Perception of Ijumu people of Kogi state of rural rebound as a permanent solution to economic recession

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria as a nation is today experiencing economic downturn and there have been a lot of efforts and suggestions towards resolving this problem. Rural development is vital to the economic exigency of any nation. This is due to the fact that a sizable number of people live there and they contribute a great deal of both human and raw materials for industrial processes. It is for this reason that the study looked at rural rebound as a lasting solution to economic recession in Nigeria. To achieve the research objectives, the study used the survey method and multi-stage random sampling was employed to select 215 respondents. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS/PC) Version 20.0 was used to analyze the quantitative data. The statistical methods employed in the data analysis were cross-tabulation, the percentages and the mode. Chi-square was then used to test the hypotheses that were formulated. Findings show that there is significant relationship between rural rebound and economic development. It was also discovered that rural people were also affected by this economic recession. The study recommends based on these findings that government should embark on discretionary spending that are aimed towards development of rural areas as they are the best route to diversifying the economy of the country and with this, the economy will regain its lost strength quickly.

Keywords: Economic recession, rural rebound, rural development, rural areas

INTRODUCTION

The continuous increase in the prices of goods and services in Nigeria since the turn of 2016 fiscal year has made the country plunge into recession and this has had negative effects on the country's economy. South Africa has taken over Nigeria as the largest economy in Africa after two years of being the continent's largest economy due to this recession and this has caused economic as well as social experts in the country to look for various solutions to the recession that has recently hit the country's economy Noko (2016). The state governments have been particularly over dependent on the federal government for allocations and income in order to handle all projects but they fail to look inwards for the various abundant natural resources that are yet to be tapped in their respective states (Yekeen 2016). Farmers have sold their lands and moved to cities due to the current situation hindering them from effectively and efficiently farming on these lands not thinking of the consequence of congestion in those cities they are migrating to. The movement from rural to urban areas has negative impacts on the quality of life in rural areas especially when the migrants move their needed manpower into the city. Migration of youths from the rural areas also placed a greater burden on the farmers because for a farmer to cover the same area of land as when he had extra assistance, he must work for much longer and extra hours thereby hindering him from having

leisure time and participation in various social activities which he would have loved to. This also reduces the farmer's output in the long run (Nyagba (2009). Congestion is also one of the problems that cause recession because of the continuous demands for limited resources. Importation has been the order of the day for the country in terms of food and some other goods and services due to the inability of the government to look inwards for opportunities that can create food sufficiency. People lose jobs by the day as organizations can longer afford to pay so many workers that they have. Banks especially keep retrenching workers because of fall in their profits. Perhaps, the causes of this economic recession can be attributed to poor economic planning, policy conflict, high taxation rates, high interest rates, devalued currency, high national debts, mass unemployment and ultimately inflation (Farabiyi, 2016). Migration of people from rural to urban centres in search for better livelihood is another cause of the recession that the country is facing. This is because it causes congestion in these cities. Also, there are no enough infrastructures as well as facilities to take care of the needs of these people.

Conceptualising economic recession

The International Monetary Fund defines a global recession as "a decline in annual per-capita real World GDP which is fostered by a reduction in one or more of the seven other global macroeconomic indicators which include industrial production, per-capita investment, trade, per-capita consumption, capital flows, oil consumption, and unemployment rate," (The Wall Street Journal, April 2009).

Economic recession is a downturn in the economy and it is often characterized by symptoms such as increases in prices of goods and services, inability of government to meet its financial obligations, exchange rate fluctuations as well as poor performance of other macroeconomic variables which define the state of the economy per time. Economic recession is a recurrent issue because of the cyclical nature of the global economy. That is why most countries, especially the developed ones, often diversify the structural base of their economy to withstand any external shock (Ashkan, 2009).

Economic recessions are often studied from three perspectives. The first concentrates on the causes of recession, the second studies its consequences and the last focuses on the predictions of recession. The first approach was used by West (1990) who showed that the cost shocks are important sources of GNP varying; Blanchard (1993) studied effects of consumption on recession origin and Wilson (1985) examined possible effects of tax and monetary regulations on a recession emergence. The second approach focuses on sociological and economic effects of recessions on human life. Cummings (1987) used this to study the influence of recessions on minorities and females in the United States; Edgell and Duke (1986) studied the Great Britain radicalism in the 1980s and the connections with recessions that happened. The impacts of recessions on families and well-being humans are shown in Taussig and Fenwick (1999). As for the last approach: the study of economic indicators which emphases on the predictions of a recession can be found in Camacho and Perez-Quiros (2002). Studying causes of recession, characteristics, its features and consequences draw attention to their comparison. Comparisons of recessions are usually based on various macroeconomic indicators such as GDP decline, unemployment, and fall of industrial production, downturn of stock market indices, decrease in trade volumes, and decrease in real personal income among others (Eichengreen and O'Rourke, 2010). However, when many indicators are involved, a direct comparison of the strength of recessions is generally not a conclusive one as recession may be evaluated better by one indicator but worse by another. Besides, recessions are usually described qualitatively using some ambiguous terms like 'severe' or 'mild'. For example, Gascon (2009, p. 2), who compared with four indicators, six different recessions concluded that "Based on the indicators he used, the economic recession of 2008 was worse

than average; however, the declines are what have been experienced before.

Causes, effects and solutions to economic recession in Nigeria

It is imperative to ascertain the reasons behind the economic recession facing Nigeria in order to proffer solutions to the problem. First and foremost, we are in recession due to the fall in oil prices and low oil production which is caused by the activities of the Niger Delta avengers and some other economic saboteurs. Nigeria has always been on extra time and it exposes its shortcomings each time there is a drop in oil prices (Ishiekwene, 2016). A 60% fall in oil revenue is the immediate cause of the economic recession. However, according to Ishiekwene (2016), there have always been deficiencies in the economic system over the years which have ensured that there was little or no infrastructural development and value-added production, poor roads, little human capital development by way of funding the educational and health sector, epileptic power. Also, the country failed to save for the rainy days during the boom years and that rain is now pouring upon us.

Managerial and technological ability to run a skilled-based economy are lacked by the country and this is worsened by lack of plan and ultimately corruption. Temitayo (2016) attributed the economic recession of Nigeria to seven major causes: Nigeria's overdependence on foreign products, inability of the previous administration to save economic policies of the present administration, activities of the Niger Delta Militants on oil pipelines, the existence of wasteful and abuse-prone subsidies, delay and controversies of the 2016 budget and different actions or inactions of the Central Bank in foreseeing the recession.

However, there have been suggestions as to how the country can get itself out of the current economic downturn. One of these suggestions is one made by the IMF through its Managing Director calling for increase in Value Added Tax (VAT) because it has become very important for the country to increase its tax base against the notion that Nigeria charges the lowest VAT in Africa and urged the federal government to engage in monetary policies that are flexible which will serve the interest of the Nigerian citizens better. The IMF also urged the federal government to reduce the cost of governance in order to focus on infrastructure provision, health, education etc. The IMF however warned Nigeria against borrowing, stating that it is affecting the country presently and subsequent loans will really hurt the country.

In order to strengthen the Naira and improve or develop the local economy, Prof. Ben Ayade, Cross River State Governor called for payment of contract fees and charges of multinational companies in local currency. He said the payments of contracts in the oil and gas sector in foreign currencies is another bane of the economy in the country. He however urged the country to commoditize its foreign reserves because it is only in Nigeria that contracts are awarded in foreign currency (Jerrywright, 2016).

Rural development in Nigeria

The word "rural" has different meanings to different people. The American Bureau of Census categorizes the inhabitants of a community that have a population 2,500 people and less as rural and in Nigeria on the other hand, the National Bureau of Statistics defines a community with less than 20,000 people rural. Rural areas can easily be identified by other criteria other than population. These criteria include the level of development in infrastructure i.e. road networks, water supply, educational institutions, health facilities, communication, electricity etc., occupational differentiation, housing, extent of community planning among others (Afolayan, 1995).

Rural development is defined by Aslam (1981) as a process which is aimed at developing the poor people in rural areas, their economy and other institutions from a state of ineffectiveness and stagnation or low productivity into a process that leads to better quality of life and higher standard of living.

There are so many problems facing rural areas in Nigeria and these problems have over the years affected the rural populace negatively. Rural areas are characterized by lack of basic infrastructural facilities and obvious presence of general low standard of living among the rural inhabitants (Olatunbunso, 1975).Nwuke, (2004) observes that poverty is more rampant among the rural populace because about 70 percent of the Nigerian people who live below poverty line are settled in the rural areas. Ele (2006) also observes that there is, indeed, a problem of transportation in rural areas as most rural roads are inaccessible and link bridges are ruined beyond repair and even in some cases do not exist. There is also, clearly, poor quality education, water supply as well as lack of health institutions in majority of rural areas in Nigeria.

One major consequence of the rural underdevelopment is urban migration which is daily diminishing active labour force in the rural areas in Nigeria. In fact, as a consequence of continuing underdevelopment, there has been noticeably increasing high rural-urban migration of people who are in search of better standard of living greater opportunities for economic and social activities that are meaningful (Oghoghouje and Gerry-Eze, 2011). Also Nwankwo and Apeh (2006) noted that rural-urban migration retards the overall national development and not only dysfunctional to rural development.

Rural Rebound

Rural rebound is defined by Johnson and Lichter (2007) as the movement of people from urban areas to suburban regions. Rural rebound is a phenomenon which has to do with the migration of people from urban areas to suburban areas or regions. It entails people moving from urban areas to rural areas in order to develop rural areas and have less congested urban areas. Also, it is a measure which is used to develop and mechanize the agricultural and rural produce to make a country's economy thrive and rise (boundless.com). According to observations by William (1970), factors such as old age, crisis, retirements, transfers as well as invasion of disease and pests are the causes of rural rebound. Jibowu (1992) was of the opinion that factors like traffic jams, congestion, increasing urban unemployment, sanitation problems, increasing crime rate and problem of accommodation are factors that contribute to rural rebound. Urban-rural migration has led to increase in agricultural outputs generally while the population of the economically productive population in agriculture increased between 1970 and 2000 (Majid 2004). Urban-rural migrants are also involved in educational, health related occupations and trading (Efuoku 2012).

Gautam (1999) reiterated that urban-rural migrants buy land and venture into farming when they get back to their villages with the saving they had while working in the urban area.

Various researches that have been done recently suggest the fact that the search for a better quality of life and environmental amenities are changing the rural area population areas (Burnley and Murphy 2004; McGranahan 1999; Rudzitis 1999). These amenity-driven values include 'pull factors' and 'push factors'. Pull factors include factors such as pleasant climate, interesting topography, the presence of water bodies, wilderness areas and the appeal of living a 'rural life' which influence decisions to leave urban areas. There are also 'push factors' which influence decisions to leave urban areas, such as perceptions of crime rates and pollution. The increasing number of people who retire from jobs and other individuals who are unemployed for one reason or another; increase in the entrepreneurial activities in the rural areas; better telecommunication that allow people to live as far away from their place of business without stress have also been identified as factors that influence rural rebound (Beyers and Nelson 2000).

In addition, the number of migrants in the rural areas consists of retirees and mid-career families, lone-eagle professionals, blue-collar workers and disenchanted city dweller that have high level of investment income and see a better way of life in rural areas (Nelson 1997, 1999; Nelson & Beyers 2002; Power 1996). Some retirees however are not part of the economically productive population (Anquinette, 2010) and increase in a specific age group may be detrimental to the development of rural areas, how to increase economically productive population to rural areas, create more jobs and enriching human capital are yet to be researched areas. Individuals with mobile job who choose to live in rural areas are likely to live in certain selected areas with high quality amenity resources (Jackson-Smith et al. 2006).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Keynesian economic theory is a macroeconomic theory which is premised on the intellectual ideas of a British economist John Maynard Keynes. This theory argues that sometimes, decisions made in the private sectors lead to inefficient outcomes in the economy as a whole i.e. macroeconomics and it therefore advocates for a public sector intervention. It advocates for monetary as well as fiscal policy responses by the federal government and central bank in order to stabilize the economy. Keynes contended that a general glut i.e. excess was possible which occurred when aggregate demand for goods was insufficient. This will in turn lead to downturn in economic activities with loss of potential output, unnecessary increase in unemployment etc. when this happens, Keynes advocates for government policies which could be used to increase aggregate demand thereby reducing unemployment and deflation as well as increasing economic activities. For instance, government may embark on discretionary spending which could not be part of the budget to create employment and stabilize the economy (saylor.org, 2017).

Before the Keynesian economics, classical economic thinking was of the opinion that cyclical fluctuations in employment and economic output would be self-adjusting and modest. This classical theory stated that if aggregate demand in the economy reduces, it will result in decline in jobs and production which will in turn enhance a decline in prices and wages. A lower level of inflation and wages would force employers of labour to embark on capital investments and employ more people. This will stimulate employment and restoring economic growth (investopedia.com, 2017).

For instance, Keynesian theory does not support the belief held by some economists that reduced wages can lead to full employment, by arguing that employers of labour will not increase their employees in order to produce goods that cannot be sold in the market because demand is weak. Also, business conditions that are poor may lead to companies reducing capital investment instead of looking to take advantage of lower prices for them to invest in new plant and equipment which would in turn result in reducing overall expenditures and employment (investopedia.com, 2017).

Keynes opined that the way out of the Great Depression was stimulation of the economy via the combination of two approaches: Reduced interest rates and Investment in infrastructure by the government. Government investment injects revenue, which leads to more spending in the general economy and in turn will encourage more investment and production involving still more income as well as spending and so forth (saylor.org).

Assumptions of Keynesian Economics

The following are some of the assumptions of Keynesian Economics Theory that could be useful for this study:

- Unemployment is the result of structural inadequacies within the economic system. It is not caused by laziness as previously believed.
- During a recession, the economy may not return naturally to full employment. The government must interfere and make use of government spending to stimulate growth in the economy. A lack of investment in goods and services leads to the economy operating below its potential growth rate and output.
- An active stabilization policy is needed to reduce the amplitude of the business cycle. Keynesian economists held the notion that aggregate demand not meeting the supply of goods and services was one of the most serious economic problems.
- Overcoming an economic downturn requires stimulation of the economy and this could be achieved by reducing interest rates and increasing government investment.

Applicability of Keynesian economic theory to the study

Unemployment is as a result of inadequacies in the Nigerian economic system. This is due to the fact that there are no laid down policies and procedures for employment creation and where these policies exist, they are not well implemented. Also, the government must interfere in the economy during recession in order to stimulate growth in the economy. Discretionary spending by the government with various investments in different sectors of the economy should be embarked upon. These spending should be tailored majorly towards rural areas as they are the raw material base of industries, and the major natural resources that can bring income to the country are found in these rural areas. This will create employment opportunities in the rural areas and will spur people from urban areas to move back to their home towns in search for jobs which will in turn reduce drastically the congestion found in urban areas. Also, aggregate demand for goods will increase thereby leading to general economic growth.

The way to maintain or increase quality of an economically active labor force, create economic opportunities, and enrich human capital in rural areas have been major problems for successive Nigerian government and this cannot be done without government intervening in the economy. As said in an earlier, Nigeria has about 56 untapped resources in various parts of the country and tapping these resources will require manpower as well as funds which could be provided by the government and create employment opportunities. Also, rural areas can become places for recreation and tourist centres if the government can embark on discretionary spending on them as these tourist centres could be a source of income for the nation.

In terms of food sufficiency, government could grant farmers loans at very cheap rates as well as leasing lands to the farming. Fertilizers could be provided for free to these farmers and government could also assist them in marketing these goods or products by creating market for them both locally and internationally. All these could spur people to move back to rural areas as there will be job opportunities and the nation as a whole will benefit because it will result in food security and the country's agricultural exports will once again be a force to be reckoned with.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the extent to which economic recession has affected the people of rural communities in Ijumu LGA of Kogi state measured in terms of their income level before and during recession.
- To ascertain the opinion of the Ijumu people on whether rural rebound can end economic recession in Nigeria measured in terms of improvement in the provision of infrastructures.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Iiumu local government area of Kogi state which is located between Latitude 7° 30' to 8° 10' North of the Equators and Latitude 5° 45' to 6° 15' East of the Greenwich meridian. The population of this LGA is around 150,000. The local government has Three (3) districts namely: Gbede district (located in the North-West of the LGA), Ijumu-Oke (located in the South-East of the LGA) and Ijumu-Arin district (located in the South-West of the LGA) (Adeyemi, 2016). The local government comprises mainly of rural communities and they engage majorly in farming. They have the same ancestral origin with the Yoruba due to the fact that they migrated from the historical Ile-Ife and they practice majorly Islam, Christianity and Traditional African religions (Adeyemi, 2016).

The survey method was used to gather data for the study. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select respondents for the survey. The nonexistence of a sampling frame (i.e. list of all households in Ijumu local government of Kogi State) warranted the use of this sampling technique as the local government has various communities in its districts as stated earlier. To select the respondents, a four-stage sampling procedure was adopted. The first stage involved dividing the local government into districts (3 districts). In order to give all the communities in each district equal chance of being selected, the second stage involved dividing the district into communities. The third stage then involved random selection of two communities from each district where purposive sample technique was used to finally select the matured and relatively permanent residents.

The statistical methods used in the analysis included the percentages, the mode, crosstabulation and chi-square and contingency coefficient.

Hypotheses

Economic recession has not affected the income of rural people of Ijumu LGA of Kogi state adversely

Rural infrastructures cannot be a permanent solution to economic recession in Nigeria.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics

Table 1 shows the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents. The sex distribution of the respondents shows that 53.1% of them were male while 46.9% were female. Data on age of the respondents shows that 13.5% were in the age group 36-45 years; 19.5% were in the age

group 16-25 years; 17.2% were in the age group 46-55 years; 17.7% were in the age group 26-35 years, while 69% were in the age group 56-65. Data on the length of residence show that 25.1% lived in the local government for 1-8years; 20.5% lived there for 9-16years; 22.3% have lived there for 17-24years while 32.1% lived there for 25years and above.

Data on the respondents' education show that 20.9% (45) had had higher education; 30.2% had primary education; 9.8% had no formal education while 84% had had secondary education. Majority of the respondents 46.9% were farmers; 17.7% were civil servants; 13.9 % were traders; 4.7% worked with private sector employee; 4.7% were

retirees, while 12.1% were artisans. Data on the monthly income of the respondents show that 8.4% had no monthly income; 31.6% of the respondents earned below 10,000 naira per month; 19.1% earned between 10,001 and 20.000 naira; 7% earned between 20,001 and 30,000 naira; 13.5% earned between 30,001 and 60,000 naira; while 11.6% earned between 60,001 and 120,000 naira monthly while 8.8% earned above 120000naira.

The results showed that economic recession affected the people of Ijumu LGA of Kogi state. It was also established that rural rebound can be used as a permanent solution to economic recession in Nigeria.

Table 1: Distribution of res	pondents by demographic	c and socioeconomic characteristics

Socioeconomic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	114	53.1
Female	101	46.9
Age		
16-25	42	19.5
26-35	38	17.7
36-45	29	13.5
46-55	37	17.2
56 and above	69	32.1
Educational qualification		
No formal education	21	9.8
Primary education	65	30.2
Secondary education	84	39.1
Higher	45	20.9
Occupation		
Artisan	26	12.1
Farming	101	46.9
Trading	30	13.9
Civil/Public servant	38	17.7
Retiree	10	4.7
Private sector employee	10	4.7
Income/month		
No income	18	8.4
Below N10000	68	31.6
N10001-20000	41	19.1
N20001-30000	15	7
N30001-60000	29	13.5
N60001-120000	25	11.6
Above 120000	19	8.8
Length of residence		
1-8years	54	25.1
9-16years	44	20.5
17-24years	48	22.3
25 years and above	69	32.1
Total	215	100

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork

Test of Hypotheses

Result in Table 2 reveals that economic recession ($\chi 2 = 0.691$, P > 0.05) is not statistically significant

on the income of the people in the study area. This is in line with the statement of Dachin, and Ali (2012) which claims that the subsistence component of the rural activities determines an important inertia of the total household income, which is little influenced by investments in agriculture and is less reactive to the economic crisis compared to urban areas. Chi-square result in Table 3 shows that the perception of the people in the study area on rural rebound as a permanent solution to economic recession ($\chi 2 = 0.044$, P < 0.05) is statistically significant. This may be due to the fact that rural urban migration has drastically reduced the production capacity of the people in the rural and suburban areas

Table 2: Effect of economic recession on the income of the people of Ijumu LGA of Kogi state

Variable			χ^2	DF	P-value	Decision
Income	level	and	12.59	6	3.6	Significant
Economic	recessio	n				-

Table 3: Perception of Ijumu People on Rural Rebound as a permanent solution to economic recession

Variable	χ^2	DF	P-value	Decision	
Infrastructural	11.4	5	11.07	Significant	
facilities and Rural					
rebound					

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The aim of the study was to examine the perception of the rural people of Ijumu LGA of Kogi state, Nigeria on whether rural rebound can be a permanent solution to economic recession. The study aimed at doing this with a view to reducing or even eradicating the problems faced by the nation in terms of amenities and infrastructure, educational facilities etc. and also eradicating the adverse effects rural-urban migration have on the country as well as the world at large like congestion and increased poverty. Based on these findings, the following are recommended as ways in which government can get rid of economic recession through rural rebound:

Government and other stakeholders should provide infrastructural facilities such as good roads, better healthcare services, quality education as well as improved communication facilities in rural areas. This may go a long way in alleviating rural sufferings caused by economic recession.

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