

**THE ROLE AND CHALLENGES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA. A CASE STUDY OF ESAN CENTRAL LGA IN  
EDO STATE (IRRUA AND EWU).**

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**A PROJECT WRITTEN AND SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC  
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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by IKHELOA CHRISTABEL SADE with Mat number SSC2105813, in the Department of Public administration, Faculty of Social Science, University of Benin in the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a degree of Bachelor's science (BSc) in public administration

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**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for his grace which was made sufficient for the completion of this project

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All glory to God Almighty, the source of my strength and wisdom.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr I.E Okommah for his expert guidance and unwavering support and also Mr Clement Oribhabor for his guidance also through out the course of this project.

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And lastly to all the wonderful persons I met in the course of this journey. I'm grateful

## ABSTRACT

The study examines the role and challenges of local government in rural development in Nigeria: a case study of Esan central LGA of Edo State. The specific objectives are to assess the role of the local government administration in rural development in Esan central Local Government Area; to investigate whether job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government led to prevention of rural-urban migration in Esan central Local Government Area; to find out the relationship between governments budgetary allocation and rural development in Esan central Local Government Area.

This study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics in analyzing the data obtained. The descriptive statistics used include frequency distribution, mean and standard deviation test t was used as an inferential statistic to test the research hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 20.0) software was as platform used for all the analyses.

The findings from the study revealed that the local government has implemented effective policies that promote rural development in Esan Central. It was also discovered that government job creation programs have encouraged youths to remain in rural communities. It was revealed that Job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government help to prevent migration in Esan central Local Government Area. It was concluded that Government's budgetary allocation helps to address rural development in Esan central Local Government Area. It was recommended that the government should always maintain a balance in development both in urban and rural areas of the state to minimize migration. Local governments should be more people-centered in approach, such that necessary collaboration/partnership with communities in its domain can facilitate the process of rural development.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>CERTIFICATION</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Research Problem	16
1.3 Objective of the Study	17
1.4 Research Questions	17
1.5 Hypotheses	18
1.6 Significance of the Study	18
1.7 Scope of the Study	19
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
<b>2.1</b> Introduction	21
<b>2.2</b> Conceptual Framework	21
2.2.1 Concept of Local Government	21
2.2.2 Evolution of Local Government in Nigeria	24
2.2.3 Local Government, Its Importance/Roles and Local Administration	26
2.2.4 Concept of Rural Development	33
2.2.5 Government's Approaches to Rural Development	34
2.2.5 Inadequate Finance and Rural Development	36
2.2.6 Impediments to Rural Development Enhancement in Nigeria	39

2.2.7 The Imperative Measures for Enhancing Rural Development in Nigeria	45
2.2.8 Challenges Facing Rural Development	47
2.2.9 The Roles of Local Government in Rural Development	49
2.2.10 Participatory Approach Model	57
2.4 Empirical Review	60
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b>	
3.1 Introduction	64
3.2 Research Design	64
3.3 Population of the Study	64
3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique	65
3.5 Research Instrument	65
3.6 Method of Data Analysis	65
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS</b>	
4.0 Presentation of Result	66
4.1 Discussion of Findings	71
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
5.1 Introduction	74
5.2 Summary of Findings	74
5.3 Conclusion	76
5.4 Recommendations	76
5.5 Recommendation for Further Study	77
<b>REFERENCES</b>	78
<b>APPENDIX</b>	86

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The idea of local government administration in Nigeria has attracted serious attention both nationally and internationally since the local government reform of 1976. Agagu, (2017), viewed local government as a level of government which is supposed to have its greatest impact on the people at the rural areas. It is a tier of government which is closest to the citizenry and it is saddled with responsibility of guaranteeing the political, social and economic development of its area and its people (Enero, Oladoyin & Elumilade, 2019).

As a result of this development, there has been growing recognition of the importance of rural development as an instrument in the overall development of the contemporary developing world. This is because of the glaring gap between the rural and urban areas in terms of infrastructural, resources distribution, human resources development and employment, which has made rural development imperative (Ogbazi, 1982 in Zakari, 2014). This imbalance has subjected the rural areas to more disadvantaged economic position. It has induced rural – urban migration, thereby, increasing unemployment situation in the urban areas, while, simultaneously depriving the rural areas of their agricultural workforce (Zakari, 2014).

The idea of local government is to bring governance closer to people in the grassroots for participation in governance, service delivery to enhance socio-economic development and good governance (Okoli, 2015). But unfortunately, today, transparency and accountability in Nigerian local government is rhetoric, most local government officials display provocative wealth gotten through criminal institutionalized stealing and corrupt practices (Onah, 2010 in Okoli, et al, 2015).

The failure of local government in the area of service delivery over the years has made the citizens to lose faith and trust in local government administration as an institution in Nigeria.

From historical perspective, modern local government administration in Nigeria can be traced to the British system of local government. But it should be stated however, that local administration did not start with the advent of British Administration in Nigeria, because some forms of system of local government administration pre-dated the British rule. Local government administration is one of man's oldest institutions. The earliest form of local governments' administration existed in the form of clan and village meetings. In fact, democracy itself originated and developed along the lines of local governance initiative in the ancient Greek City States. It should be noted however, that in other parts of the world, local governance was developed along the people's culture and expectations, and the system was tied to the norms and practices of the people (Aghayere, 2007).

According to Gboyega, four points of historical reference can be identified in the development of local government administration in Nigeria. They are: (1) Colonial rule; (2) Local government reforms in the East (1951) and West (1952) respectively; (3) The military coup of 1966; and (4) The 1976 Local Government Reform (Gboyega as cited by Aghayere, 2007 in Oviasuyi et al, 2010).

Local government administration in Nigeria has undergone many changes of which the 1976

Reforms and the Constitutions of 1979 and 1999 can be said to be most prominent. Before 1976, local government administration in Nigeria had passed through many changing environments and this has in no small measure influenced its development. Again, the 1976 Local Government Reforms brought watershed in local government system; the reform brings unified structure and makes local government bedrock for development in the rural area (Agagu, 2017).

The reform was a major departure from the previous practice of local government administration in Nigeria. The philosophical basis of the reform lies in the conviction that a strong local authority with clearly defined functional responsibilities in a power-sharing relationship with the states is an institutional safeguard against tyranny. Following the 1976 reforms, local government became recognized as a tier of government entitled to a share of national revenue consequent on its constitutionally allocated functions (Imuetinyan 2007 in Oviasuyi et al, 2010)

The provisions of the 1976 reform document were incorporated into the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Section 7(1) of the constitution provides that “the government of every state shall ensure their existence under a law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions of such councils” Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1979).

The power of the state government over local authorities has been wrongly applied to undermine elected and participatory governance and responsibility at the grassroots, and this has made operation of the constitution questionable. The situation of local government administration under the 1999 Constitution is also very confusing and complex. Although, the 1999 Constitution also guarantees the existence of a democratically elected local government system, it however, like the 1979 Constitution, gives the states the responsibility to handle issues of organization and structure (Oviasuyi et al, 2010).

As a result of this development, most of the rural areas in Nigeria are in a pathetic state of development, even, some of the urban local government areas are also deficient in development. Some of these infrastructures where available, are left uncared for. The implication of this is that local governments in Nigeria have been consistent over the years in their failure to enhance their capacity to engage and mobilize human resources towards their needs. Local roads are left unrepaired, rural electricity are in state of dilemma, rural health centres are dilapidated with

absence of drugs and necessary health personnel, rural boreholes and water pumps have no water, rural water scheme/projects are deserted (Tolu, 2014).

Edo state, is not an exception, the period under review 2008-2018, Musa (2011) asserts that local level has turned into a care-taker imposed by state governments. In some cases, care-takership is perpetuated if the outright denial of democratic local government through care-taker committees demonstrates increase in authoritarian holds on the councils by state governors, the case of where elections hold does not give cause for cheers (Okoli,2015). That is why in Edo state, each time a governor assumes office, his first official function will be the dissolution or re-constitution of local government officials whether elected or appointed to secure grassroots support by hook or crook (The nation, 2012 in Okoli, et al, 2015). Many argued that the poor performance of local governments in Nigeria is due to state and local government joint account. Many state governors and state assembly members handle local government as if they are not constitutionally guaranteed democratic elected officials (Mark in Okoli et al, 2015). Again, as a result of joint account, most local government chairmen always complain of shortage of funds released to them, due to the interference of state government in their affairs as orchestrated by governors (FRN in Okoli et al, 2015). Generally, as regards to rural development, the following areas (economic sector, health sector, provision of essential amenities, agricultural sector, general security, industrialization, education sector, transportation and communication sector) have been affected by some of these issues stated above and these areas are the

primary assignment of local government but instead of performing as expected, end up doing little.

For instance, it is noteworthy that most of the road networks in rural areas in Edo state and Nigeria at large are maintained through community efforts. This cannot really be effective as the contemporary road development needs of the rural areas are such that mere community efforts cannot adequately address. There is too, very apparently, poor quality education in most rural areas (Ele, 2011; Ijere ,2012) note in this respect too that rural education is characterized by limited functional or work oriented education and disdain for handicraft and technical subjects. Okoli and Onah (2007) make similar observation as they note thus: The privilege of education which, for instance, is supposed to be a birth right of every Nigerian child is an illusion to many poor rural dwellers. In some places, there are no schools at all while in some others the schools are shabby, ill-equipped and poorly staffed.

Edo rural areas is equally characterized by apparent lack of health institutions as there are hardly any well-equipped hospital health centres, clinics and maternal homes. Onah and Okoli (2007) observe similarly that in most rural areas in Edo and Nigeria at large, no medical institution of any sort exists at all and that where they do, the people have to travel very long distances to access them.

Water supply in the rural areas has also been discovered to be grossly inadequate and with the spread of water borne disease increased by the accompanying poor sanitary conditions (Ele, 2011; Abah, 2010) observe too that, rural areas in Edo

state is also characterized by depressingly meager annual per capital income, poor liveable houses and various forms of social and political isolation. In summary, there is apparent lack of development in the rural areas in Edo state as reflected in the near total lack of basic infrastructure, and social services. In Edo state of Nigeria, for instance, a survey of the development needs of the 471 communities in the state as at 2009 revealed that 385, 342 and 304 rural communities lack access to accessible road, portable water/borehole and cottage hospitals respectively (Edo state, 2009).

However, good local government administration cannot be underestimated towards rural development in Edo state. Thus, this paper was embarked upon to establish the nexus between Local Government and Rural Development in Esan central Local Government Area, Edo State.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

Local government is expected to become more meaningful in facilitating rural development at the grassroots level. The merit in involving the local communities' inhabitants as a focal point of good governance in the local government administration is that they serve as a point of contact between the local government and the grassroots (Okafor, 2002 in Zakari 2014)

Basic facilities such as roads, bridges, markets, health institutions, primary and post-primary institutions have been provided in different parts of the country through self-help development programmes. According to Okafor (2004), communities have the capacity to respond to specific local development plans,

mobilize their resources in a collective way, adjust their organizations to the required needs and devise their own appropriate management rules to cope with the situation (Okafor, 2004).

Regrettably, the realization of these objectives has been constrained by a number of issues confronting local government development in Edo state which are as follows: Joint account system, corruption, state interference, loss of autonomy, caretaker ship, poor commitment and poor funding.

Furthermore, in the key areas according to the four-point agenda of local government administration, the health centers in most local government is to say the least deplorable. There is abject nonexistence of drugs, medical equipment and manpower.

In the case of essential amenities, basic social amenities as road, electricity, water and recreational facilities are very much lacking in the local government across the state. In the area of agriculture, majority of the rural dwellers depend on this sector but mechanization of the sector remains at a low ebb.

Again, in the area of education, this is an indispensable index of development but much has not been done by successive administrations to provide functional qualitative education to the rural dwellers.

### **1.3 Objectives of Study**

In a broad view, this study seeks to look at the role The role and challenges of local government in rural development in Nigeria: a case study of Esan central LGA of Edo State

. But, being specific, the objective comprises of the following:

- i. To assess the role of the local government administration in rural development in Esan central Local Government Area;
- ii. To investigate whether job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government led to prevention of rural-urban migration in Esan central Local Government Area;
- iii. To find out the relationship between governments budgetary allocation and rural development in Esan central Local Government Area.

#### **1.4 Research Question**

- i. What role did local government administration played towards rural development in Esan central Local Government Area?
- ii. Did job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government led to stoppage of rural-urban migration in Esan central Local Government Area?
- iii. To what extent does government's budgetary allocation address rural development in Esan central Local Government Area?

#### **1.5 Research Hypotheses**

**H0:** Local government does not play significant role towards rural development in Esan central Local Government Area.

**H0:** Job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government does not prevent migration in Esan central Local Government Area.

**H0:** Government's budgetary allocation does not address rural development in Esan central Local Government Area.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the study provides a theoretical framework for the understanding of the role of local government in rural development in Nigeria. Therefore considering the pivotal role of local government in development in general, such information will be of immense help for policy formulation on the development of grassroots. The result of the study will equally be of help to other researchers who may want to research on such topic or related topics on development in the academia in the future.

On the practical significance, the study will draw attention of, and enlighten both the stakeholders and those who implement policies on rural development in Nigeria who may not really understand the central role of rural development on the crucial and inescapable role of local government system. As a result, the rural dwellers will endeavour to participate fully in grassroots democratization and development, while those who implement policy on development in Nigeria will become dedicated to policy formulation, recommendations and implementation.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study covered the critical analysis of the role of local government in rural development. The scope of this study is limited to the operation of Esan central Local Government Area, Edo State for the period of 2018– 2020 (2014). Communities in Nigeria in the past have maintained a strong tradition in the area of self-help projects (Okafor, 2004 in Zakari ya'u, 2014).

Basic facilities such as roads, bridges, markets, health institutions, primary and post-primary institutions have been provided in different parts of the country through self-help development programmes. According to Okafor (2004), communities have the capacity to respond to specific local development plans, mobilize their resources in a collective way, adjust their organizations to the required needs and devise their own appropriate management rules to cope with the situation (Okafor, 2004).

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the literature as well as the conceptual framework and theoretical framework for the study so as to serve as a link between the past and the present.

## **2.2 Conceptual Framework**

### **2.2.1 Concept of Local Government**

The concept of local government involves a philosophical commitment to democratic participation in the governing process at the grassroots level. This implies legal and administrative decentralization of authority, power and personnel by a higher level of government to a community with a will of its own, performing specific functions as within the wider national framework. A local government is a government at the grassroots level of administration meant for meeting peculiar grassroots need of the people (Agagu, 2017). It is defined as “government by the popularly elected bodies charged with administrative and executive duties in matters concerning the inhabitants of a particular district or place.

Local government can also be defined as that tier of government closest to the people, “which is vested with certain powers to exercise control over the affairs of people in its domain” (Lawal, 2018). Akpan (2017) defined local government as “the breaking down of a country into smaller units or localities for the purpose of administration in which the inhabitants of the different units or localities concerned play a direct and full role through their elected representatives who

exercise power and undertake functions under the general authority of the national or state government”.

Barber (2014) defined Local government as authority to determine and execute matters within a restricted area. It becomes clear from the above that the purpose of establishing a local government is to ensure appropriate services and development activities responsible to local wishes and initiatives. Local government operates at the lowest level of society.

Bandhu (2018) defined local government as: representative of local inhabitants, more or less autonomous in character instituted under state legislation, in a village, a district, a city or in urban areas to administer services as distinguished from state and central services.

The jurisdiction of a local government is limited to a specific area, a village or a city, and its functions relate to the provision of civic amenities to the population living within that area. Clarke (2008) maintains that a “local government appears to be that part of the government of a nation or state which deals mainly with such matters as concern the inhabitants of particular district or place”.

According to Rao (2015), Local government is “that part of the government which deals mainly with local affairs, administered by authorities subordinate to the state government, but elected independently of the state authority by the qualified residents. Robson (1999), in a lengthy definition, says that “Local government may be said to involve the conception of territorial, non-sovereign community possessing the legal right and the necessary organization to regulate its own affairs.

This in turn pre-supposes the existence of a local authority with power to act independently of external control as well as the participation of the local community in the administration of its own affairs. Gokhale (2017) definition of local government is very simple. He says that “Local self-government is the government of a specified locality by the local people through the representatives elected by them. Venkatarangaiya and Pattabhiram (2019) defined local government as the administration of a locality, a village, a town, a city or any other area smaller than the state by a body representing local inhabitants, possessing a fairly large amount of authority, raising at least a part of its revenue through local taxation and spending its income on services which are regarded as local and, therefore, as distinct from state and central services.

A local government is expected to play the role of promoting the democratic ideals of a society and coordinating development programme at the local level. It is also expected to serve as the basis of socio-economic development in the locality.

Ezeani (2014) favours the approach by Adamolekun (2017) in discussing local government within the purview of decentralization. Decentralisation is typologised into “deconcentration” meaning administrative decentralization or field administration and “devolution” implying democratic decentralization in which there is substantial autonomy to sub-national units (i.e. local governments) with powers and responsibilities to perform specific functions given under the law by the central government. Duru (2013) converges Nowith Ezeani (2014) and

Adamolekun (2017) on the above approach and conceptualization of local government as devolution.

Proceeding from the above, Ezeani (2014) identified the following characteristics of devolution: local government must be granted autonomy and independence and be clearly recognized as a tier of government with little or no direct control by the central government. Local units must have clear and legally recognized geographical boundaries. Local governments must possess corporate status including the power to raise sufficient revenue to perform assigned functions. Devolution involves the need to “develop local governments as institutions”. It also entails reciprocal, mutually benefiting and coordinate relationships between central and local governments.

An analysis of the above definitions reveals certain essential characteristics of local governments. These are:

### **2.2.2 Evolution of Local Government in Nigeria**

Local government is a creation of British colonial rule in Nigeria. It has, over time, experienced change in name, structure and composition (Arowolo, 2018). Between 1930s and 1940s, local government was known as Chief in Council, where traditional rulers were given pride of place in the scheme of things. In the 1950s, election was introduced according to the British model in the Western and Eastern parts of the country with some measure of autonomy in personnel, financial and general administration (Nwabueze, 2022).

It was on this premise that the rising tide of progress, growth and development experienced in the local governments in these areas was based. The pace of this development was more noticeable in the South than in the North. During this period, heterogeneity was the hallmark of the local government as there was no uniformity in the system and the level of development was also remarkably different.

The introduction of 1976 reforms by the military administration of General Obasanjo brought about uniformity in the administrative structure of the system; the reforms introduced a multi-purpose single-tier local government system (Ajayi, 2018). The reforms also introduced population criticism under which a local government could be created. Consequently, a population of within 150,000 to 800,000 was considered feasible for a local government (1976 Guidelines). This was done to avoid the creation of non-viable local council and for easy accessibility. There was provision for elective positions, having the Chairman as executive head of local government with supervisory councilors constituting the cabinet. This was complemented by the bureaucrats and professionals, who were charged with the responsibility of implementing policies.

In 1991, a major landmark reform was introduced as the system had legislative arm. In addition, the Babangida administration increased the number of local governments from 301 in 1986 to 453 in 1989 and 589 in 1991. The Abacha regime increased the number to 774 local councils that we presently have in Nigeria (Ajayi, 2000 in Tolu, 2014).

The precursor of local government was the native administration established by the colonial administration. As one of its principal authors posited, Native Administration was: Designed to adapt to purposes of local government the tribal institutions which the native people have evolved for themselves so that the latter may develop in a constitutional manner from their own past, guided and restrained by the traditions and sanctions which they have inherited, moulded or modified as they may be on the advice of the British officers. It is an essential feature of the system, within the limitations, the British Government rules through these native institutions which are regarded as an integral part of the machinery of Government with well-defined powers and functions recognized by Government and by law and not dependent on the caprice of an executive officer (Cameron 1964). The Native Administration was charged with the collection of taxes, maintenance of law and order, road construction and maintenance, and sanitary inspection, especially in township areas. This system of government, which was modelled after the Millsian ideal of local representation, generated two types of conflicts among the fledging ethnic groups in Nigeria.

The first arose in cases where two or more ethnic groups were ‘lumped together’ in one native administration. Given what Post and Vickers (1993) have aptly called the ‘differential incorporation’ of Nigerian peoples into Nigeria, some groups who had earlier access to the British and had acquired some education tended to dominate the Native Administration. If such domination could be justified, as the British did, on the grounds of the opportunity it afforded the privileged group to

groom others in the art of governance, the superimposition of the paramount ruler of one group as permanent native authority even when there was no pre-colonial history of dependent relations, encouraged local separatism. Most of the groups joined in such non-consensual matrimony agitated for separation and independence.

### **2.2.3 Local Government, Its Importance/Roles and Local Administration**

Some form of local government exists in every country of the world. Although there may be differences in the essential features of local government: constitutional status, historical structure, level of autonomy, et cetera, local government is generally seen as veritable agent of development and grassroots participation in a democratic process.

According to Emezi (2019) in Izueke (2018), in a broader definition, sees local government as a system of local administration under local communities that are organized to maintain law and order, provide some limited range of social services and encourage cooperation and participation of the inhabitants towards the improvement of their conditions of living. It provides the community with formal organizational framework which enable them to conduct their affairs effectively for the general good.

Also, in Izueke, 2018, Hill (1994) is of the opinion that if local government is to be effective provider of services, it must be more than efficient, and it runs a risk if it neglects the involvement of the public in a meaningful way, reason being that the local government will still be judged by that justice, fairness,

equality and openness by which democratic society as a whole is judged. However, there is a reasonable degree of divergent ideas among most writers on the meaning of Local Government, although few definitions exist, this is to a large extent a function of the differing socio-economic and political development of local government by most writers.

Some writers defined Local Government as “Local administration set up outside the main focus of the central national or regional administration”. The implication of this definition is that there is a glaring absence of legal personality, i.e. ability to sue and be sued, which is the major characteristic of Local Government.

According to the United Nation (UN) office for Public Administration, Local Government is a political subdivision of a nation (or in Federal system or State) which Constitute by law and has substantial control over local affairs including the power to impose tax or exert labour for prescribed purposes, the governing body such as an entity is selected or otherwise locally elected (Zakari ya’u, 2014).

The above definition is akin to the one given by Robson in Zakari ya’u, 2014, who sees Local Government as, “a territorial non sovereign community possessing the legal right and the necessary organization to regulate its own affairs”.

Looking at it from the Nigeria context, the guideline for 1976 Local Government reforms suggested a definition of Local Government thus, government at the local level which exercised specific powers within defined areas. Viewing the above definitions, Local Government can be seen as the lowest tier of government,

established by laws and assigned specific responsibilities. Also, the above definitions however contained four institutional features of Local Government and they are: First, the Local Government unit must have a legal personality i.e. like the public corporation; it can sue and be sued. Second, it must have specified powers to perform a range of functions. Third, it must enjoy substantial autonomy, especially in financial and staff matters subject to limited control from the central government; and finally, it must have elected representatives along party line or ideological orientation.

In contrast to local government, local government administration has been defined by Rondinelli (2001) as a form of deconcentration in which all subordinate levels of government within a country are agents of the central authority, usually the executive branch, regions, provinces, districts, municipalities and other units of government headed by or are responsible directly to a central government agency and the heads of the local administration serve at the pleasure of the nation's chief executive.

Local administration is therefore, a device established by either the state or federal government for the purpose of administering the localities under its control. It can be established at the federal or central, state or local levels of government.

Furthermore, the Sole Administrator System and the Caretaker Committee of Management established by both General Ibrahim Babangida and General Sani Abacha governments are good examples of local administration. The essential features of local administration are as follows:

- i. It lacks substantive autonomy which makes it impossible for local agents to take any authoritative decisions which are binding on the citizens. It simply complies or acts according to policy guidelines handed down to it by the central authority. The functions of the local body are not provided for in the constitution.
- ii. Local administration exists mainly to execute policies and programmes formulated by the central authority to which it is directly responsible and accountable.
- iii. The central or state government directly appoints and controls the staff of the local administration. Thus, the members of the local body are not elected representatives of local people.
- iv. There exists a defined pattern of hierarchical control of powers and functions and also, of channel of communication from the agents of local administration and vice versa, and which the latter must strictly adhere (Ozor, 2008 in Ezeani, 2019).
- v. Local administration lacks financial autonomy. The central or state government determines and controls its finances (Ezeani, 2019).

In his critic of the government of the then Eastern Region of Nigeria, Akpan (2002) in Ezeani,

2019, said by the use of these central government officials in these roles, by limiting the financial and executive powers and functions of local governments to the whims and pleasures of the central government; by taking over control of staff

serving local governments; by assuming the main financial responsibility for local government services; by taking over control of staff serving local governments, Eastern Nigeria from independence practiced a veiled form of integrated administrative decentralization with the so-called local government serving as nothing but mere arms and agents of the central government.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Ronald Wraith 1982, who has written extensively on local government, once had to change the title of his book from 'Local Government in West Africa' to „‘Local Administration in West Africa’” because he realized that in most cases what then existed in West Africa was mere Local Administration rather than local government (Wraith, 2002 in Ezeani, 2019).

Furthermore, in the area of role, According to Egboh & Attanse, (2014), given its statutory functions and resources, we view the following as the areas in which the local government can facilitate rural development:

- a. **Economic Sector:** The bulk of the population live in the rural areas hence; every economic development measure should take special note of rural dwellers and their problems. Therefore, local governments should be involved in economic planning and execution both of the federal and the state government. That way, they stand a better chance of mobilizing their people to support government policies alleviation measures as well as create jobs for their teeming population. By so doing, they improve their economy and address the problem of poverty.

b. **Health Sector:** The state of health centers in most local government is to say the least deplorable. There is abject nonexistence of drugs, medical equipment and manpower. Again, there is increasing lack of enthusiasm among health personnel as a result of which most inhabitants of the rural areas resort to traditional medical practices. Some has fallen victims to fake drugs sold by most local dispensaries and medicine shops.

Indeed, local government stands a better chance of tackling the health problems of the rural people by addressing the problems bedeviling the sector.

c. **Transportation and Communication:** Local government should construct and maintain local roads and by so doing ease the burden of transportation hanging on the neck of the inhabitants of rural areas. Also, they can set up mass transit as a way of checking the skyrocketing cost of transportation. In the area of communication, efforts should be geared towards encouraging Global Service Mobile (GSM) services providers to connect the nook and crannies of their localities.

d. **Provision of Essential Amenities:** Such basic social amenities as good roads, network, electricity, water and recreational facilities are very much lacking in the rural communities across the country. Therefore, the local government should partner with the central and state government in providing them. By so doing the problem of rural urban drift will be checked.

e. **Agricultural sector:** Notwithstanding the craze for oil, agriculture remains the mainstay of the country's economy. Majority of Nigerian depend on agriculture,

especially the rural dwellers, to generate income. In Nigeria, mechanization of the sector remains at a low ebb. Government can and should come to the help of the farmers by way of providing them with soft loans, subsidized farm inputs such as fertilizer, improved seedlings, insecticides and even farm implements for planting operations. Also, seminars and workshop should be organized during which farmers are taught best agricultural practices.

- f. **General Security:** Security of lives and properties remains indispensable in every developmental planning and programmes. Resources are made and kept or reinvested for greater results or dividends. Hence, therefore, efforts should be geared towards ensuring reasonable peace and mutual co-existence between local communities. Such atmosphere promotes programme and project execution and resources collection.
- g. **Industrialization:** Local government can contribute to rural development through rural industrialization by setting up cottage industries such as garri processing plants, rice milling centers, palm-oil processing units, fishing and livestock outfits etc. Such ventures provide employment to the people and empower them financially. Other ways in which rural development can be attained is by encouraging community projects such as road construction, rural electrification, water projects and so on. Also, local government can address the perennial housing problems facing Nigerians by embarking on housing projects.
- h. **Education Sector:** Education is an indispensable index of development. Though aware of the importance of education in any planned natural development, not

much has been done by successive administrations to provide functional qualitative education to Nigerians especially the rural dwellers. Against the backdrop of the important consequences therefore, we expect local government to redouble their efforts in this regard. Not only should schools be built but of important is the need to promote the quality of teaching staff in the schools through training and improved welfare packages. Again, relevant teaching and learning aids such as textbooks, classrooms, office accommodation and furniture should be provided (Egboh & Attanse, 2014).

- i. **Encouraging Communal Self-help Projects:** In this case, the government at the grass root level should in one way or the other encourage different communities to form an organization or group that will work towards enhancing the rural development in their different villages/communities. This is because; the government cannot tackle the whole problems at a time.

#### **2.2.4 Concept of Rural Development**

An understanding of the concept of development will give a clearer picture of rural development. Hornby (2018) defines development as the gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced, stronger, etc.; the process of producing or creating something new. This definition implies that development involves a gradual or advancement through progressive changes. Umebali (2011) sees the changes to be multi-dimensional involving changes in structures, attitude and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth; the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty. He asserted that development

involves economic growth components, equality or social justice's component and socio-economic transformational components which are all on a self-sustaining basis. Simon (2019) sees development as an improvement in quality of life (not just material standard of living) in both quantitative terms. He opines that development must be seen as actually and temporally relative, needing to be appropriate to time, space, society, culture. Rural Development simply connotes a sustained improvement in the quality of life of the rural people. It implies consistency in approach in which micro and macro-economic, social political, cultural and technological variables are engineered, combined and implemented as an organic and dynamic whole for the benefit of the people (Onurah 2011). Rural development is sometimes used synonymously with agricultural development efforts. It is on this account that the nitrated rural development projects in Nigeria were designed to ensure that agricultural and rural development efforts become part of package of services offered to farmers and the rural population (Ijere and Mbanasor, 2018).

The bottom line really is poverty alleviation consequent upon increase in rural productivity, income and diversification of rural economic, improvement in the supply of rural infrastructure (physical, social and institutional), enhancement of social participant and radical improvement of the quality of life of the rural people. The concept of rural development has been broadened in recent time to accommodate non-economic issues, this broadened rural development concept, otherwise known as the sustained rural development, takes a long term view of

which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generation (Michener, 2008).

These objectives can be paraphrased to include:

- Promotion of the social, cultural, educational and economic well-being of the rural population
- Promotion of sustained and orderly development of the vast resources in the rural areas for the benefit of the rural people
- Increase in and diversification of job opportunities and improvement of income in the rural areas,
- Mobilization of the rural population for self-help and self-sustaining programme of development, and
- Up-lifting of the technological based industries in the rural area

### **2.2.6 Government's Approaches to Rural Development**

Overtime, successive governments have embarked on several programmes targeted at rural development. Other approaches have been by non-governmental organization (NGOs), cooperatives, individuals through private initiatives, corporate bodies as well as international organizations. The various programmes initiated and chiefly targeted at the rural sector by government include the following:

- National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP)
- River-Basin Development Authority (RBDA)
- Agricultural Development Programme (ADP)
- Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)

- The Green Revolution
- Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS)
- Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFPRI)
- Better Life for Rural Dwellers (BETTER LIFE)
- National Agricultural Insurance Corporation (NAIC)
- National Directorate of Employment (NDE)
- National Agricultural Land Development Authority(NALDA)
- National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)
- National Rural Roads Development Fund (NRRDF)
- Rural Banking Scheme (RBS)
- Family Support Programme (FSP)
- Universal Basic Education (UBE)
- Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS)

A cursory look at the introduction, establishment, implementation and the objectives of majority of the above programmes will reveal that they are mainly targeted at rural development in an attempt to better the lives of rural dwellers, stimulate and enhance economic growth, as well as get the rural sector to contribute meaningfully to the national economic and social development. These programmes have direct or indirect impact on rural development and can broadly be grouped into specific and multi-specific programmes. The specific programmes are those directed mainly at agriculture, health, education, housing, transport, infrastructure, finance and manufacturing. Such programmes were initiated in the early 1970s and

1980s. On the other hand, most of the multi-specific programmes were put in place in the early 1990s and thereafter to handle general projects, such as NDE, DFRRI, Better Life, Family support etc.

Many of the specific programmes had some positive effect on rural development although Obadan (2017) says the target populations for some of them were not specified explicitly to be poor people (rural dwellers). Examples of such as the RBDA, ACGS, RBS, etc., which were designed to take care of such objectives as employment generation, enhancing of agricultural output and income, and streamlining rural-urban migration, which no doubt impair rural development. Other development programmes such as OFN, Green Revolution, Free and compulsory primary education, low cost housing schemes etc. impacts positively on the rural dwellers but most of them could not be sustained due to lack of political will and commitment, policy instability and insufficient involvement of the intended beneficiaries of the programmes hence according to Chiloikwu (2011) most of them died with the government that initiated them.

### **2.2.7 Inadequate Finance and Rural Development**

One of the perennial problems which has not only defied all past attempts at permanent solution, but also has a tendency for evoking high emotions on the part of all concerned (each time it is brought forth for discussion or analysis) is the issue of equitable revenue allocation in Nigeria. It is an issue which has been politicised by successive administrations in Nigeria both Military and civilian regimes. Indeed, in virtually all country in which the constitution shares power

between the central and regional or state governments and, for each level to be “within a sphere co-ordinate and independent” (Wheare 1993) enough resources need be allocated to each tier to justify their existence. Perhaps, more important at this juncture is a consideration of the adequacy of the total revenue profile of LGs, from all sources, for their operations. In the works of Ikelegbe, (2018) and Aghayere, (2013) they are of the view that local governments obtain adequate revenue for their operations. However, as Ikelegbe (2018), for example, puts it, there is ‘tremendous strengthening of local government funding, structuring, autonomy and democratization. Adequate finance is an indispensable tool for local government administration and the execution of project for which it was not up. According to Orewa (1998) the *raison d’être* of local authority is to collect its revenue efficiently and to use such revenue to provide many social services as possible for its tax payers while at the same time maintaining a reasonable amount reserve tide it over any period of financial stringency. Hence the ability of local authorities to generate revenue to manage it properly. Blau and Scout as a cited by Mukoro, (2011) in their local government have noted that they do not exist but in communities and societies and have roots in large social system.

Following from the foregoing, the basic environment of a local government in Nigeria with regard to revenue generation can be identified based on the provision at chapter (vi) (c) of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria which deals with public revenue and the fourth schedule there provides functions of a local government council section 162 (of chapter (vi) sub section 3,5,6,7 and

8) provide that “Any amount standing to the credit of the federation account and shall be distributed among the federal and state government council in such state on such terms and in manner as may be presided by the National Assembly. According to Okoli (2008), despite the elaborate provision made in both decree No. 36 of 1998 and 1999 constitution for the financial autonomy of the local government doubt still remains as to the financial relationships among the three tier of government for one thing the direct funding of the local government which has been jettisoned by the ambiguities in the provision of 1999 constitution as far as finance of the local government are concerned. The financial crisis of most local government in developing counties is worsened by the fact that they are located in the rural areas. As a result of rural poverty, they are unable to generate enough internal revenue. They, therefore, rely mainly on statutory allocation from the federal government which is usually inadequate for any meaningful development activity. As aptly stated in the local government Yearbook (2008). Adedeji (2018) asserts that the success or failure and the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of local government depends on the financial resources available to the individuals’ local authorities and the way the resources are utilized indeed the problem associated with inadequacy of findings continue to remain quite high among factors most frequently of local government to effectively perform their statutorily developed function.

Akpan, (1995) argued that the bottom line in judging the effectiveness of local government is the amount of funds at their disposal. He notes that “the success of

a local authority is often measured in terms of its ability to provide services to the public. These services cost money”, which the local government do not have sufficiency. Ogbonnia (2019) say’s that other sources of local government revenue depend on the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the council. He further explains that, there are several ways the council can generate funds but the major problems lies in the ability of the chairman to look inwards to create means of generating funds for the council.

The inadequacies of operational and capital funds constitute a set-back on local government implementation of regular services and investment programmes. Consequently, most local government can only pay workers salaries and take care of re-current expenditure. In the case of Nigeria, the financial crisis in the local government has been worsened by the failure of the Federal Government to recognize the new local government created by some states. The state governors use part of statutory allocations meant for the newly created ones, which in Oyo referred to as Local Council Development Areas (LCDA) (Ezeani, 2019).

### **2.2.8 Impediments to Rural Development Enhancement in Nigeria**

1. Relative Neglect for rural development policies: Generally, there has been less emphasis on rural development in Nigeria. The Edo State Vision 2020 (2014); in this respect notes thus; Over the years, the development strategies in Nigeria generally has been urban biased and for which there exists relative neglect of the rural areas resulting into a dearth of infrastructural facilities in the rural areas. Nigeria’s development policies which has resulted to rural

underdevelopment as reflected in the lack of rural industrialization and poor physical, social and institutional infrastructures (Mahon, 2017). This prevalent orientation, according to Olasiji (2017), is closely connected with the colonial economy which is still promoted in Nigeria. Olasiji (2017) in this respect specifically observes thus: The 1960 political independence did not change the pattern of rural/urban polarization. Nigerian leaders have continued to maintain the British colonial development legacy which serves the external economic interest and impoverish the standard of living among rural dwellers.

Olarenwaju and Toyin (2017) note too that such development strategy of concentrating investments in urban areas has resulted to a wide imbalance or gap in rural and urban development. This factor of relative neglect for rural development was reinforced by government's over-reliance on the petroleum economy. Obviously, the petroleum economy has become the main stay of the country's economy and for which government has, over the years, paid less attention to the development of the major activities of the rural areas particularly agriculture. Oshin (2017) in this respect contends that agriculture has continued to divide more as it loses its economic importance following the greater emphasis on the petroleum sector. In essence and according to Ele (2011), the emphasis on petroleum economy and the subsequent neglect of the agricultural sector has contributed substantially to the current poor state of the rural economy and the general rural sector underdevelopment.

2. Lack of Integration of the various rural development efforts: Beyond, the general neglect of development policies for the rural areas in Nigeria, another factor that significantly militates against rural development is the inability of the rural development institutions to co-operate among themselves and to ensure that their respective initiatives, actions and mandates are coordinated to reinforce and support each other and that their activities are streamlined towards effective realization of government's rural development objectives. Idowu (2019) observes this impediment to rural development in Nigeria in his comment thus: The activities of various bodies involved in the development efforts and activities never dovetailed as expected. This is to say that the expected co-ordination among the different departments, ministries, Federal, states and the local governments for instance, on the implementation mechanisms has been very difficult to achieve.

Ele (2011) in his study too notes that the rural development efforts in Nigeria has not been given the integrated and comprehensive approach it requires. This has been dysfunctional to rural development and as Abah (2018) argues, rural development in order to be effective has to be comprehensive, involving all aspects of rural life and involving the complimentary efforts of the local government, state government and federal government as well as the communities and voluntary agencies. Integration is indeed, necessary as the factors involved in rural development are interrelated and mutually enhance one another in their effectiveness (Okoli and Onah, 2018).

3. Ineffective implementation of rural development policies, projects and programs.

It has been recognized earlier in this work, Nigeria has over the years, nonetheless, developed some policies to enhance the development of the rural areas. Realizing the development objectives of those policies and programs has, however, been constrained by the pattern and nature of their implementation which has been characterized by ineffectiveness and inefficiency. As Ele (2011), Ikelegbe, (2011) and Nweke, (2011) contend, effective policy implementation is usually very difficult to realize particularly in developing nations like Nigeria. Implementation of rural development policies have, no doubt, been characterized by similar ineffectiveness and inefficiency. The inability of the relevant rural development agencies to effectively implement rural development policies could be as a result of inadequate resources which, quite often, are a real threat to successful implementation of rural development policies. It could, as a well, be a result of the pervasive corruption in the Nigerian public service bureaucracy. Such corrupt tendencies, most often, significantly increases the possibility that allocated fund for rural development projects and programs would be misappropriated or out rightly embezzled and thus hampering effective implementation and the consequent realization of the policy development goals and objectives of the policy. For instance, the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) that was intended to raise agricultural products and improve conditions of the rural population and the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure intended to transform the rural infrastructure were unable to

meet their development objectives due largely to poor implementation (Ajadi 2018). Indeed, rural development strategies do not work in a vacuum. Their effective implementation requires functional and capable institutions with appropriate institutional arrangement for that.

Another major explanation for the ineffective implementation of rural development policies in Nigeria is the discontinuation of rural development policies. Most often, rural development policies or programs are discontinued whenever there is a change in government leadership. Most times, new government abandons the projects and programs of its predecessor even when such programs are appropriate. In this respect, Ajadi (2018) notes that there is usually the absence of sustained, cohesive and conclusive implementation of rural development policies. It is this propensity that led to the abandonment of Better Life for Rural Women program of General Ibrahim Bagangida and to the introduction of the Family Support Programme by the succeeding regime of General Sani Abacha. In the context of this propensity, most rural development policies are not sustainably implemented and to their logical conclusion.

4. Poor commitment of the political representatives, towards enhancing the development of their rural constituencies. The political leaders and representatives in Nigeria, either at the executive or the legislature arm, have all come from given rural areas of the country. These politicians at different points and time have observed the development needs of these rural areas and even made promises too on how to address these development concerns.

However, their will and interest to actually articulate these needs and the strategies or programs for addressing them have, indeed, not been noticeable. The prevalent and common observation is that they hardly pursue conclusively the relevant programs for enhancing the development needs of the rural parts of their constituencies. This lack of interest and political will to project the development needs of the rural areas at the relevant political or bureaucratic power points does not induce government's prompt attention to addressing the development needs of the rural areas. This scenario is again reinforced by the fact that most political office holders (Local Government Chairmen, Councilors and Supervisors, State Commissioners and State Legislatures and Federal Legislatures) all detest living in the rural areas and have opted to, rather live in the metropolitan state capitals or the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. For this, they do not feel the impact of the gross deprivation obtainable in the rural areas and for which too they tend not to realize the urgent and dire need for enhancing development in the rural areas. These attitudes do not reflect effective political representation particularly for the rural population. Indeed, as Baba (2011) notes, political representation in Nigeria is essentially for private benefit and not for public benefit. This reasonably explains the non-challant attitude by political leaders and representatives towards enhancing national development generally and that of their respective rural constituencies particularly.

5. The Administrative inefficiency of the Local Government Areas: The local government areas occupy a strategic position in the development process of the rural areas. Even though it cannot be reasonably assumed that other higher tiers of government (state and federal tiers) do not have a role to play in enhancing rural sector development, the task constitutionally centre's, in a larger part, on the local government. As Anikeze (2017) argues, the primary purpose of local government is to provide essential local services and thus accelerate the pace of social and economic development of the rural and grassroots people. Indeed, the reconstitution of Nigeria into 301, 589 and 774 local government areas in 1976, 1991 and 1996 respectively was meant ostensibly to bring government closer to the local people and to speed up rural development. Sad enough, this objective has not be noticeably realized (Tony, 1995; Baba, 2011). This is even so, despite the huge monthly statutory allocations to the local government areas. The inability of the local governments to work towards enhancing the rural development could, in large parts, be attributed to poor and inept leadership and pervasive corruption in the local government administrative system (Halidu, 2017; Anikeze, 2017). The high level of corruption, for instance, makes it difficult for them to channel adequate fund and energy to effective rural development. As Anikeze (2017) notes, the interest of the local government leadership primarily revolves around trivialities or at best around those schemes for which they hope to derive

immediate personal gains. The net effect of this has been general stagnation in the development process of the rural people and their environment.

### **2.2.9 The Imperative Measures for Enhancing Rural Development in Nigeria**

1. Fundamentally, government needs to place rural development at the top of the agenda of the national development in realization of the fact that enhanced rural development is a prerequisite for meaningful and sustainable overall national development policies and programs. Further to this is the need for consistency in the execution of rural development programmes. Indeed, implementation of appropriate rural development programs should continue irrespective of changes in government.
2. Government again needs to de-emphasize total focus on the oil sector and to enhance agricultural development through addressing the needs of rural farmers with functional incentives. This is necessary as increased income from agricultural activities, which is the main stay of the rural economy, improves the quality of the life of the rural dwellers. For instance, when farmers shift from the use of traditional tools like hoes and matches to the use of modern tools like tractors, their production increases from subsistence to commercial quantities. Another dimension to this is the need for the establishment of agro – allied industries as growth or development drivers of the rural areas. Such agro – processing industries could be in the areas of rice milling and packaging, processing of cashew and groundnut products, cassava and cocoyam

floor packaging, processing of pineapple, oranges and paw-paw into fruit juice etc.

3. The political representatives and leaders need to identify with the development needs of the rural areas of their constituencies. Indeed, they need to articulate such needs and ensure that they become integral parts of the government's development agenda and that policies or programs initiated to address them are monitored to ensure proper implementation. This is necessary in view of the fact that rural dwellers on their own, do not constitute any meaningful political force and so development policy formulations generally ignores them. Again, the political representatives like the federal legislators could enhance rural development by actually devoting part of their constituency development allowance to rural sector development. This is necessary as such display of commitment to rural development by the political representatives will, in turn; trigger greater commitment towards initiating rural development projects and programs on the side of the rural communities themselves.
4. There is equally the need not only to adequately make budgetary allocation for rural development but, very importantly, in ensuring that such allocated funds are judiciously used to execute rural development projects and programs.
5. There is also the need for monitoring and integrating of the various national, state and local government policies and programmes on rural development and the co-ordination of the activities of all the rural development institutions. It is specifically suggested here that the federal government creates a federal

ministry that will have the mandate to ensure the integration and harmonization of the various strategies, policies activities and goals of all the pro-rural development institutions and agencies including private rural community initiatives and those of Non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The local governments in Nigeria need to eschew corruption particularly at the leadership level and emphasize accountability, due process, prudence and diligence. Again, the leadership need to refocus firmly on its primary and statutory duty of administering local and rural development in integrated and sustainable manner. It is expected that the democratization process in Nigeria will aid the coming into existence of visionary and purposeful leaderships in the local government system. Such responsible leaderships will be inclined to developing appropriate policies and programs that can be effectively implemented to address the rural underdevelopment needs in Nigeria. Indeed, with such commitment of government leadership at the state and federal government levels in Nigeria towards enhancing development at the rural areas, the nation would significantly key into the millennium rural development goals and objectives.

#### **2.2.10 Challenges Facing Rural Development**

Rural development is faced with challenges which have made the effect of government's efforts at different levels, NGOs, private initiatives and international involvement not felt by the intended beneficiaries. Umebali and Akubuilu (2011) list some of them to include

- Vicious cycle of poverty
- Poor infrastructure
- High population density
- High level of illiteracy
- Low social interaction and local politics and
- Rural-urban migration

A major challenge is that the hypothetical rural dweller who is the thermometer through which one determines the impact of rural development in the words of Chinsman (2018) continues to give negative readings as he is seen to be ravaged by an excruciating poverty, ignorance and disease. A lot of rigors, bottlenecks and unnecessary bureaucracy are often attached to rural development process. This evident in the history of most of the rural development programmes which are often saddled with disappointments.

Another challenge is the issue of proliferation of development programmes. Some are so superficially implemented that the average targeted population (rural dwellers) doubt the sincerity of the initiators. Such proliferation can easily be noticed from the many numbers of such that died with successive government that initiated them. The problem of implementation is another glaring challenge. Obot (2019) justified this claim when he writes that the development policies geared towards the improvement of the rural dwellers remained almost a house-hold word without corresponding success especially at the implementation states. To this end, some of them are so many rural communities but without water since their

installation. Also, most of the low cost haphazardly implemented as a result of poor supervision.

Perhaps, this is why water taps abound in housing estate built by some state governments during the second republic are yet to be completed and handed over to the intended beneficiaries 25 years after. This may also be the reason why the community and people's Banks system failed. The issue of funding is also a big challenge. Some of the rural development programmes are so bogus without a clearly defined source of funding. The cases of the housing for All, UBE etc., are clear examples. They often initiated before sourcing for funds from philanthropists and international donors which may never come. Other challenges include armed conflicts ranging from ethnic, religious and communal issues which do not provide enabling environment for the implementation of sustainable development programmes in such areas. For instance, a situation where foreigners and government workers in some coastal rural areas target of kidnapers demanding ransom is obviously not favorable or conducive for developmental work. Corruption poses a very big threat to rural development. There is lack of integrity, accountability and transparency on the part of people who are supposed to implement developmental projects in the rural areas. Nwakobi (2017) laments that public funds (made for rural projects) are stashed away in bank vaults in Europe and America, while an overwhelming proportion of the population live in abject poverty.

### **2.2.11 The Roles of Local Government in Rural Development**

Local government development is a broad term covering the basic facilities and services needed for rural communities and rural development (FAO, 2011). It is designed as the totality of basic physical facilities upon which all other economic activities in a system depend (African Development Bank, 2019, Geet, 2017). Rural development comprises the assets needed to provide people with access to economic and social facilities and services such as roads, water, drainage, bridges, electricity e.t.c. Local government is a government at the grassroots level of administration meant for meeting the peculiar needs of the rural people (Agagu, 2018). In his analysis, he viewed local government as a level of government which is supposed to have its greatest impact on the people at the rural areas. It is a tier of government which in physical terms is closest to the citizenry and it is saddled with responsibility of guaranteeing the political, social and economic development of its area and its people (Enero, Dadoyin and Elumilade, 2019). Appadorai (1995) observed that there are problems that are local in nature and such problems are better handled by local government because they are better understood by the local people themselves. Based on the 1976 guidelines for local government reform, it is expected that local government should engage in rural infrastructural provision to engender development and good governance at the grassroots. But unfortunately, local government still lacks behind in the area of infrastructure, this ugly trend is particularly greater in the area of water and sanitation, rural road access and electricity. According to World Bank (2019) Nigeria's infrastructure in terms of quality and quantity is grossly inadequate and

inferior to that existing in other parts of the world. Out of the 102 countries assessed in the global competitiveness report in 2004, the Nigeria's quality of infrastructure was ranked 3rd to the last, this is consistent with the World Bank survey results where manufacturing firms listed infrastructure as their most severe business constraint. The Nigerian roads were described as the lowest in density in Africa, where only 31% of the roads are paved as compared to 50% in the middle-income countries, and even where roads are provided, only 40% of these roads can be said to be in good condition (Alabi and Ocholi, 2018). Currently only 20% of Nigeria's rural population have access to electricity.

Ogunna (2000) attributed the low performance of local government to the following factors; inadequate revenue, low executive capacity, poor and inadequate working materials, incompetence and ineptitude of existing staff and excessive control by the state government which result in delays and red-tapism. The solution, he suggested, lies in the review of the local government system particularly in areas of financial relationship with the state government and personnel. This control of local government was made clear in the implementation, guideline on the application of the civil service. Reform in the local government service. Okunade, (2008) expressing his own idea, state that the spread of counties has provided the awareness among rural dwellers, and has provided the existence for a concept of the process of community development and of project which have been set in motion since the United National Organization development its concepts since thirty years ago. Community development draw greater inspiration from the desire

for a change and in the ability of man to learn and change through the voluntary method, (that is, free from coercion) and through the participation of individuals and groups in the development process for the achievement of some definite goals.

According to Sehinde, (2013) community development is: A process of education by which people of all ages and interest in the community, learn to share their thoughts, their ideas, the participation, their joys and their sorrows and in a large measure to mould and shape the communal destiny for themselves. It is a process of self discovery by the time the people of a community learn to identify and solve their community problems. A firm grasp at their beliefs and value system will throw light on what the community accepts as good and bad, as right or wrong. In turn, changes achieved by community effort can influence the beliefs and value system of a community. It is necessary to stimulate the self-help spirit of the people by mobilizing them for communal efforts, which should be sustained with the assistance of the government. Blue Print for rural development, argues that for effective implementation of strategies for community development the town and community unions, age grades, etc should be linked with government. This idea he said is to involve the community people fully through their union, age grades and other similar policies that are designed to improve their economic, social, political and cultural development. He stated that this would enable them to make positive contributions to both rural and national development. The community union and age grade in every community have usually served as point

of articulation and fully aware of the needs of the people. However, if they are fully integrated into the planning stage of development project, a lot will be achieved.

Writing on rural development in Nigeria, Mabogunje, (2002) in his book “leading issues in Nigerian Rural Development” accused successive Nigerian government at being previous regimes, rather than developing the rural areas. He content that this is the general pattern all over the third world countries. Mabogunje, remarked that many strategies such as “authoritarian hand out” from the administration which prescribed the facilities suitable for the rural areas and two, the so-called development from below have been tried in the past, in the attempt to solve rural poverty in Nigeria. These strategies have however not proved successful; he looks at rural development problem such as lack of coordinated community development programmes, manpower problems of infrastructure, problem of relevant rural education. He suggests solutions to these problems, which include clear understanding of the concept community development, an integrated development programmes, provision of infrastructure, relevance at rural education to the peculiar need and aspiration of the rural areas. Local government and rural development in Nigeria, Olowo, et al., and (2011) describes government approach to rural development as a sham. According to him, government has succeeded in imposing development programme on the rural masses, such programme he argues, only benefited a few rich and powerful urban elite. He calls for a model of rural development, which involves the genuine participation of the rural people. Such he

continues will be relatively independent of centralized urban-oriented bureaucratic machines.

Nwaka, (2019) on his part argued that government imposition of rural development programme on the communities have been Cog in the wheel of rural development. As he put it, government have often set community development; priorities without the participation of the target or relevant communities. He suggests that since government, communities are the engines of growth; government should play down its excessive control in betting out development goals and priorities for local communities. Nnoli, (2000) sees self-help, as a strategy for rural development as a form of exploitation because, according to him, for the rural people it is viewed as the task resort to their survival due to government neglect. According to him, the community development process arises from the crying need of the rural population for social welfare services, unwillingness of the rural class to provide these amenities, the exploitation of the ruling class of the competition among communities for those social artifacts which are deemed to reflect social progress, and the exploitation by the ruling class at the tendency by Nigerians to invest more time, energy and resources and those tasks approved by their communities than those sanctioned by the national collectively via-the-state. Okoli, (2015) in his book contends that the British colonialists in Nigeria hatched community development ideology in order to under develop the people through his negative manipulation strategy. He regrets that his strategy has continued to be employed by indigenous rulers in the post-colonial state. He further contends that this

strategy predicated upon the colonial policy of economic exploitation of the local area in an instrument used to sustain the self-interest of the ruling classes while the rural communities suffer under poor, harsh and stagnated conditions.

Aborisade (2008) in his book highlighted the various development programmes designed by successive governments in Nigeria, which aimed at developing the rural communities. He gives an example of River Basin and Rural Development Authorities established in 1975 to promote rural development. He laments that in practice the scheme bloated bureaucracies feeding on mega million naira contracts for irrigation and other agricultural projects while the rural areas for which they are meant seemed to have recorded deeper in debilitating poverty. Finally, from the extensive review of literature, it is obvious that scholars like Akpan, (2002), Olisa (2002) and Olowu (2008) regretted that rural development activities and programmes of the past decades of national independence have not transformed the country's rural areas in the modern, well supplied contended that prosperous population envisaged are the beginning of national sovereignty. They concluded that in terms at the number of programmes identification pursued, rural development in Nigeria has made little transformatary impact. They cite basic social services, public utilities and essential infrastructure as still being woefully inadequate in almost all corners of the country. In Nigeria, past centralized development efforts embarked upon had resulted into failure to benefit the rural people yet; these people cannot be neglected for its enormity. For instance, in Nigeria, the population of people residing in rural areas in few selected states is:

Edo 70%, Rivers 86.16%, Anambra 80:85%, Bauchi 76:8%, Oyo 37:84% , Ondo 25.8%, Kano 89:6%, Sokoto 38:7% Kwara 52.0%, Plateau 69:0%, Ogun 68:3% and Adamawa 71:5% (Olojede, 2017). It has therefore been realized that rural development must constitute a major part of a development strategy if a large segment of those in greatest need are to benefit since most programmes embarked upon by the central and state governments have failed in these areas; then local government becomes the next agent to fall on for development. The roles of local government in rural development are:

**Education:** Local governments through their local education districts have been responsible for the construction, maintenance and staffing of primary schools in their respective areas. Also, it is responsible for the payment of salaries for teaching and non – teaching staff in primary schools.

**Transportation:** The provision of transportation has gone a long way to enhance the status of Nigerian local governments. These local governments have set up diverse mass urban transit scheme to help to transport their staff and also act as a source of revenue generation for local governments.

**Public Toilet:** Local governments are not left out in the maintenance of good hygienic culture. They embark on the construction of public toilet for their people.

**Water Supply:** Local governments embark on digging of bore holes in the rural areas; this has greatly improved the hygiene nature of the people in these rural communities.

**Medical and Health:** These include the provision, maintenance and administration of dispensaries, maternity and health centres. The increase in the revenue allocation to local governments has been helping in the maintenance of these medical and health services.

**Law Enforcement:** Customary courts of Grades A, B and C and setup in different local government areas. These courts deal with civil cases such as divorce, defaulters and issuing of certificate of marriage Nehru (2006) emphasized the role of local government as the basis of any true system of democracy. According to him, the role of local government includes the following;

**Grass-root democracy:** Local government provides scope for democracy at the grass – root level. If direct democracy can still be practicable, it is only at this level, otherwise democracy at the state or national level has become only indirect type.

**Serves as a training School:** Local government is an excellent ground for creating and training future leaders. The participation of people at the local level in the management of their own affairs, gives them necessary experience to handle bigger affairs later at the state or national level.

**Encourages participation of the people in public affairs:** Local government affords opportunity to the people to participate in public affairs. It has become impracticable for common people to participate in public affairs at the state or national level.

**Reduces the burden of the central government:** Local government in a way acts supplementary to the central government. No doubt historically the local government is prior to the state or national government, but with the passage of time many important functions got transferred to the central government.

**Serves as a channel of communication:** The local government serves as two-way channel of communication between itself and the central government. Desires and aspirations of the local community are articulated and carried upward to the state government, and plans and programmes of the state and the central governments flow in the reverse direction.

**Vital for national progress:** Local government promotes diversity of experience and creative activity through democratic action. Thus, it contributes to national progress through resilience, strength and richness of democracy.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

In social work, theories are used as a general principle or body of principles offered to explain a phenomenon. Theory should therefore be accurate and predictive description of the natural world.

The following theories are relevant to this study:

- Endogenous Theory of Development
- Participatory Approach Model
- Empowerment Theory

#### **2.3.2 Participatory Approach Model**

Participatory Rural Approach (PRA) is an approach mostly used by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other agencies involved in international development. The approach aims to incorporate the knowledge and opinions of rural people in the planning and management of development projects and programmes. The root of PRA techniques can be traced to the activist adult education methods of Paulo Freire. In his view, an actively involved and empowered local population is essential to successful rural community development. Robert Chambers, a key exponent of PRA argued that the approach owes much to the Freirian theme that poor and exploited people can and should be enabled to analyze their own reality (Chamber, 2019).

People's participation as a concept was formulated or rediscovered in the 1970s, in response to the growing awareness that the various approaches then employed for rural development, such as community development, integrated rural development or basic needs did not often lead to significant rural development and especially, largely, as was then thought, because there was little involvement in development projects of those undergoing 'development'.

PRA has been described as a family or approaches, methods of behaviors that enable people to express and analyze the realities of their lives and conditions, to plan themselves what action to take, and to monitor and evaluate the results.

The term 'participation' has recently come to play a central role in the discourse of rural development practitioners and policy makers. Participatory development stands for partnership which is built upon the basis of dialogue among the various

actors, during which the agenda is jointly set, and local views and indigenous knowledge are deliberately sought and respected. This implies negotiation rather than the dominance of an externally set project agenda. Thus people become actors instead of being beneficiaries (OECD, 2004). Participation is a process through which stake holder's influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them (World Bank, 2015). Participation in rural development has gradually become more established among governments, donors and international organizations, to such an extent that Stirrat (2001) argued that, it is now difficult to find a rurally based development project which does not in one way or another claim to adopt a participatory approach involving bottoms planning, acknowledging the important of indigenous knowledge, and claiming to empower local people.

Arnstein (2019) defines participation as the redistribution of power that enables to have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society. She puts forward a model that consists of a ladder with eight rungs, as illustrated in the below. He stated that the ladder is a simplification and that the eight rungs are an imperfect representation of what is really a continuum, where a clear distinction between levels is not always possible. However, it helps to illustrate the fact that there are different degrees of citizen participation.

The model above is not neutral as pointed out by Hayward et al 2004, reading the ladder from bottom to top; it suggests a hierarchical view that promotes full participation as the goal to be achieved. Cohen and Uphof (2006) were among the first to stress the importance of participation in the various stages of the project cycle, particularly decision making and evaluation, rather than simply sharing in the benefits of projects. Pearse and Stifel complement this by stressing control and, by implication, also issues of power. According to Cohen and Uphof, (2006), participation includes people's involvement in decision making processes, in implementing programmes, their sharing in the benefits of development programmes and their involvement in effort to evaluate such programmes.

The model is relevant to the study in the sense that if rural development realizes its potentials, disadvantaged rural people had to be organized and actively involved in designing policies and programmes and in controlling social and economic institution that have impact on their standard of living. The use of PRA can help involve communities in the various decisions concerning their own development, including appraisal, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The 'developers' have also benefitted from the interaction of PRA, in the sense that development practitioners have become more open to and respectful of local knowledge and more receptive to local.

It involves local people, development agencies, and policy makers deciding together how progress should be measured, and results acted upon. It can reveal valuable lessons and improve accountability. By broadening involvement in identifying and

analyzing change, a clearer picture can be gained of what is really happening on the ground. It allows people to celebrate successes, and learn from failures. For those involved, it can also be a very empowering process, since it puts them in charge, helps develop skills, and shows that their views count (Guiijt and Gaventa 2015).

## **2.4 Empirical Review**

The success of rural development programmes does not depend on the provision of fund and materials resources alone (Oyebamiji, 2017). Human factor in community development programmes is equally important base on the fact that successful community development activities will be determined by the competence, motivation and general effectiveness of the development of the community. There is also the need for mass mobilization and education of the people so as to achieve meaningful participation in the process of community development i.e. need identification, planning, monitoring/implementation and evaluation of projects cannot be understood. Effective community change demand for a dynamic human resources development. The Community Development Association members are therefore very important in community development projects because they represent the community and are directly in charge of projects.

Similarly, Chinsman (2018) in a measure of rural development found that in assessing rural development projects, three independent programmes became a single entity with the components of (a) community empowerment (b) rural health

(c) sustainable agriculture. Under the component of community development, the aspects of community mobilization and rural water supply were combined. The component rural health comprised primary health care (training of village health workers and supervision of village health posts) and the curative aspect (health care services rendered at the dispensaries) while the component of sustainable agriculture as well as the commercial units such as poultry farm, tree nurseries/orchards, and distribution of farm inputs through to the farmers. He concluded in his study that the involvement of the government in these three key areas of community development significantly improve the well-being of the rural dwellers.

In a study by Bazin and Roux (2018) on the effect of various government interventions on the development of the rural areas of the Mediterranean, the findings of the study revealed that, because government was directly involved through the provision of fund, material and technical support and the people of the areas were carried along through their community development association, the projects brought appreciable development to the areas. They also identified several other variables that support local economic capacities as a result of the execution of these projects in the local community. These include achievement of market position, self-reliance of local actors, and local control of major resources and massive use of available local resources.

Dare (2013) in his work, discusses the creation of local governments in Nigeria, Nigeria's, socio-political context, cultural diversity and the import of these on local

government administration in Nigeria. A brief historical background of local government is also discussed. The focus however is on the problem of local government administration as a challenge to rural development such as finance, inadequacy of skilled workers, problems of participation and involvement of the people in the decision making process, general indiscipline, undue interference by the Federal and State governments in local administration, misplaced priority, etc.

Rural development relates not only a sustained increase in the level of productivity of rural dwellers and improvement in their wellbeing but also physical, social and economic improvement. One of the strategies employed by the government to achieve these objectives is through the provision of fund, materials and technical man power to assist local communities. Haddad (2006) surveyed the impact of government intervention on rural development projects in the rural areas. The study examined beneficiary ownership and project sustainability, mechanisms of downward accountability, participatory planning and poverty reduction. He rated the services provided and reported that primary health care services was the most important to the need of the people (35.8%), followed by access to clean drinking water (23.3%), access to primary education (16.5 %), improvement of access roads (14.2 %), and the formation of women's groups/cooperatives (10.2 %). He also reported that, 74 % of the members of the community development committees who facilitated and supervised these projects are men, while 26 % are women. He concluded that the provision of these social amenities empowered the rural

dwellers, improves their standard of living and enhance the socio-economic development of the community.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter described the methodology used in this research investigation. The methodology includes research design; population; sample and sampling technique; the research instrument, operationalization and measurement of variables; sources of data of the research instrument and method of data analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study adopted survey research design because the sampled elements and the variables under investigation were observed without any attempt to control or manipulate them. Agbonifoh and Yomere (2016) stated that the purpose of this design was to understand and predict some aspects of the behavior of the population under investigation.

#### **3.3 Population and Sampling Technique**

In the context of research, a population refers to the entire group of individuals, items or phenomena that possess certain characteristics and are of interest to the researcher. It is defined as a group of individuals, objects or items taken to measure the sample (Creswell, 2018). The population in this research work is 350 staffs of Esan Central Local Government Area of Edo State. The reason behind

the focus on this specific population is affected by time and financial resource constraints. (Sources Head of Service Department).

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique**

A Sample size is the number of observations used for determining the estimates of a given population (Neuman, 2006). Sample size is a portion or subset of the population. The convenience sample techniques was used to select one hundred (100) respondents' staff from the total population

### **3.5 Research Instrument**

Structured questionnaire was used to obtain data from the respondents. The questionnaire consists of statements measuring the variables of interest. The questionnaires were divided in two sections. Section A comprised questions on the personal information of the respondents while section B comprised of questions on the role and challenges of local government in rural development in Esan Central LGA of Edo State

### **3.6 Method of Data Analysis**

This study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics in analyzing the data obtained. The descriptive statistics used include frequency distribution, mean and standard deviation. T test will be used as an inferential statistic to test the research hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 20.0) software was as platform used for all the analyses.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This chapter focuses on the presentation of results collected from the investigation. The findings are also discussed.

## Presentations of results

**Question 1:** What role did local government administration played towards rural development in Esan central Local Government Area?

**Table 1:** Distribution of responses on the role local government administration played towards rural development in Esan central Local Government Area

.	ITEMS	N	Mean Score	Remark
1.	The local government has implemented effective policies that promote rural development in Esan Central.	100	2.57	<b>Agreed</b>
2.	Local government officials regularly engage with community members to identify development needs.	100	3.15	<b>Agreed</b>
3.	The local government provides adequate support for agricultural development in rural areas.	100	2.79	<b>Agreed</b>
4.	Local government initiatives have led to the improvement of education and health facilities in rural communities.	100	3.28	<b>Agreed</b>
5.	The local government has effectively mobilized resources for the development of rural infrastructure.	100	3.22	<b>Agreed</b>

***Criterion Mean: 2.50***

The data in Table 1 above shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 met the mean score standard of 2.50 and, therefore, were all agreed. It was therefore revealed that the local government has implemented effective policies that promote rural development in Esan Central. It was discovered that the Local government officials regularly engage with community members to identify development needs. It was seen that the local government provides adequate support for agricultural development in rural areas. It was there for shown that the

Local government initiatives have led to the improvement of education and health facilities in rural communities. It was discovered that the local government has effectively mobilized resources for the development of rural infrastructure.

**Question 2:** Did job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government led to stoppage of rural-urban migration in Esan central Local Government Area?

**Table 2:** Distribution of Responses on job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government led to stoppage of rural-urban migration in Esan central Local Government Area?

ITEMS		N	Mean Score	Remark
1.	Government job creation programs have encouraged youths to remain in rural communities.	100	3.54	Agreed
2.	The availability of rural infrastructure (roads, electricity, water, etc.) has reduced migration to urban areas.	100	3.62	Agreed
3.	Employment opportunities provided by the local government have improved the standard of living in rural areas.	100	3.59	Agreed
4.	Lack of adequate job opportunities still compels residents to migrate to urban centers.	100	3.25	Agreed
5.	Government efforts in providing basic amenities have successfully discouraged rural-urban migration.	100	3.24	Agreed

**Criterion Mean: 2.50**

The data in Table above shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 met the mean score standard of 2.50 and, therefore, were all agreed. It was discovered that government job creation programs have encouraged youths to remain in rural communities. It was shown that the availability of rural infrastructure (roads, electricity, water, etc.) has reduced migration to urban areas. It was revealed that employment opportunities provided by the local government have improved the standard of living in rural areas. It was seen that lack of adequate job opportunities still compels residents to migrate to urban centers. It was shown government efforts in providing basic amenities have successfully discouraged rural–urban migration.

**Question 3** To what extent does government’s budgetary allocation address rural development in

Esan central Local Government Area?

**Table 3:** Distribution of Responses on extent to which government’s budgetary allocation address rural development in Esan central Local Government Area

	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Remark</b>
1.	The local government allocates sufficient funds to rural development projects annually.	100	3.64	<b>Agreed</b>
2.	Budgetary allocations for rural development are effectively utilized for intended purposes.	100	2.88	<b>Agreed</b>
3.	There is transparency and accountability in the management of rural development funds.	100	3.51	<b>Agreed</b>
4.	The amount budgeted for rural development has led to noticeable improvements in rural living conditions.	100	3.55	<b>Agreed</b>

5. Inadequate budgetary allocation remains a major obstacle to rural development in Esan Central.	100	3.43	<b>Agreed</b>
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**Criterion Mean: 2.50      Grand Mean: 2.93**

The data in Table 3 shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 met the mean score standard of 2.50 and, therefore, were all considered high. It was discovered that local government allocates sufficient funds to rural development projects annually. It was shown that budgetary allocations for rural development are effectively utilized for intended purposes. It was seen that there are transparency and accountability in the management of rural development funds. It was there for revealed that the amount budgeted for rural development has led to noticeable improvements in rural living conditions. It was discovered that inadequate budgetary allocation remains a major obstacle to rural development in Esan Central.

**Hypothesis**

**Hypothesis 1:** Local government does not play significant role towards rural development in Esan central Local Government Area.

**Table 4: T-Test on Significant Role towards Rural Development in Esan Central Local Government Area**

Variable	No Exp.	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-Cal.	t-Critical	Sig (2-tailed)	Decision
<b>Local Government Role</b>	40	6.06	1.04	99	.177	1.964	.860	H <sub>01</sub> Rejected
Rural Development	60	6.09	1.12					

Table 4 shows that Local government does not play significant role towards rural development in Esan central Local Government Area the table shows that the calculated value is 0.177 while the critical value is 1.964 at 0.05 alpha level of

significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be concluded that Local government play significant role towards rural development in Esan central Local Government Area.

**Hypothesis 2:** Job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government does not prevent migration in Esan central Local Government Area.

**Table 5: T-Test on Job Creation and Provision of Infrastructures by the Government Does not Prevent Migration in Esan central Local Government Area**

Variable	No Exp.	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-Cal.	t-Critical	Sig (2-tailed)	Decision
Job Creation and Provision of Infrastructures	60	7.01	1.19	99	.286	1.964	.771	H <sub>01</sub> Rejected
Prevention of Migration in Esan	40	6.96	1.22					

Table 5 shows that Job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government help to prevent migration in Esan central Local Government Area. The Table shows that the calculated value is 0.286 while the critical value is 1.964 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is therefore concluded that Job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government help to prevent migration in Esan central Local Government Area.

**Hypothesis 3:** Government's budgetary allocation does not address rural development in Esan central Local Government Area.

**Table 4: T-Test on Government's budgetary allocation address rural development in Esan central Local Government Area.**

Variable	No Exp.	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-Cal.	t-Critical	Sig (2-tailed)	Decision
Local Government Role	40	7.05	1.04	99	.168	1.964	.860	H <sub>01</sub> Rejected
Rural	60	7.08	1.12					

## **Development**

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Table 4 shows Government's budgetary allocation does not address rural development in Esan central Local Government Area, the table shows that the calculated value is 0.176 while the critical value is 1.964 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be concluded that Government's budgetary allocation does not address rural development in Esan central Local Government Area.

## **Discussion of Findings**

From research question one it was therefore revealed that the local government has implemented effective policies that promote rural development in Esan Central. It was discovered that the Local government officials regularly engage with community members to identify development needs. It was seen that the local government provides adequate support for agricultural development in rural areas. It was there for shown that the Local government initiatives have led to the improvement of education and health facilities in rural communities. It was discovered that the local government has effectively mobilized resources for the development of rural infrastructure. This was in line with work of Emezi (2009) in Izueke (2010), who claims that local government as a system of local administration under local communities that are organized to maintain law and order, provide some limited range of social services and encourage cooperation and participation of the inhabitants towards the improvement of their conditions of

living. It provides the community with formal organizational framework which enable them to conduct their affairs effectively for the general good.

From research question two it was discovered that government job creation programs have encouraged youths to remain in rural communities. It was shown that the availability of rural infrastructure (roads, electricity, water, etc.) has reduced migration to urban areas. It was revealed that employment opportunities provided by the local government have improved the standard of living in rural areas. It was seen that lack of adequate job opportunities still compels residents to migrate to urban centers. It was shown government efforts in providing basic amenities have successfully discouraged rural–urban migration. This was supported (Zakari ya’u, 2014) who claims that resources in local government can be seen in terms of human, material, and financial. However, the crucial resource is financial resources, because it gives meaning to the mobilization of human and material resources, which indeed promotes development at the grass-root.

From research question three it was discovered that local government allocates sufficient funds to rural development projects annually. It was shown that budgetary allocations for rural development are effectively utilized for intended purposes. It was seen that there are transparency and accountability in the management of rural development funds. It was revealed that the amount budgeted for rural development has led to noticeable improvements in rural living conditions. It was discovered that inadequate budgetary allocation remains a major obstacle to rural development in Esan Central. Bazin and Roux (2018) on the effect of various government interventions on the development of the rural areas of the Mediterranean, the findings of the study revealed that, because government was directly involved through the provision of fund, material and technical support and the people of the areas were carried along through their community development association, the projects brought appreciable development to the areas

From the hypotheses it was concluded that Local government play significant role towards rural development in Esan central Local Government Area.

Hypothesis two revealed that that Job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government help to prevent migration in Esan central Local Government Area.

It was concluded that Government's budgetary allocation help to address rural development in Esan central Local Government Area in a study by Bazin and Roux (2018) on the effect of various government interventions on the development of the rural areas of the Mediterranean, the findings of the study revealed that,

because government was directly involved through the provision of fund, material and technical support and the people of the areas were carried along through their community development association, the projects brought appreciable development to the areas

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The study examines the role the role and challenges of local government in rural development in Nigeria: a case study of Esan central LGA of Edo State. The specific objectives are to assess the role of the local government administration in rural development in Esan central Local Government Area; to investigate whether job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government led to prevention of rural-urban migration in Esan central Local Government Area; to find out the relationship between governments budgetary allocation and rural development in Esan central Local Government Area. This chapter contains the summary of findings, contribution to knowledge, conclusion and recommendations.

## 5.2 Summary of Findings

The following are the summary of findings for this study. The findings were obtained from the extensive analyses carried out on the responses obtained from the structured questionnaire:

It was therefore revealed that the local government has implemented effective policies that promote rural development in Esan Central. It was discovered that the Local government officials regularly engage with community members to identify development needs. It was seen that the local government provides adequate support for agricultural development in rural areas. It was there for shown that the Local government initiatives have led to the improvement of education and health facilities in rural communities. It was discovered that the local government has effectively mobilized resources for the development of rural infrastructure.

It was also discovered that government job creation programs have encouraged youths to remain in rural communities. It was shown that the availability of rural infrastructure (roads, electricity, water, etc.) has reduced migration to urban areas. It was revealed that employment opportunities provided by the local government have improved the standard of living in rural areas. It was seen that lack of adequate job opportunities still compels residents to migrate to urban centers. It was shown government efforts in providing basic amenities have successfully discouraged rural–urban migration.

It was shown that local government allocates sufficient funds to rural development projects annually. It was shown that budgetary allocations for rural development are effectively utilized for intended purposes. It was seen that there are transparency and accountability in the management of rural development funds. It was revealed that the amount budgeted for rural development has led to noticeable improvements in rural living conditions. It was discovered that inadequate budgetary allocation remains a major obstacle to rural development in Esan Central.

From the hypotheses it was concluded that Local government play significant role towards rural development in Esan central Local Government Area.

It was revealed that Job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government help to prevent migration in Esan central Local Government Area. It was concluded that Government's budgetary allocation helps to address rural development in Esan central Local Government Area.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

It was concluded that local government has implemented effective policies that promote rural development in Esan Central. It was discovered that the Local government officials regularly engage with community members to identify development needs. It was also discovered that government job creation programs have encouraged youths to remain in rural communities. It was seen that lack of adequate job opportunities still compels residents to migrate to urban centers. It was shown government efforts in providing basic amenities have successfully

discouraged rural–urban migration. It was shown that local government allocates sufficient funds to rural development projects annually. It was shown that budgetary allocations for rural development are effectively utilized for intended purposes. It was discovered that Local government play significant role towards rural development in Esan central Local Government Area. It was discovered that Job creation and provision of infrastructures by the government help to prevent migration in Esan central Local Government Area. It was concluded that Government’s budgetary allocation helps to address rural development in Esan central Local Government Area.

#### **5.4 Recommendation**

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been made:

1. The roles played by the local governments can be said to be very successful. Though, there is need for the government to increase their function capacity of these projects and programmes to be able to cover every area of the state.
2. The government should always maintain a balance in development both in urban and rural areas of the state to minimize migration.
3. Local governments should be more people-centered in approach, such that necessary collaboration/partnership with communities in its domain can facilitate the process of rural development.

##### **5.4.1 Recommendation of Further Study**

Similar work should be carried on the relationship between the role of local government and rural development other local government area in Nigeria

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## **Appendix**

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

Dear Respondent,

**APPEAL FOR THE COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE**

I am an undergraduate student in the above-named Department. As part of the requirement for the programme, I am conducting a research on “The Roles and Challenges of Local Government in Rural Development in Nigeria: a case study of Esan Central LGA of Edo State”. In this regard, you have been randomly selected as a member of the sample. I wish to assure you that your answers will be treated in strict confidence and used for the stated academic purpose only.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

**IKHELOA CHRISTABEL**

**SECTION A**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Instruction: Please tick (√) the appropriate option and fill the spaces provided.

1. **Gender:** Male (    ), Female (    )
2. **Age:** 30- 35 years (    ), 36- 40 years (    ), 41-50 years (    ), 51 years and above (    )
3. **Marital Status:** Single (    ), Married (    ), Divorced / Separated (    ), Widowed (    )

**SECTION B**

**Instruction:** To each statement, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following by (√) in the given column.

**Key:** SA –Strongly Agree, A- Agree,N – Neutral D- Disagree, SD –Strongly Disagree

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	N	SD	D
	<b>Role Local Government Administration Play Towards Rural Development in Esan Central Local Government Area</b>					
1.	The local government has implemented effective policies that promote rural development in Esan Central.					
2.	Local government officials regularly engage with community members to identify development needs.					
3.	The local government provides adequate support for agricultural development in rural areas.					
4.	Local government initiatives have led to the improvement of education and health facilities in rural communities.					
5.	The local government has effectively mobilized resources for the development of rural infrastructure.					
	<b>Job Creation and Provision of Infrastructure by the Government Lead to the Stoppage of Rural–Urban Migration in Esan Central Local Government Area</b>					
6.	Government job creation programs have encouraged youths to remain in rural communities.					
7.	The availability of rural infrastructure (roads, electricity, water, etc.) has reduced migration to urban areas.					
8.	Employment opportunities provided by the local government have improved the standard of living in rural areas.					
	Lack of adequate job opportunities still compels residents to migrate to urban centers.					
9.	Government efforts in providing basic amenities have successfully discouraged rural–urban migration.					
10.	<b>Extent to which Government’s Budgetary Allocation Address Rural Development in Esan Central Local Government Area</b>					

11.	The local government allocates sufficient funds to rural development projects annually.					
12.	Budgetary allocations for rural development are effectively utilized for intended purposes.					
13.	There is transparency and accountability in the management of rural development funds.					
	The amount budgeted for rural development has led to noticeable improvements in rural living conditions.					
14.	Inadequate budgetary allocation remains a major obstacle to rural development in Esan Central.					