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**THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SEVENTH (157th)
INAUGURAL LECTURE**

**“LEARNING FROM THE PEOPLE: A
GEOGRAPHER’S MANDATE FOR
SUSTAINABLE RURAL
DEVELOPMENT”**

BY

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Great University of Ilorin Students,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Preamble

I give glory to the Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has given me the grace and the privilege to present this Inaugural Lecture today. To Him be the Glory and Honour for preserving me to see this day. I also bless Him for helping me to reach the pinnacle of my chosen profession, which I desired so much. Just like Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 9:11 *'the race is not for the swift nor the battle for the strong, neither yet bread for the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor favour to men of skill; but time and chance happened to them all'*. This time and chance happened to me because the Lord has ordained it so. The Scripture further says *'A man cannot receive anything except He is given from above'* (John 3:27). Looking back like Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15:10, I can proudly say that all I am

today is by the grace of God, and His grace in me is not in vain, to Him be the Glory, Honour and Praises.

It gives me great joy and deep sense of humility and fulfilment to present myself to deliver the 157th Inaugural Lecture of this Great University, my Alma Mater, the seventh from the Department of Geography and Environmental Management and the third in the new Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ilorin. Incidentally, it comes next in the department, to that of my able teacher and trainer, Professor Adebisi Adedayo, an astute scholar who spoke extensively on '**How the other Half Live**'. His major concern was about the manifestation of inequality in human well-being at different geographical scales and the use of social geography to address the imbalances originating from our past planning strategies. This and other earlier inaugural lectures in Geography serve one common end which, according to Oyebanji (1986), Onakomaiya (1988), Olorunfemi (2001), Olaniran (2002) and Ogunsanya (2002), is the desire to expose the contemporary relevance of geography both as an academic discipline and a tool for solving social, economic, and environmental problems.

My Background

Mr Vice Chancellor sir, let me start this Lecture by giving a short background of my journey thus far. This background will give you and my audience a deep sense of understanding of my passion for the rural populace and communities around me. I was born into the family of Late Chief and Chief (Mrs) Jonathan Ibiwoye Olawepo of the popular Isale Agbamu Compound, Agbamu, a prominent Igbomina speaking Community, in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria, some decades ago. I attended St Paul's Anglican Primary School, Agbamu between 1965 and 1971. I rode the community bicycle from

my village, Agbamu to Omupo, another rural community of about 23 kilometres in order to go and pay my admission and fee deposit in 1972 at Omupo Grammar School, Omupo, the school I attended between 1972 and 1976. After this, I started to experience urban life when I attended Kabba Teachers College between 1977 and 1978; Kwara State College of Technology (School of Basic Studies,) Ilorin, 1979-1980; and the Great University of Ilorin, Ilorin, between 1980 and 1984, where I obtained the B.Sc, M.Sc, and Ph.D. Degrees in Geography in 1984, 1990 and 1997 respectively.

My interest in Geography dated back to my secondary school days. The phenomenon of trekking through the path to draw woods and fetch water from the surrounding forests and streams, through the winding paths of the rural community where I was trained, had taught me to draw the sketches of the path we trod, which I kept for my Geography teacher (Late Rev. S.O. Abolarinwa, of blessed memory) to see. This experience had always intrigued me, and it was not surprising that I led my classes in the subject many times. In fact, I have never failed any Geography course in my life. Thus, I became a Geographer and an Environmental Manager by choice and not by accident, and I thank God for helping me to be that. During my doctoral studies, I was privileged to train under Professor Adebisi Adedayo, a seasoned scholar, who not only brought out in me the interests in rural studies but encouraged me to develop myself in the area of participatory grassroots development. I joined the services of this great University in 1997 as a Lecturer II, and I rose to the rank of Professor in 2013.

In the last eighteen years, I have been opportune to teach and do research in Settlement Studies and Rural Geography, and through progressive learning, prodding and personal experiences, I narrowed my research focus to Participatory Rural Development, using Participatory Rural

Appraisal (PRA) as a tool to effect sustainable development among the rural people in developing world. When your teachers are around, and you are asked to display your worth and those things you have learnt from them, you feel confident, even though they could not correct your mistakes or ask questions, they will nod their heads, because they are sure of what knowledge they had imparted unto you and your life. I am therefore grateful to my teachers and those who taught me most, especially in this same university, some of who are seated here today to listen to 'their product' presenting how much he has achieved when they are still alive. In this wise, I appreciate my teachers, Professors J.O. Oyebanji, A.F. Adedayo, O.J. Olaniran, J.F. Olorunfemi and of course Professor A.A. Ogunsanya (of blessed memory), who all taught me what modern Research in Geography really entails.

Introduction: The Place of Geography in Spatial Development

Mr Vice Chancellor sir, this Lecture affords me the opportunity of addressing the University Community, researchers, policy makers and general public on a topical issue on Rural Development in a body of knowledge within my discipline, Geography. For the world to have a better understanding of Geography, Geography has been defined by Hartshorne (1959) as a discipline concerned with providing accurate, orderly and rational descriptions of the earth surface. As far as Jones (1984) is concerned, the focus of all Geographical enquiries is 'space'. Areola & Faniran (1998) indicated, a good balanced geographic education is expected to enable its practitioners to learn about their environment and be conscious of the close relationship between them and the environment, and promote intelligence through awareness of the interdependency.

Mr Vice Chancellor sir, the subsection of the discipline, human geography which I specialise in, places emphasis on the study of the spatial impact of social life and of social groups as well as the spatial outcome of development policy and planning within the human environment. Through the study of geography we know more about our environment, its constituents and how to manage it to effect sustainability. The contributions of geographers to national planning cannot be overemphasized. In Nigeria, the contributions of Buchanan and Pugh to the regional study of the Nigerian landscape is fresh in our memories while the ones by scholars like Mabogunje, Iloeje, Oyebanji, Adefolalu, Faniran, Filani, Adedayo, Olorunfemi, Olaniran, Ariyo, Olofin, Areola, Ayode and Ogunsanya among others to the development of the Abuja National Plan, National infrastructural inventorization, and National Transport Development Policy, etc are on record for the future generations to benefit from. The emergence of Geographic Information System (GIS) is an important development in Geography in this dispensation. From all these and others yet to come from geography as a discipline, it can be said that the future of geography is here already. But like all academic disciplines, the frontier of knowledge cannot be exhausted. It is on this basis, that I want to convince many of you and many more outside my audience today to become geographers, not because of anything, but because many of the best informed citizens of tomorrow, are those currently studying Geography today.

The Learning Principle in Rural Development

Caincross (1961), writing about development reiterated that 'the key to development lies in peoples' minds and in the understanding in which their thinking finds expression in the play of ideas and opportunity'. This

indicates that development is about the people, and thus, putting the people first, the opportunity they have and their ideas will go a long way in fashioning out a development option that will stand the test of time.

The title of this Lecture “**Learning from the People: A Geographer’s Mandate for Sustainable Rural Development**” is thus preferred, and is suggested by my research interest and also influenced by my past relationships with the rural people, life and environment, in that:

- (i) I was born and raised in the rural geographical space and thus, I have loved since my beginning, to associate with the rural people, whom we ignorantly referred to as ‘local’ and illiterates;
- (ii) In my interaction and learning, I have learnt early in life, that the rural people are intelligent, knowledgeable and are equipped with local capabilities, information and technical knowhow, with which they have been solving their problems,
- (iii) My research and training in social geography and rural systems reached its peak in the 1990s when the government of Nigeria ‘woke up’ to correct the past unbalanced planning strategies meted towards rural communities, only to ‘slump’ back and refuse to take a blind bit of notice of ‘**how the other half live**’ despite the ‘**coat of many colours**’ portrayed within our geographical environment over the years, and the planning strategies proposed by our geographers are thus ‘**better by far**’ in solving the various development problems as lamented by scholars before me and those who taught me most (*courtesy of Profs. J.O. Oyebanji, J.F. Olorunfemi and A.F. Adedayo*).

From the outline thus far, what has influenced me in the choice of the topic for today's lecture, "**Learning from the People: A Geographer's Mandate for Sustainable Rural Development**" is the search for an order with which the problems of the rural people would be adequately addressed on bases that will ensure sustainability and effectiveness in the long term. In planning circles, the commonest form of development approach was mainly top-down wherein development which originates from the planners, governments and groups is then imposed on the people being planned for, and most of the times, the end result of this approach is usually failure, wastage of funds and resources, abandonment and absolute rejection. The failure of these various approaches has led to the development of a broad base approach which allows for participation of the people being planned for. The approaches are generally referred to as Participatory Research and Approaches (IIED, 2000; Olawepo, 2008a). One of these which is the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a group of learning tools whereby we use the idea of the rural people we are planning for to plan with them, with them participating and deciding their own planning actions.

The idea is that the rural people are aware of their environment, their needs and they have what it takes (needs, capabilities, knowledge, information, technical knowhow etc.) to effect changes that can be termed development in order to have an acceptable rural development that will not fail us, we must learn from the rural people, use the knowledge suggested by them to plan with them as stake holders with them participating in their own affairs. The most significant principles of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) concerns the behaviour and attitudes of outsider facilitators, including not rushing, "handing over the stick" and being self-critically aware. The power and popularity of PRA are partly explained by the unexpected analytical abilities of local people when

catalyzed by relaxed rapport, and expressed through sequences of participatory and especially, visual method (Chambers, 1994, Olawepo, 2009a).

Three things emanate from these assertions. Firstly, PRA is a planning strategy, wherein, the people you are planning for effectively participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects affecting their lives. Secondly, PRA is a technique of collecting and collating reliable information and data from the rural people about their livelihood and with them effectively and fully involved in information sharing. Thirdly, it is a tool where the local people share their knowledge of livelihood, thus teaching researchers and planners of their experiences within their environment (Olawepo, 2009b).

Among the most useful PRA techniques are Group discussion, Transect Walks, Force Field Analysis and Participatory planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring. Others include, Direct Observation and 'do it yourself', Participatory Mapping and Modelling, Daily time use analysis, matrix scoring, and stone casting among others.

PRA has as a planning strategy and as a form of data collecting strategies various advantages. These include among others participation, teamwork, and flexibility. Others include triangulation, sustainability of programmes and identity of expression and community sensitisation. However, it is time consuming, involving little number of participants and can easily be hijacked by the urban elite if not properly handled (Olawepo 2009b :18).

Mr Vice Chancellor sir, the common theme for all participatory methodologies is the participation of people in the processes of learning about their needs, capabilities and visions, and in the action required to address them. With the various outcome of our researches and of those that were before me in rural development planning, I want to report that

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) as a form of learning from the rural people, is the tool that we have been waiting for to effect a lasting and sustainable form of rural development in the developing world, and that it is a form of move, for mobilising local people for joint action on their own development.

Conceptual Statements, Rural Development and Sustainable Rural Development

Theoretically, the rural areas of a region or a country lie outside the densely built up environments of towns, cities and sub-urban villages and their inhabitants are engaged primarily in agriculture as well as the most basic or rudimentary forms of secondary and tertiary activities (Adedayo, 1998). The dichotomy of rural –urban structures worldwide had been explained by various theories in the past, and most importantly by the model of ‘dual society’. The concept of dualism asserts that the rich and poor nations co-exist internationally, within countries, rich and poor regions, urban rich and rural poor, the modern and traditional, etc. This led to different sets of conditions in management and in effecting development. This co-existence is not static and the degree of superiority and inferiority had led to preference in attention. In Nigeria for example, this had grown to marginalization of the rural areas at the expense of the urban centres in terms of development efforts, attention by the government and in the access to public goods and services. With emphasis on development of the urban areas in the areas of infrastructure, the economy of the rural area will begin to dwindle and consequently massive rural-urban migration sets in and then we have a chronic marginalized economy.

Despite all these, the rural area is known for providing adequate food for an increasing population, supplying raw materials to a growing agricultural and industrial sector,

constituting major source of employment and supplying of lands for urban industrial and educational development. The question remains: do we need a special programme to develop our rural areas separately?

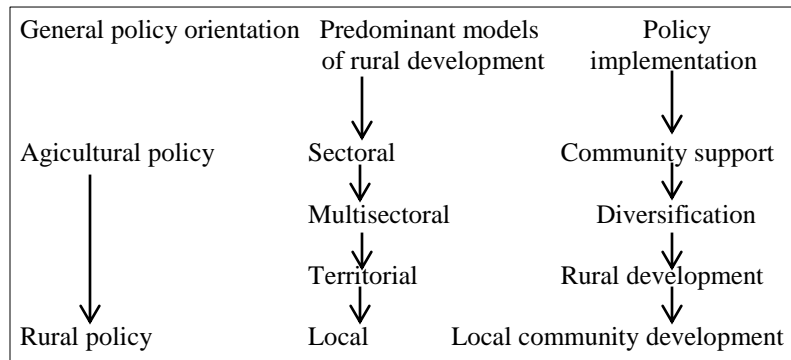
Rural Development: In the development of literature, rural development is conceived as a positive term denoting a state of short or long term transformation and improvement in the standards of people living in the rural area of a nation. This transformation may be preceded by specified programmes initiated either by the government or the rural people being planned for or external bodies with vested interest in the community affairs around the rural environment. However, the works of Atte (1983), Adedayo (1998), Okafor (2000) and Olawepo (2003) among others indicated that Rural development is more than all these. For example, Olawepo (2003) asserted that the process of rural development would be more encompassing if it includes participation of the people that are being planned for. This form of development relates to what is generally known as development from below or bottom up approach. Whatever method used, the essential components of rural development should include, a fundamental restructuring of rural space and settlement and the lives of the people living therein, so as to improve the physical and social access of produce to vital resources.

Sustainable Rural Development as defined by the Brundtland commission on the other hand is ‘the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. Sustainable rural development can therefore be seen as improving the quality of life for the rural poor by developing capacities that promote community participation so as to meet the required need of the rural area presently without compromising the assurance for continuity and future changes within the rural environment. Such changes will

have: thought for the future care, for the environment, fairness and equity, quality of life and greater participation.

In pursuance of rural development, there have been mainly four predominant models of rural development. The immediate post-war model centred on the agricultural sector, but through time the approach has changed, shifting to multisectoral, territorial and local approaches (see Figure 1). The issue of rural development of a country is a vexed one, which has attracted the attention and contribution of all professions. It involves planning at the macro level with the use of policies and strategies in mobilizing resources to achieve some stated objectives.

Figure1. The evolution of rural development policies



Source: UNDP (2000)

It also involves project planning at the micro level in the appropriately-placed belief that project constitutes a veritable means of propelling a nation's development (Oladipo 1999). The emphasis of modern day rural development would be on empowerment, participation and grassroots development, and of course, sustainability; and when rural development is sustainable in Nigeria, the rural farmers would remain on their

farms and then food security in the country will stabilize and rural multi-enterprises will be enhanced.

The Nigerian Rural Economy

The majority of Nigerians still live in the rural areas, though the actual trend indicated in our population census and unadjusted projection shows a predominantly rural domination especially in the North Central and Middle Belt areas. The trend of rural growth in Nigeria indicates that while the rate of rural population is increasing, the growth in the number of rural settlement is decreasing. This is expected as most rural settlements of yesteryears have grown to become small towns of today, while the small towns have also grown to urban cities respectively (See Table1 and Figure 2(1-4).

Table1: Nigeria’s Rural and Urban Population, 1950-2025

Year	Rural Population	Urban Population	Rural Population as % of Total
1950	29,595,000	3,340,000	80.9
1955	32,605,000	4,489,000	87.9
1960	36,220,000	6,058,000	85.7
1965	40,396,000	8,280,000	83.0
1970	45,252,000	11,319,000	80.0
1975	50,835,000	15,511,000	76.6
1980	57,188,000	21,242,000	72.9
1985	64,448,000	28,568,000	69.1
1990	70,383,000	38,159,000	64.8
1995	77,533,000	50,162,000	60.7
2000	84,853,000	64,768,000	56.7
2005	91,960,000	82,347,000	52.8
2010	98,435,000	102,831,000	48.9
2015	103,411,000	125,343,000	45.2
2020	106,458,000	148,935,000	41.7
2025	107,758,000	173,135,000	38.4

Source: Modified by the Author, from UN (1986).

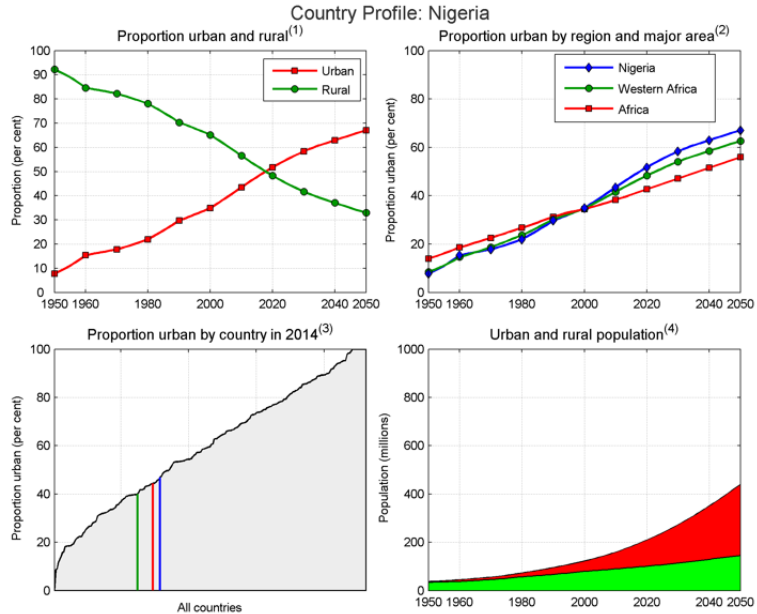


Figure 2(1-4):Rural –Urban Trend in Nigeria. (UN, 1986)

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria designated any community with a population of 5,000 and below as a rural area while others with population above this including those serving as Local Government Area Headquarters (regardless of their sizes and population) are designated as urban centres. The unique features of the Nigeria rural environment places agriculture in the centre of the economic life of rural communities and it is around this that other enterprises revolve and /or spring from. Structurally, rural economies are multi-enterprise dominated entities with indefinable boundary lines between major, complementary, supplementary and other seasonally-oriented subsidiary enterprises.

Social infrastructure in rural Nigeria has long been neglected and is invested in largely in the urban centres. As a result, the rural population has limited access to good roads, safe drinking water and other good things of modern life. Rural housing is also poorly structured with a large majority without modernization, toilets, potable water and electricity. Finally, vital inputs such as transportation facilities, (especially poor roads and rural transportation) electricity, water, business premises and information are lacking in rural economies because of inadequate Government attention (see Plates 1-3). A consequence of rural poverty in Nigeria is rural urban drift with an increasing preponderance of reoccurrence due to increasing population and inadequate infrastructural facilities. Urban migration has also led to shortage of both skilled and unskilled labour in the rural areas. Rural employees see themselves in transit employment bidding their time for better jobs in the cities.



Plate 1: A Typical Rural Transportation



Plate 2: A Periodic Market in Irepodun LGA



Plate 3: A Typical Rural Road

Evaluation of Public Policies for Rural Development in Nigeria

The problems of rural underdevelopment had been of great concern to the different levels of government in Nigeria. The First, Second, Third and Fourth National Development Plans (1962-68;1970-75;1975-80; and 1980-85) laid emphasis on the need to bridge the gap between the rural and urban areas as a policy to be pursued during each of the plan periods.

In the 1960s and 1970s, most rural development projects in Nigeria were basically channelled through agricultural development programmes to enhance improved cash flow and human and physical development in the rural areas. In the 1980s through 1990s, efforts were also laid on Agricultural Development through Government participation to uplift the rural environment. This was the era of Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) and River Basin Development and Rural Development Authority (RBRDAs). According to the First National Rolling plan 1990-92, the programme of rural development for the provision of socio-economic infrastructure came under focus in 1986. Similarly, efforts were made through rural industrialization, community approach to rural development, land reforms, establishment of government programmes such as Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Better Life for Rural Women, Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), People's Banks, Community Banks, and Poverty Alleviation Programme. It should be noted that all these Programmes had their corresponding successes or failures. For example, DFRRI was acclaimed to be one of the best programmes for rural development in the 1980s and 1990s. About 60, 000km of rural feeder roads were either constructed or rehabilitated under the first phase which was completed in 1987. (see Table 2.) Another important infrastructure on

which DFRRI's resources were concentrated was rural electrification and in development of agriculture at the rural level in order to boost food security through various agriculture development programmes.

Table 2: DFRRI's Completed Projects on Economic and Social Infrastructure

Year	Amount Allocated (₦ Million)	Feeder Roads (km)	Rural Electricity (No. of communities)	Boreholes/wells
1986	500	—	—	—
1987	400	60,000	—	—
1988	500	30,000	—	—
1989	300	30,000	142	4,000
1990	300	30,728.34	114	1,291
1991	152.3	55,576.24	325	11,310
1992	250	85,592.82	506	18,680

Source: DFRRI, (1992).

However, a shift in these strategies brought the issue of rural development to a standstill, DFRRI and allied agencies were scrapped and rural development issues came under different states government programmes. Many of the projects failed, while others were abandoned.

Past rural development programmes in Nigeria failed due to government's ineptitude, massive corruption, neglect of community participation, poor funding, ineffective policy

frameworks and lack of continuity in policy making due to changes in administration.

A number of issues need to be addressed before appropriate rural development strategy can be identified. First, a sound and collaborative planning is required. Second, the nature and content of the rural economy demand the design of appropriate policies and structures. Hence, we should be concerned about development programmes that will encourage empowerment, continuity, and sustainability. It is now a common debate that until we have sustainable rural development we will remain at a point of "three steps forward and three steps backward". Sustainable development through the process of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) therefore provides a viable option.

What then is the Mandate?

Mr Vice Chancellor sir, having looked at what could constitute an appropriate sustainable rural development and the journey so far in rural development issues in Nigeria, permit me to lay emphasis on the prescribed mandate I am reporting, both to the geographers out there and the entire planning world, the mandate of change that could transform our rural world.

Thus, the Geographers' mandate is a threefold planning strategy that lays emphases on Participatory methodologies and other planning options that enhance learning from the rural people, and this is the Mandate:

- First, **we learn and document** from our work, the experience we obtain from the rural people, using their ideas to plan with them and for them.
- Second, **sharing our learning** and field-based experiences through education, training and communicating in a systematic framework so that

even villagers receive critical information on development activities they need to begin improving their difficult lives; and,

- Third, **joining with partners** in global development collaboration to promote and achieve equity, justice and peace for all beginning from the grassroots.

Mr Vice Chancellor sir, in the 21st Century, a rural development programme that would be sustainable would put the people first, and would not be the sole responsibility of our government planning from top to down but would be guided bottom up approaches which we find only in the use of participatory methodologies, hence my urgent call for the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) at all levels of rural development programmes

My Contributions to Research in Settlement Studies and Rural Development

I . Major Research Findings.

Mr Vice Chancellor sir, in almost two decades of research and teaching as a rural geographer, my interest and concern centre on the people, their interaction with their environment and the state. I will therefore highlight several of my contributions to knowledge in my area of specialization.

[a] Resettlement Studies and Rural Development Research.

My first six years of research focused mainly on the resettled people of the Jebba Lake Basin. The creation of Jebba Dam on the Niger River had resulted in the displacement of about 6,000 rural inhabitants and loss of about 950ha of farmlands in Jebba area in 1986. The resettlement involved 42 riverine villages that were relocated into 21 planned settlements with construction of houses and

some social infrastructure. The resettlement policy enforced in Jebba Scheme was that of outright resettlement of communities with building options, and cash compensation on land, economic trees as well as on other landed property. The process of persuasion, participation and partial decision making by the local residents were introduced. . Resettlement was thus used as a tool for rural development in the localities through the process of modernization. Thus far, as at 1986, all the settlers were resettled in their new locations through the process of amalgamation of settlements (Olawepo, 1998 a and b, and Olawepo,2000a).

Mr Vice Chancellor sir, in order to harvest the impacts of resettlement on the socio-economic and rural development in Jebba resettled villages, we learnt from these rural people, who are mostly farmers, fishermen and itinerant livestock keepers, the arts of farming, fishing and their views of development ten years after being resettled in new locations. Our researches on Resettlement in Jebba Scheme involved the study of 30% of the people involved in the resettlement exercises in the resettled villages over the years. Thus not less than 679 residents were involved in all cases. These were spread among the Nupes, Kamberis, Hausas, and mixed communities drawn from about 2,245 enumerated household heads.

Our learning took the form of ‘direct observation and do it yourself’, Focused Group Discussions, Seasonal Calendars and Structured Questionnaires and other meaningful PRA techniques that left us as observers among the rural residents. These methods involved repeated visits to the communities from 1996 to 2000 and recently in 2010-2013.

Our researches in Jebba resettlement identified some dynamics of socio-economic and rural change brought by resettlement.

- First, communities were redefined in terms of physical accessibility to public goods and services, public utilities, and settlement lay out in the area of modernization. Settlements were redistributed to enjoy the advantages of relocation. They include Gbajibo, Bukah Sabo Peggi, Awuru I and 2 Chegu and Nasarawa groups. Others are Kainti, Kalema, Kumigi, Salkawa and Futawa among others.
- Second, scattered rural settlements have been brought together to form larger communities where provision of infrastructure has been well appreciated; a situation that had proved difficult in the past was thus simplified. Settlements like Gbajibo, Kumigi, Dada, Awuru, Tugan Malli-Olli and Futawa were provided with electricity, boreholes, schools and earth roads which were virtually not available in their former communities. (see Plates 4-6)
- Third, modern houses as against the thatched roofed buildings with housing infrastructure were provided for the resettlers in their new 21 locations; and,
- Fourth, Jebba Lake Basin had witnessed a tremendous influx of people since the past ten years after resettlement. This is mostly noticed in the amalgamated settlements of Gbajibo, Bukah and Awuru group. (see Table 3). These findings were subsequently reported by Olawepo (1998a, 2000), and Olawepo & Adedayo (1998) respectively.

Table 3: Fishing Activities in Jebba Lake Basin

Items	1985	1988	1992	1998	2006	2008	2010
Fishing camps	32	48	51	53	62	62	68
Boats (total)	266	302	318	400	402	420	510
Boats with engine	68	71	78	82	89	92	110
Fishermen	532	1025	1020	1424	1600	1770	2120
Catch/Boat/day	8.5kg	7.6kg	8.9kg	10.5kg	12.5kg	12.8kg	18kg

Source: Author's Research.

In another development, Olawepo & Adedayo (1998 and 1999) studied the Adjustment problems and Factors of resettlement success in Jebba Lake Basins twelve years after evacuation. Here the focus is to predict the spatial incidence of resettlement problems as well as the factors of resettlement success.



Plate 4 Water and Electricity in Bukah



Plate 5. Borehole Project in Kainti



Plate 6: A Street in Gbajibo showing New Constructed buildings

Using Stepwise Multiple Regression Analyses, we were able to depict models of Adjustment problems. Our findings revealed that about 47.25% in the variation of adjustment problems were explained by four variables. These are pressure on land, housing inadequacies, infrastructural problems and environmental hazards. In the case of factors affecting resettlement success, population difference, and accessibility to infrastructure and resettlement preference were found to be significant. In a similar work, Olawepo & Lawal (2010) also reported that, settlements that have functioning and improved social infrastructure adjusted successfully with minimal levels of desertion, and most of them were found existing in our repeated visits in 2010, 2013 and 2014 respectively.

Despite these positive contributions of resettlement to socio-economic and community changes, many of the evacuees in the early years of resettlement mentioned that even though they now enjoy modernization in the areas of

new housing, infrastructure and social change, there were occupational dislocation, loss of contact with their original homes, separation from families and friends and historical attachment and cultural affiliation to their motherland where they had their ancestors contacts and burial ground .These findings and others have been published by Olawepo(1998a and b), Olawepo & Adedayo (1998, 1999), Olawepo (2000a,b, and 2003) and Olawepo & Lawal (2010) respectively. The people in the Jebba scheme experienced a successful adjustment as a result of their participating in the resettlement planning. The planners planned with them and used their ideas in the provision of felt need infrastructure and housing modernization. The basic question still remains: Can the modernization input and innovation of resettlement be used as a panacea for effective rural development planning in the developing world? Lessons from this scheme however stand at the threshold of systematic study of development induced resettlement in Nigeria as a whole.

[b] Community Driven Development Research.

My research on **community driven development** focused on past community works in Ajasse, Oro and Esie/Ijan Districts of Kwara State as far back as 1998. Local self-help community development in this region was reported by Olawepo (1998b) as instrument of improved welfare by the communities themselves. This was found to be common in most rural areas of Kwara South in response to years of government neglect. As reported by Olawepo (1998b) the urge to provide infrastructure in three districts of Ajasse, Oro and Esie/Ijan (in Irepodun LGA of Kwara State) dated back to the 1930s during the construction of linkage roads through self- help methods. An examination of the communities showed that most communities in Igbomina land do not wait for government before they embark on development projects.

In the specific area of electricity, probably the first known cases in the entire of Kwara State were those of Oro and Esie in 1967. The two communities provided electricity for themselves through self-help from Osogbo terminal station. Similarly, Ijumu-Oro was electrified by December 1968 and by December 1972 virtually all the towns in Oro and Esie Districts had been provided with electricity through communal efforts (Olawepo, 1998b).

My research further showed that apart from electricity provision, more efforts were diverted to the opening up and tarring of many community roads in the 1980s. Oro township roads were tarred by the community and those of Buari, Sanmora, Iludun and Agbamu, were tarred in 1985, 1990, 1994 and 1995 respectively by individual members of these communities. Other examples of infrastructural provision through communal efforts include General Hospitals in Oro, Iludun-Oro and Agbamu as well as Health centres and electricity in Ijan, Agbonda, Omido and Agbele respectively. The results of our findings showed that a large proportion of these self-help projects were initiated through community Development Associations while others were financed by few rich individuals in the communities. The role of community Development Associations here included initiation of new projects, fund raising and the monitoring of the welfare of community members all over the nation (see Table 4a).

Table 4a: Selected Finished Self-Help Projects in Ajasse, Oro and Esie/Ijan Districts in the 90s.

Community	District	Project	Estimated Cost	Actual cost	Year Completed	Sponsor
Agbonda	Ajasse	School, Road & Market stalls	N545,000	N360,000	1991-1992,	Community
Omido	Ajasse	Electricity/Health Center	N150,000	N73,000	1985-1995	Community
Agbamu	Ajasse	Tarring of Road	N10m	N10m	1995	Individuals
Agbamu	Ajasse	Hospital	N2.5m	N2.5	1994	Community
Okeya	Ajasse	Classrooms	N500,000	N395,000	1992-1995	Community
Iludun-Oro	Oro	Sch. Library	N2.5m	N600,000	1996	Community
Okerimi-Oro	Oro	Road Tarring	N7m	N5m	1997	Community
Esie	Esie/Ijan	Palace	N3.5m	N500,000	1997	Community
Ijan-Otun	Esie/Ijan	Town Hall	N1.5m	N900,000	1996	Community
Agbele	Esie/Ijan	Town Drainage	N500,000	N100,000	1996	Community

Source: Ministry of Water Resources and Rural Development, Ilorin 1998.

Related to the self-help projects by communities is the introduced World Bank assisted community driven development programme adopted by various states in the Federation. As reported by Olawepo and Akanbi (2013), twenty-six (including Kwara) out of the thirty six states in Nigeria subscribed to this initiative. Our research here was based on conservation based field observation in which the authors had to visit some of the project locations to ascertain the availability of the project. The project was launched in Kwara State in 2005 and is funded through a credit negotiated between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the World Bank. While the World Bank gives a sum of 200 million dollars, the FGN contributes a counterpart fund of 5 million dollars, the state government 100 Million Naira per annum, while the local communities would have to contribute only 10% of the project's total cost. The whole credit would be paid back to the World Bank within a period of 35 years at 1% interest after a moratorium period of ten years.

The study reveals that in the last nine years in Kwara state, over 403,110,342.76 Million Naira had been expended on executions of community driven projects in the state(see Table 4b).

**Table 4b. Sectoral and Financial Distribution of
Community Supported Projects in Kwara State.
2005-2009**

S/N	Sector	Numbers	Financial commitment (Naira)	%
(i)	Education	63	202,911,128.14	50.34
(ii)	Water	41	111,588,954:30	27.68
(iii)	Health	7	26,369,647:20	6.54
(iv)	Roads	8	31,852,951:20	7.9
(v)	Power	5	19,005,528:42	4.72
(vi)	(Electricity) Social	3	11,382,133:50	2.82
	Total	127	403,110,342:76	100

Source: KW CPRP, 2012 in Olawepo&Akanbi, (2013).

In the same vein, 140 communities have benefited from the developmental impacts of the 127 community projects as at 31st March 2012. Similarly, 47 communities benefited under the provision of new motorized boreholes (see Table 5)

Table 5: Samples of New Motorized Boreholes Provided through World Bank Assisted Projects.

S/N	Benefiting Community	LGA	Bore hole Nos	No of Fetching Points	No of Tap Heads	Overhead Tanks Capacity	Reticulation Distance (Metres)	Completion Status
1.	Ago-Oja	Asa	1	7	28	30,000	500	100%
2.	Laduba	Asa	2	4	12	45,000	500	100%
3.	Ori-Okoh	IlorinWest	1	4	14	40,000	150	100%
4.	Aiyedun	Oke-Ero	2	3	12	45,000	500	100%
5.	Idofian	Ifelodun	2	2	10	45,000	200	100%
6.	Okekere	Ilorin West	1	3	20	20,000	250	100%
7.	Tsaragi	Edu	1	6	24	45,000	800	100%
8.	Bokungi	Edu	2	3	18	22,500	300	!00%
9.	Oro	Irepodun	2	6	24	22,500	800	100%
10.	Okeapomu	Ilorin West	1	3	12	20,000	500	100%

Source: KWCPRP,2009 in Olawepo&Akanbi,(2013).

When the researchers visited Laduba, Obbo-ile, Oreke and Eggi-Oyopo the new motorized boreholes were functioning effectively while those in Amule, Olori and Agbeku were also producing clean water for the use of people from those communities.

About 19 million Naira was also expended on the provision of rural electricity in different parts of the state through this laudable project between 2005 and 2012. Some of the rural communities that benefited from electricity provision under this programme include Abayawo, Sentu Igbo-Aran. and Odo-Ode group of communities all in Asa Local Government Area. The secret is this: Through a Learning Principle, the rural people initiated the programme, they paid their 10% contribution, the World Bank through the Government provided the balance of 90%.The communities carried out the projects themselves through Community Associations selected committees and evaluated and service the projects. This is one area in which the impact of the Kwara State Government is felt extensively at the grassroots and they need to be commended. The good news is that the various communities still have these projects in their care and they are being run by the communities themselves. The 10million Naira Agbamu market Stalls built through the World Bank Assisted Development Driven Project is a living example.

[c] Participatory Development and PRA Researches

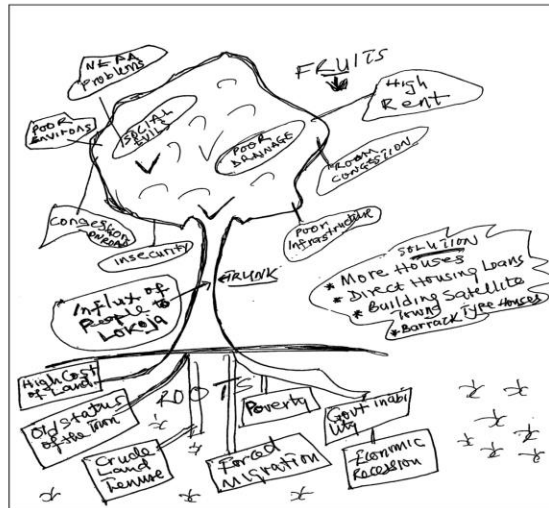
In the cause of my research in the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), I introduced in 2004, the use of 'Community Traits' to analyse rural development options or to solve rural related problems all originating from the rural people themselves. A Community trait refers to any legend or landmark or a peculiar feature commonly associated with a community and generally known by the residents. It could be

a river, common tree or shrubs, mountain or a specified game or trend of event (see Olawepo 2004, 2008a and 2008b). In the case of my study in Lokoja, I focused on the use of PRA to evaluate housing problems in Lokoja a few years after becoming a state capital. Participants were asked to evaluate the qualities of houses, problems and solutions from the points of view of the residents through the use of brainstorming, transect walk and participatory modelling. During a Focus Group Discussion, participants were led to draw 'problem Tree' of housing, their 'root cause' and 'the fruits' (using baobab tree common in Lokoja environment). While the participants were doing this, the researcher and field assistants were 'learning' from the people'. After the people had drawn the 'problem tree' they identified the 'root cause' of housing problems shown as the roots of the tree (high cost of land, inability of government to meet housing demand, forced migration, old status of the town, etc), the trunk of the tree was the influx of people to Lokoja while the fruits of the tree (problems) include social evils, poor drainage, congestion, high rent cost and porous security among others. Solution stores were also produced by the people. (see Plate 7 and Figure3.)

The study revealed that the local residents are aware of the resources within their localities as well as the pressure on housing and infrastructure, and the contributions of the government towards solving housing problems and have perceived solutions for effective planning (Olawepo, 2008b).



Plate 7: A Focus Group Discussion



Drawing of 'Problem Tree' during Group Discussion [FKA7]

Figure 3: Visual Impression of Housing Problems in Lokoja using PRA

My research work in Badagry villages also used Forced Field Analysis as a form of PRA technique in proffering solutions to rural problems from the rural fishermen's perception. There were two lessons from this study: one has to do with what PRA tells us about the fishing community, the other is the importance of facilitators that have, amongst other things, good listening skills. The experience also revealed that field workers' ability to listen and learn from local fishermen was a critical factor in collecting in-depth information that could be used for rural community planning; these and other results were reported by (Olawepo, 2008c).

My research on community trait was also expatiated in 2009 when I ventured into using PRA to explore Adolescent Sexual and reproductive health among rural based students in Afon District in Kwara State. Along standard PRA tools, Asa River was used as a popular trait to explain the situation and thus learning from these set of rural residents. The participants were asked to visualize through drawing, ways of solving the prevalent sexual problems among rural teenagers. The river flows through the district, taking the participants to the bank and imagining crossing it to the other side would mean 'solving the problems at hand'. One side represents the prevalence of that behaviour, and the other where that behaviour no longer exists in their community. The participants agreed that they need 'stepping stones' to cross to the other side of the river.

Crossing River Asa symbolised a change in attitudes or behaviour; the stones were participants' indicators of change. Figure 3 was later drawn by the participants. While the boys presented 'solutions' in their own view to include *Zip on, no to pornography, not walking in the night with their girlfriends etc* for the girls not to become pregnant before marriage, they suggested among others *avoiding night parties (ode iyawo) without parental guides*. In this wise,

experimental study using PRA tools has shown that the rural residents were able to express themselves and are ready to change if allowed to plan their affairs. It also shows that indicators of change do not have to be imposed from the outside but can evolve as part of the research design. This is another profitable learning for development. This and other findings were reported by Olawepo (2009a).

SOLVING SEXUAL PROBLEMS AMONG ADOLESCENTS

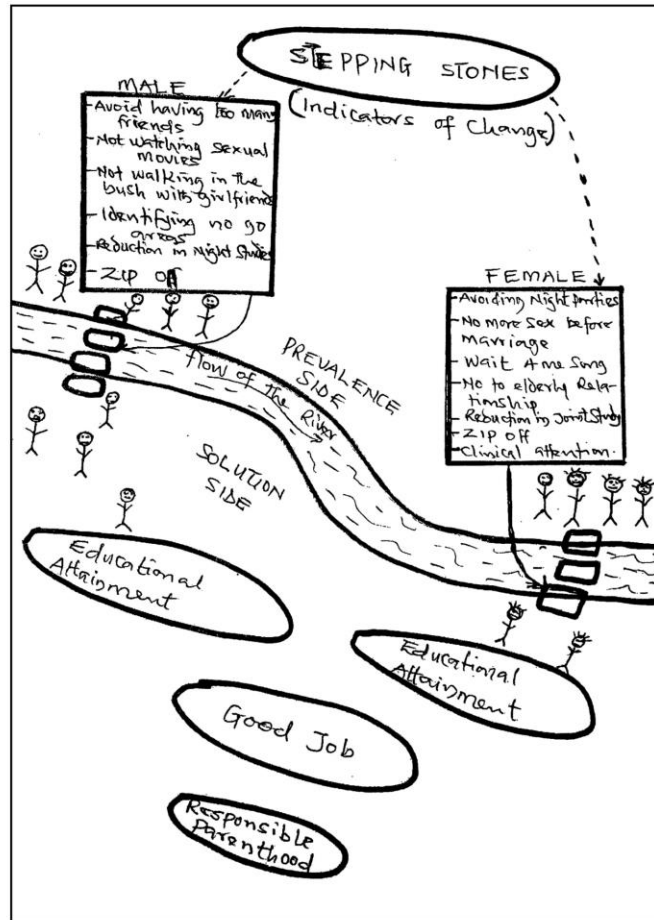


Figure 4: Visual Impression of Solution to Adolescents Sexual Problems in Afon

Olawepo (2014b) in another work reported the use of 'stone casting' as a form of PRA in Agbamu community in the choice of priority projects among the five listed by the

community. At the end, the community chose the construction of community market as their most prioritised project. The outcome of the findings showed that the community made the choice on the basis of their needs, the planner planned with them while the people contributed and executed the project themselves. As at today it is one of the most successful projects because the people saw it as their project and continuous evaluation and monitoring is still ongoing (see Plates 8 and 9).



Plate 8: Stone casting to choose Prioritised Project



Plate 9: A Multi Million Naira Agbamu Market [World Bank Assisted Project]

I also extended my PRA search into assessing the contributions of Community Banks into participatory development in both Kwara and Kogi States. The results of the positive influence of these rural banks were observed in the areas of cash flow development, employment and capacity building, ownership participation and local investment and others. These were reported by Olawepo (2004) and Olawepo & Ariyo (2011) respectively.

Olawepo & Tunde (2010) examined the potentials of rural farmers in identifying farm problems in Afon district using PRA.. The results showed that rural farmers can be drawn together to teach and lead outsiders in the ways of their daily life pattern as a method of data gathering for planning and proffering solutions to problems within their local environment.

In summary Mr Vice Chancellor, findings from Participatory Development and PRA researches show that:

- the rural residents are aware of the resources within their localities, and they have knowledge and technical knowhow to proffer solutions to local problems in their environment;
- through PRA, reliable data can be generated from the local stakeholders for the purpose of promoting participatory development among the rural people; and,
- it is only when fieldworkers appear ready to learn from rural residents that they obtain detailed information about their developmental problems and this is a secret of successful and sustainable participatory rural development worldwide (Olawepo 2004, 2008b, 2011 and 2014b)

(d) Livelihood Development Research

A comparative study of attempts at achieving rural change through livelihood development in various rural communities was undertaken by me through the use of PRA techniques in the course of my research especially in the area of farming and food production. This is because agriculture forms the largest source of labour in the rural areas and over 85% of food production in our country today is borne by small scale farmers who dwell in the rural areas. Therefore, any policy that will improve the quality of life must first take care of this sector. Despite its contribution, it is acknowledged that agricultural production does not meet the rising level of population demand in Nigeria due to the many problems confronting rural farmers and thus there is decline in food productivity. Olawepo (2010b) evaluated rural farmers' income in Afon district with a view to assessing ways of improving standards of living using PRA techniques.. The findings also show that through the use of stepwise multiple regressions, four factors were found to be the main determinants of a farmer's income out of the twelve examined. These are farm output/yield per ton, cost of farm input and implements, accessibility to credit facilities, and transport cost. Consequently, in order to improve food productivity and ensure food security in Nigeria, local farmers suggested that attention should be paid to areas of incentives to agricultural productivity affecting the small scale farmers and ease of access to farm inputs.

Olawepo (2010c) in another research reported that rural farmers in Afon District identified that the problems of high cost of human labour, high cost of transportation to the market and lack of funds and access to credit facilities ranked high in receding increased food productivity in the study area. All these reduce the incentives that can encourage local farmers to increase productivity in the subsequent farming

seasons. In the same vein, the works of Olawepo & Yahaya (2011) and Olawepo & Fatulu (2012) focused on women participation in Agriculture in Ekiti and Asa Local Government Areas respectively.

My research went further to study the components of the Zimbabwean Farmers project in Tsonga as a means of livelihood development within the agricultural sector. When the Zimbabwean Farmers were brought to Kwara State, Nigeria, in 2004, the intention of the government was to enable the local farmers benefit from their wealth of experience through commercial farming especially in the area of grain production in Tsonga and its environment. Six years after continuous farming, a survey evaluation was done through sampling of 240 farmers within their environment. Results published by Olawepo (2012) showed that about 20% of the labour force required by the Zimbabwean farmers was obtained within the local environment and most people were employed as labourers, security guards and other unskilled labour. Similarly less than 0.05% of the local farmers were trained to improve local productions while 2.8% of the farmers observed increased productivity and subsequent increase of income as a result of the commercial activities of these foreign farmers.

My research revealed some lapses in this project. Whereas the intention of the state government was to bring modernization into rural farming in Tsonga area, the peasant farmers were not carried along in the planning and implementation of the programme. The Zimbabwean farmers were met with resistance because the government did not indicate the implication of the project. In the end, the impacts of the project are only minimally felt by the local communities, while most of the productions of the Zimbabwean farmers are for international markets. Similar work on large scale farming as a form of livelihood

development option of rural development was also reported by Olawepo and Ibrahim (2013) in and around Kano River Project Phase 1as showing extensive influence of large scale farm project to boost rural development. The farmers here were carried along in the implementation of the project (especially in the choice of crops, site, sale options and extension services). 85% of our respondents agreed that there have been improved agricultural development and a high level of annual yield and accessibility to modernization. These had improved their annual productivity on farms. Despite these, farmers face the usual problems of technical in-efficiency and farm distortions.

Mr Vice Chancellor sir, my researches here showed that the issue of livelihood development as a means of developing the rural areas is important and we should put into consideration, the input of the rural farmers and the rural women in order to move forward in improving the standards of living of the rural populace. All these and others will ensure food security and efficient national nutritional development which are mainly obtainable in our rural areas.

(e) Other Researches and PRA Works

Mr Vice Chancellor sir, apart from my interest in rural studies and research, I have also demonstrated the use of Participatory methodologies in urban researches especially with my postgraduate students and colleagues in the department over the years. For example, Olawepo & Ahmed (1999) assessed spatial equity distribution of amenities in Ilorin using factorial ecology, while Olawepo & Okedare (2006) studied Men's Attitudes towards Family Planning in Ilorin. Apart from this, Olawepo & Fadayiro (2010) studied the demise of industries in Kwara State over the years. Similarly, I had worked with Oyebanji in (2006) to examine the industrial employment structure of Nigeria, while my

work in Ilorin and Lagos focused on urban agriculture and urban mass transportation respectively (Olawepo 2008d, 2014 c). Others include Olawepo (2011), Olawepo & Oluwafemi (2012), Olawepo & Obayelu (2012), Olawepo & Adeyeye (2012), Olawepo (2014b; 2014c) and Olawepo & Fashagba (2014). The foci of all these studies are one and the same: sustainable development, the environment, the people and the State. The central theme has been, to use social geography to solve socio-economic problems in space, with emphasis on putting the people first to effect equity and improved accessibility to public goods and services.

II. Teaching, Research and Fieldwork

Mr Vice Chancellor sir, I extended my effort and interest in Rural Development into non-school settings as well, as a form of contribution to knowledge. Apart from the regular teaching and supervision of Rural Geographers at Master's and Doctoral levels, I have successfully demonstrated the use of PRA techniques in our regular yearly Fieldwork Trips involving every 300 Level Student. I have led our students in the last fifteen years to demonstrate the use of PRA as a data collecting strategy at different occasions. For example, we have demonstrated in Lokoja (1998), Aboto-Oja (2002), New Bussa (2005) and Jebba (2008), the use of group discussion and brainstorming, seasonal Calendar and participatory budgeting respectively as forms of PRA techniques. Others include sun-burst and diagramming technique in Igbeti (2010), transect walk in Kishi (2011), matrix ranking in Lokoja (2013) and Force Field Analysis in Patigi (2014). Specifically in Kishi, we discovered that until we decided to 'learn' from the rural farmers we were unable to collate reliable data on relics and historical perspectives of the people on local tourism and rural periodic markets. Two of my PhD. students have also demonstrated the use of

‘community traits’ as tools for solving rural development problems in Adamawa and rural labour diffusion in Kwara state while a third one is currently using PRA to explore the response of rural women farmers to climate change in Baruten and Kaiama Local Government Areas of Kwara State.

III. My Contribution through Community Service

Mr Vice Chancellor sir, apart from my contribution to knowledge in the academics, I have been involved in various community services, especially those related to my immediate environment. I have served as a State Pastor and a member, Board of Trustees of Abundant Life Church between 1993 and 2001 and from 2000 till date respectively. I am also the current Patron of Unilorin Joint Departmental and Faculty Fellowship; adviser, Unilorin Christian Union and I play active roles in the development of my home Community’s Church: the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion.

Apart from serving the University in various capacities, I have also been involved in community services in the last ten years in my home Community, Agbamu. Thus far, as the Chairman Agbamu Community Development Association (Central Working Committee), I have assisted my community with the support of other members of my committee, to benefit from the World Bank Assisted Community Driven Development Project between 2011 and 2013. This project was completed under my leadership and was handed over to the community on December 26th 2013. In furtherance of my service to my community, as a Geographer, I have been carrying along the elite and the farmers in the community with the weekly ‘Agbamu Weather Forecast’ which I paste on the Internet every week under ‘Agbamu Forum’ in the last two years.(see Plate10).

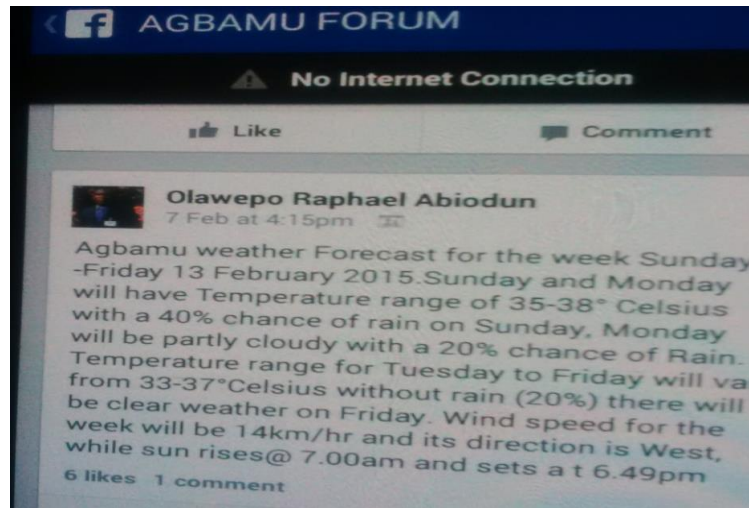


Plate 10: Agbamu Weather Forecast on the internet

This has been useful to our people at home and in Lagos to guide their ways and monitor the community weather at the local level. I am proud to say that with my professional training, I can forecast when the next rain will fall in Agbamu and its environs, the speed of the wind and the temperature range over the next six days; and it is a form of participatory development at the grassroots.

Apart of my contribution to community service at the local level, I have equally rendered my services at the State and National levels. Similarly, I was a member of the Federal Government Ministerial Committee that prepared the proposal for the Nigerian bid to host the establishment of the United Nations Climate Change Centre in Nigeria in 2013, and I irrevocably rendered my expertise and professional input successfully. This is my story thus far.

Conclusion

In concluding this Lecture, Mr Vice Chancellor sir, permit me to share this story which over the years has assisted me to drive home the point to my students of Rural Geography. In one of my research trips to Kainti, a resettled rural community around New Bussa, Niger State, 14 of us were to board a taxi ordinarily meant for 4 people on their market day. Four of us sat with the driver, seven other people sat at the back seat, the remaining three sat on the roof of the rickety taxi cab with two goats and sizable numbers of yam flour bags (see Plate 11).



Plate 11: Rural Transportation in Kainti

I was sandwiched between three Bororo herdsmen. While I was angry because of the odour coming from them, the only word I can hear from one of them with his coloured teeth

smiling at me was ‘*San nu*’. I became even angrier at that point. We then got to a big stream where we all have to come down except the driver, to allow the cab to cross, because there was no bridge. This is a community which was known for massive production of yam flour in the area, without proper transportation facilities and government attention! The Bororo man repeated his greetings, ‘*San nu Abokin Makaranta*’ then I became more furious; the Holy Spirit then spoke to my heart, and all I could hear was..... ‘the Lord paid for their salvation too’. I could not talk throughout the journey again, the odour in their bodies suddenly became sweet on me and I looked back and said ‘*San nu Abokin*’ and one of them hugged me with a welcoming smile as we alighted in Kainti three hours later.

The import of the story is this, Kainti’s case is one out of thousands of neglected rural areas serving as food baskets for our nation. Many rural areas are without serious attention; they deserve equity too. The profit of the land belongs to us all, the rural and the city people.

Recommendations

Mr Vice Chancellor sir, In order to make an impact on the majority of people in the developing world, one must remember that they live in the rural areas whereas modern development seems to be geared towards the urban centres. To remedy this, I suggest that:

- (i) Life in the rural areas should be made attractive and profitable with a view to keeping these people in their homes and surrounding through an improved accessibility to public goods and services.
- (ii) The bulk of rural development programmes should be shifted to the Local Government Administrations, who are closer to the grassroots;

but first there has to be Local Government proper Autonomy in terms of finances and rural development policies which should come directly from the Federal Government.

- (iii) It has been acknowledged that one of the main sources of the crises in the rural sector, is the absence of effective partnership and funding, I therefore suggest the backing of the World Bank Assisted Rural Development Programmes in all States. While the rural communities would choose programmes for themselves, contribute their ten percent funding, the remaining 90% would be borne by the State and Federal Government as counterpart funding.
- (iv) The nature and dimension of the problems confronting rural development in Nigeria requires a new approach to governance. Governance in the rural areas needs to be democratized to make rural development more accountable, transparent, efficient and inclusive. The rural people must be brought into all aspects of planning from rural appraisal to budgeting implementation and community monitoring. This will help them to see rural projects as theirs and as such participatory development would be sustainable.
- (v) To enforce sustainability of our environment (both rural and urban) Geography at the secondary school level should not be made optional or replaced with social studies in the development of the new school curriculum. This will enable us all to appreciate our environment early in life and to allow for proper sustainable deployment.
- (vi) Mr Vice Chancellor sir, I am waiting for a blueprint of our National Development plan that

will have the bed rock of rural development and other development programmes entrenched in our constitution; a National Development plan that will be devoid of politics, no matter which political party wins in an election. When the blueprint remains a National Development Plan that would be strictly implemented continuously, then, there will be no need for each party's agenda, but the people's National Plan, and it is then that we can have continuity in regional development plans.

Acknowledgements

I give glory to God Almighty Whose love towards me is demonstrated through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ and Who through the Holy Spirit empowered me, by His Grace, to be what I am today. Where would I have been today if not for you, Lord? All I can say is Thank You.

I thank my parents of blessed memory: Chief Jonathan Ibiwoye Olawepo (my father) who taught me how to be a man, and my mother, Chief (Mrs) Comfort Folawuwo Olawepo, who passed unto glory exactly five years ago today; she stood by me in all things, Mama I love and miss you, but your memory is in my heart forever, Thank you mama.

I also thank my immediate family, especially my brother, Engineer J.B. Olawepo and My sister Mrs Moyoade Oladimeji, who both sponsored my University Undergraduate Education, and their spouses, Mrs Bola Olawepo (Mama Prof.) and Mr. Jide Oladimeji, as well as Revd and Mrs J.O. Odedele for the sacrifices they made for me to become what I am today. Similarly, I appreciate all the children of the Olawepos, we all grew together to promote our father's name, and this we did diligently.

I am especially grateful to my children. They have always been sources of pride and joy to me; they are my legacies and the proof of my strength as ordained by God. They are Dr (Mrs) Omotola Ogunleye [Nee Abiodun Olawepo] and her hubby Rotimi Ogunleye, Mr and Mrs Olaoluwa Olawepo, Damilola Olawepo and Israel Olawepo (My Prince) for making me a proud father. Also through these children I have been blessed with two grandchildren, Masters Ore-Oluwa Ogunleye and Ayanfe-Ola Olawepo, you will grow in Jesus name.

My gratitude also goes to those who taught me most; some of them are alive and seated here today. They include Canon Moses Adeanye [my Primary one school teacher]; Professor Oluwole Oyebanji who has been my benefactor and father in the Department, Professor Adebisi Adedayo, who encouraged me to be a rural Geographer, and to take after his precepts, I am greatly indebted to him. My other teachers include Professors O.J. Olaniran; J.F. Olorunfemi; A.Adedibu, A.A. Ogunsanya [of blessed memory] and Dr. David Atte. I am also grateful to my colleagues and friends in the Department and Faculty over the years, and with whom I have always enjoyed great scholarship. I thank also the University of Ilorin for allowing me to serve my Alma mater over the years and then, for making me a Professor of Geography in my chosen Field. My gratitude also goes to three very special and key Vice Chancellors : Late Professor J.O. Oyinloye who employed me; Professor Is-haq Oloyede (OFR), who started the process of my Professorial uplift, and Professor Abdul Ganiyu Ambali (OON) who announced my Professorship on 9th February, 2013 and under whom I am presenting this lecture, I thank you sirs. I appreciate and thank the non-teaching staff of the Department of Geography and Environmental Management, my students, past and present at the doctoral, masters and bachelors levels as well as Professor

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I am indebted to all Abundant Life Church family, thanks for your support; the Lord will not forget your labour of love. I also appreciate my in-laws Mr and Mrs Raphael Adesola, Joseph Oladele and Dupe Lambe, all the way from Igogo-Ekiti and all my friends seated here today, thanks for your love all the way.

The last but not the least, I need to appreciate my darling wife, Mrs Lucy Morenike Olawepo, who has been not only a faithful helpmeet for me, but also an inspiring mother of my children I thank you for your companionship, dedication, support and understanding. You brought love like I'd never known. When I need hope and inspiration, you are always there for me; you gave life to our children; and to me, a reason to go on, and most importantly you are my best friend, a good wife, an epitome of motherhood, I will always love you forever. May God bless you more and more.

Finally, I thank you all for listening. May the Lord prosper your ways.

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