

# Impact Assessment of Roads Infrastructure on Agricultural Productivity in Konshisha Local Government Area of Benue State

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**Abstract:** This research investigated the state of rural agricultural production and how the infrastructure on ground has helped in improving agricultural sector. Konshisha Local Government which is one of the rural Local Governments areas in Benue State was chosen as the study area. The infrastructural facility assessed based on relationship with agriculture was road network. Descriptive design was used while stratified sampling technique was employed as each ward was considered a stratum. Purposive sampling technique was also adopted based on homogeneity of the population. Data was collected using primary sources which were: researcher's personal interviews, observations and photographs were also used to support and further explain the observations. The theoretical framework used in this study was the integrated rural development strategy (IRDS). From the survey conducted, the available infrastructural facilities assessed (road network) was in very deplorable state, and therefore incapable of boosting agricultural productivity in the area. Good road network is therefore recommended, especially the revival of the only federal road across Konshisha local government area. When this is fully completed, it will boost the market for farm produce within the local government area, and attract other investors in agro related ventures. Therefore IRDS is suggested to government of Benue State in order to bring the rural Konshisha Local Government Area out of this low agricultural production state.

**Keywords:** Roads, infrastructure, agriculture, rural development

## I. INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, several efforts have been made to address the food insecurity challenges, yet none seems to yield any appreciable result. This is because agriculture is growing but the growth is unsustainable. Agriculture also continues to suffer from the inertia associated with policies and programmes intervention and reformation that pervaded Nigeria especially in the post-colonial era (Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012).

The policy and programme changes undergone by the Nigerian agricultural sector is as a result of or a mere reflection of changes in government or administration (Amalu, 1998). This is because these policies vary only in nomenclature and organizational network. They emphasize almost same objectives such as provide food for the inhabitants of the nation (food security and sufficiency), export excess to other countries as well as provide rural dwellers and farmers with extension services, agricultural

support and rural development services (Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012).

Agriculture and infrastructure have a coordinate relationship, for better programmes on agriculture to be pursued and achieved; there is need for government to employ an alternative arrangement in the development of infrastructure particularly the physical infrastructure such as technology, electricity, water supply system, road network, which are very essential to a sustainable agricultural development.

The integration of all these can enhance productivity in agriculture and go a long way to curtail the wastage which is generally associated with duplication of programmes on agriculture without alternative infrastructural back up.

Development plans and policies have been the major focus of successive governments in Nigeria since independence in 1960. Some of which were meant to conform to special conditions and circumstances. There are numerous sectors in Nigeria that require government attention to develop. The focus of this research project is on infrastructural development and how this affects agricultural productivity in Benue State.

The Development of infrastructure in Nigeria can be traced back to the end of civil war in 1970. During this time, the regime of General Yakubu Gowon embarked on the policy of 3Rs which were the Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation. The aim of the policy was to revitalize those areas destroyed by the war, rejuvenate the economy and the entire social life of the people affected by the war. It was at this period that most physical infrastructures in Nigeria such as bridges, schools and roads with some industries were established. It is therefore unfortunate that this infrastructural distribution was lopsided as it focused on the urban centers leaving behind the rural areas which should be the basis for development. This has been one of the causes of the poor state of agriculture in Nigeria which has brought the present food insecurity challenge. These infrastructural situations in the urban centres negate the role of agriculture in national development. The consequence of this is the migration of the energetic youth who are employees of labour for agriculture in

the rural areas to urban centres, leaving agricultural labor to the aged who strive in a subsistence manner.

The rural areas in Nigeria have a large portion of cultivable land which if properly harnessed through integrated infrastructure and employment of labor for agriculture, the food insecurity challenge will become a thing of history. The absence of this integration has brought about poor or low productivity in the agricultural sector due to wastages incurred by farmers as a result of inaccessibility to storage facilities, market for produced crop commodities and generally the low turn up of labor due to primitive farming method.

The early years of Nigeria's independence witnessed concentration of development efforts on the modern sector of economy thereby neglecting investment in the rural economic base. The problem now has been how to make rural development sustainable. To this regards, many rural development programmes have been pursued by different administrations in Nigeria. The shortcomings of both remain the limited local community participation in problem identification, project prioritization, design preparation and implementation (Obetta and Okide, 2013). Another shortcoming is that most of these development approaches are elitist and urban based. Rural areas are still largely characterized by absence of basic human needs and underdevelopment in agricultural and non-agricultural activities (William, 1994). This is due to the negligence of the rural areas in virtually all ramifications of modernization process.

The discussion dwells on rural development though the topic runs; assessment of roads and market infrastructure on agricultural productivity in Benue State, a study of Konshisha Local Government Area. This only explains the fact that the study area is rural based which is not devoid of those attributes associated with the rural area.

#### *The Problem of Infrastructure and Agriculture*

Nigeria, since inception (pre-colonial period), has been characterized by agriculture as constituting its major source of livelihood. During colonial incursion, the Europeans met agriculture as the major occupation of the people or inhabitants of the region. Coincidentally, they needed the agricultural raw materials for their metropolitan industries. This urged them to encourage the production of cash crops such as groundnut, oil palm, cocoa, coffee, cotton and rubber. Thus to facilitate export, the Europeans embarked on infrastructural development. This gave rise to the construction of railways (Transport infrastructure) for easy conveyance of raw materials to their home industries. At that time, they also established port authorities. All these were done with total negligence to the production of food crops for domestic consumption.

Looking at the road network in Konshisha local government, it is observed that there is only one noticeable tarred road, which is the federal road linking the local government with Cross River State. This lies between Awajir

and Wuese communities through Tse-Agberagba (the local government headquarters). There are also three state tarred roads within the local government. One links Konshisha with Oju Local Government from Achoho through Okpute while the other two roads link Konshisha with Vandeikya Local Government from Wuese through Korinya. This undoubtedly means that, it is only the communities located close to the areas described above that have easy access to motorable roads. It should be noted here that all the roads mentioned above are in the state of disrepair.

There are about twenty five markets in Konshisha local government. These are supposed to be centres for the sale of farm produce however; it is unfortunate that, only the four markets which are located along the above mentioned tarred roads that attract the sale of farm produce in large quantities. This makes some farm communities unable to access markets for their produce, thus discouraging increased production.

At independence, agriculture accounted for over half of Nigeria's GDP and was the major source of export earning for public revenue. After 1983, this declined to 1.7% of GDP and 7.9% export with corresponding increase in importation of food (Forest, 1995, Economist, 2003, Aliegba, 2005 and Aliegba, 2011).

Several development programmes on infrastructure and agriculture have been embarked on by different regimes in Benue state since 1999. Some of these are in Benue Advance Plan (BAP) and Our Benue our Future (OBOF).

However the rural areas in the state have not benefited from these programmes as expected. This has made the rural areas, the supposed power house for generation of food for feeding the nation as well as for export, to be characterized by hunger, poverty, high mortality rate and rural urban migration. The high rate of infrastructural decay as well as food insecurity is experienced in the entire state. It is based on this observation that the study set out to find the root causes of the poor state of infrastructural development and the decline in agricultural productivity with its attendant consequences on food security in Benue State in general and Konshisha Local Government in particular.

The aim of this study was to analyze the impact of infrastructural development on agricultural productivity in Benue State, with special emphasis on Konshisha Local Government, which is one of the rural based local governments in the state.

The scope of the work covers the period of ten years which is within the period of democratic rule in Nigeria, this spans from 2003 to 2013. It examines the agricultural productivity in the local government within this period of study. It concerns itself with the level of government involvement in the development of infrastructure so as to enable agriculture strive better in the local government. The infrastructures to be assessed are road network and markets facilities.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 1. Research design

The nature of this topic permits the use of descriptive design; the reason is that it involves step by step development of infrastructure and agriculture, as well as the segments represented in the study. Descriptive design is the most commonly used in social science research. This is due to its inclusion of historical, developmental, survey and case studies.

### 2. The study area

Konshisha Local Government Area was carved out of Vandeikya local government (Southern part) in 1989. The local government currently shares boundaries with Cross River State, Oju local government, Vandeikya, Gwer East, Gboko, and Ushongo local government respectively. The population of the local government constitutes about 3.43% of the state's total population (NBS, 2006). Agriculture is the major economic activity in the local government, engaging majority of the inhabitants of the local government. The study concerns itself with only Konshisha Local Government Area.

### 3. Population of the Study

The study covers the entire local government which is made up of eleven (11) council wards. Each council ward therefore comprise of 1 district while a district is made up of five kindred. That is fifty five (55) kindred. The population also covers the seven departments in the local government council with their respective staff strength as follows: Agriculture 93 staff, Education 163 staff, Finance 114 staff, Health 174 staff, Personnel 125 staff, Revenue 127 staff, Works 75 staff, which makes up the total staff population of 869. Therefore the population of this study is 924 (Field Survey, 2016).

### 4. Sample size and sampling technique

The sample for this study was 32 respondents. This sample was drawn from the 55 kindred where two kindred (heads) were purposively selected for the interview from each district which represents 40% of the population of the kindred heads. Ten (10) staff of the local government council were also purposively selected for interview which were four (4) staff from the local government executive council and six (6) others from two departments; agriculture and works respectively. Key informant interview was therefore conducted to get desired data from the respondents. The availability of relevant materials to be included in the study determined the choice of sample. That notwithstanding, the researcher used stratified sampling. The reason for this was that the local government already exists in a stratified form, (each ward forms a stratum). The sample size was drawn from each of these strata. Stratified sampling is a form of probability sampling which as explained by Okoye(2003), gives every item in the population equal and independent opportunity of being included in the sample. From this, purposive sampling was applied to select the desired

responses while key informant interviews were used based on perceived respondents' in-depth knowledge about the study area.

### 5. Sources of data

Data for this work was collected from two sources namely, primary and secondary. Primary data was collected by observation of the researcher and through personal interviews. Secondary data used in this work was collected from journals, textbooks, policy handbooks and government publications (Our Benue Our Future policy document, BENARDA.).

### 6. Instruments of data collection

Data collection was carried out using the following instruments:

*i) Personal interviews* - Infrastructural development in Konshisha Local Government Area has historical antecedents. It is therefore necessary to interview the members of such communities to unearth the underlying issues associated with the state of such infrastructure. To do this, unstructured or in-depth interviews was used as described by Mathers, Fox and Hunn (2002).

According to the authors, unstructured interviews are so called because; they have very little structure at all. The interviewer approaches the interview with the aim of discussing a limited number of topics, sometimes as few as one or two, and frames successive questions according to the interviewee's previous response. Although only one or two topics are discussed, they are covered in great detail. Unstructured interviews are exactly what they sound like – interviews where the interviewer wants to find out about a specific topic but has no structure or preconceived plan or expectation as how the interview will proceed. The relationship between the interviewer and the informant is important. Some characteristics of key informant interview are that the researcher has a general purpose and may use a topic guide but informant provides most of the structure of the interview. Generally the researcher follows up on 'cues' or leads provided by the informant.

*ii) Personal observations* – Personal observations will elicit questions on issues that are not clear and seek clarifications from members of the community through personal interviews.

*iii) Photographs* - Photographs of the infrastructures investigated were used to present the current state of such infrastructure. The photographs were used to support and compliment the other relevant data in the study.

### 7. Method of data analysis

Data is presented in tables while photographs were used to show the state of infrastructure in the study area to support personal interviews and observations.

### 8. Theoretical framework

The Integrated Rural Development (IRD) strategy was adopted for the analysis of this research study. Its choice

over other theories is that, it provides a swift and linkage between the two variables that form the premise or core of this study (that is, infrastructure and agricultural productivity).

Integrated Rural Development according to UN (1976 as cited in Aminu,2000) is a composite or comprehensive program for rural development in which all relevant sectors such as agriculture, education, housing, health, transportation and employment are received as inter linking elements in a system having horizontal as well as vertical linkages in operational and spatial terms. The concept is also seen in the area of communities themselves as involving the provision of the necessary basic needs of an area. an integrated approach to rural development consists of two elements, integration of the development activities into one programme of action and integration of areas to reduce imbalances between developed areas and stagnated (less developed) ones.

IRD is regarded as the most suitable approach to the development of rural areas. This is based on the fact that, agriculture being the main stay of the rural population, its nature and size of problems suggests that action should be taken in several fronts if the problems are to be solved. Therefore, efforts to develop agriculture are not confined to agriculture alone but simultaneously to the development of other aspects in the rural sector such as education, health, nutrition, water supply, transportation, electrification cooperatives which are incorporated into rural development programme and which are necessary for agricultural development. IRD thus emphasize that while planning agricultural development for a given area, efforts should therefore be made to include the development of other sectors which aid agricultural productivity.

Despite the laudable fitness of IRD for this research, some shortcomings are identified with the approach. Governments are said to be organized by functions therefore it is difficult to determine where to locate a multi-functional approach. IRD projects call for persons from different disciplinary backgrounds to work together as a team to attain a common goal, and this can be problematic due to conflict of knowledge or on the other hand, improving coordination is simply very difficult and sometimes not feasible (Brinkeroff, 1981).

The time frame in which to assess IRD is also lengthened; this is due to the fact that, IRD emphasize capacity building and participation which focuses on sustainability of benefits and not just delivery. Therefore to develop adequate indicators for the results IRD is theoretically designed to produce (measuring capacity-building) means waiting longer than the end of the project evaluation and thereby time consuming.

Scudder (1981) observes that, performance expectations for IRD projects tend to be too high during the early years of implementation and also too low during the latter years. Therefore, the risk for AID and for current and

potential beneficiaries of AID projects in Less Developed Countries (LDCs) is that, in the aggregate IRD will be judged deficient prematurely and dispensed with before the cycle of learning can be completed. Despite the above observed shortcomings of IRD, it is still the most suitable approach to be used in this study which emphasizes infrastructural development and agricultural productivity. This is based on the simple fact mentioned earlier that there can be no improved and enhanced productivity on agriculture without adequate transformation of infrastructure which is complementary to agriculture.

### III. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE AREA

Farming is the major occupation of the people of the area. Both roots and cereal crops are extensively cultivated for local consumption as well as commercial purposes. Apart from farming, the people of the area are also engaged in craftsmanship, hunting, small scale agro service industrialization and petty trading. Baskets, cloth weaving and pottery are also very important occupational activities which engage the people of the local government as off farm activities mostly during the dry season. Relatively, over 9000 inhabitants of the area are engaged in the services of Konshisha Local Government with about 90% being the indigenes of the area.

The local government is highly disadvantaged in the area of road network. The only towns that have easy access to the local government headquarters are those that are located along the federal road linking Benue with Cross River State in Konshisha Local Government (see Figure 1). The rest of the towns are located in the interior where access roads are lacking. This goes to the extent of hindering transportation during rainy season due to the abundant low lands found in the area. This seriously affects agricultural productivity within such areas since wet season crops are not easily taken to the market whose returns from sales would be recycled back into agriculture.

### IV. ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY IN KONSHISHA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

The road network in Konshisha Local Government is not impressive. Based on the assessment, there is only one noticeable tarred road within the Local Government. This starts from Awajir and terminates at Korinya. From this condition, it is observed that, the road network in the area is incapable of aiding agricultural productivity. For instance, when considering the effect of road network on agriculture, there is no doubt that;

- i) Road network contributes in movement of machinery to farm sites. Such machinery like tractors, harvesters, sprayers and to some extent seedlings, when in large quantities. Therefore it is pertinent to note that the condition of the road network system in the study area



- has already impeded commercial farming, thereby restricting agricultural activities of the area to peasantry.
- ii) Road network helps in movement of farm produce from farm sites to either processing points or sales points. This is one of the post-harvest activities that require good road system in order to reduce wastages of farm produce. The poor condition of roads within the Local Government Area has limited farmers' chances of reaching the market with their farm produce which would have given them the opportunity to determine the prices for their products, thereby enhancing or improving their returns on investment in agriculture. This is supported by Ogunnowo and Oderinde(2012), Nchuchuwe and Adejuwon,(2012). It is very unfortunate that the ugly scenario that has exposed farmers within the interior part of Konshisha area to middle buyers' exploitation. This exploitation happens when the middle buyers commonly known as "Baranda Association" move house to house within the interior villages to buy farm produce. During this period of interaction, prices of the products are determined by the Baranda members. This group of people usually silences the farmers/sellers with the fact that, they are the ones to bear the cost of transporting the produce to the market place. This leaves the farmers with no other choice than to sell the produce at the much lower price offered by the buyers.
  - iii) The road network makes a market by itself. Good road networks, especially those that cut-across state boundaries, create markets for agricultural produce itself. Under this condition, farmers who reside close to such roads usually display their harvested farm produce by the road side. This attracts travelers moving to places that lack such items to stop over and buy, rather than spending much time in search of markets. Typical example of such road side markets can be seen along Makurdi-Kastina Ala and Katsina Ala- Jalingo roads. Farmers display assorted farm produce, some of which are pre-processed while others are in their raw forms such as gari, yam, citrus, dried cassava (kpor), sweet potatoes, Groundnut etc. This enables travellers from North Eastern parts of Nigeria to the south to stop over and buy these products/produce. One of the interesting aspect of the activity is that most of these farm produce displayed along the road are found to be very fresh with their natural taste being maintained.

Ahmed (2010) had earlier made similar observations that, despite the role of transport infrastructure in national development, the sector has yet been treated in a manner that does not benefit this recognition. The situation is not impressive as a country with a population of over 170 million people; Nigeria has a total road network of about 19,200 km, 3,505 rail network and 56 airports. Ahmed (2010 and Oni, 2013) further stressed how disheartening it is to know that despite their inadequate state, this infrastructure is also in various stages of disrepair and disuse. Most Nigerian roads are death traps rather than passage ways.

The same scenario is experienced along Vandeikya - Ikom road, as well as Otukpo-Enugu road respectively. Along these roads mentioned, products such as red palm oil, plantain, bananas, snails, pineapples, udara fruits, gari are also displayed. This, to some extent, affords some small scale businessmen to buy these items in large quantities for retail in their various destinations. This particular role played by roads in terms of sale of farm produce goes a long way in reducing post-harvest losses of farm produce. This is occasioned by the daily travelling activities along the major highways. This thereby reduces the time to be consumed while trying to access the organized market within the area, which in some cases operate at a five – day interval, while others on a seven-day interval respectively. Good road network therefore assists in improving the income earning of some rural dwellers who engage themselves in the roadside business activities as described earlier. Therefore, going by the map of the Local Government area as presented in chapter three, it can be established that the good road network required in boosting agricultural activities is undoubtedly lacking in Konshisha Local Government Area. As indicated on the map, there is only one tarred road with good bridges within the area which is guaranteed of accommodating heavy duty vehicles carrying heavy machinery and seedlings for farm during both dry and rainy seasons. This is also the case with harvested produce. It is pertinent to note that, this tarred road starts from Konshisha Local Government Area and also terminates within the same area. This has made transportation of agricultural produce to Cross River State, which has major buyers, very difficult. This tarred road cuts across some wards namely; Iwuanyam, Mbakyase, Mbatem, Mbavaa, and Mbawar and Mbake respectively. This implies that the remaining five wards have no access to the tarred roads. The existing track roads as presented on the map are in a state of disrepair. Most of which cease to be motorable as soon as the rainy season sets in.

In the area of road side business or marketing of farm produce, the road system and condition in Konshisha as presented on the map does not guarantee such. The only routes that link Benue State with Cross River (South-South) through Konshisha are in a state of total disrepair. As such, movement of humans and goods along these roads is extremely difficult and dangerous. Korinya-Branch Atser (Fig. 1) road, Korinya-Ogoja road, Wuese-Alifokpa road as well as Korinya-Agbeede road present the state of these roads. Considering this, it can be established that the Konshisha area is completely cut-off in terms of road side marketing of farm produce. The reason for this is that, most if not all travellers along the roads within Konshisha are indigenes of the area, who feed from their own farms rather than buying from others. As it was earlier stated, over 90% of the inhabitants of the area are engaged in farming activities of all kinds. The situation compels farmers to wait until five days market as usually operated in the area. This exposes some farm produce to damage before the market day.

These findings are supported by Ogunnowo and Oderinde, (2012) and Ahmed (2010) who reported that

transportation for agriculture in Nigeria is appalling. According to the authors, most of the roads in the rural areas are in feeder state, insufficient and are as well heavily eroded during rainy season. Meanwhile, road network in the rural areas are the most viable assets. This affords farmers access to both farms and markets. The poor condition of roads in rural areas has constantly denied some rural farmers access to farms and markets during rainy season. The level of dilapidation of Nigerian rural roads is such that, most of the bridges and culverts linking the rural areas have been damaged. The result of this has made many rural areas to suffer varying degrees of remoteness, inaccessibility, relative isolation and backwash effort of development. Thus, available and affordable means of evacuating agricultural produce will no doubt stimulate farmers and enhance their level of productivity. Rural accessibility and mobility involves a holistic development of rural roads and water ways (Ogunnowo and Oderinde,2012 and Ahmed,2010).

Konshisha Local Government is one of the least in the state as far as road network is concerned. There is only one noticeable road in the local government which is the federal tarred road which starts from Awajir and was supposed to link Ogoja in Cross River State but rather terminates at Uma in Mbawar Council Ward in Konshisha Local Government, with the remaining part yet to be tarred since 1994, when the construction work began. This access road if completed would have provided easy access to buyers of agricultural produce from Cross River, Ebonyi, Enugu as well as Akwa Ibom States. According to one of the prominent traders, Mrs Mbasen Anaper, the non-completion of this particular road has given Okuku (Iyala) market in Cross River State recognition as one of the highest in the sale of agricultural produce such as fresh groundnut, beniseed, rice, fresh tomatoes and to some extent yam tubers; and pre-processed products like gari. It is unfortunate to note that, 90% of these crops are transported from Konshisha Local Government, through very bad roads, by the local traders and farmers alike to this Okuku market. This cost of transportation poses a serious threat to farmers, as their bargaining power is in most cases dependent on the condition of transportation.

There also exists another road which starts from Korinya town and terminates at Atser branch in Vandeikya Local Government which would have served the same purpose of linking Cross River and Akwa Ibom States as described earlier. This is a state road which links Konshisha Local Government with Vandekya Local Government. The road has been in state of disrepair for the past eleven years. Recently, the state of the road has worsened due to erosion, caused by torrential rainfall, which has swept away half of a curvet across Ujigeri stream between Korinya and Agera Mbayegh communities. This photograph was taken in January, 2016. This implies that as soon as the rainy season sets in the road will become impassable for all motorists.

One other state road starts from Wuese community through Korinya and links Ihugh market in Vandekya Local Government. This road was constructed in 2005 by Tilley

Gyado Construction Company Limited. It was tarred since two decades. This was meant to ease access to Gboko town as well as North eastern Nigeria. Personal interviews with members of the community who reside along the road show that, the road served well for not more than two years after construction and no more. These people lamented that, the road provided easy access to Ihugh market which attracts buyers of agricultural produce both from the northern and southern parts of Nigeria, but its poor state for the past nineteen years has limited the access to this market from most parts of Konshisha Local Government, since most of the commercial transporters would not risk their vehicles carrying heavy loads along this bad road.

The other road starts from Korinya through Mbanor Council Ward (Mhambe) which links with the Ge-Anshagba road (under construction), at Agbeede (Fig. 2). This road if constructed would have served as the shortest route from Gboko to Korinya through Iwarev community in Konshisha Local Government. It is unfortunate that, this road has never been graded for once, talk less of tarring it. The state of this particular road has to some extent brought serious hardship to the entire Mbanor Community in terms of access to markets for their farm produce. Interview with some local traders shows that, this community is the highest in the production of citrus fruits, cassava, groundnut, soybeans, and sweet potatoes as well as some vegetables such as tomatoes and pepper within the local government yet; the poor state of road network has rendered their access to markets very difficult. It is pertinent to note that communities under this condition have access to markets during rainy season strictly, through motorcycles which in most cases, the fare per trip takes half the market price of the commodity taken to the market for sale. It also limits the quantity of produce that can be conveyed to these markets.



Figure 1. Korinya-Branch Atser road (January, 2016).



Figure 2. Anshagba-Ikyobo-Ge road under construction for over five years (January, 2017).

According to one of the respondents, this road was approved for construction by the Rev. Fr. Moses O. Adasu's government. Arrangements were made for the takeoff of the construction work but this dream was however not realized due to the short-lived tenure of that government. Since then, no effort has been made for the construction of this road. This road is also identified with many low lands and streams which during construction would require curvets and bridges of various sizes. These streams and low lands across the road were taken care of by community efforts through construction of wooden bridges. These bridges were capable of carrying vehicles with moderate load. During this period, the Mhambe market along this road was still functioning. This situation remained so until the late 90s when the communities along the road could not handle the condition of the road due to excessive erosion which swept always most of the wooden bridges and as well expanded the span of the streams thereby, incapacitating community workers from further construction of the bridges across the streams. This situation has remained so for about one and half decades. This has impliedly denied buyers access to Mhambe market resulting to the closure of the market.

In terms of bridges, interviews granted by some staff of the Department of Works at the local government secretariat, revealed there were two proposed bridges across the river Konshisha by the then administration of late governor Aper Aku in the 80s. These were first along Tse-Agberagba – Mbaakpur, along the tarred federal road, which is the only bridge fully completed. The other bridge along Tse-Agberagba – Selagi road (ungraded) which was partially completed. The third bridge along Dio – Mbatwer - Manta road (ungraded) which was contracted out by the government of late Rev. Fr. Moses O. Adasu. Work on this bridge did not start at all. Personal observations show that it is only communities located along the road across the first (completed) bridge that have easy access to markets on the other side of the river, for their farm produce while those within the other two bridges mentioned earlier are considered the highest in the production of soyabean, rice, beniseed, yam and Bambara groundnut respectively, yet suffer the same conditions as earlier described for Mbanor Community.



Figure 3. Tse-Agberagba – Dio road (January, 2017).



Figure 4. Propose Bridge Point at Dio-Mbatwer (January, 2017).

The then regime of Governor Aper Aku, identified another major road within Konshisha Local Government which linked farm communities to Gboko Local Government; Tse -Agberagba - Selagi – Igyura roads.

The Tse-Agberagba – Dio – Gbinde road was also identified by the Rev. Fr. M.O. Adasu which also cuts across River Konshisha. According to some natives of Dio Community, contract for construction of the bridge was awarded by the Rev Fr Moses O. Adasu's administration. It is unfortunate that the funds for this contract were embezzled by the contractors as soon as the awarding government was no longer in power. Moved by that vision for this contract, community efforts were made to construct a wooden bridge across the identified bridge point to enable access between communities during rainy season. This wooden bridge dream has failed to actualize.

This is occasioned by constant drainage of the bridge due to over flooding of the river banks. The wooden pillars as presented in pictures (not shown) are the remnants from the drowned wooden bridge. This makes access between Mbagbi community and Dio Village difficult during rainy season. One of the natives by name Iorhon Chorugh said that the only means to cross over during rainy season is the use of canoe which to him is as good as a death trap. On the other hand access from Dio to Tse - Agberagba has also become difficult as the existing track road between Dio and Tse-Agberaba (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4) is eaten up by erosion.

The road from Tse-Agberagba through Selagi was meant to link Konshisha with Gboko Local Government. This would have been another short route from Gboko to Gaav District in Konshisha. Efforts towards construction of this road started with the construction of a bridge across river Konshisha which lies between Amasetimin and Selagi (Fig. 5) communities in the early 80s.



Figure 5. Under view of uncompleted Selagi bridge across River Konshisha (January, 2017).





Figure 6. The completed River Konshisha bridge leading to Tse-Agberagba (January, 2017).

The bridge at this point was almost completed. After the termination of the tenure of the administration of Governor Aper Aku, no further effort was made regarding completion of this bridge. The road also has remained in its ungraded state with the bridge in its partially completed condition. The state of this road has also led to the collapse of Selagi market.

The poor road network in the local government has not only limited access to market but has also limited the size of the farms hence only manual (human) labour is employed on the farms. This is due to the fact that most of these roads discussed are not motorable during rainy season. Thus the movement of tractors to farm lands is not feasible hence farming is limited to rainy season.

## V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Conclusion

The state of road infrastructure in Konshisha Local Government is deplorable. Good examples are the Tse-Agberagba – Dio – Manta road and Korinya – Mhambe – Agbeede road. Groundnut, soyabeans, beniseed, yam, and other crops are produced in large quantities in the Tse-Agberagba – Dio – Manta area while citrus fruits, cassava, potatoes, vegetables such as tomatoes and pepper among others are the staples produced along Korinya – Mhambe – Agbeede area. The poor state of these roads has posed a great difficulty in conveying these produce to the market therefore heavy wastage of produce occurs especially during rainy season. This discourages farmers that could otherwise produce these crops for commercial purpose thus reducing overall productivity.

Because of the arrangement of the road network, most markets are located along the only tarred road across the Local Government Area. Farmers in the interior parts of the Local Government Area therefore have poor access to these markets. This in turn results in wastage of agricultural produce before they finally reach the markets. Agriculture in Konshisha will improve only when adequate attention is given to the various infrastructures such as road network which has interdependent relationship on agricultural productivity.

### 2. Recommendations

From the analysis concerning agricultural productivity in Konshisha Local Government, there is no doubt that, the area is capable of catering for its food needs from the crops produced locally. The major problem lies in the inability of government to create enabling conditions for food sufficiency. Therefore, in order to achieve the food sufficiency dream and the economic diversification mantra with emphasis on agriculture, the following are suggested:

- i. Instead of our youth hanging on gate keeping jobs in the cities, they will prefer to stay in the rural area and partake in the agro-processing business and as well the farms. However, this will succeed only when there is proper road network in place to ensure easy conveyance of farm products from production points to the processing areas and markets.
- ii. Good road network to enable extension workers (BNARDA) have access to farm sites and easy movement from production sites to the available markets.

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