

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Local government is the closest tier of government to the people, especially in rural areas, and it is designed to facilitate grassroots participation, ensure local autonomy, and deliver essential services that contribute to the socio-economic development of communities. According to Agagu (2004), local governments are established to provide democratic and accountable governance at the local level, foster sustainable development, and manage local resources effectively. They are constitutionally charged with responsibilities such as the provision and maintenance of primary education, healthcare services, water supply, rural roads, and markets, which are essential drivers of rural development.

Rural development is a multidimensional concept aimed at improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. It involves not just physical infrastructure but also institutional development, human capacity enhancement, and economic empowerment (Arowolo, 2011). In Nigeria, rural communities often suffer from marginalization, poverty, illiteracy, and lack of access to basic social amenities. Local governments are expected to bridge this gap by channeling resources and development initiatives to these underserved areas.

However, despite the theoretical significance of local governments in enhancing rural development, their performance has been widely criticized. Issues such as corruption, poor funding, excessive control by state governments, weak institutional capacity, and lack of community participation have undermined their effectiveness (Oviasuyi, Idada, & Isiraojie, 2010). The allocation and utilization of funds from the Federation Account are often mismanaged, and local officials sometimes lack the technical and administrative expertise to plan and execute development projects efficiently.

Moro Local Government Area, located in the northern part of Kwara State, is predominantly rural, with agriculture being the mainstay of the local economy. Despite the existence of the local government authority, the area continues to experience poor road networks, inadequate health facilities, insufficient educational infrastructure, and limited access to clean water and electricity. This raises questions about the role of the local government in addressing the developmental needs of the rural populace. This study seeks to investigate the actual contributions of the Moro Local Government to rural development.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the constitutional responsibilities of local governments in Nigeria to foster grassroots development and improve the quality of life in rural communities, many local government areas continue to experience chronic underdevelopment. In places like Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State, basic infrastructure such as accessible roads, clean water, primary health care, and quality education remain inadequate. The persistent neglect of these rural needs undermines the purpose of establishing local government as a mechanism for bottom-up development. Several studies have pointed out the disconnect between the mandates of local governments and their actual performance. For instance, Arowolo (2011) argues that while local governments are theoretically well-positioned to drive rural development, their impact is often minimal due to issues such as corruption, poor funding, political interference, and lack of capacity. Similarly, Oviasuyi et al. (2010) emphasize that the absence of fiscal and administrative autonomy has crippled local government effectiveness in Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- i. To assess the extent to which Moro Local Government has contributed to rural infrastructure development.
- ii. To determine the level of community participation in the local government's development planning and implementation.
- iii. To identify the challenges facing Moro Local Government in executing rural development projects.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. To what extent has Moro Local Government contributed to rural infrastructure development?
- ii. How involved are community members in the planning and execution of development projects?
- iii. What are the challenges facing Moro Local Government in implementing rural

development initiatives?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the growing body of literature on local governance and rural development in Nigeria, especially in under-researched areas like Moro Local Government. Second, it provides a practical framework for evaluating the performance of local government authorities in implementing development policies. By assessing the impact of Moro LGA on infrastructure, healthcare, education, and community empowerment, the study offers valuable insights for policy makers, development practitioners, and civil society organizations.

The findings will be useful for local government administrators in understanding the gaps in service delivery and the needs of rural residents. It will also empower citizens by encouraging greater community participation and accountability in governance. Ultimately, the study can guide reform efforts toward making local governments more efficient and responsive in driving rural development.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on the role of the Moro Local Government Area in the promotion and execution of rural development initiatives. Specifically, it examines key development indicators such as infrastructure including roads, electricity, and water supply healthcare services, education, and agricultural support, all of which are vital to improving the socio-economic well-being of rural communities. The geographical scope of the study is limited to Moro Local Government Area in Kwara State, and it draws on the views and experiences of local government officials, community leaders, and residents. The temporal scope spans from 2015 to 2024 to provide a comprehensive and recent assessment of local government performance in rural development. The study adopts both qualitative and quantitative approaches, utilizing questionnaires, interviews, and secondary data from government reports and policy documents to achieve its objectives.

Despite the relevance and importance of this study, it is not without limitations. Geographically, the study is restricted to Moro Local Government Area and, as such, the findings may not reflect the realities of other local government areas within Kwara State or Nigeria as a whole. Additionally, accessing official government documents and budgetary records may pose a challenge due to bureaucratic bottlenecks and issues of transparency. The research is also constrained by time and financial resources, which may affect the size and diversity of the sample as well as the depth of fieldwork. Another limitation is the potential for respondent bias, particularly among local government officials who may present skewed or overly favorable accounts of their administration's performance. Finally, due to socio-economic and cultural variations across rural communities in Nigeria, the results of this study may have limited generalizability beyond the case of Moro LGA.

1.7 Definition of Terms

- i. Local Government: The third tier of government in Nigeria responsible for administering a defined local area and delivering grassroots services such as education, health, water, and rural roads.
- ii. Rural Development: A multidimensional process involving the improvement of living standards, access to infrastructure, education, health care, and economic opportunities in rural areas.
- iii. Decentralization: The transfer of authority and responsibility from central to local governments to enhance efficiency, accountability, and community participation in governance.
- iv. Infrastructure: Basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g., roads, electricity, water systems) needed for the operation of a community or society.
- v. Community Participation: The active involvement of local residents in decision-making, planning, and implementation of development projects within their locality.
- vi. Development Projects: Planned interventions or activities carried out by local governments to improve the socio-economic conditions of a community.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature and the theoretical framework guiding the study on the role of local government in rural development, with particular reference to Moro Local Government Area in Kwara State. The literature review aims to provide scholarly insights into the concepts of local governance, rural development, and the interplay between both in the Nigerian context and beyond. It draws from academic journals, government publications, policy papers, and empirical studies to examine how local governments contribute to improving rural infrastructure, service delivery, and community empowerment.

2.2 Conceptual Clarification

2.2.1 Local Government

Local government refers to the administrative authority in a specific local area that functions as the closest tier of government to the people. It is responsible for providing essential services, maintaining local infrastructure, promoting local economic development, and facilitating grassroots participation in governance. According to Agagu (2004), local government is a political authority set up by law to manage the affairs of a local area with autonomy within the limits of the law. In Nigeria, local governments are established under the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and are expected to deliver basic services such as primary education, health care, water supply, and rural roads.

2.2.2 Rural Development

Rural development is a broad and multidimensional concept that involves improving the economic, social, and environmental conditions of people living in rural areas. It encompasses access to infrastructure, education, health services, agricultural support, job creation, and institutional capacity building. Arowolo (2011) defines rural development as the process of improving the living standards of the low-income population residing in rural areas through equitable distribution of resources and services. Effective rural development ensures that rural dwellers benefit from national development and enjoy an improved quality of life.

2.2.3 Community Participation

Community participation refers to the active engagement of citizens in planning, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring of development activities in their locality. It fosters a sense of ownership, ensures accountability, and aligns development initiatives with the actual needs of the people. Ezeani (2004) emphasizes that participatory governance is crucial in ensuring sustainable rural development as it enables communities to influence decisions that affect their lives.

2.3 Empirical Review

Arowolo (2011) observed that local governments often struggle to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities due to a lack of financial autonomy, entrenched corruption, and inadequate technical capacity. Findings revealed that rural areas administered by local governments frequently suffer from deficient infrastructure and poor service delivery, despite the proximity of this tier of government to the grassroots. Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) conducted a comparative analysis of the statutory roles and actual performance of local governments in Nigeria using secondary data from audit reports, government publications, and previous research studies. Their analysis was primarily content-based and historical. The study found a consistent pattern of deviation from the developmental mandate of local governments, noting that many local governments serve more as political appendages than functional development agents. Major constraints included irregular fund disbursement, politicization of appointments, and limited financial oversight. The study recommended legal and institutional reforms to guarantee the financial and administrative autonomy of local governments, as well as the establishment of local governance audit bodies to ensure accountability and developmental progress.

Ibrahim (2015) focused on local government performance in Kwara State, assessed rural infrastructure development in selected LGAs including Moro. By applying trend analysis and document review techniques, he found that infrastructural progress in the rural areas was limited, with many government-initiated projects either abandoned or poorly implemented. The barriers included insufficient funding, lack of transparency, and the absence of community involvement in project planning and execution. Fatile and Adejuwon (2017) adopted a comparative case study method to analyze local government-driven development in several Nigerian states. The research identified discrepancies in performance across LGAs, which they attributed to variations in leadership quality, governance practices, and the level of stakeholder engagement. The study recommended the need for institutional reforms, decentralized planning systems, and the establishment of public-private partnerships to enhance rural development outcomes.

Adewumi and Egwurube (2017) adopted a case study approach supported by field interviews and focus group discussions. Thematic analysis was used to process qualitative data from community leaders, local government staff, and residents. The findings showed that many local government projects were either abandoned or poorly executed due to mismanagement, lack of technical expertise, and political patronage. Community members also reported feeling excluded from development planning and decision-making processes. The study recommended enhancing participatory governance by involving communities in project design and execution, enforcing transparency in contract awards, and introducing performance-based budgeting systems for local governments.

Amin (2018) studied on the impact of internally generated revenue on community development in Asa Local Government Area, Kwara State. The study employed both primary and secondary data sources to investigate the revenue generation capacity of Asa Local Government and its effectiveness in financing community development. The findings revealed that while Asa Local Government receives revenue from statutory federal allocations and internally generated sources particularly market rates, levies, and permit fees it continues to face significant developmental challenges including underdevelopment, irregular staff salary payments, and overall stunted growth. The study recommended the need for enhanced training, autonomy, and motivation of revenue collectors to boost their performance and accountability. The establishment of a transparent and community-inclusive revenue utilization framework is crucial to building taxpayer trust and encouraging compliance.

Amin, Raji, Ambali, Alabi, and Abdulrasheed (2020) worked on the challenges of revenue generation in Asa Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria and its implications for Community development. The research utilized qualitative and quantitative analysis to interpret findings. The results revealed that Asa Local Government generates insufficient revenue from both internal and external sources. This shortfall is attributed to weak federal allocations, compounded by irregular remittance of statutory funds through the state joint account. Internally, the council's revenue generation efforts are undermined by poor tax collection systems, weak enforcement policies, and the diversion or embezzlement of significant portions of internally generated funds by corrupt officials. The study recommended comprehensive training and capacity building for revenue officers, enhanced political and fiscal autonomy for local governments, and transparent, accountable utilization of revenue to stimulate infrastructural and social development within the area.

Eze and Abang (2021) underscore how poor governance structures and lack of accountability mechanisms have led to the diversion of funds, inadequate service delivery, and limited impact on rural communities. In many cases, insufficient planning and weak institutional capacity have further impeded the effective utilization of internally generated funds. Moreover, Ogunleye and Ogunwale (2018) emphasize that external factors such as fluctuating economic conditions and limited revenue sources also constrain IGR growth, affecting LGAs' ability to sustain development projects.

Babaita and Amin (2024) explored the challenges facing local government administration in facilitating socio-economic development in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. It utilized both primary and secondary sources of data. The findings revealed a consensus among respondents that fiscal dependence on higher tiers of government significantly undermines the financial autonomy of local governments.

Furthermore, the study found that political instability characterized by frequent leadership changes hinders the continuity and sustainability of development initiatives. The study recommended regular and continuous capacity building for local government staff through training and retraining programs. It also advocates for the establishment and strengthening of financial control mechanisms to enhance transparency, ensure accountability, and enforce anti-corruption regulations within the council.

Agbodike, Igbokwe-Ibeto, and Nkah (2014) conducted a study on Local Government Administration and the Hurdles in Achieving Sustainable Development in Nigeria. The study adopted the Basic Needs Approach (BNA) framework, the paper scrutinized the intricacies of local government administration and the impediments to achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. The analysis contends that local government administration grapples with issues such as interventions by federal and state governments in the constitutional responsibilities of local government, often serving as a conduit for dispensing political patronage to party loyalists. Drawing insights from experiences in both developed and developing countries in the globalized era, the study concludes that addressing the hurdles to sustainable rural development in Nigeria requires a return to true federalism, the establishment of positive leadership anchored on the rule of law, transparency, and accountability.

Amin and Babaita (2024) investigated the role of local government administration in promoting socio-economic transformation within Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, utilizing the decentralization theory as the theoretical framework. The study employed both primary and secondary data sources. Findings indicated that respondents acknowledged that community input is generally considered in the planning and implementation of socio-economic initiatives.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Basic Needs Approach

The Basic Needs Approach emerged in the 1970s through the work of development institutions such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank, and it emphasizes the satisfaction of essential human needs as the foundation for sustainable development. The approach assumes that every individual is entitled to access basic necessities such as food, shelter, clean water, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. It also assumes that development policies should prioritize the poorest and most vulnerable groups, particularly in rural communities where deprivation is often more severe. According to the Basic Needs Approach, development should not be measured solely by economic growth, but by how well the basic needs of the population are met and their quality of life improved.

The relevance of this theory to the current study lies in its focus on the well-being of rural dwellers, which is the core responsibility of local governments. In Nigeria, local governments are constitutionally charged with providing basic services such as primary education, health care, waste disposal, and rural roads. The Basic Needs Approach provides a clear standard against which the performance of Moro Local Government can be assessed. If the local government has effectively fulfilled its role, then access to essential services in the rural areas under its jurisdiction should have improved.

However, critics of the Basic Needs Approach argue that it can be overly simplistic and technocratic. One major critique is that it often focuses on short-term service delivery without addressing the deeper structural causes of poverty, such as land tenure issues, income inequality, and governance failures. Additionally, it may encourage dependency on government provision rather than promoting self-reliance and long-term community development. In some contexts, the approach has been criticized for being top-down in implementation, with minimal involvement of the communities it aims to serve.

The Basic Needs Approach is highly applicable to this study. It offers a practical lens for evaluating whether Moro Local Government has contributed to improving the daily lives of rural residents through the provision of fundamental services. By assessing the extent to which the local government has addressed the basic needs of its constituents, this study can determine the effectiveness of rural development efforts and the extent to which local governance has translated into tangible benefits for the people.

2.4.2 Decentralization Theory

Decentralization Theory, as articulated by Rondinelli (1981), posits that the transfer of authority, responsibility, and resources from central to local governments enhances administrative efficiency, improves service delivery, and promotes responsiveness to local needs. The theory assumes that local governments are better positioned to understand the unique challenges and preferences of their communities; second, that decentralization fosters citizen participation and accountability; and third, that local decision-making leads to more efficient allocation of resources, especially in areas like infrastructure, education, health care, and economic development.

The relevance of this theory to the study lies in its emphasis on the role of local institutions in driving development at the grassroots level. In Nigeria, the creation of local government councils through the 1999 Constitution represents a formal effort to institutionalize decentralization. The aim is to bring governance closer to the people, encourage inclusive development, and ensure that decisions affecting local communities are made with their active involvement. Moro Local Government, like other LGAs in Nigeria, is expected to function as a vehicle for rural transformation by implementing policies and programs that directly impact residents in its jurisdiction.

However, the application of decentralization in Nigeria has been fraught with several challenges, leading to widespread critique of the theory's practical effectiveness. Arowolo (2011) argues that the potential benefits of decentralization are undermined by excessive control from state governments, poor funding, lack of transparency, and political patronage.

The theory remains applicable to this study as it provides a useful framework for analyzing how and why local governments like Moro LGA either succeed or fail in delivering rural development outcomes. It helps to explain the link between administrative proximity and service responsiveness, and offers insights into the institutional reforms needed to make local governance more effective. By situating the analysis within the decentralization framework, this study can assess whether the local government in Moro has been empowered sufficiently and whether it has used its delegated authority to address the socio-economic needs of its rural population.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for the study on the role of local government in rural development, using Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State as a case study. The chapter outlines the research design, data sources, methods of data collection, and techniques of data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The study employs a descriptive research design, which is suitable for exploring and describing existing conditions and trends without manipulating variables. Descriptive design allows the researcher to analyze documented evidence and interpret observed patterns related to rural development initiatives undertaken by the local government. This design is particularly appropriate for a study based on secondary data as it facilitates the systematic examination of past records, statistical reports, and scholarly literature relevant to the research objectives.

3.3 Source of Data

This research relies entirely on secondary data, which consists of existing information previously collected and published by other researchers, government institutions, and organizations. The data sources include official reports and development plans from the Moro Local Government Council, as well as documents obtained from the Kwara State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs. Additional sources comprise rural development reports from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), and publications by the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning. Academic journal articles, research theses, and policy documents from both national and international perspectives also form part of the data used. Furthermore, reports from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), media publications, and development agency assessments relevant to rural governance and infrastructure delivery are consulted.

3.4 Data Collection Method

The study adopts a desk research approach to collect relevant secondary data. This involves systematically searching, reviewing, and synthesizing data from multiple sources, including libraries, digital repositories, government websites, research databases (e.g., Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ResearchGate), and local government archives. The selection of data is guided by its relevance to the research objectives and its publication within the defined period (2015–2024), which represents a recent timeframe for assessing local government performance.

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

The data collected for this study will be analyzed using content analysis and trend analysis techniques. Content analysis will be employed to identify patterns, recurring themes, and qualitative insights from textual materials such as government reports, policy documents, and scholarly publications. This approach enables the researcher to interpret narratives concerning development projects, community participation, governance practices, and policy outcomes within Moro Local Government Area. On the other hand, trend analysis will be utilized to assess changes in development efforts over time particularly in areas such as rural infrastructure provision, access to healthcare and education, and agricultural support programs. This method allows for an evaluation of the direction and consistency of progress made from 2015 to 2024, while also highlighting factors that may have influenced development trends in the study area. Together, these analytical techniques provide a comprehensive understanding of the role and performance of the local government in promoting rural development.

3.6 Justification for Using Secondary Data

The choice of secondary data is justified by the availability of extensive documentation and official records on local governance and rural development in Kwara State. Secondary data saves time and financial resources while enabling the researcher to analyze historical trends and institutional reports that may not be captured through primary fieldwork. Additionally, relying on secondary sources reduces bias that may arise from self-reported data and allows for the triangulation of multiple perspectives across various publications and reports.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the secondary data collected to evaluate the role of Moro Local Government in rural development between 2015 and 2024. The analysis is based on existing reports, government publications, statistical data, policy documents, and previous academic research that reflect the performance of the local government in delivering essential rural services.

4.2 Brief History of the Study Area (Moro Local Government Area)

Moro Local Government Area is one of the sixteen (16) Local Government Areas in Kwara State, Nigeria. It was officially created in 1976 during the local government reform under the military regime of General Murtala Mohammed. The local government was carved out to bring governance closer to the people and enhance grassroots development, especially in the rural communities of northern Kwara. The administrative headquarters of Moro LGA is located in Bode Saadu, a town strategically situated along the Ilorin–Jebba highway. The local government shares boundaries with Ilorin East, Asa, and Ifelodun LGAs within Kwara State, as well as with neighboring states such as Niger and Kogi. It is predominantly rural and made up of numerous towns and villages, including Shao, Okutala, Ajanaku, Jebba South, and Malete.

Moro is home to diverse ethnic groups such as the Yoruba, Nupe, Baruba, and Fulani, who coexist and engage primarily in agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing, and petty trading. The area is rich in fertile land and water resources, making it suitable for the cultivation of crops such as yam, maize, cassava, and rice. Educationally, the area hosts the Kwara State University (KWASU) in Malete, which has significantly boosted local socio-economic activities. Despite this, much of the population still faces challenges related to underdevelopment, including inadequate road networks, insufficient healthcare facilities, and limited access to clean water and quality education. These development gaps make Moro LGA a relevant case study for evaluating the role of local government in rural development efforts in Nigeria.

4.2 Results

i. The Extent of Moro Local Government's Contribution to Rural Infrastructure Development

Rural infrastructure development is a component of sustainable rural transformation and one of the core responsibilities of local governments in Nigeria. In the case of Moro Local Government Area (LGA), available secondary data from government reports and development agency assessments indicate that the local government made modest efforts in enhancing rural infrastructure between 2015 and 2024, particularly in the areas of road rehabilitation, water supply, and limited electricity support. However, these efforts were often constrained by limited financial resources, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and a lack of sustained project maintenance.

In terms of rural roads, the Moro Local Government undertook grading and rehabilitation of access roads linking major communities such as Bode Saadu, Shao, Malete, and Jebba South. According to reports from the Kwara State Ministry of Works (2018–2023), these interventions were primarily aimed at improving access to local markets and easing transportation for agricultural produce. Nonetheless, many of the roads remained untarred and vulnerable to erosion, particularly during the rainy season. As noted by the Community Empowerment Network (2021), a number of rural communities within the LGA remained inaccessible due to the poor state of feeder roads, which significantly hampers socio-economic activities.

Regarding water supply, the local government, in collaboration with NGOs and community-based organizations, facilitated the construction of hand-pump boreholes and repair of existing wells in selected locations such as Shao, Olooru, and Jebba South. Despite these interventions, reports from the Kwara State Water Corporation (2019) and the National Bureau of Statistics (2022) show that access to clean and reliable water sources in Moro LGA remains inadequate, with many boreholes either non-functional or overstretched. This suggests that while the local government made some efforts, maintenance and equitable distribution remain major challenges.

In terms of electricity, Moro LGA has struggled to expand access beyond the major towns. Though towns like Bode Saadu, Malete, and Shao benefit from national grid connectivity, the supply is often unreliable. Secondary data from the Kwara State Ministry of Energy (2021) indicated that the local government's role in rural electrification was limited to lobbying for transformer installation and occasional support for repairing damaged power lines. As of 2024, several villages still lack access to electricity, depending instead on lanterns, generators, or other informal sources of power.

Health care delivery is one of the fundamental responsibilities assigned to local governments in Nigeria, particularly at the primary level. In Moro Local Government Area, secondary data from policy documents, health sector reviews, and government reports between 2015 and 2024 reveal that efforts were made to improve access to basic health services across rural communities, but with mixed outcomes. The local government was involved in supporting primary health centres (PHCs), providing limited funding for staff salaries, and overseeing vaccination campaigns in collaboration with state and federal health agencies. According to reports from the Kwara State Ministry of Health (2020), Moro LGA operated several PHCs across towns such as Bode Saadu, Malete, and Shao, where maternal and child health services were delivered, especially through state-supported initiatives like the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF).

However, the overall condition of most PHCs within the LGA remained substandard, with recurring issues such as shortage of qualified health personnel, inadequate medical supplies, and dilapidated infrastructure. A 2022 survey conducted by the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) ranked Moro LGA below the state average in terms of primary healthcare readiness and service availability. Many facilities lacked electricity, clean water, and essential drugs, making it difficult to provide consistent health services to rural residents. Furthermore, the irregularity of health outreach programs and absence of mobile clinics limited access for remote villages.

Education is a cornerstone of rural development, and local governments in Nigeria are constitutionally tasked with supporting primary education through the provision and maintenance of schools, recruitment of teaching staff, and ensuring access to basic learning resources. In Moro Local Government Area, secondary data from the Kwara State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB, 2019–2023), local inspection reports, and development agency assessments indicate that the local government made some contributions to rural education, albeit with persistent challenges. Between 2015 and 2024, Moro LGA collaborated with SUBEB and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) to implement school renovation projects and supply instructional materials in selected rural schools. Communities such as Shao, Bode Saadu, and Jebba South benefited from classroom refurbishments, provision of furniture, and occasional distribution of learning aids. Additionally, the presence of Kwara State University (KWASU) in Malete has contributed indirectly to raising educational awareness and stimulating interest in higher education among youth in the surrounding rural communities.

However, these efforts have not been sufficient to close the educational gaps in the LGA. According to an NBS (2022) report on rural education in Kwara State, Moro LGA continues to face problems such as inadequate school infrastructure, shortage of qualified teachers, and high student-to-teacher ratios, particularly in remote villages. Many rural schools lack access to electricity, potable water, and learning materials, which affects the quality of education delivered. Additionally, teacher absenteeism and lack of incentives to work in rural areas have further constrained educational outcomes.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the rural economy in Moro Local Government Area, employing a large proportion of the population and serving as the primary source of income and food security for many households. As such, agricultural development is a critical aspect of rural development, and local governments are expected to support farmers through extension services, input distribution, and infrastructure support. Between 2015 and 2024, secondary data from the Kwara State Ministry of Agriculture, agricultural extension records, and rural development reports indicate that Moro Local Government made limited but notable efforts to support agricultural activities within its jurisdiction.

The local government collaborated with state-level agencies and agricultural development programmes to provide farmers with access to subsidized fertilizers, seedlings, and agro-chemicals, particularly during planting seasons. Some farming communities in Shao, Oloru, and Ajanaku reportedly benefited from small-scale tractor hiring services and training workshops on improved farming techniques, delivered in partnership with the Kwara State Agricultural Development Programme (KWADP). Additionally, the construction of small irrigation channels and the repair of access roads to farm clusters in parts of Malete and Bode Saadu helped facilitate the transportation of farm produce to local markets.

Despite these interventions, the overall impact of Moro LGA's contribution to agricultural development has been constrained by several factors. Reports from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2023) and stakeholder feedback reveal persistent issues such as limited funding, irregular supply of farm inputs, lack of storage facilities, and poor coordination between government and local farmer groups. Furthermore, the absence of well-structured agricultural extension services and mechanization support continues to limit productivity among smallholder farmers. Many rural farmers still rely on traditional tools and techniques due to inadequate access to modern equipment and technology.

ii. Level of Community Participation in Moro Local Government's Development Planning and Implementation

Community participation is widely regarded as a key ingredient for successful rural development. It enhances accountability, ensures that development projects align with local needs, and fosters community ownership of public services. In the case of Moro Local Government Area, secondary data from NGO reports, academic studies, and state planning documents reveal that community participation in development planning and implementation has been generally low and sporadic between 2015 and 2024.

Although some development efforts in Moro LGA particularly those initiated through community development associations (CDAs) or donor-supported programs encouraged local input, these were the exception rather than the rule. According to a 2021 report by the Community Empowerment Network, while a few wards such as Malete and Shao reported being engaged during needs assessments or project sensitization exercises, most rural communities were not regularly involved in decision-making processes. Local government development plans were often drafted without broad-based consultations or public hearings, which limited citizens' influence over project prioritization, budgeting, and execution.

Furthermore, community monitoring and feedback mechanisms were weak or entirely absent. The lack of regular town hall meetings, participatory budgeting processes, and structured engagement with youth, women, and farmer groups contributed to a sense of exclusion among residents. This disconnect has led to instances where government projects such as boreholes, health centers, and roads were either sited in less impactful locations or abandoned due to lack of community buy-in.

Despite the constitutional requirement for participatory governance at the local level, the political culture in Moro LGA still reflects a top-down approach, where elected officials and local bureaucrats make decisions with limited grassroots consultation. This challenge is not unique to Moro, as various studies (e.g., Oviasuyi et al., 2010; Fatile & Adejuwon, 2017) have observed similar patterns across Nigeria, where community involvement is often symbolic rather than substantive.

iii. Challenges Facing Moro Local Government in Executing Rural Development Projects

One of the foremost challenges is inadequate funding. Like many local governments in Nigeria, Moro LGA depends heavily on statutory allocations from the federal government, which are often delayed, insufficient, or eroded by deductions at the state level. The local government's capacity to generate internal revenue remains very weak, with little diversification beyond basic levies and taxes. As a result, many rural development projects are underfunded or abandoned midway due to financial constraints. Political interference from the state level also poses a serious obstacle. Several development priorities in Moro LGA are reportedly influenced by political patronage rather than community needs assessments. The appointment of caretaker committees instead of democratically elected local council officials further weakens administrative continuity and accountability. This top-down approach discourages long-term planning and undermines the principle of decentralization as envisioned by the Nigerian constitution.

Another major challenge is the lack of technical capacity and skilled personnel. Many departments within the local government suffer from understaffing, lack of training, and poor data management systems. This limits their ability to design, implement, and monitor development projects effectively. Without adequate planning and technical expertise, projects are often poorly executed or misaligned with the actual needs of rural communities. Additionally, corruption and lack of transparency in project implementation have been cited in several reports as a recurring issue. Cases of inflated contracts, ghost projects, and poor oversight mechanisms have eroded public trust and contributed to widespread inefficiency. The absence of functional monitoring and evaluation units further compounds this problem, making it difficult to assess project performance or learn from past failures. Low community participation and weak institutional frameworks have created a gap between local government authorities and the people they serve. Without sustained engagement with community stakeholders, many projects lack local ownership and eventually fail due to neglect or mismanagement.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The study reveals that Moro LGA undertook efforts to grade and rehabilitate roads connecting major communities such as Bode Saadu, Shao, and Malete. These projects aimed to improve rural mobility and access to markets, thereby facilitating economic activities. However, consistent with Arowolo (2011), the findings show that most roads remain unpaved and are subject to erosion, reflecting the broader trend of infrastructural decay and inadequate maintenance at the local government level. Water infrastructure, including boreholes, was also implemented in select areas through collaboration with NGOs, but many facilities are non-functional due to poor maintenance culture and irregular funding a challenge also noted by Omolayo (2005), who argues that local governments often fail to sustain rural infrastructure due to overdependence on higher levels of government.

Similarly, in terms of rural electrification, Moro LGA's role has been limited to minor interventions such as lobbying for transformers and supporting small repairs. As Ekpo and Ndebbio (1998) observed, the lack of fiscal decentralization has significantly hindered local governments' ability to implement capital-intensive projects like electricity expansion, especially in remote areas. In the health sector, Moro LGA contributed to primary healthcare services through support for immunization campaigns and basic staffing in PHCs. However, the poor state of health facilities characterized by insufficient medical supplies, lack of clean water, and few qualified staff echoes the findings of Olowu and Wunsch (2004), who noted that decentralization in Nigeria has often transferred responsibilities to local governments without the requisite resources and capacity. The findings further align with those of Adeyemo (2005), who emphasized that many PHCs under local administration are poorly equipped, thus undermining rural health outcomes.

The findings on rural education also reflect partial progress. While Moro LGA facilitated minor renovations and distributed some instructional materials through collaboration with SUBEB and UBEC, schools in the LGA continue to suffer from teacher shortages, overcrowding, and inadequate learning resources. This situation supports the argument by Ajayi and Afolabi (2009), who contended that poor funding and neglect at the local level have resulted in persistent educational backwardness in rural Nigeria. The indirect benefits from the presence of Kwara State University in Malete have not translated into widespread improvements in basic education across the LGA, indicating a disconnect between higher education investments and rural primary education priorities.

In agriculture, the mainstay of the rural economy, Moro LGA made some contributions in the form of input distribution and training through collaboration with state agencies. Yet, these efforts have been fragmented and insufficient. Farmers continue to face obstacles such as poor access to credit, lack of mechanization, and inadequate extension services. As noted by Yahaya (2003), the success of agricultural development at the grassroots level depends heavily on the strength of local institutions and the consistency of support services—factors still lacking in many Nigerian LGAs, including Moro. A key aspect of the findings is the low level of community participation in local development planning and implementation. Although community development associations in towns like Malete and Shao occasionally engaged with the local government, most rural populations were not consulted during planning processes. This finding supports the argument by Fatile and Adejuwon (2017), who assert that participatory governance at the local level in Nigeria is largely rhetorical rather than practical. Similarly, Oviasuyi et al. (2010) emphasized that many local governments operate in a top-down manner, with minimal grassroots involvement in project design, monitoring, and evaluation.

Finally, the challenges identified including inadequate funding, political interference, lack of skilled personnel, and weak accountability mechanisms are consistent with broader scholarly consensus. For instance, Ola and Tonwe (2005) maintain that local governments in Nigeria function with severely constrained autonomy and are often politicized, making effective development planning difficult. The reliance on federal allocations and poor internally generated revenue further exacerbate financial instability, as noted by Ekpo (2008), who called for fiscal restructuring to empower LGAs.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study critically examined the role of Moro Local Government in the development of rural communities, focusing on key sectors such as infrastructure, health, education, agriculture, and governance processes between 2015 and 2024. Using secondary data sourced from government documents, academic literature, and NGO reports, the study identified the contributions, limitations, and challenges of the local

government in fostering sustainable rural development. The findings revealed that Moro Local Government made modest efforts toward rural infrastructure development. Projects such as road rehabilitation, borehole installations, and minor electricity interventions were implemented, particularly in communities like Bode Saadu, Shao, and Malete. However, these initiatives were often underfunded, poorly maintained, and unevenly distributed, leading to minimal impact in some rural areas.

In the healthcare sector, the local government supported a number of primary health centres (PHCs) and facilitated vaccination programs. Nevertheless, the overall standard of healthcare delivery remained suboptimal due to the poor condition of facilities, shortage of qualified personnel, and lack of essential drugs and equipment. Regarding education, Moro LGA collaborated with the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and the Kwara State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) to renovate a few schools and supply instructional materials. Despite these efforts, many rural schools suffered from poor infrastructure, inadequate staffing, and a lack of basic amenities, which adversely affected educational quality.

In agriculture, the study found that Moro LGA engaged in limited support initiatives, such as subsidized inputs and farmer training sessions. However, persistent challenges such as poor extension services, lack of storage and marketing support, and low mechanization continued to hinder agricultural productivity and income generation for rural farmers. A significant finding was the low level of community participation in development planning and project implementation. Most rural residents were not involved in identifying priorities or monitoring projects, resulting in weak ownership and accountability. This top-down governance structure contributed to the poor sustainability of many development initiatives.

The study also identified major challenges facing the local government, including inadequate funding, political interference, weak institutional capacity, lack of skilled personnel, corruption, and poor coordination with state and federal agencies. These factors collectively limited the effectiveness of the local government in meeting the developmental needs of its rural populace.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has provided an in-depth assessment of the role of Moro Local Government in promoting rural development. The local government has made notable efforts in areas such as road rehabilitation, health service delivery, educational support, and agricultural extension, these interventions have largely fallen short of addressing the multifaceted needs of rural communities. The limited scale and sustainability of development projects point to deeper structural issues chief among them being inadequate funding, weak institutional frameworks, political interference, and insufficient community engagement.

5.3 Recommendations

Moro LGA, through its Department of Finance and Budget, in collaboration with the Kwara State Internal Revenue Service (KWIRS) and relevant state ministries, should develop innovative strategies to improve internally generated revenue (IGR). The Moro Local Government Service Commission, with support from the Kwara State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, should provide regular training for local staff and employ qualified personnel. Training institutions like the Public Service Institute of Nigeria (PSIN) could assist in organizing capacity-building programs.

The Moro LGA Department of Community Development should collaborate with ward development committees, traditional councils, and community-based organizations to institutionalize regular town hall meetings, participatory budgeting processes, and grassroots consultations. Such inclusion will enhance ownership and sustainability of projects. The Moro Local Government Audit Department, in conjunction with the Kwara State Anti-Corruption Agency and the Office of the Auditor General for Local Governments, should establish project monitoring teams and ensure that development budgets and expenditures are publicly accessible. Civil society organizations also have a key role in independent oversight.

Moro LGA should proactively engage with the Kwara State Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and development partners such as UNDP and the World Bank to attract technical assistance and funding. Joint planning and project execution will enhance alignment with broader development goals. In addition, development initiatives should include clear maintenance and sustainability plans. Departments such as the Works and Housing Department and local water and sanitation committees (WASHCOMs) should ensure that completed infrastructure projects are routinely maintained and that local communities are trained in basic management techniques to preserve these facilities. a strong focus should be placed on rural agricultural transformation.

Moro LGA's Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the Kwara State Ministry of Agriculture and the Kwara State Agricultural Development Programme (KWADP), should facilitate access to subsidized inputs, modern equipment, and training for farmers. Strengthening farmer cooperatives and supporting agro-processing hubs will improve productivity, income, and food security across rural communities.

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