

Identifying Redevelopment Needs of the Jos Plateau Mining Region

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Abstract: This paper is concerned with the rehabilitation of the depressed Jos Plateau mining region. It focuses specifically on identification of the redevelopment needs of the region. Information on the settlements, their sites, physical surroundings and current economic activities; housing conditions, presence of infrastructural facilities and amenities, types and quality of road links, and marketing activities in the region provided the requisite data for the study. The findings led to the identification of five critical redevelopment needs of the region namely: land availability; sustainable alternative economic activities; reorganization and restructuring of the settlements; physical accessibility; and social integration. Land management schemes, promotion of fadama farming; paying attention to tourism; creation of service centres; and improving bonding in the communities are recommended as measures to address the needs of the region.

Keywords: Development, Needs, Degradation, Accessibility, Rehabilitation, Planning

INTRODUCTION

The Jos Plateau is a distinct physiographic region which rises to a general altitude of over 1,200 metres above sea level, and about 600 metres above its surrounding plains to which it descends through several steep, stepped escarpments. It is located in about the

centre of Nigeria's space, occupying the northern half of Plateau State. It covers a land area of about 8,600 kms and made up of essentially of the following administrative units; Jos North, Jos East, Jos South, BarkinLadi, Ryom, Bassa, Mangu, and Bokkos Local Government Areas (Fig, 1).



Fig.1: Nigeria and plateau state showing local government areas.

Prior to this time the Jos Plateau constituted one of those restricted areas of tropical Africa where the systematic exploitation of its resources by modern methods created an "economic island" surrounded by vast areas with poorly developed exchange economy. For almost a century, the economy of the Jos Plateau was dominated by intensive exploitation of minerals particularly tin and columbite.

Starting with the Royal Niger Company which commenced tin mining operations in 1905, the number of mining companies on the Jos Plateau increased to forty (40) in 1912, and reached 139 by 1955. In 1960, the country produced over 12,000 tonnes of tin

representing 5% of the world's total output. On the whole, the mining industry employed a large number of people and attracted migrants from many parts of the country. No doubt, majority of the people on the Jos Plateau then relied on the socio-economic returns from their employment in the tin mines [1].

Unfortunately, from the late 1960s the industry ran into many problems. Production declined considerably to less than 2 % of world output, and continued to decline in the face of numerous operating problems such as high cost of deeper and less accessible deposits, the competition by other minerals (particularly oil) and the economic

depression and fallen world market prices for tin and its associated minerals. By 1983, the country was allocated a production quota of only 385 tonnes, and since the 1990s the industry has remained in a stabilized low state [2].

In consequence, most of the mining companies folded up and laid-off their workers including their senior engineering and technical professionals. Thus, in addition to the environmental problems arising from mining activities, the 1990s marked the beginning of the various economic and social woes of the region. Settlements and their residents in the region are now facing numerous problems such as unemployment, or fallen standards of living and uncertainties about their future. This is why the processes and requirements for sustained development need to be identified, understood, planned for and enhanced in the region.

In planning for the redevelopment of the region, knowledge of its physical, economic, and social circumstances becomes imperative. For instance, we need to know the region's current environmental conditions and alternative employment and productive opportunities and potentials they present. Thus, understanding the existing situation in the region in order to identify its development needs becomes an important preliminary exercise in the current effort to rehabilitate the region. It is against this background that this paper provides information on the current conditions in the Jos Plateau Region as a basis for identifying its development needs on which planning actions for its redevelopment can be based.

CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

It has been observed that one of the major factors in the current concern about what has been achieved from decades of central planning in many developing countries derives from the ambiguity surrounding the word "development" [3].

For instance, scholars have over the years been drawn into the debate of whether development should continue to be seen as modernization or generally as economic growth. But evidences show that in developing countries which have registered significant gains in Gross National Product, growth rates are plagued with severely skewed income distribution patterns [4]. Such situations have created isolated "islands" of economic prosperity within countries while the vast majority live in abject poverty lacking economic access to fundamental human needs such as food, shelter, safe drinking water and health services [5].

As a consequence of these experiences, more and more scholars are arguing that economic growth does not necessarily bring about economic development and that in many countries, the prospect for reduction of inequality in the future are gloomy.

Bhaduri [5] therefore forcefully argued for a more sensitive and humanitarian approach to development that would attack the causes of poverty. Thus according to Develtere [6], economic growth does not cause social growth and consequently cannot be seen to accurately convey social development. He argues that indicators of social change should be used to complement economic growth as evidences of development and in formulating development policies.

Arising from these arguments, development can be seen as the process of :

- i. a general improvement in levels of living together with,
- ii. decreasing inequality in income distribution, and;
- iii. the capacity to sustain continuous improvements over time.

This view of development has two implications. First, a general improvement in levels of living emphasizes that development is essentially a human issue, a concern with the capacity of individuals to realize their inherent potentials, and to effectively cope with the changing circumstances of their lives. Secondly, development involves the total and full mobilisation of a society towards the achievement of continuous growth.

An important component of development that has attracted and enjoyed increased interest in recent years is rural development. This has resulted perhaps from the growing realization of its role in the overall development of emerging nations with about 70% of their populations living in the rural areas [7]. More than hitherto, the focus today is how to bring about rural development and improve the overall living condition of the rural people.

The task of achieving rural development has provoked the search for the identification of the development needs of rural communities. In this regard, Ray [8] posits that rural development should focus on increasing rural productivity and income, diversify rural economy and generally enhance the quality of life in rural areas. This perspective thus envisages a life free from poverty, hunger and diseases, a life in which prosperity is enhanced in the rural areas by the building of schools and hospitals, the supplying of water and electricity, the provision of recreational facilities and the times to enjoy them all.

Terluin [9] has contended that rural development needs can be based on either "access-type disadvantages" or "resource-type disadvantages". The first relates to people-oriented deprivations such as poor access to food, shelter, drinking water, electricity, health services, schools and information that would better their future. The second on the other hand relates to resources necessary to provide goods and services

sellable in the global market. No wonder, Barlett [10] argues that improvements in the socio-economic wellbeing of a depressed or disadvantaged area can best be brought about by recognising and animating the collective resources of the territory itself. Thus development needs in rural communities should therefore focus on issues that would generate improvements at the inhabitant level and those that would stimulate development at the place.

The provision of such needs requires according to Ray [8] partnership working and collaborative arrangements between public bodies or between the public, private and voluntary agencies which have been increasingly recognized as a mechanism to promote and manage rural development.

METHODOLOGY

Information generated by previous works on the mining region served as the platform on which data collection for this study was based. Sumaila [2] who pioneered empirical studies in the region carried out a delimitation of the region and identified ninety – two (92) rural settlements in the region in addition to the major towns of Jos, Bukuru, Bassa, Barkin Ladi and Mangu.

Given that this study is an exploratory one, the data collection methods involved essentially systematic observations and recording of information on the physical, economic, and social conditions in and around each of the ninety- two settlements. To ensure total and quick coverage of the region, six Field Assistants who were undergraduates were engaged to work with the researcher. They were briefed on the focus of the study and the nature of their tasks prior to the commencement of the exercise. In each settlement, a Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) technique was used which ensured rapid gathering of information in small-sized rural settlement. To facilitate this, the Field Assistants worked in three groups each recording observations on one of the following three aspects of the study.

- I. Settlement sites, their physical surroundings, and existing economic activities and potentials especially with regard to mining (both formal and informal), agricultural activities, rural crafts, and industries.
- II. Housing types, forms, and conditions, and whether new houses were being constructed; presence of infrastructural facilities and social amenities such as schools, hospitals, electricity, water supply, and recreational activities.
- III. Types and quality of road links in terms of their surface conditions, width, period of motorability, and types and conditions of the bridges/ culverts on the roads; cost of vehicular movement and marketing

activities especially goods sold and market periodicity.

These exercises were carried out simultaneously in each settlement while the researcher conducted oral interviews on each village head. The fact that the researcher has full knowledge of the geography of the region eliminated almost completely the logistics problems usually associated with data collection in a rural setting such as the Jos Plateau. Movement of the research team was done in one vehicle and the exercise lasted throughout the month of April, 2013.

Systematic inquiries and oral interviews of village heads were conducted on general problems confronting the settlements. Questions relating to vehicular movement, community participation in development and social integration issues were asked. Apart from the information obtained from the literature, some useful population statistics were obtained from the Plateau State Ministry of Economic Development. The recorded observations were summarized and the results of each aspect are presented and discussed in the next section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Physical Conditions

Physiographically, the mining region is dominated generally by granitic and basaltic rock outcrops and a lot of inselbergs. Most of the settlements are located at foothills lineally along either wet or dry river valleys. Soils around the settlements were observed to be patchy in their distribution as their formation can only be noticed within the rock joints where they harbour trees and shrubs. According to Morgan [11], about 30% of the land area in the region is occupied by rock outcrops. The region is presently characterised by artificial lakes and ponds, drained by an interlacing system of water furrows.

Due to intensive mining activities, the physical landscape around the settlements presents considerable environmental problems. The physical imprints were in the forms of abandoned old mines or over – mined areas greatly disfigured by heaps of compacted or uncompacted mining tips of different heights and circumferences often bare of or with very scanty vegetation. There were mining spoils of slurry tin tailings spread over wide areas, and earth banks of unconsolidated steep paddock mounds of either loose swampy or clayey soils. Also prevalent were deep and unfilled mining pits and neglected mining excavations some of which were dry open pits with gully sides and heads.

Evidences of numerous forms of rural land degradation do also exist as bad – land type features left on old, previously mined, and abandoned river courses.

They also exist as blocked, sealed-off, or diverted river courses and polluted and /or infested surface water bodies. Others were very active and destructive gully processes especially along the old mined valleys whose sides are rendered even more unstable and susceptible through mining operations.

As pointed out by many village heads these environmental problems are now expressed in the form of acute land shortages, land use competition, conflicts, and pressures on rural land. Even more disturbing are the safety and security challenges posed by the mine dumps, dams and various ponds around the settlements. A number of people especially children have died either by drowning or through sudden collapse of old mine paddocks. In the last five years, the mine dumps and pits are said to be used as hide-outs by assailants and 'trenches' from where attacks are launched on villages especially in Riyom and BarkinLadi Local Government Areas which have been witnessing deadly communal clashes.

It is glaring from the foregoing that land on which the economies of most rural communities across the world are based is seriously threatened in the Plateau region especially with regard to its spatial occurrence and availability for various uses. Apart from physical barriers especially rock outcrops which have greatly affected land availability, the physical surroundings of the settlements have also been severely devastated and disfigured by mining activities. These facts therefore make land a crucial and urgent redevelopment need in the region.

Economic Activities

The total collapse of the tin mining industry has created a number of economic problems arising from general unemployment and apparent unfriendly economic environment. Many of the inhabitants claimed not to be gainfully employed. The problem according to the people is that many of them are technically and psychologically attached to mining activities making their adjustment more difficult. This probably explains the prevalence in the region today of informal mining activities which concentrate on re-working the mine dumps. Though a large number of the people (both male and female) were observed to be engaged in it, the activity was said not to be profitable enough as to provide reliable economic support to the people.

There are however, a few other economic sectors and specializations practised by many of the people at various scales of operation. The agricultural sector in the region is characterized mainly by rain-fed upland farming. Farm units were observed to be generally in patches, separated by rock outcrops, or found strewn by numerous stones. By means of terracing, many of the steeper slopes and escarpment were observed to be brought under cultivation. The

traditional farming systems are based on one that predates the sudanic sorghum-based culture which employs the short-handle, large-bladed hoe for cultivation and weeding. Crops such as acha, rizga, millet and, tiger nuts which are typically of short growing period and of low nutrient demand are grown. Given that the soils are patchy and are easily eroded or leached which could even turn to hard pans in places, this form of agriculture as currently practised appears unable to assure adequate incomes for the people.

Farming activities in the region were also found concentrated along river valleys as fadamas. The various ponds are now being used for farming activities. With the use of the local shaduff irrigation, a highly specialized form of intensive farming is being practised. Perishable crops such as tomatoes, cabbage, lettuce, carrots and vegetables are usually grown. Since the available fadama area is limited in the region, it is not able to provide adequate employment for all or most of the able-bodied men and women. Moreover, it requires specialized skills which most of the people currently lack.

There are also the semi-urban and urban fringe zone economy which is characterised by a mixture of both urban and rural-type activities such as petty-trading, informal services, crafts, and gardening. In such settlements as Bisichi, Zawan, Du, and Kuru which are the rural hinterlands of the urban centres, people were engaged in medium to large scale businesses as in the construction industry, or middlemen appointed distributors for industrial products, especially consumables. Regrettably, most of the settlements cannot benefit from such opportunities. It can therefore be concluded that the greatest need of the region today revolves around sustainable economic activities capable of providing reliable employment, liveable incomes, and strong support to the people.

Characteristics of the Rural Settlements

Number and Sizes of the Settlements

The study has shown that sixty-nine (69) out of the ninety-two settlements identified in the region in 1989 physically exist on ground today. The remaining twenty-three (23) had become desolate and abandoned at the time of this survey (see table 4.1). The desolation process though aggravated today by the communal clashes prevalent on the Jos Plateau was set in motion by the general economic insecurity and survival challenges plaguing in the region. Also most of these settlements are isolated and highly dispersed separated by long distances from centres of growth such as urban centres. For instance, Barkin Sho and Barkin Werram are each about 40 kms away from the nearest urban centre. These factors have led to the relocation of many settlements especially in the BarkinLadi, and Riyom Local Government Areas. In fact, field evidences of

settlement amalgamation and shifts abound in the region.

Table 4.1. Status of Rural Settlements in the Mining Region

Survived /Flourishing	Adjusting /surviving	Stagnating/decaying		Desolate/Abandoned
Naraguta	Hoss	Korot	Kumbun	Danyaro
Bebale	Farinlamba	Kantoma	Tim-Tim	Gamajugo
Rukuba	Rahoss	Mashakash	Gana-Daji	Kalato
Delimi	Jebu	BarkinDregi	Kwaf	Dawa
Rayfield	AssobHausawa	JirginSama	Werram	Yelwa
Du	KuruJenta	Passa Kai	Hiktop	Ruku
Zawan	KassaHausawa	SabonGari	Shen	Tenti
Vom	Daika	Kurama	Rakwok	Dress
Kura	Jakatai	KeffiHabu	Ropp	Monbuwso
Riyom	Bunga	Kasa Kobo	Gashish	BarkinSho
Ganawuri	GanaRopp	BukarBokwoi	Forom	BarkinKwi
Heipang	Kuba	Maitumbi	Mbar	SabonGida
Bisichi	Daffa	Nding	Bot	Fusa
	Mankatako	Barageshe	Bungudu	Gwam
Miango	Kunet	Sho	Buji	Barkinwerram
Kurra falls	Dogo	Shere	Bachit	Bakinnding
Bokkos	Gindiakwati	Rim	Kwi	Jol
Dorowa		Sharabutu		Rafan
				Tafan
				Kaku
				Tashok
				Major Porter
				Myel

Source: Fieldwork, 2013

Officials statistical records show that the eight Local Government Areas that make up the mining region have an estimated population of 1,771,253 distributed in settlements of various sizes. Presently 63.6 % (1,126,517) of the population are rural dwellers while 36.4 % (644,736) reside in settlements designated as urban (Plateau State Gazette, 2012). Table 4.2 shows

that 13% of the total population of the region live in settlements of less than 2000 people, while about 30% live in greater Jos (Jos- Bukuru Urban complex). These statistics show the scattered nature and small sizes of most of the settlements in the region which have obvious implications for the provision of social amenities and the overall socio economic development of the region.

Table 42: Percentage Distribution of Projected Population according to Settlement Sizes

Population Cohort	Total Population	Percentage
Less than 2000 people	147,014	8.3
2000-4,999	444,584.5	25.1
5000-9,999	405,616.9	22.9
10,000-14,999	129,301.5	7.3
15,000-19,999	42,510.1	2.4
20,000-24,999	30,111.3	1.7
400,000 +	572,114.7	32.3
Total	1,771,253	

Source: based on 2006 national census figures.

Field evidences show not only a preponderance of females in the entire population, but also large concentration of population in the young and old age- groups. These may be attributed to the fact that

the rural settlements are experiencing negative net migration as young adults move out of the settlements in search of jobs. Thus the population is undergoing an ageing process which is the product both of selective out- migration and selective in migration of retired people. In all the settlements, therefore, elderly people, women and children now characterise the structure of

the population. In these circumstance most of the settlements stagger under high maintenance burden. In fact, many of the people looked sickly or largely underfed during the period of fieldwork for this study. The settlements are also suffering from lack of threshold population sizes. It therefore becomes imperative to reorganize and restructure the settlements for development purposes.

Basic Infrastructures and Social Amenities

Based on the availability of infrastructural facilities and social amenities, only seventeen settlements can be said to be flourishing having standard infrastructure and social amenities such as hospitals, schools, pipe-borne water, and electricity among others. Even four of the settlements (Rukuba, Naraguta, Rayfield and Kuru) have in addition such facilities as public toilets and libraries. Interestingly settlements in this group constitute the rural hinterlands of the urban centres in the region as all of them lie within 2 km distance of either Jos, or Bukuru thereby becoming parts of the Jos – Bukuru urban complex. Indeed, settlements in this group are undergoing the process of ‘rurbanization’ enjoying high – order urban facilities. For instance, the Headquarters of 3rd Armoured Division, Nigerian Army is in Rukuba, Plateau State Government House in Rayfield, Jos Industrial Zone, and the University of Jos in Naraguta, while Nigeria Police Staff College is in Kuru. Another important feature of this category is that the settlements are linked by tarred roads.

The second groups of settlements are those which can be described as surviving and adjusting favourably to the decline of the mining industry. The seventeen (17) settlements in this group are within 2-5kms of the three major highways in the region and also enjoy a high level of amenities provision. These settlements are thriving on trading selling Irish potatoes, and vegetables (for which the Jos Plateau is known) along the major roads. Indeed, ‘road-side’ markets are found dotted along the highways where the settlements are located.

The remaining thirty – five (35) settlements can be categorized as stagnating and decaying . This is because in these settlements existing facilities appear unmaintained. Schools are in very deplorable condition, while school children were seen trekking over some distances to schools. A 7- day periodicity is the main feature of the market system in the settlements. Markets were found to be held either in old stalls, or under the shade of trees which are also used as slaughtering centres and for the sale of meat. Only a few settlements have pipe-borne water facilities, but the tapshad invariably gone dry. A lot of the wells have either been abandoned or left uncared-for. Health facilities were non- existence, while postal centres and recreational centres among other amenities were scarce. Thus about a third of the settlements in this group were also

experiencing the process of desolation as most of their housing units looked rickety, and were at the time of the survey unoccupied, abandoned or partly or totally dilapidated with little or no efforts at repairs, or renovation. In such settlements as Kantorna, Tenti, Bachit, Kuji, Mbar and Jalnearly all the housing units were affected, neither were there new constructions. Indeed, they also tended to typify the ghost- town picture which the desolate and abandoned settlements presented.

Rural settlements in this category have relatively poor quality road connections. Their road links were earth- surfaced and either clad with pot – holes or characterised by depressions, sagging and dangerously eroded edges. Indeed, they were of seasonal use. The bridges on the roads which were in many cases of wood /plank structures were also narrow and limit vehicular traffic to the lighter ones. In fact, during the wet season especially, most of the settlements are reported to be virtually cut –off and isolated as the road links are rendered impassable. As a result, movement is restricted to a few kilometres. Due to the nature of the roads only very infrequent commercial vehicles ply them. For this reason, the rural inhabitants commute between the settlements by trekking while most of the time, they head-load their goods to the markets.

No doubt, most of the settlements in the region lack basic amenities. One striking feature of the results of this study is that settlements linked by good roads or located along the major roads enjoy appreciable level of infrastructural facilities. Indeed amenities provision decreases with distance away from good roads. This implies that physical accessibility is a major redevelopment need necessary to inject life into the settlements and make the region liveable.

Social Setting

The study found that a high proportion of the population of the region are migrants. Indeed, right from the inception of commercial tin mining on the Jos Plateau, the bulk of the labour force was provided by migrants. As a result, most of the major Nigerian ethnic groups still live in the region especially in the larger villages and urban centres. Today, large migrant populations are in such settlements as Gana Ropp, Gana Daji, Ropp, and Gindi Akwati. Thus, there is high level of heterogeneity of the rural populations. It is therefore common to find several communities in many villages. This heterogeneous nature of the various communities could be a major source of the communal clashes in the region. These may be the result of conflicts arising from scramble for control of resources especially land between indigenes and settlers. Integrating them and creating bonding amongst them is needed to ensure peaceful co-existence on the Jos Plateau.

In summary, the following needs have been identified as critical to the redevelopment of the Jos Plateau region.

- Land availability.
- Sustainable alternative economic activities.
- Reorganization and restructuring of the rural settlements.
- Physical accessibility.
- Integration of the heterogeneous communities.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This study has identified specific and unique redevelopment needs of the mining region based on its current physical, economic and social conditions. It therefore becomes imperative to make recommendations on how these needs can be addressed. Land reclamation, restoration, and management scheme that guarantees and ensures land availability for various uses is recommended for the region. Such a scheme should focus among others on refilling of mine pits, levelling out of mine dumps, initiating soil stabilization processes, and converting derelict land to economic uses should be initiated. In Jos North, South, and East Local Government Areas where mining activities first started, evidences of land reclamation abound. Eucalyptus trees were seen on mine dumps which today have succeeded in breaking down the dumps through natural processes. While this method can be said to be successful, it however takes a long time period for the results to be visible. It may therefore not be appropriate especially for the immediate vicinities of the settlements where the demand for land is highest and most critical. A faster result-yielding approach is required while planting of eucalyptus trees can continue farther away. The Local Government Councils should lead these initiatives and drive them successfully.

In a rural setting like the mining region, agriculture remains a viable and sustainable economic activity. This, as an option should be encouraged and supported in the region. But more importantly, the highly specialized fadama farming appears to hold a higher promise for the redevelopment of the region. This is because it can make use of the numerous ponds and lakes that spread across the region. It also requires smaller land sizes, while the perishable crops grown are of daily demand. Indeed the Plateau region has become popular for the production of such crops and various road-side markets for their sale, dot the region. What may therefore be required are efforts to modernize it, extend its scale of production, and increase crop yields through sustained extension services.

Secondly mining relics and antiquities exist today in the region. They are in the form of abandoned "Drag -Lines", excavation equipment and machines, sluice-boxes, slurry-wash facilities, abandoned labour camps and other mining landscape features. These could

be harnessed and relocated to suitable highly disfigured areas for the purpose of building a Mining Museum. The mining features of dumps, pits, ponds and lakes can be developed and turned to tourist spots and centres for picnicking, swimming, boating and other tourism activities. The Plateau State Government and the Local Councils can advertise these opportunities in order to attract private sector participation in such activities.

The fact that only a small portion of the Plateau region has been excavated and mined, suggests that large deposits of tin are still left in the region. It becomes incumbent on Nigerian government to search for industrial uses of tin in order to re-open mining operation on the Jos Plateau.

The dispersed nature of the rural settlements and their relatively small sizes require that some forms of reorganization and restructuring of the spatial pattern of the settlements be carried out. This would involve identifying and selecting settlements that have locational advantages and injecting developmental impulses into them. This could result to locational shifts of settlements dispersed from these centres. The current security problems in the region have on its own led to the relocation of remote settlements. The service centres should be the focus of governments' road development efforts linking the other rural settlements to them. Such efforts would raise the accessibility levels of the settlements and bring infrastructural facilities and amenities closer to the people.

A package of social integration for the region should focus on encouraging the people to hold village meetings, participate in faith-based association activities, and age-grade help initiatives. These would engender constant dialogue and pave the way for all residents to have equal access to rural resources thereby reducing conflicts and disagreements.

It is relevant to point out that the details of each of the recommendations must be properly and comprehensively worked out. This would permit the selection and adoption of the most appropriate and cost effective options for implementation. It would also enable the assignment of responsibilities for execution to the relevant government agencies with participation of private sector organizations.

This study was essentially an exploratory one carried out using the Rapid Rural Appraisal technique. The study has therefore provided an insight to the redevelopment needs of the region on which more comprehensive and detailed studies could be based. It is therefore hoped that the findings of the study would provoke the search for appropriate and comprehensive planning package that would restore the future of the depressed settlements, rekindle the hopes and better the future of their impoverished residents.

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