

## State, International Capital and Poverty in Maigana

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### Abstract

*Nigeria is predominantly a rural environment that has been experiencing endemic and protracted crises. Since a national crisis is no other than the totality of its rural crises manifesting in, among others, a fall in rural productivity and income, chronic rural poverty, rural unemployment and under-employment, rural – urban migration, collapse of basic infrastructural needs etc. Maigana offers and demonstrates empirical insights into the practical condition of Nigeria’s rural malaise. Whereas analysis of the socio-economic setting of a rural community can not be complete and accurate without being placed within the orbit of the State and international capital, it is rather not unusual that the various World Bank/IMF ‘solutions’, adopted by the Nigerian State, further worsen the rural crisis. Maigana, one of the few rural communities where direct capitalist intervention was unleashed even before the direct colonial domination provides basic data for our analysis.*

### Introduction

It is perhaps too general and mundane to say that the prevailing rural situation in Nigeria’s countryside is that of stagnation and decay, apathy and despair; despite all the seeming attempts and massive investments pinned down to transform the rural environment. Thus, the growth in rural studies has considerably increased since the mid 1970s sequel to the World Bank’s renewed interests to resolve part of its inherent contradictions. These renewed interests by the World Bank to plunge the agrarian economy in Nigeria have been supported and backed by the State legislation and apparatuses.

Successive regimes in Nigeria since 1960 have made several policy declarations and inaugurated numerous programs and strategies designed to transform the countryside. Even though no one is likely to dispute the fact that as the countryside occupies a unique place and thus plays central roles in sustaining the national economy, the rural society still remains the most neglected and bullied by the State power.

Hence, the disastrous failures to transform the rural areas in at least providing the essentials of life has over time, conditioned a greater number of rural populace with lack of essential needs, weakened hearts and plagued with chronic poverty. Thus, the incessant failures that have characterized rural policies, programs and strategies, located within the realm of the State, must thus be part of the legacy or tradition of the political economy. This paper attempts to briefly examine certain issues bordering on rural policies vis-à-vis their impacts on Maigana rural communities.

### **Maigana: Location and Peopling of the Area**

The Maigana rural communities under focus extend roughly from latitude 11. 00 to 11. 06’ North and from longitude 7.54 to 7.58 East. The rural community is thus 30km away from Zaria, off Zaria-Jos highway. It is speculated that the projected or estimated population of the area is more than 100,000 inhabitants spread throughout the constituent hamlets and wards. Most of the people asked during the field work could not satisfactorily state the population of the area. However, *Sarkin* Maigana and other hamlet/ward heads were able to arrive or “More than 100,000 people” probably based on tax collections and other reasons.

Maigana is the disputed headquarters of Soba LGA in Kaduna State. The local government is bordered by Zaria and Sabon Gari LGAs to the North-West, Igabi and Kauru LGAs to the South-West and Southern parts of the Local Government, Makarfi LGA to the North and Ikara/Kubau LGAs to the East. It is however the headquarters of the KADP.

Since the era of imperial and colonial plunder, Maigana has served as an important centre of agricultural activities with one of the first farm centres established in the area. Maigana is also the District headquarters in addition to its self-esteemed *Sarki* status locality; controlling a number of hamlets and wards.

The origins of Maigana community with which we are concerned is said to have been peopled a long time ago. No exact date has been known on the actual period of the peopling of the area as no archaeological anthropological studies have been carried out on the walls and minaret in the locality. However, as an old settlement, particularly the Maigana walled rural community, it is said to be founded and settled initially by a group of people from the East – Bornu (Abbass 1994 Interview) This is thus supported by Smith's hypothesis of a substantial North-South movements of peoples since the era of desiccation (Smith 1977: 156).

Furthermore, the collapse of the first or even the second Kanuri empires has also been explained to have triggered avalanches of migrations southwards into the Hausa land. These chains of events and the resultant migrations in and from Kanem-Borno were unprecedented in the history of Hausaland, particularly in the processes of state formation and consolidation.

To buttress the Bornuan origins, people of Maigana show that even names of their localities are of and thus depict Kanuri words or vocabularies. For instance, the name Maigana is said to be derived from the Kanuri words 'Mai' (King) and 'Gana' (Small) which altogether means 'small king'. Others include Soba, Gimba etc.

### ***The Economy and Society***

Among the principal hamlets and wards, Maigana and Sabon Gari (*Tasha*) localities are the major centres of socio-economic as well as political activities. Thus, all the neighboring localities look towards Maigana, as it accommodates the traditional oligarchy, for leadership, guidance and of course control. Ecologically, the savanna vegetation is the dominant natural feature of the area. This feature is much more tolerable than that of the upper North. However, the specific natural vegetation of the area is that of Sudan savanna which is sometimes moist. Hence, the characteristic feature of the landscape is predominantly grass cover which invariably exhibits two different types: viz- tall and green grasses during the rainy periods, particularly at the swampy areas or river beds, and short and dry grass cover during the dry seasons. The topography of the area indicates that the soils contain same vital nutrients essential for a variety of crops cultivation.

In the area however, laterised soils are common. These soils are generally reddish-brown in color and therefore rich. But in the *fadama* areas, the soils are naturally dark or brown and thus contain fertile alluvium which retains water or moisture even during the dry season. Even though the soils are characteristically rich it is bewildering to note that agricultural activities, over time, can only be enhanced with the application of chemical fertilizers and other related chemicals; in addition to applying the high yielding varieties (HYV) or improved seeds. Hence, soils and crops have, over time, been polluted with such chemicals and have therefore become highly fertilizer responsive.

Rains generally commence in the area from March to September or October with some variations from season to season (Mortimore 1989). The average rainfall in the area is between 32 and 58 inches or 1050 and 1373mm with variations of course from year to year (Mortimore, 1989). Thus, agriculture is naturally the predominant occupational activity of the people. The agrarian population, in addition to the cultivation of staple food crops, had come to be coerced to cultivate specific cash crops for exports. Cash crops grown in the area are cotton, groundnut and tobacco. Others include 'commercialized' maize, sugar cane, vegetables etc. Food crops include guinea corn, maize, millet, yams, etc. Fruits and other groups of vegetables are grown through irrigation canals, established a long time ago, and *fadama* farming activities during the dry season.

Other activities engaged by the rural inhabitants include livestock rearing, fishing and mixed farming activities. Peasant farmers in the locality indicated that both cash and food crops are cultivated in the area in addition to other farming activities carried out.

The agrarian economy in Maigana has been complemented by a number of non-farm activities which have bolstered the dynamics of the rural economy. During the early epochs of colonial rule, the establishment of Maigana farm centre and other ancillary centres at Samaru, Anchau etc also contributed immensely to the diversification of the entire rural economy. The Maigana Farm Centre was established by the colonial government in 1910 primarily to boost the production of cash crops, particularly cotton, in the area.

Thus, as the rural economy initially revolved around the production of the subsistence food crops, the ascension of colonial rule completely disrupted and distorted the traditional patterns, relation and orientation of production. The results portrayed that the rural economy was tilted and changed to predominantly revolve around the production of cash crops.

Since the period of colonial rule, the spree of State intervention in rural economy has been incessant and devastating (Jamal & Weeks, 1993). During the colonial era, for instance, the aim of State intervention in the rural agricultural production was essentially designed to promote trade, capital accumulations and its production needs, commensurate to the agrarian policies pursued as well as experiment new varieties of crops. This consequently stymied local productivity as well as the growth or further development of the productive forces and production relations (Dunmoye, 1989). All these stalled and prevented agricultural and rural development thereby deepening the pauperization of the peasantry, worsening of the rural stratification and thus creating a new breed of peasants – the ‘*peasantariat*.’

With the incursion of metropolitan capital, the spread and further impetus of cotton production in Maigana assumed new dimensions. Farmers were thus encouraged to extend their acreage of the export crops. This was followed by the growth, concentration and penetration of merchant capital into the fabrics of the rural economy. Initially, European merchants and firms were accorded the necessary protection and freedom by the colonial State to engage in all forms of trade and commerce. Hence, the establishment of marketing boards as statutory export monopolies to regulate produce trade in vital cash crops by the colonial regime in the 1940s testified the design to mop-up the economic resources

Due to the abundance of shea butter trees, quality nuts and the accompanying by-products, Maigana, among other vital economic potentials and climatic conditions, attracted immense imperial and colonial government attention. However, Maigana and its entire environs had hitherto been referred to as the cotton district. The land, accordingly, was described as large, with rich soils and qualitatively potential for the cultivation of cotton (Orr, 1905)

Sequel to the pressures and suggestions of the British Cotton Growers` Association (BCGA) and colonial officers respectively, the colonial regime acquired a farm in Maigana in 1910 to experiment the cultivation of several varieties of seed cotton. Even though the assiduous design of the BCGA to establish cotton growing villages was obstructed, blocked and prevented, it nevertheless did not hinder the colonial state to invest resources in cotton cultivation. Consequently, cotton did not, however, acquire the expected prominence as an export commodity (Shenton, 1987: 38-39) The introduction of the varieties of seed cotton, popularly referred to as ‘improved seed’, led to the gradual but violent phasing out and destruction of the local seed cotton referred to as ‘inferior’ (Gill, 1911). Hence, during the early epochs of colonial rule, cotton and to some extent, groundnut cultivation took off in Maigana.

When railway facility reached and extended to Zaria in 1911 and to Jos in 1913, attempts to bolster the cash crop cultivation and production in the area took unprecedented trends and dimensions, basically due to easy repatriation. More cotton gins were established, particularly due to the expansion of production, in the late 1940s. This contributed to the intense penetration of the rural economy. Maigana was thus transformed as a centre of experiment of agricultural production owned by foreign firms (Gill, 1911). It should be recalled that C.W. Orr, Resident Zaria province, reported in 1905 that:

*...it would be a good thing if the association (BCGA) were to open a small buying station at Zaria with hand machines for ginning and processing. The Transport department would no doubt be able to quote low rates for taking the cotton down to Zungeru on returning cart during the dry season, and the purchase of cotton would give the necessary impetus to its production on a larger scale than is the case at present, where the demand is merely local. Seed cotton sells at present amongst natives at the rate of about 1/2d per 1b and in a good year I have known it purchased at an even lowerrate. I feel convinced therefore that given a generous rate for cart transport from Zaria to Zungeru, cotton would at this moment be exported from Zaria and landed in Liverpool at a cost which could leave a few margins of profit (Gill, 1905)*

The colonial onslaught on the economy and society of Maigana rural community was fundamental. It affected the nature of economic and social setting of the localities with local craftsmen completely dislodged and off-rooted. However, the cottage industries that were in existence eventually collapsed and disappeared. These included dyeing, pottery, tanning, cloth weaving, wood carving and blacksmithing industries (Abbass, 1993 Interview).

Maigana is depicted by a stigma of poverty hung-up all over the localities: on the inhabitants and their physical surroundings. Shabby looking and idleness of the aged and children population are the prevalent features in the rural localities. Almost everybody appears in dirty and worn-out clothes. Bare footed children, many of whom are naked or half-naked, play and wander about aimlessly and endlessly all day long with no regard to attending to school. While a few others have an added reputation of hawking which justifies and thus gives them the ticket to roam from one house to another selling a variety of petty commodities?

The architectural structures in the localities are of *ginin kasa* (unbaked clay) with houses predominantly roofed with *jinka* (grass) and *aduruku* –cum-stalk walls. Only a few houses are of *soro* (unbaked clay roof) types with only spotted ones possessing *rufin kwano* (iron sheet roof.) It should be noted that the houses are poorly built and sub-standard. Rooms are narrow with no adequate provision and consideration for ventilation thus vulnerable to various health hazards

The entire rural environment is poor and slummy with limited facilities and amenities and thus amenable to all sorts of discomfort. Drainage facilities are poor as pools of stagnant waste materials spill over the footpaths behind or in front of every household through the drainage exit holes (*rariya*). All sorts of flies besiege the arena and thus becoming highly vulnerable to transmitting all types of health related problems. This partly and invariably explains the shambolic nature of the rural setting and therefore the *raison d'être* for turning the entire Maigana rural socio-economic environment or condition and also the rural residents in complete state of total disorder.

### ***The State and Rural Policies***

The State exists with sharp divisions and endless antagonism or contradictions amongst and within classes as well as established process or pattern of exploitation and subordination through legislation and policies by the ruling oligarchy. Thus, for better understanding of the entirety of rural intervention, the dynamics of the socio-economic setting of the rural Maigana community; the program and strategies of rural development must be situated under the aegis of the State and the adopted rural policies. Since the early commencement of colonial rule, Maigana has been one of the few rural communities whose inhabitants were unleashed by direct capitalist intervention, particularly in the vegeticultural economy. While the adopted rural development strategies aim to enhance improved socio-economic condition of the rural productivity and income, they are also designed to adequately make the provision and sustenance of a variety of social and welfare services. It is therefore disturbing to note that in Maigana (as in all other similar communities), despite the huge human and material investment made in the agrarian community, the exercises, particularly those of the ADP, are characteristically very diabolical. Since the exercises have rather turned out to be catalogues of colossal failures, they are invariably yet to even address the central issue let alone attempt to transform the condition of the rural community

This section thus essentially examines the role of the World Bank in relation to the State guided or prescribed rural policies and heavy investments made on the one hand and the performance of the ADP in relation to agricultural productivity and the condition of the peasant farmer in Maigana on the other. Hence, the impacts of the ADP on the socio-economic setting of the people of Maigana rural community, through the role of the State and capital, particularly in terms of the encapsulated peasantry, is as given and well established. State intervention in rural economies has a long history; thus manifesting in a variety of forms, magnitude or intensity. While it is acknowledged that cotton production and cultivation in Maigana failed to bring about the expected yield during the colonial period, its retrial in the early and mid 1970s, when the ADPs were introduced, only assisted to worsen the condition of production with accompanying socio-economic problems in the rural and urban sectors of the economy. This failure thus put the principal agitators in a very serious dilemma and which probably forced them to shift their focus from cotton to groundnut.

When both the cotton and groundnut state-guided production or cultivation collapsed as export crop commodities, the World Bank on its own part swiftly planned and hatched a new policy for the continuous peasant onslaught by thus introducing the highly mechanized HYV of yellow maize. The crop not officially categorized as an export commodity, but was nevertheless regarded as a 'commercial' rather than staple food crop. A large number of peasant farmers vehemently rejected the mechanical and 'commercial' nature of the HYV with a preferable inclination and determination to continue the cultivation of the local varieties of maize, sorghum, millet etc. But some peasant farmers who cooperated with the State and the World Bank were inevitably lured into accepting the risky enterprise.

Consequently, the ADP's continued promotion and retention of the HYV crops, under the guise of enhancing productivity coupled with the State adopted policy and protection, completely assaulted to the peasants' assiduity to continue maintaining their position.

Peasant farmers, particularly those of the older generation, bitterly complained that the newly introduced crops were not only foreign or non-indigenous to the locality, but highly problematic to the local environment. However, the processes and procedures in their cultivation are methodologically to the book of instruction, too cumbersome and expensive for the peasant farmers to handle and endure. The inevitable consequence is the threats which their cultivation pose to the stability and enhanced rural productivity in general and the food production in particular, added to the HYV potential vulnerability to insects, pests and diseases (Clough & Williams, 1987:173).

Attempts at rural development in Maigana have not yielded the desired results of transforming the abysmal rural situation of basic needs. Thus, attempts to understand why this persists has largely been scored on how the system of production operating in the rural areas, over time, are determined by the intrinsic league of the State and capital with adverse impacts on the society in general.

It should be well emphasized that the rural economy was violently brought under the State-capital incursion via the World Bank/IMF sponsored agricultural projects. The State therefore feels justified to intervene directly into the rural sector because it believed, though erroneously, (based on the World Bank-IMF fictitious diagnosis and prescription on the "ills" of the Nigerian economy) that the *raison d'être* of taking up of the "prescription and pills" as contained in the 1975-80 Development plan was hinged on:

*...a backward land tenure system, scattered land holdings, primitive cultivation method, outmoded technology, scarcity of capital and the vagaries of nature (Nigeria, 1975: 154).*

Other agricultural constraints inhibiting productivity and diversification, according to the World Bank/IMF prescription, include low inputs of chemical fertilizers, low level of irrigation acreage, a skewed marketing system, lack of credit facilities, uncoordinated research and inadequate overall planning at the national level (World Bank, 1975:129-32). It should therefore be noted that in its 1954 report (World Bank, 1954) on Nigeria and up to the subsequent report (World Bank, 1973) the World Bank has prescribed a capitalist development strategy. It is thus interesting to further note that the capitalist 'pills' were strategically kept out of stock to enable the preeminence of foreign capital to expand, consolidate and undermine the rural economy.

The World Bank is structurally or characteristically full of contradictions in both its constitutional and institutional policies and their implementations. Thus, as its policy purportedly intends to improve the condition of the poorest rural inhabitants, the reality exhibits a complete reverse as there exists no empirical reflection of change, over time and space, in the improved living condition of the so-called target groups. However, there is no tangible evidence to at least indicate that any of its rural development projects possesses the institutional capacity and potency to transform rural situation of poverty and under-development and thus realistically geared to benefit the rural inhabitants (Clough & Williams, 1987:171).

Thus, commercial adventurism is obviously the platitudinous remark or statement which has made the World Bank project activities potent, visible and plausible to concentrate on areas that are strategically potential for the realization of its neo-colonial objectives. This partly explains why food import figures in the country have dramatically increased despite the existence of ADPs and other projects with all the accompanying finances; coupled with the State backings/support.

The KADP took off with millions of US dollar loans. Hence after a protracted albeit with breakdown of negotiations between the Kaduna State Government and the World Bank on fundamental issues, the government later compromised stance and therefore surrendered itself to the World Bank's assaults on the economy and society. Since the commencements of the loans, the State has continued to renew and reschedule or postpone repayments objectively geared to increase

*The productivity, incomes and standards of... rural families in the State by (providing a) range of farm support services in association with infrastructural and institutional improvement. (Musa, 1982:84)*

Part of the activities KADP proclaims to execute includes the construction of the rural feeder roads, earth dams, seed option and distribution as well as other specialized services. These consist of tractor hiring, credit to purchase bullocks, farm planting etc.

However, under the technical service program of the ADP, the project activities in Maigana include adaptive research, seed multiplication and crop protection and crop protection services. To pursue those services, a colossal amount of funds was expended and valuable time spent on various ADP staff attendance to training, workshops and seminars within and outside the country. (KADP report 1989:11, ICR: 2)

Hence, in collaboration with national and international agencies, the KADP in Maigana undertakes its activities or program in direct consultations or contacts with the FACU, IAR and other World Bank sanctioned or auxiliary agricultural bureaucracies. It is no wonder therefore that a large percentage of Maigana community does not benefit from the activities of the project.

With the incidental privilege of serving as the zonal headquarters as well as the main focus area of the KADP, a large spectrum of rural residents in Maigana and environs is thus expected to be highly endowed with the privileged provision of a wider range of agricultural facilities and inputs. According to our surveys, the reverse is diabolically the case. What actually obtains, according to the peasant farmers, are the official infrastructures for demonstration purposes located within the headquarters and the laboratory farms with results probably enjoyed by the favored farmers

Hence, rural inhabitants' accessibility to agricultural facilities is highly limited, relative and occurs only as a windfall. It is therefore no surprising that more than 70% of the rural population is unaware of or unaffected by the provision of any agricultural facilities so provided by the KADP. Another tantalizing program of the ADP is that which consists of the adaptive research of the maize/sorghum mixture, maize/cotton, yam/rice etc. based on the project's predominant farm laboratory trials. All these are nonetheless mechanical in nature which therefore do not allow or give room for variations and deviations to the natural phenomenon as well as the social and economic capacities of the peasant farmers. All farmers interviewed, notwithstanding, expressed disappointment, disgust and repugnance over the procedural aspects of the so-called technology of the station and experimental research trials.

It should be noted that there exists two seed multiplication farms in Maigana. The farms were basically established to produce and provide high quality seeds of good and suitable crop varieties for maize, sorghum, millet, rice and groundnut. (KADP Report 1989:45) The performance of these farms, since their establishment, has been described as 'far below expectation' even when applied to the project's laboratory seed farms managed by the project staff. The commonplaceness of the results has indicated that seed multiplication exercise embarked upon by the project has rather turned out to mean further multiplication of farmers' problems. Thus, the withdrawals albeit with total destruction of the local variety seeds compatible with local environment was the greatest tragedy the peasant is paying dearly. Therefore, the expected overall food sufficiency and an enhanced condition of life towards alleviation of poverty have further become as speculative and elusive as ever.

After nearly exhausting all the packaged financial sources contained in the World Bank ADP loans, other new avenues for fresh loans were exploited. This is notwithstanding the colossal failure in realizing the objectives set out in the ADP. These fresh avenues for World Bank support and funding are in *fadama* irrigation schemes. The enshrined objective of the scheme was to generate farm income and raise employment opportunities of farmers during the dry season

Essentially, the scheme was strategically designed for the cultivation of wheat. Issues that centre on wheat cultivation are numerous, especially from the cost, preparations, relevance and impact on other staple crops. For the commencement of the scheme, reports have shown that in the entire Maigana zone, many washbores and tube wells were drilled to bring about large areas of *fadama* land under irrigation.

Thus, under the National *Fadama* Development Program (NFDP), a World Bank loan of \$1.232 million was secured. There is no disputing the fact that under the deciduous rural development policy, the strategies adopted will continue to collapse as they unfold as designed. Therefore, the *fadama* development program in Maigana has suffered a number of debilitating problems. Even the Implementation Completion Report (ICR) of the KADP succinctly shows that the exercise has been a dismal failure:

*... non availability of hydrogeological and hydrological data establishing ground water potential as well as surface water resources, drilling was done on hit-and-miss basis resulting in high failure rate (i.e. abortive tubewells). (KADP Report 1989)*

However the threats of *fadama* irrigation to the ordinary inhabitants in Maigana were devastating. In the first place, it affected the dwelling set up of the rural houses. Thus, the long grass (*ciyawa jinka*) used for thatch roofing purposes etc cannot be allowed to grow in such swampy areas taken over by NFDP. Consequently, the scarcity of the long grass has made many house roofs unrefurbished. It also forced many rural dwellers to resort to the first alternative of *soro* architectural roofing style or that of iron sheets (*rufin kwano*).

Invariably, larger areas of land in Maigana have come under the larger scale *fadama farmers*. This act, in part, has caused inadequate pasture land for the cattle to rear and breed. The exacerbation of the breeding space for the cattle has forced the cattle rearers to pounce on any available area which further worsens the growth of adequate long grass for *jinka* (roofing), *danni* (wall) etc purposes. In addition, they also launch heavy incursions into the peasant farms by destroying cultivated crops. This has caused incessant frictions between the Fulani cattle rearers and peasant farmers which usually result in bloodshed and wanton destruction of property.

### **Con Dition of Rural Infrastructures**

Provision and sustenance of infrastructural facilities are vital elements for socio-economic growth and development. While powerful infrastructure investments provide powerful avenues for socio-economic growth, they however serve as strategic conduits through which alleviation of poverty could be effectively channeled. However the impacts of infrastructures on agricultural production, stimulation of markets, enhancing household incomes, provision of rural employments and social development are very remarkable in any dynamic society. Hence, rural infrastructures must be designed with the sole objective of improving the state of rural condition; particularly the welfare and productive capacities of the rural inhabitants. The design of rural infrastructures must thus, within the sociological perspective, be solidly hinged on the concrete understanding of rural peculiarities, resources endowments, etc of the communities. It is now imperative to assess the state of rural infrastructural facilities in Maigana with a view to critically appreciating their potency within the matrix of the objectives of rural development.

ROAD – Movement, in and around the entire Maigana rural localities, is impaired by a preponderant lack of all-weather roads. During the rainy season however, movement from one locality to another is sometimes impossible. Thus, transportation between and within the Maigana rural localities are undertaken with difficulties and constraints. All journeys within the rural community are covered by motorcycles, bicycles, where available or paid for, but mostly and considerably undertaken on foot.

It is worthwhile to note that the literature tells us that rural road constructions and rehabilitation are undertaken by three major organs: the ADP, financed by the tripartite arrangement amongst the State and Federal Governments on the one hand and the World Bank on the other, the defunct DFRRRI which emphasized on the construction of new rural road links, and by a few self-help or community projects executed by the affected communities. It must be stated here that the role of the local government in this affair is completely zero.

Because of the preponderant role which rural feeder roads play to the life of rural inhabitants, the acute nature of rural roads in Maigana and the constraints therein have always forced the rural inhabitants to mention road project among the top-most priorities of any design for rural development and in most cases, the most highly appreciated project. With roads, rural dwellers will be able to 'see' and 'feel' the existence and relevance of government. Hence the provision and maintenance of the poor state of rural roads will ameliorate the inadequate or non-existing infrastructures

The poor state of rural roads in Nigeria was explicitly noted and emphasized in the 1980 World Bank-Federal Government Report on food strategy mission. The Report succinctly states that:

*Whilst the country's primary and secondary roads are being gradually improved to acceptable standards, the feeder road system has suffered from years of neglect and represents the most serious constraints to agricultural development in Nigeria*  
(Idachaba, 1980)

While Maigana rural women bear the brunt of major rural activities, they substantially share the burden of rural transportation of commodities, particularly farm products, mostly undertaken by the traditional head-loading system. Hence, farm products are carried on head by women and children covering a range of three or more kilometres and as much as ten or more kilograms

With roads so provided within the Maigana rural community, particularly those constructed by the ADP, the rate of deterioration without the corresponding rate of repairs, rehabilitation or maintenance, especially with regard to the volume of goods and the prevalence of the high axle vehicle loads plying the roads, specifically the heavy axle 911 Mercedes Benz, firewood lorry etc. have also contributed to the furtherance of the rural road depletion.

**WATER-** Water is of a vital necessity to human existence. Rural water situation is another stubborn and key issue area of rural infrastructures within the entire matrix of rural development program. Thus, issues central on safe water supply in the rural areas are no doubt numerous. While water supply in the rural areas has notably and notoriously continued to exacerbate, more and more people are hence exposed to inadequate and dangerous sources of water which have continued to endanger the dynamic growth of the rural population.

Whereas sources of rural water supply in Maigana are numerous, they nonetheless include ponds, rivers, shallow wells, springs, stream which are, more often than not, shared by domestic and wild animals. These sources are often polluted or contaminated and thus very vulnerable to all sorts of diseases like trachoma, sleeping sickness, typhoid, cholera and others contacted through contaminated water. Thus, most of the water related pathogen in the rural areas are dependent on the non-availability and non-accessibility of safe drinking water.

The entire Maigana rural population and all its other local constituencies are predominantly plagued with inadequate access to safe drinking water. Despite the huge investments made by the State and Foreign Agencies, safe/potable water has not yet reached the rural communities. Thus all investments made inevitably have gone in drains. For the vast majority of the rural dwellers, particularly during the dry spells of the year, getting water, not to talk of its safety, is an onerous task which consumes a lot of rural inhabitants' labor and time.

In Maigana rural locality for instance, the overhead water storage tank is rarely utilized or operated to benefit the entire population. The diesel engine operated borehole is perhaps not designed to totally satisfy the water requirements of the locality. Only a few individual households could afford to extend the facility into their houses. Due to one reason or the other, water supply from the borehole is erratic as in most cases the taps go completely dry for days or even weeks. It is feared, within the community that the facility is heading for collapse. The rapidity in the collapse of public utilities may be buttressed by the two hand-pumped boreholes which had gone dry immediately after commissioning in the locality. Thus, the vandalization of the instruments had eluded the raised hopes of the rural inhabitants.

In general, public investments in water coupled with those from international organs are enormous. All these have apparently shown some rather impressive efforts which are but diabolical in nature as the investments have no positive effects on the lives of the rural communities. In addition, the problems designed to be solved have only continued to worsen or multiply notwithstanding the so-called finances and other resources invested. Anthony Churchill succinctly states the problematic:

*Rural water supply and sanitation investments have often failed to provide affordable, acceptable services, or deliver all the expected health benefits to a population that remains by and large poor and fragile in health (Churchill, 1987)*

Poor water situation in the Maigana hinterland communities is worse and lamentable. Nigeria is thus characterized with rapid growth in population hitting the region of 2.6 percent per annum. Nigeria's rural dwellers are therefore faced with more critical problems of water supply and other related facilities (Churchill, 1987). Women and children in Maigana thus bear the brunt of hauling water for all domestic purposes, no matter its purity and distance. Women's stake for water is thus highest. For women, it is a restless life while for children the activity prevents them from attending any formal schools.

With the ecological changes in the rural landscape added to the state of rural development programs, the problem of water supply in the rural areas have become more precarious than ever before. This is because even the streams, ponds, springs, wells etc. which rural dwellers depend on dry up. Maigana rural communities especially those of kwadaro, Sabon Kaura, and Bauda annually resort to digging of wells in streams and ponds in order to obtain water to survive particularly during the dry spells of the year.

Between 1985 and 1995 three earth dams were constructed in the entire Maigana KADP Zone (one in 1987 and two in 1988) while one was rehabilitated in 1988.(KADP Annual Reports 1985-1995). Other sources of water supply include digging of boreholes (six in 1989), open wells as well as dam construction. All these have no much impact on the rural water situation in Maigana. It should be noted that dam construction usually has large agriculture as the primary target or objective rather than the purposes of direct human consumption.



As dam construction alters the quantity of water flowing the rivers, streams and other sources of rural water supply, it inevitably worsens rural search for water during the dry season. Rural communities affected thus have to travel further distances to collect the life-sustaining commodity. Maigana communities have, over time, thus been experiencing a considerable recession of the flow of water into the various streams and river tributaries. Constructions of earth dams by KADP further worsen an already critical water problem of the inhabitants.

The water dilemma in the rural areas is obvious: as the shallow wells dry up during the dry season they however retain only unpurified, colored, odorous, tasty and unsafe water during the rainy season. In only two of the whole areas where concrete wells are available, in Maigana and Tashar Itace, the water facilities were constructed several years ago which cannot retain enough and safe water to satisfy the needs and requirements of the communities.

**EDUCATION-** Education is a necessity for a meaningful and spicy life. There is no dispute however to state that the mother of all poverty is that which emanates from illiteracy and thus gnaws its victims, like cancer, to perpetuity. Hence, the social and economic gap between rural and urban areas, between people therein and within is a direct manifestation of the lack of or deficiency in education which has continued to threaten a meaningful human existence.

Rural areas are most seriously hit by the poverty of education that it has shackled almost all the rural populace. In the first place, there are no schools. Structures, no matter how elegant, do not make a school. Funds for the construction of schools, enrolled pupils, materials, teachers etc were not only too inadequate but were drained and privately accumulated by the top state officials down to education department of the Local Education Authority (LEA). Even the existing structures are more often left to dilapidate.

In spite of the rural nature of Maigana educational environment, clear indicators have demonstrated that in the entire rural areas, there exist powerful trends of potential children of primary schools age wandering but with no opportunity to acquire formal education of any meaningful sort. Hence, with the lopsided and dwindled supply of relevant and sustainable education needs of the communities, albeit with total collapse, the situation has produced apathy and despair to all the rural inhabitants of Maigana. All these have serious implications for education and the future of the communities and the society at large.

Thus, the poverty of learning environment in Maigana localities is not an issue of relativity but the entirety of resources, and facilities are absolutely lacking. The entire adult population is thus very repugnant towards sending children to the only school in Maigana locality. The acceptance of the reality of rural traditions to live and die in perpetual illiteracy is perhaps now well settled and concluded by the rural residents.

In Maigana locality, this trend is demonstrated by frequent high drop-out of children in the only school. The high drop outs are largely due to apathy, despair and inability to bear the brunt of education requirements. Other factors included inconveniences and the futility to trek long distances, perceived irrelevance of the curriculum and instructions to individual or rural needs. Furthermore, marriage and hawking or petty trade, particularly by females and a host of other salient issues. The number of children continuously *withdrawn-and-never-to-return* from the only primary/secondary school in Maigana is ominously on the increase.

In the rest of the localities of Maigana, schools do not structurally exist to warrant parents' provocative withdrawal of their children. Thus, it is not only those children with no access or opportunities to even go to school wander about are destined for a perpetual life in illiteracy and poverty but also those *withdrawn-and-never-to-return*. Hence, children of primary age who are out of school in Maigana are a threatening time bomb.

One may vividly observe that the commercial centre (*Tasha*) or Sabon Gari locality contains or attracts more children, particularly the fairly and relatively grown-up, far more than the primary or junior secondary in Maigana has at each of the school's respective peak period of attendance. The issue and of course the tradition going on in the community is that the more the children (those lucky to begin school) grow older, the more inclined they withdraw or are withdrawn from the school(s) to begin preparing their future and molding their character to accepted rural life, rather than orient them for the uncertainties or hopelessness inherent in what the Western education empirically presents to them.

**HEALTH-**In the first place, the entire Maigana rural communities have become endangered by all kinds of ailment as every sickness threatens the life of its victims coupled with the dwindled and degenerated social condition of life. Thus, the state of public policies on social and economic matters, over the last three decades, has serious devastating consequences to most of, if not all, the rural households.

In almost all the rural households in the localities, impoverished and malnourished children and hunger stricken adults, struck by hypertension, heart diseases, etc are the common sights in the localities.

In the whole of Maigana rural areas therefore, the communities are completely denied accessibility to modern health and medical facilities. It is however only in Maigana rural town that a building named clinic structurally exists. Whenever there erupts the plague of *bingiri* (epidemic resulting in sudden loss of life) a new burial ground would need to be cleared. Whosoever falls sick would either remain with the sickness, like illiteracy, and die with it, or seek for medical attention in Zaria if is in a position to afford the journey and the expenses involved. ELECTRICITY-The provision of electricity ultimately transforms the social and economic life of a community and thus uplifts the entire activities in the area so provided. As it permeates all facets of human endeavors, its provision and optimal utilization is therefore all encompassing. It however becomes relevant only to the appropriate stage or growth of the rural areas; all other rural infrastructures being put in place.

Based on the foregoing, it should be noted that it is only in Maigana rural town that the government, through NEPA, has recently extended power supply with a World Bank Loan. The commissioning ceremony of the power supply for the locality along with that of Soba was colorfully performed in July, 1996. NEPA poles and wires can be observed penetrating into rural community and inside some few rural households.

At the present stage of the growth of the locality, electricity is by and large not of vital or significant basic needs of the rural communities vis-a-vis the stage of other infrastructures, notwithstanding. In circumstances where there exists no potable water, no accessible roads, no functional school etc, electricity is seriously a misplaced priority to a typical rural resident like that of Maigana.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the enormous contributions of the rural sector in the sustenance of the national economy, the central issues in rural development, particularly in the development of the rural inhabitants; in socio-cultural and economic dimensions especially in agricultural productivity and incomes, social awareness, direct and active participation, the provision of medicare facilities, access roads etc have all been characterized with dismal failure. Consequently, agricultural production or productivity, in the provision of food, raw materials and labor employments, has ominously dwindled primarily due to the State intervention in the rural economy resulting to the neglect and marginalization of pivot of the rural economy – the peasantry. Despite the seminal attempts at rural development (in policies, programs and strategies) coupled with heavy investments of resources, both local and foreign, all have notwithstanding turned out to be colossal exercises in futility and gimmicky

Thus, the poverty dominant characteristic setting of the Nigeria's countryside is a paradox and diabolic. In an oil resource based economy coupled with its potency in agricultural pursuits, rural communities, where these resources are located, have been, without any exception, collectively and totally deprived of the basic needs of life. Hence, abysmal provision of essential infrastructures such as health and transportation requirements, education, water supply facilities etc are clear indicators vividly dictating the myths of the expensive sectoral, particularly agricultural, approaches to rural development in Nigeria

As prescribed and guided by the World Bank, IMF etc, rural development policies, strategies/programs funded through external resources have led to, among others, the creation of cultivable environment for the favorable operation of MNCs, establishment of various bureaucracies to siphon resources, exacerbation of the rural socio-economic condition and consequently the furtherance of the structural dependence and under-development.

Hence, Maigana rural economy is characteristically rich and therefore potential for a variety of agricultural and non-farm activities, which if effectively organized for the benefit of the entire population, a different tale could have been reported. With State intervention in the rural economy, at least since colonial era, the rural society has come under a variety of rural policies, programs and strategies, particularly the ADPs, with little or no benefits to the inhabitants of the rural area.

Due to the sheer and prolonged neglect sequel to the insensitivity of the State to the plight of the rural residents, Maigana inhabitants have, out of relative obscurity and necessity, found solace in combining their mental, material and physical resources to actualize their basic rural needs by forming Community Development Associations (CDAs) to bail themselves out of the social and economic quagmire they found themselves deeply inside.

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