colonial and postcolonial regimes as well as the donor institutions has brought about a plethora of issues militating against rural society, a catalogue of crisis has, by and large, emerged. These include the perfunctory public policy attention paid to rural small-scale peasant farmers, particularly in irrigated project sites which place too much emphasis and dependence on public investments with large-scale enterprises and urban bourgeois farmers being the central focus.

But against the advocacy for a change from the 'economy of affection' to the so-called capital intensive large scale economy characterized by export crops and machinery etc, state interventions, over time, have been fashioned out on capital intensive projects without due regard to the social, economic and ecological consequences. Reforms on such interventions were, however, advanced towards social provision of basic human needs as advocated by the ILO, which in essence, has turned out to be a further modification of denials of rural needs despite the strong advocacy for the relative rural self-reliance and redistribution of resources equitably (Sandbrook, 1982). The rural economy is, of course, broader than and therefore not synonymous to farming. Other ingredients that make up the entire rural economy consist of livestock production, forestry, fishing, marketing, hunting, manufacturing etc. Within this diversity of activities in the rural society, Mortimore succinctly shows the assumptions attached to the non-farm activities and their impacts.

...It often seems to be assumed that a decline in rural non-agricultural activity will accompany urbanization and the transformation of agriculture. But such an assumption does violence to the multifaceted structure of ... rural economies. Diversification is very much and is also ultimately related to ecology (Mortimore, 1989)

Even though the peasant mode of production has been outmoded, as it cannot make any dramatic change and increases in production and productivity, it is equally accepted that the introduced technology is highly inappropriate to the state of affairs of the rural realities or indigenous farming systems. In other words, the technology is highly inappropriate for the rural farming system and for the generality of the rural farmers whose understanding of the technology and resources is highly analogue to the generally accepted designs of the transformation of rural society. The

dependency nature of rural environment on urban policy and bureaucratic tangling has, however, produced undesirable constraints on the efficiency of labor and other productive processes. It must be stressed that public policy on agriculture has by and large shown great disaffection towards the small scale farmers; particularly those in rural areas, as the inputs, credits and other facilities concretely show its bias in favor of the large scale urban arm-chair farmers at the expense of the predominant peasant population. Thus, the improvement of the peasantry is, any way, an inevitable historical outcome of the penetration of capitalist forces into the countryside under colonial and post-colonial conditions (Watts, 1983).

THE CHALLENGE OF URBANIZATION IN NIGERIA

Urban growth is generally regarded as the transformation of areas with rural character into towns. It is, in other words, the growth of towns from their hitherto statuses of rural settings. In an ideal and orthodox setting, such processes of urbanization should usually come along with industrialization through the establishment of factories and the expansion of employment opportunities, which ideally should however produce a thriving industrial environment. The obvious relationship between urbanization and industrialization is the nexus of labor attraction not only in the commercial and manufacturing activities but more importantly in agricultural production. Thus, as opportunities expand in urban areas, they, however, dialectically dwindle in rural areas as people are continuously attracted into the urban areas where they are forced to abandon rural life to seek a means of livelihood in towns. The rural residents apparently see the attractiveness in the towns with seeming better opportunities. But in reality, many people abandon rural life in preference to the crowded; often substandard, and shanty housing in towns where they cannot find suitable employment opportunities (Gadd, 1976). What provokes such rural residents to off-root their places for such urban life can be better appreciated in policy analysis.

The Nigerian population has continued to steadily grow from about 20 million in 1931 to 32 million in 1952/53 and to some 56 million in 1963. However, the 1973 census was cancelled due largely to its political content and agitation for its cancellation. The 1991 census put Nigerian population at more than 88 million. Currently, Nigeria is more than 150 million inhabitants with large urban centres (Nigeria, 2006). While most of the urban centres are faced with serious social problems, Nigeria's great majority of urban workers live with inadequate facilities. One therefore wonders whether these sectors, characterized with squalor features etc, are indeed within the Nigerian urban area planning. These areas consist, inter alia, of poor roads, lack of water supply, poor sanitary condition and in most cases, without electricity supply. Other grave problems bordering on social issues faced by urban Nigerians include inadequate job opportunities which give rise to growing incidence of insecurity; resulting from such crimes as theft, house breaking, armed robbery etc which seem to be the only attractive options left to those who cannot

legitimately make ends meet to sustain themselves. However, even many of those legitimately employed engage in intense fraudulent activities because the condition has forced them to find that crime is necessary in order that they may continue to afford to live in the high - priced urban areas (Adedeji & Rowland, 1973). The challenge of urbanization is, without disputes, the challenge of the future. A practical solution to the challenge of urbanization is, on the other side of the coin, the empirical solution to the rural problems. It has been explicitly shown that:

... the problems of urbanization are the problems of the young on whom the future progress of our country depends. It is the youth who are rejecting the rural life for the attractions of the urban areas. It is the youth who arrive with high hopes in the urban areas for a better way of life. It is the youth who are most greatly disillusioned when no jobs, no housing, inadequate services and all too few prospects for a better way of life, await them in the town. It is in our youth that the crisis of expectations is at the highest and the disappointment and frustrations will be most heavily felt. And it is the youth whose morals are put at greatest risk. In failing our youth we fail ourselves and our country (Adedeji and Rowland, 1973).

The challenge of urbanization intrinsically challenges the rural question as the dual settlement patterns are the two sides of the same coin. Thus, any design to transform one area without a corresponding and relative attempt to improve the other is likely to produce undesired results. For example, whenever attempts are made to improve urban areas alone that in themselves will cause some movements of people from the rural areas. Put differently, any design and strategy to improve urban condition must correspond with similar or relative design and strategy to improve the rural situation. To stamp out the prevalence of rural urban migration, a relative and proportionate 'balance' in design and strategy of rural and urban development must be made and enforced within the entire development plans. Urbanization process in Nigeria has continued to increase with rapidly growing problems in all parts of the country. The pace of urbanization has indicated that 54 towns in 1952 had a total population of 3.1 million. Some of these towns had populations of 20,000 while others had above. The pattern of growth shows that by 1963 the population jumped to 10.7 million and the number of towns of such size rose to 183. During the same period, however, the percentage of Nigerians living in towns (20,000 and above) was 19, but if settlements of 5,000 and above were by 1963 regarded as being urban, then about 55 percent of Nigerians could be considered urbanized (Adedeji and Rowland, 1973).

Such rapid rate of urbanization in Nigeria has its inherent negative implications in social, environmental, economic, political and other dimensions. While the social implication of congestion and over-crowding are obvious or certain, the inadequacy of all sorts of services cannot be ruled out. Such urban setting inevitably brews incidence of violence, robbery and social vices like prostitution; causing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases. The conglomeration of people from diverse ethnic and cultural groups also brings about struggles and conflict between them in the political, religious or even economic arena, which raises tensions between the relevant parties. The challenge of urbanization is immense and critical

to both the government and people. To overlook problems associated with accelerated pace of urbanization would lead to conclude acceptance of the worsening condition of rural areas and mass drift from traditional rural environment to urban areas. The failure of government to halt these trends of mass movement of people to overcrowd the urban areas with other associated implications is catastrophic. If there is a need to plan and deal with urban problems, it automatically necessitates planning for the rural areas since both areas are symbiotic and interwoven. It has been observed that:

... In virtually all the existing urban areas of Nigeria, the level of basic essential services to the community is inadequate....The service is a daunting one; the scope of the challenge is enormous and some of the resources - trained manpower, technical know-how and finance- are in very short supply (Adedeji and Rowland, 1973)

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa; one of the fastest growing population in the world and with one of the fastest and dramatic pace of urbanization during the last three or four decades. Such an overwhelming urban population is not indeed peculiar to Nigeria but a worldwide phenomenon. Nigeria, with its large diversity in social structure, cultural heritage and economic endowments, has potentials for rapid urbanization with inherent depletion of rural areas. Whereas urbanization process must never be oblivious of and divorced from rural consideration, it implies that any strategy to improve urban centres must similarly be equitably matched by a corresponding rural development in order to prevent any influxes into the urban areas. It should be noted however that even in planned circumstances and with practical measures to relatively improve rural conditions, migration trends into urban areas, no matter the scale, are unavoidable. In situations where plans and measures are not taken into consideration, it is expected that a growing influx of people from rural to urban areas would be unprecedented (Puttaswamaiah, 1990).

Thus, as the growth and explosion of urban settlements are universal phenomena, the continuing trends of urbanization in Nigeria are incessant and endemic. Nigeria is thus changing from an agricultural and rural society to an urbanized setting. From the twelve-state structure of 1967 to the present thirty-six, Nigeria's urban growth has varied within different areas. Although Nigeria is predominantly rural, the impact of urbanization, all over the country, is continuously being felt as the newly created state capitals, in particular, continue to pull out rural and other groups of people from both urban and semi-urban areas into such locations which constitute vital points of rapid urbanization. During the 1970s, Nigeria was confronted with the challenge of reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation particularly in the war ravaged areas. Other socio-economic activities were designed throughout the country. This no doubt involved the state direct involvement of resettlement and movement of people from different parts of the country. It should be recalled that the 1970s were the unprecedented years of great oil revenues which also coincided with the rapid population explosion and urbanization process, on the

one hand and rural depletion; accompanied by large influxes of people into the urban area, on the other. As such mobility trends in the population were unhealthy, "the eventual distribution had very adverse consequences for the space economy and for the people themselves both in towns and the country" (Ajeagbu, 1976). Thus, the changing population characteristics in both the rural and urban habitats had their own distributional dynamics and impacts.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the population distribution in Nigeria revealed that the highest concentrations of population were located largely in the southern part of the country, particularly in Lagos, Ibadan, Port-Harcourt, etc. High density distribution could also be found in the Northern part especially in Kano and Zaria. The central issue of concern, the implications of these patterns of population distribution, centre on pressure on resources, particularly on agricultural land, threat to food security, housing, urban land use and infrastructure amenities, employment etc. which their availability and provision are always in the diminishing side.

The tempo of urbanization and its challenges in Nigeria have continued to widen over the years. This development has significantly affected the proportionate distribution of the urban and rural populations. It was estimated that between 1951 and 1953 the rate of urbanization in Nigeria was about 5 percent per annum (Ajeagbu, 1976). But by 1963, the rate of urban growth in the country had risen to 8 percent per annum. The growth of large urban centres has been phenomenal and thus many urban areas were actually growing at much faster rates by doubling their populations within an interval of a decade (Ajeagbu, 1976). In Nigeria, the process of urbanization has remained a continuing trend since time immemorial. The origins of many towns can therefore be traced back to the middle ages while many are of pre-European origin; a few were created by colonialism. The pre-colonial towns were self-sustaining in all respects; sufficient in food supplies with large farming areas within the cities, large markets, effective local processing, transporting, storage, wholesale and retail purchasing etc. With spatial process, particularly since the 1960s, when modernity took over the traditional expansion of the economy, the towns have been transformed to perform new functions. In essence however, the process of urbanization offers a variety of socio-economic options to those attracted into the towns, particularly those from the rural village or traditional kinship system.

... While they are in many aspect divorced from their traditional family support base, they are at the same time exposed to modern economic systems and industrial technology very different from what they have hitherto been used or equipped for .This exposure is by itself a very useful result of urbanization (Ajeagbu, 1976)

It is further shown that:

For some of these people who are often ill-equipped for urban employment or the urbanized economy, the initial confusion and the disappointed expectations especially about employment and other opportunities following their immigration into the towns, eventually give way to favorable responses to the new challenges (Ajeagbu, 1976).

Even if urbanization process offers some opportunities to others and responds

favorably, a great number suffers from the modernizing effect of urbanization, especially those whose stay is longest and were initially involved in the challenges and stresses of urbanization (Ajeagbu, 1976). An important implication for urbanization process in Nigeria is the urban-rural relationship, particularly on the influences urban centres exert on the rural hinterland by drawing rural inhabitants through migrations. Urban spatial system in Nigeria, particularly within the context and process of urban development policy, has since the 1960s been a subject of discussion. Socio-economic behavior and responses of the rural urban migrants as well as the tempo of the urban explosions were enhanced due to state public policy (Ajeagbu, 1976). For example, in 1963, there were 24 urban centres in Nigeria each with a population of 100,000 and above and at the same time there existed 55 towns each with a population of 50,000 inhabitants or more. Furthermore, there were 183 towns with 20,000 or more inhabitants each which as a whole became the concentration of 10.7 million inhabitants (Ajeagbu, 1976).

One of the greatest challenges of urbanization, particularly in this century is the amazing shifts in the trends of the population movements. It should be noted that in 1990, "only one person in eight lived in an urban area, today half of the world's people live in cities" (Tinker, 1988). The great challenge faced by all the urban areas globally is, no doubt, the challenge of food production which is erroneously regarded as rural because of the further erroneous belief that urban areas are only centres of commerce and industry. The venue for all agricultural experimentations in under-developed regions has been rural. All large scale farms, innovative agricultural extensions, research programs focus largely on rural areas. Thus, rural peasants constituted as laboratories, experimental agents and tools. Urban emphasis in food production has been very narrow in focus largely because of its status as commercial and manufacturing centres. The issue of food and feeding of the teeming city populations has received a perfunctory attention. This is partly adduced to the misconstrued inclination for the urban areas which are planned to "follow the complex, highly capitalized, and energy consuming supermarket model of food distribution commonly found in more industrialized societies" (Tinker, 1988).

ISSUES IN NIGERIA'S RURAL ENVIRONMENT

Despite the rapid growth in the urbanization process, Nigeria is predominantly a rural environment. Since 1960, Nigeria has attempted strategies for rural development which none has been successful (Abbass, 1997). Rural society, over time, has continued to be neglected and ignored. The chronic and alarming circumstances and influences surrounding the rural Nigeria present a picturesque of threats to future human settlement. The nature of the rural condition vis-à-vis the abundant resources is thus a paradox. Threats to a sustainable rural development have been set through the nexus of the state policy and the intricacies of state power through the political economy in determining control of the means of production and class interests. Hence, the advocacy of social scientists, physical planners and

other scholars on the imperative of rural societies in the dynamics of the overall societal sufficiency and development has never been in dispute. Such an advocacy further argues that the economics and other issues of rural "behavior and interest of the state are better analyzed and understood within their political context" (Abbass, 1997) or socio-political rationale and socio-economic implications.

Designed policy approaches to rural development based on the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' have collapsed and therefore turned out to be frustrated options with in-built structural barriers. As both the policies are direct manifestations of the political economy, they invariably cannot stand the test of time and solve the issues addressed. Rural areas in Nigeria are currently confronted, more than ever before, with serious problems ranging from the general under - development and social backwardness to the specific infrastructure deficiencies, impoverishment, widespread poverty and hunger, illiteracy, unemployment as well as apathy and despair. With the worsening of rural life, however, it has been shown that:

... The structural changes from agricultural to petroleum economy, particularly from the 1970s, when the former was neglected and relegated to the background, led to massive rural-urban migrations at an unprecedented scale. Thus, the results of these changes, particularly in the 1990s, indicate that a far greater number of people, more significantly in the urban areas, cannot adequately feed themselves and are therefore faced with increased insecurity, widespread diseases and criminal activities (Abbass, 1997)

While rural marginalization and neglect have been the central theme of urbanization program in Nigeria, it should be stressed that these are the direct embodiment of the unserviceable neo-classical economic theory which makes the apparent policy objectives of rural development inconsistent with the rural needs (Abbass, 1994). Thus, disparities between town and country, inserted within the development policy, have continued to impede rather than facilitate the development of the rural as well as urban areas particularly in providing a range of social welfare for the two habitants (Martinussen, 1988). The vicious circle within the predominant strategies makes it crystal clear. It indicates that the urban biased strategy was only designed to incorporate or upgrade rural areas with urban features.

... The design to incorporate rural areas with semi-urban features is rooted in the perception which suggests that the establishment of institutions, structures, agencies etc. per se, would automatically provide the basic needs of rural dwellers and then solve the problem of poverty. Therefore, efforts to raise rural welfare must move from mere extension of urban physical appearance to rural areas as models of development since urban areas are not devoid of features of rural life - abject poverty and deprivation (Abbass, 1997)

The perennial rural poverty, rural class formation, class fractionalization and class struggles are other salient issues embedded within the given rural development strategies, which have rarely been the focus of attention. The plight of rural dwellers has to be situated within such important paradigms in order to capture and understand the issues involved in proper perspectives. Hence, the intensification of spatial inequalities, narrowing accessibility to basic necessities and heightening of rural gap has inevitable and irreversible class content. It is not therefore by accident, but

by design, that there exist heavy concentrations of facilities in the urban centres to benefit a few urban elite groups.

THE ECOLOGY OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION

We are here specifically concerned with the ecological aspects arising from the provocative movements of people, trapped in poverty circle, from rural to urban areas and the emerging trends and issues therein. Thus, what provokes such rural "people to off-root their homes to live in apparently less desirable and strange surroundings?" (Gadd, 1976). What is the general behavior of such people in the process of such movements and its aftermath, particularly the settlement aspects, its nature and means of livelihood? What, after all, will be the impact of the expanding population on the urban settlement on the one hand and the rural communities or habitats on the other? These rural and urban ecologies are very crucial in understanding the extent of rural-urban migration, poverty and under-development.

More than ever before, rural areas in Nigeria are currently confronted with serious problems ranging from the general state of underdevelopment, social backwardness to the infrastructural deficiencies, impoverishment, widespread poverty and hunger, illiteracy unemployment as well as apathy and despair (Abbass, 1994). With the worsening of rural life, the state policy of withdrawing of subsidies, life, everywhere, has become more miserable and unbearable for the rural residents who are forced out of rural environments; floating between rural and urban areas. This floating population, screwed-down in poverty, after off-rooting their habitats in the rural areas, cannot establish permanent home and make life easy, for themselves and others, in the urban areas. As the new or expanding economic growth is the powerful pulling force that attracts rural population into the urban areas, the hopeless, brutish rural life is the force pushing them to flood urban areas.

Rural pressures centered on social infrastructural amenities; with high rural population densities and where state interventions in agricultural programs have assaulted the life of the peasantry, are endemic and highly colossal. These consequently affect pressures on food supply and pose threat to feed the family with an inevitable option to move into the urban centers for the lumpen-proletarian jobs (Abbass, 1994). By 1970, for example, Ajeagbu had shown that the average population densities in Nigeria within the main areas of rural population pressures range from about 300 persons per square miles (115 per km²) in the Northern parts of the country to over 900 persons per square miles (345 per km²) in the Southern parts as exhibited on Table 2. Whereas the overall national average density was, as at the time, about 500 person per square miles (190 per km²), it implied that where the rural densities per square miles were 500 persons (200 per km²) or over, pressures on resources were more and more experienced (Ajeagbu, 1976).

Population mobility can generally be categorized or classified into various forms of migration trends. In the first place, it emanates from high density areas to other higher density locations. These suggest that the receiving areas are resourcefully buoyant with enhanced or increased opportunities. The other one takes place, as usual, from the pressured rural areas to the urban centres. However, migratory trends also occur from low resources and high density and pressured rural areas to sparsely settled, high resource rural locations. On rare occasions however, pressured urban areas force some groups of people to move to resource-based low density rural areas to rid themselves from the rigors of urban environment. As the availability and distribution of resources have a direct relationship with the concentration and distribution of population, rural-urban migration implies that economic or material expectations and opportunities of the migrant rural peasants could be obtained and achieved from such resource available and resource distributed urban areas. The propensity therefore to migrate from the pressured rural areas is even the more when the destinations are assumed to provide the social, economic and other prospects anticipated.

Rural-urban migration is not prompted by a desire to search for agricultural land. Rather, a greater number of the migrants abandon farming by being transformed to wage earners. This trend in migration does not alleviate rural pressures or enhance the utilization of the dormant rural resources but precipitate more urban pressures and subsequently the creation of the satellite settlement at the fringe of the urban centres. It should be stressed that the condition of rural migrants into the urban suburb, predominantly occupied by low wage earners, cannot be measured in any way higher than the rural peasantry. Furthermore, even the socio-economic condition of the large urban dwellers has remarkably regressed beyond the poverty line leading to the evaporation of the hitherto 'middle class' within the socio-economic settings and realities of societal impoverishment or state of poverty.

At this juncture, it is important to take a cursory look at the proportional distribution of population between the rural and urban areas. By 1970s, for example, and based on the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) estimates, about 85 percent of Nigerians lived in predominantly rural settlements whereas less than 10 percent lived in towns which possessed a population of 50,000 or more. However, the average increase of the population of urban residents was about 20 percent living in 183 towns with 20,000 inhabitants or more (Ajeagbu, 1976). With the explosion of urban settlements and depletion of rural areas since the 1970s and the prevailing socio-economic situation in the 1980s and 1990s both rural and urban settlements have witnessed unprecedented stressed and constrained conditions, resulting in urban environmental degradation on the one hand and rural decay on the other.

The trends of rural-urban migration are structurally focused on poverty. Thus, poverty over time, has gradually shifted from rural to urban areas and has become more indigenous and well rooted in urban than rural areas. In Jamal and Weeks (1993), it has been argued that as poverty has become more urbanized, "the wage earning class has practically disappeared as a distinct entity and there has been an astonishing transformation of the urban labor market" (Jamal & Weeks, 1993). This

is, accordingly, sequel to swift changes in the harsh behavior of the economy, which also provokes rural-urban migrations. The distinctions between rural and urban sources of income have indicated that both urban and rural poverty are two sides of the same coin which however feed or depend on each other. It is further argued that:

...Even if rural poverty should be statistically more important its root cause may still lie in the poverty and resulting lack of effective demand in the urban sector; the reverse may also apply. Any policy on poverty worth its name would have to attack both locations of poverty simultaneously (Jamal&Weeks, 1993).

If we take and focus on the urban bias analysis that has for long been the main staple of analysis, recent revelations or developments within the socio-economic gap between the rural and urban areas have demonstrated the gap among the residents of both areas not as spectacular and striking as had been clamored and agitated for. As a matter of fact, income gap has even turned in favor of the peasant farmers against the urban or even the salary or wage earners (Jamal and Weeks, 1993). This was sequel to the dramatic changes that radically altered the rural-urban relationship and the income differentials that had come into being since the 1970s.

Urban bias has become an epitome of development strategies clinched with the state policy and predominantly conceptualized in literature. This urban bias thesis focuses on the rural victims and urban beneficiaries within the surplus generation and transfer, allocation and distribution between the two sectors whereas the highest concentration and centralization of power and resources are in the urban areas. State Creation processes in Nigeria since 1980s and 1990s have expanded further growth of urban settlements and the movements of people from rural to urban areas (State capitals). Still, the conditions of people have not fundamentally changed. Accordingly, the 2006 population census of Nigeria indicates that about 77% of Nigerians live in predominantly rural areas while the rest live in urban and semi urban settlements. As deduced from Table 3, the male/female ratio is 1.0497 while the percentage male and female totals are 51.21167795 and 48.78832205 respectively.

One of the astonishing features of Nigerian social setting is the wide inequalities that continues to exist between the town and the country; caused primarily by the state policy through various interventions and other economic measures in not only wealth distribution but also resource allocation and management to the two sectors. However, the remarkable insights of rural-urban inequalities are those that can be gleaned from the inequality that exists between the urban wage earner and the rural farmer. This will settle part of the serious contentions and issues bordering on rural-urban disparities and rural-urban migration. Even though these issues affect agricultural productivity, they are nonetheless wide, dangerous and detrimental to both rural and urban settlements and their sustainability since migration is a provocative response to economic gap and insecurity.

During the 1970s, petroleum as 'the devil's excrement' not only brought about expanded growth but at the same time set in a paradox: trouble, waste and corruption

which continue to be drowning the ship of the nation (Watts, 1983). These were part of the economic shocks that radically and astonishingly altered the urban-rural relationship in Nigeria during that period, the relationship altering the rural-urban income differentials thereby worsening condition of life in the former more devastating than in the latter as those who have migrated and settled or floated at the fringes of the urban centres as well as the wage earners are worse-off in terms of actual per capita income than those in the rural areas (Karl, 1997). Thus, focus on farm-wage gap is relevant in understanding the efficacy of the trends of rural migration. As real wages have practically fallen, the decline in employment has been widely recorded.

... living standards of the urban workers and peasants have drawn closer... urban poverty now rivals rural poverty in intensity and extent. The falling wages in urban areas have endangered profound changes in urban economic structure. No longer is urban wage sufficient to support an average size family in town... (Jamal and Weeks, 1993).

Table 2: Nigeria's 2006 Population Census

States	Males	Females	Total	% of Total
Abia	1,434,193	1,399,806	2,833,999	2.024
Adamawa	1,606,123	1,561,978	3,168,101	2.263
Akwa-Ibom	2,044,510	1,875,698	3,920,208	2.800
Anambra	2,174,841	2,007,391	4,182,032	2.987
Bauchi	2,426,215	2,250,250	4,676,485	3.340
Bayelsa	902,648	800,710	1,703,358	1.217
Benue	2,164,058	2,055,186	4,219,244	3.014
Borno	2,161,157	1,990,036	4,151,193	2.965
C/River	1,492,465	1,396,501	2,888,966	2.063
Delta	2,074,306	2,024,085	4,098,391	2.927
Ebonyi	1,040,984	1,132,617	2,173,601	1.552
Edo	1,640,461	1,577,871	3,218,332	2.299
Ekiti	1,212,609	1,171,603	2,384,212	1.703
Enugu	1,624,202	1,633,096	3,257,298	2.327
FCT	740,489	664,712	1,405,201	1.003
Gombe	1,230,722	1,123,157	2,353,879	1.681
Imo	2,032,286	1,902,613	3,934,899	2.811
Jigawa	2,215,907	2,132,742	4,348,649	3.106
Kaduna	3,112,028	2,964,534	6,076,562	4.333
Kano	4,844,128	4,539,554	9,383,682	6.702
Katsina	2,976,682	2,813,896	5,790,578	4.137
Kebbi	1,617,498	1,621,130	3,238,628	2.313
Kogi	1,691,737	1,586,750	3,278,487	2.342
Kwara	1,220,581	1,160,508	2,381,089	1.694
Lagos	4,678,020	4,335,514	9,013,534	6.438
Nasarawa	945,556	917,719	1,863,275	1.331

Niger	2,032,725	1,917,624	3,950,349	2.822
Ogun	1,847,243	1,880,855	3,728,098	2.663
Ondo	1,761,263	1,679,751	3,441,014	2.458
Osun	1,740,619	1,682,916	3,423,535	2.445
Oyo	2,809,840	2,781,749	5,591,589	3.994
Plateau	1,593,033	1,585,679	3,178,312	2.270
Rivers	2,710,685	2,474,735	5,185,420	3.704
Sokoto	1,872,069	1,824,930	3,696,999	2.641
Taraba	1,199,849	1,100,887	2,300,736	1.643
Yobe	1,205,003	1,115,588	2,320,591	1.658
Zamfara	1,630,344	1,629,502	3,259,846	2.328
Total	71,707,079	68,313,873	140,020,952	99.998

Sources: Nigeria FOS, 2010.

Thus, the scuttling trend of rural-urban migrations is imbued with serious implications. Invariably, the rates of rural-urban migration are consequent upon the state deliberate neglect of the basic needs of rural residents. The problems associated with population influxes are, more often than not, accompanied by overcrowding and squalor living that has provoked the soaring tension and instability in both the urban and rural settlement patterns. Therefore, as these problems have increased additional pressures on urban habitat bordering on services like health care, water supply, waste disposal, transportation and educational facilities, the growing number of lumpen proletarians has consequential impacts on unemployment rate and agricultural productivity in the urban and rural sectors of the economy. All these have contributed in the swelling crime rates, political turmoil, violence etc.

While problems of poverty are squarely the prime factors pricking rural-urban exodus, the abysmal provision of infrastructures, relatively placed at urban centers and nothing provided for in the rural areas, constitute other crucial trends. Rural development policies and strategies can be sustained only when provision, operation and maintenance of appropriate infrastructures are geared towards creating an atmosphere of socio-economic realism. The technocratic reformist character or behavior of Nigeria's rural development policy has jeopardized the provision and sustenance of rural infrastructural amenities.

Rural societies exhibit palpable contrasts with urban settlements, particularly in the provision and maintenance of infrastructures. Nigeria's over 150 million people are largely rural residents and thus rural-urban distribution of amenities shows a lopsided balance against the predominantly rural population. This trend therefore demonstrates that urban policies and preferences, under the pretext of rural development in Nigeria, have dominated public proclamations and pronouncements of the political leadership in false slogan of rural transformation, poverty alleviation etc. This goes on to show that:

... rural setting must intrinsically be linked with the urban social conditions since the former exists in a symbiotic pattern with the latter. In other words, the dialectics of rural-urban relationships show that the growth of urban areas and the well

being of the inhabitants automatically dwarf rural settings and dwellers in all ramifications; as problems and deplorable conditions of rural communities are intrinsically or dialectically associated with urbanization or vice-versa. (Abbass, 1997).

The orthodox belief suggests that, the traditional approach of rural development through agriculture must be shifted and discarded. To recognize rural communities as only food producers within the economy is misleading. Thus rural societies must be equally recognized to be equally entitled to all other amenities not necessarily agricultural implements alone. In this vein therefore, Sandbrook shows that:

... any policies that argument urban bias is likely to compound the poverty problem. Relevant here is the paradox that effort to expand urban employment ... with stagnant rural areas will increase urban greater migration to the relatively prosperous cities (Sandbrook, 1982)

While the transformation of rural communities is greatly influenced by the type, quality and quantity of facilities provided and the regularity of their maintenance, such infrastructures like sources of water supply, environmental sanitation, educational and literacy condition, nutritional and other socio-economic life of the rural society must be focused on their sustainability and viability. It must be emphasized that the provision, operation and maintenance of rural infrastructures greatly prevent or at least reduce the phenomenal rural-urban migration; a trend always accompanied with serious socio-economic and political repercussions (Abbass, 1994). Development plans and the provision of rural infrastructures since 1946 have not been geared towards a satisfactory meeting of the basic needs of the rural residents. The Second Development Plans 1970-74, for example, were confronted with a very high level of unemployment and under-employment in the countryside. It should be noted that this was the period oil revenue earning reached its apogee in Nigeria. The plan document however recognized the poverty and poor conditions of the rural society. This culminated in the formulation of policies towards ensuring adequate food supply to meet the quality and quantity standards for the increasing population. It was also geared towards the production of agricultural raw materials for exports and for domestic agro-based industrial manufacturers and creating rural employment opportunities designed to reduce the prevailing rural urban migration. It should be noted that the strategies to achieve such objectives further exacerbated the rural problem. It was only during the Third Development Plans 1975-80 that the government made its first official statement on rural development planning in the following declaration.

...The main objectives of rural development are to increase rural productivity and income, diversify rural economy and generally enhance the quality of life in rural areas. Since agriculture constitutes the predominant form of activity in rural areas, the most important instrument for achieving these objectives are the agricultural programs of both the Federal and State Governments (Nigeria, 1975).

Due to the serious disparities between the rural and urban areas in the provision, operation and maintenance of infrastructures, the plan document further declared that:

... Another aspect of balanced development of the rural and urban areas has lagged behind the urban areas in development, resulting in increasing disparities between standard of living in the rural and urban areas and the mass migration of population from the former to the latter (Nigeria, 1975).

With the further widening of the gulf of inequality between the rural and urban centres, urban biased development strategies have continued to characterize development plans resulting in the imbalance investments and therefore in the rural labor drains. The Fourth Development Plans 1981-85 proposed certain integrative approaches to develop rural areas, particularly through orientating rural societies to produce for market, and for an enhanced strategy to raise productivity and income (Nigeria, 1981). Furthermore, the strategy was designed to provide a framework for equitable and even spread of infrastructural facilities and help to counter balance the strong trend towards rural-urban migration (Nigeria, 1984). The development plan documents have noted the difficulties associated with the transformation of rural Nigeria and have therefore shown that such expectations could not be realized largely due to the inflationary trend in the unstable economy coupled with embarrassing food imports and the rural-urban drain.

Efforts to stem out the tide of rural migration have not been successful due largely to the fact that strategies to improve rural productivity and income levels as well as employment opportunities could not be achieved. However, the provision of vital infrastructures and community services are abysmal whereas initiated action geared towards the responsible use of rural resources to preserve the social, physical and economic environment and to improve the quality of rural life has been dismal (Abbass, 1994).

Another crucial issue within the confluence of rural-urban question is that which centres on the feeding and keeping food flowing into the cities as well as the need to provide spaces for farming in and around the cities. Irene Tinker (1988) for instance explains that most planning strategies favor the elite in the underdeveloped countries even though poor people in the cities are in the majority. He further stressed that "income statistics reinforce the presumption that city dwellers are better off than those living in rural areas. But urban poverty is underscored when income is adjusted to reflect the high costs of food in cities" (Tinker, 1988). Hence, the direct relationship between poverty and rapid urban growth challenges the feeding of the urban population into a precarious setting. As families in the cities spend more than three-quarters of their income on food, urban poverty grows astronomically. With the dwindled urban condition of life and purchasing power partly due to devaluation of currency and the collapse of the urban supermarkets, the spread of uncontrollable marketing costs is currently giving way to further higher prices of food.

In the past, food importation was possible and was on the increase due to the dwindled agricultural production locally. Overtime and with the over-stretching of the resources such importation in response to growing food needs could no longer be continued. Thus, the economic stabilization policies, currency devaluation etc. have put restrictions to imports. Thus urban families, in the first place, have not

been in position to obtain and consume the required food they need due largely to ban on food importation, currency valuation, weakened purchasing power, wage cuts, retrenchment in public service, reduced opportunities for employment and the withdrawal of all subsidies (Tinker,1988).

Migrants from countryside flood into the cities due partly to the attractions of the construction works and other means of transient employment. In both the cities and the countryside, food is a big problem, as it constitutes a big percentage of household expenditure. The sharp increase in food prices has given rise to grave implications for the economy and the persistent demand for wage reviews. The challenge here is that urban agriculture has been ignored and how the urbanites can feed themselves is not given any serious thoughts. Furthermore, the need to improve the condition of the ruralities has received a perfunctory attention by the political economy. These, combined together, including the migration of destitute, have brought about the soaring urban population with the corresponding rural depletion.

TRENDS OF RURAL-URBAN POVERTY IN NIGERIA

The nature and scope of poverty in Nigeria have continued to manifest in multi-dimensional perspectives. Thus, poverty may be related to or indicated with income, health, level of education, vulnerability to social injustice, powerlessness, voiceless-ness among other indicators (Zenith Economic Quarterly, 2007). However, Nigeria is a country of extreme inequalities between the urban and rural habitats as well as within the two sectors and amongst the people generally. The inequality is therefore a very crucial area in poverty matrix. These extreme inequalities inhibit people's capacity and productivity. They breed apathy and despair, bad governance and continuing conflicts and instability, for example, over 80% of the Nigerian oil and gas resources accrues only to 1 percent of the few privileged Nigerians. This shows that Nigeria is one of the most unequal states in the world. Furthermore, the pervasiveness of poverty, in depth and breadth, in Nigeria is very frightening. The statistics on poverty in Nigeria, from whichever sources, is quite disheartening. In absolute number, the poor in Nigeria has increased from 18 million in 1980 to 67 million in 1999 and about 80 million in 2004. In percentage terms, it has moved from 43% in 1992 to 66% in 1997 and at least 70% in 2002 (Zenith Economic Quarterly, September, 2007).

The incidents of poverty in Nigeria may manifest in many forms. For example, lack of access to basic needs or services to the vast majority of people, inadequate access to productive resources like education, enhanced working skills, socio-economic capacity and political rights to participate in decision-making affecting people's conditions of life. Poverty may also manifest in weaknesses and inadequacies of infrastructures, technology and credit facilities to the largest number of people, complete deprivation or exclusion of the vast majority of people from participating in socio-economic and democratization processes. Thus, the nature and trends of incontrovertible poverty in Nigeria is on the increase and can be seen as essentially

structural or chronic with prolong and persistent or permanent deprivation of productive resources and skills for self-expression and self-actualization. Great majority of people are therefore materially, psychologically disabled and permanently engendered. With the nearly forty poverty-related programs introduced in Nigeria some twenty years ago, none has actually worked and brought smiles on the face of the poor to relieve them of chronic poverty (Schraeder 2004).

Table 5: Poverty Head Count in Nigeria 1980-1996

Year	Poverty Incidence (%)	Est. Pop (million)	Pop in Poverty (million)
1980	28.1	65	18.3
1985	46.3	75	34.7
1992	42.7	91.5	39.1
1996	65.6	102.3	67.1

Source: FOS, Poverty Trends in Nigeria, 1996, Adapted from Jega and Wakili (eds) 2002

Between 1980 and 1996, for example, the trends of structural poverty in Nigeria recoded soaring incidence of pathetic situation as exhibited in table 5. It is Paradoxical to note that the trend has even gone worse during the democratic era of 1999 to 2007, when the nation experienced, more than any period of its history, unprecedented revenues from oil despite all the seeming anti-poverty, anti-corruption policies, strategies and programs. Thus, with rising inflation, socio-economic and political instability, insecurity, soaring unemployment, indecent of poverty is unparalleled and unprecedented. Within the same period (1980 - 1996) however, the distribution of population according to poverty status of Nigerians pertinence in core poverty areas, had an astronomical increase throughout the period (FOS, Poverty profile in Nigeria, 1980-1996) in both the rural and urban habitats. With regard to spatial incidence of poverty in Nigeria, it can be observed that table 6 shows much severer trends in the rural areas, which are indeed worsening by leaps and bounds.

Table 6: Spatial Incidence of Poverty in Nigeria 1980-96

Year	Urban	Rural
1980	17.2	28.3
1985	37.8	51.4
1992	37.5	46.0
1996	58.2	69.8

Source: FOS, Poverty Trends in Nigeria, 1996, Adapted from Jega and Wakili 2002

All the previous and current government efforts at alleviating poverty in the country came under different slogans with enormous human, institutional and material resources used but have woefully failed to resolve poverty. On the contrary, they all exacerbate the incidence of structural poverty amongst Nigerians in both the urban and rural areas. The State is of course the greatest culprit in the woeful failures of poverty eradication programs. The State however does not seem to be drawing vicissitudes or lessons from previous government policies and failures. The National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) of the Obasanjo regime consists of Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RID), Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS) and National Resources Development

and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS) among its focal areas of emphasis. It should be noted that instead of empowering the youth, they have been enhanced, by the prevailing situation, to be more restive, militant and engage in all forms of criminality due to non-availability of jobs.

Again rural areas are left to wither away and suffer from non-provision of infrastructural facilities which provokes rural-urban migrations and soaring insecurity in both the rural and urban habitats. The unprecedented and abysmal provision of social welfare services is a norm rather than exception. Furthermore, the inefficient utilization, conservation and development of abundant natural resources in Nigeria have made NAPEP a costly exercise in futility.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been shown and argued that there are serious crises in both the rural and urban habitats of the Nigerian society, which have continued to assume wider dimensions and implications. Part of the crises centres on the food production and food shortage, persistent poverty and socio-economic disparity which, more often than not, engineers the provocative rural-urban migration and the consequences thereof. However, the state intervention adds further impetus to the worsening situation as the agricultural pursuits, seen largely as rural, have nevertheless turned out to be more and more unbearable and unaffordable by the rural peasantry, thus making the society completely vulnerable to food deficit.

The challenge of urbanization inevitably challenges the rural question. Thus, as urban settlements and associated problems expand, rural conditions correspondingly worsen since urban areas pull out rural residents to migrate for the seeming better opportunities. With the state policies provoking the ruralities to off-root their places they no doubt raise the problems of security in both the rural settlements in all its manifestations. It must be stressed that any design and strategy to improve the urban condition must correspond with similar design and strategy to improve the rural areas in order to stamp out the prevalence of rural-urban migration. In other words, tackling the issues of sustainable development, infrastructural distributions are crucial in ameliorating the rural drift.

While rural infrastructures in Nigeria are abysmal and dismal, the disparities in the provision of such amenities have enabled rural residents to continue to move en-masse into the urban centres; a situation that has transformed and depleted rural agricultural productivity with soaring food prices and thus turning rural development policy and strategy into a colossal exercise in futility. To curtail further rural disruptions, basic needs must be provided and communities directly involved must participate in the affairs that affect them. Hence, the neglect of rural environment must be reversed in order to ensure a sustainable rural development as well as the overall national development. Thus, special development strategies for the rural and urban habitats that are struck by social, economic and political poverty must be worked out, through investing in the poor to give high rate of return by empowering

them in the social, economic and political realm that would directly contribute aggregate growth and productivity in the country. An all-round war to fight corruption in Nigeria must be mounted.

With the rural society trapped within the confluence of the IMF-World Bank structural policies, the role of Community Development Associations in overturning the status quo should be pursued in order to lessen the problems associated with the population and housing pressure in the cities characterized with poor, squalor and inhabitable housing condition. The progress recorded in Nigeria with regard to providing housing settlements has rapidly degenerated as the houses already built by the government have been sold out to a few in disregard of the explosive homeless and under-privilege population. This policy has far reaching consequences on land, shelter, water, transport and other socio-economic issues also. Thus shelter and settlement problems with food production and inadequate infrastructures have become elusive to most Nigerians. The poverty content in such circumstances has become the motive force and trend in rural depletion.

REFERECNES

- Abbass, I. M.** (1993). The challenge of rural development in a deregulated economy. A Paper presented at a national seminar on rural development resources in a deregulated economy organized by New Nigerian Newspapers in Collaboration with Arthor Green Consultants, Shiroro Hotel Minna, 10-12 February, 1993.
- Abbass, I. M.** (1994). The operation and maintenance of rural infrastructure for a sustainable integrated rural development in Nigeria" paper prepared for a National Symposium on Water Resources and Rural Development organized by the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Rural Development, Central Hotel, Kano, 4th - 11th June, 1994.
- Abbass, I. M.**(1997). The Political Economy of Rural Development in Nigeria. A Study of Rural Zaria, 1960-1995. Unpublished PhD dissertation, ABU Zaria.
- Adedeji, A. and Rowland, L.** (eds) (1973). Management Problems of Rapid Urbanization in Nigeria, Unife Press.
- Ajeagbu, H.I.** (1976). Urban and Rural Development in Nigeria Heinemann Educational books, London.
- Bonat, Z. A. and Abdullahi, Y. A.** (1989). World Bank, IMF and Nigeria's agricultural and Rural Economy cf. Bode Onimale, The IMF, The World Bank and The African Debt, Zed Books London.
- Fayemi, K. and Igbuzor, O.** (eds) (2005). Poverty Eradication in Nigeria: Perspectives on a participatory and Pro-poor Approach, Centre for Democracy and Development, Abuja.
- Gadd, P.** (1976). *The Ecology of Urbanization and Industrialization*. London: Macmillan.
- Jamal, V. and Weeks, J.** (1993). Africa Misunderstood, Macmillan, London.
- Jega, A. M. 1, Wakili, H.**(eds) (2002). The Poverty Eradication Programme in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects Benchmark Publishers, Kano
- Karl, T. L.** (1997). The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Martinussen, J.** (1988). *Society, State & Market: A Guide to Competing Theories of Development*, Ibadan: Zed Books
- Mortimore, M. J.** (1989) Adapting to Drought: Farmers, Famines and Desertification in West Africa, OUP, London.

- Nigeria** (1975). Third National Development Plan 1975 - 80, Government Printer, Lagos.
- Mortimore, M. J.** (1981). Guidelines for the Fourth National Plan 1981 - 84, Government Printer, Lagos
- Mortimore, M. J.** (1984). Views and Comments of the Federal Military Government on the findings and Recommendations of the Committee on Renew of Local Government in Nigeria.
- Mortimore, M. J.** (1987). Federal Office of Statistics Labor Force Sample Survey Report 1966 - 1987, Government Printer, Kaduna.
- Mortimore, M. J.** (1996). Federal Office of Statistics, Poverty Trends in Nigeria, Government Printer Jega, A. & Wakili (eds) 2002.
- Mortimore, M. J.** (1997). Federal Office of Statistics, Poverty Profile in Nigeria 1980 - 1996 Government Printer Abuja.
- Mortimore, M. J.** (2006). List of Nigerian States by Population - Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/list_of_Nigeria_states_by_population."
- Puttaswamaiah, K.** (ed) (1990) *Poverty and Rural Development: Planners, Peasants and poverty*. New Delhi: Oxford & IBH,
- Sandbrook, R.** (1982) *The Politics of Basic Needs: Urban Aspects of Assaulting Poverty in Africa* London: Heinemann.
- Saliu, H. Jimoh, I. H. Yusuf, N. and Ojo, E. O.** (eds) (2008). *Perspectives on Nation-Building and Development in Nigeria; Political and Legal Issues*. Concept Publications, Lagos.
- Schraeder, P. J.** (2004). *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation*. Australia: Thomas Wadsworth,
- Tinker, I.** (1988) Feeding Megacities - A Worldwide Viewpoint cf: *Urban Age - The Global City*, Magazine Winter, USA.
- Watts, M.** (1983) *State, Oil and Agriculture in Nigeria*. California University Press, USA.
- Zenith Economic Quarterly** September (2007). *Economy; Conquering Poverty, Enthroning Prosperity*, Zenith Bank Publication, Lagos.