

The Roles of Women in Nigeria's Quest for Rural Economic Development: A Case Study of Ife Central Area, Osun State

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ABSTRACT

The role of women in rural economic development in Nigeria is pivotal amidst ongoing efforts to alleviate poverty and enhance community well-being. This study examines women's contributions within Ife Central Local Government Area, Osun State, highlighting various government and non-governmental initiatives aimed at grassroots development. Despite substantial policy frameworks like the Better Life for Rural Women and Microfinance, challenges such as ineffective implementation and corruption persist, impacting rural communities disproportionately. Data for this study were gathered using quantitative methods and analyzed through content analysis. Drawing on Thirlwall's development goals and the basic needs approach, this research underscores the importance of local participation and effective governance in achieving sustainable rural economic growth. It advocates for enhanced women's involvement and community-focused strategies to overcome existing barriers and foster inclusive development.

Keywords: Development, Rural, Policies, Woman

INTRODUCTION

The role of women in rural economic development in Nigeria cannot be overstated. The economic situation in Nigeria demands the active participation of all citizens, irrespective of gender, in development initiatives. Various development programs and policies have been implemented to eradicate widespread poverty and promote rural development, including initiatives such as Better Life for Rural Women, Family Advancement Programme, Family Planning Programme, Green Revolution, Operation Feed the Nation, and Microfinance.

These policies aim to eradicate poverty at the grassroots level and enhance rural economic development through the contributions of women in society. This study seeks to examine the role of women in rural economic development in Nigeria, using Ife Central Local Government Area as a case study. Records indicate that women's impact on development cannot be ignored, given the numerous government and non-governmental programs supporting grassroots advancement.

Women's participation in rural development is crucial, especially as poverty deeply affects rural areas. Despite various proposed programs, the government often neglects these areas, resulting in poor implementation of poverty alleviation programs. Many development policies remain largely theoretical, with slow or non-existent implementation. Corruption among Nigerian leaders exacerbate

underdevelopment, as funds for social services are often misappropriated, leading to abandoned projects and a decline in living standards.

The significance of this study lies in enhancing rural economic growth and development by promoting local initiatives and participation in national development plans. Effective implementation mechanisms at the local government level are crucial, as is recognizing women's contributions to development. Surveying development in rural economies reveals the significant impact of women's involvement, especially in sectors such as primary health care.

Understanding the contributions of women can encourage their participation and support from non-governmental organizations in implementing rural economic development programs. The link between local development and enhanced national development is increasingly recognized, with scholars emphasizing community participation for sustainable growth.

Thirlwall (1983) identified three main goals of development: life sustenance, self-esteem, and freedom. Life sustenance involves providing basic needs, which is central to this study. The basic needs approach, initiated by the World Bank in the 1970s (UNDP, 2006), suggests that no country can be fully developed without providing essentials such as housing, clothing, food, health, and education, aligning with Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

This study focuses on the role of women in rural economic development in Nigeria, using Ife Central Local Government as a reference point. The research faced limitations including time, financial constraints, and challenges in data collection. The researcher encountered difficulties obtaining data from Ife Central Local Government officials, requiring extensive explanations and negotiations to access necessary information.

The study relies on secondary sources such as internet search engines (Google, Wikipedia, Dictionary.com), journals, newspapers, and textbooks related to rural economic development. These resources were instrumental in gathering information and completing the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

In this study, the following key terms are defined within the context of this research:

Rural

According to dictionary.com, rural refers to areas that are far from large towns or cities, typically known as the countryside or a village, with low population density (Wikipedia).

Rural Development

Rural development lacks a universally accepted definition. Diejomah (1973) describes it as a process of improving the living standards of the rural population, including food, nutrition, health, education, housing, recreation, and security. Adegboye (1973) emphasizes the continuous development of rural people to enable effective utilization of their intellect, technology, and resources. Uwakah (1985) views it as a process of moving rural people from their current state to a better one. Williams (1978) expands the concept to include employment generation, equitable access to land, income distribution, health, nutrition, housing, law and order, and opportunities for saving, credit, and investment. The overarching goal of rural development is to raise the standard of living for rural people through their efforts, supplemented by government assistance.

Economy

The economy refers to the system of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. It

involves the efficient use of resources and includes natural resources, labor, and capital. Economic activity is influenced by technology, innovation, and changes in industrial relations. An economy's functioning is shaped by culture, values, education, technology, social organization, political structure, legal systems, geography, and natural resources. There are various types of economies, including market-based, command-based, green, gig, and programmable economies.

Economic Development

Economic development is the process by which a nation improves the political, economic, and social well-being of its people. It involves policy interventions aimed at improving living standards, education, health, and overall quality of life. Economic growth, on the other hand, focuses on increasing GDP. As Amartya Sen points out, economic growth is one aspect of economic development. Economic development encompasses a broader range of indicators, including life expectancy, education standards, literacy rates, environmental standards, housing quality, healthcare access, and income per capita.

Community

The concept of community lacks a precise definition. Chaturvedi (2006) defines it as the total organization of social life within a limited area. Community development, according to Warren (1971), is a deliberate attempt to strengthen the horizontal pattern of a community, promoting better living standards through self-help and cooperative efforts, supported by technical assistance from government or voluntary agencies.

Development

Development is a complex and multi-faceted term. Business dictionary defines it as the process of economic and social transformation based on cultural and environmental factors. Olopoeniyan (2002) views development as a movement from a lower stage to a higher and preferable one. Abubakar (1999) emphasizes qualitative improvement in societies, while Forest (1981) associates development with the realization of human potential and reduction in poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

Women

Women refer to female adults in human societies. Women's organizations involve arranging women into groups with different objectives and names. The role refers to the function or importance of an individual or organization in promoting or demoting an activity. Politics involves who gets what, when, and how (Lasswell, 1936). Ventures refer to business projects or activities involving risks. Enlightenment means knowledge and understanding of something, often aimed at making someone understand it better. Gender/sexism refers to unfair treatment based on sex, especially against women. Abdicate means failing or refusing to perform a duty.

Development in a Broader Term

Development is essential for societies and is synonymous with economic growth. Abubakar (1999) defines it as qualitative improvement in societies. Forest (1981) views it as creating conditions for the realization of human potential, marked by reductions in poverty, unemployment, and inequality, and improvements in nutrition, health, and living standards. Development involves identifying and addressing the most pressing needs of people (felt need), producing intended results (efficacious), and considering various factors that contribute to outcomes.

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Nigeria's rural development has faced significant challenges due to a lack of well-articulated programs. Efforts by successive governments have often been more about propaganda than actual development. Nigeria had no formal rural development program until 1976 when the government created the Directorate for Rural Development. Before this, rural development was addressed through large-scale plantations, subsidy approaches, and agrarian reforms under the Integrated

Rural Development (IRD) program (Agwunobi, 1993).

Rural development efforts have not been centrally guided, leading to fragmented programs across various ministries and departments. The local government system, crucial for linking the government and rural people, remains underutilized. This has prompted a continued search for effective rural development strategies (Okeh, 2010).

International organizations have played a significant role in Nigeria's rural development. Organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), and World Bank have provided technical expertise, education, extension, training, and primary healthcare services. However, Nigeria's reliance on these organizations has sometimes led to corruption, mismanagement, and a lack of focus on local needs.

The Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) was a bold attempt to centralize and standardize rural development in Nigeria. Despite some progress, the trial-and-error approach and lack of sustained effort have limited its effectiveness. Future strategies should build on the DFRRI's foundation, focusing on self-reliance and minimizing reliance on international organizations. This approach will ensure that rural development initiatives are tailored to the specific needs of Nigeria's rural population, promoting sustainable and inclusive growth.

In conclusion, understanding the concepts of rural development, economy, economic development, community, and development in broader terms is crucial for addressing the challenges and formulating effective strategies for rural development in Nigeria. The role of women in this process is vital, as their participation and initiatives can significantly contribute to achieving sustainable development goals. By leveraging both local efforts and international support, Nigeria can overcome the barriers to rural development and improve the living standards of its rural population.

Measures of Acceleration and Sustainable Rural Development in Nigeria

To accelerate and sustain rural development in Nigeria, the following measures should be given urgent consideration:

Increasing State and People's Participation

Participation is essential for any successful rural development project or program. Genuine participation involves engaging a broad spectrum of the community in all phases of development, from project selection and design to execution and evaluation (Hall and Midley, 1988). This approach empowers the poor, enabling them to make independent decisions regarding development projects. Therefore, development strategies should prioritize actions by the people rather than by elites. Authentic participation requires that beneficiaries are deeply involved in the planning and execution of projects, as projects designed without their input are often doomed to fail (Essenior, 1990). Government support should include providing

resources to local organizations through revenue sharing and local grants.

Encouraging Community Organization

Voluntary community organizations are crucial for harnessing local initiatives for rural development. However, these organizations often focus on a limited range of projects such as health centers, roads, water, markets, and schools. Training officers in these associations on program and project planning can help expand the range of projects to include those directly impacting the lives of rural people (Essenjob, 1990). Implementing DFRRI's proposals to encourage community organization for rural development is vital.

Mobilizing Women's Groups

Reaching women is critical to reaching the broader community because women influence families and communities profoundly (Amain, 1998). Education for women should be both formal and informal, aiming not only to enlighten but also to liberate them from superstition, ignorance, inferiority complexes, and other barriers. Combating societal restrictions and religious beliefs that render women as second-class citizens is essential (Williams, 1998). Women in purdah should be mobilized through village heads and religious leaders to engage in productive economic activities. Organizations like the National Council of Women Societies and Better Life for Rural Women should be supported to enhance women's participation in development.

Manpower Development

Professional staff recruitment and continuous training are essential to accelerate and sustain rural development. Without adequate staff and necessary resources, policy objectives cannot be achieved. Nigeria should establish more institutions offering rural development as a course of study at degree or higher national diploma levels, similar to India's approach (Rank, 2010). Village extension workers should be trained in extension education, agriculture, health, sanitation, and other essential areas (Shehu, 2011). Trained and dedicated staff are prerequisites for successful implementation of rural development programs (Solomon and Adeyemi, 2005).

Establishment of a "Parent" Rural Development Directorate

Scholars suggest that rural development in Nigeria has been hindered by administrative and structural bottlenecks (Okeh, 2010). Currently, rural development lacks centralized guidance, and responsibilities are fragmented across various ministries, leading to inefficiencies and duplication of efforts (Ajayi, 1996; Essenjob, 1991, Etebom, 2022). Establishing a dedicated rural development directorate would provide necessary linkages between planning and action levels and prevent duplication of duties among different ministries (Njoku, 2000). Organizations like IFAD and DFRRI often rely on seconded staff from other ministries, who may not be fully committed to rural development efforts (Obinne and Nnamah, 1999). A dedicated directorate with its own professional staff and adequate funding is crucial for effective rural development (Shehu, 2011).

Role of Women in Rural Economic Development

Women and Rural Development

Women are central to rural development in developing countries, yet they remain largely invisible in mainstream policies and programs. According to Brandt (1995), women make significant contributions to productive and developmental activities, essential for human well-being, but these contributions are often not recognized as part of the conventional economy. Waring (1999), cited by O'Toole and Macgarvey (2003), noted that while the conventional economy includes paid work and business activities, women's

voluntary contributions to rural communities' well-being are overlooked.

In Nigeria, women predominantly contribute to the informal agricultural sector. However, government policies and programs rarely prioritize women, resulting in minimal involvement in public rural development initiatives (Damisa and Yohanna, 2007; Ogunlela and Mukhtar, 2009). This study aims to evaluate women's participation in rural development, examining public policies and programs in Nigeria, and identifying challenges and opportunities for engaging women in these initiatives.

IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Rural women are key agents for development, playing a catalytic role in achieving economic, environmental, and social changes essential for sustainable development. However, they face significant challenges, including limited access to credit, healthcare, and education, which are exacerbated by global food and economic crises and climate change. Empowering women is crucial for the well-being of individuals, families, and communities, and for overall economic productivity, given their significant presence in the agricultural workforce worldwide.

Community development cannot succeed without involving rural women and leveraging their potential. Sustainable rural development in Africa requires orienting development efforts towards rural residents, ensuring their full participation, and focusing on the unique attributes of women. In Africa, women contribute significantly to agriculture, which is a primary source of livelihood for many (United Nations, 1995). Their contributions to household food production and national economies are increasingly recognized within Africa and internationally. Since the 1990s, women have formed associations to organize, articulate their concerns, and assert their leadership roles, pressing for expanded economic and social opportunities and advancing women's rights (Manah, 1998).

Many rural women participate in mutual-aid societies, benevolent groups, cooperatives, and market women groups. These groups help women pool resources, reduce workload, and invest in saving societies or cooperative ventures, providing access to resources. Historically, women have been involved in agriculture, poultry making, healthcare, and spiritual services, contributing significantly to development (Alaju, 1992).

Rural development aims to improve and expand physical infrastructure, enhancing the quality of life and standard of living for people. It is people- and infrastructure-oriented, with inter-governmental linkage. The importance of women in community development includes:

1. Improving income-generating capacity and living standards by meeting basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing, and ensuring security of lives and property.
2. Involving rural populations in governance, particularly in initiating and executing integrated rural development programs on a sustainable basis.
3. Increasing employment opportunities in rural communities, making them more productive and less vulnerable to natural hazards, poverty, and exploitation.
4. Ensuring more equitable income distribution and narrowing the gap between urban rich and rural poor by upgrading skills and earning capacities.
5. Reducing rural-urban migration and its associated problems.

IMPACT OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Women are the backbone of rural economic development in sub-Saharan Africa. About 80% of the

economically active female labor force is employed in agriculture, comprising approximately 47% of the total agricultural labor force. Women are responsible for 70% of food production, 50% of domestic food storage, 100% of food processing, 50% of domestic animal husbandry, and 60% of agricultural marketing (FAO, 1996).

Technological advances in food processing have benefited women, reducing labor time and increasing incomes. For instance, cassava processors introduced by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Nigerian villages have led to more efficient processing, enhancing women's earnings. According to Dr. Lukas Brader, Director-General of the IITA, neglecting women's contributions in agriculture would hinder the development of a productive, sustainable, and equitable agricultural sector in Africa.

In many rural areas, women contribute unpaid labor to household agricultural production and spend up to 50 hours a week on domestic labor and subsistence food production, with little task-sharing by spouses or sons. Despite this, women often have separate access to land and engage independently in farming or other income-generating activities, combining unpaid labor with independent production to meet family needs and achieve autonomy and self-reliance. Their income is crucial for family survival, regardless of the presence of men, as the system of allocation and distribution within many African households imposes individual responsibilities on men and women to meet their personal needs.

FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Access to Land

One of the primary constraints to women's participation in rural development is access to land. Agricultural intensification, population growth, and economic change have led to shifts from common property systems to more centralized control, often disadvantaging women and poorer populations. Women rarely own land, and when they do, their holdings are typically smaller and less fertile compared to men's (FAO, 1996).

Labor Bottlenecks

Excruciating manual labor is a significant bottleneck for female farmers. With men leaving rural areas for better opportunities, women lose access to male help on farms. As a result, women must work harder to increase yields, using intensive methods to maintain soil fertility. In regions where technical innovations like irrigation allow multiple cropping seasons, women's labor is crucial to meet the increased workload.

Credit and Other Inputs

Women also face challenges accessing credit, technology, extension services, agricultural training, and markets. Many credit associations and export-crop marketing cooperatives restrict membership to household heads, excluding most women. Banks often require collateral and male approval for loans, with men often reluctant to support women's applications. Resources and technical assistance are typically directed towards men growing export crops, with improved seeds and tools favoring larger, male-owned farms.

Women's Employment

Analyzing women's employment in Africa is complicated by unreliable data and difficulties defining economic activities, especially in agriculture and informal sectors. Women face greater labor market vulnerability due to less education and training, occupational segregation, and heavy burdens of unpaid

domestic work and childcare, which limit their time and energy for income-earning activities.

Educational Training

Lack of access to formal education and training hinders women's employment and societal advancement. Many African parents prefer to educate boys, considering girls' education unnecessary. Adolescent pregnancy, early marriage, and girls' domestic labor burdens further obstruct their schooling. Few women pursue scientific or technical education, which limits their skills and job opportunities.

Health and Sanitation

Inadequate potable water, sanitation, and waste disposal in rural areas increase susceptibility to waterborne and environmental diseases. For women, these conditions are worsened by certain religious practices, heavy workloads, high birth rates, and socio-cultural dietary restrictions. Consequently, maternal and infant mortality rates remain high.

ROLES OF THE GOVERNMENT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

On-the-Job Training of Community Development Workers

Governments provide on-the-job training to community workers, encouraging local initiatives and organizing community groups for study and action. This training equips workers with tools to enlighten, mobilize, and systematically help citizens analyze and solve community problems.

Provision of Grants for Community Development Projects

Recognizing that development starts at the local level, governments provide financial assistance through community development grants to supplement community resources.

Provision of Material and Technical Assistance to Communities

Federal and state governments offer technical advice to improve living standards, suggesting how to obtain additional resources and materials. Key areas of local government involvement include:

- Education: Governments provide primary and secondary school facilities to achieve the national goal of education for all.
- Agriculture: Community efforts focus on agricultural production, including communal farms, poultry, agro-based industries, cooperatives, and crop projects.
- Rural Construction and Social Services: Governments support the development of rural infrastructure such as roads, bridges, markets, and recreational facilities, as well as hospitals, health centers, water supply schemes, and electrification.

Introduction of Development Agencies and Programs

Governments create agencies like the Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) to enhance local development, believing that development must start locally.

The Role of Central and Local Governments in Economic Development

Governance includes citizen participation, which enhances the quality of life. The United Nations defines

community development as uniting people's efforts with governmental support to improve material, social, and cultural conditions, integrating communities into national progress. This process requires participation, self-initiative, and technical support to foster responsibility and involvement.

Approaches for Mobilizing Citizens Towards Community Development

– Direct Approach: Government or elite groups plan and implement development projects, assuming they know what is best for the community.

– Indirect Approach: Communities initiate discussions and decide on programs, with assistance to motivate and stimulate action in beneficial areas.

Sustaining community development efforts requires mobilizing citizens, mutual trust, clear objectives, and government assistance.

CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD FOR RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Nature of Rural Development in Nigeria

Rural development in Nigeria is aimed at improving the quality of life for rural populations by increasing resource productivity, boosting income, and creating employment opportunities (Olayide et al., 1981). It involves an integrated approach to food production, infrastructure provision, healthcare, education, and sustainable agriculture. This modernization process connects rural societies with the national economy, aiming for sustained quality of life improvements through a blend of economic, social, political, cultural, and technological initiatives.

Rural development is closely tied to agricultural development due to the predominant engagement of rural people in agriculture. Efforts in rural development significantly impact farmers, who are central to agricultural programs. Integrated rural development projects in Nigeria were designed to combine agricultural and rural development efforts, contributing to foreign exchange generation and revenue attraction.

Rural development is seen as both an ideology and a practice, often involving planned changes by external public agencies like national governments and international organizations. The goal is poverty alleviation through increased productivity and income, economic diversification, and comprehensive infrastructure development. It emphasizes a consistent approach combining micro and macroeconomic, social, political, cultural, and technological factors for the sustained benefit of rural people.

CHALLENGES OF RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In Nigeria, several factors hinder rural economic development (Muhammed, 2007):

Unclear Objectives

The objectives of agricultural and rural development are often poorly defined. Public institutions controlling access to agricultural inputs and markets tend to be inefficient and unresponsive, favoring a privileged few.

Limited Resources

Resource limitations lead to the concentration of land, capital, and knowledge in the hands of a few,

resulting in high unemployment and low productivity among rural inhabitants. This overcapitalization and poor land utilization exacerbate the problem.

Designing Incentive Systems

Creating effective incentive systems for common property resources like water, pastures, forests, and fisheries is challenging. These resources are often treated as open access, leading to overuse and mismanagement

Inadequate Agricultural Productivity

Low agricultural productivity, especially in food crops, hampers rural economic development. Proper management, sufficient manpower, and adequate maintenance of machinery are essential for improving productivity, which is often better than relying on manual labor.

High Levels of Poverty

Poverty among rural populations, including some elected community leaders, hinders development. Personal interests, fund misappropriation, project abandonment, and equipment diversion contribute to this issue.

Poor Infrastructural Facilities

The lack of modern machinery and tools for large-scale agriculture is a significant problem. Many communities remain engaged in peasant farming and live in poverty. Government and international agency interventions often overlook local farmers' interests (Shim, 2008).

Way Forward for Rural Economic Development

The National Policy on Rural Development outlines several objectives to achieve acceptable levels of rural development (Ogbazi, 1992):

- Promote social, cultural, educational, and economic well-being in rural communities.
- Sustain and orderly develop rural resources for the benefit of rural populations.
- Increase and diversify job opportunities in rural areas.
- Improve income-earning capacities in rural communities.
- Mobilize rural populations for self-help and self-sustaining projects.
- Develop technology-based industries in rural areas.

Several programs have been implemented to support rural development, including:

- Agricultural Development Programme (ADP, 1975)
- Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI, 1986)
- Better Life Programme (BLP, 1981)

- Family Support Programme (FSP, 1995)
- Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP, 1997)
- State Agency for Community-Based Poverty Reduction Project (2000)
- National Special Programme for Food Security (2001)

These initiatives aim to address the challenges and pave the way for sustained rural economic development in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Over the years, the government has made various attempts to meet the needs of communities with limited resources, but these efforts have not been fully successful. Community development has been suggested as an alternative vehicle for positive societal transformation (Eze, 1999). Mere (1982) emphasized that community development serves as an instrument for social betterment and upliftment. The United Nations (UN) in 1956 defined community development as a process by which people's efforts are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social, and cultural conditions of communities, integrating them into national life and enabling them to contribute to national progress (Khindula, 1991).

To supplement government efforts, other bodies are needed to encourage better life patterns for society members. Women, in particular, organize themselves in groups to assist with community development, participating in all stages from identifying needs to executing and evaluating projects. They carry out enlightenment programs on government policies, family childcare, and home economics.

Women also assist extension workers in reaching other women in the community. Through group efforts, women promote religious beliefs, care for motherless and abandoned children, assist destitutes, encourage modern home management, and support education at nursery and primary levels. These groups, which can be cooperative, self-help, welfare, church, collective, or exchange work groups, aim at economic, social, and political development.

The role of women in community development in Ife-Central and other communities is significant. They embark on various physical projects like building shops, markets, maternity centers, and renting canopies. As mothers, they play critical roles in educating and socializing children, teaching home management, body maintenance, and environmental cleanliness, and contributing to society's physical development. Women are always willing to serve their communities, and their contributions should not be underestimated.

However, women's efforts are often hindered by factors such as societal perceptions of their roles as secondary and inferior to men's. These unexamined assumptions about women's interests and capabilities have caused economic, social, and political setbacks. This study aims to investigate the factors that delay and inhibit women's roles in community development in Ife-Central and to provide solutions. It also highlights the problems facing rural development policy in Nigeria, including the involvement of foreign organizations, mismanagement of funds, and neglect of rural areas.

Recommendations

To achieve reasonable rural development, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Autonomy for Local Governments:** The state and local government joint account should be abolished, granting local governments full responsibility for their share of federal fund allocation.
2. **Direct Access for International Agencies:** International agencies investing in projects that impact rural people should have direct access to those communities.
3. **Encouragement of Self-Help Projects:** Both federal and state governments should encourage self-help projects in rural communities.
4. **Monitoring of Local Government Spending:** While joint accounts should be discouraged, state governments should monitor local government spending.
5. **Priority for Impactful Projects:** Only projects with direct benefits to rural communities should be prioritized.
6. **Involvement of Youth and Women:** Youth and women's organizations must be involved in rural development programs.
7. **Distribution of Development Projects:** Development projects should not be concentrated in local government headquarters but spread to cover all rural communities within the local government.
8. **Private Investment in Rural Areas:** Private companies should be encouraged to invest and build industries in rural communities with abundant raw materials.

By implementing these recommendations, women will contribute and participate actively in rural economic development in Nigeria can be more effective, inclusive, and sustainable

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