The Effect of Spatial Mobility of In-Migrants on Rural Development: A Case of Osi and Ilogbo Communities of Ajebamidele Settlement in Ise- Ekiti, Ekiti State of Nigeria

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Introduction

Rural development according to Morsely (2013) is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. Rural development has traditionally centered on the exploitation of the land-intensive natural resources such as agriculture and forestry.

Attempts have been made to develop Nigeria largely rural communities without much success. Pre and post-independence government have different conceptions of rural development. The colonial pre-independence leaders equated rural development with agricultural development were vast rural lands all over the country were opened up and linked with railway and feeder roads by the colonial rulers to tap both mineral resources and agricultural raw materials needed to feed ‘home’ industries. This pattern of rural development and remained virtually unchanged, even after independence. The mode and spatial location of development investments by succeeding new independent
government in Nigeria represent a continuum of colonial administration (Mikanjuola, 1987). Rural areas suffered neglected in favour of federal and state administrative headquarters. These headquarter were vigorously developed as post-independence show piece to become premier cities, rather than meaningful and balanced rural socio-economic development.

Pre and post-independence rural development conception involved planned diverse activities aimed at increased production of export and food crops. Such activities include establishment and vigorous research work on improved seedlings in various agricultural institutes in Nigeria, setting up of agricultural settlements in parts of the old western and mid-Western regions (Edo and Delta states), seed multiplication and distribution, agricultural loans and credit facilities, government subsidy on farm implements and inputs diversification of rural activities, construction of federal road and improved marketing system. The effect of such activities on rural social economic emancipation was however minimal. Indeed, rural areas remained stagnated during the oil boom era, during which there was continued and concentrated investment in all sectors of the urban economy. Such spatial disparities in socio-economic development and rural-urban differentials in economic opportunities and wages since colonial era up to the turn of the last decade was largely responsible for the massive spatial mobility especially from rural to urban centres. It is this past and present political-economic dynamics environment that is responsible for stimulating the villager to desire change in the basic location and rational of his economic activities and which in consequences determines the volume, characteristics (direction) and importance of spatial mobility Mabogunje, (1970).
An integrated approach to rural development is in vogue, an integrated approach to rural development implies an “outcome of a series of qualitative and quantitative changes occurring among a given rural population and whose converging effects indicates, in time, a rise in the standard of living and favorable changes in the way of life of the people concerned.” In line with this conception, the past Federal Government has created various agencies under the office of the presidency aimed at transforming the rural areas in all facets. Such agencies in the past include defunct Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI), National Agricultural Bank for Rural Development (NABRD). Moreover, several ministries such as health and education are pursuing vigorous programmes aimed at rural emancipation.

Due to lack of accurate data, due consideration is not often given to population change in planning for social economic development of the rural areas. Apart from fertility and mortality rural population dynamics is affected by in and out migration and the consequences of such spatial mobility process on rural development cannot be over emphasized.

**Objective of the Study**

The research aims at identifying the characteristics, courses and effects of spatial mobility on rural development using Osi and Ilogbo communities in Ajebamidele settlement, Ise Ekiti in Ise Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

**The Study Area**

Ajebamidele settlement is located at about five (5) kilometers from Ikere Ekiti along Ise – Ikere Ekiti road. It is composed mostly of settled rural peasants, in-migrants from the west, Edo, Delta Kogi of Nigeria. The settlement is located at the heart of the rain forest belt. The soil and weather conditions are
naturally good for cultivation of cash crops such as cocoa, oil palm, coffee, plantains and food crops such as yams, cocoyam and cassava.

Among the several communities that make up Ajebamidele settlement, osi and ilogbo rural migrants communities have been selected for the study, a preliminary visit and investigation carried out before the real survey, revealed that the two communities are homogenous and still retain the culture and value of their places of origin i.e. Osi and Ilogbotowns Ido local government area of Ekiti state.

Their choice for study stems from concentration of these migrants in distinct community pockets, the high degree of cooperation noticed among the community members and the total resolved and determination to succeed as migrant farmers outside their traditional home within the same state. The name Ajebamidele is a reflection of such a determination to succeed and take away the proceed to their places of origin.

Methodology

Pre-coded and open added questionnaire were administered in the two communities using the house identification numbers for the purpose of census, a single random sample of 60 heads of households were interviewed. The questionnaire sought information on the migrants demographic profile the reason(s) for moving from the past destinations on leaving home, the types of past and present occupation before and after migration, past and present income and mode of investment of disposal income, problems encounter and their contribution to the general development of the settlement.

The data generated were checked for consistency and then summarized using simple computation of percentage mean standard and deviation and correlation coefficients of bivariate variables such as income/farm sizes,
income years of stay, years of stay/farm sizes etc.

**Findings and Discussion**

Rural in migrant are of middle age and people of high socio-economic expectation and they are more enterprising than the natives. For instance the mean age of migrants is 44 years while 86.7% of the migrants farmers have or aimed at erecting one or more modern building both in the village and at place of origin, only about 18% of the natives have or intended to erect a modern building in the village the reason for the migrants decision being that the village is already a second home and occasional visits paid to places of origin on special festivals by the migrants demand a building place to stay in arrival.

To the indigenes, only the main settlement Ise Ekiti could attract a modern building since they only commute most of the days from Ise to the farms or the best stay in the village doing the week days only to return to ise town during weekends for meeting, festival and merry making, a practice common to Ekiti. Such migrant’s characteristics agrees with selective theory of migration which explains the quality and enterprise of migrants. Migrants exhibit better characteristic such as intelligence and industry than non-migrants such traits will depicted in works of Ajaegbu (1976).

A major reason push factor identified for rural leaving their places of origin is lack of enough fertile land for farming. Easy access to abundant farmland is the major pull factor that attracts rural in migrants to Ajebamidele settlement. These in migrants farmers on arrival sought and obtained farmland from the natives without any strings attached by the landlords since they (migrants) provided labour to the land owners initially. Today the migrants peasant have full right to the farmlands on which they have planted and tended over the decades permanent tree cash crop hence their determination put-up permanent
structure in the village. However, they, maintain effective linkage with their home base, especially when community projects or family demands calls for contributions.

About 92% of the migrant have over stayed over 20 years and their movement from places of origin to the present destination involve stepwise migration. Some having stayed 2 or 3 settlement before finally settling at Ajobamidile all the migrants, apart from the teachers are full time farmers. They are largely illiterates with only about 14% possessing first school leaving certificate (primary six) cocoa is the main tree crop, while oil palm, kola nuts, oranges and plantains are interpolated to provide shade for the cocoa in addition to the economic values. Some coffee is also planted but not on a large scale as cocoa. Farm sizes ranges from 3 acres to 10 acres.

Investigation revealed that the mean income of these in-migration farmers before leaving home was less than 200,000 per annum. Their income appreciated on their arrival at destination to an average of 1,000,000 per annum. The declared present income of the migrants has risen to a staggering average of 600,000. This boost could be attributed to the direct interface between consumer and producers, due to the elimination of marketing boards that were responsible for regulating prices. Another reason for increased revenue could be due to depreciation of our local currency against the major foreign exchange currency.

Farm implement used by farmer’s remains crude (cutlass and hoe). The cost of acquiring these implements is one of challenges faced by the farmers. Farm labour is not only but very expensive. Most in-migrants prefer to owe and work in their farms than being hired. Children that could assist in farm work are away from the village to attend schools in the nearby towns.
where post primary education facilities are available.

Despite high profit declared the amount re-invested is paradoxically low. On the average less than 100,000 is re-invested in agriculture i.e. purchase of chemical and farm labour.

To individuals and the families therefore migration is beneficial. Apart from the benefit of investing in children education, the migrants farmers acquire items ranging from battery operated radio, TV and cassette recorder while some of the migrants own motorcycle about 8% have cars or pick up vans. However, the micro effect of migrants on rural development is not clear out.

**Conclusion**

Rural in-migrants possess the physiques, intelligence, will and industry to develop their rural base. What is lacking is the lead and purposeful direction. The qualities and potentials of rural in-migrants for development have been allowed to remain latent by the government and its agencies for rural development. They only need to be harnessed through skilful planning and faithful execution of such plan programmes and projects carrying the rural peasants along at every stage of the rural development efforts of governments.

**Recommendations**

One major discovery of the study is that the rise in farmer disposable income is not properly invested in projects that could lead to the development of the village. A lot of farmer’s income is spent on consumables and facilities. Such as burial ceremonies, annual harvest thanksgiving in churches and the like. To this end there is the urgent need to educate the farmers on the need to invest their money wisely. Campaign by national orientation agency (NOA) hitherto based in cities should shift to rural areas and settlements to educate farmers on the proper utilization of income if possible.
Rural banking services should be established near the farmers to encourage saving and better investment of funds, buying of shares in companies. Government should provide basic social infrastructure electricity, health, water to improve the conditions of living in the rural areas. Money realize by government from cocoa should be re-invested in projects that will make the rural areas more habitable.

The in-migrants desire to provide sound education for their children not only to compensate for their parents educational inadequacies but to employ the benefit associated with sound education. These rural communities once contributed money, materials and labour to erect secondary schools in the villages for the benefit of their off-springs.

REFERENCES