Chapter 14

Investigating the Roles Played by Selected Agencies in Infrastructure Development

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ABSTRACT

Urban areas that are the seat of power, cities, and capital cities are often the location and base of administration where policy allocations take place and the needs of settlements are discussed and met. Therefore, rural infrastructure needs are at the mercy of urban spaces decision making. This chapter proposes and attempts to purposively select some public agencies and examine their roles in balancing the urban-rural infrastructural dichotomy. The relevance of international donors in the efficiency of the public agency was also incorporated. The study further questions the success of some of these agencies and the mode of operation of these agencies at arriving at an improved infrastructure provision for the rurally excluded.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Planning as a discipline cannot shy away from the relevance of infrastructure towards the development of settlements. Popoola and Magidimisha (2018) reported that infrastructure is germane to the shaping of people’s livelihoods and livability. The
same study identified that despite its relevance to all, some areas continue to be neglected. Medayese et al. (2016:347) opine that societies are said to be excluded when they do not enjoy certain infrastructures which other society’s benefits. Such spatial exclusion continues to put rural areas at a disadvantage over urban areas. Yet, improving rural service delivery in the face of urbanization towards the sustenance of rural households cannot be ignored (Harvey and Reed, 2004).

Rural studies have over the years been focused on agriculture-related issues (Popoola & Akande, 2016), with less focus on rural infrastructure development (Jeong et al., 2017; Freedman and Maine, 2018). It is no longer a new local discussion but also a global one as regards the dearth of rural infrastructure. Urban areas which are the seat of power, and capital cities are often the location and base of administration where policy allocations take place and the needs of settlements are discussed and met.

Therefore, rural infrastructure needs are at the mercy of urban spaces decision-making. The political elite, decision-makers, policy advocates are resident in the urban areas, yet make decisions for the rural areas. Ibielan (2010) iterate that political actors remain a driver and dictator of development. The political actors in this regard focus on the government in power that shapes the direction of infrastructure decision. This chapter attempts to purposively select some public agencies and examine their roles in balancing the urban-rural infrastructural dichotomy. The relevance of international donors in the efficiency of the public agency was also incorporated. The increased dependence on the private sector through public-private partnerships and local and international donor support has been a result of the increasing burden on the shoulders of the public government.

Studies (Popoola & Magidimisha, 2018; Taiwo, 2013; Sanda et al., 2016) argue that despite the heavy dependence on government for infrastructural development across the globe, government capability to arrive at a holistic-countrywide infrastructure provision has been limited by high costs of infrastructure; improper planning; poor execution of projects; political interference; unclear objectives; limited operational autonomy by government departments; inadequate managerial, human and technical, conceptual and design skills; a lack of accountability and transparency; heavy and cumbersome bureaucracy; inappropriate economic settings; and inadequate capital.

Thus, to arrive at the needs of the infrastructurally disadvantaged, the government acts through various agencies which are heavily dependent on the financial and communal framework for the support of projects and programs. The study further questions the success of some of these agencies and modes of operation of the agencies at arriving at an improved infrastructure provision for the rurally excluded.
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