

Issues in Rural Development and Management Theories: A Review

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Abstract: The notion of people's engagement in rural development is gaining attraction in Nigeria as a key tool for mobilizing resources and organizing the rural populace to have invested interests in their own well-being. Governments at all levels, including the federal, state, and local levels, have accepted that "traditional democratic philosophy," which promotes rural people's active engagement in decision-making and policies implementation that touch and shape their lives, has an intrinsic mandate. This article provides a survey that reveals specific strategies to modernize and correct the rural development model based on both local and international practice. Analyzing the theoretical and Management side of rural areas' steady development, the association between a variety of rural economy structures and rural areas' multifunction character is discovered, necessitating the diversification of rural economies through the stimulation of numerous organizations. It has been established that the rural economy is a complex socioeconomic system, with object-subject connectivity influencing its diversification. In general, the review concludes that, in addition to emphasizing the need to compliment the theory behind the new rural development theory with new interpretations that help us with better understanding about rural development. This study establishes a different rural development definition and recommended global best practice using smart growth development as a necessary step in rural people management.

Key words: Management, Nigeria, Rural development, rural areas and Socioeconomic,

I. INTRODUCTION

Rural communities are very important component of every nation, Nigeria inclusive. This is because about 70 percent of food, raw materials and human beings reside there (Global Food Policy Report (GFPR) 2019; FAO, 2020). This formal, dichotomous way of dividing the country's territory into urban and rural areas is highly imprecise and subject to change, as new rural settlements are being transformed into urban areas, thus reducing rural area size, and many suburban areas are urban-rural spaces difficult to delimit.

This imprecise definition of rural area borders poses difficulties both for theoretical and practical development management. Rural areas are highly diversified, as they include many varying forms of space use: agricultural, forest and transport areas, waters, areas unused for commercial purposes, ecologically valuable areas, rural settlements inhabited by farmers and residents unassociated with agriculture and, increasingly more often, buildings and

facilities of public institutions and industrial activities and companies. These areas, at least in functional terms, often include small towns, especially those domiciled in urban-rural communes.

Rural areas with diverse regional systems are constantly being transformed, with changes to their nature and functions. However, no commonly agreed definition of rural areas and rural development exists at this time. In this context, the literature has long acknowledged that rural development is a contentious concept in reality, policy, and philosophy. However, there is no commonly agreed-upon definition of what constitutes "rural areas." The definition of rural areas changes from one country to another and from time to time within same country. This is due to different countries employing different criteria to distinguish between rural and urban areas. De-agrarisation is occurring as the agricultural purpose deteriorates, and alternative non-agricultural production, service, and consumption functions are emerging.

Several decades ago, poverty reduction across the world has been achieved in most developing countries except in the Sub Sahara African countries in which Nigeria is inquisitive. However, it remained high in rural areas of most developing countries. The report by Global Food Policy Report (GFPR, 2019) postulated that majority of the world's poor individuals live in rural areas: rural populations account for about 45.3% of the world's total population, although 70% of the world's populations are still extremely poor.

The global poverty rate in rural areas is currently 17%, more than double the urban poverty rate of 7% (GFPR) 2019; FAO, 2020). Generally, it is accepted that the conditions for them are worse than their urban counterparts when measured by almost any development indicator, from extreme poverty to child mortality and access to electricity and sanitation (Food and Agricultural Organization of United Nations (FAO), 2020). According to Ekong (1988), rural community is an aggregation of families that lives within same geographical location, with similar cultural beliefs and influences each other socio-culturally.

Achieving these results and more, concerted efforts must be made towards developing the rural communities by all stakeholders. However, not everyone understands the dynamics of the rural society as most programmes postulated by governments have not achieved their desired objectives.

This paper intends to look at rural development concept and policy theories in Nigeria and their management. However, the paper will observe the approaches or theories used by Nigerian governments to change and better the well-being of the rural dwellers.

The Concept of Rural Development

In theory, the concept of development is a normative term that implies growth and change. So its definition depends on the individual backgrounds. Essentially, community development is a continuous process of generating and efficiently allocating scarce resources for achieving socially satisfying needs of community members. It is made up of two points which are inter-related.

In any country, the problem of community development comes under:

1. Increasing all potential resources existing in the nation
2. Improving the utilization of the resources.

Majority of rural populations in many developing nations (the least developed countries, or LLDCs) work in and rely on local agriculture, forestry, and fisheries for a living. Rural development can be described as the enhancement of sustainable livelihoods (particularly for underprivileged groups) with great consideration to local characteristics since they are the end beneficiaries of development assistance.

According to World Bank in 1975, rural development was "a strategy designed at improving economic and social living conditions, focused on a specific group of disadvantaged people in a rural area." It helps the most vulnerable members of the rural population to benefit from development". Rural development is frequently conflated with "agricultural development" or "regional development." However, some distinctions exist between both types of development.

Agricultural Development: is primarily concerned on expanding agricultural products such as crops, animals, and fish. Human beings, land, and capital are all merely considered as manufacturing items and tools. "Rural Development," focuses mostly on people and institutions. Rural development comprises agricultural development initiatives, but it also one of the ways for active farmers and rural villages to revitalize their economies.

Regional Development: The term "regional" refers to a "area" (i.e. specific area within a country) or "region" (countries). Regional development, as defined by the Rural Planning Association as a regional plan that includes both rural and urban growth. Rural community development is a proactive approach including all sectors in the population and involving social and economic transformation. It also entails the inclusion of rural dwellers in the programme, as they make up the bulk of the populace and rural poor in many underdeveloped countries. Therefore, if rural development is meaningful, the precondition must be an acceptance on

restructuring of socio-economies of the rural areas for optimum development.

Globally, rural development definition varies. Several scholars and institutions define and conceptualize it in different ways. Therefore its conceptualization suffices as defined by Hornby (2000), as the development and slow growth of something so that it becomes more advanced and stronger. This definition implies that development involves a gradual or advancement through progressive changes. Adisa (2014) observed these changes as multi-dimensional involving changes in structures, attitude and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth; the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty. In supporting this, it is argued that the definition of rural development has advanced through several periods as changes in the perceived mechanisms and goals of development (Anríquez and Stamoulis, 2007).

As opined by World Bank (1975), rural development was seen as purely an economic issue or raising the low levels of rural income through agricultural modernization. This definition is reflective of rural development as a subset of development in the 1970s. This is because the 1970s development was also viewed merely from the economic dimension. However, nowadays development is broadly viewed as general improvement of the quality of life of people based on economic, social, political, environmental, and administrative issues. However, the 1975 World Bank definition does not consider these development dimensions. Furthermore, before the 1970s, rural development was synonymous with agricultural development. In this regard, (Johnston, 1970) argued that during 1960s and early 1970s, intense industrialization was the major attribute of the perceived development path.

Furthermore, he conceptualized rural development as precisely leading into a mechanism as basically a structural transformation characterized by economy diversification away from agriculture. In a separate view by Simon (2004), development is an improvement in quality of life (not just material standard of living) in both quantitative terms. He further opines that development must be seen as actually and temporarily relative, needing to be appropriated to time, geography, society, and culture. From the foregoing, rural-community development is not a one-off thing or an immediate and snap phenomenon. Rather, it is gradual and systematic approach towards perfection having a specific goal in mind. Some authors referred to it as a process.

Besides, during the 1970s, rural development is conceptualized based on equity considerations, the focus and definition of rural development turned to providing social services to the rural poor. Subsequently, rural development in 1970's was observed as a concept been highly related to the promotion of living standards and a precondition for reducing rural poverty (Johnston, 1970).

Later in the 1980s, World Bank also re-defined rural development, as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of the rural poor.

Kata (1986) argued that rural development indicates the overall development of rural areas to improve the rural people quality of life. However, the author also fails to consider some important aspects/dimensions of rural development. Other authors envisage rural development for instance, Philips (1992) perceived it as the creating and widening opportunities for (rural) individuals to realize and sustain full potentials through education and share in decision and action which affects them. He also sees it as an attempt to boost rural output, create jobs, and eradicate basic or extreme cases of poverty, disease, and ignorance, according to him.

Olayide, *et al.* (1981) observes it as a means for the provision of basic amenities, infrastructure, improved agricultural productivity, extension services and employment generation for rural dwellers. Hence, these authors see it as a concerted efforts made in order to facilitate significant increase in rural resources productivity with the central objective of enhancing rural income and creating employment opportunity in rural communities for rural dwellers. Several reasons for such urgency such as high and unacceptable rate of poverty, poor access to social and economic infrastructure, sanitation, infant death rate, undernourishment, disease and reduce admission of children into school.

Measuring rural development, Ekong (1988) suggests that it could be measured in the aspects of roads, water supply, housing, electricity, building of model communities, access to education, improved healthcare delivery, and food and agricultural products availability for the rural settlers. Hence, the objective of the National Policy on Rural Development as outlined by Ekpo (1991) encapsulated the ideal situation of an acceptable level of rural development. These includes:

1. Improving the social, cultural, educational and economic well being of the rural population.
2. Enhancing the long-term and harmonious development of rural areas' vast resources for the purpose of rural people.
3. Increase and diversity of job options in rural areas, and increase in income Organizing of rural people for one self-help and self-sustaining development plan
4. Inspiring technological based industries in the rural area. However, rural development may be conceptualized as a broader strategy intended to favours all groups of people. Furthermore, it could be conceptualized as one of the strategies that is intended to improve the livelihood of all groups of society at large.

Based on the above-discussed definitions, (Madhu, 2000) basically defines rural development as an activity concerned with improvement of spatial and socioeconomic environments

of rural areas to enhance individuals' ability to cater and sustain their well-being. The meaning of rural development has also evolved over time in line with current trends. World Bank (2000), says rural development is seen as strategies and policies designed at improving the economic and social life of a specific group of people – rural poor. Inconsistence to this definition, recently is conceived as the process of improving opportunities and rural inhabitant well-being. Also, it involves change in rural societies characteristics.

Also, outside agricultural development, it involves human development and social and environmental objectives, as opposed to economic ones. Therefore, rural development encompasses health, education, and other social services. It also uses a multi-sector approach for promoting agriculture, extracting minerals, tourism, recreation, and niche manufacturing ((IFAD), 2016). Also Guinjoan *et al.*, (2016) describes rural development as improving the standard of life and economic well being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated area.

Recently, Anríquez and Stamoulis, (2007); Adisa, (2014) have accepted it as subset of development. In aligned with these findings (Singh, 2009), says rural development connotes the overall development of rural regions, intending to improve rural people's life standard. Furthermore, he conceptualized the term rural development as a process, a phenomenon, a strategy, and a discipline. A process:- the engagement of persons, communities, and nations in pursuit of their cherished goals over time. A phenomenon:- interactions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural, and institutional factors. A strategy:- designed to improve the economic and social well-being of a specific group of people, that is, the rural poor. A discipline:- representing an intersection of agricultural, social, behavioral, engineering, and management sciences.

These contemporary definitions and concepts of rural development are recognized as, " the contemporary 'narratives', 'definitions' or 'prescriptions' concerning rural development naturally tend to address everything that affects rural people and the quality of their life as entities and as integral members of the larger society and, indeed, the world" (Adisa, 2014).

Rationale for Rural Development

The development of the rural communities in Nigeria is fundamental, but certainly not limited to, the following reasons:

1. No country is completely urbanized.
2. They form the major important sector of the economy. This could be since they supply the entire country with its food needs, raw materials for industries, employment generation and foreign exchange earnings.

3. Urban populations are serviced by the rural inhabitants as they replenish urban population.
4. Lack of development activities characterizing the rural areas has led to sharp development difference existing between both areas and has contributed to youth exodus from rural to urban centers. Rural development can reduce this exodus.
5. Lack of development of secondary and tertiary infrastructures entails concentration of manpower in the urban centers. In reversing this trend, rural communities infrastructural development becomes an imperative strive.
6. There is humanitarian reason why policy makers should give attention to rural areas. This could be the human beings in the rural settings deserve the good things of life, having contributed so much on the entire system.
7. Economic development is a process which requires the growth and modernization of both areas.

Several numbers of organizations which focus on rural development to reduce poverty has grown with the realization that most impoverished groups live in rural areas. The major international trends for rural development and poverty reduction are below.

The *World Summit for Social Development* held in Copenhagen in 1995 declared the goal to reduce absolute poverty in the world by half through people-centered social development.

The conference avail better opportunities for *the poor by half between 1990 to 2015* at the *DAC High Level Meeting of OECD* in 1996. In addition, the UN General Assembly (Millennium Summit) in 2000 advocates it as one of its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with the World Bank and IMF also promoting the target.

These international trends gear towards poverty reduction, the number of organizations engaging in rural development has increased. For instance, *the Asian Development Bank (ADB)* is focused on fighting poverty while the World Bank is developing a new strategy for rural development in addition to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). *The Department for International Development (DFID)* in the United Kingdom adopted the Sustainable Livelihood concept as a substitute development approach to rural development and for effective anti-poverty programs. Moreover, most NGOs regard rural development as effective in reducing poverty and have expanded their activities to include remote rural areas such as in Africa and mainly Sub-Sahara Africa.

Problems of Rural Development

Development of rural community has been bedeviled by some problems these includes:

1. *Agriculture and agrarian reforms*, peasantry fragmentation, low per capital income, non access to

credit because of high collateral requirements, storage and marketing problems and inefficient extension services.

2. *Health and Nutrition*: Most rural regions are characterized by inadequate health services and sanitation facilities thereby causing communicable diseases compounded by under nourishment and resultant diseases.
3. *Rural Manpower Development*: The educational curriculum for its development is unsuitable for job opportunities.
4. *Lack of Institutions*: Lack of social institutions impedes development in the rural areas. These institutions include: hospitals, financial institutions, education programmes that could target the educational needs of the rural dwellers.
5. *Uncontrolled Population Growth*: This problem, although is not limited to the rural setting alone, the dimension in the rural setting is alarming especially that the rural people lack the power to maintain this type of growth. The little effort at development is frustrated by the provision from this ever emerging population.
6. *Negative Perception of the People*: The rural people think of themselves first as rural before they imagine themselves as human beings. Therefore, pushing for development while they felt development was meant for some more important people than themselves is not achievable.
7. *Exclusive Corruption*: Corruption has eaten to the fabric of the Nigeria people. This has sabotaged development efforts in the rural areas.

Rural development is equated with changes in social, economic and structural institution relationships and processes. It is not just economic growth, but fair sharing of the socio economic benefits resulting from the growth. So, it is presumed to increased production, increased job opportunities, rooting out fundamental causes of poverty, disease and ignorance, generation of new employment, equitable distribution of income between rural and urban areas, widespread improvement in health, nutrition, housing, creation of incentives and better prices, sharing in decision activities and fundamental education which should involves men, women and children.

Conclusively, its development is often perceived as the process by which series of changes occurs within a given rural population with the aim of improving the rural community population living condition. These involve policies with two major goals:

1. Improved production and the wellbeing of the rural majority
2. Increased production that will enhance significant changes in the development of rural areas.

Rural development strives in Nigeria and its managements

Historically, several efforts at developing rural areas have been pursued since the colonial times. The concern has been to transform mostly the agrarian society to achieve some common set of developmental goals based on their capacities and needs.

Policies aimed at the improvement of the rural areas and pursued by various governments (federal, state and local) have been observed since 1960s. Several authors have opined community participation in rural project development is an important factor and medium to the speedy development of the rural areas in Nigeria (Okafor, 1984; Udoye, 1992; Muoghalu, 1992)

The need to develop the rural areas and subsequently, reduce the contrasting scenario of urban opulence and rural decadence has equally received ample documentation by scholars (Hansen and Schulz, 1981). Before the onset of colonial administration, communities across Nigeria had employed communal efforts as the mechanism for mobilizing community resources to provide physical improvement and functional facilities in the social, political and economic aspects of their lives. Communal labour was employed in constructing homesteads, weeding of farm, roads/path way, bridges construction and the provision of other social infrastructural facilities required by them. Some of the relevant institutions were the age-grades and the village councils.

Some authors have maintained that Nigeria rural communities have indulged in various forms of community self-help schemes development before the advent of colonization. This includes village moats construction, markets, shrines, village squares and a host of activities (Ebong, 1991 and Ering, 2012). Furthermore, Nigeria cultural perspective has increasingly brought development activities. But the modern rural development institutionalization can liken to the early 1920s when the British adopted community development strategy as an extraordinary development replica for the rural areas in their territories. This was to adjust and make amends for their fault on traditional British school system by imparting skills e.g carpentry, house building, shoe making/repairs, e.t.c in rural development centers.

Moreover, the above-discussed definition and concept of rural development has its limitations in defining or conceptualizing rural development. Thus, the already established and discussed above definition or concepts of rural development may be broadly classified into three; Firstly, in the 1960s and secondly in 1970s. Rural development was primarily conceived as merely raising rural people income through the modernization of agriculture which was the third classification.

In Nigeria, the year 1973 represented a turning point in rural development initiatives. During this time, the government

made concerted efforts to mobilize the public in support of rural development. Several task groups and agencies were set up to oversee, organize and direct partnership with the people on self-help activities. Programmes established between the end of the Nigeria Civil War and the year 1980 were; National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP, 1972). River Basin Development Authority (RBDA, 1973). Agricultural Development Projects (ADPS, 1975). Operation Feed the National (OFN 1976). The Green Revolution Programme (GR (1980). Programmes established after 1980 till date include: Accelerated Development Area Project (ADAP, 1982). Nigeria Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS, 1987). Multi-State Agricultural Development Project (MSAP, 1986). Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank, (NACB, 1986). Directorate for Food and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI, 1986). Better Life Programme for Rural Women (BLSP, 1987). National Fadama Development Project (NFD, the 1990s). National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA, 1992). National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS, 1999). National Special Programme for Food Security (NSPFS, 2003) and Root and Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP, 2003).

Better Life for Rural Women Programme as well as the Family Support Programme (FSP). More recent programmes include the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the YOUWIN program as well as the Small and Medium Industries Equity Investment Schemes (SMIEIS). Recently, Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprises Project in the Niger Delta of Nigeria (LIFE-ND), (2019).

Various state governments had also outlined plans for rural development, with the Integrated Rural Development Strategy serving as a potential strategy for bringing development to the people.

Several studies of rural development strategies have been conducted, particularly since 1960, to better understand their success in transforming the socioeconomic lives and livelihoods of rural residents. These policies, on the other hand, could be grouped together under particular theoretical frameworks. Each is discovered and studied in terms of its theoretical utility in changing (managing) their environment and, more specifically, their lives.

Sectional Management: This is one of the oldest and most popular ways still in use around the world. Ntukidem (1991), postulated this model of management entails annual budgets and plans set up in sectional management terms based on governmental and agency reports and actions. This included plans, strategies, and programs, with the planners taking care to include the complete constitutional responsibility allocated to the sections in each case.

Following independence, Nigeria has intentionally or unconsciously adopted the sectional management approach to growth. This is dependent on yearly budgets and development plans that are drawn out on a regular basis. Provisions for the

development of rural areas and people are integrated into these budgets and development plans.

Agricultural development, and support and maintenance of community self-help initiatives to achieve improved rural development were emphasized in both the first and second National Development Plans (1962-68 and 1970-74) periods. For instance, during the 1970-74 proposed development period, this was opined: "Development of Nigeria rural sector requires mobilization of underutilized and underexploited labour." Poorer farmers react to superior community price incentives by increasing labor inputs, resulting in higher productivity. The rural sector's contribution to development is particularly notable in terms of the agricultural surplus it generates (Nigeria, 2nd Development Plan, 1970:23). The Third Development Program, which acknowledged that rural growth is superior to agricultural development, is even more crucial.

The plan policy was related to increase input pay-off model which corresponds to improved productive competence to avail better and beneficial new inputs where farmers can advance, dominated the plan policy (Schultz, 1964). In 1981, the fourth plan maintained emphasis on agricultural development which was poor. It therefore postulated its objective that of providing employment opportunities, self-reliance about food production, higher per capital income, foreign exchange earnings and raw materials for development of its sector. These policies as shown above were deliberate. However, management of these policy and practice were poor. These policies were not implemented rather budgetary allocations made have been developing the pockets of few individuals.

The Structural Management: This administration is predicated on the restructuring of society's major organizations and systems. This is thought to develop if these systems are modified in accordance with global best practices. Rural development requires reorganizing existing systems and institutions to fulfill people's yearnings and assist them improve their lives (Charles, 2010).

Aspects of emancipation can also be found in structural management. For example, a fundamental aim of the feminist and women's liberation movements is the reorganization of the family and society as a whole, particularly in Africa. Thus, reorganizing the major institutions that have prevented the women in servitude from contributing their fair share to society's overall progress. This has been the main point of contention among feminists and their liberation movements throughout society.

Integrated Rural Development Management: is a recent management implemented by government in tackling problems associated with rural. It emerged from previous efforts which were abortive in improving the well-being of rural, which is the definitive developmental goal. Moreover, the conditions have worsened. Food production growth fell

from Per capita income declined from 0.7 percent in 1952/62 to less than -0.7 percent in 1970/74 (IFAD, 2016).

Inspite of the Green Revolution, the increasing numbers of illiterates is on the rise. This is unique from general development because of policy; which reflected on the mobilization and development of human resources potential and achieving a more equal allocation of income and equal access to resources.

Based on its planning, it above the agricultural sector. It encompasses a nationwide general policy aimed at attaining socioeconomic improvements for rural populations, and the complexities of regional area development based on implementation, such as delegated powers and human resource management. This approach relies significantly on regional self-reliance initiatives as national mindset.

The Humanistic Management: This is purely educational programme associated with the consciousness on equipping and empowerment. Ntukidem (1991) advocated for the enhancement of society's ability to comprehend, regulate, and regulate its environment, rather than simply exploiting it. It entails raising individual and group consciousness in meaningful collaboration with some human groupings for the greater benefit. To achieve growth, it is necessary to modify people's attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors.

A humanistic management to development maintains that by heightening or changing man's ability to appreciate his own endowment, provides him new perspective and instrument needed to shape communal space and also shape his life and fortune. The self consciousness that humanistic development management fosters may lead to self-emancipation and make the Rural people have enough power over a society that looks predetermined and immutable.

Generally, based on discontent and disillusionment, development could not meet expectations. It point-out the flaws of development been conceptualized, planned and executed. Thus, a new strategy, a new paradigm that could transform the rural. The origin of smart rural development (SRD) related to local and regional systems should be sought in various socio-economic and both development theories and concepts (Porter's) cluster theory, the local and regional competitiveness theory, the innovation theory, the human capital theory, the social capital theory, the local and regional rooting theory, the local production systems theory, the innovative environment theory, the learning regions theory as well as the regional innovation systems theory, etc. (Szczech-Pietkiewicz 2015, Dudek 2018).

These concepts were used to develop regional development policies. These policies were directed at stimulating the endogenous potential of regions, and strengthening intraregional cooperation and innovativeness. One of the three priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy was smart rural growth, and the goal was formulated to support a knowledge- and

innovation-based economy through the improvement of European potential for innovation, the results of educational processes and the use of economic and social capabilities of the digital society. Smart rural development should be understood as a type of economic progress achievable as a result of innovation, education and research activities in rural areas (EC 2010, Naldi *et al.*, 2015, Wolski 2018).

Smart rural development is defined by interrelated factors, such as the socio-economic structural characteristics of an area (human resources, human capital, mobility, capital resources, location and markets); natural and environmental resources (natural environment assets, landscape and cultural heritage); connections and cooperation networks (local markets, ICT infrastructure, social capital and cooperation with the external environment).

The smart rural area concept assumes that social activation and technological progress, when effectively integrated with other development initiatives, can create new revenue-generating opportunities, improve the products and services offering and lead to an overall strengthening of the local community, resulting in the improvement of the quality of life in rural areas. Thus, this concept could be articulated by the Nigeria government, which may avail the used and to developed rural area's development strategy and policy for the poor.

II. CONCLUSION

Self-help development activities' contribution to rural community development is largely determined by the presence of dedicated local actors and the extent government fosters local planning and involvement. The diverse variety of scope and impact of self-help acts on rural inhabitants' welfare in diverse places reflects the character of community leadership and their proclivity for self-help programs. Rural growth concept is primarily focused on the sustainable and balanced development concept, observing equal consideration in it development programmes of economic, social and environmental aspects into consideration, without violating future generation's interest. The practical specification of sustainable and balanced development should be adjusted to the circumstances and factors surrounding it location. It seems that the smart rural development concept corresponds to contemporary challenges arising from the comprehensive knowledge-based economy using technological and social innovations and networking connections, conducive to increasing the competitiveness of locals in various local and regional systems.

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