

## Rural Development As Strategy for Food Security and Global Peace in The 21st Century

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**Abstract:** *This paper discusses rural development as strategy for food security and global peace in the century. The paper adopts descriptive methodological orientation to investigate how the abysmal failure of governments in the contemporary world to develop their rural areas has adversely impacted on food security. However, the paper argues that why the quest for rural development has remained elusive particularly in the developing countries is largely due to up-bottom approach currently adopted by countries. It further argues that this strategy has not only resulted to abject poverty in most countries, but also failed to achieve food security among individuals, families and communities around the globe. The implication of this sorry state of affairs is that the attainment of global peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has remained an exercise in futility in spite of the over-dramatized efforts of international organizations like the UN. The paper, therefore, recommends among others, the need to establish a specialized agency to study the success of rural development policies and programmes in some countries like China and replicate such strategies in other parts of the world for effective food security on global peace in the 21st century.*

**Key Words:** *Rural Development, Food Security, Global Peace*

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### 1. Introduction

Rural development as a concept has no generally acceptable definition. This is largely because scholars within the purview of political science, sociology, geography, among others, view the concept from different analytical tradition and disciplinary perspective. Also, scholars sometimes define the concept not only on parochial basis but also on individual perception and experience. However, such definitions most times reflect their cultural orientation, environmental milieu and ideological inclination.

Notwithstanding these unsettled controversies, rural development is conceived as strategy aimed at finding ways to improve the rural lives with participation of the rural people themselves so as to meet the required need of the rural area (Zhude, 2010). According to World Bank (2005), rural development is the process of rural modernization and the monetization of the rural society leading to its transition from traditional isolation to integration with the national economy.

Also, rural development is perceived as a process of not only increasing the level of per capital income in the rural areas but also the standard of living of the rural population measured by food and nutrition level, health education, housing, recreation and security (Diejomoah, 1973). To give more credence to the real meaning of rural development, Ollawa (1971) asserts that:

...rural development aims at restructuring the economy in order to satisfy the material needs and aspirations of the rural masses, and to promote individual and collective incentives to participate in the process of development... this involves a host of multi-sectoral activities including the improvement of agriculture, the promotion of rural industries, the creation of the requisite infrastructure... establishment of decentralized structure in order to allow mass production...

A critical look at the above position by Ollawa reinforces the role of agriculture in the achievement of rural development objectives. Thus, the improvement of agriculture in the rural areas all over the world requires not only the collective efforts and participation of the rural people but also strong political will and commitment

by the government. Such commitment and political will are usually manifested through the formulation and effective implementation of development policies and programs capable of boosting food production.

Ultimately, the adoption of the above critical step by nation-states through their domestic policy actions is therefore expected to bring about radical transformation of agricultural sector and production. Similarly, the availability of sufficient quantity of food for consumption in a given country energizes states to adopt people-oriented strategies to secure food products already produced. However, such strategy is therefore expected to assist nation-states to be free from hunger, assist other countries in dire need of food for consumption, have sufficient food to export for exchange earnings, address the increasing spate of violence occasioned by hunger and famine, create employment for the large population of youth in their countries and foster cordial relations among states in the contemporary globe.

In consideration of the import of these strategies as well their benefits to states, this paper seeks to examine the extent to which rural development (bottom-up approach) could be used as strategy to achieve food security and global peace in the 21st century.

## 2. Theoretical Perspective

This study adopts Political Economy approach and Big Push theory in the analysis of rural development as strategy for food security and global peace in the 21st century.

According to the proponents and adherents of political economy approach (Brewer, 1989; Callaghy, 1993; Dolan, 1993; Ake, 2002), this theory establishes the close relationship between the super-structural and sub-structural strata of society. They bluntly argued that rural development is the best option to stem down rural poverty, reduce urbanization, balance the economy, radically bring down civil uprisings and reinvigorates the collapsing states particularly those in the third world.

The basic methodological premise of the political economy approach is that the primary basis for explaining social life should be the material conditions of the people. This is succinct because, the most fundamental of all the needs of man are those of economic nature. Thus, without these needs, life itself would be meaningless. Therefore, an understanding of the "economic assets" of society invariably leads to the understanding of the laws, politics, culture, religion and modes of thought of that society.

By application of this theory to our study, we argue that the sorry state of most rural areas in some states in the contemporary world is as a result of deliberate policies of governments to exploit rural areas in order to develop the urban centres. Thus, the peripheral formations are underdeveloped to aid the ascendancy of core formations.

Hence, the political economy approach assists us to trace the root causes of rural underdevelopment which consequently affects food security and global peace. This is because, political economy of rural development is replete with exploitation, urban bias and elitist class interest. Thus, a classic case of this phenomenon is the geometric development of metropolitan cities in Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Latin America, from the resources generated from the rural areas in these continents.

Thus, this approach has been criticized on several grounds. The critics argued that political economy approach has failed to suggest implementable strategies to be adopted by states to address the imbalances between the rich and poor and between the developed and underdeveloped economies in the world. Consequently, lack of proper prognosis for the transformation of these countries and their rural areas other than "delinking" from the world system coerced us to adopt the "Big Push Theory" as part of measures to find lasting solutions to perennial challenges bedeviling rural development, food security and global peace, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The theory of the "big push" is associated with Professor Paul N. Rosenstein-Rodan (Edame, 2006). The thesis is that a "big push" is needed in the form of a high minimum amount of investment to overcome the obstacles to development in an underdeveloped economy and to launch it on the path of progress.

Therefore, there is a minimum level of resources that must be devoted to a development programme (rural development, food security and global peace), if it is to have any chance of success. Accordingly, launching a country into self-sustaining growth is a little like an airplane off the ground. Hence, there is a critical ground speed which must be passed before the craft can become airborne. Therefore, the big push theory argues that proceeding "bit by bit" will not launch the economy successfully on the development part.

By application of this theory to our study we argue that why development has remained elusive in most rural areas in many countries in the world is as a result of lack of commitment and poor investment by governments on rural development policies and programmes.

Therefore, for rural development to serve as strategy for food security and mechanism to achieve global peace in the 21st century, the "big push" theory posits that nation-states must be willing to devote substantial investments to their rural areas, rather than concentrating on urban centres. Such political will must be manifested in their national development policies and should be faithfully funded, implemented, monitored and evaluated by appropriate governmental agencies in their respective states.

### 3. Rural Development on Global Perspective

...the differences between the village and the town or city are only too obvious to warrant any serious debate. The city is simply where bright lights are found, where the tempo of life is fast and where all the good things of life prevail in abundance while the village is the area with opposite attributes.... (Ekong, 2010: 2).

The above position by Ekong captured the sorry situation of most rural areas especially in countries located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Thus, what this implies is that lack of basic amenities or infrastructures characterized most rural areas particularly in the peripheral social formations. Therefore, an area is conceived as rural when half or more than half the adult male working population is engaged in farming, then a greater population of the country is included irrespective of settlement pattern (Bogle, 1977: 28).

To shade more light on the conceptualization of rural area with Nigeria as a point of departure, Ekong (2010:3) argues that 45% of Nigeria's population was engaged in agricultural activities. It was also estimated that 36% of the population was urban dwelling while 64% was rural. Accordingly, 19% of the working population engaged in non-farming occupations, work in cities but reside in rural areas. In view of this, the quest for rural development especially in most developing world has been elusive. Thus, in spite of the fact that the greater population of people in most countries resides in the rural areas, no appreciable efforts have been made by some governments to improve the living conditions of the affected people. The need to address this ugly situation partly explains why the 2010 UN's Human Development Report asserts:

...people are the real wealth of a nation. It is now universally acceptable that a country's success or an individual's well-being cannot be evaluated by money alone.... Income is of course crucial without resources, any progress is difficult ...we must gauge whether people can lead long and healthy lives, whether they have the opportunity to be educated and whether they are free to use their knowledge and talent to shape their own destinies.

The pathetic situation in most rural areas in the world has resulted in what is globally referred to as "poverty". Poverty as a phenomenon is conceived as misery linked to an insufficient resource base, lack of income, narrow margins, high risk of failure, hunger and diseases (World Bank, 2010). Therefore, the menace of poverty and its attendant consequences on the lives of the common man in the rural areas across the contemporary globe captured the views and curiosity of Delang (2006: 231).

...eradicating hunger and poverty require an understanding of the ways in which these two injustices interconnect. Hunger and malnourishment that accompanies it, prevent poor people from escaping poverty because it diminishes their ability to learn, work, and care for themselves and their family members.

Hence, poverty affects virtually all aspects of social, economic and political lives of rural dwellers in the contemporary world. This was also captured in the 2010 Human Development Index presented in the table below:

**Table 1:** The 2010 HDI and its Components:

S/N	THREE DIMENSIONS	POOR INDICATORS
1.	Health	Life Expectancy at Birth
2.	Education	Mean years of Schooling Expected years of Schooling
3.	Living Standards	Gross national income per Capital

**Source:** Human Development Index Report, 2010.

From the above table, it becomes pertinent to underscore the import of improving the living condition of the rural dwellers. Thus, most rural people in view of the above presentation are believed to be living in abject poverty when once they do not have access to basic health facilities, education, water, good road network, recreational facilities, security, employment opportunities, among others.

Notwithstanding, it is therefore crucial to note that poverty is a global human problem. Hence, poor people also exist even in the developed nations of the world. The rate of poverty is sometimes evaluated through a country's Human Development Index like the sample presented in the table below:

**Table 2:** Human Development Index Report, 2010 (Selected Countries).

HDI RANK	HDI VALUE	LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (YEARS)	MEAN YEAR OF SCHOOLING (YEARS)	EXPECTED YEARS OF SCHOOLING (YEARS)	GROSS NATIONAL INCOME (GNI)PER CAPITAL (PPP2008,\$)	GNI PER CAPITA RANK MINUS HDI RANK	NON INCOME HDI VALUE
1 Norway	0.938	81.0	12.6	17.3	58,810	2	0.954
4 United States	0.902	79.6	12.4	15.7	47,094	5	0.917
11 Japan	0.884	83.2	11.5	15.1	34,692	11	0.917
15 Israel	0.872	81.2	11.9	15.6	27,831	14	0.916
26 United Kingdom	0.849	79.8	9.5	15.9	35,087	-6	0.860
55 Saudi Arabia	0.752	73.3	7.8	13.5	24,726	-20	0.742
65 Russian Federation	0.719	67.2	8.8	14.1	15258	-5	0.729

67 Azerbaijan	0.713	70.8	10.2	13.0	8,747	8	0.769
70 Iran	0.702	71.9	7.2	14.0	11,764	-3	0.725
73 Brazil	0.699	72.9	7.2	13.8	10,607	-3	0.728
83 Turkey	0.679	72.2	6.5	11.8	13,359	-26	0.679
89 China	0.663	73.5	11.4	7.5	7,258	-4	0.707
101 Egypt	0.620	70.5	6.5	11.0	5889	-8	0.657
119 India	0.519	64.4	4.4	10.3	3,337	-6	0.549
169 Zimbabwe	0.140	47.0	7.2	9.2	176	0	0.472

**Source:** Human Development Index Report, 2010.

The above table indicates that Norway, which is located in Europe is the most developed in view of the 2010 HDI report while Zimbabwe (located in Africa) is the least developed among the countries selected. The implication is that the pace of rural development in both countries (Norway and Zimbabwe), cannot be the same. It is even possible to regard rural areas in Norway as urban centres or cities in Zimbabwe as well as most countries in Africa.

Therefore, it is urged that rural development policies and programmes receive significant boost from most governments in developed countries like USA, Norway, Britain and France than the underdeveloped countries like Nigeria, Mali, Uganda, Chad, Benin Republic, South Africa, Kenya, and Niger. Also, it is argued from this premise that agriculture which plays dominant role in food production is better funded and prioritized in developed economies than the third world social formations.

As a result of this, food security could best be understood within the trajectory of developed social formations than in the developing states. It is also possible to think of peace even though not on a global scale among developed economies than countries like Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Benin, Uganda, Niger, Liberia, Chad, Morocco, Sudan, Mauritius and Somalia (located in African). These countries are ravaged by poverty, illiteracy, health challenges violence, internal insurrection, militancy, leadership crisis, political instability, among others.

#### 4. The Nexus Between Rural Development and Food Security

In most developed world, rural development is often multi-dimensional. In Europe for instance, rural development actions also integrate environmental management which is often neglected in Africa, as a core component. Hence, rural development programmes in Europe particularly in Luxembourg, Lithuania, Ireland, Italy, Hungary, Greece and Croatia, are usually top-down; from the local or regional authorities, regional development agencies, NGOs, national government or international development organizations (Rosegrant et al, 2005: 65).

Rural development policies in the above countries are designed to accommodate the participation and initiatives of the rural people for development.

The import of integrating the rural dwellers in policies and programmes of rural development has been well articulated by Swaminathan et al, (2004):

...rural development aims at finding the ways to improve the rural lives with participation of the rural people themselves so as to meet the required need of the rural area. The outsider ... may not understand the setting,

culture, language and other things prevalent in the local area. As such... people themselves have to participate in their sustainable rural development.

However, what this suggests is that the term rural development is not limited to developing countries. In fact, many of the developed countries have very active rural development programmes. This is succinct because, the main aim of the rural government policy in most developed countries like Australia is to develop the underdeveloped villages.

Thus, the most viable occupation of large number of people residing in the rural areas in most countries of the world is agriculture. Also, about 97% of foods consumed by those residing in most cities in developed countries (New York, Vilnius, Skopje, Paris, Tbilisi, Berlin, Helsinki, Prague, Ottawa, Sofia etc ) and those in developing countries (Abuja, Algiers, Yaoundé, Cairo, Kinshasa, Beijing, New Delhi, Kuwait City etc), are produced in the rural areas (FOA, 2010).

Therefore, there is a direct relationship between rural development and food security. Whereas rural development is conceived as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social conditions of rural people, food security connotes a situation when all people at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (World Food Summit, 2010).

Contrarily, food insecurity exists when people are undernourished as a result of the physical unavailability of food, their lack of social or economic access to adequate food, and /or inadequate food utilization (World Food Summit, 2005). Therefore, food-secured people are those whose food in-take falls below their minimum calories (energy) requirements, as well as those who exhibit physical symptoms caused by energy and nutrient deficiencies resulting from inadequate or unbalanced diet.

Similarly, some observers (Uyanga,1980; Olarenwaju, 1984; Magbogunje, 1980; Vincent, 1981; Ekpo 2006, Ntukidem, 2006; and Kherallah et al, 2002), have incisively argued that there are strong direct relationship between agricultural productivity, food security, hunger and poverty. This assertion is supported by the 2010 HDI statistics which argues that:

...three-quarters of the world's poor live in the rural areas and make their living from agriculture. Hunger and child malnutrition are greater in these areas than in urban areas. (HDI, Report, 2010).

Therefore, it is bluntly argued from the above premise that effort towards curbing the increasing menace of food security must first start from radical improvement of agricultural sector by nation-states across the world. This is clearly because, increase in agricultural productivity will not only enable farmers grow more food but also ensures food security. Also, it will obviously lead to high income generation to farmers as well as enable them diversify production and grow higher-value crops. Hence, these outcomes are therefore expected to impact positively not only on farmers and common man who consume the foods produced but also on the economic development of states in the globe.

## 5. The Interface Between Food Security and Global Peace

...Food security is a complex sustainable development issue...linked to health through malnutrition, but also to sustainable economic development, environment, and trade. There is a great deal of debate around food security with some arguing that... there is enough food in the world to feed everyone adequately; the problem is distribution... future food needs can or cannot be met by current levels of production...national food security is paramount or no longer necessary because of global trade... globalization may or may not lead to the persistence of food insecurity and poverty in rural communities (Rosegrant et al, 2005: 48).

The above observation by Rosegrant and others, reinforces the argument among scholars on conceptualization of food security as a social phenomenon. Notwithstanding, food security is a complicated issue that is susceptible to many forces. According to Latham (1997), food security is built on three pillars:

- i. **Food availability:** This refers to sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis.
- ii. **Food access:** This connotes having sufficient resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet.

iii. **Food use:** This implies appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation.

Generally, food security happens:

When all people at all times have access to enough food that is affordable, safe and healthy... when it is culturally acceptable... meets specific dietary needs...is obtained in a dignified manner... is produced in ways that are environmentally sound and socially just... ([www.foodthoughtful.ca](http://www.foodthoughtful.ca)).

Thus, the attainment of food security in the contemporary globe has been largely constrained by the following factors:

#### **A. An underdeveloped agricultural sector**

The major challenge to food security in the world today is that agricultural sector in most countries especially in Africa is underdeveloped. Indeed, this sector is characterized by over-reliance on primary and crude method of farming, low fertility soils, minimal use of external farm inputs, environmental degradation, significant food crop loss both pre and post harvest, minimal value addition and product differentiation, and inadequate food storage and preservation. According to Nwaniki (2003), "about 95% of food production in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and some countries in Asia, is influenced by adverse weather conditions".

Similarly, there is an overall decline in farm input investment including fertilizers, seeds, and technology adoption. Thus, access to fertilizer use is constrained by market liberalization and trade policies that increase fertilizer prices relative to commodity prices.

#### **B. Poor governments' policies:**

The formulation of poor policies by many governments have greatly affected food security in the contemporary world. Such handicapping policies are evident when the focus of governments' policies, structures and institutions are put above that of the rural people.

Thus, one such way this ugly trend has taken place in some countries is through uneven development within countries where certain regions or state are preferentially developed for political reasons at the expense of rural areas. Therefore, policies that promote monopolistic competition for the large scale industries not only hurt cottage/small industries, but also the development of rural areas where food production takes place.

#### **C. Diseases and infection:**

Available evidence shows that diseases and infection have continued to plague many countries particularly those in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Thus, diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, not only reduce the manpower available to agriculture and household food acquisition, but also increase the burden of household in acquiring food in most countries, particularly in the above continents (Zhang and Zhang, 2002).

For instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa, AIDS is the leading cause of adult mortality and mobility. Consequently, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that by 2020, the epidemic will claim the lives of 20% or more of the population working in agriculture in many African countries. Also, more than two third, ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of the total population of the 25 most affected countries resides in

rural areas (FAO, 2010). It is, therefore, important to note that lack of resources also makes it difficult if not impossible for HIV-affected households to supplement their diets through the purchase of more nutritious and varied foods (Hilary, 2004).

#### **D. Poverty:**

As earlier noted, failure to develop rural areas anywhere in the contemporary globe ultimately results in poverty among the people. However, poor people no doubt, lack access to sufficient resources to produce or buy quality food. This is obviously the trend in some countries like Mali, Niger, Madagascar, Malawi, Kenya, Jamaica, Haiti, Gabon, Costa Rica, Chile, among others. As a result of this pathetic scenario, food imports have witnessed unprecedented increase in these countries since 2003 (World Bank, 2005).

This is largely because, poor farms in these countries have very small farm, use less effective farming techniques and/or be able to afford fertilizers and labour saving equipment. Hence, all these factors limit food production (Gordon, 1976).

The implication of the above sad situation on food security and global peace has been carefully put to perspective by Wilkin (2009):

.... Without economic resources and a political voice, poor farmers may be forced on to less productive land possibly causing further environmental deterioration... addressing poverty is critical to ensuring that all people have sufficient food...

#### **E. Health:**

Available researches in the field of medicine have proved that without sufficient calories and nutrients, the body slow down, making it difficult to undertake the work needed to produce food. Consequently, without good health the body is also less able to make use of the food that is available. This scientific discovery perhaps explains why Jorge (2010) asserts that:

....a hungry mother will give birth to an under-weight baby, who then faces a future of stunted growth, frequent illness, learning disabilities and reduced resistance to diseases... contaminated food and water can cause illness, nutrient loss and often death in children...

However, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has reduced food production in many affected countries, as productive adults become ill or die. Thus, lacking the required labour, resources and technical know-how to grow staples and commercial crops, many households particularly in US, Europe, Oceania and Asia, have shifted to cultivating survival foods or leaving their fields or farm lands, thereby reducing food supply not only in their countries, but also in the globe (World Bank Report, 1990). Hence, addressing health and health-related issues will ultimately improve the production, utilization and availability of food.

#### **F. Water and the Environment:**

Food production requires massive amount of water...it takes one cubic metre (1000 litres) of water to produce one kilogram of wheat and 3,000 litres of water to produce one kilogram of rice... producing sufficient food is directly related to having sufficient water... (Stewart, 2003).

The above assertion underscores the import of water and environment to food security and its attendant consequences on global peace. Hence, the import of irrigation in food security cannot be underestimated.

Consequently, irrigation ensures an adequate and reliable supply of water which increases yield of most crops by 10% to 40%. Although it is estimated that about 40% of global crop land is irrigated, only 17% produces world's food (FAO, 2010).

#### **G. Gender Equity:**

It is globally acknowledged that women play crucial roles in providing food and nutrition for their families through their indispensable roles as food producers, processors, traders and income earners. Yet, women's lower social and economic status occasioned by adverse cultural practices as well as harsh/biased policies of government culminate to limit women access to education, training, land ownership, decision-making and credit facilities for agricultural production. Consequently these social and cultural practices against women, particularly in the developing world, lead to their inability to improve their access to and use of food.

Therefore, food utilization can be enhanced by improving women's knowledge of nutrition, food safety and the prevention of illness. Also, increasing women's involvement in decision-making by countries all over the world, and their access to land and credit, will in turn improve food security. This is succinct because as Ukpong (2006) rightly observed "the involvement of women particularly in decision-making by governments of nation-states will ultimately assist women invest in fertilizers and better seeds, labour-saving tools, irrigation and land care".

#### **H. Disasters and Conflicts:**

Experts have argued that droughts, floods, cyclones and pests can quickly wipe out large quantities of food as it grows or when it is in storage for later use. Likewise, seeds can be destroyed by environmental dangers such as earthquake and windstorm as the case in Haiti and Japan.



Similarly, conflicts such as the experiences in Libya, Sudan, Syria, Iran, Tunisia, among others, can also destroy food production or storage, as farmers flee to safety or become involved in civil war. Thus, previously productive land like the case of Iran, Bolivia, Afghanistan Cambodia, among others, can be contaminated with explosive debris and need to be cleared before it can again be used for food production.

However, stored food, seeds and breded livestock may be eaten or destroyed by soldiers, leading to long-term food shortages. Therefore, government's spending in the affected states like Sudan, Southern Sudan, Libya, Syria etc, need to prioritize food security in the after math of conflict.

#### **I. Population and Urbanization:**

It is generally accepted by experts that population growth increases the demand for food. Thus, with most productive land already in use, there is pressure for land to become more productive. However, poor harvests and higher costs lead many farmers to migrate to cities to look for work (Roundinell, 2008). Hence, expanding cities spread out across productive land, pushing food production further and further away from consumers (Huang et al, 2002).

#### **J. Trade:**

Many poor countries (Gabon, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Zambia, Malawi, Chad, Niger, Benin Republic, Namibia, Uganda, Sudan, Uruguay, Venezuela, Vietnam, Syria and Sri Lanka), can produce staples more cheaply than rich nations (United Arab Emirates, Germany, Canada, France, Switzerland and Spain). Unfortunately, barriers to trade such as distance from markets, quarantine regulations and tariffs sometimes make it difficult for them to compete in export markets against highly subsidized farmers in these rich countries of the world.

### **6. Rural development: a bottom-up approach to food security and global peace in the 21st century**

A cursory survey of policies and strategies to rural development by most nation-states indicates the continuous adoption of up-bottom approach of decision-making in rural development efforts. In most countries in Europe, America, Asia, and Africa, rural development policies and programmes are formulated at the central, national or federal level, while implementation are designed to take place at the regional, local, community and village levels. Consequently, majority of these policies and programmes have failed to address the challenges of rural underdevelopment for which they were designed.

As a result, the desire for food security – all people at all times having access to sufficient, safe nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life by countries, international organizations (**UN, FAO, EU, AU, USAID, Etc**), has been unrealistic.

Hence, achieving food security with the ultimate view to promote global peace in the 21st century in its totality has continued to be a critical challenge and a "clog in the wheel of progress," not only in the developing countries, but also in the developed nations.

Although the difference lies in the magnitude of the problem in terms of its severity and proportion of the population affected, the fact remains that the existing approach of decision-making in rural development (up-bottom approach), by some countries in the developed and developing world has no capacity to impact positively on food security and global peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In consideration of the above thesis, this study advocates the adoption of bottom-up approach in rural development policies and programmes by all countries in the world. Thus, rather than formulating and implementing rural development policies and programmes from the federal/national levels to regional/local government levels, nation-states should now consider the socio-cultural, political and economic realities at local, community and village levels in their countries. The following are justification of the proposed/recommended paradigm shift in rural development:

#### **1. Availability of land:**

It is no longer doubtful that significant population of people in many countries lives in rural areas. In some countries, agriculture accounts for over 60% of the GDP. Also, about 70% of the population of some

countries relies heavily on agriculture for their livelihood. Therefore, rural development policies and programmes should reflect the realities in rural areas.

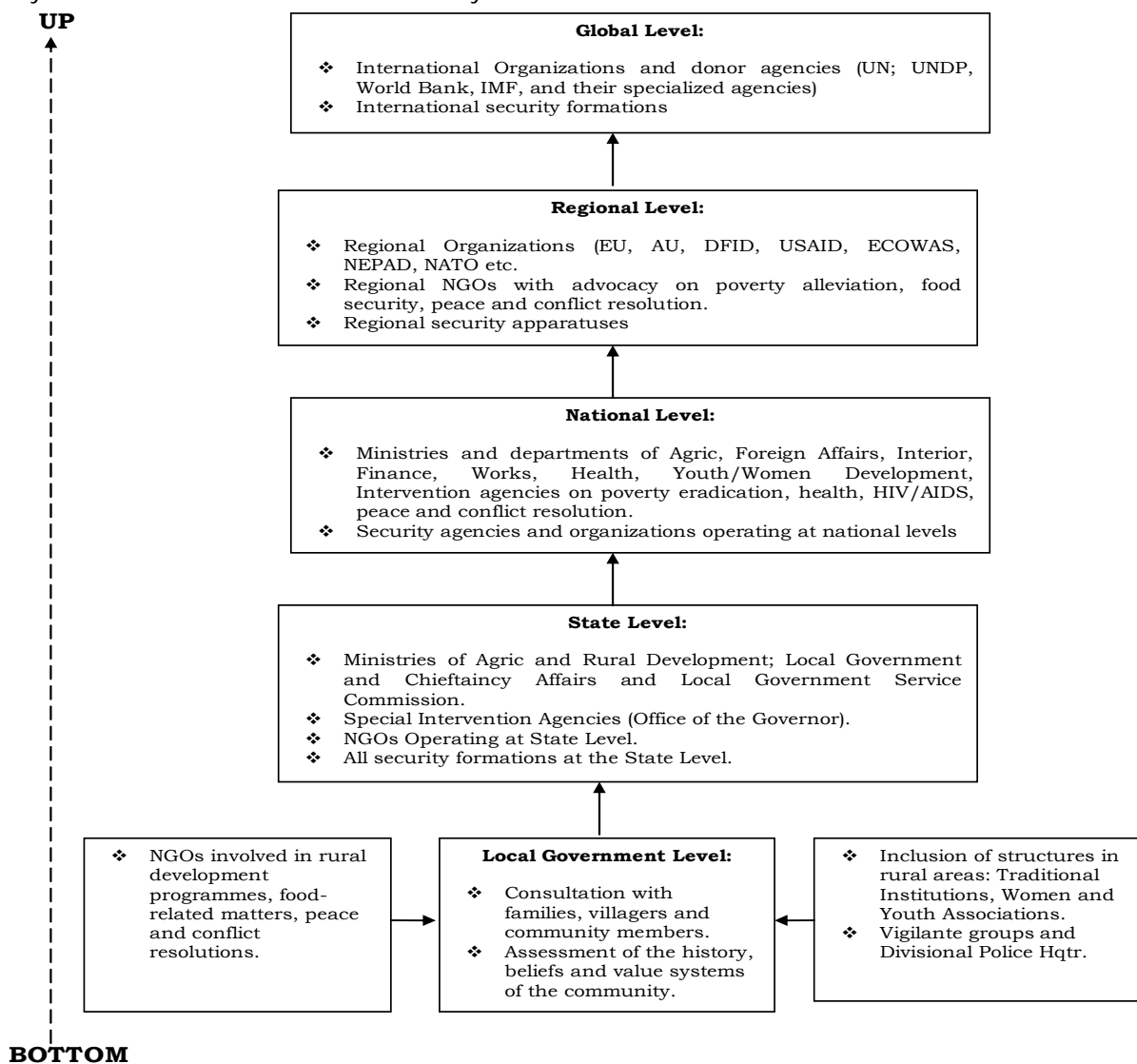
Thus, the implementation of rural development policies should be done by those who not only have access to available productive lands for agricultural production in their localities but also by those for whom the policies and programmes were designed to serve.

**2. Decision-Making in rural development issues:**

Decision making according to policy experts denotes choosing among completing alternatives (Dror, 1968), Thus, rural development policies and their implementation must take cognizance of the role of the rural dwellers and their communities, belief systems and cultural practices, for the success and efficacy of the policies and programmes.

Hence, such policies and programmes should originate after due consultation of the opinions of the rural people (the elders forum, the traditional rulers, women and the youths). Thus, rural development policies and programmes designed to achieve food security must ultimately involve the rural communities in their implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The chart below presents how such policies and programmes should originate:

**Fig. 1: A Sample Of Proto-Type Bottom-Up Approach Of Rural Development For Achievement Of Food Security And Global Peace In The 21<sup>st</sup> Century**



Source: Nwagboso's Field Work, 2011

### 3. Proper education on various international actions to achieve rural development and food security:

The UN Millennium Development Goals are one of the initiatives aimed at achieving food security in the world. However, in its list of goals, the first Millennium Development Goal states that the UN "is to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty," and that "agricultural productivity is likely to play a key role in this agenda (Usman, 2010).

Therefore, of the eight Millennium Development Goals, eradicating extreme hunger and poverty that are traceable to food insecurity depend largely on agriculture the most. In view of this, the rural dwellers and their communities that are regarded as "centres of attraction as advocated by "bottom-up approach" must be properly informed of the goals of MDGs as well as their efficacy to address critical problems not only in their localities but also in the world.

### 4. Implementation of Policies to address the challenges of climate change in rural areas

Efforts to addressing the negative effects of climate change in rural areas require education and advocacy among the rural populace.

Indeed, practices among the rural people, particularly in Africa, such as land clearing, over-exploitation of species, bush-burning, over-grazing, deforestation, among others, require proper education by enlightened group residing in urban centres (Awa, 1992). They must visit these villages and communities to influence their behaviours on these practices that impact negatively on the environment and global climate.

Therefore, addressing climate change and its adverse effects on food security and global peace requires bottom-up approach and not conventional up-bottom approach currently existing in many countries. Therefore policies and programmes on food production by governments should meet the standards and expectations of those who engage in the profession (rural dwellers).

### 5. Global inequality

The failed attempts by UN and many other international organizations to close the gap between the rich (developed) countries and the poor (underdeveloped nations) are achievable through "paradigm shift" and "international re-focusing".

This shift should rather than attempting to address inequality on a global scale, "re-focuses on finding lasting solutions to factors that breed inequality in the rural areas (families, villages and communities).

Thus, inequality in rural communities and villages are perceived in the area of few individuals and families deliberately having access to productive farm-land to the detriment of large population of the area, access to river(s) for fishing activities, access to primary, secondary and university education, access to good water, primary health care facilities, housing, among others.

Consequently, poor access to these critical facilities by large number of indigenes in the many rural areas, lead to disaffection, acrimony, conflicts and violence (Toye, 1995). This consequently, results in shortage of food (food insecurity) and disharmony among the people. Therefore, global peace cannot be achieved until inequality at rural areas all over the world is decisively tackled (McSweeney, 1999).

### 6. Conclusion

...what strikes a visitor from the advanced country to most rural areas is the low level of technological practice in some countries especially in Asia, Africa and Latin America...this state of affairs gives the impression that engineers and scientists in these continents are careless about devising the technologies

appropriate to the rural sector... the government should first stop deceiving itself and the public that the rural sector does not yet have the type of technologies and facilities it needs... (Ogbudinkpa, 1991).

Rural development as strategy designed by countries to improve the lives of the rural people in order to meet their required needs has abysmally failed to achieve this lofty objective, particularly in the developing world. Rural development whose emphasis should be on issues germane to agriculture and technological developments of rural communities has tremendously left large population of the contemporary world in hunger, poverty and avoidable crisis. Thus, since rural development policies and programmes are incapacitated to bring about desired food security, the attainment of global peace has continued to attract mix reactions by observers and public commentators all over the world.

In India for instance, (the second most populous country in the world), about 30 million people have been added to the ranks of the hungry since the mid 1990s and 46% of children in this country are underweight (Human Right Watch Reports, 2010). World-wide, about 852 million people are chronically hungry largely due to extreme poverty, while 2 billion people lack food security due mainly to varying degrees of poverty-related cases (Yao and Colman, 2010).

Similarly, experts have argued that about six million children die of hunger every year and 17,000 every day (Mousseau, 2003). However, this situation is attributed to failure of rural development policies and programmes to achieve food security. As demonstrated in this study, the root causes of food insecurity in the world today is the inability of people to gain access to food largely due to poverty. While some developed countries in the world have made significant progress towards rural development, food security and poverty alleviation, many countries in Africa, particularly the Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America, have continued to lag behind (Ekong, 2010).

The above ugly trend particularly among African states (Nigeria, Mali, Cameroon, Gambia, Senegal, Cote D'ivoire, Madagascar and Zimbabwe), has not only affected the development of their rural economy, but also subjected the people to abject poverty. Notwithstanding, it is important to observe that an appreciable level of improvements have been recorded recently by some countries in the developing world.

Consequently, global peace cannot be achieved when most countries in the contemporary world "have their second name as poverty. (IFPRI, 2002)" Understandably, peace hardly triumphs in poverty-driven environment. This, therefore, underscores the need for global action towards combating the root causes of rural backwardness, poverty and food insecurity in order to achieve global peace in the 21st century.

In view of this, nation-state should emulate and replicate the strategies and actions adopted by Australian and Chinese Governments to address the problem of rural underdevelopment and food insecurity in their countries (Pinstup-Aderesen, 2002). This is crucial because as FAO (2010) observes: The Australian Government helps developing countries in its region to reduce poverty and address food security by promoting trade liberalization, peace and stability, good governance, security of land tenure, rural develop and agricultural research.

However, the AU, EU, and other regional organizations in Africa and Asia should strictly adopt bottom-up approach with rural communities as centre of attraction in order to address the pathetic situation of underdevelopment in rural areas. This ugly phenomenon is responsible for increasing rate of poverty, food insecurity, crisis and reported cases of violence in many parts of the world today.

## 7. Recommendations

1. The United Nations as a body should identify the strategies and factors that aided the Chinese Government to achieve desired heights in rural development. The identified strategies should, therefore, be replicated in other countries particularly the developing world to enable them address critical problems of rural underdevelopment in their respective states.

2. The United Nations should also establish specialized agency charged with the responsibility of ensuring that cultivated or productive land in developing and developed countries are equitably distributed to

households as it is the trend in China and Australia. This could be done through collaboration between this envisaged UN specialized agency and regional bodies in respective continents such as AU, EU, NATO among others.

3. There should be a paradigm shift among states (developed and developing), in the area of concentrating development programmes in the metropolitan or Urban centres. It is strongly recommended that the approach to development of rural areas in this 21<sup>st</sup> century should be "bottom-up". Thus, the "bottom-up" approach emphasizes the involvement, consultation and participation of the rural populace on critical issues of rural development in their localities.

4. It is strongly recommended that all countries in the contemporary world should declare what is referred to as "Food Sovereignty". Thus, "Food Sovereignty" is the right of people and communities to safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate food, food producing resources, and ability to sustain themselves.

5. The international organizations, NGOs and some food-secured countries in the world should formulate implementable strategies and action-plan capable of benefiting food insecure countries like India, Benin Republic, Niger, Mali, Zimbabwe, Haiti, among others. This strategy would rather than supplying food stuffs and relief materials to the affected countries, focuses on ways to address the root causes of food insecurity to enable them become food producers.

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