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Rural Development System in Nigeria and the Veering Locus from China's Successful Strategies

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Abstract

Development of the rural areas calls for the provision of basic infrastructure and social amenities with a view to enhancing the quality of life in the environments. Attainment of rural development, however, depends on pragmatic and conscientious planning, and the political-will to have the development plans effectively implemented. The essentiality of these actions is highly reflected in the revolutionary transformation of China's rural system, with the resultant rapid economic growth and poverty reduction in the country, put at 8–9% per annum. Nigeria though had transformation-oriented rural development programs that are similar to those of China, none of the programs had visible or sustainable impacts in the country's rural life. A critical analysis of the causal failure of Nigeria's rural development programs in relation to the recorded successes in China shows that implementations of Nigeria's rural development programs veered from the locus of the political-will that forms the strength of the recorded successes by China. Rethinking the paradigm of rural development in Nigeria unequivocally calls for modeling the country's rural program implementations alongside the strength of the political-will adopted by China for attainment of the much desired rural transformation and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: rural life situation in China and Nigeria, pro-rural development policies, political-will for policy implementation, impact of rural programs, veering locus in Nigeria

1. Introduction

Rural areas remain a dominant landscape in most countries, given that the general populace heavily depends on the areas for food and economic development (International Fund for Agricultural Development [1]). Improved productivity and quality of living by rural residents, however dependent on the social supports available to them in persons and/or to their environment [2]. Unfortunately, rural areas, especially in developing countries, have not been given the desired social support for quality living and transformational development. Much of the infrastructure for the national development agenda and service provisions have largely been concentrated in the urban areas leading to an imbalance in the development drive between the two areas [3, 4]. The resultant effects of this include the poor living condition

of the rural areas, and the drive for rural-urban migration as an option of a social safety net [5, 6]. Such migration has in turn brought about congestion of the urban areas with heavy pressure on the available infrastructure and social amenities in the areas [7–9]. The need to avert this situation puts the drive for rural development in the forefront of national development across the globe. Rural development drive is more essential to sub-Saharan Africa, where life in the areas is highly demeaning due to little or no social supports for the rural areas and the residents.

Rural development construes a distinct approach to improving the living condition or fostering the socio-economic change in rural areas [10, 11]. It usually entails the creation of enabling environment such that residents of the areas could explore the environment for satisfaction of their basic needs of life, improve their economies and quality of life [12]. The bedrock to achieving this is the provision of functional infrastructure and social amenities like good roads, electric power supply, telecommunication network, pipe born water, and institutional support services for enhanced productivity and improved living conditions [13, 14]. Attainment of this fit however depends on putting the right policies and institutes in place at both the national and international levels. Without this, the globalization drives and its attendant mutual benefits would not only bypass the poor countries but would as well harm their social and economic development [15]. Consequently, development practitioners, either as governmental or non-governmental organizations at national and international levels, have begun working at formulating and implementing pro-rural policies that would not just bring about transformational development of the rural systems but have rural lives integrated in the globalization drive. A number of countries, with similar economic status with Nigeria many decades ago, particularly the Asian and Pacific countries, had conscientiously embarked on agricultural development programs, before the turn of the twenty-first century, as an approach to developing their rural system [16–20].

2. Rural development approaches in Nigeria and China: the agricultural dimension

In view of the fact that agriculture constitutes the dominant economic base of the rural areas, rural development schemes and programs have been designed around the development of agriculture with the hope that such development would enhance productivity and translate to a better living condition arising from improved income generation from sales of increased agro-produce. In Nigeria for instance, a number of agriculture development programs were put in place across the phases of national development. Between the 1970s and 1980s is the enactment of agricultural programs, such as the National Accelerated Food Production Program (NAFPP), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution, Agricultural Development Program (ADP), and recently from 2012 is Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA). Similarly, the Chinese rural reform, which has experienced great development in today's world, began with agriculture owing to the fact that majority of the rural China largely depends on agriculture as means of livelihood. Among the enacted agricultural programs by the Chinese rural development, policy include decentralization of agricultural production, green revolution, commodity-based production, and liberalization of the agricultural market [21, 22].

The development of agriculture rests on the holistic development of rural areas [14]. For increased production or yield of staple foods, it requires that the rural poor have to legally secure entitlements to assets such as land, water, and technology,

access to markets and microfinance, and opportunity to participate in decentralized resource management [6, 11]. Attainment of increased rice productivity, but at more than a 600 million tons per year in today's global economy, was based on the enactment of a holistic rural development strategy that ensures the provision of necessary agro-support services alongside the integration of rural infrastructure. The underlying rural development programs that achieved the success of increased agricultural productivity in China include household responsibility schemes, non-farm reforms, rural infrastructure development, integration of micro-finances, and anti-poverty schemes [23, 24].

In the same vein, Nigeria equally launched rural-life-oriented schemes among which are Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure, River-Basin Development, National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), National Agricultural Insurance Corporation (NAIC), and Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS). Better Life for Rural Dwellers (BETTER LIFE), Family Support Program (FSP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), National Rural Roads Development Fund (NRRDF), Rural Banking Scheme (RBS), Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), Family Economic Empowerment Program (FEAP), Universal Basic Education (UBE), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS). With these institutionalized rural-based development programs in China and Nigeria, the question at hand is: what impact did the enacted agricultural and rural development programs have on the rural system? To provide a convincing answer to this question, it becomes essential to take an in-depth examination of the underlying principles of the development programs and the implementation strategies.

3. China's rural situation and the reform programs

3.1 The Chinese pre-reformed rural systems

Before now, the Chinese rural system was largely characterized by poor infrastructural development and poor living condition. According to Yupeng [25]; Ahluwalia [26]; Long et al. [27]; Su et al. [28], China's rural environment is occupied by about 55% of the Chinese population with the majority of them relying on agriculture as the main means of livelihood. The rural production performance was however deficient to the extent that the Chinese agricultural growth was just about 2.5% [19]. As of the 1970s, the country's Gross Domestic Products (GDP) was below that of the sub-Saharan Africa, which was put at \$1071 [17]. Owing to poor infrastructural development and institutional support services, the Chinese life expectancy was 62 years; and the illiteracy level was as much as 49% [19]. With this situation, the country was classified among the third world countries whose economies were agriculture-based and largely characterized by poor social and economic development.

An attempt to revert this disparaging life condition in rural china stimulates the enactment of a number of rural development programs among which are the household responsibility schemes, non-farm reforms, green revolution, rural infrastructure development, integration of micro-finances, and anti-poverty schemes. The programs were to care for the vulnerable groups that may not be directly benefited by other urban-based transformation programs [19]. The success of these development programs however rests on the conscientious implementation of the programs in line with the underlying principles guiding the purpose of each of the programs. The Chinese rural reform programs thus take the following guiding principles:

3.1.1 Human development

This reform agenda centered on human development and as such, the reform policies were designed to take care of the impoverished groups and ensure wealth creation for all. In the light of this, the reform guidelines call for integration of the urban, rural, regional and domestic development with openness to the outside world in order to bring about the system's socio-economic and human development. In the light of this, key poverty-stricken counties were identified and reached out to with support services. In this regard, the poor farm families, or at least one person from a household, were trained on non-agricultural economies the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation. In view of this, about 90% of the trained peasant farmers found non-agricultural employment as an alternative or additional means of livelihood is greatly supported [23].

3.1.2 Social mobilization of stakeholders for reforms

In an attempt to ensure a far-reaching effect of the human development programs, steps were taken to mobilize and organize people from all walks of life to join in the development and construction of the poverty alleviation programs. In this regard, provinces, prefectures, and counties were organized under the state, government organs, and large state firms to support the poor. In the same vein, private firms were encouraged to invest in impoverished areas and NGOs sponsor children in poor households on compulsory basic education; poor mothers were given support services by the Chinese Population Foundation, and the Women Federation worked at increasing women's income. In addition, the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty certified up to 260 industrialized enterprises to participate in poverty reduction, and by this, about 3 million impoverished households and 12 million poor people were supported for economic growth.

3.1.3 Spirited self-reliant efforts

This reform approach aimed at effecting change on the poor peoples' attitude from dependence on external supports to self-reliance and hard work such that they could improve their basic production and overcome the impediments of poverty for the attainment of better living conditions. The emphasis here is on the stimulation of the impoverished people's initiative to participate in the design and implementation of poverty alleviation plans. This forms the basis for the initiation of the household responsibility system approach as a tool for the transformational development of the Chinese rural system. Under this approach, the rural households were empowered to decide what and how many farms enterprise(s) to produce with greater control over the land and resources for their farm enterprise production.

3.1.4 Employed integrated development approach

For the social and economic development of the rural system, the Chinese authority embarked on an integrated approach whereby poverty alleviation programs were integrated in science, education, health, and infrastructure for overall improvement of the impoverished people's capabilities. In the light of this, a National Poor Regions Compulsory Education Project was put in place to provide and universalize a nine-year compulsory education and illiteracy eradication among the middle-aged and young people. In this regard, the central finance appropriated special funds to support compulsory education and rebuild and expand the rural junior high school, provide free textbooks, subsidize the pay of teachers and

administrative staff in the poverty-stricken regions. In the area of healthcare, medical reliefs were administered to the poor households to treat and prevent illnesses, and the poor households were educated and encouraged to decrease their births through family planning.

3.1.5 Oriented economic development

Economic development of the rural system and the country as a whole strongly depends on agriculture, particularly food and industrial development. In view of this, the Chinese government explored and exploited the agricultural sector, not just for poverty alleviation of the rural system, but also for the industrial and economic growth of the country. This feat was achieved through the structural adjustment of agriculture to bring about agricultural diversification, under which the Chinese economy shifted from staple food production to high-value agricultural products such as fruits, vegetables, milk and milk product, meat, egg, and fish, to meet the human's changing consumption pattern and the rising demand for products at both the national and international level.

3.1.6 Leadership and governance

For the attainment of sustained, healthy, and stable economic development, and prevention of marginalization of the impoverished people, the Chinese government strictly adhered to the concept of rapid economic development that is human-oriented. As further indicated by Liu [23], the policy of supporting impoverished groups and achieving wealth for all is an unswerving tenet to the Chinese government. With the political-will, strong sense of commitment, and genuine spirit of human development, the Chinese government at all levels did not only incorporate poverty alleviation programs into their overall economic and social development strategies but as well increased budgetary allocations for meeting the poverty alleviation goal. In this regard was the establishment of supporting policies and formidable organizations and leadership to fulfill the set agenda of poverty alleviation and economic growth of the poor or impoverished. Also established were poverty alleviation administrative structures at the national, provincial, prefecture, and county levels for the organization and coordination of the national and local poverty alleviation and development. For effective implementation and assured benefits of the poverty alleviation programs, the key poverty-stricken counties were identified and reached out to through the poverty administrative structures.

4. Impact of the Chinese reform agenda on socio-economic wellbeing of the rural system

Based on China's rural reform programs, the country is known to have transcended the economies of all its contemporary developing countries, rising to become the second-largest global economy after the United States [17]. In the same vein, Xiaohua [29] submit that China has not only made great advances in its agricultural and rural development dives since the country began its reform in 1978 but has been able to feed its population of 1.3 billion and contributed to international agricultural development and food security. This remarkable achievement began with increased productivity from 2.6 to 7.1% per annum from 1978 till date. According to von Braun [19], China's grain production greatly increased over eight consecutive years reaching 571.2 million tons in 2011, and now to more than a 140.5 million tons. Arising from this exponential growth in agriculture, rural people

found their incomes rising by 15% per annum between 1978 and 1984. In the same vein, Jiabao [30] pointed out that rural net per capita income has been on a steady increase over several years and reached about 6900 Yuan in 2011.

The success of the early agriculture-led reforms, as indicated by Gulati [17], also brought about increased demand for non-agricultural goods thereby leading to the release of a surplus of labor and capital into the rural nonfarm sector. In this wise, the revamped agriculture opened up the opportunity for the development of small-scale food-processing plants, machinery repair shops, and increasingly more modern and technology-intensive industries to meet the growing demand of the well-off farmers for production and post-harvest handling support services, and creation of job opportunities for employment of millions of people whose labor were no longer needed on farms [19]. As the rural nonfarm economy thrived, it not only provided farmers and rural areas with added opportunities for expanded investment outside agriculture and its allied sectors but also put pressures on the reform of the urban economy thereby triggering macroeconomic reforms and adoption of measures, such as the special economic zones, to increase foreign investment. Consequently, the contribution of the nonfarm sector to Chinese GDP moved from almost none back in 1952 to about one-third as of today.

Other impact of the transformed agriculture in China is the breath-taking reduction of poverty, from 33% of the population in 1978 to 3% in 2001 [17]. This decline was most substantial in the first phase of the reform when agricultural GDP grew at 7.1% per annum and rural poverty dropped from 33 to 15% within the first 6 years (1978–1984). And thereafter, systematic large scale poverty and development by the Chinese government from the mid-1980s brought about a great reduction in the number of impoverished people without enough food and clothing from 250 million in 1978 to 26.1 million in 2004, with the share of the population living in poverty falling from 30 to 2.8% [23]. The accompanying provision of public services as an important means of narrowing the gap between rural and urban areas led to the provision of improved infrastructure, construction, and upgrade of rural roads, provision of potable water for rural dwellers, repair of dilapidated houses, provision of education and medical services for the rural dwellers [30]. Investment in the non-farm sector equally boosts the development of small-scale food processing plants, machinery repair shops, and modern technology-driven industries to support the country's agricultural growth. The nonfarm reforms thus brought about the employment of millions of people, especially those whose labor was no longer needed on the farms, contributing about one-third of the country's GDP. The resultant effects of these approaches, as pointed out by Zhang et al. [31]; Xu and Tan [32], were tremendous changes in the rural population, their lifestyles and culture, community organization, employment, and industrial structures. In view of these provisions, Guoxiang [33] expresses that the gap between rural and urban incomes and livelihood status is decreasing.

5. Rural situation in Nigeria and the reform programs

Rural environments in Nigeria, as in most other developing and/or sub-Saharan African countries, is largely characterized by poor living condition arising from the provision of little or no infrastructure and social amenities that are essential to the attainment of quality life. As expressed by Muoghalu [34]; Usman [35], rural life in Nigeria is greatly characterized by the vicious cycle of poverty; poor infrastructure, high level of illiteracy, low social interaction, and local politics, and little or no rural-urban migration. With this situation, it is extremely difficult for the rural

dwellers, most of whom are farm families with agriculture as their primary means of livelihood, to be economically productive or become integrated in agricultural markets. According to Okuneye [36], Nigerian agriculture, which contributes about 50.2% of the country's GDP between 1960 and 1970, has gradually declined to about 20% in the 1980s, and to less than 5% in the 1990s [37]. The need to avert the poor living and economic condition of the rural environment underscore the enactment of a number of rural development policies and programs at one time or the other by the successive governmental regimes in the country. Among the enacted agricultural and rural development programs in Nigeria were:

5.1 Agricultural development programs

Among the popularized agricultural programs in Nigeria, as highlighted by Adeola and Oluwafemi [38], include National Accelerated Food Production Program (NAFPP), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution, and National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA). The programs aimed at ensuring increased food production for both home consumption and exportation for international marketing. In view of this, the NAFPP put up in 1973, had its focus on increased production of food crops for assured food security. Integrated in the program were tractor and machinery distribution services and provision of research-based technologies or improved packages. The OFN, put in place in 1976, was to popularize agriculture for the practice among the citizens in general as a way to ensure increased food availability and to reduce food expenditure at the household levels. The Green Revolution adopted in 1980 was patterned after Asian success stories on the integration of the Green of Revolution concept in their agricultural development programs with the aim of effecting large-scale agricultural production system in Nigeria.

5.2 Agricultural support service

In an attempt to enhance and ensure attainment of developed agriculture in the country were integration of support services such as Agricultural Development Programs (ADP) and River-Basin Development Authority (RBDA) nationwide. The ADP, developed in 1975, was adopted to provide extension service delivery to the farmers, drawing innovative and technical information from the research outputs to guide the farmers on technicalities of farm practices [39, 40]. In view of this, a network of research-extension-farmer-input linkage systems was put in place to ensure that research; extension, and input service delivery are readily available to the farmers for improved productivity. The RBDA, set up in 1976, functions to provide irrigation service with a view to ensuring that farmers are in production all year round or save them from dependence on the unpredictable rainfall pattern in the country [41, 42].

5.3 Rural infrastructure development program

In an attempt to address the challenge of the poor state of infrastructure in the rural areas, which is believed to be crucial to the attainment of agricultural development, was the institution of the Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DIFRRI) and Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS) in 1986 [43]. The scheme functions on the mandate of opening up rural areas through the development of feeder roads, rural electrification, and water resources development through well and/or borehole drilling, construction of schools, and health centers.

5.4 Agricultural-based financial support services

In order to provide financial back up for the farmers as capital or investment base Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS), Nigerian Agricultural Credit Bank (NACB), Peoples Bank of Nigeria (PBS), and National Agricultural Insurance Corporation (NAIC) were institutionalized across the country. As it were with China's financial provision under its integrated development programs, the Nigerian agro-based financial institutions were put in place to provide financial service to the farmers for enhancement of their production capacity and resource acquisition, and insurance of their farm enterprises against possible agro-based disaster in terms of crop failure, flooding and crop destruction by an infestation of pests and diseases.

5.5 Structural adjustment program

In an attempt to ensure self-reliance and discourage heavy dependence on foreign donors, the nation embarked on Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). The program, which though is an economic policy promoted by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the early 1980s for developing countries, aimed at ensuring adjustment of the social and economic structures of Nigeria from the narrow mindset of heavy dependence on oil and importation of goods and services to diversification into other resource exploitation and inward development of the nation's social and economic wellbeing. In essence, SAP, as indicated by Kwanashie, Ajilima, and Garba [44], was designed to induce structural and institutional changes necessary to reorganize the productive structure of the economy so that self-sustaining growth could be attained. The scheme was meant to stimulate and ensure that rural households were empowered to decide what and how much farm enterprise(s) to produce with greater control over the land and resources for their farm enterprise production.

5.6 Mass mobilization for socio-economic development

Attainment of national development, as globally acknowledged, is certainly beyond individuals' efforts thus, the need for mobilization of stakeholders in development. This action was enacted in form of Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) by the Federal Government of Nigeria whereby stakeholders in development were mobilized for organization and taken of actions on development and economic recovery of the nation. This entails the integration of private entities in partnership with the Government to encourage investment for employment generation and economic development in a wider spectrum of both rural and urban coverage.

5.7 Human capacity development and empowerment scheme

The need for human capacity development for enhanced skill development and empowerment for increased productivity and quality life were the establishment of human development schemes such as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Universal Basic Education (UBE), and Primary Healthcare Services (PHS). The NDE had the function of effecting human capacity development in terms of entrepreneurial training for skill acquisition on goods and service production such that the trained individuals become gainfully employed by starting off a business on what such ones were trained. Such training in some cases were agro-based especially for the non-farm family-oriented person; and in most cases, on non-agro

entrepreneurs. The UBE on the other hand functions to provide basic elementary education for the literacy development of Nigerians across the rural and urban areas. The program thus emphasizes child or children of school-age enrolment in primary schools for basic education. Part of human development capacity is the attainment of good health status and in view of this was the enactment of the PHS to provide basic health service to families and especially for children under age five. The commonly provided health services for children include child immunization against polio, measles; and for mothers are child delivery, malaria, and tuberculosis treatment.

5.8 Poverty alleviation programs

In view of the need for eradication or reduction of the poverty level of rural China was the enactment of integrated anti-poverty programs. In the same manner, was the establishment of anti-poverty programs for the Nigerian rural and urban system. The programs include Better Life for Rural Dwellers (BLRD), Family Support Program (FSP), National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), Family Economic Empowerment Program (FEAP). These programs provide the rural poor and other vulnerable groups with either agro-based or non-agro-based employment for income generation satisfaction of their basic needs of life. Integrated in the anti-poverty programs were training for skill acquisition and provision of entrepreneurial production tools such as sewing machines, hair driers, refrigerators, to start a business thereby generating income to make a living. Alongside this were provisions of vehicles—which take the form of taxi cabs or commercial busses, motorcycles, and tricycles for transportation services for some individuals.

5.9 Rural development funds

In an attempt to financially support the enacted programs came to the institutionalization of financial institutions, namely the National Rural Roads Development Fund (NRRDF), Rural Banking Scheme (RBS), and Community Banks—now Micro Finance Banks. These institutions had the mandate of providing financial backup for effective implementation of development programs, particularly support for the rural and small-scale entrepreneurs that might key into the enacted programs.

6. Impact of the Nigerian rural development approaches in relation to China's rural systems

Given the background information into the Nigerian rural system and the country's rural development programs, the expectation is to have a rural environment with social amenities and infrastructure that supports a better living conditions in the areas and increased agricultural productivity. Although the rural development programs at the onset had a measure of impacts on the rural economy and the nation at large, such impacts had proven to be temporary as the Nigerian rural situation remains in a sordid state [45]. The environment has either remained the same as it were at the inception of the enacted programs for its development or has further been plunged into poorer conditions. The areas still lacked access roads thereby making mobility between communities or farms, extremely difficult for the rural dwellers, and as well much difficult to transport farm produce from the farms to markets. With the high perishability of agricultural produce, non-provision of post-harvest storage facilities and poor marketing system often result in great losses

of what is strenuously produced by the farmers. To avoid maximum losses, most farmers had to sell their produce at give-away prices thereby making their ventures unprofitable with attendant impoverished living status. Water is essential to life and comfortable living; lack of potable water sources has continued to hinder good sanitation practice and health conditions of the rural dwellers.

Human capacity development of rural dwellers remained poor as they lacked access to good education and training for intellectual development. Few available primary and post-primary schools are poorly equipped and at a far distance to most the rural communities. With a poor transportation system for mobility, it becomes extremely difficult for the school-age children to attend schools and as well difficult to acquire quality education due to inadequate teachers and lack of quality and adequate teaching and learning facilities in the schools. Similarly, is a lack of health facilities for quality and affordable healthcare of the rural dwellers. For this reason, rural dwellers largely relied on traditional healthcare, using herbs for healthy living conditions. Where the taken herbs could not address the encountered ill health, the implication is the hindrance of production functions and social and economic performance.

In view of this situation, Nigeria's rural areas are highly detractive for settlement and social engagement; and as such, rural dwellers, particularly the youths, readily desire to migrate to the urban areas for settlement. As indicated by Olayiwola and Adeleye [46], most development programs hardly trickled to the Nigerian rural areas; and where it does, it is usually of little and temporary benefits to the rural dwellers. Consequently, the country's rural areas remained poverty-stricken with no alternative job opportunities to agriculture. The situation is so bad that most rural families find it hard to meet the basic needs and other essentialities of life, which range across food security, responsive health management, acquisition of protective shelter, welfare development, and productivity of the individual World Bank [47–53]. In line with this, Okafor [54], succinctly expressed that, the rural system in Nigeria, like in many of the third world countries, has been greatly neglected. In view of these, the questions at hand are: why do the enacted rural development programs in Nigeria fail to achieve the expected goal of rural transformation? Are the programs inappropriate or poorly implemented? Are there lessons that could be learned from China's development strategies? Arriving at satisfactory answers to these questions calls for in-depth review and critical analysis of technical issues that underlay the success stories of China's rural development systems and the failure of Nigeria's situation.

7. Rural development programs implementation in Nigeria and the veering locus from China's success story

A critical look at the Nigerian rural situation in relation to the pre-reform rural situation in China shows the same trend of poor living conditions in both countries' rural areas with agriculture as the dominant means of livelihood. In an attempt to address the rural challenges, multidimensional rural development programs were separately developed and deployed by both countries but differently implemented. A side-by-side comparison of the programs between Nigeria and China's rural development programs shows strong and correlated similarities between the two countries. A careful look at the enacted rural development programs by the Chinese system shows a simultaneously developed and implemented multiple programs. This implies that a multidimensional or integrated approach [54], is essential to addressing the multi-dimension social and economic challenges confronting the rural environment. While the agricultural development programs set the pace for

increased farm enterprise productivity, the non-agriculture or social development programs not only enhanced the quality of rural life but also aided agricultural productivity [19, 23]. Similarly, the multiple rural development programs in Nigeria are meant to enhance economic productivity, income generation, and quality of life, through health care, nutrition, and education of the rural people. However, the much-desired rural transformation has failed to materialize in Nigeria's context [55, 56]. If the rural development programs by Nigeria and China were similar, why then was the failure in Nigeria against the Chinese' success story? Critical examination of the implementation of the enacted rural development programs in the two countries shows the veering locus in the Nigerian mode of program implementation from that of China; and are thus reflected as:

7.1 Isolated program development

In as much as rural development requires a multidimensional approach, the programs have to be interconnected for synergic goal accomplishment. The multiple rural development programs in Nigeria were rather developed and implemented in isolation of one another rather than collectively coordinated. This is large because each of the rural development programs in Nigeria came up at different times under different governmental regimes to reflect the “programs and policies of the individuals occupying the seat of governance” or often launched to “reflect their regime” and not necessarily in the interest of national development [57]. This submission is underscored by the fact every rural or development programme by outgone governments is often jettisoned and replaced by a new one. This is not the case with China as the country conscientiously developed multiple rural-oriented programs and collectively coordinated for rural and national development. According to Liu [23], China in its pursuit of poverty alleviation and development programs charted a suitable path through agricultural and non-agricultural programs that take the form of household responsibility system, liberalized agricultural product markets and prices, a market-oriented reform, rural education, and rural tax and fee reform [58]. Concurrent coordination of these programs, as highlighted by Lin [59], makes the agricultural program center on moving the agriculture from collective farms to individual household farms and moderation of grain supply; poverty alleviation program address rural income stagnation, rural and urban income disparity, and between the prosperous coastal areas and the hinterlands.

7.2 Lack of political-will

The enviable transformational development of the Chinese rural system certainly did not come by chance, but by concerted efforts and required political-will to have the planned programs implemented accordingly [17, 30, 33]. According to Zhang and Guoqiang [58], the Chinese government policy for rural development was based on the principle of “give more, take less and liberalization”. Expatriating on this, Liu [23] expresses that the policy of supporting impoverished groups and achieving wealth for all, and to keep a stable and healthy living is an unswerving tenet to the Chinese government. This is a major problem in program implementation in Nigeria. Programs and policy implementations are never backed with the required political-will thereby botching transformative potentials of any enacted rural development programs. Rather than conscientiously implements development programs for national development, enacted programs are seen as an opportunity for self-enrichment—taking more and more from the system to impoverish the citizens, particularly the rural dwellers, instead of making it “give more, take less and liberalization” as done by the Chinese government. This situation made Nigeria

fits Laah et al. [60] submission that agricultural policies of many countries in today's world are not well-aligned with stated government objectives of increasing agricultural productivity improvement of farm household well-being.

7.3 Lack of investment in rural infrastructure

The exposition of the Nigerian government's lack of commitment to rural development is further underscored by the lack of investment in rural infrastructure and social amenities. Unlike massive investment drives on rural infrastructure by the Chinese government, hardly could any substantive investment in rural infrastructure be seen in Nigeria. According to Zhang and Guoqiang [58], alongside budgetary expenditure of RMB 339.7 billion on agriculture, the central government allocated as much as RMB 53 billion as rural construction fund rural education, healthcare improvement of rural living, and production conditions. The Nigerian government however veered in this respect with no commitment to investing in rural infrastructure. Although there are claims of budgeting huge sums of money for rural development by the Nigerian governments, there is little or nothing on the ground to prove the claims as rural communities in the country grossly lacked infrastructure and social amenities to support quality living, and as well lacked social support services for improved production and diversification of both agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises.

7.4 Lack of mobilization and social participation

Attainment of rural development in China was by collective efforts of all relevant sectors, with each sector fulfilling specific roles in line with the development agenda. According to Liu [23], the Chinese government took a number of steps to mobilize and organize people in all walks of life to join the development and construction efforts in poverty-stricken regions—an approach that reflects the socialist system. The Nigerian rural development system veered in this regard by failing to mobilize relevant sectors, particularly the local fabricators that are crucial to enhancing the farmers' production capacity through the production of motorized farm implements and post-harvest handling machines. On this note, the initially recorded increased agricultural productivity could not be sustained as farm produce could not be preserved to guarantee future supply for the market.

7.5 Lack of genuine empowerment of rural people for self-help

Attainment of rural development is not solely by governmental or external interventions, but also by the motivation of the rural dwellers for self-help through empowerment. In the light of this, the Chinese rural development strategy centered on encouraging the rural poor to become creative, and through self-help, improve their living condition. As expressed by Liu [23], the emphasis was on respecting impoverished people and stimulating their initiative to participate in designing and implementing the poverty alleviation plans. In the light of this, essential assistance from the Chinese government and all other stakeholders in rural development made the rural dwellers overcome the common attitude of "wait, depend on, and ask" to develop a spirit of self-reliance and hard work. With these spirited efforts, rural China outpaced its poverty status for better living conditions. Nigeria's rural development programs greatly veered in this context as the rural dwellers are hardly carried along or integrated in the design and implementation of development programs. Likewise, the rural dwellers are hardly given essential support, in terms of capacity training on production and value addition, for improved productivity

or living condition, either by government or non-governmental organizations. The practice of distributing meager monetary and material gifts to rural individuals has greatly made them be less creative but be highly expectant and dependent on what could be done for them.

7.6 Lack of monitoring mechanism on program implementation

The value of every development program lies in its timely and appropriate implementation. To ensure this is the need for monitoring and evaluation, not only of the programs but also of allocated resources. This tool plays a major role in effective program implementation in the Chinese rural development drives as the government ensures that budgeted poverty funds reached the designated impoverished farmers through a transparent distribution and monitoring mechanisms for feedback and outcome evaluation. This mechanism is grossly lacking in program implementations in Nigeria thereby creating the opportunity for corrupt government officials and participants in program implementation to either divert or siphon the funds with impunity.

8. Conclusion and recommendations

A comparative consideration of China's rural development approaches in relation to Nigeria shows a marked difference in their respective achievements. While the transformation approaches by China have made the country become a formidable force in the global economy, Nigeria's economy, especially the rural economy, has remained stunted owing to the ineptitude implementation of rural development programs in the country. Unlike the entrenched political-will and sense of commitment that brought about transformational development of the Chinese rural systems, the Nigerian efforts at rural development and economic transformation failed to see the light of the global economy largely due to poor leadership and governance, poorly developed and/or implemented economic policies, lack of innovative skills and creativity, and widespread corruption. A critical look at the Nigerian development approaches does not in any way suggest that the schemes were inappropriate or inefficient, but were inefficiently implemented. The ineptitude with which the rural development efforts were implemented in the country underlies Adebayo [48] description of the whole lots as *episodic drama, soap opera, and comedy*. As may be inferred, drama, either in form of soap operas or comedy merely entertains, much more temporarily, without any lasting or meaningful impact on the viewers. The epilogue to the episodic description of the Nigerian rural development efforts thus suggests that the country is highly characterized with the drives for enacting rural development programs but with no genuine commitment and the political-will to effectively implement for transformational development of the rural system in the country. This situation is further shackled by a high level of corruption in nearly all spheres of social-economic endeavors in the country. Consequently, the country, as indicated by The World Bank (1996); Aigbokan, [50]; Ogwumike [53]; Adebayo [48]; Obuah [52]; Lawal-Adebawale [51]; Afolabi [49], has remained ravaged by food insecurity, poverty, high level of unemployment, and recently, insecurity of lives and properties.

In the light of this, the poorly implemented rural development approaches would have to be redirected and ensure that the programs are actually rural-oriented, with strong commitment and political-will to have the programs implemented. Rural development programs should not be limited to agriculture for increased productivity but should be multi-dimensional to simultaneously care for

the non-farm components. This should include rural infrastructure, health services, and education, capacity training on value addition, and postharvest handling alongside market integration. Social mobilization and participation of all walks of life are essential to achieving sustainable rural development. In this wise, government at all levels would have to create enabling environment for non-governmental and private sectors, comprising agricultural researchers, local fabricator of agro-machines, agro-processors, and industries, marketers and entrepreneurs' participation for a holistic approach to rural development and synergic realization of meaningful impacts. Alongside this is the need for effective coordination of the programs and mobilization of members of the rural system for participation in the design and implementation of development programs meant for them. And there should be an orientation of rural dwellers, and the citizens at large, for collective actions and support for successful implementation of the enacted rural development programs in the country.

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