

**TITLE: STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL ANGLICAN CHURCHES TO ALLEVIATE
RURAL POVERTY IN IGBOLAND, NIGERIA.**

by

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DEDICATION

THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO MY FAMILY:

Esther Chiunyelu, my wife, Somto, Chisom, Ozioma, Okwudili and Nmesoma Maduka, who bore the brunt of hardship because of my being away for study purposes.

DECLARATION

As required, I hereby state that the whole thesis, except where specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my own original work.



Johnson O. Maduka

Date: 17/04/2003

As supervisor, I have agreed to the submission of this thesis.

Dr. S. de Gruchy.

Date: _____

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ABBREVIATIONS

AG	Action Group
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CMS	Church Missionary Society
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEN	General
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KWAHO	Kenya Water for Health Organization
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MI	Macedonian Initiative
NAN	News Agency of Nigeria
NCNC	National Convention of Nigerian Citizens
NDE	National Directorate of Employment
NEPA	National Electric Power Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPC	Northern People's Congress
NPN	National Party of Nigeria
NPP	Nigerian People's Party
OPEC	Organization of Petrol Exporting Countries
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
USA	United States of America
UPN	Unity Party of Nigeria
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

This research project concerns the role that local Anglican Churches can play in alleviating poverty in rural Nigeria. After a brief overview of the political, economic and social background of Nigeria, the first chapter considers the causes and impact of rural poverty in Nigeria. The paper then defends a theological vision for rural development, identifying four key elements, namely stewardship, empowerment, self-reliance and the mobilization of local assets. In the final chapter, the paper argues that a combination of agriculture and micro-enterprise, in the form of small agricultural business, provides the most practical contribution the Church can make. A number of such business opportunities such as garri processing and livestock farming are considered.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	II
DECLARATION.....	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	IV
ABBREVIATIONS.....	V
ABSTRACT.....	VI
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: RURAL POVERTY IN NIGERIA.....	2
1.1. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF NIGERIA.....	2
1.1.1.POLITICAL.....	2
1.1.2. ECONOMIC.....	3
1.1.2. (II) SOCIO- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.....	5
1.1.3. (I) RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY.....	6
1.1.3. (II) CULTURE.....	9
1.1.3. (III) ETHNIC IDENTITY.....	10
1.1.4. URBAN-RURAL RELATIONSHIP.....	11
1.2. THE CAUSES OF POVERTY.....	13
1.2.1.THE DEFINITION OF POVERTY.....	13
1.2.2. CORRUPTION AND MISMANAGEMENT.....	14
1.2.3. DEBT CRISIS IN NIGERIA.....	14
1.2.4. THE STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMME (SAP).....	15
1.2.5. UNEMPLOYMENT.....	17
1.3. THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON RURAL LIFE.....	17
1.3.1.CRIME RATE.....	17
1.3.2. POOR ROADS.....	18
1.3.3. ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.....	19
1.3.4. EDUCATION.....	20
1.3.5. HEALTH CARE.....	20
1.3.6. THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE RURAL COMMUNITIES.....	21
1.4. CONCLUSION.....	22

CHAPTER 2: A THEOLOGICAL VISION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT	24
2.1. STEWARDSHIP	24
2.2. EMPOWERMENT	27
2.3. SELF- RELIANCE	29
2.4. MOBILIZATION OF LOCAL ASSETS	32
2.5. CONCLUSION.....	35
CHAPTER 3: CHURCH RESPONSE TO RURAL POVERTY IN NIGERIA	37
3.1. THE CHURCH IN RURAL NIGERIA.....	37
3.2. AGRICULTURE.....	40
3.3. MICRO-ENTERPRISES.....	41
3.4. SMALL BUSINESSES IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR.....	42
3.4.1. GARRI PROCESSING IN THE RURAL AREAS OF NIGERIA	42
3.4.2. PALM PRODUCE (PALM OIL AND KERNEL)	43
3.4.3. LIVESTOCK PROJECT	44
3.4.4. WATER PROJECT	47
3.5. FURTHER SUGGESTIONS.....	49
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION	50
BIBLIOGRAPHY	53

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Nigeria as a country is faced with a series of problems, from national to community level. The most significant is the problem of poverty. Some of the contributing factors are the decades of military rule, mismanagement and corruption in the country, religious and political crises and structural adjustment policies. The present research arises out of my own interest as an Anglican priest in the rural parishes in Igboland, Nigeria. I have been in close contact with the people in the rural communities and I know what life is like in the rural areas. I also know the feelings of the people. My interest in this essay is therefore on what the Anglican Church can do to alleviate poverty in the rural communities in Nigeria.

In Chapter One, we will focus on a brief overview of Nigeria. I will highlight some key issues relating to the political, economic, religious, cultural and ethnic context of the country. Bearing in mind that we are dealing with rural poverty, I will also highlight the relationship between the rural communities and urban cities in Igboland. Poverty as we all know, is a worldwide phenomenon and I will adopt the World Bank definition of poverty as the working definition for this project. In the next stage of this chapter we will focus on the causes of poverty and these include bad governance, debt, implementation of structural adjustment programmes and unemployment. This will lead us to the impact and effect of poverty in the rural communities.

In Chapter Two, we will pay attention to a theological vision for rural development. The emphasis will be on stewardship, empowerment, self-reliance and mobilization of the local assets, both human and non-human. I will pay particular attention to Nyerere's view of the *Ujamaa Village* and Kretzmann and McKnight's understanding of the *Community Asset Base*.

In the final chapter, I will explore different ways through which the Anglican Church in the rural community can alleviate rural poverty in the country. I believe that if these are properly implemented, the Anglican Church in the rural communities can make a difference in poverty alleviation. It is argued that this is possible because the human and non-human resources are there, and that what is required is to use them judiciously, for the benefit of the people in the rural communities.

CHAPTER 1: RURAL POVERTY IN NIGERIA

1.1. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF NIGERIA

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is a large landmass in West Africa, surrounded by French-speaking countries.¹ It lies between the Equator and the tropic of Cancer. Its temperature is between 25°C - 40°C.² In the far north is the savannah grassland and in the south are the thick forests and swamps in some areas.

Its agricultural products are cotton, hides and skin, peanuts, soyabeans, beans, millet, rice and onions, from the north, while the south provides palm products, yam, cassava, cocoa, kola-nuts, timber, bitter-kola. Nigeria is a country with great agricultural potential. We will examine the political, economic, and cultural context of Nigeria.

1.1.1. Political

Originally, Nigeria consisted different independent states, but in 1861 they became part of the British Empire. Post and Vickers state that Sir Lord Fredrick Luggard amalgamated both the Southern Protectorate and Northern Protectorate in 1914 and later divided them into four regions, for easy governance.³

It was after the amalgamation in 1914 that Luggard handed over to Hugh Clifford, who introduced some changes in the country.⁴ In 1946 and 1951 the Macpherson Constitutions were introduced, bringing all the independent states that make up Nigeria into one entity.⁵ On October 1, 1960, Nigeria became independent, and a Republic in 1963, with political activities based at the regional and tribal levels.⁶ In 1964-65 national elections were conducted. They were characterized by violence, mainly in the West. The army took over on January 16, 1966, with Major General J.T.U. Aguiyi Ironsi as the Head of State. In that same year there was a counter-coup that ousted and killed Ironsi

¹ Crowder & Abdullahi. 1979. On the east is Cameroon, west is Benin Republic, and while in the north is Niger Republic, and on the northeast corner is Lake Chad. Downs in the south are the Bights of Biafra and Benin. p. 1.

² <http://www.motherlandnigeria.com/geography.html> In the south, the temperature is about 90°F while in the north it ranges between 25°C- 40°C. seasons are rainy season which comes between May and October and dry season between November and March.

³ Post and Vickers 1969. In 1939 Nigeria was divided into East, West Mid-west and North. p. 2.

⁴ <http://www.motherearthtravel.com/nigeria/history.htm>: Hugh Clifford 1919 –1925, brought in western economic development and educational progress in the South. He introduced the new governmental structures such as the 1922 Constitution and Legislative Council.

⁵ White, 1981. Macphersons Constitutions. p. 286.

⁶ Ibid. <http://www.motherearthtravel.com/nigeria/history.htm>: These were Northern, Eastern, Western and Mid Western Regions. The political parties were formed along the regional lines and this contributed to the failure of the first republic.

and thirty thousand (30 000) Easterners in some parts of the country. This led to the declaration of the Republic of Biafra for the Easterners on May 30, 1967 and finally led to the Biafra and Nigeria war of 1967-1970.

In 1979 a new civilian government was elected, but was ousted in a military coup in 1983, by Major General M. Buhari and a counter-coup by Gen. I.B.Babangida in 1985. The late Gen. Sani Abacha, who ruled 1993 to June 8, 1998, became the Head of State through a "palace coup." A new era began with Gen. A. Abubakar from June 09, 1998 – May 29 1999, when he handed over to the elected civilian government. The President of the country is currently Chief O. Obasanjo, a retired army general.

1.1.2. Economic

Chief Obafemi Awolowo once noted in 1947 that one of the fundamental problems facing Nigeria was that of being a mere geographical expression, than rather a nation.⁷ The issues of ethnic, religious, regional and class conflicts still pose tremendous problems for the country. These conflicts have left their impact on the economy, policy-making and on the reform process in the country. It has been observed that many of the economically inefficient policies, investments and projects that past governments had embarked upon since the 1970s can be attributed directly to the problems of unhealthy ethnic, regional and religious competition that is always a component of Nigerian politics.

Nigeria has many natural endowments and is rich in agricultural products and solid mineral deposits. Agriculture plays a key role in its economic development and revenue generation. Indeed, in the pre-independence period, and soon after independence, agriculture contributed 80% of its GDP to the economic growth of the country.⁸ Nigeria is known for its palm products, cocoa and rubber.⁹ The majority of Nigeria's farm production comes from small-holders, who use hoes and similar basic tools. In less crowded areas, crops are typically planted in rotation, so that soil lies fallow and is recharged. In the more crowded areas, cropland is typically under constant cultivation, leading to low output.

⁷ Joseph , R A. 1987. p. 184.

⁸ http://www.nopa.net/Useful_Information/clinton/tick.html Agriculture contributes over 80% of its GDP and contributes largely to its economic growth.

⁹ Ibid. Nigeria is renowned as the 3rd largest producer of cocoa. Second largest in both palm oil and rubber among other exportable cash crops.

Other resources in different locations can supplement the agricultural sector and they exist in commercial quantity. The discovery of the black gold, oil,¹⁰ has overshadowed all other resources and greater attention is paid to it, but a lot of it is wasted during processing.¹¹ The table below indicates the major minerals that are found in Nigeria.¹² If they are managed well they will contribute in alleviating poverty in the rural communities.

MINERAL	DEPOSIT	LOCATION (STATES)
Talc	Over 100 million tonnes	Niger, Osun, Ogun, Kastina
Gypsum	Over 1 billion tonnes	Most states in Nigeria
Iron ore	3 billion metric tonnes	Kogi, Enugu, Niger, Zamfra, Kaduna etc
Lead & zinc	10 millions tonnes	8 states
Bentonite	700 million tonnes	Many states
Baryte	7.5 million tonnes	Taraba, Bauchi
Gold	N/A	South west states
Bitumen	Over 120km	South-East & Western areas.
Coal	Over 3 billion tonnes	South-East States
Rock Salt	1.5 million tonnes	Ebonyi, Imo, Benue, Plateau
Gemstones	N/A	Plateau, Kaduna, Bauchi
Kaolin	3 billion tonnes	Many states

¹⁰ Ibid. However these mineral resources have been overshadowed by the black gold – oil. Nigeria actually is one of the major producers of crude oil world wide ranking 5th among OPEC producers. Oil indeed altered dramatically the economic configuration of the country, rising from less than the 5% contribution to GDP in the 1970s to almost 80% in the 1990s. Although it still represents the biggest source of foreign earnings; the need to diversify the reproductive base of the economy has engendered a host of policy measures to activate the economic potentials of the non-oil sector.

¹¹ Nigerian Economic Society 1986. With an average gas and oil of 1049 scf/bbl over the decade of the 1970s the high level of oil production has resulted in the production of large quantities of associated gas for which there is no timely demand. This results in the flaring of over 90% of gas produced in Nigeria today. The oil fields in the country are very small in size. They are spread over extensive areas of land, which makes it uneconomic to gather associate gas for commercial purpose. Consequently the entire oil province of Nigeria is dotted with gas flares, which is irredeemably waste in the valuable resources.

¹² <http://www.nigeriahighcommottawa.com/nigeria-economic-environment.htm>

The oil boom brought with it mixed blessings.¹³ There is nothing positive to show for it, but rather it led to a high inflation rate and a lack of infrastructural development and social services. The high output in the oil sector brought a sharp decrease in the agricultural sector.¹⁴ Agriculture, which contributed more than 75% of export earnings in 1970, became less productive because of neglect, poor investments and drought, disease and the high rate of reduction in soil fertility.

The majority of Nigeria's farm production comes from small-holders who use hoes and similar basic tools. In less crowded areas, crops are typically planted in rotation so that soil lies fallow and recharged. In the more crowded areas, cropland is typically under constant cultivation leading to low output.

1.1.2. (ii) Socio- economic Development

Despite the fact that the national economy is basically agrarian, successive administrations' policy initiatives have engineered gradual transformation to an industrial society. Manufacturing activities and the services industry has now taken firm roots in the country. The present moves testify that the nation is gradually moving from an agrarian to an industrialized economy.¹⁵

In 1998 the manufacturing sector accounted for about 5% of GDP, which is a decline from 13% in 1982. The few manufacturing industries are operating below capacity because of the epileptic power supply in the country. Some areas of investment are the petro-chemical, fertilizer, and automobile assembly plants and farm equipment.

¹³ Ajayi. O. 1996: When oil prices output and exports rose the government suddenly had a huge cash flow to invest in infrastructure development and to greatly improve social services. Real wages increased in non-agricultural [mainly urban] sectors. Average per capita income rose sharply. Import as a share of GDP at factor cost soared from 21% in 1960s to 83% in the early 1980s.

¹⁴ Ajayi. O 1996: Agriculture fell from 60% of GDP in 1980s to 31% by the early 1980s. Production declined because of in expensive imports [given the highly appreciated exchange rate] and heavy demand for construction labour encouraged migration of farm workers to towns and cities. A major agricultural net exporter in the 1960s and largely self sufficient in food, Nigeria quickly became a net importer of agricultural commodities.

¹⁵http://www.nopa.net/Useful_Information?clinton?tick.htm Things that make Nigeria tick. This expansion is profound in the financial sector where 57 commercial banks and 33 merchant banks now exist side by side with 5 discount houses, 104 insurance companies, 280 financial companies, 195 primary mortgage institutions and 1014 community banks. The vibrancy is further accentuated by the activities of the two stock exchanges, the Nigeria Stock Exchange and the Abuja Stock Exchange- acknowledged by the World Bank in 1998 as key players in the emerging financial market.

Currently Nigeria has the largest reserves of natural gas in Africa and efforts are being made to develop markets for natural gas, which includes investment in gas fired electrical installations, a liquefied natural gas [LNG] plant, and fertilizer and other chemical ventures. About 75% of the gas is burnt during processing. Coal production has declined to about 63 503 metric tons, far less than the late 1950s production. There is a decline in tin ore, columbite and iron ore mines in the country.

The federal government has adopted different measures in its efforts to redirect the economy of the country towards a market orientation with people's participation. In its efforts to achieve this it has embarked on privatization of its parastatals. It has also restructured its economic policy as a way of attracting foreign investors. It remains to be seen if these measures may contribute to poverty alleviation in the rural communities.

1.1.3. (i) Religious, Cultural and Ethnic Identity

Religion is part of everyday life for the people of Nigeria. Most of the time the laws, how people think and act, and what people believe and value, all tend to go along religious lines. These come under three main religions, namely Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion (ATR). Christians are mainly in the south, particularly in the eastern part of the country. Although there are a growing number of Christians in the north, they remain in the minority. In the north are the Muslims and they are equally found in the west.

Nigeria is notoriously religious.¹⁶ The belief to the non-Christians is that any natural object belongs to one god or spirit, while every village in Igboland has two or more Churches. Both progress and ill luck of an individual or the community is always attributed to God or gods. Anywhere one goes he or she is there with his or her god.

¹⁶ Isichei, E 1976. The Igbo were nothing if profoundly religious and all accounts of their life reflect the fact. The Igbo are in their way a religious people. p. 160.

1.1.3. (i). Christianity, Islam and ATRs

With the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 the missionaries made their first appearance in 1841 and 1842 in Badagry, and Calabar in 1846.¹⁷ Several other attempts to evangelize the hinterland failed, because of cultural and communication barriers.

In 1857 an ex-slave, Rev. John Christopher Taylor, established the first mission station (Anglican) at Onitsha in Igboland.¹⁸ In 1885 the Roman Catholic Mission arrived.¹⁹ The local people who embraced the new religion did so whole-heartedly, but the traditional rulers felt that the new religion (Christianity) was a threat to their traditions and customs. The rural people who were changing to this new religion were both persecuted with the early missionaries and some of them died as martyrs.²⁰

From Onitsha the missionaries moved into the hinterland. Currently there are very few people in Igboland who are not Christians. The mainline Churches are the Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Pentecostal churches.

In Igboland, nearly every village has one or more churches of different denominations. People at all times identify with the churches in their village. Even the non-members honour the invitations from the churches, because most members of the family may be members of that church that sent the invitations. In most villages, old church buildings are giving way to new edifices, because people are known by the size of the church they build.

In Nigeria, Christianity is predominantly in the East and partly in the west and far north. In the Middle belt region many are Christians. There are many Christians in the northern part of the country and many Muslims are turning to Christianity. This has led to the current clashes between the Christians and Muslims in the country. This new

¹⁷ Ibid. The history of the Christianisation of Igboland began in 1841, when Simon Jonas, an Igbo who had been sold into slavery and rescued and resettled in Sierra Leone, spent three weeks at Aboh and preached to the children who flocked around him. p. 160.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 160.

¹⁹ Ilogu, E 1974. The Roman Catholic thrust in the evangelism of Igboland started in 1885 under the leadership of French born, Father Joseph Luitz who had some experience as missionary in Sierra Leone. His party was received again as in the case of the CMS party in 1857, well received by the kings and chiefs of Onitsha. p. 57.

²⁰ Isichei, E. 1976. One Joshua Hart became Nigeria's first martyr. Refusing to sacrifice to pagan gods in 1875 he was bound with cords, thrown into the water and beaten with paddles and stabbed with spears until he died. p. 160.

development has caused Christians coming unite under one umbrella, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).

Islam entered Nigeria from North Africa through Borno in the late fourteenth century.²¹ Around 1349-85 Islamic missionaries reached Kano and it has remained the strong-hold of Islam in Nigeria.²² Northern Nigeria is predominantly Muslim, but in recent times Christianity has spread to all the states. This was one of the causes of religious disturbances in the north. As a sequel to the spread of Christianity in the north, Zamfara State and some other states in the north, introduced the Sharia legal system on October 27, 1999, as a deterrent to the Christians, but this had no effect. Sharia is a legal system governing the Muslims and this was introduced in the northern states in Nigeria. In some states in the north the Sharia legal system is operational while in some it is not.

African Traditional Religions (ATRs) are the indigenous religions of the people. They can be found in every part of the country, but the numbers are diminishing. Many of them are turning to Christianity. The presence of ATRs varies from place to place because of cultural and traditional differences. In Igboland there are a few who are traditionalist, and this does not prevent them from honouring church's invitations, nor do they stop the members of their families from carrying out Christian functions in the churches.

Religious riots which occurred in Kano, can be traced back to 1980, while those in Yola were in 1984. More than one thousand people were killed.²³ In the recent years there has been a series of religious disturbances in Nigeria, especially in the north. Usually they are between the Christians and Muslims. During the disturbances lives, properties and churches are destroyed.²⁴ Those that are displaced fall back to the villages with

²¹ Isichei, E. 1993. In the late fourteenth century the dynasty migrated to Borno and the new capital of Gazargamo, created a century later became an important centre of Islamic learning. p.304.

²² Ibid. 1993. According to the Kano Chronicle, Islamic missionaries first reach Kano and converted its king, in the reign of Yaji dan Tsamiya (c1349 – 85). p.305.

²³ New African Year Book 1995-96. A repeat of the Kano religious riots of December 1980 occurred in Yola in February 1984 in which up to 1000 people may have been died killed. The trouble started when police moved into Jimeta township to arrest members of the proscribed Maitalsine sect. The sect's followers, who had been preaching their message in the area for some time, resisted attempts to flush them out. This led to widespread rioting and loss of life. Eventually the army had to be called in to restore order. p. 322.

²⁴ [www.worthynews.com\[09/22/2001\]](http://www.worthynews.com[09/22/2001]) .Nigeria (Compass)- A total of 294 Churches have been burned in Kaduna city of northern Nigeria during Muslim and Christian clashes since the Kaduna State Government decided to adopt and implement the Islamic legal system last year. The violence has also left thousands of Christians homeless and dramatically increased the number of widows and orphans according to the Macedonian Initiative [MI] a Christian non- governmental organization that released the figure in June. Many children are now orphans, women are now

little or nothing to keep them going. This has contributed to the present pressure on the environment, especially in the rural areas, leading to rural poverty.

1.1.3. (ii) Culture

Culture is a way of life that traverses the entire social system of people. It affects an individual from birth till death. Both culture and religion operate along ethnic and regional lines. They are interrelated, both in practice and beliefs. Cultural heritage often coincides with ethnic groups or unions.²⁵ Following the coming of the missionaries the culture of the people was adversely influenced. Chinua Achebe illustrates this in his novel, *Things Fall Apart*.

Okonkwo was deeply grieved. And it was not just personal grief. He mourned for the clan, which he saw breaking up and falling apart and he mourned for the warlike men of Umuofia who had so unaccountably become soft like women.²⁶

Okonkwo was deeply worried because his people could no longer hold to the tenets of their culture, because they had embraced Christianity. Before the coming of the missionaries they had good relationships amongst themselves, but now they no longer have. They no longer have regard and respect for their traditions and customs. "Blessed is the one who forsakes his father and his mother for my sake."²⁷ Achebe points out that the saying of Jesus is the position of Christianity, but that it created the barrier and division between the culture of the people and Christianity and that was why things had disintegrated and the centre could no longer hold in Umuofia.

In Igbo culture, women are meant to be seen and not heard. One thing people consider offensive and insulting is to call a man, 'woman.' Achebe commented on this, saying, "without looking at the man, Okonkwo had said, this meeting is for men." The issue therefore is that a man who contradicted him had no titles, according to the culture and

widows, many children's education has been disrupted their schools having been destroyed or their parents killed. These people have no roof over their heads anymore and they are roaming the streets.

[www.vanguard.com/news/articles\[30/11/2001\]](http://www.vanguard.com/news/articles[30/11/2001]). The spectre of religious crisis ravaging some parts of the country yesterday, swept through the ancient town of Osogbo claiming at least two lives. Twenty Churches were also vandalised in the incident.

²⁵ Obichere, B. (ed). 1982. Igbo ethnic unions worked for the preservation of the Igbo cultural heritage. Ibo state Union constitution explicitly called for the promotion of cultural understanding among the various groups in Igboland.

²⁶ Achebe, C. 1991. p. 129.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 108.

traditions of the people. For that reason he had called the man a woman. With this action Okonkwo had killed the man's spirit.²⁸ Achebe went on to say:

Everybody at the kindred meeting took sides with Osugo when Okonkwo called him a woman. The oldest man present said sternly that those whose palm kernels were cracked for them by a benevolent spirit should not forget to be humble. Okonkwo said he was sorry for what he had said, and the meeting continued...²⁹

In general, throughout Nigeria, women have internalised the situation as a way of life and tradition that must be obeyed. Any action willingly or unwillingly taken not according to the culture will be viewed as a violation of the tradition and customs of the land and it is assumed to be an abomination. This has contributed to the fact that culture encourages polygamy, for the reason that they the women (wives) constitute cheap labour for the local farmer, namely their husband. Under this system women have no right to inheritance, especially of land. If the husband dies, only the male children of the man, and male relations, will make decisions.

1.1.3. (iii) Ethnic Identity

Nothing can be understood of Nigeria until its pattern of ethnic diversity is delineated. Within the boundaries drawn by the British are a staggering variety of ethnic groups, as revealed by the pressure of some 248 distinct languages.³⁰

In Nigeria today there are many ethnic groups and languages.³¹ The largest ones are the Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba.³² The ethnic groups are located in the major regions of the country.³³ Many political and social policies are influenced by the ethnic patterns of the regions. Religious, cultural and social values all run along ethnic lines.³⁴ It is only in the West and Middle-Belt that both Christianity and Islam co-exist scale.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 19.

²⁹ Ibid. p. 19.

³⁰ Coleman. 1958. p.15.

³¹ Shields, A. Why Study Nigeria? http://www.uni.edu/gai/Nigeria/Background/why_study_nigeria.html. Nigeria is known to have at least 250 different ethnic groups and associated languages; some claim it may be as high as 1000 languages when dialects are included.

³² Diamond, L 1988. But just three comprise roughly two thirds of the population: the Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba, and the Igbo. In this respect Nigeria can be classified as having a relatively centralised ethnic structure. p. 21.

³³ Ibid. The predominance of the three major ethnic groups is amplified by their regional concentration in the country- the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Igbo in the East, and the Yoruba in the West. p. 23

³⁴ Ibid. In the East, Islam was virtually absent while Christianity claimed a high proportion, especially among Igbos. Within the Northern region, Islam provided an overarching transethnic identity throughout upper north- and hence an important cultural bond for formation of a broader, more modern dominates class. p. 25.

Socio-economic activities also drawn occur along ethnic lines.³⁵ Each group tries at all times to maintain its identity both at local and national level. This has led to the cry of marginalization of the minority groups in the country. Political office-holders and political party formation correlate with the ethnic groups in the country.³⁶ Ethnicity and regionalism go hand in hand in Nigeria. While membership of an ethnic grouping is optional, it really is compulsory for individuals. Not to identify with his or her ethnic group has a negative impact on the individual.

On the other hand, ethnic consciousness has accelerated development in the rural communities.³⁷ At all levels, people are conscious of their ethnic group, be it big or small, and this determines their reasoning and association most of the time. Most people attach much importance to this. According to Obichere:

Ethnic unions theoretically had voluntary membership. In practice, those persons who refuse to join their kin were regarded as social and ethnic outcasts. It is necessary for the urban immigrants to identify with his kinship. Kinship ties remained a decisive factor in attracting the newly arrived to the ethnic unions.³⁸

This has helped in rural community development. Because of ethnicity each community tries at all times to embark on projects for the well-being of its members.

1.1.4. Urban-Rural Relationship

In the urban-rural relationship there are winners and losers. The losers are usually the rural dwellers, who see themselves as people who are inferior to the urban dwellers, in that cities are associated with "development." However, the weak economy, and retrenchment from the public sector, has greater impact in the cities than in the rural areas. In the urban areas, taxation affects many people who have no space for private practice to supplement the fixed monthly income. Though people in the cities are faced with numerous problems, they remain the centres of political, social, and economic

³⁵ Ibid. It was not simply by default of other lines of cleavage that socio-economic competition was organised and perceived through the prism of ethnicity. The political mobilization and statehood demands of the minorities also reflect deep emotional attachment to their distinctive group values, symbols, and languages, ways of life and historical traditions, and genuine fear that these would be suppressed or obliterated. p.61.

³⁶ Ibid. The AG in the West and NPC in the North, and to the increasingly close association between the NCNC and the Igbo State Union ... In the immediate past civilian government the parties were formed according to ethnicity. UPN in the West, NPN in the North and NPP in the East. p. 57.

³⁷ Obichere, O 1982. Although the various levels interacted with one another, the village ethnic union and town ethnic union tended to be the focal point where concrete improvement projects were initiated and carried out. p. 158.

³⁸ Ibid. p.158.

activities.³⁹ Politicians and institutions pay greater attention to the cities as areas where things are happening and for that reason the rural communities are neglected.

The city centres are seen as hubs of power and activity. This has led to the mass movement of the youth, both the unskilled and skilled to the cities. The young people hope that things will be better there or they will get jobs.⁴⁰ With this current movement there is a population explosion in the cities. The food supply can no longer meet the demand of the increasing number of people. The shortage is associated with the fact that agriculture is left in the hands of the old people in the rural areas. In addition, the situation is aggravated by high rate of inflation.

In the rural communities, the main problems are lack of infrastructure and low level of food production.⁴¹ Youths and the young adults feel that as soon as they get to the cities, they will overcome their societal problems such as unemployment and access to recreational facilities. This leads a transfer of skills, energy and potentials leadership from the rural areas to the cities, with negative consequences for the rural areas.

Agricultural resources are in abundance in the rural communities, but with advancing years and a lack of assistance those remaining cannot do much. The rural dwellers need to be empowered, to enable them harness the abundant agricultural resources in their areas.⁴²

Away from the cities, people's relationships with one another are very close. In the urban centres relationships are based on class and social status. In the rural districts, people are still close to nature and culture and tradition continue to guide people's behaviour. The cities, are much more cosmopolitan. On the whole, the urban-rural relationship in Nigeria, especially in Igboland, is characterised by an uneven

³⁹ Nurnberger. 1999. The greatest problem of the periphery is the existing concentration of power in the centre. p. 438.

⁴⁰ Jarmon, C 1988. Migration results from a mix of 'push' and pull factors and reflects different motivations. Most migrants, whose stay in the cities varies in length, are seeking work in the urban centres. They see in the city prospects for fulfilling a variety of interests, which would be difficult to satisfy in the village. As evidence of the city's attraction migrants leaving the village may constitute. In some cases close to 70% of a village's male labour force and all may be away from home at the same time. Then city is a place where [it is believed] anyone can get 'ahead' particularly school leavers who exaggerate their chances to compete for the job opportunities in the urban centres.

⁴¹ Snyder and Tadesse 1995. A lack of infrastructure and the problem of rural poverty have forced the youths and young-adults to migrate to the city centres in search of employment. p.141.

development between the two. The urban dwellers have greater opportunities than their counterparts in the countryside.

1.2. The Causes of Poverty

In this section we will examine the causes of the poverty in rural Nigeria. But before we do this, however, we will clarify our definition of poverty. This will embrace the broad view of poverty before we narrow it down to our working definition.

1.2.1. The Definition of Poverty

The World Bank defined poverty as the presence of hunger, a lack of shelter, joblessness, powerlessness, a lack of clean water, poor health facilities and a lack of freedom.⁴³ People are said to be poor when they do not possess the basic essentials of life. In a similar way, Nurnberger notes that absolute poverty is the situation where the income does not meet the basic essentials of the individuals.⁴⁴ Townsend supports this view.⁴⁵ It exists where people are living below the national poverty line. They cannot meet their daily needs. Their life is that of survival of the fittest. Thus poverty should be seen in the light of people living in need of the basic amenities that are essential to life. In the rural areas most people live in extreme difficulties, because what they have cannot sustain them. In this situation, they only live one day at a time because the future is unknown. The situation affects them psychologically, socially and spiritually. They no longer reason as they ought because of its psychological impact of poverty and they seem to withdraw themselves from others most of the time. The poor adopt paranoid attitude to life and to the situation they find themselves in. Poverty has made some people question about the love God has for His people, because of their sufferings emanating from poverty.

In the present paper, then, poverty is lack of basic essentials that would have helped people to solve their daily needs. Their incomes have no effect on their needs and the future looks no different. For these reasons the World Bank's definition of poverty will be

⁴² Nurnberger 1999. The peripheral population must be empowered through development. This will guarantee their access to the resources within their communities so that they could improve in their present living standard. p.439.

⁴³ www.worldbank.org/poverty/mission/up.1.htm

⁴⁴ Nurnberger. 1999. Absolute poverty is a situation in which income does not meet the level of basic essentials. p. 61.

⁴⁵ Townsend [ed] 1970. p. 48.

adopted. It applies to the people in the rural Igbo communities, where most people lack basic essentials. The four key causes of poverty in rural Nigeria will now be examined.

1.2.2. Corruption and Mismanagement

Corruption and mismanagement by a number of government functionaries and individuals has contributed to the problem of poverty in Nigeria. Some of the past military rulers were involved in looting the government treasury. "President Obasanjo, while in Abuja, took a critical look at the state of the nation and affirmed that we are not a new Nigeria as regards to corruption. The social malady had impeded our progress as a nation and hindered the spirit of enterprise."⁴⁶ People who are in advantaged positions saw this as an opportunity to enrich themselves at the expense of the masses. Oyovbaire and Olagunju stated that the annual production of petroleum was at \$26million⁴⁷, but some people in authority corruptly mismanaged these turnovers.⁴⁸

Corruption and mismanagement are some of the major contributing factors to the present predicament in the country. Some of the perpetrators and people in authority transferred the taxpayers' money to overseas banks. Francis stated that the sum total deposited in Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg was over \$3 billion by some Nigerians.⁴⁹ This money could have been utilized to benefit the poor and improve the economy, but instead this thief led to rural poverty and plunged the nation into debt.

1.2.3. Debt Crisis In Nigeria

The problem of debt ought to be the responsibility of both the creditor and debtor countries. President Obasanjo, while addressing former US President Mr. B. Clinton, said:

My people cannot hallow the fiftieth year. And we enter a new millennium, not in a spirit of new beginnings but millstone of debt grinds our country and its people into endless poverty. Nigeria borrowed \$5 million from western creditors in 1978. Since then we have paid back \$16 billion. It may also surprise you to know that we still owe \$31 billion. This is largely due to the compound interest rate fluctuation.

⁴⁶ Vanguard Nigeria. 16/10/2001.

⁴⁷ Oyovbaire & Olagunju. 1990. The first two years of the 2nd republic, a barrel of crude petroleum quota was selling at about \$40:00 and daily production was around 2 million barrels. Annual revenue from petroleum stood at around \$26 million. The leadership of Nigeria's 2nd Republic prodigally spent the reserve left by the Obasanjo administration together with all the foreign exchange earnings from crude oil, which occurred during the second republic and proceeded to pile up a debt of \$2billion. This was when Obasanjo was the Head of State. p.10.

⁴⁸ Charles W. C.2000. www.usembassy.state.gov/nigeria/wwwwhcf.21.html.

⁴⁹ Francis, 2001. www.jubileeplus.org/world/news/africa/court_uk_abacha_loot.html.

An average Nigerian is earning about \$300 per annum, while his or her counterpart in USA earns \$27 240. Nigeria is currently spending \$2.25 on education and \$3 on health per person per year. This shows the extent of poverty the people are subjected to in the rural areas. The debt issue has made it impossible for the nation to address issues such as HIV/AIDS and other related problems. This has contributed to the high mortality rate in the rural areas.

As the President rightly pointed out, the impact of debt is enormous in the country, to the extent that every child born in Nigeria is born into poverty. Caution must be exercised, however, so that as the country is calling for the cancellation of its debts and assistance, the more does not contribute directly or indirectly to the problems of the poor masses, through unnecessary expenses and extravagance.

1.2.4. The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)

The economic demands placed on the country by the SAP policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB), destroyed the preliminary conditions for development, that is the growth of the local and regional markets, and channelled any existing capital to the world market where it is useless to Nigeria as a nation. The programme consists of measures designed to increase export to earn hard currency and decrease imports. This obliged the government to:

- spend less on health, education and social services, so that people must pay for them or go without
- devalue the national currency, lowering export earnings and increasing costs
- cut back on food subsidies – so prices of essentials can soar
- cut jobs and wages for workers in government jobs and industries
- encourage privatisation of public industries, including sale to foreign investors
- promote export-led farming instead of the growing of staple food, raising local food prices.⁵⁰

The programme subjected many people to undue hardship. The former Senate President, Dr. Chuba Okadigbo, stated that the imposition of SAP on Nigeria by the IMF was a blunder due to the illegitimacy of the military government that favoured it.⁵¹

⁵⁰ . <http://www.jubileepius.org/databank/profiles/nigeria.html>.

⁵¹ www.nigeriacommerce.com/commercenews. Take Nigeria as a dynamic instance, for explanation. It is here recalled that the Nigerian debt doom is a child of many military governments. Worse still, it is indeed a fruit of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), proposed to and imposed on Nigeria by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). That is to say that Nigeria is a comatose victim of an IMF proposition. Take due note that the illegitimacy of military governments upon which our debt burden rests plus the relevant IMF blunder has made Nigeria one of the

The implementation was in three stages: first was the devaluation of the currency and the cessation of subsidies and price controls. The intention was to limit people's purchasing power and to reduce inflation. Second was the liberalization of foreign trade and the operation of an open-door economy. This contributed to the closure of many industries and institutions, because they could no longer meet their financial obligations. Third was the overhauling the public sector finances. This was aimed at reducing wages and closing ailing government-owned companies.

The measures forced the public enterprises to run budget deficits and led to the reorganization of government-owned institutions, following the IMF and World Bank directives. This gave rise to the liquidation of the public assets through privatisation and a high rate of inflation due to decline in the economy. Amosoro makes it clear that the aim was to reduce the work force both in the government and private sectors.⁵² Those who lost their jobs went back to their villages. The measure contributed greatly to the increase in unemployment and the high inflation rate in the country.⁵³

The main objective of the SAP was to stabilize the world financial markets and to protect the economic growth of the First World countries. According to Nurnberger:

The austerity measures imposed by the structural adjustment programme (SAP) of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) are at least partially meant to increase prospects that the international banks could recover their bad loans.⁵⁴

The issue of SAP was more of the creditors protecting their own interest than helping the poor to improve on their living conditions. It is case of selfish interest at the expense of people's lives.

poorest countries of the world. Thus, millions of people wallows in IMF induced poverty. As such, the continuation of debt rescheduling in the guise of debt relief, is fiscally imprudent and morally bankrupt.

⁵² Amosoro. 1998. The economic measures resulting from these policies are public spending cutbacks and ensuring loss of jobs as well as the institutional destabilisation of all the income and right safeguards necessary for the transformation of the centres and forms of power.

⁵³ Oyovbaire & Olagunju. 1990. The inflationary consequences of the programme have been very disruptive of economic activity at both levels of consumers and producers. Rising prices of foodstuff, transportation, drugs and medical services and the basic consumption items have led to drastic reduction in the real incomes of consumers, causing great economic hardship to the most vulnerable groups such as large families, low income earners and the unemployed. p.38.

⁵⁴ Nurnberger 1999. p. 128.

1.2.5. Unemployment

The key result of mismanagement, the debt crisis and the SAP is a contraction of the economy and loss of jobs. Unemployment has both social and economic impacts on the people. Socially it leads to deterioration in family life, social exclusion and crime, while economically it reduces the economic well-being of the people. It is such a difficult problem, in that it cannot be measured. One of the reasons is that the economy of a country cannot be monetised,⁵⁵ though some who claimed that they are not employed do at times receive casual income. One thing that must be noted is that the term “unemployment” most often depends on the cause of the condition. Olaloku argued that unemployment may not necessarily mean not getting a job, but one may not find one equal to one’s desire or paying adequately.⁵⁶

In Nigeria, the rate of production dropped and this led to retrenchment of the workers. As this is happening some people are being retired, while the school-leavers are queuing up. Those who do not find work in the cities return to the rural areas, and this increases the pressure in the rural areas. This has contributed greatly to the problem of rural poverty in Nigeria.

1.3. The Impact of Poverty on Rural Life

Six key issues serve to describe the impact of poverty on rural life.

1.3.1. Crime Rate

The links between poverty, unemployment and crime are never in doubt. Life is a continuous process and people engage in different activities to sustain themselves. Some people participate in violent crimes, prostitution, murderous cult groups and armed robbery.

The issue of armed robbery, for instance, is no longer news because it is an on-going event in the country. Most of the criminals are youths and young adults who are unemployed. The upsurge is related to the weak economy of the country. Stealing now goes hand in hand with murder. Uzokwe has said:

⁵⁵ Olaloku, 1979. It is difficult to measure the rate of unemployment in Nigeria in that only small proportion of the labour force do register with the labour office. Based on this no one can say exactly the number of people that are unemployed in Nigeria today. p. 111.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 1979. p.111.

It seems that these brigands no longer find satisfaction in just taking away the possessions of their victims but instead they make it a point of duty to maim or kill.⁵⁷

Crime is common in the rural areas for a simple reason. When young adults and youths engage in criminal activities and are dislodged in the city centres, they withdraw to the villages. Because there is no security in the rural areas they will start to terrorize the poor in the vicinity.

1.3.2. Poor Roads

The infrastructural facilities in Nigeria are in a deplorable condition, while some are in fact obsolete. There is a lack of a maintenance culture and of business integrity in the country. Most of the time the clients and the contractors handling the projects use sub-standard materials in executing them. This has contributed to the poverty in the rural communities because the farmers can no longer move their products to the markets for sale.

The federal, state and community roads are dilapidated.⁵⁸ They are impassable, especially during the rainy season. This has contributed to the poor economy because there is no free and easy means of movement in the rural areas. According to Albert Obiefuna:

Look at all the traffic jams; we have all the delay in going from one place to another, a journey you will do in 10 minutes you will do it in one and half hours because of the bad roads, and for how many years has that lasted? Right from toll gate to Head Bridge is nothing to write home about, that is Onitsha-Enugu express way, the Onitsha-Owerri road has become legend some days people stays for two nights and they are people who are supposed to be on business.⁵⁹

It is frustrating to travel on Nigerian roads today because of the slow movement of vehicles. The industrialists also suffer while transacting their businesses. Civil servants and other commuters are similarly affected. The end-product is low productivity and slow growth in the economy. People cannot contribute much to the economic growth of

⁵⁷ <http://www.ngex.com/personalities/voices/uzokwe081601.htm>. They have varied methods of operations and the police often seem to be outwitted every time. In fact a recent news account by NAN, describe how...armed anti crime policemen took to their heels as dare devil robbers took over the police toll point around the National Theatre in Iganmu ...the five policemen ran into their Peugeot 306 patrol car and sped off as soon as robbers alighted from the 18- seater commuter bus in which they rode.

⁵⁸ <http://www.vanguardngr.com/news/articles/2001/November/16112001/se2161101.html>.

the country because of bad roads. The people in the rural areas are finding it difficult if not impossible to travel by road. Unfortunately there is no other means of transportation available in the villages, apart from trekking, and for this reason they cannot sell their products and people from outside cannot come to the village to buy.

1.3.3. Electricity Supply

The issue of electricity in Nigeria confirms the saying 'the rich also cry', for both the rich and the poor are effected by the regular power failures. In the country districts it is very difficult for the people to remember when they last used electricity. The industrialists who could have helped to boost the economy cannot, because there is no steady power supply.⁶⁰ This epileptic power supply by the NEPA (National Electric Power Supply Authority) has contributed immensely to the suffering of the people, especially those in the rural areas, who have no alternative. No electricity means no water supply, no industry, no work and a poor economy, as industries are either closed down or producing below capacity. Chidi Nkwopara observed that:

Economic activities, especially those requiring the use of public power supply, have either slowed down or completely grounded. Many commercial centres within the municipality have remained in pitch darkness for about one month without any remedy in sight.⁶¹

The situation is such that both the small-scale industries and the big ones which depend on electricity cannot function, because there is no electricity for them to do their jobs. What it means is that when the industries are not functioning they will lay off their workers and these workers have no other means to sustain themselves and their families. They may remain unemployed for a long time. Thus the issue of poverty will continue to be with the people unless the problem of power supply is solved. Lack of electricity has contributed to the rural migration to the cities by the young people, while some of the artisans cannot perform because they have no power supply.

⁵⁹ <http://www.vanguard.com/news/articles/2001.htm>

⁶⁰ <http://www.vanguard.com/news/articles2002/20052002/se3200502.htm>. Two industrialists have cried out against power outage in Nnewi the industrial town of Anambra State saying that many industries in Nnewi and Onitsha may be forced to shut down. If the present outage continues some small-scale industries would be forced to closed shop and throw thousands of their employees into the labour market.

⁶¹ <http://www.vanguardngr.com/news/articles/2002/May/21052002se521052.html>

1.3.4. Education

At the time of writing education in Nigeria is for the rich. Low-income earners can no longer afford to fund the education of their children and wards. The very few who can, often stop half way because of the financial commitments, hardships and teachers' strikes.⁶² Industrial action is the only option available to the teachers for them to be paid their monthly salaries. To this end the children spend most of their time at home or roaming the streets.

It is a simple fact that most of the public schools these days are ill-equipped and poorly sponsored. The government does not pay attention to the education sector and those parents who insist on their children acquiring basic education are forced to pay dearly for it. On this the Jubilee 2000 Coalition stated that:

As schools are forced to charge fees, fewer people are able to send their children, and education is mainly available only to the better off. Further development is impaired as education attainment falls. In Sub Saharan Africa the damage to education is particularly significant; the percentage of 6 – 11 year olds enrolled at school has fallen from nearly 60% in 1980 to less than 50% in 1990.⁶³

Through the non-payment of staff salaries, the lack of equipment and shortage of funds, the education sector is in crisis. There is a high illiteracy rate in the rural areas and this means that education is dying. The crisis in the education sector has contributed to child abuse in the rural areas. This means that in the near future people in the country villages will be illiterate.

1.3.5. Health Care

In the past, Nigeria had a good health care system but at present there are no funds to maintain the system. The effect of this is a high rate of ill-health, especially in the rural communities. Accompanying this, there is a high infant mortality and maternal death rate in the rural areas. Because of the rural poverty, people cannot afford to go to the hospital for treatment. The resulting malnutrition makes them prone to different infections and diseases.

⁶² <http://www.coywatch.org/issues/dereg/featured/2001/solukoya.html>.

⁶³ Jubilee2000 Coalition.

The funding of the health care sector has fallen in Nigeria since 1980s. Today people pay heavily for their health care in the country. Those who cannot afford it, go without.⁶⁴ The maternal mortality rates range from 800 to 1500 deaths per every 100 000 live births. The infant mortality rate is approximately 83 deaths per 1000 births.⁶⁵

Adebayo Alabi stated that the causes are:

Inadequate funding, poor staffing, mal-administration, lack of personnel motivation, brain drain, obsolete and malfunctioning vital equipment, unstable water and electric supply, non-availability of essential drugs and dressing, poor sanitation...⁶⁶

The government hospitals in the country are more like referral centres. The situation has deteriorated to the extent that the poor and low-income earners seek help from the informal health sector and traditional healers, or simply rely on home remedies.

Some of the diseases that were thought have been eradicated have staged a come-back like tuberculosis, yaws, yellow-fever, polio. They have appeared simply because people can no longer afford to be treated. The worse hit are the poor in the rural communities. Consequently, the workforce in the rural area is being reduced.

1.3.6. The Environment in the Rural Communities

The environment is made up of living and non-living things alike. It embraces the air, soil, water and rocks as well as plants, animals and humans. Environmental matters are related to one another, for there is no "island existence" in the ecosystem. Within the eco-system of a small niche, its environment is total, as each living and non-living member of the community interacts with one another in a co-ordinated or disorganised way, thus affecting themselves or other elements. Whatever that affects one of the members affects the rest.

Because of already existing relationship among the ecosystem, environmental degradation is not a new problem to humanity but serious attention has recently been drawn to it in Nigeria. Human activities have caused significant damage to the natural environment. For some time there has been exploitation, misuse and mismanagement

⁶⁴ http://www.urc.org.uk/c&s/jubilee_2000/j2000.htm.

⁶⁵ http://www.crlp.org/ww_sbr-nigeria.html.

⁶⁶ http://www.humanrights.de/n/nigeriabook_t_alabi.htm

of the limited resources and the impact is more serious in the rural communities. These include:

- burning the bush
- overgrazing
- over-cultivation
- poor farm practices, including soil tillage, shifting cultivation and incorrect irrigation
- over-use and wrong use of pesticides and other chemicals
- poor management of mineral resources and other raw materials.

Much damage has been done to the environment in recent years, through exploitation and exploration of the land, water and the mineral resources, both renewable and non-renewable. For example, Nwankwo and Ifedi identified the following factors as the environmental problems associated with oil exploration and exploitation in Nigeria: contamination of streams and rivers oil spillage, forest destruction and bio-diversity loss, and gas flaring.⁶⁷ These have contributed to low crop yields, because they have negative impact on the environment. The amount of energy put in by farmers in planting does not correspond to crop yields. The harvest is therefore poor because of pressure on the environment. It is the rural poor who suffer the most because of the degraded environment.

1.4. Conclusion

The above are some of the factors that have contributed to, and have an impact on, rural poverty in Nigeria. The political instability and the religious and civil disturbances do not encourage the foreigners to invest in the country. At the same time, young people are migrating to the cities in search of non-existing jobs, leaving farming in the hands of the old and sick people who can do little or nothing to improve the conditions in the rural areas.

The issues discussed in this chapter are some of the factors that contribute to causing rural poverty. They are inter-related and the people who are affected are mostly the rural dwellers who have no alternative to, or way out of, the situation. This does not

⁶⁷ Nwankwo and Ifedi. 1985. p. 58-64.

mean that they cannot do something on their own, but that they need assistance that will enable them to change their position. In the next two chapters it will be shown how the Church can help rural communities to overcome the problems of poverty in Nigeria.

CHAPTER 2: A THEOLOGICAL VISION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In view of the issues raised in Chapter One, this section will look at the theological vision for the rural Anglican Church for rural poverty alleviation. In an effort to achieve this, four key issues will be examined. These are stewardship, empowerment, self-reliance and mobilization of the local assets. People, wherever they are, should realize that they are endowed with resources that will enable them survive in their own locality. What people really need is to care for these resources and utilize them judiciously for their own good and good of others. For the people to achieve this, they need to be equipped so that they can realize their own self-worth. With this they can utilize whatever that is available to them and be in position to address their daily needs.

2.1. STEWARDSHIP

The first element of this vision, concerns an affirmation of stewardship. The issue of stewardship is the question of responsibility attached to the duty of human being as the only creature that God created in His image. Attfield viewed it as the human responsibility of caring for the natural world and being accountable to God.⁶⁸ Likewise, Peterson argued that it is a privileged position, with responsibility granted to humanity by the Creator.⁶⁹

Calling people to the office of stewardship is a call that will oblige them not to deface the beauty of the earth, nor exhaust its natural resources to the detriment of the unborn generations. They should not be oblivious of the capacity for suffering of non-human animals.⁷⁰ All parts of Nature are to be cared for and protected, bearing in mind that they have right to exist. This ought to be honoured since all depend on one another in order to survive.

The role of humanity as a steward is that of an overseer. Everything created is inter-related to one another, for there is nothing that is an island. All should be seen as One, and One as All, because what affects one affects all. Allfield says that this implies that humanity is God's agent.⁷¹ It is important to note that each exists for the rest. Humanity

⁶⁸ Attfield, 1994. p. 1.

⁶⁹ Peterson, 2001. p. 216.

⁷⁰ Attfield, 1994. p. 15.

⁷¹ Attfield, 1994. p. 22.

cannot survive as an entity without others, for all co-habit the earth and therefore have responsibility to care for the earth and things therein.

According to Attfield:

People have a responsibility before God to care for and enhance the beauty of and fruitfulness of the earth: this responsibility is seen in the discharge of the power and the skills entrusted by God to their hands. It is assumed, then, that humans have been endowed with considerable power over the earth and their fellow creatures, power which can be used for good....⁷²

People should at all times act responsibly in their dealings with other things, be they human or not. The power invested in humanity is for good, not for exploitation and oppression. The call to have dominion does not mean domination. We are accountable to God how we manage the earth.

Peterson is of the view that humanity is called to safeguard the earth as stewards.⁷³ Others can only feel the impact of God, but that depends on human relationship with them.⁷⁴ There is no way we can express our relationship with God apart from the others. This entails treating the animals kindly, farming responsibly, recycling and not transforming the nature.⁷⁵ This is an opportunity to co-ordinate and care for the vulnerable amongst the people and other creations.

The essence of humanity being created in God's own image is not of superiority or dominion but servanthood, because all depend on God. According to Peterson:

Humans are distinguished from the rest of creation not by our superiority but by our peculiar form of individuality and interdependence. We are the responsible ones, responsible for all the rest upon which we are so profoundly depend.⁷⁶

People should see themselves neither as lords nor should they lord it over others. This means that individuals should reserve the right to utilize all the available resources judiciously. There is a need to be considerate while utilizing both the renewable and non-renewable resources. As stewards, human beings should make other occupants of

⁷² Ibid. p.22.

⁷³ Peterson, A . 2001. p.13.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p.21.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p.49.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p.216.

the earth feel the goodness of God in creation.⁷⁷ This means listening carefully to what the Creator is saying (Psalm 19:4). This is necessary so that all can co-exist and not exploit available resources indiscriminately or carelessly and in this way to avoid exhaustion and extinction.⁷⁸

The earth and the things on the earth are the Lord's (Ps. 24:1). He has a purpose for everything He created. The civic responsibility of humanity is to maintain a balance on earth, for God is aware of human needs and has provided for each and every one, wherever one is. The earth has more than enough for humanity, but the problem is human injustice emanating from greed. This affects all and this is the reason why there is poverty, even when human beings live in the mist of plenty.

A key method of alleviating poverty in the rural communities is for humanity to return to the earth in humility and create good relationships with it. The relationship should be void of exploitation and oppression, with proper utilization of available resources. It is imperative that humanity must work hard in such a way that it can meet its needs and reclaim the depreciation that is going on in the present world, of which the poor at the rural level suffer most. This is because in the beginning Adam and Eve were stewards in the Garden of Eden.⁷⁹ Cain was called to practise agriculture, while Abel was to care for the animals. David was called to be a shepherd, before becoming the king of Israel.⁸⁰ Jesus Christ learned carpentry in Joseph's workshop. Even the Holy Family has a humble way of supporting itself.⁸¹ Some of the Apostles were fishermen,⁸² while some were tent and cloth makers.⁸³ Men and women have great potential for community development. The disciples used their diverse talents in their service to God and humanity. People of the present age, with their potential and capabilities, should engage themselves with something as to alleviate poverty in the rural communities.

⁷⁷ Dyrness 1979. p. 126.

⁷⁸ Samuel and Sugden 1985. p.258.

⁷⁹ Gen. 2:15. Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

⁸⁰ 1Sam. 16:11. Are these all sons you have?" "There is still the youngest, Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep"

⁸¹ Matthew. 13:15. The Holy Family was that of the carpenters. The members engaged themselves in working as to sustain the family. Through that they were able to meet their daily needs. People ought to be engaged by self or others.

⁸² Matthew. 9: 9. As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the water for they were fishermen.

⁸³ Acts. 9:39b. All the widows stood around him crying and showing him the robes and clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

Pope John Paul II stated that "The earth by reason of its fruitfulness and its capacity to satisfy human needs is God's first gift for the sustenance of human life. But the earth does not yield fruits without a particular human response to God's gift, that is to say, without working. It is through work that man, (*sic*), using his intelligence and exercising his freedom, succeeds in dominating the earth and making it a fitting home."⁸⁴ The Christian must turn to these new perceptions in order to take on responsibility, together with the rest of humanity, for a destiny which from now on is shared by all.⁸⁵ People in their efforts for daily bread should do that with fear of God. This can only be true when people are equipped. They will then return to their communities to harness the resources and practices which they have learnt.

2.2. EMPOWERMENT

A second element in such a theological vision is empowerment. People can only learn in, or improve, their present situation by doing. In other words practice makes perfect. People have to be allowed to participate actively in the exertions of the community, so that they acquire knowledge. This section, will look at how people can be empowered, so that they can be agents of change in their communities. Once humanity is empowered it can then take care of itself and be in a position to utilize all the available resources judiciously.

The word *empowerment* has become a widely used term in discussions of disability, rehabilitation and assistance, rendered to a weaker party. The understanding varies and at times looks confusing but it all depends on the interpretation given and the prevailing situation. At its most basic level, empowerment is defined as a process of assumption or transfer of legal power and official authority.⁸⁶ However, there is wide divergence as regards the specific nature of this assumption or transfer and regarding the nature of the power at stake. Harp felt that 'empowerment is freedom of choice regarding services, influence over the operation and structure of service provision, participation in system-wide human service planning and participation in decision-making at the community level.'⁸⁷ Empowering the people will give them the freedom to associate and operate within the system of their choice.

⁸⁴ 2Thess. 3:7-10.

⁸⁵ Paul VI Encyclical Letter Octogesima Adveniens (May 14,1971:21).

⁸⁶ Webster New Dictionary 1994.

⁸⁷ Harp. 1994. <http://www.empowermentzone.com/emppower.txt>.

Empowerment is that process whereby individuals struggle to overcome their dependency on others by taking initiatives that will enable them be independent. Being involved in community development or other similar process in life can achieve this. Through such participation people can gain invaluable personal skills that will help them live humanly. Having acquired this, they will know what they are good at doing and how to achieve skills. Snyder argued that empowerment is that state of persons (women and men) being enabled to take their destiny into their own hands.⁸⁸ Central to this is the formal and informal education of the masses in the rural communities, which will enable them to understand that they have potential that will enable them be people of worth. This can only be possible when people realize who and what they are and what they can do.

To achieve empowerment involves three basic things: (a) access to productive assets such as land, credit facilities and technologies that can produce income, (b) access to basic needs such as education and health services, pure water, fuel and shelter and (c) participation in decision-making.⁸⁹ In an effort to alleviate poverty in the rural communities, therefore, the people should have access to the productive sector, access to daily basic needs and involvement in decision-making. These will enable them play the leading role in a number of issues that affect them.

Snyder argued that participation is an active ingredient for empowerment.⁹⁰ People's participation will provide several benefits for them as individuals and for the community. This involves mobilization of human and non-human resources within the community. Second, it makes greater effectiveness in planning and implementation of development initiatives, by adopting them to the local circumstances. Third, it helps to improve in the maintenance of assets and infrastructure through local resource contributions and management. It contributes to local experience in providing local services and thereby stimulates the development of other forms of the local institutions. Finally, it enhances accountability and more equitable distribution of benefits, by making local administration accountable to a more representative community.

⁸⁸ Snyder. 1995. p. 6.

⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 5.

⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 247.

'Empowerment is therefore a process of conceding to disadvantaged communities the rights to question and communicate alternative options.'⁹¹ This means that the poor need opportunities to develop their own solutions in solving their own problems, while the outsiders can only give supportive assistance where necessary. This amounts to the replacement of a system of people's participation in public-initiated development with one of public participation in people-initiated development - quite a reversal of the normal development professionalism, as well as power structures.⁹²

The indications in participation in projects or the creation of opportunities for self-help will remain limited and unsustainable unless there are possibilities and mechanisms for real participation in decision-making and resource allocation, especially at the rural level. The World Bank's Learning Group on Participatory Development defines its object as:

a process, through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them." And on the other hand the World Summit for Social Development stated, "empowering people, particularly women, to strengthen their own capacities is a main objective of development and its principal resource. Empowerment requires the full participation of the people in the formation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well-being of our societies."⁹³

Empowerment can only take place through active participation of the people in the process. This participation may be limited, and even threatened, if the people do not gain certain entitlements and generate certain rights over some of the issues. Participation therefore includes both action and decision-making, for these will guarantee people's confidence that they are performing well.

2.3. SELF- RELIANCE

The previous section dealt with enabling people to be equipped to be in a position to take risks in addressing issues that are facing them. To live, therefore, is to take risks, and success lies in one recognizing what one is best at. In realizing their individual abilities, people can then develop self-confidence that will enable them to perform. According to Julius Nyerere, former President of Tanzania:

⁹¹ Gupta. 1994. Working Paper No. 1207.

⁹² Chamber, R. Normal Professionalism, New Paradigma & Development. Sussex, IDS Discussion Paper 227, and Dec. 1986. Normal Professionalism and the Early Project Process: Problems and Solutions. Sussex, IDS Discussion Paper 247, July 1988.

⁹³ Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, Draft Document art. 26.par.

The Friendship Textile Mill is a demonstration that our struggle for self-reliance does not mean hostility to the people of other countries, nor a rejection of the help they are willing to give us when that help enables us to become more self-reliant in the long run. Indeed, the phrase 'the right kind of assistance' can be defined as assistance, which helps us to become more self-reliant in the long run.⁹⁴

When one starts to talk about development one is talking about the struggles for self-reliance. In the *Arusha Declaration* of 1967, Nyerere stated that developmental goals and strategies must be based on the policy of socialism and self-reliance. There is a need for all people to have equal rights and opportunities. It is this that will eventually place them in a position where they will perform and utilize their abilities and capabilities to the fullest. For the people to realise self-reliance they should live in peace with one another without imposition, injustice, being exploited or exploiting others for this will gradually increase the basic level of material welfare of the people before the individuals live in luxury.⁹⁵

Development is not manna that falls from heaven. As we has been, it involves people's participation in the process of change. In the context of the United Republic of Tanzania's realities of poverty and underdevelopment, the *Arusha Declaration* stressed the very need for the mobilization of human resources for their self-reliance instead of waiting and depending on capital, external assistance or material resources from others. Development is a people's movement in which they are directly involved, though money and wealth is the result of this involvement.⁹⁶ People at the rural level must be mobilized and inspired to act. By so doing they are empowered to cherish what they have. According to Nyerere:

In other words, the existence of this and the other new textile factories means that Tanzania will not have to depend upon any other country for its cotton cloth. Instead of paying wages to the spinners and weavers of Europe, we shall be paying wages to the spinners and weavers of Tanzania.⁹⁷

People at the grassroots should be a part of the struggle so that they will, from the onset, realize that the project is theirs. What Nyerere was struggling to establish was that people should be at the centre of their own affairs.⁹⁸ When people participate in a

⁹⁴ Nyerere. 1973. p.117.

⁹⁵ Nyerere. 1968. p. 340.

⁹⁶ Ibid. p.243.

⁹⁷ Nyerere. 1973. p. 48.

⁹⁸ Nyerere. 1968. "The Arusha Declaration," p.340-341.

programme they are changing their situation knowingly or unknowingly. To achieve effective community participation, transfer of knowledge and skills to the community becomes necessary.⁹⁹

People appreciate what they have, control and administer as their own project.¹⁰⁰ This makes them to be responsible to themselves and also relate with each other more easily. Nyerere argued that what is needed in development is that people should understand that they have something to contribute towards the progress of their community.¹⁰¹ Indeed, collective efforts are needed in areas of decision-making and execution of projects. Any achievement in this sphere will be internalised in them, because they have contributed to the welfare of their community.

In Tanzania, the *Ujamaa* programme is a common belief that agriculture has a vital role to play in poverty alleviation and community development. This involves both farming and keeping of livestock. It is the rallying point for other sectors in development. According to Guy Berger:

Agriculture's role in development includes providing food and raw materials, subsidising industrial development through surplus transfer, serving as a market for industry with regard to agrarian inputs and consumer manufactures and releasing labour-power for industrial development or productively absorbing labour – power where industry is unable to do so.¹⁰²

There is need for proper co-ordination so that there will be changes in the lives of the people. With it, and through it, people are sure of having enough food for themselves and surplus for the market. Some of these crops will form the raw materials for the local industries, thereby creating employment opportunities for the rural populace. For this reason, Nyerere pointed out that the issue was not how to expand but how the people will contract into agriculture and to other areas of production that are lucrative within the community.¹⁰³ If agriculture is taken seriously other avenues can easily be explored. Investing in agriculture will create job opportunities and many will benefit by acquiring technical skills.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Royal Tropical Institute 1986. p. 44.

¹⁰⁰ Nyerere. 1973. p. 6.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 67.

¹⁰² Berger. 1992. p.78.

¹⁰³ Nyerere. 1973. p. 90.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 91.

The issue of rural poverty is not just a matter of lacking resources but the will to invest, to harness the existing resources and sharing them equitably. The technical skills and the knowledge are there, but what people require most is the self-confidence that they can perform on their own. The people at the rural level should understand that God, who placed them where they are, has a purpose and will provide enough for them. For instance, a farmer will need a wheelbarrow to move his or her crops during the harvest and a carpenter will be required to put the wheel in place, while a blacksmith will be required to fit the bolts. One farmer has directly or indirectly employed one or more professionals in different areas, solely for him or her to move his or her crops from the farm.

According to Nyerere:

Human dignity cannot be given to a man by the kindness of others. Indeed, it can be destroyed by kindness, which emanates from an action of charity. For human dignity involves equality and freedom, and relations of mutual respect among men. Further, it depends on responsibility and on a conscious participation in the life of the society in which a man moves and works.¹⁰⁵

Self-reliance cannot be realised when people depend on others to do things for them. People should be engaged in activities that will enable them to utilize their capabilities and, at the same time, realize their self-worth. Through active participation, people will exhibit their individual potential and will improve on what they were before. Attwood, Bruneau, and Galaty state that participation is a means whereby people at the local level will, in a great variety of locally determined ways, assume part of their own responsibility for economic development and avoid being a burden on other people.¹⁰⁶ The people have the responsibility to assist themselves on how to overcome their present predicaments. This will enable them to realize their capabilities, as well as working together for the good of their community. When this is in place, the people will be self-reliant.

2.4. MOBILIZATION OF LOCAL ASSETS

Every community, underdeveloped, developing and developed has assets that will enable it sustain its members. A close observation will show different gifts, skills and people's capabilities that are in existence in that community. Individuals and

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 218.

¹⁰⁶ Attwood, Bruneau, Galaty. 1988. p. 100.

communities are endowed with different assets for growth. John Kretzmann and John McKnight argued in their book, *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, that using these assets is the best approach to community development. For proper utilization, an inventory of the assets must be taken. This includes individual capabilities, associations and institutions in the community. These will be mobilized following some steps for maximum result.

The steps include mapping out the available assets, both human and non-human, within the locality. Information must be obtained concerning what the people and community have with them. This will create good working relationship with all in the community and will invariably lead to economic development. This economic growth will now make the people economically viable with what they have and able to map out development programmes for themselves. Base on the above, the community will be in a better position to utilize and implement their mapped out projects, bearing in mind that every institution will work in good relationship with one another for the welfare of the whole.

This is not an unusual approach for Nigeria. Indeed, Nigeria has a long record of outstanding grassroot associations, ranging from local to the national level.¹⁰⁷ Kinsmen and women are all involved, because it is one of the uniting factors in the country. They render their services to their members, the community and the government.

In the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial eras these organisations emerged as catalysts for the community development.¹⁰⁸ They usually emerge in the form of unions, social clubs or co-operatives that come together in solving their problems, or in execution of projects that will benefit the community.¹⁰⁹

Each community is a unique living entity and can initiate programmes that will be of benefit to itself. That is to say, every community consists of individuals and institutions in a particular geographical location. It has a common historical background, characteristics and objectives in life that can make a difference to the community.¹¹⁰ Bearing this in mind, each organisation always focuses on the welfare of the community and itself. This has led to developmental progress in the rural Igbo communities in

¹⁰⁷ Honey and Okafor 1998 (ed). p. 36.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid .p. 53.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 102.

Nigeria. When these groups meet they often embark on different projects like building halls, schools and lock-up stores, sinking bore holes, etc. In some places they invest in commercial vehicles and 'okada,' (motorcycles) as a means of transport,¹¹¹ or embark on health projects. In most places the youths are not left out, but they invest in the musical bands that serve both the Church and the community.

As soon as these organisations are mobilised they, in turn, will mobilise their local resources within reach for the good of all.¹¹² This is usually the case because they are the sole financiers and executors of their projects, except where they need external assistance. When people embark on a project they do so in the spirit of providing the basic infrastructure in the rural areas and as a way of assisting one another.

Nigerian rural communities can boast many assets with which to build their future. A thorough inventory of the gifts, skills and capacities of the community's residents will unveil a vast and often surprising array of individual talents and productive skills, of which only a few are currently utilized or mobilized in community-building. This will enable the organizers to know what they have and those who feel marginalized will be integrated in the whole system. It is very important to recognize the abilities and capabilities of every individual, even those who are considered useless or unhelpful. Where this is done, people will feel recognized and will play active roles in the community, for this is human nature. Every individual needs recognition, regardless of his or her social status in the community.

Beyond the individuals and local institutions that make up the asset base there are some formal institutions that are located within the community. These are the schools, both private and public, Churches, and village halls, hospitals, etc. These can be used for community building, where people have a set objective and understand each other as partners in the progress of the community. The Church is included.¹¹³ Its members can contribute to the well-being of other people and the community, through provision of

¹¹⁰ Swanepoel 1997. p. 32.

¹¹¹ Okada (motorcycles). Bad roads in the rural communities had led to people investing in using motorcycles as effective means of transport in the rural communities.

¹¹² Honey and Okafor 1998. p. 63.

¹¹³ Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993. While their basic purpose is the spiritual care of their members, they have demonstrated incredible capacity to undertake community work of every kind. The Church in order to fulfil its role must demonstrate its preaching with concrete things that affect the lives of the common people in the rural community. Faith without work is dead likewise preaching that does not address the problem of the poor is not a true Gospel. pp. 143-145.

some basic facilities.¹¹⁴ This will contribute to reducing the rate of unemployment and check the exodus of the youths to the urban centres.

There are abundant resources that can be utilized in poverty alleviation by the Churches in the rural communities. According to Kretzmann and McKnight:

As a matter of fact, many Churches and synagogues have already begun to utilize their resources within the community in extremely creative and innovative ways and thus have become centres for interactions between individuals, groups, associations and institutions. In other words, at the present time many contemporary religious leaders have come to understand that they cannot continue to remain viable within their community unless they learn to develop vital links to the development and improvement of that community.¹¹⁵

These assets need to be utilized in such a way that they will be means of alleviating rural poverty amongst the people in country areas.

2.5. CONCLUSION

Community development within recreation and leisure services represents a type of service approach that is highly dependent on citizen participation, particularly of citizens who are vulnerable. Overall community development aims to empower both individuals and local communities through involvement, education, skills development and proposed changes in existing conditions. These aims are achieved through such practitioner roles as research and reconnaissance, education, group development and advocacy (Hutchison and Nogradi).

Community development is a matter of social planning and social action. Social planning is that of a professionally controlled, top-down planning approach, used by many professionals in our communities today in their efforts to bring change in the communities. Social action, also known as called community organizing, is at the opposite end of the process. Here the people have the primary role of organising themselves around key issues that effect them. Community development therefore involves partnership with knowledgeable and committed people who believe that they can and are involved in planning, empowering and building their own community.

¹¹⁴ Honey & Okafor, 1998. The women organizations in both churches have erected ultra-modern 'story buildings' used for such activities as wedding, meetings and schools. The Catholic Women Organization for example, runs domestic centre for girls in its building. p. 109.

¹¹⁵ Kretzmann and McKnight. 1993. p. 143.

Both Nyerere, and Kretzmann and McKnight, though not professional theologians, knew and understood what it means to be created in the image of God and that people are agents of their own development with what they have. People in the rural areas have the abilities and capabilities that can enable them to reclaim their full humanity that has been marred by rural poverty. By utilizing what they have judiciously people can go a long way to changing their situation.

Nyerere, in *Freedom and Development*, stressed the importance of people being able to realise their own capabilities, instead of depending on external aid. People of all ages have all they need in order to overcome their problems. With self-confidence and self-reliance they can face odds and emerge victorious. To achieve this, people should stop looking for external help and rather trust in their ones own ability.

In the *Ujamaa* villages programme, Nyerere demonstrated that no matter how impoverished people are, they have the resources to sustain themselves. This can only be possible when people develop self-confidence in themselves and in what they can achieve. In a similar manner, Kretzmann and Mcknight argued that every community has the assets that can enable them to reclaim their self-worth. Once these assets and facilities are utilized to the fullest, the situation will never be the same again. To achieve this, people must know what they have in the community. The inventory of the Church and the community will enable planners to know exactly where to start. People should realize that what they have could sustain them, if properly utilized.

With this in mind, the final chapter explores some practical ways in which the Anglican churches can work with communities towards self-reliance and empowerment.

CHAPTER 3: CHURCH RESPONSE TO RURAL POVERTY IN NIGERIA

The subject, which is being dealt with, is what the local Anglican Churches in Nigeria can do to alleviate rural poverty. Nigeria is a complex country, politically, religiously, culturally and ethnically and these factors have contributed to the problem of rural poverty in Nigeria. Their impact cuts across the lives of the people, especially the poor in the rural areas.

People should not remain like this forever and something needs to be done so change the situation of penury in rural communities. The poor need to be empowered to be self-reliant. People should realize that God, who created them, has a purpose for doing so. In other words, there are resources available that will enable them live humanly. What they need to understand is their position as stewards. They should mobilize and utilize all the available assets, both human and non-human, judiciously. When this is done there will be a change and people should realize that they are agents of this change.

This final chapter will concentrate on what local Anglican Churches can do to alleviate rural poverty in Nigeria. People in the rural community have contributions to make. Attention will be focused on two key areas. These are agriculture and micro-enterprises. As soon as the Church invests in them and the people in the rural areas are directly involved and committed in the whole programme, there will be a change.

3.1. THE CHURCH IN RURAL NIGERIA

Churches in the rural areas of Nigeria are the centres for socio-economic and cultural activities in Nigeria.¹¹⁶ In Igboland every village tries to identify with the Church, for the simple reason that its members are known outside their village by the size and progress of their Church. In the local community the people regard the Church as the centre of attraction and sign of development. The lands which the mainline Churches stand today were donated for the development of the community. This is why in every rural parish there are schools, halls, sports facilities and farmlands.

¹¹⁶ Honey and Okafor, 1998(ed). Organizations in both Churches Anglican and Roman Catholic Mission have erected ultra modern story buildings use for such activities as weddings, meetings and schools. The Catholic Women Organization for example, runs a domestic centre for girls in its building. There is healthy competition among the

In the Anglican Church in Igboland, the relationship between the local Church and its members is such that non-members participate in Church activities by invitation and willingly assist if called upon. This has helped to create a better understanding between the members of the community and the Church as they pursue their developmental goal with one mind. This understanding contributes to the fact that non-Christians prefer mission institutions, hospitals and schools to those of the government. People in the rural communities believe that only the Church will provide them with the best. They have great trust in the Church as an agent of development. The situation is the same today in the rural areas. The relationship between the Christians and non-Christians is always cordial. People interact together as a body for the interests of the community.

Most rural Anglican Churches have different organizations that assist in its progress. Both men and women, young and old, are duty bound to belong to one or more organizations where he or she can make his or her own contribution towards the progress of the Church. For effectiveness and development the “abroad-members”¹¹⁷ organize themselves where they are and respond as individuals and as a group to the activities in their home Churches. The Church, on the other hand, does its pastoral duties to the “abroad” as well as to the “home” members.

In most cases, activities are organized in such a way that both Christians and non-Christians can interact. For instance in the August General Meeting for Anglican women, the women both abroad and home base¹¹⁸ will meet for one or more days to discuss the affairs of the Church and the community. At the end of their meeting they will agree on a particular project to be carried out before their next meeting the following year. This has contributed to the peaceful co-existence between the members and non-members and to progress recorded in the rural communities.

Churches in the rural communities are great assets to the people. The Churches have diverse services to render to the people in the communities. Most rural Anglican

Churches in the rural areas who will develop faster than in area of erecting infrastructures. This has contributed in provision of some basic amenities in the rural communities. p.109.

¹¹⁷ Abroad members these are the members of the community but they are living outside the community. People in the rural areas have special regard for them. They are seen as people who are development and will attract development to the rural communities. They make their monetary and material contributions both to the Church as well as the community in general.

¹¹⁸ Home base is the members of the community who are at home. Even if they have their business are outside the community but they take off from the community they are regarded so.

Churches in Nigeria have facilities that if properly utilized, will assist the people in developing the area. Most of the Churches in the rural areas have already invested in projects that are of immense value to the people in rural communities. Some have halls for social gatherings, while some have pre-nursery and nursery schools, where children acquire qualitative education. Most Anglican Churches in the local community have at best one project and people admire the move as a sign of development in the community.

Once these facilities are properly utilized they will assist in the alleviation rural poverty. According to Kretzmann and McKnight:

No matter what their size or denomination, many religious institutions have at least one large meeting room, a sanctuary, classroom space, office space, a basement, lobby walls, hallways, a kitchen, a parking lot and some open unused spaces.¹¹⁹

These facilities should be put to use in such a way they will be of benefit to both the Church and the community at large. These assets are of great value to the communities for development. In some places they have musical sets, furniture, cooking utensils and transport for hire. These can form links of development. For instance, those who have the musical instruments can build a recording studio. Around the studio people can open up shops and artisans can establish there, too. In this way the community will continue to improve on what they have and, through that, they will start to solve some of their family and community problems.

How can this be in the rural communities? Nyerere argued that since people know what they have and want, they can achieve their set objectives through active participation in the programme. Similarly, Kretzmann and McKnight stated that the Church is a go-between to other resources in and around it and in the community.¹²⁰ Swanepoel stated that once success is recorded in one area, people in the community would be more successful in other areas.¹²¹ This is a chain reaction and the Church is seen as the starting point.

¹¹⁹ Kretzmann and McKnight 1993. p. 144.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 155.

¹²¹ Swanepoel .1997. p. 17.

This noble objective can only be achieved by integrating all the organizations within the community, because each has a role to play in community development. The Anglican Church should organize its activities in such a way that they embrace the activities in the community because its members are also of the community. A spirit of oneness is effective in the community building.¹²²

For the Anglican Church in the rural community to effectively address the issue of rural poverty two main issues will be examined. These are agriculture and micro-enterprises. How can rural Anglican parishes combine these two elements to make a difference?

3.2. AGRICULTURE

Food is one of the most basic needs of human beings and producing it is the main economic activity of the people in the rural communities. Although people have other goods and services to render, which may be sold, and gain made, agriculture is the basic activity. Agriculture played a vital role in the economy before the discovery of oil and to this day most of the people in the rural areas depend heavily on agriculture for their survival.

In recent years, agriculture has started to decline because of government neglect. Young are drifting to the cities looking for the non-existing white-collar jobs.¹²³ O'Connor argued that the migration of the youths and young adults from the rural areas to the cities has contributed in the drop in agricultural output.¹²⁴ Arnold stated that in earlier times agriculture employed about 70% of labour force. In Nigeria, today the country is importing some of its staple food.¹²⁵

The cause of the present decline was that originally agriculture was developed to favour the colonial masters.¹²⁶ These exported goods were later imported as processed food,

¹²² Kretzmann and McKnight 1993. p. 140.

¹²³ O'Connor, A, 1991. African governments are constantly accused of neglecting the food producers in every respect other than marketing. Efforts to assist them through advisory services, credit facilities or provision of inputs such as fertilizers have certainly been very feeble in most countries. The governments themselves claim that the problem lies in their own lack of funds. p. 85.

¹²⁴ Ibid. p. 86.

¹²⁵ Arnold. 1977. p. 91.

¹²⁶ Ibid. Nigerian agriculture was developed in response to colonial needs: that is the export commodities such as cocoa, cotton, groundnuts, palm oil and kernel. Cash cropping for export assumes an international division of labour

at high rates. For this reason, little or no attention was paid to local production for local food consumption. Apeldoorn pointed out that the increasing emphasis on the cash crop production led to the dwindling of grain reserves at the household level.¹²⁷ Because of the immediate gain, people abandoned the idea of planting the local staple food that would sustain them after their exports. This, in turn, has led to hunger and poverty, because the population growth rate was higher than the agricultural output.¹²⁸ Output can no longer sustain the population. The situation is exacerbated by the Federal Government's neglect and the movement of young people to the cities.

The *status quo* is alarming and something needs to be done. Revival in the agricultural sector is of paramount importance. Arnold stated that:

A key to revival of agriculture, therefore, is that of improving the status of the farmers: in essence this means paying him more for his crops so that it becomes an attractive business to be a farmer and as a consequence, encourages farmers' sons not to desert the land for towns.¹²⁹

3.3. MICRO-ENTERPRISES

These challenges facing the Church in the rural communities only be addressed by creating job opportunities for the people. Its investments should be in small-scale enterprises. According to Trevor Manuel, the South African Minister of Finance:

Small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) represent an important vehicle to address the challenges of job creation, economic growth and equity in our country. Throughout the world one finds that SMMEs are playing a critical role in absorbing labour, penetrating new markets and generally expanding economies in creative and innovative ways. We are of the view that with the appropriate enabling environment, SMMEs in this country can follow these examples and make an indelible mark on this economy.¹³⁰

that would trap Nigeria in a primary production role while foreign exploiters rush mass-produced manufacturers at exploitative prices on the country. p. 91.

¹²⁷ Van. 1981. p. 97.

¹²⁸ Ibid. Nigerian population is growing at a rate of nearly 3% per annum; agricultural output is only growing at a rate of 25 per annum. p. 97.

¹²⁹ Arnold. 1977. p. 92.

¹³⁰ Trevor. 1995. PRODDER. News Letter. p. 3.

Micro-enterprise is a contributing factor to promoting economic growth, development, employment opportunities and possibly to alleviating rural poverty. In his opening address to the President's Conference on Small Business in March 1995, in Durban, the former president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela stated that, "the government of National Unity is committed to helping create an environment in which small business can flourish and prosper." His emphasis was on the importance of micro-enterprises as a way of promoting economic growth and creation of job opportunities. Barnard, argued that if the situation of unemployment were to be addressed meaningfully the issue of micro-enterprises would be taken seriously and vigorously. He went on to say, "only a well stimulated and structured SMME sector is in position to create enough employment opportunities in order to start addressing the employment situation in the county."¹³¹ This is where the Church in the rural community comes in, in its efforts to assist the people in a rural poverty alleviation programme. Its attention should be on the SMME sector where, when established, the raw materials will be steadily available to sustain production.

3.4. SMALL BUSINESSES IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Finally, a range of small-scale businesses will be identified opportunities in the agricultural sector that could be pursued by the rural Anglican Church in Nigeria. Once the people are mobilized and the available assets are properly utilized and investments made, these will make a difference to the lives of the people living in the rural areas of Nigeria.

3.4.1. Garri processing in the rural areas of Nigeria

Garri is a local staple food that is produced from cassava. The cassava plant does not take long to mature for harvesting. When it is harvested and peeled it is sent for grinding and the ground cassava is compressed to drain is and later sieved. The next stage is to fry the sieved cassava to dry it. At this particular point, palm oil may or may not be added, depending on choice. The pictures below show the method garri processing in a local community.

¹³¹ Barnard. 1995. p. 3.



Fig. 1A



Fig. 1B

Garri processing in Igboland.

Figure 1A is the grinding part of garri processing. As soon as this is done the cassava will be compressed to dry. Figure 1B is the sieving and frying process. As soon as this is done the garri is ready for eating and marketing.

A mechanized processed of garri production increase its output, saves time and those involved can attend to other things in the community. In mechanized garri production, instead of using hands for grinding and pressing, a locally made grater, presser and fryer can easily be procured.

The Church in the rural communities has the capacity and capabilities to organize a mechanized garri-processing venture. This can be integrated in the rural development programme of the community. Use of fryer will save the environment, for the people will depend less on firewood and prevent the people from health hazards on the side of the producers, who are exposed to the choking effects of billowing smoke. The fryer in question will not need electricity, because the electricity supply in Nigeria is not to be trusted. The Church can afford a generator as the source of power supply for the fryer. Churches in the rural areas can easily afford the fuel to run the generator and maintain it.

3.4.2. Palm produce (Palm oil and kernel)

In the South East States, palm trees are common and bear fruit all year round. The Church in the rural areas can invest in palm produce, bearing in mind that the raw material is always available. When the seeds are harvested they are boiled before the

extraction of the oil. The palm nuts can be processed further to extract white oil for industrial use.

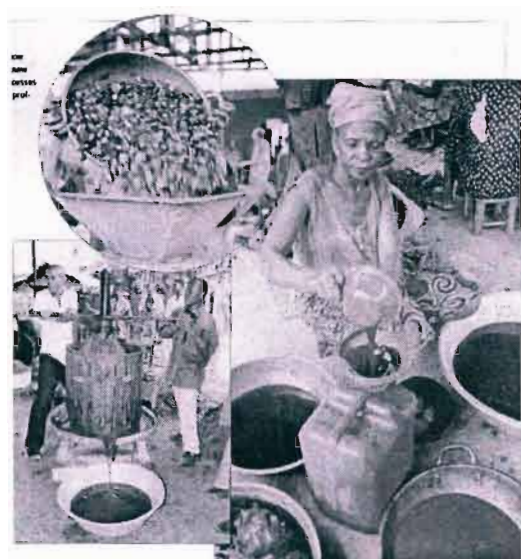


Fig. 2. Palm oil processing in Igboland

In Figure 2, the top picture show the palm seeds, while below are two young men extracting the palm oil. The women in the background are picking the seeds before boiling them. The woman on the right is packing the oil for use or marketing.

The church should endeavour to procure the boiler, presser and cracking machines. If the people can obtain these, they will produce drums of palm oil for marketing and sufficient to use at home, too.

3.4.3. Livestock project

Livestock includes cattle, goats, sheep, poultry, pigs and rabbits. The following are some of the projects the Church could become involved in to alleviate rural poverty.

(i) Pig farms

There is currently a demand for pork in rural areas. Pork, being good white meat and cheap, is popular. As a poverty alleviation venture, its productivity is encouraging, in that the sow can give birth to ten or piglets.



Fig. 3. Pig farm in Igboland

Figure 3 shows a local pig farm, with piglets. Rearing pigs is relatively easy, in that feed for the pig is always available.

(ii) Poultry

A poultry enterprise is another area in which the church can invest. The present author's personal experience has been that poultry can be used in rural poverty alleviation programmes. A farmer in the village who engages in planting vegetables can use chicken droppings as manure. Poultry can equally be sources for improving the immediate welfare in households, especially among women and children. Poultry can contribute to the protein consumption of the people and will also provide job opportunities. Permin, Pederson and Riise stated that poultry alone is by far the largest livestock group and is estimated to be about 14 000 million worldwide, consisting mainly of chickens, ducks and turkeys.¹³² The Church should pay attention to this enterprise because of the economic value and job opportunities that accompany it.

¹³² Permin, Pederson and Riise, 1999. p.143.

(iii) Snail (Congo meat)

People in rural areas nicknamed snail “Congo-meat,” because the size is assumed to be as big as the Equatorial forest in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is very large. In a typical Igbo community, people use lights at night in hunting for snails and some trade on it. Snail rearing is an area of interest and investment because it saves time and is lucrative venture.¹³³ In Nigeria, the snail business is considered worthwhile. For this reason even the government has shown interest in establishing farms for it.



Fig. 4. Snails in a small pen in Igboland.

Many people engage in the snail business because of the gain they make out of it.¹³⁴ The female snail lays between eighty and a hundred eggs. The output of the business is high as soon as it starts production and the labour involved is not too demanding. People in the rural areas can invest in snails, because the enterprise is not capital intensive and has high a demand.

(iv) Rats and Rabbits

Rats and rabbits (rodents) are another possibility in the livestock family. The demand for rodents is high because of their laboratory use in both secondary and commercial schools in rural communities. The students buy them for their practicals. Their

¹³³ <http://www.thisdayonline.comarchive>. Breeding snails has a lot of advantages because of low capital costs, ability to survive famine, vibrant market and easy maintenance, amongst many others.

¹³⁴ <http://www.firewall.unesco.org/mab/capacity>. About 70% of the people indicated that they engage in snail collection and they do so for the purpose of obtaining their source of protein and obtaining supplementary income from the sale of the snails, as their major source of income.

acquisition and up keep are not expensive. Personal investigations and experience have shown that they are a source of poverty alleviation in country areas because even children can keep them in the rural villages. During festivals, people sell them and some eat them. The enterprises create job opportunities, too.

(v) Fruit processing and food storage

Nigeria is blessed with different fruits and crops as food that produce high yields but are seasonal. This seasonality means that there is much waste, because there is no storage system in the rural communities that will assist the farmers. Provision of storage and processing facilities will go a long way to assisting and encouraging farmers. This will also make these fruits available all year round and will enable more people to become farmers.

3.4.4. WATER PROJECT

God gave us water but He didn't put it in pipelines. You see the school children – cleaner, with brighter, clean cloths. Scabies gone, dull look gone. The teeth look better. Their parents are cleaner. The total outlook of the whole location has changed.¹³⁵

The importance of a good water supply cannot be over-emphasised. Water is a basic need that without it people do not feel happy and may even die.¹³⁶ It is an essential commodity and with it in place other projects will follow. Snyder and Tadesse stated that the provision of an adequate water supply would increase people's opportunities in development, health facilities, labour saving technologies and employment.¹³⁷ The time that would have been used in the search of water would be used for other things that are important to the community. Provision of water in the rural communities will improve the living conditions of the people and also create job opportunities for them. The Church in the rural community can drill water boreholes within its compound, with the assistance of its members. This will solve the problem of water supply to the church and the community.

¹³⁵ Snyder. 1995. p. 187.

¹³⁶ Nurnberger. 1999. p. 76.

¹³⁷ Snyder and Tadesse. 1995. p. 76.



Fig. 5A



Fig. 5B



Fig. 5C

Figure 5A shows members of a rural Church trying to drill a water bore-hole that will serve it and the community. Figure 5B shows the children in the community fetching water from the Church compound. They were happy that their long trek in search of water is now over. Figure 5C is the water vendor plying his trade. He has fetched water and is supplying it to his customers.

Investment in a water supply will assist in rural poverty alleviation. It will provide the people with potable drinking water and also attract other investments. According to Fisher “the Kenya Water for Health Organization (KWAHO), led by Margaret Mwangole, had developed over 100 water related projects for women by 1970.¹³⁸ KWAHO is using clinics that include a source of clean water as the initiating point for other development

¹³⁸ Fisher. 1993. p. 101.

approaches.” With the provision of potable water by the Church, both the Church and the community will benefit. People will have enough time to attend to other things, both in the Church and the community.

3.5. FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

The rural Anglican Church, in its efforts to alleviate rural poverty in Igboland, can invest in some other areas in which the people in the rural community can participate actively. The investing will be such that it will not be capital intensive.

These are some other areas of interest and investment: battery charging, baking, fashion and designing, funeral undertakers, business centres (typing pool, fax, phone, and photocopier), milling machines (for maize, beans, yams, cassava, rice). Others are hairdressing, the making of soap, candle and pomade and repairs to shoes and plastic containers. With these in the locality people can earn their living and be able to solve some of their daily needs.

These are some of the ways for the rural Anglican Church to fulfil its diaconal ministry in the 21st Century. This should be a new dimension by the Church in the area of evangelism, for these enterprises will go a long way to creating job opportunities for the people in the rural areas. When the Church shows concern for the people it shows the local people in the streets that God really loves them and has not abandoned them in their present situation.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

Rural poverty is an issue that needs the urgent attention of all people. Although it is a worldwide phenomenon, the worst affected are the poor, especially those in the rural communities. The situation in Nigeria is such that many families eat once a day. Many people cannot afford a decent shelter, while many have lost their jobs because of the weak economy. Most people in the rural areas, have no access to potable drinking water and health services. Education is currently for the rich because the poor cannot afford it and this is a great threat to present and future generations. The situation is such that people living in the rural area communities are living in a dilemma, because their future is bleak and unknown. The future of the children in the rural communities is hanging in the balance, because many of them no longer go to school because the parents and guardians can no longer afford their school fees. The youths and the young adults migrate to the cities in search of non-existing jobs, leaving agriculture in the hands of the poor, the sick, the weak and the elderly in the rural communities.

The situation is more pronounced these days because the country is becoming more complex than it was before. This is because of political and economical instability in the country. Mismanagement and corruption are ingrained from long military rule in the country and is still found within the ranks of the present leaders. Religious, ethnic and communal interests and clashes are common scenes and they cut across the country, making it impossible for people to think of others. This has contributed immensely to the problems of rural poverty in Nigeria, in that most people who were displaced had no other place to go apart from back to their villages. In the communities, they have little or nothing, because they had lost their properties and resources in these disturbances. The outcome of this is that there is a population explosion and a new crime wave in the rural communities, because many people are struggling with the few available resources.

Many in the rural areas, in an effort to survive, have descended heavily on the environment, leading to the exploitation and exhaustion of non-renewable resources. The infrastructure is bad, to the extent that the farmers in the rural communities cannot move their crops to the cities or preserve them for sale. What they realize in the end is never worth the effort that they put into merely trying to survive.

Efforts must be made so that people can have a new lease on life in the rural areas. Some of the essentials of life should be put in place, so that the people in the rural communities can live humanly. When this is done, the poor in the rural areas will be in a better position to meet some of their daily needs. To achieve this, people should jealously guard and jealously utilize whatever they have, both personal and communal judiciously. The principle of equity and fair play will always guide the people in their dealings with human and non-human resources in the community. This will only be possible when they are equipped, for this will enable them to know exactly who they are, what they have, and how to deal with others.

People in the rural communities can do something on their own as soon as they realize that they are endowed with different talents and gifts. Also that they have assets within the community that will enable them to live humanly. They need empowering, on how to utilize the assets and facilities available in the locality. This is where the Church comes in, as an agent for change in the rural community.

The rural Anglican Church has a role to play in the programme of poverty alleviation. The Church can achieve this through utilization of both human and non-human resources available in the community. The individuals in the community should be utilized, each according to what he or she can do best, for the good of the community and self. All the existing facilities will be put into maximum use, such that they will be of benefit to the community. The Anglican Church in the rural community can therefore respond to rural poverty alleviation through two key issues, agriculture and micro-enterprises. The farmers in the rural areas should be assisted, possibly in the form of free interest loans or grants, provision of high-yielding crops and new methods of farming.

The Church should invest in small-scale businesses such as improved garri production, oil palm, livestock and water bore-holes. There are series of opportunities where the Church can invest in its efforts to alleviate rural poverty in Nigeria. What it means is that both the Church and the community will be partners in progress for the good of the poor in the rural areas in Nigeria. The Church should use its position in the community to bring changes in the area of rural poverty alleviation programmes, bearing in mind that

people in the rural areas have great regards for it and view it as an agent of progress and a sign of development.

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