

State Intervention in Settlement Reorganisation and Rural Development in Nigeria: Lessons from The Tanzania's Villagization Policy

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Abstract

Anchored in a Marxist political economy framework, this paper which is largely qualitative in nature, adopts the use of secondary and primary data to examine the role of the state in the reorganisation of rural settlements in Nigeria, drawing lessons from Tanzania's Villagization Policy. Focusing on Tiv land in Benue State, which is predominantly rural and characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern, the paper argues that the issue of human settlement, as an integral component of sustainable and meaningful rural development, has received limited attention from the Nigerian government at the federal, state, and local levels. The paper further contends that rural development initiatives in Nigeria have largely prioritised agricultural productivity, the provision of social amenities, empowerment programmes and skills acquisition, while paying insufficient attention to the spatial organisation of settlements. There is hardly any discernible government policy or legislation specifically designed to address the problem of dispersed settlement patterns which not only reflect the level of underdevelopment and poverty in rural areas, but also contribute to the slow pace of rural development. Consistent with Marxist perspective, the paper concludes that this neglect reflects the nature and character of the post-colonial Nigerian state which functions largely as an instrument of elite accumulation rather than development. The paper also traces the problem to the legacy of colonial administration which laid the foundation for the rural-urban dichotomy in the country. Given the similarities between the conditions that informed Tanzania's Villagization Policy and those prevailing in many parts of Nigeria, the paper suggests that Nigeria can draw valuable lessons from the Tanzanian model, as well as from settlement restructuring initiatives undertaken in other African countries, including Kenya, Zambia, Cameroon, and Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo). It also highlights the efforts of the colonial administration and Native Authorities in establishing settlements, towns, markets and villages across different parts of Nigeria. Despite its implementation challenges, Tanzania's experience demonstrates the strategic importance of deliberate rural settlement planning in achieving meaningful rural development.

Keywords: State; Political Economy; Settlement Pattern; Rural Settlement; Rural Development; Tanzania.

1. Introduction

The importance of human settlements has been acknowledged in several academic discourses, government policies and conferences at the global, regional and national levels. At the centre of global efforts to address the multiple challenges confronting sustainable development is the issue of human settlement. The nexus between human settlement patterns and the underdevelopment of rural areas in Nigeria, particularly Tiv land in Benue State, which Udo (1982) describes as a classic case of village settlement disintegration in tropical Africa, can be situated within the argument of scholars who contend that rural settlement patterns constitute a critical aspect of underdevelopment, poverty and insecurity in the area (Ahire, 1993; Hembe, 2005; Tarnande, 2015; Shija, 2023). However, the Nigerian government appears to have undermined the importance of human settlements in the transformation of rural areas. The issue of human settlements has not been prioritised in rural development

policy in Nigeria. Rural areas in Nigeria are comparatively worse than urban and semi-urban areas in terms of settlement organisation and availability infrastructure. Government policies and programmes often define rural poverty and underdevelopment mainly in terms of poor agricultural productivity, inadequate access to social amenities and infrastructure, the near absence of commercial and industrial activities, low political awareness and participation and insecurity without giving adequate attention to rural settlement patterns which are critical to sustainable development. While these factors are important in understanding the crisis of the rural sector in Nigeria, they also reveal the inherent deficiencies in rural settlement structures across the country.

Generally, there is hardly any noticeable government policy or legislation at the federal, state, or local government levels specifically designed to address the problem of unplanned, scattered and poorly serviced rural settlements in Nigeria. In Benue State, for instance, the issue of settlement patterns received limited or no attention in rural development policies since its creation in 1976 until 2021 when the Benue State Government, in collaboration with USAID, established a Rural Development Policy Committee with settlement patterns included among the committee's recommendations. However, the report has suffered the same fate as many others that end at the level of committee deliberations without implementation. Similarly, the policy pronouncements on the resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) by the Benue State Government do not yet suggest the existence of a comprehensive and sustainable rural settlement policy with clearly defined priorities and implementation strategies.

The imperative of state intervention in rural settlement in Nigeria in the context of this paper entails reorganisation of rural areas in favour of nucleated or compact settlements. Udo (1982) supports this position, arguing that even in traditional societies, nucleated settlements have long been accepted as the most normal and rational form of settlement organization. The relationship between the state and human settlement is rooted in the fact that government possesses legitimate authority over land, people and territory as reflected in the Land Use Act of 1978. The Nigerian state has exercised this authority through urban development agencies and the creation of political and administrative units such as states and local government areas. In this regard, the Tanzanian experience demonstrates how the state can play an active role in restructuring rural settlements with important lessons for the reorganisation of rural settlements in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Clarification of Concepts

i. The State: Although there are several perspectives on the concept of the state, its literal meaning is less controversial than the various theoretical debates surrounding its nature, origin, purpose and role in society. The concept becomes more complicated because the term "state" is often viewed in different ways and, in many instances, used interchangeably with terms such as government, nation, society and country. Despite these controversies, Johari (2003, p. 54) considers the state as a "condition" or "description" of things. It may also refer to anything "official" in contrast to what is privately owned and controlled, and is sometimes used as a synonym for government. In political theory, however, the state is conceived as a technical expression referring to a human association with four essential elements: population, territory, government and sovereignty. When these characteristics are taken into

consideration, the state may be defined as a territorial society divided into government and subjects, claiming sovereignty over all other institutions within its defined territory.

In the context of this paper, the state in the Marxist perspective is seen as “a committee for managing the affairs of the whole bourgeoisie” (Marx & Engels, 1972, p. 475). This perspective highlights the class dimension of the state and brought a radical dimension which challenges the traditional conceptions of the state by considering the state as an instrument of class domination. In works such as *The Communist Manifesto* (1848/1978) and *The Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875/1978), Marx argues that the state is not a neutral arbiter, but an instrument of class domination. It implies that the state exists as instrument in the hands of the few individuals who by the virtue of acquisition of state power use it to service their private interests at the detriment of societal development.

ii. Rural Settlement: Although the concept of settlement is widely used, it is difficult to provide a precise definition because its meaning varies across disciplines such as geography, archaeology and anthropology. While some scholars define human settlement in terms of archaeological sites, Singh (1994) developed the concept of “settlement geography, referring to the visible imprints made by humans on the cultural landscape through the process of occupation. According to Almed (2009), human settlements are specifically located areas on the earth’s surface where human beings inhabitants agglomerate. Viewed from this perspective, human settlements may be defined as the most visible expressions of human culture imposed on the natural environment. This geographical analogy suggests that human existence is inseparable from the earth’s surface and that settlements are integral to human survival, as they enable people to explore and utilize the environment to meet their needs. The definition provided by the United Nations (1976), which is most suitable for this paper, conceives human settlements as the totality of a human community—whether a city, town or village—together with all the social, material, organizational, spiritual and cultural elements that sustain it. This conception encompasses several components and facilities such as buildings, roads, planning and other forms of infrastructure.

With regard to rural settlement, it may appear to be a familiar and self-explanatory concept, but it is essentially relative, as its meaning largely depends on the country involved. In some countries, a rural settlement refers to an area officially classified as rural by government agencies, such as population commissions. In Nigeria, for example, a rural settlement is officially defined as an area with a population of less than 20,000 people, whose inhabitants are predominantly engaged in primary or agricultural activities, and which is recognized by law or government as rural (Dawam, 2000). However, because population thresholds for distinguishing rural from urban areas vary from one country to another, functional criteria are often considered more reliable than demographic statistics in classifying settlements. Most suitable to this discussion is the notion that defines rural settlement as a cluster of dwellings, commonly referred to as a village, together with the surrounding land from which inhabitants derive their livelihood (Sharma, 2007).

Therefore, despite the diversity of perspectives, there is a general consensus that human settlement refers to a defined area or space where people live. It represents the totality of human community life, including its social, material, organizational, spiritual and cultural elements. Rural settlement, therefore, refers to a rural space occupied by a rural community and shaped by its economic, social and cultural environment. Such a settlement pattern influences the overall rural way of life and its structures. In general terms, any area that is not urban may be regarded as rural.

iii. Rural Development: The concept of rural development has attracted diverse perspectives regarding its approaches and essence. According to Madu, Yusof, and Suyatno (2015), rural development is primarily concerned with the review and assessment of improvements in the quality of life of rural people broadly measured in terms of adequate provision of health and social services, better living conditions and the reduction of income inequalities, among others. The United Nations (1986) defines rural development as a strategy designed to transform rural life by extending to the masses of the rural population the benefits of economic and social progress. This definition underscores the fundamental principle that the rural poor should fully benefit from development through equitable access to resources, inputs, and services, as well as active participation in the design and implementation of development programmes. While the former definition emphasizes the objectives and outcomes of rural development, the latter focuses more on the institutional arrangements and mechanisms through which rural development can be achieved. Nonetheless, both perspectives conceive rural development as a process aimed at improving the quality of life of rural populations.

Based on these perspectives, rural development may be conceived as a process that brings about a series of changes within a given rural setting, ultimately resulting in improved living conditions for rural dwellers. Such improvements depend on a variety of factors, including better access to education, healthcare, potable water, feeder road networks, electricity, and other essential services. Rural development therefore entails the transformation of rural society in all its ramifications through the enhancement of the welfare of the generality of the rural populace, ensuring that everyone has opportunities for advancement and access to healthcare, education, decent shelter, and other basic amenities. This conception implies that rural development is closely linked to the formulation and implementation of programmes and policies that enhance rural access to infrastructure and social services, improve income-generating and economic activities, promote political participation and guarantee the security of lives and property. Achieving these objectives remains a major challenge confronting successive administrations in Nigeria at both the federal and state levels.

2.2 The Role of the Nigerian State in Rural Settlements: A Historical and Theoretical Insight

The role of the state in human settlements implies that the state has an important role in rural settlement development, particularly in the organization and planning of settlements, the degree of population concentration, policy formulation and implementation, land ownership and the provision of social amenities. The significance of the state derives from the fact that human settlements do not exist in isolation from the political system which possesses the authority to exercise sovereignty over a territory and its people. In this regard, the Nigerian state, since the colonial period, sometimes in collaboration with development agencies, has intervened directly and indirectly in rural development through various policies, programmes and resource allocations.

Historically, state intervention in rural settlements in Nigeria can be traced to the introduction of the Township Ordinance of 1917 by the British colonial administration. The colonial government classified settlements into first, second and third-class categories for the purpose of infrastructure provision. First-class settlements, such as Lagos which were reserved mainly for Europeans and their employees became centres of concentrated

infrastructural development, while limited or no attention was given to second and third-class settlements. Consequently, the emergence of the urban–rural dichotomy in Nigeria can largely be attributed to the deliberate colonial policy of concentrating development activities in urban areas (Ujo, 1999). The exploitative character of British colonial policy also contributed significantly to the rural–urban settlement gap in Nigeria. The colonial administration viewed rural areas primarily as centres for the production of raw materials and food to serve European capitalist interests. According to Abbass (2012), colonialism facilitated the exploitation of rural resources, resulting in increased rural poverty and structural distortions in the rural economy. This process transformed systems of social production, infrastructure provision, ecological relations and labour recruitment, thereby aggravating poverty among the rural population.

Like the British colonial administration, the post-colonial Nigerian state has paid limited attention to rural settlements. Consequently, rural development programmes and policies such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the Green Revolution, Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs), the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), and Better Life for Rural Women (BLRW) have had limited impact on the transformation of rural settlements in Nigeria. Similarly, many government policies, programmes, initiatives, and legislations relating to human settlements in Nigeria, including the Land Use Act (1978), the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Law (1992), the National Housing Policy (1991), the National Urban Development Policy (1992), and the National Building Codes and Standards, are largely urban-oriented to the detriment of rural settlements. As Enyi (2014) observes, development efforts in Nigeria, from the colonial period to the present, have been disproportionately directed towards urban centres at the expense of rural areas.

Apart from the significant gap between policy formulation and implementation in rural development, settlement policies and programmes in Nigeria are, in many instances, designed primarily for urban areas, leaving rural settlements largely neglected. As a result, state intervention in rural settlements has not resolved the rural–urban dichotomy; rather, it has reinforced and exacerbated it. More importantly, rural settlement, which constitutes an integral component of rural transformation, is conspicuously absent from most government initiatives and policies. The issue of settlement patterns has not received adequate attention from the government. Consequently, the Nigerian state has failed to address the problems associated with scattered, unplanned, and poorly serviced rural settlements. The failure of the government to address these challenges can largely be attributed to the nature and character of the Nigerian state. The premise of this argument is that the state has played a prominent role in rural settlement organization and development in many countries, such as Tanzania and Kenya. The state failure argument is rooted in neo-Marxist scholarship, particularly the works of Ake (2002), who contends that development policies and strategies cannot be properly understood without constant reference to the nature of the state and the social forces within which it is embedded.

From this standpoint, which aligns with the conception of the state adopted in this paper, it can be argued that the Nigerian state functions largely as an instrument in the hands of the political class for the primitive accumulation of wealth at the expense of development. This helps to explain why funds earmarked for development projects in Nigeria often end up in the private hands of individuals connected to those in power. In essence, the Nigerian state and its institutions have become increasingly privatized and commodified and are therefore

ill-positioned to deliver meaningful development outcomes. This argument does not deny the fact that some administrations have demonstrated genuine commitment through programmes and policies aimed at rural development. Although the government has recorded certain achievements, its overall performance remains unsatisfactory when measured against the country's abundant human and material resources. In many instances, state actors appear more concerned with creating the impression of pursuing development than with demonstrating genuine commitment and implementing credible policy priorities.

2.3 Rural Urban Settlement Dichotomy in Nigeria

Human settlements vary not only in size, type, and stages of development but are also classified differently across countries and localities. Moreover, settlements are not static; small settlements and villages can develop into large urban centres over time. In general terms, human settlements are categorized into rural and urban based on their characteristics, population size, functions, demographic structure, and the availability of social and infrastructural facilities. Focusing on Nigeria, the rural-urban dichotomy has multiple dimensions and perspectives that cannot be exhaustively covered in this paper. Therefore, this paper highlights only some critical factors relating to rural-urban settlement dichotomy in Nigeria. Historically, before the emergence of coastal ports and commercial towns such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, Calabar and Kano, Nigeria had few settlements that could be classified as urban in the modern sense. Prehistoric Nigerian society largely depended on agriculture for subsistence and exchange. As argued by Akpan (2012), although some form of city-like settlements existed in parts of Northern Nigeria and among the Yoruba, true urbanization evolved mainly along the coast in response to commercial trade. The Yoruba, Hausa, Edo, Kanuri, and other groups were known as town or urban dwellers before the 20th century. The Yoruba, in particular, are regarded as one of the most urbanized peoples in tropical Africa, with cities such as Ibadan, Ogbomosho, Abeokuta, Ile-Ife, Oyo, and Benin City existing several centuries ago.

Coastal port towns such as Bonny, Opobo, Okrika, Buguma, Brass, Forcados, and Calabar also developed from fishing and salt-trading villages into urban centres as a result of trade between coastal communities and Europeans. At the beginning of colonial rule, these port towns had more cosmopolitan populations than many Yoruba towns and settlements in the Far North, although they were smaller than Kano, Zaria, and Katsina. The so-called ancient cities in Northern Nigeria owe their existence largely to trans-Saharan trade and agricultural activities in the region. Today, Kano is recognized as one of the earliest and most important metropolitan cities in Nigeria, alongside Lagos as the largest metropolis in the country. However, the political restructuring of the country through state creation since 1967 has contributed to the redistribution of industries and migration patterns as job-seekers moved from major cities such as Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna, Kano, and Enugu to new state capitals. These emerging state capitals such as Minna, Uyo, Makurdi, Maiduguri, Bauchi, among others, have experienced significant population growth and developed into major urban centres. It is also important to note that Abuja, which became the Federal Capital Territory in 1991, has grown rapidly and now ranks among the largest cities in Nigeria, potentially rivaling Lagos.

In terms of population distribution, agencies such as the National Population Commission (NPC), National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and National Identity Management

Commission (NIMC) have not been able to provide precise official figures for the rural population beyond estimates. The 1963 post-independence census placed the rural population at 80.7%; this declined to 70.13% in 1985 and about 69% in the 1990s (Muoghalu, 1992). A recent report indicates that about 53% of Nigeria's 213 million people now reside in urban areas, and this is projected to rise above 70% by 2050 (World Bank, 2022). This suggests that the rural-urban gap is narrowing due to rapid urbanization, with more people now residing in urban centres. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of Nigeria's population still lives in rural areas.

The rural-urban dichotomy in Nigeria can also be assessed based on access to social and infrastructural facilities such as roads, water, electricity, healthcare, education and housing. On this basis, the rural-urban gap is clearly wide in favour of urban centres, where such facilities are concentrated. Consequently, rural areas often become less attractive for habitation. However, infrastructure deficit is not only a rural problem but a national challenge. It is estimated that Nigeria requires between \$100 billion and \$150 billion annually over the next 30 years to close its infrastructure gap (Punch Editorial Board, 18 September 2023). Functionally, rural areas in Nigeria are largely agricultural, relying heavily on manual and traditional methods of production. Agriculture remains the main source of livelihood for the rural population. In contrast, commercial, financial, and industrial activities are concentrated in urban areas. Trade in rural areas is mainly based on agricultural produce, which contributes minimally to economic diversification. The rural sector, despite being a major contributor to food security and the national economy, remains largely neglected, especially in comparison to urban centres. As a result, its full development potential remains underutilized.

The rural-urban gap is also evident in terms of quality of life and overall development. As noted by Akpan (2012), when measured in terms of living standards, social opportunities, infrastructure, and human development, rural areas consistently rank far below urban centres. Rural areas in Nigeria are widely associated with underdevelopment and poverty. According to recent reports, multidimensional poverty is higher in rural areas, where about 72% of the population is poor, compared to 42% in urban areas (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Although poverty also exists in urban centres, the majority of Nigeria's poor reside in rural areas. Generally, rural settlements are characterized by underdevelopment, poor planning, inadequate services, and in some cases, dispersed settlement patterns, such as those found in Tiv land in Benue State. In addition to underdevelopment and endemic poverty, many rural areas in Nigeria also face severe insecurity challenges, particularly attacks by armed herdsmen on farming communities. It is reported that between 2017 and May 2020, herdsmen attacks resulted in 2,539 deaths and 253 kidnappings across 654 incidents in Nigeria (*THISDAY*, 7 June 2020). Nearly every state and local government area has experienced such attacks, with Benue, Taraba, Plateau, and Southern Kaduna among the most affected. Similar incidents have also been reported in southern states such as Enugu, Ekiti, and Ondo, as well as northern states including Adamawa, Zamfara, Niger, and Sokoto. However, these attacks are predominantly concentrated in rural areas across the country.

2.4 Political Economy of Rural Settlements in Tiv Land of Benue State

Tiv land in Benue State is predominantly rural with agriculture as the main source of livelihood. The settlement pattern is largely dispersed or isolated. Most settlements are not only scattered, but are also unplanned and poorly serviced, unlike urban settlements. Tser (2013, pp. 83-86) captures the reality of the proliferation of Tiv settlements:

in Benue North-East and North-West areas (Tiv land), once a male member of a family attains adulthood—not necessarily by age, but by maturity of mind and physical ability, whether married or single, and with the consent of the head of the family, he relocates to settle at the extreme end of the family farmland to forestall cases of encroachment by non-family members. This explains why scattered settlements are rife in this sub-region of Benue State. From Tsar-Mbaduku in Vandeikya LGA to Agaigbe in Gwer West, Abako in Ukum, Gbinde and Mabagertyav in Konshisha, Yelewata and Nzorov in Guma, Mbaswa in Ushongo, and Shitile in Tarka LGA, the settlement pattern is predominantly dispersed, with people occupying virtually every portion of their land to prevent encroachment by non-family members.

This narrative helps to explain why most rural settlements in Tiv land are characterised by sparsely distributed and isolated villages, hamlets and single compounds. The compound constitutes the smallest unit of analysis and, in some instances, clusters of compounds form a hamlet or small village occupied by members of extended family or kindred. Most compounds in Tiv land comprise closely spaced groups of small buildings traditionally constructed from sun-dried mud or mud blocks and roofed with thatch grass or palm fronds. An average rural Tiv person may erroneously refer to some settlements as *geri* (towns) without considering the population threshold of 20,000 inhabitants and the availability of essential service functions that qualify a settlement as a town. In most parts of Tiv land, the once prevalent large compounds have fragmented into smaller compounds consisting mainly of members of the immediate family—the father, mother, and children. The extended family system that formerly characterised Tiv society has gradually given way to the nuclear family system, though without a corresponding transition to a nucleated settlement pattern. Unlike in the past, compounds are becoming smaller as a result of the erosion of communal values, the desire to settle on ancestral farmlands, the spread of Christianity and the influence of Western civilisation which has made the traditional practice of polygamy less popular among the people.

Small settlements in the form of hamlets and villages are sparsely distributed across most parts of Tiv land because they represent family lineages. The population density of Tiv settlements corresponds with Udo's (1982) description of sub-Saharan African settlements, some of which consist of fewer than ten compounds. With specific reference to Tiv land, Udo further maintains that the average Tiv village consists of about six sleeping huts with an average of 2.5 inhabitants. However, variations exist in village sizes, ranging from one or two huts to about twenty huts per village. In a few areas, villages have expanded into large settlement units or rural towns with populations exceeding 5,000 inhabitants. Indeed, settlements evolve and expand as population increases. The distribution of the Tiv population is, however, uneven. In some areas, particularly the northern parts of Tiv land, population densities are as low as 30 persons per square mile, whereas the southern parts record densities ranging from 700 to 800 persons per square mile (Ubaa, 1970, cited in Hembe, 2005). According to Hembe, these high-density areas are commonly found in Tyar Gaav, Kunav, Ukan, Mbagen, Mbagba, Mbativ, Nanev, Ishangev-Tiev, and Ishangev-Ya. In such areas, some settlements are virtually continuous, with dispersed compounds of one village almost adjoining those of the next. The high population densities have resulted in acute shortages of farmland, thereby encouraging both rural-urban and, more significantly, rural-rural migration. This partly explains how people from the northern parts of Tiv land have spread throughout the southern parts and beyond.

Although dispersed settlement patterns are predominant in Tiv land, there are a few cases of nucleated settlements in the form of towns and urban or semi-urban centres such as

Gboko, Makurdi, Katsina-Ala, Adikpo, Vandeikya, Korinya, and Zaki-Biam. Nevertheless, the existence of these pockets of nucleated settlements does not substantially alter the overall settlement landscape of Tiv land. Most of the larger settlements and major towns are products of colonial activities and historical developments. Some serve as local government headquarters, including Gbajimba in Guma, Tse-Agberagba in Konshisha, Wannune in Tarka, and Lessel in Ushongo, among others.

In addition, some nucleated settlements in Tiv land function as market centres, including Ihugh in Vandeikya, Gbeji in Ukum, Anyiin in Logo, Gbor in Katsina-Ala, Jato-Aka in Kwande, Ikyobo in Ushongo, Jov-Ikyundan in Konshisha, Tse-Kucha in Gboko, Asukunya in Tarka, and Tyulen in Guma. Other clustered or linear settlements are situated along major roads, as illustrated in the table below using examples from Konshisha, Ushongo, Guma and Tarka Local Government Areas of Benue State.

Selected Nucleated Settlements Along Major Roads in Tiv Land

LGAs	Roads	Settlements
Konshisha	i) Awajir / Tse-Agberagba / Wuese / Ogoja	Gungul, Adoka, Tse-Agberagba, Iber, Wuese.
	ii) Gboko / Otukpo / Enugu	Jov-Ikyudan, Achoho.
	iii) Wuese / Korinya / Ihugh / Tse-Mker	Wuese, Jov Mbavaa, Alabusa, Amua. Jov / Mbava, Tyoutsa.
	iv) Branch Atser / Korinya / Mhambe / Tse / Agberagba	Korinya, Mhambe, Agbeede, Amua.
Ushongo	i) Gboko / Lessel / Ihugh	Kartyo, Madugu, Waapera, Lessel, Ge-Mbayem, Alu.
	ii) Katsina /Ala / Ugbema / Adikpo / Ogoja	Ushongo, Akerior, Gbatse.
	iii) Ge-Ikyobo / Tse-Anshagba / Akputu / Agera	Tse-Ushiinyi Ayu, Yaakur, Ukali, Uga, Ikyoobo, Mbayar
	iv) Branch Kuhwa / Heagha / Korinjo / Ushongo	Abia, Ate-Kombo, Mbatiam, Hegha, Igbor.
Tarka	i) Makurdi - Yandev / Katsina / Ala / Zaki / Biam / Wukari	Tiortyu, Uchi, Nyambee, Gwarche, Agudo, Wannune, Tarhembe,
	ii) Buruku / Ijer / Wannune	Ortese, Tse- Agbuuku, Sooyoan, Usombo etc.
	iii) Wannune / Ikpa / Igbor	Tse-Yave, Azungur, Anbyoho, An-Gbaaye, Amenger
Guma	i) Makurdi / Lafia,	Daudu, Ortese, Yelewata,
	ii) Makurdi -Tyulen Anyiin – Wukari	Abinsi, Agasha, Tyulen, Ikor, Azom, etc.

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

On the origin of settlement patterns, it may be argued that settlements in Tiv land are largely products of farm sites, family inheritance, migration, market centres, administrative headquarters, government-designated areas, and social centres. In his study, Uji (2015) attributes the emergence and growth of settlements in Tiv land, especially those located along

the banks of the River Benue such as Abinsi, Katsina-Ala, Wurukum, and Wadata, to the activities of Jukun, Hausa, and Tiv migrants in the Benue Valley. Similarly, the Colonial Administration and the Native Authority established a number of settlements in Tiv land. Classical examples include Gboko, established by Captain Downes in 1932 as the administrative headquarters of the Tiv Division, and the Tor Tiv settlement area at Mbaakon (Hembe, 2005).

Fundamentally, most settlements in Tiv land originated as individual or family settlements and farm sites. Even market settlements and those established by colonial and Native Authority administrations are often named after British-appointed chiefs in Tiv land. Examples include Korinya, Annune, Igbor, Zaki-Biam, Aliade, Adikpo, Kyado, Donga, and Jato-Aka, among others. Thus, the family inheritance explanation regarding the origin of settlements in Tiv land corresponds with Bylund's (1960) evolutionary model and Hudson's (1969) spatial competition theory, which suggest that original settlers reproduce and their descendants subsequently occupy available land close to the ancestral homestead before expanding into more distant areas. This process repeats itself as succeeding generations continue to reproduce and establish new settlements.

Settlement formation in Tiv land also reflects instances where groups of individuals or families migrate to establish new settlements, often as a result of displacement. This phenomenon has become increasingly common in parts of Tiv land, particularly along the Naka Road in Gwer West Local Government Area, Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, and notably along the Daudu axis in Guma Local Government Area on the Makurdi–Lafia Road. The emergence of these settlements has largely been occasioned by incessant attacks and the occupation of ancestral lands by armed Fulani herders in Benue State. The formation of new settlements in Tiv land as a consequence of displacement may be explained through Wagstaff's (1978) catastrophic theory, which posits that the establishment of new settlements is not necessarily a continuous spatial process but may result from specific events that generate dissatisfaction or compel members of a community to relocate. Relatedly, some historical events in Benue State and the neighbouring states of Nasarawa and Taraba have also contributed to the formation of new settlements in Tiv land. Tser (2013, pp. 87–88) highlights some of these events and the corresponding settlements that emerged:

- (i) The 2001 Benue–Taraba crisis, which compelled some Tiv refugees to return to Benue State, led to the establishment of Mbatom (Kenpeshio), a settlement and market centre in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area along the Zaki-Biam–Katsina-Ala Road;
- (ii) The 2001 Abinsi crisis in Guma Local Government Area resulted in the development of Tior-Tyu settlement and market in Tarka Local Government Area along the Makurdi–Gboko Road;
- (iii) The agitation for the creation of Nyamatsor and Anber Local Government Areas from the present Buruku Local Government Area contributed to the growth of Abwa settlement and market along the Gboko–Ugbema Road to its present status; and
- (iv) The struggle for the leadership of the Groundnut Marketers Association in Luga Market, Mbayion, facilitated the development of Igbesue settlement and market in Mbativ, Gboko Local Government Area.

In the context of the historical evolution of Tiv settlement patterns, it is evident that settlements have undergone significant transformations as a result of socio-economic, political and historical developments within Tiv society. Ogundele (2006) maintains that one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Tiv people is their high level of mobility within

their broad territorial domain. Similarly, Ahire (1993) observes that the Tiv people are predominantly farmers and, much like the nomadic Fulani who migrate in search of pasture for their cattle, the Tiv frequently move from one location to another within Tiv land and beyond in search of fertile agricultural land. It is therefore important to situate the history of Tiv settlement patterns and their changing nature within the framework of Marxist political economy. Viewed from this theoretical perspective, the pattern of settlement in Tiv land is largely shaped by the land tenure system and the practice of agriculture.

Land, which is a fundamental factor of agricultural production in Tiv land as elsewhere, is central not only to the migration of Tiv people but also to the determination of their settlement patterns. People naturally gravitate towards lands that are suitable for agricultural activities and, in particular, seek to establish residences on family-owned lands. Consequently, the desire to expand and maintain control over agricultural land often results in the establishment of new and isolated settlements. This tendency is reinforced by Bohannan and Bohannan's (1968) principle of the *residence rule*, which grants individuals the right to reside in areas associated with the smallest lineage segment to which they belong by birth, usually that of their father.

Historically, traditional Tiv society was organised around a communal mode of production, which significantly influenced its value system, including settlement patterns. In the pre-colonial period, land administration was undertaken through village councils, where decisions were reached by consensus among elders. Land was held communally on behalf of families. According to Tarnande (2005), the greatest impetus for change in Tiv society, and indeed African societies generally, has been the incursion of the Western capitalist mode of production. Notwithstanding the disruptive effects of colonialism, there has been no complete transformation of the traditional mode of production. What exists in contemporary Tiv society is better described as an articulation of modes of production. Traditional communal land tenure arrangements have gradually given way to individual landholding in most parts of contemporary Tiv society. Although the Land Use Act of 1978 vested ownership of land in the government, it did not extinguish the rights of individuals occupying or developing land in rural areas. Rather, it transferred allocative powers over undeveloped land from traditional authorities to local governments (Tarnande, 2005). Consequently, people continue to claim and exercise rights over their farmlands. Land, which remains a critical factor in the rural economy of the Tiv people, is largely owned and controlled by peasant farmers. The attachment to land ownership has become deeply entrenched and continues to influence the pattern of rural settlements in contemporary Tiv society.

Comparatively, the situation in the southern parts of Benue State, inhabited predominantly by the Idoma and Iggede peoples, is somewhat different. Tser (2013, p. 84) observes that settlement patterns in Benue South are predominantly nucleated. This, however, does not imply that the Idoma and Iggede are less committed to farming or place less value on land. Rather, they prefer to reside together in compact settlements for socio-cultural, economic, and security reasons, while reserving the surrounding hinterlands for farming and hunting activities. This explains why settlements such as Usha in Agatu, Idaba in Apa, Ikpomolokpo in Ado, Ichama in Okpokwu, Okpiko in Ohimini, and Ugboju in Otukpo Local Government Areas exhibit nucleated settlement patterns, with their surrounding hinterlands remaining largely uninhabited.

The theoretical basis of this argument is that nearly all rural settlements in Tiv land perform primarily agricultural functions. Thus, emphasis is placed on the material conditions

of existence and production, particularly the role of the economy, in understanding Tiv settlement patterns. Every socio-economic system possesses a mode of production, and each mode of production gives rise to particular social classes, class relations and contradictions upon which ideology, philosophy, dominant values, legal systems and state institutions are founded (Beckman, 1983). This perspective helps to explain that the nature and character of settlement patterns in Tiv land are not merely reflections of the economic history of the people but are also largely determined by agricultural practices, land tenure arrangements, and the prevailing mode of production.

3. Impact of Scattered Settlement Patterns on Rural Development: A Focus on Tiv Land in Benue State

The scattered settlement pattern that characterises most parts of Tiv land does not only provide parameters for measuring the level of underdevelopment and poverty, but has also negatively affected rural development in several respects. This argument suggests that dispersed or isolated settlement is one of the major causes of rural underdevelopment and poverty in Tiv land. According to Tarnande (2015), the dispersed settlement pattern that characterises much of the Tiv rural society is, in many ways, antithetical to meaningful, rapid and sustained development. It is therefore partly responsible for the slow pace of development that makes Tiv society stand out as a symbol of poverty when the geography of socio-economic development in Nigeria is discussed. Providing an elaborate account of the impact of scattered settlement patterns on development in Tiv land, Tser (2013, pp. 86–87) notes that:

this pattern does not lend itself to rural development strategies. When projects such as schools, skill acquisition centres, health facilities, and electricity transformers are proposed for areas with scattered settlement patterns, it becomes difficult to select suitable sites for such projects. This situation has led to the location of projects in a few clustered settlements with relatively fewer people, at the expense of the rural dwellers who are scattered across the landscape and constitute the majority of the population. In agricultural development, the introduction of commercial mechanised farming poses the problem of displacing people who are scattered over the landscape.

From the standpoint of agricultural productivity, commercial and industrial development, as well as social and infrastructural provision, arguments against scattered settlement in Tiv land are supported by the fact that it results in the waste of valuable agricultural land by reducing the amount of cultivable land available, thereby discouraging large-scale mechanised agriculture. In another dimension, scattered settlement patterns are considered unsuitable for commercial and industrial activities, as well as for the provision of social and infrastructural facilities. The reason is that social amenities such as water supply, electricity, schools, health clinic, and housing can be more effectively established and efficiently managed in nucleated settlements. Moreover, industries are usually established where there is a concentration of people. Commercial activities are predominantly found in urban areas because commerce and industry thrive better in places where investors can access markets and make profits from their products. Similarly, the unplanned, informal and dispersed nature of rural settlements in Tiv land makes it difficult to develop a framework for the provision of social infrastructure. The settlements are so numerous and widely dispersed that attempts to supply them with social amenities and infrastructure may not yield the desired development outcomes. As observed by Tser (2013, p. 86):

drilling a borehole for the people of Ojantele in Apa or installing a transformer for the people of Edumoga in Okpokwu LGA would be better protected than if such projects were established in an environment where people are scattered across the landscape. Similarly, schools, health facilities, skill acquisition centres, and other projects established in nucleated centres would be more accessible to the people. In agricultural development, the hinterland left for farming by people living in clustered settlements such as Agila, Abogbe, Uchobo, Uwokwu, Ojapo, Ogobia, Ikobi, Itogo, Ukwo, and other settlements in Benue South can be utilised for farming without necessarily displacing the people.

This description reflects the settlement pattern in parts of Benue South, particularly in Idoma and Iggede lands. However, nucleation in the Benue South sub-region is not synonymous with rural development. Rather, the argument is that nucleated settlement patterns are more amenable to rural development. Under a nucleated arrangement, farming activities are carried out outside the settlement area, while other economic activities take place within it. This arrangement allows for the efficient utilisation of social amenities such as schools, health services, electricity, water supply, and sanitation facilities.

Another deficiency of scattered settlement patterns is that they discourage political mobilisation and participation. This pattern deprives people of a sense of neighbourhood, community spirit, and social interaction because it is often difficult to bring people together. Politically, many people are effectively disenfranchised and find it difficult to participate in electoral processes, including voting, because of the long distances to polling centres. Even in the past, Hembe (2005) argues that the dispersed nature of Tiv settlements contributed to the absence of centralised political institutions in Tiv society. It has become evident that inhabitants of emerging townships and larger villages are generally more receptive to new political ideas than those in remote rural areas. This may be because urban residents are better informed, more enlightened, and less constrained by tradition and the influence of elders. This suggests that political activities are more concentrated in areas with higher population densities. Likewise, the decline or absence of strong community development projects in Tiv land can also be attributed to scattered settlement patterns, which hinder community mobilisation and social interaction.

With regard to security, it has been argued that insecurity in Tiv land, especially the incessant attacks by Fulani herdsmen and recurrent land disputes, can largely be attributed to the deficiencies associated with scattered settlement pattern. The desire to control and protect land often results in land hunger which in turn leads to encroachment and conflict. Generally, scattered settlements are more difficult to defend. However, some scholars contend that nucleated settlements may suffer greater casualties during attacks because of the high concentration of people in one location. According to this perspective, an attack on one community can alert neighbouring communities and enable them to prepare for counterattacks, unlike clustered settlements where attacks can be executed swiftly and simultaneously. This reasoning suggests that scattered settlements are more difficult to overwhelm because they require more time to conquer.

Although this argument appears convincing, it does not adequately reflect the security realities in Tiv land, where isolated settlement patterns have proven ineffective for collective defence against external aggression. Historically, Hembe (2005) argues that the Tiv revolts of 1960 and 1964 affected scattered homesteads in rural areas more severely than nucleated settlements. Villages such as Taraku in Masev successfully resisted adversaries in both 1960

and 1964 and also enjoyed better police protection during periods of unrest. The relationship between scattered settlement patterns and persistent attacks on farming communities in Tiv land by marauding herdsmen has been widely acknowledged. The Report of the Benue State Committee on Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Tiv Land (2014) identifies scattered settlement patterns as one of the major factors exposing rural Tiv communities to herdsmen attacks. The report further indicates that nucleated settlements would have been more difficult for herdsmen to ransack and that it would have been easier for government security personnel to protect such villages (Tarnande, 2015, p. 9).

Nevertheless, every issue has two sides. Despite the disadvantages associated with scattered settlement patterns, they also possess certain benefits. Scattered settlements are generally less prone to crime and relatively free from the health risks associated with overcrowding. For the average peasant farmer, this settlement pattern brings people closer to their farmlands, helps prevent encroachment, and ensures effective control over land resources. It is also suitable for shifting cultivation and contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage. However, the advantages of nucleated settlements appear to outweigh their disadvantages and therefore make them more suitable for promoting rural development in Tiv land and elsewhere in Nigeria. In this regard, Udo (1982) argues that even in traditional Tiv society, as in many other pre-industrial societies, nucleated settlement patterns have been regarded as the most normal and rational form of settlement.

4. The Imperative of Rural Settlements Reorganization and Rural Development

The issue of human settlements is at the forefront of global efforts to address the multiplicity of challenges facing sustainable development. As one of the main drivers of development, especially in the developing world, the imperative of sustainable human settlements informed the United Nations Conferences, namely the UN-Habitat I (1976), Habitat II (1999), and Habitat III (2016). These UN conferences, organized under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly, also produced key outcomes such as the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements and the Vancouver Action Plan, the establishment of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (1978), the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and Habitat Agenda, the Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements for All, as well as the UN Strategic Plan (2020–2023).

Other global initiatives aimed at mobilizing governments and key stakeholders to achieve sustainable human settlements include the World Bank Mission (IBRD, 1961), the UN Commission on Human Settlements (1977), the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (1987), the Global Strategy for Shelter (2000), and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 11): “Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements,” among others. Many countries, especially in Africa, that recognize human settlement as an integral component and key indicator of sustainable development have adopted resolutions and recommendations from these international conferences, as well as leveraged other global and regional initiatives, to introduce development-oriented human settlement policies. For instance, the resolutions of the First United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in 1976 informed the Nigerian government’s enactment of the Land Use Act of 1978. In Tanzania, a rural resettlement programme known as the “villagization” policy was introduced. Similar village integration policies were implemented in Zambia, Kenya, Zaire, and other parts of Africa, including Nigeria, such as the Abakaliki Rural Resettlement Scheme. According to Udo (1982, p. 57):

in various parts of Zambia, Zaire and Nigeria, many small villages have been amalgamated to form larger settlements as part of programmes aimed at controlling and eradicating the incidence of sleeping sickness. The more recent cases of village integration, such as those in Abakiliki Division of Nigeria, have been prompted by the desire to ensure greater social security and to provide a threshold population to support basic social services such as schools, rural electrification, rural water supply, postal agencies, and rural clinics.

Therefore, the imperative of state intervention in rural settlement in Nigeria entails re-organisation of rural areas in favour of nucleated or compact settlements. According to Udo (1982), village integration in most part of Africa such as Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya, Zaire, and some parts of Nigeria, such as the Abakiliki was motivated by the desire to ease the collection of tax from the rural population, ensure greater social security as well as provide a threshold population to support basic social services. In Tanzania, for instance, a rural resettlement policy was introduced based on the conviction that the ability of government to raise taxes, defend its territorial boundaries, provide public goods and improve the living standards of the people through increased agricultural productivity was hindered by the large and scattered peasant population in the hinterland.

In Tiv land of Benue State, the imperative of restructuring and reorganising rural settlements has given rise to the advocacy for *Sor Tema* (resettlement in favour of clustered or compact settlement patterns), similar to attempts made by the Nasarawa State Government. The growing advocacy for the reorganisation and restructuring of rural settlements in Tiv land is largely driven by the problem of insecurity arising from attacks by Fulani herdsmen on rural farming communities. Consequently, the *Sor Tema* campaign argues that the incessant attacks on rural communities, as well as land-related disputes, have exposed the deficiencies associated with the scattered settlement pattern in Tiv land. Although the *Sor Tema* awareness campaign has not received adequate attention from the government and other critical stakeholders, such as Mdzough U Tiv, it has contributed to the emergence of new clustered settlements, particularly along the Makurdi–Naka Road, Katsina-Ala–Zaki Biam Road, and the Makurdi–Lafia Road, especially within the Daudu axis of Guma Local Government Area.

Although attempts at village integration in most parts of Africa during the colonial period were inspired by the desire to ease tax collection from rural populations and to create a conducive environment for colonial administration, they also helped, to some extent, to bring formerly scattered settlements together. The argument being made is that segmented settlements not only provide parameters for measuring the level of underdevelopment and poverty but are also antithetical to meaningful, rapid and sustained rural development in Nigeria (Tarnande, 2015). According to Tser (2013, pp. 86–87):

scattered settlement patterns do not lend themselves to rural development strategies. When projects such as schools, skill acquisition centres, health facilities, and electricity transformers are proposed for areas with scattered settlement patterns, it becomes difficult to select suitable sites. This situation often leads to the concentration of projects in a few clustered settlements with fewer people, at the expense of the majority of rural dwellers who are dispersed across the landscape. In agricultural development, the introduction of commercial mechanized farming may also lead to the displacement of people who are scattered across the landscape.

Arguments against scattered settlements suggest that they result in the wastage of valuable agricultural land and discourage large-scale mechanized farming. Segmented settlements are also considered unsuitable for commercial and industrial activities, as

industries are usually located where there is population concentration. Furthermore, scattered settlements tend to hinder political mobilization and participation because they limit social interaction and isolate people from civic engagement. More importantly, the persistent attacks by armed herdsman on rural communities in Nigeria, as well as frequent land disputes, can partly be attributed to scattered settlements. This is because such settlements are more difficult to defend, and competition over land often leads to land hunger, encroachment, and conflict.

Despite these disadvantages, scattered settlements are noted to be less prone to crime and relatively free from health risks associated with overcrowding. For the average peasant farmer, they bring people closer to their farmlands and help prevent land encroachment while ensuring better land control. This settlement pattern is also suitable for shifting cultivation and contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage. From a security perspective, it is argued that in the event of attacks, nucleated settlements often suffer higher casualties due to population concentration. According to this view, attacks on one community can alert neighbouring ones, enabling preparedness for counteraction, unlike clustered settlements where attacks can be executed in a single sweep. This perspective suggests that scattered settlements are more difficult to overrun quickly.

However, as persuasive as this argument may appear, it does not fully reflect the realities of insecurity in some rural areas of Nigeria, including Tiv land in Benue State. There are inherent weaknesses in isolated settlements with respect to collective defence against external attacks (*Report of the Benue State Committee on Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Tiv Land*, 2014). Moreover, in a nucleated settlement arrangement, farming activities are carried out outside the residential area, while other economic activities are concentrated within the settlement. This facilitates more efficient use of social amenities such as schools, healthcare facilities, electricity, water, and sanitation. This analysis does not imply that nucleated settlements are synonymous with rural development or are without challenges; rather, it emphasizes that they are more amenable to rural development. Therefore, the advantages of nucleated settlements far outweigh their disadvantages and, therefore, make them a more suitable model for rural development in Nigeria.

5. Lessons from Tanzania's Experience

Tanzania became an independent country in 1961, almost the same period as Nigeria. The issue of scattered rural settlements was one of the major problems that confronted the Tanzanian government after independence. According to Kikula (1996), rural settlements during the 75 years of colonial rule in Tanzania were small and localised. At independence in 1961, about 90% of the Tanzanian population lived in rural areas in scattered hamlets that were not organised into formal villages (Osato, 2011). This situation posed a challenge for state formation and the need to bring the scattered rural population under government control. The socio-economic and historical realities of post-independence Tanzania therefore informed the government's decision, under the leadership of Julius Nyerere, to introduce a "villagisation" programme based on recommendations of the World Bank Mission (1961) on sustainable human settlements.

Basically, the Tanzanian villagisation policy was designed to agglomerate the rural population and establish government-planned villages. It aimed at resettling the previously scattered rural population in line with the modernization of rural areas. According to Nyerere (1968), the concentration of the rural population would facilitate the modernization of

traditional agriculture, which was characterised by shifting cultivation, small farm holdings, poor implements and low yields. As noted by Mandal (1989), the Tanzanian model of rural resettlement was designed to provide services such as schools, dispensaries, shops and staff quarters at village centres, along with residential areas where settlers-built homes and cultivated crops on allocated plots of land.

The thrust of Tanzania's villagisation policy was anchored on Nyerere's political philosophy of *Ujamaa*, which was rooted in traditional African values of familyhood and communalism. At the same time, the policy was influenced by a blend of Fabian socialism and Catholic social teaching. Nyerere's ideological outlook emphasised self-reliant development for African nations, based on socialist principles. As a radical political thinker, he was committed to a model that could liberate post-independence African countries from the global capitalist system which he believed perpetuated dependency and underdevelopment. Consequently, the Tanzanian government established *Ujamaa* villages to promote socialist values in rural areas. These villages consisted of peasant households working collectively on communal farms to improve living standards and generate surplus income for social infrastructure development.

The implementation of the villagisation policy occurred in two phases. The first phase was voluntary and relied on persuasion. As captured in Nyerere's Arusha Declaration (1967), rural development in the immediate post-independence period depended largely on persuasion to encourage progressive farmers to adopt modern agricultural techniques for cash crop production. However, this approach yielded limited success, as village formation progressed slowly. In response, a compulsory resettlement programme was introduced in 1974, under which all peasant households were relocated into villages. Within a 35-month period, registered or developmental villages were established (Osato, 2011). Comparatively, the compulsory phase recorded greater success than the voluntary approach. McHenry (1979) observes that within about 20 months, nearly 85% of rural households had been relocated into nucleated settlements, marking a significant transformation of the countryside. However, implementation varied across regions and typically involved stages such as identifying existing settlements, selecting new village sites, and final resettlement.

A critical factor in Tanzania's rural resettlement programme is its institutional and legislative framework which offers important lessons for Nigeria. According to Shivji and Peters (2003), village development in Tanzania was not merely about physical relocation, but involved institutional restructuring through the Villages and Ujamaa Villages Act of 1975. This was preceded by the African Chiefs Ordinance (Repeal Act) of 1963, which nationalised land under presidential control. However, in 1982, the Villages and Ujamaa Villages Act was repealed and replaced by the Local Government (District Authorities) Act to enhance village-level participation in decision-making.

Generally, Tanzania's villagisation policy recorded notable successes, particularly in its early stages. According to Osato (2011, p.12):

Tanzania's villagisation policy succeeded in relocating over five million peasants from scattered homesteads into nucleated settlements of 250 to 600 households each, permanently altering spatial, social, and economic production relations. It also established approximately eight thousand development villages and a new system of village governance. In addition, it led to short-term increases in primary school completion rates by about 11.5% and an increase in the probability of completion by about 13%. From the perspective of community mobilisation and political awareness, it increased participation in village meetings by about 6 percentage points

In terms of infrastructure, the policy improved access to schools and healthcare services in rural areas, particularly primary education and health facilities. Ngware and Haule (1992) also highlight its impact on electoral participation and the strengthening of local government fiscal capacity. The widespread mobilisation in developmental villages during the late 1970s increased political awareness and encouraged higher participation in national elections, making electoral democracy an important feature of Tanzania's political development. However, some of these gains were not sustained due to implementation challenges. Poor execution led to environmental degradation, agricultural decline, and social dissatisfaction. While Tanzania's villagisation policy has been praised as a model of socialist modernisation, it has also been criticised as an authoritarian intervention in peasant production systems. Nonetheless, it remains one of the most significant rural settlement reorganisation efforts in Africa. The policy promoted integrated rural development through communal agriculture, planned settlement patterns, improved markets, rural security, political participation and expanded access to infrastructure such as water, transport, education, and healthcare.

Despite its shortcomings, the Tanzanian model provides useful lessons for rural development in Nigeria. It demonstrates that the state has an important role to play in restructuring rural settlements. Settlement planning should therefore be a key component of Nigeria's rural development policies. Given the similarities between Tanzania's post-independence challenges and those of Nigeria, the Tanzanian model can serve as a useful reference, provided it is adapted to local conditions and improved upon to address weaknesses such as corruption, inadequate funding, and weak institutional and legislative frameworks. Ultimately, the success of rural settlement reorganisation in Nigeria depends on moving beyond excessive reliance on government intervention. Instead, a balanced approach that combines state leadership with community participation and private sector collaboration is required.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper examines the role of the state in the reorganisation of rural settlements by drawing on the Tanzanian experience for lessons that are relevant to Nigeria. The study is inspired not only by Tanzania's experience but also by similar efforts in other African countries such as Kenya, Zambia, Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo), Cameroon and others. It is further informed by the relatively successful attempts of the colonial government and Native Authorities to establish planned towns and villages in various parts of Nigeria during the colonial period. These experiences demonstrate clearly that the state has a significant role to play in the reorganisation of rural settlements in Nigeria. However, the Nigerian state has largely failed to address the problem of scattered, unplanned and poorly serviced rural settlements. Although human settlements are central to rural transformation, they have not received adequate attention from government policy. In most cases, state interventions in rural development have widened the rural-urban divide in favour of urban centres. This failure to restructure and develop rural settlements is largely attributable to the nature and character of the post-colonial Nigerian state which often serves as an instrument for the political class to pursue primitive accumulation of wealth at the expense of development.

There is, therefore, an urgent need to redirect government attention toward the problem of rural underdevelopment which is closely linked to the nature and spatial

organisation of rural settlements in Nigeria. Rural development should go beyond the provision of social and infrastructural facilities, empowerment programmes, and improved agricultural production. Greater attention must be given to the structure and organisation of rural settlements, as this is fundamental to achieving sustainable and meaningful rural development. The Nigerian government should draw lessons from Tanzania's experience, particularly by reflecting on both the successes and implementation challenges of the villagisation policy. The Tanzanian model of rural settlement reorganisation should be adopted and adapted to suit Nigeria's unique socio-political and cultural context. In addition, the policy should be supported by strong, credible, and sustainable legislative-based institutions. More importantly, the success of any rural settlement reorganisation policy in Nigeria will depend not only on political commitment and the reduction of bureaucratic bottlenecks and corruption, but also on effective collaboration between government and rural communities.

Specifically, government should design and implement a Rural Resettlement Action Plan that would transform rural settlements into viable socio-economic and political entities capable of contributing meaningfully to national development. Focusing on Benue State, a proposed Benue State Rural Resettlement Action Plan could be developed based on the philosophy of *Sor Tema* (resettlement through clustered settlement patterns), similar to the *Ujamaa Villages* in Tanzania. Such a strategy would involve government efforts in partnership with rural communities, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders to establish Central Location Centres (CLCs) at the kindred level across all council wards in the local government areas. These CLCs should serve not only as residential clusters but, more importantly, as viable rural economic units capable of positively transforming the rural political economy and contributing to national development.

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