Towards a People-Centred Approach in Theology for Socio-Economic Rural Community Development in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

By
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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work. It has not ever been submitted in parts or in its entirety to any school for a degree.

Signature…………………………………..

Date……………………………….

Abstract

This research proposes a people-centred approach to community development in Nasarawa State, Nigeria, within a practical theology framework. The researcher, therefore examine the community development approach in Nasarawa State Nigeria, to ascertain the extent of a people-centred approach in order for a more robust concept that is reasonable for the church towards socio-economic community development. The data used in this research was collected from secondary sources. These sources include: articles, books, journals and public documents.

The research recognizes considerable efforts made so far towards socio-economic development of Nasarawa State. The research indicates that socio-economic development in the rural communities continues to face major challenges, due to the absence of an effective approach to development. The research argues that the persistence of poverty in such communities is inconsistent with the riches of the State's natural resources. Therefore, the research proposes a holistic approach which focuses on the participation of the church in community development efforts, and which is motivated by both physical and spiritual needs of the people.

It is argued in this research that contrary to modernization, relief and welfare which create dependency, a people-centred approach restores power to the people and enables active participation of the poor in the process of community development. The research holds the view that a holistic people-centred approach of development entails participation, empowerment, self-reliance and sustainability which are basic components of community development. The goal of the church in development in terms of reconciliation and building relationships is considered to ensure that these components are duly achieved.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie bied 'n mens-gesentreerde benadering tot gemeenskapsontwikkeling binne 'n praktiese teologiese raamwerk. Die studie ondersoek die benadering tot gemeenskapsontwikkeling in Nasarawa Staat, Nigerië, met die doel om die invloed van 'n mens-gesentreerde benadering te bepaal. Verder, bied hierdie studie 'n meer robuuste model vir sosio-ekonomiese ontwikkeling wat meer gepas is vir die kerk se betrokkenheid in gemeenskapsontwikkeling. Inligting vir hierdie studie is verkry van sekondêre resensies en sluit artikels, boeke, joernale en publieke dokumente in.

Die navorsing erken die aansienlike bydraes wat sover gelewer is ten opsigte van die sosio-ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Nasarawa Staat. Dit erken dat sosio-ekonomiese ontwikkeling in plattelandse gemeenskappe steeds groot uitdagings beleef, waarskynlik vanweë die afwesigheid van 'n effektiewe aanslag tot ontwikkeling. Die studie argumenteer dat die voortbestaan van armoede in sulke gemeenskappe teenstrydig is met die staat se natuurlike hulpbronne. Daarom stel die studie 'n holistiese aanslag, wat fokus op die deelname van die gemeenskap in ontwikkelingspoging en wat deur beide die fisiese en geestelike behoeftes van die mense voor.

Daar word geargumenteer dat, anders as verligting en welsyn, wat afhanklikheid skep, 'n mens-gesentreerde aanslag mag by die mense herstel en aktiewe deelname in die proses van gemeenskapsontwikkeling moontlik maak. Daarom, voer hierdie studie aan dat 'n holistiese, mens-gesentreerde model van gemeenskapsontwikkeling, deelname, bemagtiging, selfstandigheid en volhoubaarheid behels, wat basiese komponente van gemeenskapsontwikkeling is.

Dedication

With deep humility, I dedicate this thesis to God Almighty who gave me the strength to put it together and to my wife Halita and our children Victor Shuni, Enoch Wyosho and Shalom-el Yama for their prayers and support throughout my academic pursuit. The great assistance you rendered cannot be forgotten.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Preamble

The central goal of this research is to examine past and current conceptualizations of people-centred development and to present a theological approach as a possible alternative way in the efforts toward socio-economic development in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. This approach is considered as holistic because it seeks to address all areas of human life; physical, emotional, relational, intellectual, and spiritual aspects.

For this reason, this chapter presents the introduction to the research and it outlines the background, motivation for the research, research problem and questions, aims, research methodology and conceptual framework and the summary of chapters.

1.2. Background

Development does not only entail economic growth. It must also improve people's lives. It is characterized by an adequate provision of basic human needs and social services for all. As such one cannot deny that those who are faced with the challenge of absolute or relative poverty are often deprived of socio-economic power in terms of elementary level of education, quality housing, adequate healthcare, good food, clean water, clean environment and employment. In Nigeria, such issues remain at the forefront of lingering social problems. On the question of giving people a sense of belonging and dignity. Chinelo Aroh notes that over the years, successive governments in Nigeria have demonstrated appreciable interest in the provision of amenities to both rural and urban populations in the country (2002:1). However, their interest has not made any meaningful impact on the lives of the people. The quality of life of the poor at the local level remains relatively unchanged.

Korten and Klauss (1984: ix) point out that in the 1970s, "bold commitments were made throughout the world to deal with three central development challenges, namely: poverty, environmental deterioration and the empowerment of people through increase of participation in the developmental process." At present, the question of liberation, of human dignity and human rights, and of gender has occupied the minds of people who desire to challenge oppressive systems in a variety of forms.

Liberation theology, feminist theology and the discourse on human rights and human dignity reveal the importance of certain basic principles that could be used to empower people to develop and utilize their potential (see 4.4). For theologians, at least, this fact is rooted in

biblical stories, prophetic voices raised in the community against poverty and social injustice, and calls for the removal of anything that hinders people's freedom. Scripture makes it clear, for example, that the socio-economic crisis in Nehemiah's time was so severe that people offered their sons and daughters as pledges for loans to obtain food. Some sold their daughters into debt slavery to fellow Jews and, since the proceeds from their crops went to creditors, nothing was left over to redeem their children (Klein 2000:347).

Another clear example is the situation in the time of Amos, which marks a time of great prosperity. Yet prosperity was limited to the wealthy and that it fed on injustice and on the oppression of the poor. That is, the prosperity was a disadvantage on the side of the poor (Keesmaat 2002:446). In response, Nehemiah and Amos rebuked the leaders and wealthy individuals who practiced oppression and urged the people to restore their rightful and purposeful relationship with God and with one another. This clearly shows that there is a people-centred element to the plans of God but the question is what is the purpose of a people-centred *development*?

According to Chambers (2003:9-11):

- The objective of development is wellbeing for all (an experience of good quality of life).
- Livelihood security is basic to wellbeing (access to adequate stocks and flow of food and cash to meet basic needs).
- Capabilities are means to achieve livelihood and wellbeing (what people are capable of doing and being).
- The poor, weak, vulnerable, and exploited should come first (human rights, intergenerational and gender equity).
- To be good, conditions and change must be sustainable - economically, socially, institutionally and environmentally (there should be sustainable livelihood and wellbeing for all, now, and for the future).

With respect to the issue of socio-economic development, Stan Burkey, a prominent figure in the study of community development, observes that economic development is the process by which people through their own effort are able to boost production for direct consumption and sale of the surplus for cash. Social development, on the other hand, refers to those investment and services carried out or provided by the community for the mutual benefit of that community such as health facility, education, water supplies, energy, transportation, communication, among others (Burky1993:26-27). In other words, it makes sense for people

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individually or as a community to participate actively in development because it ensures self-reliance.

Similarly, an African New Testament scholar, Speckman (2007: xxiv), argues that economic growth projects such as self-help schemes and other schemes financed by external aid can never lead to sustainable development. In his opinion, people can overcome poverty and dependency by their own efforts and can transform their social structures in order to release their own God-given potential. In other words, people must participate in their development for it to be sustainable. Wealth cannot flourish unless people are motivated to engage in production of goods. Development can be achieved only when individuals are willing to work together for the benefit of the community.

The communities of the ancient Israel were based upon and centred round relationships and the value attributed to human beings. The conviction of the creation of all human kind according to the *imago Dei* in Genesis was strongly adhered to and everyone was obliged to treat each other in the community in a dignified manner. Hoppe (2004:9) states that this was also a practical necessity because ancient Israelites organized themselves into groups such as clans and tribes to provide adequate defence against their enemies. According to Hoppe, in early Israelite society, "it was the duty of the community especially the extended family and clan that protected the rights of individual Israelite peasants to work their Land for the benefits of their families," (Hoppe 2004:9).

In the Old Testament, communities are portrayed clearly in terms of settlements. In the time of the Judges, people were divided into families, clans, and larger bodies called tribes and during Canaanite invasion, each tribe had to fight to acquire its own portion of land to live in community (Hanson 1992:1100). Prophecy emerged from this struggle as a movement committed to preserving the essential values of the older Yahwistic ideal community within the setting of kingship (Hanson 1992:1102).

On the other hand, the New Testament notion of community was developed and given an *ecclesial* form after the death of Jesus and his resurrection. It was also understood as part of Jewish religious history (Acts 2 and 4) which shows that the people lived together and shared things in common (Wall 1992:1105). The Christian community therefore is Christocentric, empowered by God's grace and gifted by the Holy Spirit. It involves interdependence, mutual support, caring for one another and sharing belongings (Martens 2008:189).

In Africa, the concept of community has always been a paramount characteristic of human co-existence. The concept is captured in the African saying, "I am therefore we are" (Mbiti 1969:107-109). This means that a human being is only a person in the eyes of others in the community. Every individual belongs to the other, and together, they belong to the larger family (Speckman 2007:41). This is in line with the communal life of the people of Nasarawa State. Most of the communities, especially those in the rural areas, erect their houses in their villages according to a nuclear overall design so that isolation is almost impossible and "speckled settlements" are hardly found (Obanye 2006:15).

Nasarawa, known as "the home of solid minerals", is located in the north-central part of Nigeria. As its name indicates, it is an area of considerable natural resources, especially of agricultural resources. Ironically, the majority of the rural population struggle to meet their daily needs. Based on the National Planning Commission Report (2004), Ibrahim and Umar (2008:12) claim that the bulk of agricultural production in Nigeria that is geared to meet everyone's needs through National Economic Empowerment Strategy takes place in the rural areas. However, the levels and incidence of poverty are more pronounced in these rural areas. Furthermore, the authors note that a report on Poverty Profile for Nigeria (1980-1996) by the Federal Office of Statistics in 1999 shows that poverty in Nigeria depicts a regional variation with a higher rate (40%) in the Northern agro-climatic zone (where Nasarawa State is situated) than in the Middle and Southern zones – 38% and 24% respectively.

As a resident of Nasarawa State, it is perplexing for one to note that despite the vast arable land, a variety of solid minerals and potential for tourism in the State, the streets of Nasarawa are filled with beggars and street children – the latter often used as hawkers by their parents in order to earn a living. The population is mostly illiterate resulting in youth unemployment. The high levels of poverty and economic dependency have motivated the State Government's socio-economic development efforts that focus on not only the rural but also the urban population. The church, on the other hand, seems not to be adequately involved in any effort at holistic development.

1.3. Motivation for the Research

This research was prompted by insight obtained from an earlier essay that the researcher wrote as part of the requirement for a Post Graduate Diploma in Theology and Development Studies at the Stellenbosch University. Exposure to essential concepts and theories of and approaches to development came in the form of books and journal articles as well as from

seminars and workshops attended on community development and human dignity. His experience and position as a pastor in some local congregations of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA)[1] of the ECWA Lafia District Church Council (ELDCC) in Nasarawa State, Nigeria also contributed to the motivation for this research. The research will focus on Nasarawa State where the researcher has lived for about twelve years and experienced first-hand the need for community development in the rural areas of the State which is characterized by pronounced poverty.

Efforts by the government, NGOs or the villagers themselves seem not to have led to any meaningful change. Therefore, the present economic reality in the rural areas demands critical appraisal with a view to finding possible solutions and promoting more rapid socio-economic development. One possible way the Church could achieve the latter may be by applying a people-centred approach of development from a theological perspective.

1.4. Research Problem and Questions

The concept of a people-centred development was motivated by a critical analysis of past efforts in development. According to the advocates of this concept, the modernization strategy did not adequately benefit the poor. This is because it was production-centred and not people-centred (Korten & Klauss 1984:1-3). Relief and welfare also landed people into dependency (Korten 1990:115). Therefore, people-centred development is generally viewed by the advocates as a framework that is based on a social learning process and the empowering of people and communities. It is an approach which ensures that people are empowered to participate in society's economic, social, and political life. It makes sure that no one is left out or dominated in the process of development because it must be done in ways that are consistent with the basic principles of participation, equity and sustainability (Korten & Carner 1984:201; Korten 1990:67).

In the light of the above, Burkey (1993:205) argues from a people-centred development perspective that self-reliant participation development is an educational and empowering

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[1]ECWA is an indigenous Nigerian church with branches abroad. According to the statement of its strategic plan, ECWA is a dynamic global church guided by the Holy Spirit, self-sustaining and effective in meeting the needs of the society spiritually, socially, economically and an agent of change toward godly living. The Church's ultimate goal is to glorify God and to achieve this purpose by communicating the gospel to the lost, discipling and equipping believers, organizing them into local churches and caring for the needy in the world through advocacy and social services (ECWA Strategic Plan, 2007). ECWA pursues this goal through the establishment of various Ministries (departments and agencies), one of which is the People Oriented Development (POD) of ECWA (ECWA Constitution and Byelaws, 2010:1-2).

process in which people in partnerships with each other and with those able to assist them, identify problems and needs, mobilize resources and assume responsibility. The people themselves plan, manage, control and access the individual and collective actions that they decide upon. In line with this claim, Chambers (2003), an authority on Development Studies describes the forces behind the people-centred approach to development in his book, *"Whose reality counts?"* He argues that in the process of community development important issues have been overlooked; development professionals dominate the poor by imposing their ideologies on those they seek to develop rather than allowing them to participate in their development. If effective development is to take place there must be a due consideration to the realities of the poor. Consequently, development practitioners should change their concepts, values, methods, and behaviour in order to embark on new high ground of participation and empowerment.

In view of the high level of poverty in Nasarawa State which is otherwise rich in natural resources, and of the many unsuccessful and ineffective development efforts in the State, this research poses the following research question: On theological grounds, *in what way can a people-centred approach in theology assist the church and the government in their efforts toward socio-economic community development in Nasarawa State, Nigeria?* In order to answer this question, the following points will be addressed:

- The extent of current socio-economic community development programs in Nasarawa State.
- The understanding of people-centred development and how can it assist in achieving holistic development in Nasarawa State.
- The concept of people-centred approach within the context of practical theology and community development through the effort and participation of the church.

1.5.   Aims of the Research

The primary assumption that strengthens this research is that the poor ought to find a place on the agenda of the community of faith. It is evident from the background to this research that ancient Israelites and early Christian's communities did not overlook the poor among them (also see Hope 2004:16). Therefore, if the church in Nasarawa State strives to be holistic in its ministry, it should adequately address the plight of the poor in its polity and in its practice (witness). Consequently, the research aims to:

- Describe community development efforts in respect of socio-economic development in Nasarawa State and to find out the reason for the persistence of poverty in spite of the availability of natural resources.

- Identify fundamental aspects of people-centred development and to show how it can be a better approach if applied from a theological perspective.

- Examine the theological concepts of people-centred approach and define the present and possible future role of the church in community development efforts.

1.6. Conceptual Framework and Methodology - Development Studies and Practical Theology

1.6.1. Conceptual framework

Theology is regarded as the knowledge and understanding of the existence of God and his activities which include the whole of creation (Robinson 1994:319). Theology arises from the freedom and responsibility of the Christian community to inquire about its faith in God (Miglore 2004:1). In this research, theology is defined as the practical activities of Christians as they relate their faith in God to their response to human needs. In this sense, the research is related to the discipline of *practical theology,* which is the study of theology in a way that is expressly aimed at making it applicable and relevant to everyday concerns and reality.

Rossler (2005:315) defines Practical theology as "the term for a theological discipline that has church activities as its theme." Similarly, McLemore (2012:5) maintains that, "practical theology refers to an activity of believers seeking to sustain a life of reflective faith in the everyday life." For Osmer (2009:11), practical theology is a branch of theology that appeared in the Research University of the Early Modern Period rooted in the differentiation of moral theology from dogmatic theology. Osmer (2011:2) also explains that practical theology emerged as an academic discipline with the ultimate goal of formulating "theories of practice" and "rules of art" that could guide the reflective practice of church leaders. The social element behind this task is that the church needs leaders who can look closely at their own context and ask what is going on and who can engage with the social sciences to understand why certain events and patterns occur. Therefore, the church needs leaders with practical skills who can help their community develop norms and visions appropriate to its own time and place.

The above concept of practical theology is therefore relevant to development studies. For instance, *community development* is a process or movement designed to promote better living

for the whole community with the active participation, and if possible, at the initiative of the community (August 2010:5-6). It begins with people's potential and proceeds to their enhancement and growth (Maluleke 1993:18). *Socio-economic development,* in turn, refers to the process of transformation in a society, which ensures human dignity, social reconstruction, literacy, increase in the level of employment and improvement in life expectancy (Elwert 1999:816). It could therefore be referred to as the general wellbeing of people in a social setting, which includes improving the living standards of poor people in terms of social services such as quality education, health services, housing and community development.

As an approach to development, *people-centred development* is defined as a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in quality of their lives, consistent with their own aspirations (Korten 1990:67). Korten (1990:218) further explains that the vision of people-centred development is to return the control of resources to people and their communities to enable them meet their own basic needs. This approach is recommended in this research because it gives room for capacity building and creates opportunity for people's participation. It also enables the people to be responsible stewards of resources, an act that is essential to sustainability.

In view of this, it can be argued that the mission and the ministry of the church are concerned with the everyday life and needs of the members. Thus, development study within the discipline of theology is not just an academic enquiry; rather, it seeks to inform the church leaders about contemporary global issues and their responsibility to enhance the wellbeing of their members. Therefore, a people-centred development approach from a theological point of view is a holistic strategy (the combination of physical and spiritual) that can be applied by all churches with transformational vision. Based on Osmer's (2011:2) understanding of the task of practical theology, one can argue that practical theology offers an authentic approach to sustainable development. Applying this principle will help community workers to carry out their development efforts critically.

On the above assumption, Joda-Mbewe (2002:3) notes that, "Practical theology begins by describing the situation of the congregation and then correlates that situation with the faith and belief of the congregation." Furthermore, doing Christian ministry requires empowering local faith communities to grow spiritually in order for them to discern the will of God in their situations. This approach to ministry requires the full participation of the people in

evaluating the results when they apply their insights, and returning to the Bible and Christian tradition to once again reshape and work on their answers (Joda-Mbewe 2002:3). The research therefore evaluated theories and approaches to development and the relevance of community development to Christian theology. It also employed the concept of practical theology to propose a holistic people-centred approach to community development. According to Osmer (2011:2), practical theology attends to four tasks in the hermeneutical circle thus:

- The descriptive-empirical task asks the question: what is going on? It entails gathering information to understand better particular episodes, situations, or contexts.
- The interpretive task asks the question: why is this going on? It enters into a dialogue with the social sciences to interpret and explain why certain actions and patterns are taking place.
- The normative task asks the question: What ought to be going on? It raises normative questions from the perspectives of theology, ethics and other fields.
- The pragmatic task asks the question: How might we respond? It forms an action plan and undertakes specific responses that seek to shape the episode, situation, or context in desirable directions.

The present research design is therefore based on Osmer ideas. This design thus explains the basic principles of and approaches to people-centred community development which may lead to successful community development in Nasarawa State if applied in line with the view of the church as an integrated ministry.

1.6.2 Methodology

Methodology is fundamental to a research study like this one. Methodological implications for this research concurs with Dawson (2009:14) that how research is conceptualized and how data is collected are vital to how the research conclusions are reached. Following the principles of practical theology as outline above, this research employs an extensive literature study of books, articles, dictionaries, speeches and public documents on important and relevant concepts to enrich the notion of people-centred development that this research envision in order to address the research question. This study is, therefore, predominantly a literature review. Mouton (2011:87) augments this, that, "review of the existing scholarship... tells you more about what you are looking for." Therefore, findings from the literature

reviews were studied and analysed which assisted this research to draw logical conclusions that this research achieved.

It was very important to utilize this research method on the fact that a literature review is an evaluative report of studies found in the literature related to the researcher's selected area (Lourens 2007:20). Moreover, the review describes, summarizes, evaluates and clarifies this literature. It gives a theoretical basis for the research and helps the researcher determine the nature of the research and then select relevant and important information or works that are central to the researcher's area (Lourens 2007:20). Furthermore, literature review does not only search for information, but also includes the identification and articulation of relationships between the literature and one's field of research. In addition to this, the literature(s) provides a context for the research, shows where the research fits into the existing body of knowledge, enables the researcher to learn from previous theory on the subject, illustrates how the subject has been studied previously and also point out weakness and gaps in previous research (Boote, & Beile, 2005).

In line with the Publication Manual of American Psychological Association it is stipulated that "the components of literature reviews can be arranged in various ways: such as by grouping the research based on similarity in the concepts or theories of interest, methodological similarities among the studies reviewed, or the historical development of the field" (2009:10). This method was applied in this research by way of describing and analysing socio-economic development programs in Nasarawa State to unravel the current development efforts and challenges faced in this process. In addition to this, it describes the concept of people-centred development and its implication to the church within the context of practical theology.

However, in addition the researcher has utilized a participant observation. A participant observer is a person who might have lived or worked in an area for an extended period of time and have immersed his/herself in people's everyday life (May 2002:148, 153). Therefore, the researcher's experience as a pastor in some local congregations of the ECWA church of the ECWA Lafia District Church Council in Nasarawa State motivated the used of this methodology. Furthermore, the materials of this document were gathered, studied and analysed based on one's observation of the happenings in the context of the research area.

1.7. Overview and Summary of Chapters

The structure of the research will be outlined in five chapters.

Chapter One provides a general introduction and a literature review of the research topic. The main ideas and aims of the research as well as its relevance to practical theology and basic argument and structure of the research are presented in this chapter.

Chapter Two presents a descriptive analysis of Nasarawa State -its historical background, economic potential, socio-economic development programs and the specific development challenges. In particular, the reality of poverty and its impact on rural communities are probed.

Chapter Three reviews concepts and approaches to development with the aim of describing a coherent vision for (a holistic approach) community development, that is, a people-centred development concept.

Chapter Four explain the notion of community development from a Christian theological perspective while offering a theological reflection on liberation theology, feminist theology, human rights and human dignity. The chapter also focuses on the role of the church in community development.

Chapter Five provides a summary of the thesis and conclusions as well as suggestions for further research on similar subject matters.

1.8. Summary of Chapter

The present chapter serves as a foundation for the research. It contains the introduction to the research, the motivation for the research, research problem and questions, aims of the research, the research design and the conceptual framework of the thesis. In addition, the methodology, overview and the outline of the chapters are stated.

The basic argument of this chapter is that, viewed from a theological perspective, a people-centred development approach is holistic and it could be a key to sustainable poverty eradication, promotion of human dignity, social justice and self-reliance. The approach focuses on people's physical and spiritual needs with the assumption that the gospel is for both the poor and the rich (Bosch 1991:98).

Chapter 2: A Descriptive Analysis of the Efforts in Socio-Economic Development in Nasarawa State

2.1. Introduction

In Chapter One of this research, it revealed that Nasarawa State is an area with considerable natural resources especially agricultural resources; yet most of the rural population struggles to meet its daily needs. Although the communities are predominantly rural and agrarian, there is an alarmingly high and pronounced incidence of poverty among them. It is therefore clear that the present economic realities in the rural areas of the State demands critical appraisal with a view to finding a possible solutions and promoting more rapid socio-economic development.

The primary aim of this present chapter is to describe the factors that characterize the current state of socio-economic development in Nasarawa State and to understand the context of the development challenges facing the region. The chapter also includes reflections on the level of socio-economic development in Nasarawa State, on certain challenges in the area of development and a more detailed reflection on incidences of poverty especially in rural communities. The outcome that is sought is to determine whether the level of the socio-economic development in rural communities of Nasarawa State is sufficient and, if it is not, to probe why the State Government has not yet adequately attended to the development needs of its people.

2.2. A Brief Description of Nasarawa State

Since the context of this research is Nasarawa State, it is important to provide a short historical background of the State as well as data on its population growth. Other important aspects that need clarity for the purpose of this research include the different cultures, traditions and religions in Nasarawa State, as well as the economic potential, employment and economic activities of the State.

2.2.1. Historical background

Nasarawa State was created out of the old Plateau State on 1st October 1996. It has been noted that Nasarawa State was created as a result of many years of agitation arising from strong political feelings of marginalization and neglect. According to Aliyu (2011a:1):

> The struggle for the creation of the state was necessitated in the first place by a desire to liberate the people of the former 'lower Plateau' from the backwoods of history to which they had been confined under both the defunct Benue-Plateau State and the old Plateau State.

In other words, the present Nasarawa State forms the bulk of what was the southern part of former Plateau State comprising the ten local government areas of Akwanga, Awe, Doma, Karu, Keffi, Lafia, Nassarawa, Nasarawa Eggon, Obi and Toto. At its creation in October 1996, Nassarawa State had ten local government areas (LGAs) with the state capital in Lafia. Three other local government areas namely Keana (out of Awe), Kokona (out of Keffi) and Wamba (out of Akwanga) were created in November 1996 to make up a total of thirteen local government areas (Nasarawa State Government (NSG) 2003:1).

2.2.2. Population growth in Nasarawa State

Understanding the population growth of Nasarawa State is a prerequisite for evaluating its development and challenges. For instance, Nasarawa State is located in the central part of Nigeria and in the proximity of Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). This location is strategic because it has contributed to the fast population growth of the state. The 1991 census puts the state's population at 1.2 million but by 2003, the population, estimated at a national average growth rate of 2.83 percent per annum, was projected to be 2 million. With the influx of people into the State particularly into Lafia the State capital, Akwanga, Keffi and Karu local governments due to the proximity to Abuja the FCT, the 2005 population of the state is estimated at over 2 million (NASEEDS 2005:11). The current population of the State is estimated to be about 3.1 million (NSG 2008a: vi). Over 80 percent of the populace are farmers and live in the rural areas (NASEEDS 2005:10). From the data, it is clear that there is a rapid growth of about 158 percent in population.

The four major towns that link other parts of the country and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) namely Lafia, Akwanga, Keffi and Karu[2] are the most densely populated areas in the

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[2] Lafia is the capital city of Nasarawa State and of the most populated local government in the state. It is also a major commercial centre with a link road between the northern and the eastern parts of the country. The tertiary institutions in Lafia include the Federal University, Federal Open University, State School of Nursing and Midwifery, and Nasarawa State Polytechnic. Akwanga on the other hand is located in the central part of Nasarawa State and serves as a junction town that links the north central zone with the north-eastern zone of the country. Its population also includes a high number of rural people who have migrated into the town because of its commercial activities or who use it as a transit station. Akwanga has a State and private colleges of education. Keffi is another important town in Nasarawa State. It directly connects people from the north and the east to the FCT. The State University and School of Health are located in Keffi and some workers who cannot afford to stay in Abuja live in Keffi and go to work in Abuja from there. Karu is the primary business centre in Nasarawa and the seat of the local government area which is nearest to the FCT. Its population is similar to that of Lafia because some of the residents commute from Karu to work in Abuja (Imam et al 2000). The ECWA University is also located in Karu.

region and they remain the State's primary commercial nerve centres. Moreover, they also control link roads between the eastern and the northern parts of the country (Imam *et al.* 2000:8, 12, 14).

One of the reasons for the influx of people from the rural areas and from other parts of Nigeria into these major towns could be attributed to basic human needs. Peil and Sada (1984:122) argue that political, economic and social factors are largely responsible for people's migration to urban areas. Anthony O'Connor concurs that both poor living conditions in the rural areas and greater opportunities in the cities are responsible for migrations from the rural to the urban areas. For some people, the reason may be due to land shortage or the collapse of the rural economy in times of drought. At such times, people often perceive that prospects are better in the city (O'Connor 1983:74-75). On the Nigerian situation of which Nasarawa State is a part, Okafor (2011:363) explains that:

> Rural-urban migration is usually explained in terms of push-pull factors. The push factors include the pressure resulting from man-land ratio in the rural areas and the existence of serious underemployment arising from the seasonal cycle of climate. The factors are further exacerbated in Nigeria by the lack of infrastructural facilities, which makes the rural life unattractive. Youths move to urban areas with the probability of securing lucrative employment in the industries. In addition to this, there is the concentration of social amenities in the urban centers.

All in all, reasons for urban migration in Nasarawa State seem to include all of the reasons listed by O'Connor (1983), Peil and Sada (1984) and Okafor (2011) and could be summed up as follow:

- The quest for higher/better education;
- The search for jobs (employment);
- The quest for better living conditions due to the high rate of poverty in the villages;
- The search for certain basic social amenities which are unavailable in the rural areas.

Thus, people are forced to move to better places because of the quest to improve their living conditions, which eventually affecting the growth of the economy. It is evident that growth in population has mostly negative effects on the limited infrastructures and social services. Nasarawa State, for instance, has inadequate housing, insufficient education facilities, and poor transportation and health services. Additionally, there is the susceptibility to HIV/AIDS, environmental destruction, and violence among other challenges. These problems are evidence of poverty and they can also increase the level of poverty in any given community. In this regard, Szirmai (2005:156) shows that some of the negative effects of overpopulation in most developing societies are a high level of dependency ratio. For example, children from

larger families do not do as well in school as children from smaller families owing to the pressure on family budgets, and they have less prospects of enjoying good health. This fact may also be applicable to populated or congested communities.

2.2.3.   Cultures, traditions and religions of Nasarawa State

The fact that Nasarawa is a multi-ethnic state cannot be overlooked. Nasarawa is made up of about 25 ethnic groups with separate languages and cultures. The ethnic groups are Alago, Agatu, Afo, Arum, Basa, Eggon, Egbira, Gade, Gbagyi, Gwandara, Fulani, Hausa, Jukun, Kantana, Kanuri, Koro, Kulere, Mada, Migili, Nakere, Ninzum, Nyankpa Rindre, Tiv and other non-indigenous settlers from other parts of the country (NASEEDS 2005:12). Most of these people groups can be found in almost all the 13 local government. They also share similarities in culture and traditions such as marriage, birth and naming ceremonies, occupations, and burial ceremonies (CAPRO 2009).

In terms of leadership, communities are headed by traditional rulers such as first, second and third class chiefs, district heads, and village heads as well as zonal leaders. In some instances, the affairs of the people are managed by family or clan heads while community leaders are responsible for making decisions concerning the whole community (CAPRO 2009:28). Generally, men are considered heads or owners of households and protectors of families. They also have more access to sources of production such as ownership of land and credit, while women's major responsibilities include farming and domestic work such as raising children, cooking and housecleaning (Umar, Luka & Rahman 2010:62). The cultures and traditions of most of the people groups in the State include the practice and promotion of polygamy as a symbol of honour and greatness. A polygamous marriage is encouraged on the basis of the belief that families with many children are a sign of strength and wealth (CAPRO 2009:159). The people believe that both rain and good harvest come from the ancestors; therefore, at the beginning of the farming season, rituals are performed to appease the ancestors for abundant harvest.

As noted above, the State comprises of different people groups who also share similar rich and cultural heritages, which they uphold religiously. They celebrate various seasonal festivals,[3] which serve as sources of inspiration, recreation and entertainment all year round.

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[3]Some of the festivals and ceremonies include the Ogani fishing and cultural festivals in Umaisha, the Odu festival in Doma, the Keana salt festival among others, most of which are celebrated before the planting season (NASEEDS 2005:12). Notable festivals celebrated by the Christians include Easter, Christmas and New Year

The festivals are also veritable tools for establishing and maintaining unity among the ethnic groups in the State (NASEEDS 2005:12). Even though the people differ, they have co-existed harmoniously for decades. This tradition of harmony continues to prevail and manifest in their positive disposition toward one another (Obanye 2006:14-15). Nasarawa State is therefore generally peaceful and its inhabitants are very hospitable to strangers.

As the population of Nasarawa State differs along the lines of language and ethnicity, so also does it differ in terms of religious affiliations as the people adhere variously to African Traditional Religion (ATR), Christianity and Islam. The number of African Traditional Religious practitioners is smaller than the number of adherents of the other two major religions. According to CAPRO (2009:5), the ATR adherents generally believe in a Supreme Being, one God, who is called different names by different people. They strongly acknowledge that God is somewhere far beyond the sky and is the ultimate cause of events in the world –fertility, rain, health, and every good thing; but misfortune is sometimes also attributed to him.

Both Christianity and Islamic religion have large followership in the State. Christian churches operate mostly under the umbrella of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)[4] while Islam operates under various groups and organisations[5]. Unlike in some other parts of Nigeria especially in the north, the two religious groups live in relative peace in Nasarawa State. The State enjoys freedom of worship, freedom of association, freedom of movement and speech which are all conducive to the favourable climate of social and religious peace (Obanye 2006:15). Nevertheless, communal crises are not completely absent in the State, and these have resulted in the loss of some innocent lives and properties and caused a setback in

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while the Muslims celebration comes up at the ends in the annual Mecca pilgrimage and at the end of Ramadan. These festivals are held in high regard as people travel from far and near to celebrate them.

[4]The membership of the Christian Association of Nigeria includes almost all the church denominations in the country. Its primary goal is to foster unity among all Christians in Nigeria and its activities extend to the spheres of political and inter-religious dialogues. It is made up of five blocks namely the Christian Council of Nigeria, the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, the African Instituted Churches, and the ECWA/TEKAN. The association also operates women and youth wings.

[5] There are many Muslim groups and organizations in the state such as the Darikatul Tijaniyya, Federation of Muslim Women Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), Fityanul Islam Jama'atu Da'wah, Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'a Wa'ikamatis Sunnah (Izala or JIBWIS), and Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI). Some of the groups are gender oriented and include Muslim Brothers, Muslim Lawyers Association (MULA), Muslim Sisters Organisation (MSO), Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN), Muslim Youth Foundation, Nasrul-Lahi-L-Fatih Society of Nigeria (NASFAT), Voice of Islam, and so forth (http://www3.qeh.ox.ac.uk/pdf/nrn/BP7Liman.pdf).

government's effort at effective socio-economic development. For instance, in his reaction[6] to a recent communal crisis in the State, the current governor Alhaji Tanko Al-Makura, said "Nasarawa State Government is deeply worried by this wanton destruction of lives and property at this critical period when this administration is focused on the socio-economic development of our beloved State." It means that the State can do much better if the people continue to seek peace and harmonious relationship.

2.2.4. Nasarawa State and its economic potential

There are several socio-economic development opportunities in Nasarawa State. This is because the State is also naturally endowed in terms of economically and commercially viable natural resources. The revenue of the State comes from mineral resources, tourism and agriculture, among other things.

2.2.4.1. Mineral resources

As mentioned earlier, Nasarawa State is often referred to as the "*Home of Solid Minerals*." This statement is undeniable because each of the thirteen Local Government Areas is uniquely blessed with one form of mineral deposit or another that is valuable in local and international markets. Nasarawa State records show that minerals available in the region include beryl, sapphire, tourmaline, quartz, zircon, tantalite, iron ore, limestone, talc, clay and salt among others (NSG 2010b:25-27).

In his speech at the eleventh Nigerian Economic Summit in 2005, Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu the former executive governor of Nasarawa State stressed the importance and benefit of mineral resources as a component of socio-economic development in the State. He noted that "Nasarawa State produces over 60% of barites supplied to oil companies in Nigeria which is used as drilling mud for the extraction of petroleum in the oil industry as well as the pharmaceutical and paint industries" (NSG 2005:5). This shows that if the mineral resources in Nasarawa State are adequately tapped, the State can compete with other States in the country, as Governor Aliyu Akwe notes, "The economy of Nasarawa State, north central Nigeria, is one of the top economies in Nigeria. This is because it is endowed with potentials other States or indeed other countries dream of: solid minerals, agriculture and tourism." He

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[6]The broadcast on the unfortunate communal crisis between herdsmen and farmers in the Jankwe Development Area of Nasarawa State was made by His Excellency, Umaru Tanko Al-Makura, the Governor of Nasarawa State on Saturday, 7th April 2012 (http://www.nasarawastatenigeria.com/?p=271).

further notes that Nasarawa has been described as one big "gold mine" but transforming the "gold" into a revenue-generating venture requires huge investment (NSG 2010a:1).

2.2.4.2.   Tourism

Nasarawa State is richly endowed with beautiful landscape and has a clear potential for tourist and recreational activities. For example, Nassarawa Eggon, Akwanga and Wamba local government areas offer sites within the mountain areas which could be explored and developed for tourism purposes. The Eggon rolling hills and caves, for example, serve as beautiful tourism sites. Other sites of interest include the magnificent Ferin Ruwa Falls in Wamba Local Government Area and the Hunki Lake in Awe, among others (CAPRO 2009:2). The tourism industry in the State therefore has huge potential for development. According to Governor Adamu, "tourism is another aspect of the economy that the State is indeed proud of. The tourism potential that could be developed into reputable holiday resorts for both domestic and international tourist's attraction could be found in all the thirteen local government areas" (NSG 2005:6), yet very few are being utilized at present.

2.2.4.3.   Agriculture

Due to its climate and location in the Guinea Savannah region of Nigeria, Nasarawa State is highly suited for agricultural production[7]. Crops that are currently grown in the State include melons, rice, yams, sugar cane, cassava, groundnut, soya beans, guinea corn, millet, maize, cashew, mangoes and oranges. The major crops produced for domestic consumption and export are yam and rice which are grown in all the thirteen local government areas of the State. The lowland areas such as Lafia, Doma, Awe, Keana and Obi Local Government Areas generally play a leading role in the production of these crops (NSG 2008a:4).

The region also shares in the benefits of the Benue River Valley. This shows that Nasarawa State is a highly agrarian area and a large percentage of its population engages in farming and other agricultural activities as the main source of livelihood. CAPRO (2009:3) notes that, "the people of Nasarawa are mainly farmers with locally made implements like hoes, sickles

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[7] The state consists of plain lands and hills measuring up to 300ft above the sea level at some point (NSG 2009: vi). The highlands are around Nasarawa Eggon, Akwanga, and Wamba Local Government areas while the rest of the state lies in the lowland regions. It is blessed with a tropical climate and abundantly rich and fertile soil conducive for cultivation of many cash and food crops. The climate is tropically hot before the start of the raining season between February and May. The months of June and July are slightly humid and hot while August-January is moderately cold. Rainfall is generally moderate with a mean annual rainfall of 1311:75 (NSG 2008a: vi; see also Obenye 2006:11).

and so on. Some are fishermen, while others are involved in trading, weaving, mining, and carving, still others are also civil servants".

Statistics have also shown that those who are active participants in the agrarian economy in Nasarawa comprise about 80 per cent of the State's population (NSG 2009:4). Indeed, the most noticeable feature of Nasarawa State is the predominance of the agricultural sector, as government officials emphasize the need to improve agricultural policies in the effort to work on the State's economic potential. In this regard, the first democratic governor of Nasarawa State, Abdullahi Adamu noted that:

> Apart from being '*Home of Solid Minerals*' the state is also qualified to be called the 'Food Basket of the Nation' as it is one of the leading food producing states of the federation. It is blessed with a tropical climate and abundant rich and fertile soil conducive for cultivation of many cash and food crops (NSG 2005:5).

Aliu Akwe Doma, the second elected governor of the State, also confirmed that:

> Agriculture no doubt remains the dominant enterprise of our people. Eighty percent of our people are engaged in agriculture for livelihood. Our agricultural policy therefore is directed towards the attainment of food sufficiency and security as well as job creation and wealth generation (NSG 2008b:2).

2.2.5.   Employment and economy activities

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that some industries, tourist centres, solid minerals and agriculture which provide the people with employment and economic activities exist. However, agriculture is the main source of the economy in Nasarawa State. Since at least 80 percent of Nasarawa's population of 3.1 million is engaged in agriculture or employed in the agricultural sector (mainly smallholders), this means that only 20 percent can be regarded as being formally employed in the public, corporate and other sectors. This agrees with the observation of the UNDP that two-thirds of the people in developing countries (where Nasarawa State of Nigeria falls) live in rural areas and agricultural production is the main source of survival and income (Eade & William 1995:515).

Agriculture is the centre of economic activity in Nasarawa State. Abimiku (2010:1) states that, "As the largest employer of labour, agriculture stands out as the life-blood of Nasarawa fledging economy. Its place in the overall welfare and well-being of the populace of the State cannot be overstated". Agriculture is also regarded as a catalyst for poverty alleviation and wealth creation in Nasarawa State. However, it appears that other industries with great economic potential such as mineral resources and tourism have received less attention from the people of Nasarawa.

It is against this background and in light of other issues such as population growth, economic potential and skewed employment conditions in Nasarawa State that the existence or need for socio-economic development in the region will be investigated in the next section.

2.3.   Current Efforts in Socio-economic Development in Nasarawa

In the aftermath of the era of military rule in Nigeria, successive democratic governments in Nasarawa Sate have formulated and implemented policies that aimed at developing the socio-economy wellbeing of its people. However, from its inception in October 1996 until May 1999, Nasarawa State was ruled by military leaders. Today, development is carried out through the administration of projects and programs in various areas of the economy and the provision of infrastructure such as education, agriculture, roads and health centres, among others.

In the pursuance of socio-economic development, poverty eradication has now become an important topic of discussion among world leaders. Nigeria's former President Olusegun Obasanjo was motivated to search for a strategy that could address the problem of poverty and underdevelopment in Nigeria. In 2003, he created a National Economic Group that constituted the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) in response to development challenges in Nigeria. Accordingly, the Nasarawa State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NASEEDS) was founded to respond also to critical issues of poverty, underdevelopment and bad governance in Nasarawa State (NASEEDS 2005:1). The ultimate goal of NASEEDS is to bring all past efforts in development into focus with the aim of creating holistic, practical and logical approaches that would produce positive results. On its agenda are issues of wealth creation, poverty reduction, employment creation, value re-orientation and service delivery, among others. This could be achieved in the spirit of participation and transparency (NASEEDS 2005: 1-2).

The major components of socio-economic development are encapsulated in the thirteen-point agenda set up for development of the State during the third regime under the administration of Governor Aliyu Akwe. These include "security, agriculture, education, health, tourism, urban development, rural development, industrialization, economic empowerment, civil service reorganization, solid mineral exploitation, housing and cultural re-orientation" (NSG 2008a:73). Some of the development efforts will be discussed below beginning with development activities in the sphere of education.

The term education could be defined as the process of training or teaching people in a given environment. Henry & Mpinganjira (2004:8) indicate that education helps in the provision of semi-skilled labour force that is needed for the production of goods and services. Of course, good and/or quality education is essential for the development of every community (Harper 1999:36). This is because education equips people with knowledge, skills and ability that can help them live well wherever they find themselves.

The previous democratic administrations in the State determined that the State's educational system needed urgent attention; therefore, significant efforts were made to improve the standard of education, in particular in the area of establishing new tertiary institutions.[8] The aim of establishing these schools was to invest in human resources development to meet the State's most needed resource − manpower. The issue of education is relevant to the socio-economic development of any society because when people are well educated they are also able to contribute effectively to the development of their communities as the ultimate goal of education is transformation of life. This means that education is primarily linked to employment since people can earn a living based on their educational attainment.

Philips (1964:19) stated a few decades ago that, "We use our education to earn a living, and we use it to enjoy the fruits of our living." Furthermore, education can also produce future leaders or administrators, i.e. society often finds its leaders among the educated members of communities (Harper 1999:13-14). Education also reduces the high levels of crime. Henry& Mpinganjira (2004:9) maintain that in socio-economically developed societies, the crime rate is low. Therefore, one can argue safely that socio-economic development is best attained when the literacy level of a given society increases. This is because when people are educated and become employed, criminal activities will reduce, as the people provide for their own needs.

Second, development activities in the area of healthcare are also crucial. Health is described as the sense of wellbeing. As far as 1974, the World Health Organization declared that health is not merely an absence of disease but a state of complete physical, and mental, spiritual and social wellbeing (cited in Haralambos & Holborn 2008:280). Therefore, good health of

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[8]The new tertiary institutions establish include Nasarawa State University located in Keffi town, School of Health Technology located in Keffi, School of Nursing and Midwifery located in Lafia, Nasarawa State Polytechnic located in Lafia, Hills College of Education Gwanje Akwanga (private institution), and ECWA Bingham University, Karu (private institution).

citizens is an important indicator of social and economic development in a society. Those who are healthy can contribute optimally to the development of their communities, as "you need a healthy labour force if you are to increase production level" (Henry & Mpinganjira 2004:9). Speckman (2007:257) adds that, "a healthy person is expected to be a producer in one way or the other." This means illness usually affects one's level of productivity.

It has also been noted that the area of public health in Nasarawa needs improvement considering the important role health plays in socio-economic development. Nasarawa State inherited health facilities which were in deplorable conditions from the old Plateau State[9] (Nasarawa State of Nigeria 2009:2). Thus, after its creation, the Nasarawa government embarked on health programs and projects that would improve the health conditions of the people of the State. Since no meaningful development can be experienced in a society which good health is a luxury, the State Government aimed to improve the provision of health services to the people by training more health personnel and working on some healthcare projects. Efforts in this direction include the establishment of the School of Health Technology in Keffi and of the School of Nursing and Midwifery as well as the renovation of the Dalhatu Araf Specialist Hospital (DASH), Lafia (NSG 2008b:3). In line with the Millennium Development Goals, the State Government also embarked on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of all Primary Health Care Clinics in various locations in the State. Furthermore, the State collaborated with the Federal Government on HIV/AIDS projects and on malaria treatment for children under the age of five years (NSG 2009:23-27).

Third, there has been a lingering problem of water and electricity supply in the State since its creation. Successive governments have made significant efforts to provide potable water for the people. The rehabilitation and upgrading of water schemes in Lafia, Doma, Keana, Nasarawa Eggon, Akwanga and Nasarawa are examples of efforts in this regard (NSG 2008a:64-65). Other urban and semi-urban centres have also benefitted from the water projects.

Similarly, new transformers were purchased to boost electricity supply in the State capital and its environs. The government has also embarked on an accelerated rural electrification

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[9] For example, a survey conducted by the state in 2008 showed that out of a total number of 668 PHC clinics in the state, only 95 (14.2%) could provide basic emergency obstetric care; 28 of them (4.2%) had the capability to provide malaria services, while running tap water was only available in 73 PHC clinics (10.9%). As a result, the population of the state especially those in the rural areas are continuously subjected to many common diseases (Nasarawa State of Nigeria 2009:2).

scheme which would connect every nook and cranny of the State to the power grid. A contract has also been awarded to construct a hydroelectric power station at Farin-Ruwa that would generate steady electricity supply for the State. Even though the issue of mining solid minerals is essentially a federal project, the State is also encouraging small-scale miners to boost output in the sector while making efforts to monitor and control the menace of illegal miners. The State Mineral Development Company is being overhauled and restructured to meet the challenges in the sector and boost the economy (NSG 2008b:4-5).

Fourth, in terms of commerce and industry, the government is committed to creating a good industrial base in the State. For example, the NSG report (2008a:58-60) shows that a package of incentives awaits new investors in the State. The State has also constructed a permanent Trade Fair Complex to boost industrialization and encourage the organized private sector to set up small-scale industries and allied ventures. The State has constructed modern markets in Lafia, Keffi and Akwanga, and is making plans to repossess the Karu International Market which could help to develop the economic sector. Other industries include the sack industry in Akwanga and the fertilizer industry in Lafia, just to mention a few.

Another important government project is rural road development.[10] When completed, the roads will connect all corners of the State and provide easy access that would facilitate the transportation of goods and services. Lastly, the agricultural sector has also received keen attention from the government of Nasarawa State. Like his predecessor, the second democratically elected governor of the State, Aliyu Akwe, was also committed to agricultural development as the propelling force of sustainable rural development and a means of poverty alleviation.[11] Aliyu (2011a:1) notes that:

> Governor Aliyu Akwe Doma's 13-Point Agenda, with all its inadequacies at least provided a model for socio-economic transformation of the state which had agrarian revolution as its linchpin. The justification for this derives from the fact that ours is largely a rural state with over 80 per cent of the population engaged in one form of agricultural activity or the other.

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[10]The affected roads that are under construction include Gitata-Panda-Karu Road, Doma-Akwatta Road, Toto-Umaisha Road Doma-Agyaragu; Kadarko-Giza-Keana; Agaza-Agwatashi and Obi-Assakio Roads; Kokona Junction-Agwada-Udege Beki Road, Nasarawa Eggon-Mada Station Road (30 kms), Gudi Junction-Ungwar Zaria-Nunku Road; Adudu-Azara-Wuse Road (NSG 2009:41).

[11]The Bada Koshi Agricultural Scheme is a good example. Bada Koshi means "sufficient food" in Hausa language. It is an agricultural scheme that is projected to cover a period of five years (2009-2014) and aimed at improving food security and self-sufficiency, creating opportunities for gainful employment, generating income and reducing poverty. Under this program, government procured tractors and other farming implements for farmers in order to promote their method of farming from subsistent to mechanized farming which will in turn result in high quality and quantity of agricultural products (NSG 2009:4).

In view of the efforts made by successive administrations, one has to agree that some success has been attained in the area of development in Nasarawa State. Nevertheless, the State has not fully reached its development potential due to several reasons. The first factor has to do with its origin as mentioned in the discussion of the historical background of the State. Before 1996, the area now known as Nasarawa State was under Benue and Plateau States. At that time, development activities were focused on other parts of the old States, and less attention was given to the Nasarawa area. On the side of government, some of the problems have been attributed to:

> Inadequate and unsteady inflow of funds for smooth implementation of programs and projects; inadequate indigenous professionals and technical manpower necessary for the execution of projects; a weak private sector capacity incapable of playing significant role in economic stimulation, especially in the light of government initiative on private partnership; general apathy regarding private sector driven investment opportunity; the weight of liabilities from previous administrations. The challenge in this regard was how to manage these liabilities in the face of compelling need to accelerate the state development efforts and poor infrastructural facilities, which makes it difficult to attract investors to the State (NSG 2008b: 6).

Furthermore, high cost of governance, poor revenue base, weak public institutions and weak human resource capacity, low levels of transparency in government business and the attendant high level of corruption and heavy external and domestic debt all contribute to the slow pace of development in Nasarawa (NASEEDS 2005:18). The present State Governor, Tanko Al-Makura, also attributes the challenges to development initiative to the accumulated debt that the State needs to pay. He said:

> Nasarawa State could have been a high flyer in progress and development had it been free from needless huge debt profile. Yet, the government of the state is learning to trudge on, gaining more supporters by the day with initiatives to reposition the long-neglected states (in Samuel 2012:1).

Thus, the inability to attain desired results in the area of development is not only because of the programs but also because of problems of policy implementation as a result of changes in administrations and priorities. Programs are good only if the policies behind them are sustained and successfully implemented. In other words, if government's policy and programs on development are being sustained and reinforced by successive administrations, the State economy would be healthier. However, this research contends that the current approach leads to dependency on government resources (or other rich relations) for development programs but on the contrary the State income cannot meet all the needs of the people. In the words of Obanye (2006:18):

> The people are not forceful and productive enough to develop themselves. But [they] wait for the government to do everything for them. This is the mistake people make as the

development of the State is a collective responsibility. People should use their God-given talents and potentials to develop the young State.

Furthermore, some of the amenities provided by the government to contribute to development are being vandalised or stolen by the people (Obanye 2006: 19). This means that the people undermine their own potential and values, and continually look onto the government for survival. This reliance and the dependence on government resources cannot lead to real development as real development cannot be based on the charity of others.

Some of the problems of ineffective community development also rest with the government because, in most cases, development programs and projects are planned and executed for the people without the local communities coming on board. As such, the people assume that the projects are government projects and not theirs; therefore, they never see the need to contribute to but rather are willing to benefit from such projects (Monaheng 2003:130).

In communities in Nasarawa State, the situation became worse with the restoration of a democratic government. The result is that many rural dwellers leave for cities in search of their share of the nation's wealth, thus, abandoning the excavation of the natural resources. They become a nuisance to the rest of the people when they could have been shaped into future potential leaders whose inner abilities have been discovered. These and many other factors contributed to the quest for people-centredness in terms of socio-economic development efforts. For example, Speckman emphasizes that the power to overcome poverty and dependency lies with the individuals and the communities and that the creation of conditions that are conducive to the release of a God-given potential in individuals can lead to a transformation of social structures thereby the development of undeveloped communities (Speckman 2007: xvii).

Against this background, the research assumes that the people are not adequately empowered to use their skills and creative ingenuity and to work hard to enhance their living conditions by breaking out of their poverty, dependence and despair, and move towards prosperity, responsibility, self-reliance and self-respect. As such, it is assumed that the goal of development is to empower the marginalised, the excluded and the powerless to convert their local knowledge and technology into meaningful production.

Having described the extent of socio-economic development as far as government efforts go, the limitations and success and failures of these efforts, the next section will consider the 2005 report by NASEEDS committee in order to identify some challenges related to development in Nasarawa which require urgent attention.

2.4. Some Challenges in Development

Nasarawa State is faced by various challenges in the area of development. These challenges are multidimensional and cut across all sectors (NASEEDS 2005:25-26). The challenges could also represent factors that contribute to poverty in Nasarawa State, and the situation seems to call for a theological and ecclesiological response.

2.4.1. Environmental degradation

In most developing countries, adverse effects on the environment are presently severe and on the increase. They result from overpopulation and environmental exploitation. Adam Szirmai[12] (2005:160) notes that 1.2 billion people in developing countries have no access to clean water and 1.7 billion people have no access to adequate sanitary facilities with tremendous health hazards as consequences. Most urban settlements in developing countries have no sewage system while 90 percent of sewage is discharged without treatment, and air pollution is on the increase. This situation can lead to loss of lives and low productivity. Environmental deterioration can also lead to poor and smaller harvest as the soil on which people depend loses its fertility (Korten 1990:2).

In line with this, it is obvious that Nasarawa State proximity to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) has attracted great numbers of people and caused movement from rural areas to major towns, leading to congestion in towns, not only in terms of the population but also in terms of overcrowded buildings, markets, vehicles, and factories. The result is in an unclean environment as well as a shortage of social services, both of which constitute a health hazard. Some people also erect buildings without the pre-requisite planning, therefore causing blocked drainages.

Moreover, outside the urban areas, the State also faces the challenge of soil erosion, land degradation through mining and bush burning, deforestation, flood, waste management and pollution. According to a NASEEDS report, these have resulted in loss of lives and priorities, damage to agricultural farmlands, loss of incomes, poor health conditions, low productivity, unplanned public expenditure, as well as increase in the poverty level especially in the rural environment (NASEEDS 2005:25). The major challenges in most of the major towns are

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overpopulation and lack of adequate housing, lack of infrastructure including access roads and absence of good drainage systems. Joseph (2012:1), a Daily Trust news reporter, explains that erosions and floods are behind the hardship that is present in both rural and urban communities of Nasarawa State. Wada Yahaya Mohammed, the Nasarawa State Commissioner for Works, confirmed that the situation in some parts of the State is critical because no less than ten communities have been cut off with the collapse of several bridges and culverts in the 2012 floods. In Lafia, seven primary school pupils were swept away by the flood and one young man was killed in Karu, while hundreds of people were displaced and the crops washed away.

There is no doubt that environmental challenges have a negative effect on people's sources of livelihood. Since the people of Nasarawa are predominantly farmers, environmental problems have serious implications for agricultural production. This means that the Nasarawa State government needs to take extra precaution regarding issues of environmental destruction which may later lead to extra expenditure on repairs and rebuilding.

2.4.2. Structural economic challenges

The economy of Nasarawa State is monocultural with approximately 80 percent of the people being peasant farmers and rural dwellers. Poor infrastructural facilities or the lack of access to good facilities is also a problem (NASEEDS 2005:11 26). It is often difficult to access basic necessities such as energy, water supply, transportation and communication systems. In turn, production and local and external investment are affected resulting in a low commercial and industrial base (NASEEDS 2005:11). The people also seem to lack basic skills in the use technological equipment and of local methods of crop preservation. Since agriculture is the mainstay of the State's economy, it is strategic to stimulating the growth and development of the State. However, it is important to channel more development efforts to other aspects of the economy in order to reduce the dependence on one source.

2.4.3. Gender inequity

According to Szirmai (2005:501), gender discrimination is a potential obstacle to optimal use of human talent. It can also be an obstacle to fast and effective development of any society especially in several societies that prohibit women from formal education and from engaging in paid work outside the house. Although many such women have potential for trade and entrepreneurship, they are hindered by inadequate access to capital and support services. It

means that when women have less access to paid jobs, health services and education, the overall development of the community is held back.

In the same way, cultural, political and other barriers continue to constrain the achievement of gender balance in development programs in Nasarawa State. In particular, "Gender disparity poses a threat to development especially in places like Nasarawa where over 65 percent of the population mainly women, are marginalised" (NASEEDS 2005:40). Furthermore:

> Women are not only constrained to their sole traditional roles in raising children and performing domestic chores, but are still objects of unjust laws, discrimination, as well as social and cultural taboos. Women such as widows, divorcees, and head of single-parent families, are daily subjected to dehumanising experiences (NASEEDS 2005:92-93).

In this regard, Szirmai confirms that in many African societies, the heaviest physical work in food production is usually left to the women, while men engage in activities with higher status (Szirmai 2005:499). Similarly, Rahman, Ibrahim and Ibrahim note that women in Nasarawa State carry the main responsibility for both farm work and domestic work. For example, women spent more hours per day than men in both productive and reproductive activities such as cooking, housecleaning and childcare (2007:61). Therefore, one can assume that such women are not given the opportunity to explore their potential outside the domestic domain where some of them may outperform men. The table below clarifies the situation in Nasarawa State:

Table 1: Time budget analysis in farm household activities

Core	Men	Women
Farm work	4.8	2.4
Cooking	0.3	3.3
Fetching of water	0.5	1.0
Fetching firewood	0.9	0.8
Housecleaning	0.4	2.2
Childcare	0.4	2.0
Food processing	0.4	1.3
Total	7.7	13.0

Source - Rahman, Ibrahim and Ibrahim (2007:61)

In an article titled *Determinants of Poverty among Farming Household in Nasarawa State* Ibrahim and Umar (2008:15) reported that in Nasarawa State, the number of non-working females (i.e. not employed in the formal sector) who are involved in farming or domestic work exceeds the number of working females, and they are poorer when compared to the females working in the formal sector. Clearly, women play an important role in promoting socio-economic development in terms of income generation for the household. It is not without reason that Burkey (1993:66) comments that, "any rural development programme that does not give emphasis to women's participation in development is making things more difficult for itself."

Consequently, women's roles in the socio-economic development of every community should not be ignored. Women's skills and abilities should be taken into account when creating opportunities in order to enhance the wellbeing of the family and the community at large. Sadly, "in Nigeria women provide 60-80 percent of agricultural labour and yet they have not been given due recognition in the agricultural sector" (Rahman, Ibrahim & Ibrahim 2008:57). Furthermore, in an analysis of women's involvement in livestock production in the Lafia area of Nasarawa State, Ayoade, Ibrahim and Ibrahim (2009:7) note that, "the majority of the women rarely participated in livestock production". According to the authors, "the major factors affecting their participation were inadequate capital, re-occupation with household chores and dominance by men."

When women are encouraged to engage in other employment activities besides domestic work, they can contribute greatly to the development of household and of the community at large. The below table illustrates that in Nasarawa State, women who work and contribute to household development are more than those who are confined to domestic duties and are poorer.

Table 2: Contribution of working class and non-working class females to household development

Category	Poor %	Non-poor %
Working class (female)	15.3	85.7
Non-working class (female)	84.7	14.3
Total	100.00	100.00

Source Ibrahim and Umar (2008:16)

In short, the absence of many women from development programs demands a critical response. Thus, the creation of employment can help reduce or eradicate poverty but empowering women is an important issue to be considered in development process. Some studies have argued that genuine and balanced development and growth will be achieved only when gender inequalities have been redressed (Rahman, Ibrahim & Ibrahim 2007:57). August (2010:73) notes that, "for decades women have been working to educate the world that gender injustice is a critical issue in underdevelopment and that it hinders peace and justice". Furthermore, partnership between male and female members of society is needed if human community is to move forward in her social, political, economic and religious life.

2.4.4. HIV/AIDS as a health challenge

Health is an important aspect of human capital. Investments and improvement in health are seen as major positive contributors to economic growth and development. Health also has to do with the state of mind, and the lack of it may affect the productive capacity of individuals, households and even the community (Szirmai 2005:204). This shows that when a society is faced with a particular health challenge, development suffers setbacks. The discussion at this point will focus on HIV/AIDS which is one of the most devastating health problems that hinder socio-economic development in many parts of Africa.

The demographic analysis of Nasarawa shows that the state is growing on a daily basis due to its geographical location. Nevertheless, the advantages have also given rise to some health challenges. In the year 2000, it was discovered that the incidence of HIV/AIDS in the state had increased. The increase was attributed to the geographical location of the State between key "hotspot" States such as Kaduna, Benue and Taraba and its proximity to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) which attracts the masses. It was also noted that poverty and ignorance remain major factors in the spread of HIV/AIDS. An influx of sex workers from the *Sharia* states[13] to Nasarawa and the FCT who probably lack protective measures is also a factor in the spread of the disease. Moreover, because the cost of living in Abuja is high, people live in Nasarawa and commute daily to Abuja (Imam *et al.* 2000:4, 9, 18). The factors that fuel the spread of HIV/AIDS in the State could be summed up thus:

> The proximity of the state to Abuja the Federal Capital, which has resulted in the influx of migrant populations into the State, harmful cultural practices like wife inheritance, unhealthy circumcision and scarification, lack of mutual fidelity within polygamous mirages, myth and

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[13] Nigerian states that operate under Islamic Law are known as *Sharia* states.

mist conceptions about HIV/AIDS, increase of stigma and discrimination against PLWHA and gender based violation (nasarawa_policy_brief.pdf).

This means that HIV/AIDS constitutes a serious challenge to development in Nasarawa State. The impact of HIV/AIDS on all sectors of the society including the workforce is reflected in the increase in sickness/absence rates and in the number of orphans and vulnerable children (NASEEDS 2005:26). The programme manager of Nasarawa State AIDS Control Agency (NASACA), Ibrahim Azara, affirmed that the State occupies the seventh position in the HIV/AIDS prevalence ranking in the country. He enumerated the challenges of NASACA as inadequate technical staff, office accommodation, funding and equipment. Therefore, he called on the State Government to concentrate on policy action aimed at addressing these challenges in a way that would enable the agency to fight the scourge.

Youths are the most vulnerable to HIV infection but the rural populace is more endangered (Imam *et al*. 2000:4, 9, 18). If health is a factor that contributes to the socio-economic development of either an individual or society then the people of the State must be enlightened about the negative effects of HIV/AIDS. The church should be able to participate significantly in this campaign because it relates directly with the people. The church could serve as a mouthpiece as well as a source of protection against any act of discrimination against or violation of the rights of those living with HIV/AIDS.

If health is indeed a catalyst for socio-economic development, ill health could lead the individual or the community into poverty and dependency because without good health human activity is limited.

2.4.5. Unemployment and lack of economic diversification

Unemployment and lack of economic diversification often go hand in hand. Unemployment could be both a cause and a result of the situation of poverty in which people find themselves. It could be a cause, since without a job one has no income and cannot pay for proper housing, food, medical care and education (Swanepoel & De Beer 2006:6). A number of Nigerians have also observed that unemployment is a major factor that contributes to poverty in Nigeria and it has negative effects on their sources of livelihood, as many roam the streets without any tangible source of livelihood (Ucha 2010:51). In Nasarawa, for example, unemployment is one of the leading characteristics of poverty. Since the people of are predominantly subsistence farmers their meagre produce is often sold out before the next season, many find themselves in a state of hunger. Some of them who are privileged find seasonal jobs with low

pay, while the rest either beg for daily bread or depend on politicians for handouts. Some girls or even married women wash dishes in restaurants and hotels in Lafia, Abuja and other towns and cities for little pay.

According to Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data, the general unemployment rate for 15 years and above for both the state and rural sector in 2006 was 12.8 percent. More female adults (14.4 percent) were unemployed than male adults (11.6 percent) (NBS 2006:2). In Nasarawa State, the challenge of unemployment has a direct correlation with youth idleness, high crime rate, promiscuity, general indiscipline and moral decadence. Unfortunately, youths who are more than half of the State's total population lack productive jobs (NASEEDS 2005:85-86). In such a situation, the primary sustainable solution to poverty eradication would be job creation. Employment in this sense does not necessarily imply government jobs only but also self-employment such as small-scale or even agricultural activities. Onuk, Anzaku and Luka (2010:109) show that, "youths in all countries are both a major human resource for development in agriculture and technology innovation." In other words, youth participation or involvement in agricultural activities is a way of increasing their skills, knowledge, confidence and self-reliance as well as an opportunity to collaborate and engage in sustainable development.

It is also observed that in Nasarawa, most of the projects that started since the first democratically elected government have been abandoned or are yet to be completed and put to use. These include the Sack Industry in Akwanga, Karu International Market, Lafia Main Market, Fertilizer Company in Lafia, and Hydroelectric Power Station at Farin-Ruwa, to mention a few. The slow or ineffective project execution has also compounded the challenge of unemployment. In this regard, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) 2011 report shows that "the national unemployment rate increased to 23.9% in 2011 compared to 21% in 2010 and 19.7% in 2009." The unemployment rate may have been a lot worse without some of the employment generating policies of government which have helped to curtail the rise, that is, when compared to other countries of the world where rates have risen faster than Nigeria (NBS 2011:10).

Local industries also include the dyeing pit in Lafia, salt mining in Keana, art and craft industry, which produces items such as baskets, carved wooden implements such as ladles, pestles and mortars, and iron implements such as knives, cutlasses, hoes, all of which are a common sight in the local markets and are used by farmers to boost local use and sales. The government would need to encourage more people to participate actively in such businesses

in order to increase their economic power. This could be accomplished if the individual's ability is recognized and utilized.

2.4.6. Illiteracy

Literacy is described as the ability to read, write and calculate (Szirmai 2005:227). Literacy therefore is one of the major factors that could foster the socio-economic development of a given society. It is a key that unlocks life for people (Maluleke 1994:13). In Nasarawa State, the standard of education has fallen and it is marked by overcrowding, poor sanitation, and poor condition of service for teachers which result in poor quality of teaching and its products (NASEEDS 2005:42). Most of the rural population is unschooled and illiterate (Ibrahim & Umar 2008:16). This group dedicates most of its time and energy to rural farming, which is the major source of income. Most of the privileged few do not even obtain tertiary education. Early marriages as well as the inability of some parents to pay tuition fees for the education of their children and wards poses a serious challenge to educating the masses. Thus, most people resort to farming. Based on the NBS data (2006:2), the adult literacy rate in Nigeria from 15 years and above was 53.7 percent which means almost half of the population are illiterate, and according to gender classification 68.4 percent of the illiterates are females.

One may therefore conclude that illiteracy is a major factor affecting crop production among farming households in Nasarawa State. For example, it was observed that the number of illiterate adult farmers (men and women) is higher, compared to those who are literate and the illiterate farmers are also poorer (Ibrahim & Umar 2008:16-17). Thus, educating farmers either formally or informally will be a step in the right direction, as it would enable them to make rational decision on issues that affect them as farmers especially their standard of living and means of livelihood. In the same way, it will enable them to obtain other jobs outside their farm income.

2.5. Manifestation of Poverty in Nasarawa State

As mentioned earlier, Nasarawa State is richly blessed with various natural resources that should enable the people to live a good life. However, because of the challenges mentioned above, many of the citizens live below the poverty line. The impact of poverty on the rural population has negative implications for the future of the people and the next generation if proper measures are not taken.

2.5.1. Understanding the concept of poverty

Scholars have conceptualized and defined poverty in various ways depending on the context of the research being undertaken. However, poverty is commonly seen as the shortage or complete lack of what is needed for survival or meeting a particular problem at a given time. According to Myers (2011:113), poverty is more complex than the idea of people simply being in deficit or in lack. He takes into account the perspectives of other authors such as Chambers, Friedman, Christian and Jayakaran who define poverty as:

- *Entanglement:* the poor live in a situation that leaves them physically weak, isolated, vulnerable and helpless (Myers 2011:115-116).

- *Lack of access to social power:* the poor are excluded from the overlapping domains of state power - political power, social power, and economic power (Myers 2011:118).

- *Disempowerment:* the poor find themselves trapped in a system of disempowerment that includes cultural, societal, biophysical, spiritual, and personal systems (Myers 2011:124).

- *Lack of freedom to grow:* the poor are restricted and limited in four areas of life namely physical, mental, social, and spiritual. People lack the freedom to reach their full potential (Myers 2011:131).

Subsequently, Myers (2011:132) concludes that poverty is a complex social phenomenon that affects all areas of life - physical, personal, social, cultural, and spiritual. He however admits:

> I doubt there is or will be a unified theory of poverty. There is always more to see and more to learn. The corrective is to keep using a family of views to see all the things we need to see. We must work hard to be as holistic as we can be for the sake of the poor (Myers 2011:132).

For this reason, scholars are of the opinion that a description of the condition of poor people in a given community will be on both individual and community levels (Chambers 1983:108). On their part, Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:2) claim that, "poverty is a relative term because it can either describe the situation of an individual or a family, or it can describe a whole community or society". August (2010:1) also notes that poverty can be classified according to the level of disadvantage experienced, that is, as absolute or relative poverty. Poverty is considered absolute when individuals are in a situation which the absence of the next meal means the difference between life and death. On the other hand, relative poverty refers to a situation in which people's basic needs are met but the people remain disadvantaged when compared to their social environment (Swanepoel & De Beer 2006:3).

Poverty is indeed a global problem which has had diverse effects on nations; therefore, it has become an important subject to world leaders. The theme of poverty eradication is reflected

in the World Vision 2020 and it is also one of the Millennium Development Goals (Ibrahim & Umar 2008:11). These different views of poverty as mention above are relevant to the context of rural communities in Nasarawa State. Majority of the people live in rural areas and lack access to adequate social amenities, political and economic powers. The situation of the rural dwellers will be discussed later.

2.5.2.   The nature of poverty

From the brief discussion of the concept of poverty above, a theological perspective of community development is proposed here because of its holistic character. The principle behind the holistic theological perspective is that building and maintaining relationships is fundamental to community development. August (2010:18) assumes that the chief cause of poverty is sin. According to him, sin and exploitation leads to the breaking of relationships and prevents people from experiencing and enjoying the abundant wealth God has in store for humankind. Sin is the root of deception, distortion and domination, and it militates against the plan of God. In the same vein, Myers (2011:144) argues that the nature of poverty is fundamentally relational. He insists that in a community where relationships are cordial, there would be mutual love and care. If there is a broken relationship, then, there would be selfishness, corruption and exploitation of the powerless, among other issues. In his opinion, when God is on the sidelines or is blanked out of people's story, they do not treat one another well; the love for God and for others is absent because of sin. Unless the issue of sin is addressed, poverty may not be properly reduced nor development be sustained.

Myers (2011:144) therefore concludes that poverty should be understood as the outcome of relationships that do not work for the wellbeing of all. He further claims that the scope of sin affects five areas of relationships that make up people's lives namely people's relationship with themselves, with the community, with others, with the environment and with God. It can be argued that each of these broken relationships is related to the above description of poverty which indicates that the poor have been denied access to certain socio-economic benefits due to social class structure. Restoring the broken relationships is the bridge that is needed if development is to be sustained. People need a change of heart and mind so that they would be clothed with love and care for the powerless and hopeless.

2.5.3.   Poverty among rural farmers in Nasarawa State

The relational nature of the concept of poverty is relevant to the situation in Nasarawa State. Poverty can be identified in problems associated with education, health, economic

oppression, dependency, and so forth. Ibrahim and Umar, in their *Determinants of Poverty among Farming Households in Nasarawa State2008,* view poverty as the inability to meet people's basic needs of food, access to land and education. The authors critically study the socio-economic characteristics of farming households in Nasarawa State to determine the level of poverty among farming households. They also identify the determinants of poverty and the coping strategies in the study area (Ibrahim & Umar 2008:12-13). Using random sampling to select one local government area from each of the three senatorial zones in the State, the authors randomly selected five villages from each local government and ten farming households from each village to constitute a total of 150 respondents for the study.

The estimate used to determine the poverty level among the farmers by Ibrahim and Umar is the poverty line of the Nigerian currency, the Naira with the cut off being ₦1, 125 per month, ₦281.5 per week and ₦40.2 per day. The expenditure of farming households on food below this poverty line are classified as poor while those above it are the non-poor farming households. However, the result of their findings show that the percentage of those who fall below poverty level is higher than those above it, which means that the majority of the farming households are poor (2008:14-15), as shown in the table below:

Table 3: Incidence of Poverty among Farming Households

Category	Poor %	Non-poor %
Poor	80	53.0
Non-poor	70	47.0
Total	150	100.0

Source - Ibrahim and Umar (2008:15)

The socio-economic parameters for evaluating the farming households were based on the household size, number of employed and non-employed females in the household, number of literate men and women, and number of household members employed outside the agricultural sector. Ibrahim and Umar, in line with Hassan and Buba's (1991) report, maintain that due to dependency ratios, bigger households are poorer than those with fewer members. The second result, which is also reflected in IFPRI (2004), shows that the majority of poor farming households have a higher number of non-working female. The report agrees with Omonona (2000) that most members of the poor farming families are illiterate. Lastly, Ibrahim and Umar also reflect the findings of Adejobi (2004) and Ajakaiye (2001) that farmers who are engaged in other economic activities such as tailoring, carpentry, masonry

and small-scale trade are not as poor as those whose only means of livelihood is farming, (Ibrahim & Umar 2008:15-17).

2.5.4. Impact of poverty and coping strategies

One could safely assume that most of the residents of Nasarawa State are suffering from abject poverty in the midst of apparent plenty. The impact of poverty is felt mostly by rural dwellers who have to seek for alternative means outside their main livelihood to keep life going. As a coping strategy, most members of poor farming households often skip meals especially breakfast and lunch. However, they take supplementary drinks such as "*kunu*" (a local nutritious non-alcoholic drink made from maize and millet), while on the farm (Ibrahim & Umar 2008:18).

Another strategy used for coping with food poverty as describe by Ibrahim & Umar is engaging in wage labour as farm workers or domestic workers in order to complement the efforts of the household head and meet some personal needs. Young boys and girls are often farm workers while some young girls also work as domestic servants. These jobs attract low pay and are often not secure. The reduction in quantity of meals served to the household members is also a common strategy used by the farming households. This practice would obviously result in hunger and malnutrition especially for the younger members of the household. The following table illustrates the scenario:

Table 4: Coping strategies used by poor households in Nasarawa State

Coping strategies	%	Rank
Skipping meals	26.5	1
Quantity of meals is reduced	20.0	3
Less preferred food is purchased	4.2	6
Sale of some assets	14.3	4
Engaging in wage labour	22.4	2
Borrowing from friends and relations	12.2	5
Total	100.0	

Source: Ibrahim and Umar (2008)

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the reasons and impact of poverty in Nasarawa State perpetuate each other. Therefore, positive measure needs to be taken to reverse the trend since they actually have all it takes for the people to enjoy a good life. The

church also needs to be aware of the situation of poverty among the people and find a solution to it.

2.5.5. Causes of poverty in rural communities in Nasarawa State

It is somewhat difficult to separate the various challenges to development from causes of poverty in the case of Nasarawa State. Again, as noted before, scholars differ in their view of the causes of poverty primarily because of the different contexts of research. According to Burkey (1993:36), some of the arguments concerning rural poverty are clouded by ideological convictions, education and training, class prejudice, and so on. He goes on to outline some of the causes which could also be the reasons for the persistence of poverty in the developing countries under five headings as follow:

- Lack of modernization tendencies

- Physical limitation

- Bureaucratic stifling

- Dependency of the Third World countries

- Exploitation by local élites

From the causes listed above, it could be assumed that poverty or under-development in Nasarawa State is not mainly derived from the lack of modern technology or slow economic growth, but poor economic opportunities, systemic social deprivation and the neglect of public or social facilities contribute to the present state of affairs in Nasarawa (see also Sen 1999:3). Furthermore, most rural dwellers in Nasarawa State are not self-reliant as discussed in (2.3). They continually look onto the government, church and other relatives who live in the cities to do things for them. Indeed, poor economic opportunities and systemic social deprivation are a problem in rural communities. Burkey (1993:6) explains that the existence of moneylenders, landowners and traders creates dominance/dependence relationships at the village level. This dominant relationship distorts and erodes communal bonds and values as well as equality of access to resources. It also affects unity and peaceful coexistence in rural communities.

This form of exploitation can be observed among rural farmers in Nasarawa State. For example, the practice of borrowing and lending through *bada kaka* and *adashe* in rural areas seems to be a contributing factor to the persistence and sustenance of poverty in the rural areas. *Bada kaka* is the Hausa term for the borrowing of a certain amount of money or goods by farmers before or during the raining season from creditors which they would repay with

farm produce worth about a 100 percent or more during harvest. *Adashe* on the other hand is the Hausa term for an equal contribution of money by two or more people usually in rural areas to help an individual to meet a certain need which would be repaid within a stipulated time with a 20 or 30 percent interest monthly. The aim is to help rural farmers especially those who do not have money to start the farming season.

However, these methods of assistance have plunged many rural dwellers into debt crises which eventually result in poverty and hunger. It has been observed by Olotu (2011:2-5) that the majority of those who sponsor *bada kaka* are from the city while the *adashe* is popular among the rural people although sometimes some city dwellers also practice *adashe.* Rural folks complain that *bada kaka* or *adashe* does not enhance or boost production but it has rendered most of them perpetual debtors as they keep producing food while the rich continue to benefit from their products. Olotu (2011:7) also explains that, in every season, most of the people who borrow money through these means have to pay landowners in order to gain access to their farmland since the landowners control the land in the rural areas even if they live in the urban areas.

Gleaning from the above discussion, one can gather that, environmental degradation, unemployment, lack of initiative, gender inequity, health problems, lack of economic diversification, dependency, illiteracy are serious challenges towards effective development. Poverty and underdevelopment are caused by factors such as corruption, high level of debt, apathy and dependency. Nevertheless, the chain of poverty can be broken through hard work and by the community or individual's active participation in development activities.

2.6.   Summary of chapter

The present chapter has described the extent and the success or failure of current socio-economic community development programs in Nasarawa State. It offers a descriptive analysis of Nasarawa State in order to understand the state of its socio-economic development. The chapter also described the historical background, economic potential and the economic activities in the State.

The chapter explained that Nasarawa is blessed with natural resources and its strategic location in the central zone of the country close to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) opens it up to different opportunities. The people are predominantly rural and agrarian with about 80 percent engaging in agriculture as the main economic enterprise. Although the State has made significant efforts to improve the living standards of the people, it is yet to reach its

desired goal due to various challenges in the area of development such as inadequate funds, lack of indigenous professionals, and a high level of dependence on government resources by the rural people, illiteracy and lack of economic diversification. The impact on the people especially on farmers in rural communities is poverty.

The research understood that the government efforts to make life better for the people, cannot adequately be achieved without the active participation of the people. This is because development does not imply doing something for the people; rather, it is best achieved when the people actively participate in the process. The people should also be willing to complement the effort of the government rather than wait for the government to do everything for them. The description of the situation in Nasarawa State in this chapter is in line with the tasks of practical theology according to Osmer (2011:2). It helped to achieve the first aim of the research. It also opens the way for a discussion of the concept of people-centred community development in the next chapter. The chapter focused on the various views of development, some approaches to development, and how the church can employ people-centred development as a holistic approach to meet human needs.

Chapter 3: Understanding People-Centred Community Development

3.1. Introduction

From the previous chapter, it is clear that the Nasarawa State Government is committed to improving the living conditions of her people. However, the current state of socio-economic development in the State indicates that some major challenges remain. To overcome these challenges and ensure effective development, a holistic approach is suggested which will require people's participation in their own development. With the understanding that the government alone cannot adequately meet the basic needs of the people, church leaders, such as the ECWA church, are also seeking ways to offer some hope to their members and communities and improve their living conditions . Therefore, the question that this chapter seeks to answer is: what is understood by a *people-centred approach* and how can it assist in achieving holistic development in Nasarawa State?

In order to respond to this question, the chapter described the notion of development, specifically, socio-economic development, various approaches to development and the concept of community development. An overview of various views on development is therefore given including the concepts of community development (as opposed to, amongst others, rural development), the philosophy and principles of community development. The reflection in this chapter was crucial for the discussion of development as a holistic approach for socio-economic development from a theological perspective in the next chapter.

3.2. Understanding Development

In this section, various definitions and concepts of development was reviewed before attempting a critical study of some approaches to development and of people-centred community development.

3.2.1. Defining development

Scholars and pioneers in the field of development studies agree that no fixed and final definition of development exists (Burkey 1993:33). However, the term development is generally understood as a specific state of growth or advancement (Soanes & Stevenson 2008:392). It describes the process that a community needs to go through in order to eliminate poverty (Hughes & Bennett 1998:3). Development can also be defined as relationships that exist among societies and the institutional or structural frameworks which

circumscribe the behaviours of members of society and streamline the relationships which they, individually and collectively, seek in order to gain greater access to material things of value in society (Ogai 2003:13).

According to Speckman (2007:25), "development could be approached from different epistemological frameworks". It is traditionally viewed as an economic advancement through modernity but radicals view development as an alternative theory of post-modernism which focuses on human development with an emphasis on personal needs and growth. For Aroh (2002:6), "development was viewed as being synonymous with economic growth expressed in aggregate or macro-economic indicators of Gross National Product GNP and the growth of per capita income". Her approach focuses on economic growth or achievement as a means of reducing abject poverty.

A few decades before Aroh's and Speckman, Land (1969:181-183) suggested an epistemological approach to development from a theological and ecumenical point of view. He showed that the word 'development' had its origins in post war concern about the fate of the poorer nations in light of the challenges of poverty. Development therefore was designed to ensure change and growth towards self-sustainability. For the humanist, "this implies that people should have a full sense in global vision in which they will live in peace, brotherhood, justice and respect for the right of all, where they will share mutually the benefit in their various cultures." For the poor and hungry masses of the world, "development is the transition from misery, want, disease, and illiteracy to decent condition of life. It is nourishing food for their children, decent clothing, protection against disease and a roof over their heads," (Land 1969:182).

Thus, while Aroh (2002) definition emphasizes economic advancement Land (1969) focuses on meeting human needs in a self-sustainable way. Some other reputable scholars in the discipline of development have also viewed development from different lenses. Friedmann (1992:33) understands development as a process that seeks the empowerment of the households and their particularly relevant action. In his book "*Whose Reality Counts?,"* Chambers views development as a responsible wellbeing by and for all (2003:11). Sen (1999:3-4) sees "development as freedom" and not just an economic process. He argues that anything that deprives people of freedom should be removed and that freedom is central to development for two basic reasons:

- *Evaluative reason* - assessment of progress has to be done primarily in terms of whether the freedom that people have is enhanced.

- *Effectiveness reason* - achievement of development is thoroughly dependent on the free agency of that people.

In Myers' (2011:3) view, development is transformation, a term that reflects positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially, psychologically, and spiritually. Development is also not something arrived at, an endpoint, but a continuing process (Myers 2011:155).

From the above definitions, one may therefore conclude that development is a form of social and economic change that leads to meaningful progress in the life of an individual or a community. It is a process that gives people the right to make choices regarding their lives; for instance, in acquiring knowledge, having access to resources for a decent standard of living and improving their condition from bad to good. This brings us to the issue of socio-economic development in the context of Nasarawa State.

3.2.2.   Socio-economic development

Understanding socio-economic development can contribute to the understanding of people-centred community development. Available literature presupposes different views of socio-economic development. Meier (1995:7) defines economic development as "the process whereby the... income of a country increases over a long period of time [whereby] the number of people below an 'absolute poverty line' does not increase, and… the distribution of income does not become more unequal". In other words, the aim of economic development is to see that economically powerless nations or individuals gain power, since wealth puts one in a position of power.

However, social development refers to planned development outcomes that prioritize social impacts, often through the social sectors of health and education. This conception of social development informs the setting of targets for social impact, focusing on such indicators as levels of maternal mortality and participation in primary education (Green 2002:52). Therefore, social development guarantees the fulfilment of people's aspirations for personal achievement and happiness, promotes a proper adjustment between individuals and their communities, fosters freedom and security and creates a sense of belonging and social purpose (Midgley 1986:2). This implies that economic development aims at raising the level of material wellbeing of individuals while social development enhances social services.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been quite proactive in proposing some contemporary and relevant approaches to tackle the socio-economic pathologies rooted in the social and economic rights' discourse of the developing world. These proposals are encapsulated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The goals set clear targets for reducing poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women (NMDG 2010). The MDGs offer the most thorough description of what socioeconomic development entails and what the salient aspects that constitute a socio-economically developed society are.

Nasarawa State does not quite measure up to the aforementioned standards because poverty, deprivation and lack of access to opportunity and choice characterize the current state of affairs in the State. Poverty levels remain rampant. Ibrahim and Umar (2008:11-12) note that most countries of the world fall under the absolute poverty line, as their people live on less than one US dollar per day while those who are relatively poor live on at least one or two US dollars per day. In relation to this observation, reports show that 50 percent of Nigeria's population live below the poverty line and that only 40 percent have access to safe drinking water, about 55 percent of the urban population live in single rooms, and 62 percent have no access to primary healthcare (NPC 2004). Furthermore, 60 percent of the population is illiterate and feed on one-third of the required minimum protein and vitamin intake due to low purchasing power. The incidence of poverty in Nigeria rose from 28 percent in 1980 to about 70 percent in 2003. The nation's per capita income reduced from $698 in 1980 to $290 in 2003; and the nation's ranking in Human Development Index (HDI) dropped from 129 out of 177 countries in 1990 to 158 in 2003.

Similarly the report by the National Bureau of Statistics on Nigeria's poverty profile shows that the scourge of poverty in Nigeria does not only affect household expenditure, it is marked by inadequate access to government utilities and services, environmental issues, poor infrastructure, illiteracy and ignorance, poor health, insecurity, and social and political exclusion. Urban settlers endure the high demand of services such as school enrolment, access to primary health care, growth of unsanitary slums while the rural people are faced with problems in the agricultural sector and food security (NBS 2010:13). It becomes clear that for any meaningful socio-economic development and poverty reduction to take place, there should be an improvement in people's access to social services such as education and health.

The comprehensive factors that can contribute effectively to the quest for socio-economic development include health and education. The context of the research population usually determines what it will require for the development of the area. Therefore, quality education and adequate health care remain the leading factors in the development of any community. According to Szirmai (2005:177), health and education are important aspects of development. They belong to the basic needs every development strategy tries to meet. Improving the state of health and the level of education also can contribute to the realisation of other development objectives. This shows that education and health remain a catalyst for socio-economic development in any given society such as in Nasarawa State.

3.2.2.1. Educational factor

Haralambos and Holborn (2007:599) describe education as an aspect of socialization that involves the acquisition of knowledge and learning skills. Education also helps to provide semi-skilled labour force that is needed for the production of goods and services (Henry & Mpinganjira 2004:8). It means that good and/or quality education is essential for the development of every community (Harper 1999:36). In the context of socio-economic development, one could say education is the process of training or teaching people in a given environment by equipping them with knowledge, skill and ability that can help them live well anywhere. This implies that people need to be nurtured or trained to be sensitive to issues that affect their lives and to socialise within their environment.

When people are well educated, they may also contribute effectively to the development of their communities, as the ultimate goal of education is the transformation of life. Thus, education is linked first to employment since people earn a living through their educational attainment. As mention earlier, Philips noted some decades ago that, "We use our education to earn a living, and we use it to enjoy the fruits of our living" (1964:19). Secondly, through education, future leaders or administrators can also be produced, that is, society often finds its leaders among the educated members (Harper 1999:13-14). Thirdly, education reduces the high levels of crime because in socio-economically developed societies, the crime rates are low (Henry & Mpinganjira 2004:9). Therefore, one can assume safely that socio-economic development is best attained when the literacy level in a given society increases to a certain level. When people are educated and are employed, their chances of engaging in criminal activities will be less because they are able to meet their own needs and desires.

That education is an important factor that aids socio-economic development has far-reaching effects. An enlightened individual or society enjoys much happiness and growth. In places where the majority of people are educated, (formal or informal), there is often mutual care and support, as everyone significantly contributes to community development. Independency is manifested clearly in such societies and members – male or female and young or old – have a sense of belonging. Thus, contribution by everyone indicates development at all angles. It is logical to say that improving the standard of education and the rate of enrolment into various levels of schooling in Nasarawa State is a necessity. This is in agreement with Szirmai (2005:228) who argues that literacy should enable or empower a person to function effectively and to use his/her knowledge for group and community development. In other words, people can use literacy to carry out their everyday tasks or activities, and literacy here is not only limited to the ability to read and write but to obtain simple knowledge on how to go about one's daily activities.

3.2.2.2.   Health factor

Health is commonly perceived as a sense of wellbeing. As far back as 1974, the World Health Organization already pointed out that health is not merely an absent of disease, but a state of complete physical, mental, spiritual and social wellbeing (quoted in Haralambos & Holborn 2008:280). Therefore, good health is an important indicator of social and economic development. Those who are healthy can contribute optimally to their communities because a healthy labour force can increase the production level (Henry & Mpinganjira 2004:9). Speckman (2007:257) adds that, "a healthy person is expected to be a producer in one way or the other". This means illness usually affects one's level of productivity.

According to Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:5-6), the majority of those who live in rural or disadvantage communities are far from access to basic human needs of clean water, adequate housing, and so on. This means communities that have access to safe water and sanitation are more likely to enjoy good health. Adequate facilities for the disposal of waste to prevent diseases are important to every community. The money that should be spent on medicine or hospitalization could then be used to provide for other needs of the family or community.

Consequently, the lack of access to adequate and proper housing or to quality food is often an indication of inadequate socio-economic development. For example, houses that lack good ventilation can pose a health hazard to the people who live in such houses. High rates of illness and mortality can also be caused by poor food nutrition especially in disadvantaged

communities (Szirmai 2005:192). Inadequate healthcare can trigger poverty and dependency in the individual or the community because without good health, human activity is limited. Thus, great efforts should be made towards improving healthcare services for all members of society and it should be a matter of priority in the development of Nasarawa State. Since healthy individuals make up a healthy community, a healthy community is an indication of socio-economic development.

3.2.3.   Basic needs and development

Human beings constitute an important part of the efforts towards development in a society. Therefore, meeting their basic human needs should be a primary goal of any development approach. Swanepoel (1997:3) argues that meeting basic human needs must not only focus on physical needs, it should include the promotion of human dignity and self-reliance. This means that any effort to address people's physical needs must simultaneously strive to fulfil the need for dignity and self-reliance. Such efforts are best achieved through people's own initiative and active participation (Swanepoel 1997:3). From a theological perspective, people-centred development offers a holistic means of development in the sense that it focuses on both physical and spiritual needs of the people (Myers 2011:47).

It means that the central focus of community development is to help individuals or communities to meet their basic needs, which are for survival or simply maintaining their dignity. Swanepoel (1997:2) states that the basic needs approach grew out of an awareness that many people are without basic resources. The basic needs are both physical and abstract; they go hand in hand and may be present at the same time. This shows that physical needs cannot be sustained if the emotional needs are not met. Material things are meant for people but the concept of basic needs is beyond material things, it has to be people-centred. That is to say, economic-centred without people-centred development is not sustainable or holistic. In this regard, Koopman (forthcoming) emphasizes that the issue of basic needs whether material or non-material needs to be properly addressed so that the victims may "avoid severe suffering and to experience a life of dignity" because all forms of suffering "constitute the violation of wholeness and *shalom*". Thus, this discussion will clarify the idea of basic needs in terms of physical and abstract needs.

3.2.3.1. Physical human needs

Physical needs have to do with the consumption of individuals, households and communities. In developing countries, people expect a higher standard of living for themselves, their family, their community and their nation and that certain things should be made available to all (Singh 1983:21). Physical human needs are also referred as basic needs because they help to sustain life. As Burkey (1993:3) has noted, basic human needs are those things that an individual must have to survive as a human being. According to the International Labour Organisation, basic human needs are in two forms; first is the certain minimum requirements for family private consumption such as adequate food, shelter and clothing as well as certain household equipment. Second is the provision of essential services by and for the community at large such as safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport, health and educational facilities (August 2010:2). This means whatever effort is made to develop oneself or another, the aim is to see that particular needs are met.

3.2.3.2. Abstract human needs

From the above discussion, basic human needs are not just physical or material needs; they are also abstract or non-material needs such as freedom, love, respect, and so forth. Swanepoel (1997:3) points out that a key component of abstract human needs is dignity. He argues that any effort to address people's physical needs must simultaneously strive to fulfil the need of dignity, that is, dignity is promoted by giving people recognition, and by recognising them as capable of making their own decisions and accepting responsibility for their decisions. In this regard, Singh (1983:19) describes two elements of abstract human needs as self-respect and freedom. Every person and every nation seeks some basic form of self-respect, dignity, or honour and freedom to political or ideological freedom as well as freedom from social servitude. Similarly, August (2010:2) argues that human needs do not only relate to material needs but also include issues like choice, self-reliance, the right to vote and the right to an own opinion. On the significance of this aspect of human needs, Koopman (forthcoming) maintains that it creates grounds for people to live in communion with one another without being excluded.

Thus, physical and abstract human needs go hand in hand; one cannot be in place without the other. While physical human needs such as provision of social services and welfare are temporal, abstract human needs such as love, concern, and care go beyond the temporal. From all indications, the "spiritual" human needs is absent in this combination and in many programs of development (and this is equally true of Nasarawa State). This is because various

countries adopt different models of development in pursuing their development agenda, as will be shown in the next section.

3.3. Some Approaches to Development

In an effort to improve the living conditions of the poor, several approaches to development have been applied in the past few discussed in this research includes the modernisation approach, the NGO approach and people-centred approach. These approaches to development were critically examined to assess their relevance to Nasarawa State in Nigeria.

3.3.1. Modernization approach

The dominant contemporary approach to development is the modernization theory which has contributed much to a popular understanding of development and which today commands the majority of programs, human resources, and money (Bragg 1987:22). The modernization theory is described as a logical or systematic process of harmonizing changes in the demographic, economic, political, communication and cultural sectors of society (Okoye 2003:221).

According to Hughes and Bennett (1998:7-8), modernisation theory sees development in terms of rapid increase in production through investment in modern industrial technology, which could be measured in terms of Gross National Product (GNP) and Per Capita Income (PCI). Coetzee (2001:27) also explains that the idea of modernization is portrayed as a kind of final stage in the social and economic development of societies. He further notes that modernization is often referred to as the transformation which takes place when a traditional or pre-modern society changes to such an extent that new forms of technological, organizational, or social characteristics of advanced society appear.

Therefore, the ultimate goal of modernization is to increase production and economic growth in order to raise the standard of living of the people and to provide the good life as far as possible. Similarly, the basic argument of modernization is that every society undergoes stages of development - from traditional to modern. According to this theory, the problem of Third World societies is that they lack resources and skilled manpower and they suffer from slow growth, high level of corruption, nepotism, illiteracy, poverty, cases of disease and inadequate institutional framework, among others (Okoye 2003:222). Therefore, modernization theory considers western culture superior to all others and development is seen as possible only in the western way (Maphunye *et al*. 2009:9). The theory assumes that the way forward is through:

> Transfer of knowledge, technology, and capital from the 'advanced' to the less-advanced nations. The transfer closes the technological gap between the two and creates an economy in the latter that supposedly matures until it reaches the final stage of high production and mass consumption. At this point, the benefits would trickle down within that economy from modern industrialized sector to the poorer sectors, creating a society and economy that would look very much like those of Western Europe, the United States or Japan (Bragg 1987:22).

The modernization approach presupposes that development involves a high level of technical assistance, encouraging interaction between the developed and developing nations, and adopting developed nation's political institution in the Third World. However, some scholars in the field of development studies have criticized the method on the basis that it has failed to contribute to or bring about a sustainable development. According to Burkey (1993:28):

> .... [T]he optimism of the 1950s and 1960s could not be sustained. The empirical evidence could not be denied. More and more information accumulated which pointed towards a growing poverty complex: marginalisation, mass unemployment and recurrent   starvation crises. The 'green revolution' was only one experience which confirmed the universal observation that what was taking place in many countries during the development decade was growth without development but with poverty, which in the 1980s has lead to negative growth and the debt crisis.

Speckman (2007:30) claims that modernization approach involves 'coercion and imperialism', as economic and political incentives are given to the powerless nations and, in turn, western nations market themselves and their products as the model of life. In other words, Africans or poor countries are forced to abandon and exchange their culture and heritage with those of the western or developed nations. Furthermore, the vehicles used by the advocates of this theory are education, market systems, social values, politics and religions which are the most commonly used ideological tools of modernization. However, it cannot be totally denied that some of these tools brought development to Africa. Speckman (2007:31-34) therefore outlines some important critiques of the 'modernization' approach to development as follow:

- The modernization approach to development has no focus because it works in a wide and general situation which overlooks the local context.

- Modernism does not develop people's capacity and potential; rather, it creates indebtedness and dependency.

- Imperialist activities have led to the draining of human and natural resources of the underdeveloped nation.

- The emphasis on economic growth leads to the destruction of natural ties by way of introducing an artificial socio-economic relation. In this process, the benefactor is dominated by the donor.

- The economic growth approach is not achieved through any sustainable development. This is because of an increase in the foreign penetration of the economy while the mass population does not participate in the benefits of economic growth but rather become poorer and poorer.

- The recipient of development aid (that is, the underdeveloped country) loses initiative and continually looks up to the Good Samaritan for help.

Considering the above overview of modernization theory and its criticisms, one can assume that modernity or modernization is a process of ensuring economic development in a modern way instead of the traditional way. It seems to be the dominant way but not necessarily the accepted way for the underdeveloped nations. This is because modernity is the process of development from traditional to the modern era through science and technology. This theory says the old must be replaced with the modern, that is, "traditional to modern".

The modernization method of development has indeed become a model in some developing countries, yet it cannot be classified as accepted or suitable to all. In the late 1980s, such issues were of great concern to many scholars. African countries predominantly embraced the development strategies based on western economic theories which focus on economic growth rather than on social development. These strategies neglect local manpower as attention moves to modern technological tools for easy production. Nigeria is one of the countries that have also come under the influence of this theory (Okoye 2003:223). The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) is a clear example.

On the negative impact of the SAP, Khalid (2007:32) notes that Nigerians witnessed a tremendous change in wellbeing after independence in 1960 especially with the discovery of crude oil. However, the people have moved from poverty, to wealth and later back to poverty. The situation was worsened by the damaging side effects of the SAP which plunged the nation into increased poverty and social exclusion, and a growing number of "new poor" emerged (Khalid 2007:32). Furthermore, the nation's currency (the Naira) is grossly undervalued, manufacturing sectors have collapsed leading to a high rate of unemployment and foreign debt remains very high (Khalid 2007:33). The effects of the SAP can be said to be one of the major causes of the declined standard of living.

Even though Nigeria adopted the modernization theory in order to achieve its development goals, there are a lot of lapses in its implementation which have resulted in the decline of standard of living. This is evident in the provision of the basic human needs such as

education, housing, clean environment, safe water, healthcare, electricity, which are inadequate for the Nigerian rural populace. The diagram below illustrates the effects of the SAP in most developing countries (including Nigeria) as outlined by Hughes and Bennett (1999:164-165).

Table 5: The features and results of SAPs

STRATEGY	RESULT
Much emphasis is laid on the increase of exports of the Third World countries products.	Less emphasis on food crops for internal consumption, the land is used to grow cash crops for international market.
Reduction of import by means of wage freezes and restriction on the availability of credit.	Local currency is devalued thereby making imports more expensive and export cheaper to foreign buyers.
Improved revenue levels by reducing government spending on basic services such as health care system and education.	Poor people, who may have had free healthcare and free education coupled with government subsidies on their crops, now have to pay for services.
The poor countries are encouraged to open up their markets for foreign competition.	The richer farmers, for example, can exploit the new market in the poor countries since they can afford to sell at an artificially low price which could result in the collapse of local agriculture.

The above discussion shows that the development efforts of both the government and international agencies towards the improving the life of the ordinary Nigerian seem to be inappropriate to the needs of the people. The modernization strategies of development prove inadequate since its emphasis is on economic growth instead of human development. In Nasarawa State, for example, most of the farmers now concentrate on producing cash or commercial crops such as yam, rice, sesame and melon as opposed to food crops for internal consumption. They are encouraged to do this because government policies offer capital and machineries that are geared towards mass production of such cash crops. The practice is one of the causes of the high level of hunger and malnutrition mentioned earlier because what

would have been food for the community is sold out but the income generated cannot cover family needs.

The Nasarawa State Government provided funds for the construction of the Yam and Sweet Potatoes Conditioning Centre for the export of these crops to European and other international markets (NSG 2008a:73 & NSG 2009:13) whereas at the local level, these crops are not available. Most farmers do not even have access to some local methods of crop preservation and they have to sell their produce immediately after harvest at the cheap prices. The immediate concern of the government should be the question of security in terms of better healthcare, better education (formal or informal), stable food prices, and the development of local tools which are affordable for small-scale farmers. Furthermore, traditional leaders, tribal and family heads should also encourage family cohesion, group cooperation and appreciating the value of every member of the community as a matter priority and key aspect in the development process of any society.

The argument here is not that the modernization approach is completely worthless or unsuccessful; it can be more effective if it is people-centred, that is, focused on human development that will in turn develop the economy. In other words, the people should be brought on-board to participate in self-development because it leads to the choices available to people to live valuable lives. This can also be done well by building human capacity because people's wellbeing and their quality of life are the most important measure of successful development. Therefore, people especially the rural dwellers must be at the centre of human development, both as beneficiaries and drivers, and as individuals and groups. The poor, for example, must be empowered with the tools and knowledge to build their own communities, states and nations. This will strengthen the local economy because those who live in rural areas often make use of tools which are locally made for their production.

3.3.2. Approach to development by NGOs

In discussing the approach to development by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Korten's analysis of the history of the theory of development will prove useful. Korten has critically studied the strategies of development adopted by NGOs and identified specific strategies used to address the situation in poor nations or communities. He examines critically the three traditional strategies of development and proposes a fourth. The first three strategies are relief and welfare, small-scale self-reliant local development, and sustainable system

development. The fourth strategy proposed by Korten (1990:115-123) is people-centred development and he refers to all these strategies as the generations of development.

According to Korten (1990:115-118), the first generation started with relief work or charity demonstrated to people affected by different disasters. The relief and welfare approach is an ancient international voluntary action which aimed at giving assistance to victims of wars and natural disasters. NGOs in particularly were involved in direct delivery of services such as food, health care and shelter to meet immediate needs of the people[14]. However, it was later realised that this method offered only temporal relief. It landed the beneficiary in long-term dependency on the NGOs, as their genuine desire to help the poor was not yet achieved. Speckman (2007:13-15) explains that, "the aid seems to produce the opposite of what it was intended to be," for it diminished the institutional capacity, that is, the support would have been well utilized if it were used to develop the nation's production capacity. Secondly it, "lacks economic initiative for the underdeveloped countries" in the sense that the condition was not conducive for the Third World.

It is against this understanding that the second generation approach emerged in the 1970s. This period is called the era of "small-scale, self-reliant local development" or what is often referred to as *community development* strategies (Korten 1990:118). The second generation approach was motivated by the awareness that relief and welfare activities were not sustainable but rather they created dependency which was contrary to the values and aims of the NGOs to empower people at the rural level. According to Korten:

> Some of the NGOs engaged in second generation strategies have done so since their funding. However, a more common pattern has been for NGOs working with the poor... countries to begin with first generation strategies. Gradually their experience leads them to question the validity of relief and welfare activities. Yes, they are meeting immediate needs substantially exceed their capacities. Furthermore, charity creates dependence, which for many NGOs is contrary to their own values (Korten 1990:118).

As such, the focus move from what the NGOs could do for the poor to what the poor could do for themselves was captioned *Beyond Charity*[15]. The NGOs then began to see community

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[14] The strategy of this generation, according to Korten, is that the NGOs focused on the immediate and visible needs of the people. They were the doers while the beneficiaries remain passive, the NGOs also manage the logistics and presented starving children to the public to raise fund from philanthropies. Korten acknowledges that relief effort is an essential and appropriate response to emergency situations that demand immediate and effective humanitarian action.

[15] According to Korten, the second generation focuses more on empowerment-oriented local organizing that acknowledges the political dimension of poverty, commonly assumed, at least by implication, that the village organization of the poor, by their own initiative, can mobilize sufficient political resources to change the

development as the answer to sustainable development. The idea is that to be effective, educating the poor and providing them with small loans, among other issues, would empower them to become self-reliant, which is the goal of development. The development worker in this case becomes a facilitator and encourager (Korten 1990:119). Nonetheless, this approach is not without criticism. Korten, for example, notes that, in practice, many second generation program interventions are little more than handouts in a more sophisticated guise. In other words, many of these interventions give little more than lip service to self-reliance and, in fact, build long-term dependence on the assisting NGO (1990:119). This observation is a true picture of the situation in Nasarawa State. As mentioned in the last chapter, some development projects are initiated but usually do not make it to the stage of completion. Moreover, those who have moved from the rural to the urban areas in search of better life find themselves in difficult situations and become a nuance to the rest of the people.

The problematic issue addressed by the third generation which emanates from the second generation is "sustainable system of development". In the second generation, the focus was on the individual community. The flaws in the second generation can be summarised as follow:

- The benefits generated by its village intervention depend on the presence of the NGO and the availability of donor subsidy.
- Acting on its own, the NGO can never hope to benefit more than a few favoured localities. Self-reliant village development initiatives are likely to be sustained only so long as they are linked to a supportive national development system (Korten 1990: 120).

The method of the third generation is to combat "local inertia [which] is sustained by structures that centralize control of resources, keep essential services from reaching the poor, and maintain system of corruption and exploitation". There is a need for a "policy and institutional setting that facilitates, rather than constraining, sustainable and inclusive local development action". Therefore, the third generation solution is to strive for "changes in policies and institutions at local, national and global level" (Korten 1990: 121). This also fits into the situation of rural dwellers in Nasarawa State who depend so much on the government to do everything for them (see 2.3).

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relevant power structure. In other words, the focus was on mobilizing and empowering people collectively and in partnership with the NGOs to foster development.

The third generation argues that ordinary people cannot enjoy the dividend of development unless its policies are shaped towards capturing development from the local level. However, this process is "tedious" because it requires much time to achieve the needed transformation by institutions of global society. Before proceeding to suggest the fourth generation approach, Korten sums up the problems of second and third generations thus:

> The critical deficiency of the third generation strategy parallels at the macro-level the deficiency that the second generation strategy displays at a more micro-level. The second generation strategy's critical flaw is that it requires countless replications in millions of communities, all within a basically hostile political and institutional context. It is much the same with third generation strategies, only at a macro-level (Korten 1990:121)

The fourth generation is a strategy of development that emerged with the realisation that the second and the third generations could not equally distribute power and wealth at the local, national and international levels (Korten 1990:123). The central concern of the fourth generation is to decentralize the distribution of wealth and power and nurture the people's initiatives.[16]

Therefore, there was a need to mobilize people to rally and take control of their affairs "through the power of ideas, values and communication links" (Korten 1990:127). Even though the problem of this fourth generation identified to be having "inadequate mobilizing vision" (1990:127), the principle and practice of this strategy aimed that peoples' capacity, and ability, be valued without domination by anyone. This awareness motivated the movement towards people-centred development (Korten 1990:128). The people-centred development approach captures the micro-situation with emphasis on developing 'communities' rather than on 'nations;' it works with particularities rather than generalities or universal (Speckman 2007:35). In this case, local communities are involved at all levels of the development process. Speckman rightly argues that development should be contextual if it is to transform structures and lives. At the micro-level is where development happens. Human conscience must be developed to have "technical interest, practical interest, and emancipatory interest (Speckman 2007:35). Therefore, programs of development must be planned to meet the target group at their own level. This leads to a brief review of the concept of people-centred development in the next section.

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[16] This sentence is a summary of Korten's elaboration of the principles of the fourth generation.

3.3.3.   People-centred development approach

From the foregoing analysis of approaches to development, one can conclude that modernisation and NGO strategies have not helped in the attainment of required development nor can they be regarded as good models of development. Viewed as socialist and capitalist models, their major failing is that they have become "so production-centred that the needs of the production system have assumed precedence over the needs of the people" (Korten & Carner 1984:201). These flawed approaches often leave people in dependency. Thus, it became necessary that a new strategy of intervention be introduced to serve as an alternative for meaningful development.

Korten & Carner (1984:201) explain that the concept of people-centred development "is an approach to development that looks at the creativity and initiative of people as the primary development resources and to their material and spiritual wellbeing as the end that development process serves". Furthermore, it is an alternative that provides substantial increase in productive output to meet the needs of a vast and growing world population, but it must do so in ways that are consistent both with the basic principles of participation and equity, and sustainability. This is because "development concerns people – people experiencing reality within which they find themselves day by day and moment by moment, feeling its implications and seeing its practical functioning around them" (Coetzee 1986:1). In Andrew's (2009:8) words, "development is mainly a process, be it economic, social or cultural, that serves the basic needs of both today and tomorrow". These needs include five interconnected freedoms namely economic opportunities, political freedom, social freedom, transparency, and protective security. This shows that in the process of production, individuals or communities should be mobilized to participate continuously in their transformation, which means people's potential and capacity are recognised.

In line with this assumption, Korten (1990:218) explains that the need for an authentic development model must be understood as a process of economic, political, and social change that should involve a sustainable human community. As such, in people-centred development, the vision is first to return the control of resources to the people and their communities. Secondly, it seeks to provide opportunities for people to obtain secured livelihood through the value and culture of the people. Thirdly, it reconnects people to one another and links them to God and the natural resources that God has blessed them with. Lastly, it calls for self-respect among the individuals and self-reliance of the community. The

vision of people-centred development is geared towards the productive use of local resources to meet local needs.

Three basic principles are identified with a people-centred development. Firstly, it ensures the freedom and democracy that enable people to set and pursue their agenda. Secondly, it allows people to have access to relevant information that fundamentally makes them responsible in their own community. Lastly, the value of the outsiders in this process is measured in terms of the capacity of the people to define their future and development (Korten 1990:218-219). Taking his cue from Korten, Roodt (1996:318) affirms that the Manila Declaration on People's Participation and Sustainable Development is aimed at fulfilling the principles and guidelines of people-centred development. Its aim is for people, "to exercise their sovereignty and assume responsibility for the development of themselves and their communities, the people must control their own resources, have access to relevant information..." Subsequently, James Robertson (1997)[17] states that:

- People-centred development rejects the concept of modern development that common people were pushed off the land and turned into paid labourers and employees dependent on those richer and more powerful than themselves. It believes in economic justice and democracy through policies that favour small producers, co-operatives, and worker or community-owned corporations.

- People-centred development believes that what is of greatest value often cannot be counted or appropriately valued in monetary terms. It views a properly functioning world economy as a multilevel, decentralizing system, so organized that the function of each level enables the levels "below" to develop in a people-enabling and environment-conserving direction. This system includes the household and the local community levels-which are ignored in modern economic understanding.

It is important to note that people-centred development is generally viewed by scholars as a framework that is based on a social learning process and the empowerment of people and communities. It is an approach which ensures that people are empowered to participate in society's economic, social, and political life. It ensures that no one is left out or dominated in the process of their development. Burkey (1993:35) also rightly maintains that development

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[17] James Robertson is an independent writer, speaker and consultant, a founder of "The Other Economic Summit" (TOES) and a contributing editor of the People-Centred Development Forum, (http://www.converge.org.nz/pirm/new_civl.htm).

at the micro-level of any society must involve people of varying socio-economic status, occupations and skill, education, ambition, and enlightenment. He further notes that development follows a gradual process and will necessarily involve the use of physical, financial and human resources. He suggests that all efforts of any development must cover the area of human (personal), economic, social and political development.[18] When these dimensions of development are duly applied, people would become self-reliant and be able to provide for their basic needs and those of their families. In Burkey's (1993:35-39) assumption:

- *Human (personal) development* is the key to any sustainable development and it makes sense if change is motivated from within an individual. It is a process by which an individual develops self-respect and becomes more self-confident and self-reliant being able to recognise his/her shortcomings as well as potential for positive change.
- *Economic development* is a process by which people through their own individual and/or joint efforts boost production for direct consumption and have a surplus to sell for cash.
- *Political development* is a process of gradual change overtime in which the people increase their awareness of their own capabilities, their rights and their responsibilities, and use this knowledge to organise themselves to acquire real political power.
- *Social development* refers to those investments and services carried out or provided by the community for mutual benefit of the people of that community whether it is a village, a district or a nation.

These definitions to various aspects of development which augment the concept of people-centred are essential for any development agency in any given community. It focuses on people's capacity and capability to meet their needs and to refuse to be dominated by others. This understanding clarifies what is meant by people-centred development but when viewed from a theological perspective "spiritual development" is absent from this approach. This motivated a theological approach. The research further explores scholars' views of community development so as to establish the role of theology in people-centred community development as the knowledge could be applied to community development projects in Nasarawa State.

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[18] Burkey's definitions of human, economic, social and political development are universal and they illustrate the kind of thinking that development workers should be doing before they intervene in a situation of rural poverty and stagnation (Burkey 1993:35-38).

3.4. Concept of Community Development

In this section, important issues in community development were discussed. The concept, philosophy, principle and process of community development were clarified here to help understand what a people-centred entails. Clarifying the concept of community development could help to determine the scope of any development effort in Nasarawa State. This knowledge would help both the church and Nasarawa State with their development programs and projects.

3.4.1. Concept of community

A community can be described as a place where people reside and share things in common such as tradition, culture, lifestyle, land, and religion. Ferrinho (1980:1) defines community as,

> a way of life, defined by a set of common values and interests around which institutions are developed and with which residents identifies themselves. It is a network of social interaction within which people relate to one another. It is also a system of reference for a set of common individual identifications and a place from which a human population obtains the energy it needs to live and survive.

According to this view, it is impossible to think of a community in terms of isolated components such as territory and population. Conversely, it is impossible to think of a community merely as the sum of its parts. Rather, a community must be seen as a complex system of interaction between ecological, social, cultural and psychological elements (Ferrinho 1980:1).

A community has also been described as a group of people living together in a given area of land sharing not only particular interest but also basic conditions of common life. It is seen as a social unit or social group of people who are tied together in some specific relationships (Orebanjo *et al.* 2007:10). The term community is also seen as a group of ordinary people spatially united and who share common needs and values (Swanepoel & De Beer 2006:44-45). A community therefore is characterized by people living in a specific location, having a collective interest, and bound together by a sense of belonging. However, the problems of a community have been associated with the issue of relationships. In Gilchrist's (2004:9) opinion, "relationships are not always beneficial, either for the individual or for society as a whole." This is because communities are sometimes elitist, tribalist and oppressive and this may hinder development efforts since broken relationships are unhealthy for community development. On the contrary, every community has a role to play in its own development; the members only need to be empowered to develop themselves.

3.4.2.   Community development

The concept of community development has its roots in several academic disciplines including sociology, economics, urban and regional planning, social work, architecture (Green & Haines 2002:3), and theology. According to Ferrinho (1980:39), the term "community development" was adopted at the Cambridge Conference in 1948. It was defined as,

> one single programme of approaches and techniques which rely upon local communities as unite of action and which attempt to combine outside assistance with organised local self-determination and effort, and which correspondingly seek to stimulate local initiative and leadership as primary instruments of change.

In this sense, community development is regarded as a process through which the community analyses its situation, determines its needs, and makes decisions about its aims in order to attain agreed goals (Ferrinho 1980:39). Community development is therefore a process whereby community members come together to perform various functions in order to give a face-lift to their immediate environment or community (Aroh 2002:10). Community development is also regarded as the sort of rural and urban development programs by most governments which involve expansion of health, education and other social facilities, enlargement of roads and other communication networks, market, agriculture and adult education classes (Aroh 2002:11).

The above views of community development show that the central goal of development is to enhance the lives of people in the community at all levels either through the effort of the people themselves or with the help of the government. It is also a strategy for improving the socio-economic life of the people within their community. Aroh (2002:14) therefore highlights three objectives of any community development effort as follow:

- To increase the availability of material resources and widen the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health and protection.

- To raise standards of living in addition to higher incomes, the provision of more jobs, better education and greater attention to cultural and humanistic values, all of which serve not only to enhance material wellbeing, but also to generate individual and natural self-esteem.

- To expand the range of economic and social choice to individuals and nation by freeing them from servitude and dependence, not only in relation to other peoples and nation-state but also to the forces of ignorance and human misery.

These objectives imply that community development must be holistic. Hence, the notion here is directed towards a positive change in economic, social and cultural life thereby improving the living standard of the community members.

Monaheng (2008:125-126) traces the history of community development to the 1950s and 1960s, noting that, "the 1950s and 1960s witness a spread of community development as a poverty-oriented development strategy in less developed countries." Community development was then seen as a process directed by local people towards objectives which they regarded as beneficial to the community. Again, community development focuses on the method of achieving desired change in communities (Maphunye *et al.* 2009:108). The desired change could entail the provision of better roads, markets, water supplies, improved educational facilities and the establishment of small-scale industries. Therefore, community development is a planned and organised effort to assist individuals to acquire the attitudes, skills and concepts required for their democratic participation in the effective solution to community's problems. This is done in order of priority determined by their increasing levels of competence. What follows is a review of the concept of rural development which illuminates the understanding of people-centred community development from a rural approach.

3.4.3. Rural community development

The concepts of rural development and community development are closely related. While the former refers to a specific locality, the latter is general. Since the central focus of this research is to seek for an alternative and effective socio-economic development in Nasarawa State, it becomes necessary to mention the objectives of rural development. In fact, rural development should be understood as a subsidiary of community development. According to Chambers (1983:147), rural development is a strategy that enables a specific group of people – poor rural women and men – to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest in rural areas to access and control more of the elements of rural development. The group includes small-scale farmers, tenants, the landless, and others.

Singh (1986:18-19) defines rural development as a process of developing and utilising natural and human resources, technologies, infrastructural facilities, institutions and government policies and programs to encourage and speed up economic growth in rural areas. This would help to provide jobs and improve the quality of rural life as well as self-sustenance.

According to Aroh (2002:18), rural development works towards improving living conditions in rural areas through the increased productivity of agricultural and related enterprise. Further, if it is to benefit the lower income earners, the equitable and fair distribution of the created wealth must take into account the need to maintain a balance between individual consumption and improvements in communal social services.

Rural development may also be seen as an attempt to enhance the wellbeing of the rural population in a way that promotes national development. However, at the grassroots level, the basic needs that sustain the people and their freedom to earn respect are crucial. As noted in Chapter Two, most rural dwellers in Nasarawa State depend on agriculture for their livelihood and have little or no access to adequate social services. Since major development efforts are also centred in the cities, there is a strong attraction for the rural dwellers to migrate to the cities in search of better conditions of living.

The point here is that because rural people are found in different locations, their economic and social circumstances, their problems, needs and their development challenges vary greatly. Therefore, the programs that address their problems must be locally sensitive. It is evident from the above discussion of rural development that what the rural people need for their development is not necessarily modern technology. Rather, it is an opportunity for their formation into clusters where they can be empowered for greater productivity via the utilisation of their local knowledge and technology. Moseley (2003:7) also describes local development as the pursuit of development at a local scale with the aim of addressing local concerns, adding value to local resources –whether material, human or symbolic and mobilising local actors- whether people, groups or agencies. He further identifies three specific tasks for local development thus:

- Overcoming market failures (that is, doing socially useful things that are generally unattractive to the market such as delivering services to scattered populations and integrating environmental conservation and economic development programs).
- Improving 'local capacity' (that is, the ability and readiness of people and organisations to engage in development initiatives).
- Facilitating 'local empowerment' (that is, giving local actors more power to influence what happens in their locality).

Thus, the rural community can overcome development barriers. Moseley further emphasizes that in order for the above objectives to be achieved, the rural area should be small enough to

sustain a sense of place and the willingness of rural people to get involved. However, it should also be large enough to accommodate management and delivery of services (Moseley 2003:8). Poverty eradication in rural areas requires strengthening the management of community-based initiatives such as organisations and associations through workshops, for example, to empower them for participation in the poverty eradication efforts (Ndiyo 2008:52). If they could do this, the rural dwellers in Nasarawa State will not depend so much on the government to meet their needs.

3.4.4.   Philosophy and process of community development

The above discussion shows that community development (rural or urban) is concerned with peoples' affairs. Therefore, there is a need for a people-centred philosophy of development to guide development practitioners. According to Ferrinho, any philosophy of life must reflect efforts to find a definitive fundamental solution to the felt needs of the people. A philosophy of community development may be conceived as a system of values to humanity which is generated by certain human interests that will lead to progress (Ferrinho 1980:47). This means that the philosophical interest and the universal ethics of community development focus on progress and change for the improvement of the people's lives. It is a change that is interpreted for the wellbeing of the people.

Therefore, community development is not a social movement but an action based program that involves the social life of the people. It is a process of attaining human value or worth and a process of actualising the vision and keeping the community's goal. This is clearly noted in the basic philosophical principles of community development according to Ferrinho (1980:50-55). The first is "human solidarity" which implies a shared feeling or spirit of unity, a common responsibility for the present and the future life of a community. It is also a moral and solid responsibility to make changes. The second is "social equity" – a concept of distributive justice that holds the social organisation and provides appropriate opportunities for all individuals to participate in their social development. The third principle has to do with the "respect of human beings" which involves accepting all as fellows and dealing with their condition irrespective of race, nationality, status or gender. If the focus of development is on the person, everyone would be willing to participate. The last is "continued activism" in which the people are the first agents of change especially when the movement considers them as ends and means. This is because people are the objective beneficiaries of every development; their active involvement in the projects is very important.

The notion of a philosophical approach to community development as proposed by Ferrinho is that in any efforts of development, people and not just the project should be the major focus. This is because when people are well developed in all areas of life, then the society would enjoy peace and stability. People must be given the privilege to utilize their abilities to forge ahead.

It is apparent that the search for a method of development continues to be an area of research in development studies. Researchers and practitioners are making efforts to see that the less privileged individuals or communities are empowered to become self-reliant and self-sufficient; yet, poverty remains a major challenge in many Third World communities. Most of the failures have been associated with approaches by either the governments or non-governmental agencies, as in the case of SAPs earlier mentioned. Chambers (2003) asserts that the situation is so because core issues have been overlooked. This means that certain processes need to be considered if any authentic development is to take place. In the following subsection, four basic concepts that issue from a people-centred community development concern namely participation, empowerment, self-reliance and sustainability will be presented. If duly applied the process could help meet basic human needs.

3.4.4.1. Participation

Participation is a process whereby people are collectively mobilized, motivated and energised to utilize the resources around them for an overall improvement of their living conditions. Creativity is a God-given aspect of our humanity; therefore, it becomes a priority to provide structures of participation that will enable people to discover and express their creativity (Morisy 2000:127). According to Midgley (1986:8), "participation strengthens the capacities of individuals and communities to mobilize and help themselves." In this way, dependence on others is minimized and ordinary people are helped to rediscover their potential for co-operation and mutual endeavours. Rahman (1993:150) also notes that "popular participation is an active process in which the participant takes initiative and takes action that is stimulated by [his or her] own thinking and deliberation and over which they can exert effective control".

In line with these claims, Burkey (1993:56) maintains that participation is an essential part of human growth, that is, the development of self-confidence, pride, initiative, creativity, responsibility and cooperation. It means that through participation, people learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems. For example, farmers in a rural area

could group themselves and find ways to boost production and markets for their crops. Another example could be when rural people form village development committees to find ways to execute poverty eradication programs. The community development practitioner's part would be to cultivate an environment of self-deliberation among the people.

To strengthen the approach of participatory community development, Chambers (2003:103-104) proposes a participatory rural appraisal as one other way for people to contribute to their transformation. According to him, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is seen as a family approach and method of development. He states that, "the essence of PRA is changes and reversals of role, behaviour, relationship and learning. In this approach, the agents of change do not dominate and lecture rather they facilitate, sit down, listen and learn". They do not transfer technology but share methods which local people can use for their own appraisal, analysis, planning, action, monitoring and evaluating. They do not impose their reality, but they encourage and enable local people to express their own (Chambers 2003:103).

PRA is both an approach and a method of learning about rural life and conditions from, with and by rural people with emphasis on learning by outsiders. The method is extended into analysis, planning, action, monitoring and evaluation, and it enables rural people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act. It has become a philosophy and a way of life which stress self-critical awareness and commitment to the poor, weak, and vulnerable. The pillars of PRA as noted above include room for outsiders to facilitate and not dominate, collective participation, partnership and sharing of information (Chambers 2003:104).

Likewise, Liebenberg and Theron (1997:125) state that participation "is a means of empowering people by developing their skills and abilities, thus enabling them to negotiate with the development delivery systems and/or equipping them to make their own decisions in terms of their development needs and reality." Through participation, a solid, local knowledge base is used for development. This view asserts that for a long term, the local people have lived in deprivation, surviving the hardships of their poverty and they have something outsiders do not. Therefore, their common sense of the political, social, economic, cultural and natural environment dynamics can be of immense value to development efforts (Swanepoel & De Beer 1997:4-5).

Participation has been viewed as a *means* as well as an *end* (instrumental purpose and transformative purpose). It is a means when it aims at accomplishing a project more

efficiently, effectively or cheaply and it is an end when the community or group sets up a process to control its own development (McGee 2002:104). For the purpose of this research, participation is not viewed in terms of its instrumental purpose which ensures commitment to project sustainability, but rather in terms of its transformational purpose whereby people are assisted to decide their own priority (ibid). This is because people need to be involved in matters that affect their lives and have an effective voice in decision-making and the implementation process that will produce positive change in their community.

It is important to note that when people are mobilized to participate in a community project, they are there to make decisions regarding the project because it concerns their future (Swanepoel & De Beer 2006:29). This means that in the process of development the individual or community are not to be seen only as beneficiaries but also as subjects of development. Through participation, people feel a sense of belonging because they are able to identify their needs and the causes of their problems; therefore, they can contribute positively to the improvement of their living standard and wellbeing.

3.4.4.2. Empowerment

It was observed earlier that the fourth generation strategy needed an alternative development model that will enable local control in the process of development. The assumption is that human beings all over the world, whoever they are, understand their own needs much better than anyone else. Even though they need help, giving them power to do things or take control over their own lives is very important. Korten (1990:146) says, "through cooperation and information-sharing, progress is made toward increasing individual and collective capacities to make better use of available resources to meet the people's self-defined needs on a finite planet." For Rahman (1993:206), "a process of empowering and enabling the people to articulate and assert, by words and by deeds, their urges and thinking is the core dimensions of social development." In this sense, the people are empowered to take control of their development activities with a mutual understanding between them and the donor agencies. Rahman (1993:206-207) further highlights three elements of empowerment as:

- Organisation under the control of the disadvantaged and underprivileged people, with sufficient strength derived from direct numerical size and/or linking with other organisations of similarly situated people.

- Social awareness of the disadvantaged in terms of understanding derived from collective self-inquiry and reflection of the social environment of their lives and the working process.

- Self-reliance, that is, people's power comes ultimately from self-reliance. Self-reliance is strengthened by collective identity, deriving from not only material but also mental strength from solidarity, sharing and caring for each other and from thinking and acting together to move forward and to resist domination.

In this regard, Liebenberg and Theron (1997:125-126) note that "empowerment can be viewed as a process that makes power available so that it can be used for the manipulation of access and the use of resources to achieve certain development goals." According to this view, people are able to express and define what development means to them when empowered. This will enable the manipulation of resources and the fulfilment of basic needs to be achieved. In addition, empowerment goes beyond having power to make decision; people should also have knowledge and understand how to make correct decisions in the development process (Swanepoel 1997:7). In other words, empowerment means the acquisition of power and the ability to participate effectively in the process of development. At least two basic approaches to the concept of empowerment are identified by August (2010:11):

- Empowerment as the development of skills and abilities that enable people to manage and/or negotiate development delivery systems better.

- Empowerment as a process concerned with equipping people to decide and take action within the context of their own development needs.

Therefore, people's knowledge should be valued irrespective of their socio-economic background. Empowering people does not only depend on financial support because money is not the only solution to human development or human needs. They need to be encouraged to take initiative and participate in their own affairs. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that empowerment places much emphasis on ensuring local decision-making and on self-reliance. It allows a participatory learning process whereby the individuals or communities improve and become aware of their situation and seek possible alternatives to get out of their predicament. It shows that the people have an idea but they only need someone who can help them develop and make it meaningful to their lives.

3.4.4.3. Self-reliance

One of the goals of development is to create an environment where people will become self-reliant. The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines self-reliance as "a form of reliance on one's own power and resources rather than those of others" (Soanes & Stevenson 2008:1306). Thus, any genuine development effort should be geared towards ensuring self-reliance which has to do with empowering individuals or the people of a particular area to remove conditions that are responsible for their dependency on others. This shows that the idea of self-reliance, developed from the aspect of a person's inner identity or mind, is a term for identifying one's experience (Hoeft 2005:905).

In this regard, all forms of community development should be directed towards removing the shackle of dependence by dominance on the poor or the marginalized (Robinson 1994:319-320). Self-reliance could otherwise be referred to as holistic development in which the developer acts as catalyst to assist the poor to escape from their current *situation* of misery. Burkey (1993:50) believes that "people must feel and believe that it is their own efforts that are driving the development process. They must feel that they themselves are contributing to the maximum of their own human, financial and material resources". For him, self-reliance is doing things for oneself, maintaining one's confidence, making independent decisions – either as an individual or within the context of a collective group to which each member has voluntarily allied himself or herself. Self-reliance comes from within but it is directed outwards. Self-reliance is based on social relationships.

However, one cannot make people self-reliant; they become self-reliant if attitudes are changed. It is not about the supply of material or provision of money; the people must feel and be the drivers of their development, which is the right attitude. They must be able to identify their problem and provide solutions that can possibly solve their problems by "making independent decisions". In other words, people must know that development comes as a result of their economic sense and the ability of a family, community or a nation to satisfy its basic needs (Burkey 1993:51). It shows that self-reliant participatory development is a foundation for true and holistic development. Burkey (1993:206) further outlines the aims of self-reliance in community development as:

- The growth and development of individuals in their own context.
- A feeling of responsibility in the process of development in their community.
- The strengthening of a collective personality in their expression as a people.
- A true form of democracy where individuals become integrated in the fellowship.

- The foundation of genuine development as expressed by the people.

The points show that self-reliance is fundamental to people-centred development as it makes people believe development is their own project because they know their needs.

3.4.4.4. Sustainability

The aim of fostering participation, empowerment and self-reliance in individuals or communities in the process of development is sustainability. This implies that a continuous flow of the benefits of development characterizes its sustainability. Liebenberg and Theron (1997:126) point out that sustainable development is a,

> developmental strategy that manages all assets, natural resources, and human resources, as well as financial and physical assets, for increasing long-term wealth and wellbeing. Sustainable development as a goal rejects policies and practices that support current living standards by depleting the productive base.

Treurnicht (2003:63) also rightly notes that sustainable development aims at meeting the present needs as well as considering the future benefits. According to Ndiyo (2008:9), sustainable development has several dimensions namely environmental, economic, social and institutional systems. Sustainable development can only thrive in an environment that cultivates these four components which are described as follow:

- First, environmental sustainability is achieved when the productivity of life-supporting natural resources is conserved or enhanced for use by the future generation.

- Second, economic sustainability is achieved when a given level of expenditure can be maintained over time. In the context of the livelihoods of the poor, economic sustainability is achieved if a baseline level of economic welfare can be achieved and sustained. The economic baseline is likely to be situation-specific, though it can be thought of in terms of the dollar-a-day of the International Development Targets, e.g. the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

- Third, social sustainability is achieved when social exclusion is minimized and social equity maximized.

- Fourth, institutional sustainability is achieved when prevailing structures and processes have the capacity to continue to perform their functions over a long period (Ndiyo 2008:9-10).

One could see clearly here that every effort towards community development should first aim at developing the people. Secondly, the environment where people live is equally important. Therefore, development efforts must be geared towards raising the standard of living for the

masses and they are better realized when people are provided with the opportunity to develop their potentials. Since the people also need to have a sense of stewardship, the principles of participation in community development should be encouraged and properly applied in the quest for meeting the basic needs of the people.

3.4.5. Role of a community development worker

A community development worker organises, mobilizes and coordinates the efforts of the people in a particular community to develop their environment. The worker is sent by the government, the church or any other organization (Aroh 2002:51). The present research points out that people-centred development seeks to return the control of resources to the people, who must show self-confidence about their abilities to manage and control their own development. Therefore, the community development worker's major role and contribution to the community is to guide and empower the poor to become confident in themselves and their ability to fight their way out of their predicament. This is against the notion and theory that assumed that the poor are helpless, ignorant and backward, and they need outsiders to do things for them (Burkey 1993:53). Furthermore, the worker is responsible for educating the poor to become aware of their situation in terms of the prevailing social, economic and political relationships in which they find themselves. This is because the people need to identify personally the important needs in their lives through experience causing them to take action against the oppressive elements in their reality (Burkey 1993:55).

The best tool for promoting the work of a community development worker is dialogue. Through dialogue, individuals or a group of people can seek out the options available to them and choose those that are consistent and relevant to their own social framework. A community development worker ensures that the people are helped to understand what is expected of them but to help them improve their skills, the worker must create a conducive climate to reason with the people in order to accomplish the set goal of the community effectively (Aroh 2002:54-55).

3.5. Summary and conclusion of chapter

The ultimate goal of this chapter is to understand what is meant by people-centred development and to show how this approach can inform the church and the State to be holistic in their efforts of community development. This approach helps to spell out the aim of this research and the method, which was a literature study. In this process various definitions, concepts and approaches to development were examined putting out the strength

and weakness of the approaches in the attempt to answer the research question. It is shown that the flaws of the diverse development efforts have resulted in constant shifts in the various strategies or approaches with the recent approach being the people-centred development. The changes surfaced because local knowledge was not valued and this led to failures in the economic model of development which aimed at uplifting the living standard of the poor. The discussion was followed by a review of the concept of community development, the philosophy and process of community development and the role of a community development worker. The concept of rural and community development focused on the integrated approach. It lays emphasis on strengthening local communities and encouraging them to be active in the process of development. This idea became apparent when the concept of people-centred development model emerged. This understanding therefore clarifies what is meant by people-centred development but what was lacking was a spiritual aspect of human development to balance the approach.

Thus, one may conclude that people-centred community development approach would be compatible with the development efforts in Nasarawa State if approach holistically because it gives preference to people rather than projects. The approach recognizes the potential and capabilities of the people enabling participation, empowerment, self-reliance and sustainability. The overall discussion in this chapter is consistent with Osmer's (2011:2) task of practical theology which explains what is meant by people-centred development approach and focuses on what ought to be going on in community development. This understanding now provides the platform for the research to examined whether the church as an agent of development has applied this method.

Chapter 4: `Christian Theology and Development - A Practical Theological Perspective

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter Three, an understanding of a people-centred community development is offered as an alternative approach to development. It is suggested that this approach may have much to offer in terms of achieving success in community development projects.

This chapter focussed on holistic people-centred development from a practical theological perspective. It was shown that Christians concerned about the negative realities and challenges facing their communities, and any involvement of Christians in this regard is considered as being theologically motivated (Myers 2011:47). The basic question that the chapter seeks to answer is whether a people-centred development approach in theology could be holistic (i.e. with regard to physical as well as spiritual needs) and whether it could be the key to the reduction or eradication of poverty, and at the same time, the key to the promotion of human dignity, social justice and self-reliance.

In order to address this question the chapter highlights the issues in the theology of development and the biblical concept of human development. This was followed by a discussion of liberation towards development which includes liberation theology, human rights, feminist theology, and human dignity. The role of the church as an agent of development was also explored as well as the possible goals and roles of the church in community development. In this way, a legitimate and appropriate Christian response and approach to human needs in the context of sustainable development was considered.

4.2. Background to Theology of Development

In the 1960s, underdevelopment became a major point of concern for world leaders. Therefore, the United Nations initiated a decade-long program of development, which by means of a strategy of economic aid and in conjunction with agencies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), was designed to eradicate poverty globally. However, disenchantment with the program soon set in because the approach seemed to be unsuitable. A second decade of development then emerged during which the concept of theology of development appeared (Gern 1999:441).

Theology of development refers to a theological perspective that developed in ecumenical circles and that was motivated by the desire of Christians to be creatively and wholeheartedly involved in finding solutions to human, social and political problems in the contemporary world (Dunne 1969: i). The impulse for the formulation of a theology of development began at the World Council of Churches (WCC) conferences in Geneva in 1966 and Uppsala in 1998 among others. The conferences focused on "the church and society" and the challenges of justice, peace and development (Gern 1999:441). During these conferences, the global church became more aware that it could not continue to give priority to its own special identity without being concerned with the development of the world around it.

Besides the WCC conferences, the 1983 Wheaton Consultation on *The Church in Response to Human Needs* also played a vital role in developing a theology of development. It was initiated by concerned evangelical leaders who proposed a long-term process of study and reflection on the nature of development from a biblical perspective. The vision of this proposal was to promote theological reflection on meeting human needs in concrete local development situations and to clarify theological issues related to development (Samuel & Sugden 1987: ix-x). This theological approach is best known as transformational development as it aims at changing the minds and behaviour of individuals and institutions towards a sustainable development through the church ministry (Bragg 1987: 39).

At the centre of these Christian endeavours was a concern for the "powerless". The concept of "power of the powerless" became increasingly significant in discussions by Christian leaders on the involvement of the church in the debate on a theology of development. Jenkins (1969:53) explains that "the powerless power" is the love that absorbs, suffers, and reconciles. Any genuine involvement of Christians in development must seek to promote awareness of the powerless and of the possibility of living with powerlessness and poverty. Such powerlessness and poverty, Jenkins contends, would not have to be degrading and frustrating but may indeed be creative and human. Therefore, Christian teaching and preaching should be rooted in the recognition of the powerless, hopeless and poor in the society.

Jürgen Moltmann's paper, *The Christian Theology of Hope and Its Bearing on Development* also raises the question of the relationship between Christian hope and human development. According to Moltmann (1969:93), Christian hope and human development are connected in and through the church. This means that the church is the place where the connection occurs

and where Christian hope and human development can be practiced. Moltmann (1969:93-94) explains that:

> Christian faith in God's grace and Christian hope in the kingdom of God are not a hindrance to the advancement and development of an individual or a nation but rather they take up this progress, promote, correct and stimulate it by virtue of their infinite resources of strength which are aimed at and beyond all finite goals.

The statement shows that God and humankind have been reconnected by the cross. Therefore, a theology of hope and development must be grounded in this fact. If a Christian is to demonstrate his/her hope and love for the coming kingdom, says Moltmann, he/she should show it by identifying with the less privilege. Caring for them is like caring for Jesus and this does not simply mean the advancement of physical society or economic development, but of their victims such as the hungry, the naked, the oppressed, the homeless and the prisoners (Moltmann 1969:96). This means Christian theology, preaching and teaching should aim at those without a future to give them hope and a future.

Furthermore, for successful development to take place in a person it must be a combination of what the person knows and can do and what he/she hopes and desires. This means that hope for the future requires the development of what is present, and it would be impossible to imagine the future without those who have become and who are the victims of the present development. Moltmann rightly remarks that "the future on which Christian faith pins its hope does not begin on high at the pinnacles of evolution and up advanced societies, but as evidence in the crucified, down there with those without a future and without hope". Furthermore, Christian hope must develop the imagination of love for the unloved, the neglected, and the derelict (Moltmann 1969:98-99).

This hope is brought to constant proximity with what Moltmann calls a "revolutionary hope" for the future and for the oppressed and the neglected. By "revolutionary hope" is meant the hope that protects the poor and the oppressed from the advanced and the developed who may act as the gods of the poor by creating dependency on the rich (Moltmann 1969:99). Christians must therefore be aware of and be involved in the day-by-day struggles and difficulties of the people. People in underdeveloped countries or societies today face numerous challenges that require the special attention of the church. In Chapter Two, it has been noted that the people of Nasarawa State share some of these problems with many people in the world. Adhikary (2004:5) summarizes the challenges as follow:

> ...people worldwide are infected with HIV today, and HIV left… millions orphans… About 36 million people worldwide are currently living with AIDS 95% of which live in the

developing countries. AIDS has already killed 23 million people. More than 150 million children do not attend primary school and 150 million children drop out of education before grade IV. Contaminated water claims the lives of 5 million children annually. Due to wars and domestic strife in various countries about 40 million are refugees in other countries than their own and are displaced in their own home countries. About 250 million children are child laborers and more than 3,000, 000 are forced to take arms. The age-old minority issue is one of the crucial issues in almost all over the world. Minorities suffer because of political, religious, ideological, economical and ethnic reasons.

When such challenges appear and church members or communities are affected, the church is obliged to do something about it. The challenges can thus serve as a fertile ground for the church to rethink its way forward, not in the least because congregations sometimes place their last and only hope in the church especially in countries where religious barriers exist and others are seen as second-class citizens.

In a more recent book, *God for the Secular Society,* Moltmann (1999:43-45) notes that after the Second World War, religion is, unfortunately, often seen as a private affair that has nothing to do with politics or the public sphere. However, Christian discipleship and public theology must take sides in both critical and creative ways in politics and issues in the public domain. Therefore, public theology is of general concern when it comes to hope in Christ for the kingdom of God.

Moltmann's argument here is well articulated and Myers (2011:5-7) confirms that Moltmann's view remains valid today, that is, regarding the modern worldview that sees a dichotomy between the spiritual and physical needs of human beings, a separation by which the church has been captivated. It was clear that, during his earthly life and ministry, Jesus did not only care for the spiritual life of people, but he was concerned about the material or physical world as well. Therefore, Myers (2011:8) argues for a holistic development and stresses that the church needs to be informed and shaped by a biblical worldview or framework for transformational development. However, what exactly does the latter refer to? Does a biblical concept of human development exist? These questions will be answered in the next section.

4.3. Biblical Concept of Human Development

For Christians, the Bible represents the standard of ministry and service. As such, commitment to community service will naturally require a biblical understanding of development. Christian scholars of development have argued that, though the term development does not occur directly in the Bible, the concept of development is present in

Scriptures (Hughes & Bennett 1998:3). Two terms that are closely related in meaning to development that will be considered here in line with their biblical implications are growth and transformation. The understanding is that the first term, growth, refers to the physical, while the second, transformation, to the spiritual.

4.3.1. Physical development

The concept of physical development could be viewed as a process of gradual increase in the population of a society or community or the physical increase of an individual. A society or community grows by birth or by migration while an individual's growth is marked by physical increase in terms of mental and intellectual abilities, for example. A key objective of this research is to consider first the development of individuals who live in the community or are part of a nation. A common example of human development that scholars have pointed out as a biblical model is Jesus. Luke 2:52 says, "And Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and with men" (NIV). The intellectual discussion (between Jesus and the temple officials) in the context of this passage relates the character of Christ to the need of human development. Four areas are related to human development in this text namely increase in wisdom, stature, favour with God and favour with men. Moffitt (1987:235), in his *Local Church and Development* and Hughes and Bennett (1998:4), in *God of the Poor,* interpret these four areas in equivalent terms to show that Jesus' increase or growth implies mental or intellectual development (wisdom), physical development (stature), spiritual development (favour with God) and social development (favour with men).

This passage can thus be used as a biblical model of development to guide Christian development workers in their efforts in development. It could also be seen as a key to a theology of integrated mission which is holistic Christian ministry. Moffitt (1987:235) outlines the relevance of this passage to development as:

- Mental development - shows the need to observe, remember, integrate, analyze, and make wise decisions (wisdom).
- Physical development - indicates the need for food, shelter, exercise, and a healthy physical environment (stature).
- Spiritual development - shows the need to develop, nurture, and maintain a vertical relationship with our Creator (favour with God).
- Social development - shows the need to develop, nurture and maintain horizontal relationships with other individuals or groups (favour with men).

One can summarise the above development process as an example of people-centred development. The approach shows a psychological development of the individual which is crucial to the successful development of a community. This means mental development is important because it increases people's knowledge and leads them to acquire information about what concerns their lives and how to manage adverse situations before things get out of hand. Physical development is equally important because people need food to grow and a clean and healthy environment to survive. Mutual relationships are possible when people get to know how to live with one another and relate well with God. It is also important to make social and spiritual development a priority. For people to make decisions and the right choices about their own lives and affairs, they would have to be built up psychologically.

The different dimensions can also be seen described in terms of holistic growth or development. Munson (2008:5) agrees that growth flows from need, that is, there is no point of growth in areas that there are no needs. Thus, all development programs or projects must consider people's needs especially in relation to mental, physical, spiritual and social growth. However, taking into account all the diverse areas of growth is not enough; the diversity must also be in the context of services in the community. This includes the family, church, local community and distant community especially the victims of poverty (Munson 2008:6). It means that all the diverse groups need to grow in their perception of the issues around them and think of the way forward.

The point of emphasis here is that people have potential that should be valued and developed either by themselves or by others, as one may not know people's capabilities unless they are given the opportunity to utilize them. However, they may attain their potential unless they are able to make wise decisions about their lives and their relationship with God and with fellow human beings. The idea of development suggests that something potentially is present which given the right conditions will gradually unfold (Hughes & Bennett 1998:4). Even though development may not be a biblical term, the idea is certainly present in terms that express the idea of ''growth'' which is closely related in meaning to the concept of development. The term growth reveals the purpose mankind was created for:

> God created human beings full of potential for growth. He created people to handle the resources of the earth in co-operation with others in a way that would reveal the wisdom and glory of our Maker. [However], [t]he fall thwarted this development but through Israel first, and then through his Son, God is working towards our restoration ... God is determined to develop human beings that will realize their potential for displaying his glory (Hughes & Bennett 1998:5-6).

From the Christian, in particular, the evangelical perspective, development is regarded as transformation rather than development per se because transformation is considered spiritual while development is too wedded to secular agenda to convey the radical change that is needed to bring blessings to the world of need. According to this view, transformation points to that "radical re-orientation towards God and away from sin at the heart of our being which bears fruit in true wisdom and the real social harmony" (Hughes & Bennett 1998:6). This goes a long way to show that transformation looks forward to the renewal of people's inner minds. Transformed people develop, with God's help, in wisdom, in stature and in favour with God and fellow humans, as in the case of Jesus noted above. This understanding implies that unless people are transformed, development may not be sustainable because sin which causes greed, corruption and all forms of oppression needs to be removed to enable a fair treatment of all human beings which leads to the of spiritual development.

4.3.2.   Spiritual development

It is noted in Chapter Two that poverty has a spiritual dimension in the sense that the absence of the fear of God triggers social imbalances that cause poverty. People become selfish, greedy and corrupt, and practice injustice, oppression of the poor and marginalization of the weak. Disregard for God therefore becomes a barrier to development. Thus, spiritual development requires that people's knowledge of God and his purpose for humanity be put in place to create a peaceful environment for development. When the church neglects its duty to the poor, it amounts to the neglect of its spiritual calling and of its ministry of compassion. The previous chapters have established that considerable efforts have been made in the area of development from a secular point of view but also that development needs to be holistic.

Transformation is a theological term for development formulated by Christian development workers and theologians. Bragg (1987:39), for example, has reflected extensively on this subject noting that the purpose of God for humanity has been distorted by sin. Therefore, "transformation is part of God's continuing action in history to restore all creation to [God] himself and to its rightful relationships." Furthermore,

> God's purpose for humanity is that men and women be *imago Dei*—that they live as his image in the world, his co-creators and stewards, rather than as predators of creation. God intends that social structures reflect and promote, justice, sharing, and free participation for the well-being of all (Bragg 1987:39).

Consequently, transformation seeks to restore distorted relationships and reconstruct social structures that exist in the present world which are responsible for hindering people from fulfilling God's purpose for their lives. Bragg further identifies the characteristics of

transformation as life sustenance, equity, justice, dignity and self-worth, freedom, participation, reciprocity, cultural fit, ecological soundness, hope and spiritual transformation (Bragg 1987:40-47). He argues that it is possible that other development programs (secular) and theories reflect some elements of transformation but they cannot adequately manifest all. In his opinion, transformational development is holistic because it aims at better life and better way of living as individuals and as community. Bragg points out that, "the transformation that the Bible calls us [to] is a transformation of both individuals and social structure that allows us to move toward increasing harmony with God, with our fellow human beings, with our environment, and with ourselves" (Bragg 1987:47). This Research argues that the combination of physical and spiritual aspect of human development is crucial if holistic development goals would be achieved. They are the ingredients that can make up a healthy community.

In the following section, the research further explores various theologies that have evolved in Christian history to show the importance and the need of active participation of the church in a holistic development.

4.4. Liberation towards Development

As noted in the first chapter (1.6), this research is done in the context of practical theology. Of course, practical theology is understood as a discipline that is concerned with the practical side of people's life of faith and with addressing people's problems. Its unique task is to provide concrete guidance to particular communities as they struggle to form liberating practices that can challenge forms of oppression (Osmer 2005:319).

Therefore, the biblical concept of human development as explicated above logically leads to a discussion of liberation and development. The biblical concept focuses on holistic (physical, mental, social and spiritual) aspects of human development which presumably converge in the theology of liberation. On the concept of the four generations of development (i.e. relief and welfare, community development, sustainable system development and people's movement's), the idea of human development is the central concern because it aims at liberating people from dependency and making them self-reliant. The problem of dependency is a major concern that needs to be addressed since independence and freedom of participation are some of the main goals of people-centred development. According to Robinson (1994:319), the idea of dependence is alien to the biblical understanding of human development because dependence implies inequality, which is against the will of God.

Therefore, true development implies development of people, the release of people from their conditions of slavery and marginalization so that they can have the rightful dignity of participating in the processes of making decisions, which affect their life and labour.

The central goal and vision of people-centred development, as argued in this research, is to return the control of resources to people and their communities in order to meet their own needs. This will include strengthening people's capacity for participation, because they need freedom to take control, to share their ideas and to be valued as human beings with the potential to grow. As such, governments and the church have a role to play in ensuring that people's rights are protected. Moreover, those who would assist the people, be it the government, church or an NGO, should recognize that people can improve their performances when they are supported and offered the chance to participate and contribute in their personal or community development.

The discussion which follows is not an attempt to argue for or against liberation, feminist theology, human rights and human dignity. However, without development, liberation efforts remain invalid and ineffective. Access to socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political power through human development or capacity building could therefore be sought in any form of struggle for liberation.

4.4.1.   Liberation theology and development

Liberation theology originated from Latin America in the late 1960s with prominent exponents such as Gutierrez (1979) and Moltmann (1999), among others. It developed as an ecclesial and contextual theology in response to specific historical and social settings. It is not a system of beliefs but a new way of doing theology that is rooted in the life of Christians in solidarity with the poor. In this movement, it is important to relate faith to life and practice in the context of the realities of particular societies (Stan 2008:486). Liberation theology reckons that the history of the people of God in Egypt could be used as a biblical foundation for a theology of liberation. The biblical story relates how the people of Israel were humiliated, marginalized and oppressed by the Egyptians and how God liberated them from the hand of Pharaoh and his people. In this process, God demonstrated his power which made the people trust him more. Their liberation can be seen as a movement from slavery to freedom and from dependence to independence and it shows that God favours the poor and the oppressed, working daily to see that they are set free from any form of oppression or system that dominates them.

Tamayo-Acosta (2003:67) explains that in the Exodus experience, the Hebrew people lived in a condition of slavery and inhumanity under the dictatorship of the Pharaohs but God showed sensitivity to human affairs in that he became visible in his work through a liberating action as he took the Israelites out of Egypt. She points out that, "Yahweh took stock of the situation, showed indignation, and took on the commitment to liberate them so that they could recover the dignity the pharaoh denied them".

From the perspective of liberation theology therefore, one can assume that the problems of inequality, increased unemployment, corruption, violence against and oppression of the poor prompt victims all over the world to seek alternatives of freedom. Liberation theology spread to several parts of the world from Latin America in the 1960s addressing issues that affect people based on their own context and experience. According to Gutiérrez (1979:26-27), liberation is a radical movement for change among the exploited and a social revolution that would break the dependency system. He outlines three approaches which describe the process of liberation. First, it is a process that reflects the aspirations of the oppressed people and social class, emphasizing the conflictual aspects of economic, social and political processes which put them at odds with wealthy nations and the oppressive class. Second, it is a process whereby people assume conscious responsibility for their destiny. Third, liberation allows people to gain access to the biblical truth in which Christ is demonstrated as the one who brings liberation by destroying the power of sin which is the root cause of all disruption of friendship, injustice and oppression.

Similarly, Schubeck (2003:259) notes that liberation theologians speak of God and Jesus as liberators of the poor and the oppressed, and insists that justice and spirituality work hand in hand. He also reflects on the experience of human beings who assume co-responsibility with God for their liberation. The liberation movement was a movement of the poverty-stricken people of Latin America at a time the continent got its independence from colonial and economic masters in Europe and North America. The movement records strong Christian participation (Moltmann 1999:47). Freedom and independence therefore remain the basic concerns of any liberation movement which understands that people have potential but if their potential is not fully developed, respected and valued, they will not be able to access the earth's resources.

In the liberation movement, "the upwardly mobile and educated classes of the population took over the development programs of the nations of the industrial West, and their theologians talked about a theology of development" (Moltmann 1999:48). However, the

ruling classes themselves ended up exploiting the masses, which turned to a movement of revolution. The revolution movement replaced that of liberation and looked towards bringing justice to the oppressed as a necessary part of Christian neighbourly love. On the significance of the theology of liberation, Moltmann (1999:48) further notes that, "liberation presupposes real, economic, political and cultural oppression, and is aligned towards a life in freedom and justice." It was a process that was maintained by the people and theology reflects this movement in the light of the Gospel.

From the biblical point of view, James Cone explains that liberation theology arose from biblical stories, and the theologians used the Bible as a tool for finding the meaning of life. For instance, Black theology, of which Cone is an exponent, tries to answer the hermeneutical problems of a text as the scriptural revelation of God in Christ who is the liberator of the socially and politically oppressed (Cone 1997:74-76). Those who recognize their fight against poverty and injustice are consistent with the Gospel of Christ the liberator and saviour of humankind, healer of the sick and broken hearted and the helper of the helpless. Therefore, the primary purpose of liberation theology is to grant freedom to the oppressed.

Furthermore, the biblical emphasis on the socio-political character of God is to show that God sides with the weak and helpless, to whom he serves as liberator as well as social worker. Cone highlights four significant tasks of Christian theology. First, Christian theology must speak of Jesus, who is concerned and actively involved in the struggle for freedom for the oppressed. Second, Christian theology must be prophetic and recognize the reality of human dignity. Third, theology cannot ignore tradition; rather, it is the interpreter of the Gospel at any given time such that the meaning of the past is revealed in the present. Fourth, theology is always a word of liberation to the oppressed and the humiliated as well as words of judgment against the oppressors and rulers (Cone 1997:75-76).

This shows that a theology that is not meaningful to human life and experience is insignificant, and any theology that does not speak of liberation, freedom, and equality among humankind, whether black or white, male or female, is not a Christ-like theology. It can also be said that Christian theology is the message of God in Christ that offers joy and good life for all peoples.

4.4.2.   Liberation, human rights theology and development

The subject of human rights has a long history and a diverse tradition. It is grounded in the biblical teaching of the image of God and justice owed to others. It is also rooted on the love of God revealed in Jesus especially for the outcast. It was practiced right from the Early Church through the ages (Stassen 2008:405). The subject matter drew the attention of concerned Christians in Europe and the United Nations (UN) as seen in several declarations of human rights which base the inalienable and indestructible dignity of human beings on their creation in the image of God. By linking human dignity with the image of God, belief in God is conjoined with respect for the beings he created (Moltmann 1999:55). God created humankind in his image, and endowed it with freedom, creativity, significance and moral discernment (Olasky 1988:144), which show that all human beings need to be truly free and have access to the good things of life.

Historically, the middle-class movement in the West emphasized the rights to freedom and participation in community, while developing countries emphasized the rights to basic economic needs. In developing countries, the focus is on the basic exigencies of survival in the face of famine, abolition of colonial structures, overcoming of racial discrimination, and cultural authenticity over against colonial and global economic domination (Stassen 2008:413). This shows that if people are not given the privilege to utilize their potential, it can be considered a denial of their human rights. People need to be free from exploitation and domination by the powerful, and the church stands in a good space to speak for them. Hoppe (2004:17), who sees poverty and oppression as mostly human inventions, relates several stories of how wealthy people often used their status to take advantage of those whose economic situation is precarious. However, the legal traditions in the Torah aimed at delineating the rights of the poor and regulating how successful Israelites were to deal with those on the margins of ancient Israelite economy. The laws attempt to prevent a permanent economic and social underclass in the ancient society.

It is important to note that ecumenical theologians and lawyers share the commitment of the UN to create awareness that the right of everyone should be respected (Moltmann 1999:56). Fighting for human rights is not based on people's socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions only but on the fact that "they are human beings" (Moltmann 1999:117). This means when people honour and respect each other as human beings, development will come to stay; but when some are busy building and others are destroying, all efforts may prove futile. It also means that church involvement in the issue of human rights should be in the

area of basic needs and economic rights of the people as well as democratic freedom from autocratic and corrupt power structures, hunger, and economic injustice. Above all, love is the key to recognition and the struggle for human rights because the Bible states that the greatest commandments are to love God and to love one's neighbour as oneself. It means that the idea of human rights is grounded in the love of God who gives human beings their rights (Stassen 2008:413).

4.4.3.   Liberation, feminist theology and development

The discussion of feminist theology in this section is not an attempt to assess a particular attitude to women. Rather, it recognizes that people who feel the pinch of oppression and poverty most are women (see 2.4.3 above). The empowerment of women is one of the main priorities in developing a community, and feminist theology presents important principles for perceiving women and moving towards their development. Any society, religious or secular, that does not value the potential of women cannot make much progress. Therefore, any unjust structure that disempowers women should be removed to enable women utilize freely their potential as human beings created in the image of God.

Feminist theology is an approach to theology from the perspective of females that developed in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s. It strives for women's liberation from all forms of oppression and further advocates the full humanity of every person especially of women. It ensures that women have a say as equal partners with men on issues that concern the wellbeing of women in society which may have been denied or suppressed (Peacore 2008:317-318). It is a movement that also fights for the full recognition of women's human rights.

The theological vision of feminist theology, according to Moltmann, reflects a comprehensive cultural revolution. First, it seeks to address openly the everyday brutality and humiliation which take place in families and between men and women. Second, it seeks to protect the human and civil rights of women in society and in the church. Third, it motivates Christian women to participate in the general and religious feminist movement (Moltmann 1999:56), because it stands against the limitations that women experience in the church and in the community.

One question one may ask here is how can women's liberation struggle benefit women and their communities? That is, what follows women's liberation? It is the assumption of this research that the development of women should be a prime target of development especially

in light of the important role women play in the family and in the community. Therefore, their development should be a priority in any society. It is important also to note that women's liberation does not aim at making women into men or merely equal to men, but to let women live freely and to enable them utilize their God-given talents as human beings. In Stott's words (1990:273), the heartfelt wish of Christian feminists is a liberation that leads to the discovery of true identity. In other words, the liberated woman is free to know herself, be herself, and develop herself in her own special way, creatively using her full intellect and talent.

The struggle for women's liberation therefore is of paramount importance but the ultimate goal must be women's development which would enable them to contribute effectively in secular and religious society. The theological significance of the struggle could be traced to the situation of women in the Old and New Testament times. Shirley A. Decker-Lucke points out that even though biblical women lived under a patriarchal system, they did share the privilege (with men) of full membership of the community of God's people. They also had the privilege to participate in society's civil and religious activities. This shows that any barrier by any group of people that undermines or downplays the role of women for whatever reason should be removed to enable women participate actively in either secular society or sacred society (Decker-Lucke 2002:78-79).

The power and potential of women should not be undermined in the process of development in any society because the Bible sees women as important as men, and they should all have the opportunity to contribute to the growth and development of society. Marsha Ellis Smith explains that beyond mere domestic activities of women in the biblical stories, they also served as political leaders and performed wonders in their time (Smith 2002:337-338). For Valerie Griffiths, "leadership in the Old and New Testament is based on the calling and spiritual gifting of God and the recognition of this by his people" (Griffiths 2002:642-643). The presence of women as leaders in patriarchal societies such as the biblical world should serve as a theological challenge to those cultures that do not yet recognize the role of women in development. Thus, women's liberation, from the perspective of any culture or tradition, should not be overlooked by the church or theology. It paves the way for women to use their gifts and leadership potential and to show that women can contribute to the growth of the society.

To relate the issue of women in development to the efforts of ECWA in Nigeria, the empowerment and development of women remain at the top of the agenda especially in her

"Ten Year Strategic Plan". As a church and community of faith, ECWA recognizes the position of women from a biblical perspective. The church actively promotes human dignity especially the right of the Nigerian woman. It recognizes that in Nigeria some cultural perceptions and practices have negative effects on females especially the negligence of the girl-child education and women's empowerment. In response to these issues, the church has set up policies that would enforce opportunities for the empowerment of women and protect widows and orphans from exploitation in all its congregations and in the communities where the congregations are found (ECWA 2007:14).

4.4.4.   Liberation, human dignity and development

Human dignity has to do with the value of being human, which is not bestowed by persons or institutions and which does not derive its meaning from any human action or status. Rather, it is grounded in God's creative act and based on biblical testimonies (Moltmann 1984: ix-xi). It is enhanced when people become self-reliant and self-sufficient, when they become capable of organizing themselves toward fulfilling their potential (Swanepoel 1997:3). Stott explains that human dignity signifies humankind's relationship to God, its fellow humans and the earth (1990:154-155). Human dignity is therefore to be understood as the state or quality of being worthy of honour, love and respect. This dignity is not obtained through economic, political and or educational attainment but is bestowed on human beings by God. For Louw (2005:119),

> [By] community development is meant the fostering of a culture of human rights in order to safeguard human dignity and to empower humans by means of personal validation, education and sustainable development. [Therefore] the aim of community development is to create society as a living space in which human dignity can be cultivated ... in order to gain social credibility.

It is relevant therefore to talk about human dignity in terms of community development. This is because human beings are created in the image of God, and their dignity is manifested in their ability to reason and understand, in their freedom to shape their own lives and the life of their communities, and in the capacity for love and friendship (Graff 1989:216).

This view of human dignity is in line with the people-centred approach to development which recognizes that all human beings have potential and no one is inferior to the other since God created both men and women with equal opportunities. Nolan (2009:105, 107) is of the opinion that equal dignity, respect, and honour must be given to all human beings because they are all made in the image and likeness of God. Besides, respect for human dignity forms the basis of love and justice in social relationship. It means that in a society where people's

dignity is respected, development is possible, and exploitation, discrimination and oppression are overruled because the people live, work and grow together. In his earthly life and ministry, Jesus, a model of human development, valued people and did not mind their status. He loved little children, tax collectors, the poor and women.

The crucial point here is that people who are less privileged should not be treated as inferior but as human beings created in the image and likeness of God with potential for growth and development. Empowering them to gain control over resources and to become self-reliant without being dominated by society's economy or political structure (be it secular or religious) is also crucial. The people-centred development approach in theology seeks to liberate people to become self-reliant. Therefore, if the approach is applied by the church, it will give hope to those whose rights and dignity has been denied and offer liberation from all kinds of barriers that affect their livelihoods.

4.5. The Local Church and Community Development

It may be helpful at this point to consider briefly the efforts of the local church in community development in Nasarawa. In Nasarawa State, the church seems to be paying more attention to discharging spiritual truth to the people but less attention to their physical needs. For example, the ECWA church set up a department called People Oriented Development (POD of ECWA)[19] whose mission is to promote and improve sustainable living conditions of the masses through effective community mobilization and capacity building (Kasai 2008:4). In ECWA's Lafia District Church Council, the context of the researcher, many of the pastors leave issues of community development[20] to the POD co-ordinators while they concentrate on preaching and executing church projects. Yet the members are in pain because of poverty and lack of economic opportunity. The youth and women who cover the higher population of the church are jobless. Therefore, this research argues that sustainable development may be best achieved when it focuses on both physical and spiritual needs.

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[19] ECWA's POD initiative was founded in 1989 to encourage holistic community-based development to demonstrate God's love to people. The activities of POD include providing community health, adult education and community economic projects especially in northern Nigeria (Kasai 2008).

[20] According to Rev. Farinto the former President of the church, "ECWA as a growing church in Africa ECWA has impacted the society by utilising local resources through mission, church planting and growth, delivery of basic necessities like education, health care, agriculture and community development and the distribution of literature and media services" (ECWA 2007:ii). On the contrary this effort is not adequately fulfilled in Nasarawa State.

In view of the underlying concepts of liberation discussed above, one can argue that the church has the responsibility to ensure that people are not only liberated, but also enjoy the benefits of that liberation. This is to say that the role of the Christian church in community development is to integrate the proclamation of the Gospel with the obedience to the command to love one's neighbour. When the Gospel is preached and the hearers respond to it, the hearers who are experiencing injustice or destitution are glad when the preacher also seeks to meet their physical needs (Claydon 2008:402). Of course, God's grace, love and forgiveness make sense when the character of God is manifested in the life of the preacher, and God's holiness in the exercise of justice, love, caring ministries and his kingdom in order to advocate peace and equal rights (Claydon 2008:404).

This combination is what makes the people-centred approach a theology of integral mission.[21] The integral mission of the church has a biblical and theological background which is founded in the character of God. It is seen in the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt (where they suffered oppression and slavery) and the provision of the laws that will guide their spiritual and moral lives as children of God. Jesus also did not only proclaim the kingdom of God and repentance to the sinner. He also provided food for the hungry, healed the sick and the lame, gave sight to the blind, and freed people from oppressive traditional and cultural constraints.

The fact that true Christian mission and ministry should aim at meeting physical and spiritual needs of the people cannot be overemphasized. The physical and spiritual components make the approach holistic. As Joda-Mbewe (2002:20) explains, "a holistic approach seeks to focus on the human being as an indivisible entity, the total being, of which soul and body form a unity out of the diversity". He also notes that, "Spirituality is not vacuum-packed but actualized, experienced, discovered in particular circumstances and places. A person's spirituality is not entirely private but has social ramifications." As such, the physical needs of the person are as important as the spiritual. In this regard, Koopman (2007:299) states that the church has a unique contribution to make to public life since it is a unique servant of the Lord of the universe. August (2010: viii) also views the church as a central institution and location of and for the marginalized especially the most vulnerable in the society, that is, women and

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[21] The term theology of integral mission comes from the Spanish word 'mission integral' and which can also be referred to as 'holistic ministry' or "transformational development". The term entails the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. Proclamation then means telling the people the gospel and demonstration means showing what it means to be part of the kingdom by means of caring for the saved (Gwaivangmin 2009:10).

children. These thoughts form the background to an understanding of what the church is all about and what role the church can play in community development especially in the context of Nasarawa State. However, more needs to be said about the character of church in this regard.

4.5.1.   Understanding the local church

The church is often seen as a place or building where Christians meet for worship, prayer and Bible study, and so forth. However, it is also clear that the ideal meaning of "the church" goes well beyond that. Guthrie (1994) describes the church in five ways – first, as the people of God, second, as the body of Christ, third, as a holy people, fourth, as a united, catholic people, and fifth, as an apostolic people (Guthrie 1994:354-365). Guthrie rightly sees the church as a chosen and set apart community, united in Christ and depending on his leadership for the task for which he has commissioned them. According to August (2010:44) the Hebrew word *qahal* and the Greek word *ekklesia* translate into our term "church" which describes the calling of people out of a broader community the inhabited world to become the community of God – for God's redemptive purpose with the world. It shows that the church is a community of people who are called from all sorts of bondage to freedom, and having a sense of identity founded on a common bond and for a common purpose.

The church can also be seen as both an institution and an organism (Koopman 2007:305). The local church indeed has a great task of rendering a holistic ministry not only to the members of the faith community but also to the entire community where church is located. Congregations adopt various methods to facilitate the development of the members and of community members but denominations and ecumenical bodies need to come together to build lives and promote the dignity of all people. Koopman (2007:306) suggests that individual members of the faith community be equipped so that they can be involved actively in community building and the advancement of life and dignity for all. Worship services therefore have the potential to transform people into disciples who can live as responsible citizens.

Consequently, the church could be regarded as a community of believers in Christ who are chosen and set apart, meet in a particular place for a common purpose; depend on Jesus Christ; are in union with each other; and are committed to worship one God, love and care for one another in and outside the church. The church is seen as both a universal and a local church. The focus in this research is, however, is not on the universal church but on the local

church, that is, Christian communities (community of believers) which are closely related to the people in communities where they live. Therefore, when the word church is used in this research is referred to this concept and not a particular denomination. The research focuses on the local church, first, because of the idea that the church should not close its eyes to the needs of people immediately around it. Second, the majority of the poor or marginalized people are very often closely connected to the church in one way or the other whereas the government seems far. It is often from the local church that these people seek guidance, inspiration and help.

Furthermore, this position agrees with Onwubiko (2001:17) who considers the church as the family of God and its central concepts of "family-hood" as important for understanding the church and its mission. Onwubiko urges the church in her mission to think of togetherness, teamwork, what connects them together in smaller group to extended family, clans, community and the larger society. The attitude can also discourage the idea of tribalism and ethnicity and cause believers to see themselves as people of God thereby breaking all boundaries and uniting all tribes and nations in the family of God. This is also in line with the goals and vision of people-centred development. Therefore the local church should have a strong sense of community, focus on mutual aid and use the majority of her income to assist members who are in need (Thomas 2007:20).

4.5.2. The goal of the church in community development

At this point, it should be already evident that this research views development as a holistic undertaking, based on a peaceful and living relationship between human beings and their Creator on the one hand and with one another on the other hand. Thus, development could be a vehicle for meaningful change. The goal of Christians in community development will be discussed here in relation to the idea of reconciliation and building relationships because it helps people to live rightly with one another and as stewards of God's resources. By contrast, the modern worldview maintains that change or development is achieved through and solely in the application of science and technology while the people-centred approach also recommends the restoration of power to the people and capacity building.

In the previous chapter, the discussion of development from the perspective of modernization covers the approach used by NGOs; the basic needs approach, and people-centred community development. Based on these approaches, socio-economic development indicators are measured in terms of life expectancy at birth, literacy rate, and per capita income. In other

words, the effort is geared towards reduction of poverty, combating the spread of diseases, and economic and human development as a vehicle for change. However, this research maintains that the approaches are somewhat inadequate because they are not holistic in character. To achieve sustainable development, the principle of reconciling people to God and to fellow human beings is paramount as it can strengthen the efforts of those people who (legitimately) see development from those approaches. The goal of the church in development in terms of reconciliation and building relationships is considered in what follows.

4.5.2.1. Reconciliation

First, the goal of Christian involvement in community development is to reconcile people to God. This is because the call of Christians to be ambassadors of Christ is a call to the ministry of reconciliation. Apostle Paul says, "in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself... and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us" (2 Cor. 5:19-20, NIV). In line with this, Migliore (2004:265) states that, "the mission of the church is to participate in the reconciling love of the triune God who reaches out to the fallen world through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit."

However, it is obvious that governments and NGOs all over the world are actively involved in meeting people's physical needs. Individual Christians and organizations are also concerned about the wellbeing of their neighbours. Such concerns are usually demonstrated through the provision of food, shelter and clothing as well as in efforts to promote people's dignity and to help them realize their potential for a full and meaningful life. Although these concerns are essential, they are limited to only the basic areas of physical life. A proverb in Hausa says when you kill a snake and do not remove the head, the poison remains. This implies that the caustic agent (of poverty) must be dealt with if sustainable development would be achieved. It can be removed through reconciliation to God.

Based on Scriptures, Christians believe that human beings lost their "Godlikeness", lost God's image, lost God's nature and his ultimate riches, and became devoid of divine ability, potential and vision because of sin. Therefore, the first step towards receiving ultimate creative and productive power is seeking reconciliation with God. According to Olasky (1988:145), human rebellion against God affects every area of human existence. The fall

resulted in God's curse on creation and in destructive patterns of thought, culture, and relationships, which keep men in bondage to poverty and deprivation.

The way to obtain the lost glory is by turning to the Creator. Matthew 6:33 says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all other things will be added to you" and Proverbs says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov.1:7). Therefore, people must first repent of their sins and seek pardon by appropriating the redemptive work of Christ on the cross (Acts 3:19). After reconciliation with God, the individual necessarily experiences a transformation of his/her inner being, producing God-like conduct and great creative ability (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17 which says, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation as old things have passed away). This ability is fed by vision and inspiration from the Holy Spirit. When there is fear of God, one's innovation, hard work, determination and prayer can then contribute to sustainable development. This agrees with Myers who argues that "if people are seeking God, many other good things will follow and become possible. If they are not, the horizons of change are more limited and difficult" (Myers 2011:181).

The primary goal of Christian social development is to reconcile people to the living God. Physical, psychological and social needs are crucial, but the goal always moves beyond the physical sphere to the spiritual sphere (Elliston 1989:175). By implication, the ministry of the church must touch every aspect of a person's life because each ministry of the church seeks to bring human beings (women and men) to the kingdom of God. In this way, meeting people's physical needs is seen as intermediate while reconciling people to God has eternal significance (Elliston 1989:176).

When people are reconciled to God and to one another then it will be easy for them to love and care for one another. According to Bosch (1991:81), the central aim of the great commission as found in Mathew's Gospel is to make disciples. It includes simultaneously practicing love and righteousness, that is, upholding justice. Christian mission in this sense is not limited to just making disciples but also to making the new believers "sensitive to the needs of others, opening their eyes and hearts to recognize injustice, suffering, oppression and the plight of those who have fallen by the way side". It implies that once they are reconciled to God, disciples are better equipped to minister to each other. Bosch concludes that, "it is not possible to make disciples without telling them to practice God's call of justice to the poor." The role of the disciple is to proclaim Jesus' ultimate victory over the power of evil, to witness to his abiding presence, and to lead the world towards the recognition of the love of God (Bosch 1991:83).

Furthermore, people are often unhappy with each other simply because they have no mutual relationship. For some, cultural values have been overturned by violence, selfishness, corruption, and so on. Others are being oppressed and marginalized due to socio-economic, religious and socio-political differences. Such relationships need to be restored and rebuilt to enable the free flow of participation among the people. Musa (*nd.*) suggests that values that must be in place to enhance poverty alleviation and community transformation should include love for one another, honesty and sincerity, community spirit, accountability, hard work, discipline, creativity, indigenous/appropriate technologies and justice.

One may conclude here that a healthy community is a fertile ground for development, and what makes it healthy is the restoration of broken relationships. In the last two chapters, the research has considered health as a catalyst for development from a physical perspective. However, one could examine a healthy community from a relational point of view. This understanding is strengthened by Munson's (2008:4) assumption of holistic health which is outlined as:

- Good relationship with self (emotional, sometimes physical)
- Good relationship with others (relational)
- Good relationship with God (spiritual)
- Good relationship with environment (ecological, and physical).

These four areas are crucial to this research as they identify areas that are central to community development, that is, as God-centred as well as people-centred. Munson's outline reflects the integration of physical ministry with spiritual ministry to attain sustainable development. Since the goal is to restore relationship (whether physical or spiritual) which can prevent further unhealthy activities that lead to poverty or underdevelopment, it should also enable people to enjoy freedom to participate in the process of development and create in them a sense of belonging. Bragg (1987:39) shows that the church is at the centre of God's purpose and that the unique contribution of Christians to development is precisely as the people of God—the church—as a new community where all relationships are being transformed and redeemed. If relationships are so important and reconciliation is part of this, how are relationships built to the point of reconciliation, and what is their significance for development?

4.5.2.2. Building relationships

The second important goal of Christians in community development is to establish cordial relationships among people in the community. The concept of reconciliation shows that relationships ought to be established between God and human beings implying that good relationships are essential in development because they are the bridge across which ideas and values are carried (Hiebert 1989:75). Relationships serve as a link between human beings. According to Bragg (1989:68), Christ's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount aims at establishing a cordial relationship between people:

> Living in a peaceful and rightful relationship is the heart of the message of the Gospel. Christ came to heal not only the broken relationships of humans with their creator in a redemptive way, but also to engage them in harmonious fellowship among themselves, in the community of faith (1989:68).

Bragg (1989:73) further explains that when people's relationship with God is changed, then their relationship with the poor neighbour would be transformed, and the care of the environment will be markedly different. In short, they would begin to fulfil the *imago Dei* and *mission Dei,* and realize a new *shalom* together*,* knowing that the kingdom is drawing near. Similar Adhikary's (2004:4) comments that:

> Christian belief is essentially holistic. It means everything is within the purpose of God. Holistic ministry implies care and growth of the total personality of a man: body, mind and soul. In the Bible man is seen in his total personality. It is related to Christ's redemptive work of restoring harmony of all creation in the totality of relationship: a) Relationship of Man to his own self, b) His relationship with his neighbor, c) His relationship with nature and environment, and d) His relationship with God. We believe in holistic transformational change in the individual and community that will positively affect the attitude of people to life and the world.

What binds these relationships together, according to Bosch (1991:86), is seen in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which leads people to repentance and forgiveness, love and acceptance of enemies, justice and fairness in inter-human relationships. Further, the Lukan story of Jesus' association with the marginalized such as women, tax collectors and Samaritans shows that he reconnects and rebuilds broken relationships as well as broken religious barriers which the church is called to emulate and incorporate into its activities. A relationship that does not recognize the worth of others as God's creation should therefore be broken to create an atmosphere conducive to development.

Robinson (1994:318) also rightly observes that already in the Old Testament, when the prophets found irregularities in society or any abnormal relations such as dominance or the oppression of and exploitation of the poor, they immediately raised the question of justice.

According to Robinson, the biblical concept of covenant was meant to safeguard right relations with God and with fellow human beings. This is true because God who created all human beings expects them to take care of one another's welfare and to relate to one another as fellow human beings.

In this regard, Myers rightly claims that restoring relationships must follow a certain order. Restoring relationship with God takes the lead because those who seek God first find other things (such as material needs). The next thing is to build a positive character within oneself because the self is the seat of character formation and values. Quality relationships within the community is equally important because people need to work together to achieve a common purpose. It is also important to build relationships with other people – especially with those who have wronged one and not to mind the past. Lastly, there is a need for a healthy and respectful relationship with the environment on which we depend for our basic needs of food, water and air (Myers 2011:180-183). Myers is convinced that this should be the day-to-day message of the church because when people live in peace with God and among themselves, the idea of exploitation and oppression will be minimal. Harmonious relationships are the way forward for any society to grow.

At this juncture, one could conclude that when people are reconciled to God and to one another, new relationships are indeed established. The repented sinners obtain freedom to engage in cross-cultural, cross-political and cross-economic relationships without discrimination. In Christ, there is unity and freedom of association and people of different colours and cultures become members of the community which is called into unity whereby there is "No Greek, No Gentile" (Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28) – all are one in Christ Jesus. They share the same baptism, one God, one faith, and one Lord who is in all (Eph. 4:4-5). Therefore, the church has the responsibility to fight for the rights of the people who have been denied participation in society because of culture. Furthermore, Christian relief and development efforts must involve spiritual transformation, which has to do with setting people free from destructive attitudes, beliefs, values, and patterns of culture. In other words, development work in Christian perspective is not only for eternal salvation, but also for the transformation of cultures and economic life (Olasky 1988:145).

4.5.3.   Role of the church in community development

The principles of reconciliation and relationship building place the church in a better position to fulfil its role in people-centred development which incorporates public role, individual and

community empowerment and raising godly leaders. In its public role, the church moves from silence to speaking on behalf of the powerless. With individual and community empowerment, the church seeks ways to provide job opportunities, moral support, training and programs that fit target groups, and to raise godly leaders.

4.5.3.1. Public role of the church

The word public refers to "that space which reflects a social realm, is open and intelligible to all, is of a political nature [which] provides room where common speaking and action can take place" (August 2009:17). Therefore, the role of the church in community development is very significant; its involvement in the public affairs of the State can help shape people's everyday lives and activities. Migliore (2004:249) describes the church as a community of liberated creatures reconciled to God and to each other and called to God's service in the world. The church is not a violent community and its role in society is not limited to converting the heathen or founding new churches but it also entails speaking out against any form of economic order or political system that does not favour the masses or human dignity and human rights. The church speaks out by teaching the right way or even by denouncing and rejecting the abuse of human freedom. Migliore (2004:266) further states that the mission of the church will always include "the prophetic activity of… denouncing injustice and oppression… and the royal activity of being a protector and advocate of the weak and lowly".

Individual Christians should be moved with compassion and, with a sense of responsibility, seek the peace of the communities in which they live. Adhikary (2004:7) is convinced that, presently, "this world needs more prophets—prophets to call people to repentance and to act justly to people in all human relationships, in the family, in organizations, in the Church, in the society at large."

The confidence of the church is in Christ Jesus who is the Lord of all areas of life, whether private or public. The church also confesses that Christ is at work in all nations of the world and both the church and the world (political, economic, environment, civil society, and public opinion formation) centre around him, and both are under his reign. Christians believe that the Gospel of Christ has power to judge and redeem people from all cultures, political orders, social ideologies and moral systems. Therefore, to be a Christian does not end in church membership but it also has to do with representing Christ in all areas of life which includes fighting for the redemption and freedom of the oppressed and the poor by either external or internal powers (Koopman 2007:295-296). This understanding shows that the public role of

the church is significant. If the church would be faithful to its calling, then, it cannot afford to ignore its public role. Of course, the church, being a unique servant of the Lord has the duty to speak publicly on behalf of the poor as well as those who have been silenced and rejected. This is not in the least because justice, peace and equity are biblical mandate the church dares not ignore or forget (Koopman 2007:298). In relation to the government, the church should not accept any form of administrative system which marginalizes the masses or the churches. Rather, the church should speak out critically and cooperate in a discerning way with the government not only on the formation of public opinion through inclusive public debate but also on the formulation and implementation of public policy on behalf of the silenced, most wronged, and vulnerable in society. After all, the primary solidarity of the church is not with governments but with the poor, the wronged, and the vulnerable (Koopman 2007:299).

In a similar vein, August (2009:29) points out that the unique nature of the church as "public" could be that it would have the monopoly to make absolute and authoritative pronouncements on behalf of God, which the State has to obey or at least has to respect. He affirms that the church should not only concentrate on its spiritual role but due to its own nature and calling the church should also not leave the political sphere totally in the hands of the State. The approach of the church should be seen as complimentary to people-centred social development paradigm, that is, the Christian approach should not disregard the development principle of participation, empowerment and sustainability. Being an agent of change, the church should indeed act in unity with the community and participate in its life experiences because the community's needs are experienced from inside, that is, the people know their needs more than outsiders do (August 2010:50).

The inference here is that the Christian community has a role to play in the public life of the people; it should be concerned with all areas of life. Therefore, the church can reject and denounce any practice introduced by either the government or group within the society which dehumanizes or oppresses the masses. In the process, the church should be fearless in defending the poor, oppressed and the less privileged. In this way, the church will remain true to the biblical concept. For example, Berthoud notes that the time of the prophet Amos was an era of peace and prosperity but only for a few individuals – those who belonged to the royal and wealthy classes of society. According to the book of Amos, the prophet did not condemn prosperity that resulted from honest hard work or from wise investment of wealth. Rather, he attacked any form of prosperity that was ungodly – such as skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales (Amos 8:5). Amos 6:1-7 also

condemned those who ignored the misery around them and instead practiced superficial optimism particularly in international relation (Berthoud 1988:29).

Furthermore, Berthoud notes that the prophet did not only rebuke the people of God for their maltreatment of the poor but also reprimanded other nations who have oppressed the Israelites such as Syria, Philistia, Edom, Ammon and Moab. Those nations did not show mercy in warfare, enslaving the innocent, betraying friendship covenants and openly raping pregnant women (Amos 1). The attacks clearly show that the people did not respect the principle of Genesis 1 that humans are made in the image of God and, "to hate the image-bearer is to hate the image, so Amos attacks the stifling of all compassion and the violent anger that seeks to obliterate the very last trace of one's enemies" (Berthoud 1988: 31). Therefore, besides preaching the Gospel of salvation, the church should endeavour to be a mouthpiece for the poor and the oppressed in every society. A discussion of the role of the church in terms of the empowerment of individuals and the community is in order at this point. This could help the church in Nasarawa State to re-examine its involvement in community development.

4.5.3.2.   Individual and community empowerment

As mentioned earlier, the role of the church is one of integral mission and as such empowering both the individual and the community should also be a major concern of the church. When individuals or communities are empowered, they will possess the strength and ability to function and gain freedom from anything that hinders their development. Speckman says that the people-centred development model is called "our vision, 'a people centred vision'". The vision reflects three principles namely that power resides with the people; that the control of resources should be by the people; and that people are allowed to determine their future (Speckman 2007:39). This shows that whatever the church can do to empower people within their communities will be of great advantage to the propagation of the gospel.

To illustrate his point, Speckman, offers a critical examination of the story of healing the cripple in Acts 3, showing that the healing of the man did not only empower him but the believers were also empowered to seek the good and challenge evil regardless of its source – whether political cultural or religious. The man's healing motivated them to speak out boldly and freely – even against the authorities (Speckman 2007:228). The healing also dignified the beggar and increased his quality of his life. When the quality of life of people is improved, it reduces the power of powerful nations or authorities since the people can now rely on

themselves just as the poor and the unlearned disciples were then given the power to heal and to form a community which shared things in common and lacked nothing (Acts 4: 21).

Empowerment concerns the holistic development of a person, as it includes physical, spiritual and material salvation (Speckman 2007:233). To develop a theology of development in his interpretation of the passage, Speckman focuses on the issue of begging because the aim was to trace the importance of human development in the story. Begging is seen as a shameful thing; therefore, to be free from begging and move from dependency to independence makes begging the central point in the discussion (Speckman 2007:236-238). In view of this and other problems associated with poverty and underdevelopment, the church in Nasarawa State should strive to empower the poor by the following means:

4.5.3.2.1. Moral Support

The church has a great role to play in bringing about development and social change because her call and ministry include overcoming all social barriers (Wilson 1989:154). Moreover, the task of the church especially its missionary arm has been understood as the transformation of society from which the transformation of people's physical and social as well as spiritual lives flows (Pierson 1989:7). The church is called to be a community of love and service in which all participate in an exchange of gifts (Migliore 2004:268), and when people begin to live according to the gospel, then they would begin to experience individual and community changes in their social and economic life.

Pierson further explains that the basic theological foundation for the missionary activities of the church goes beyond preaching good news, calling people to repentance and faith, and church planting; it also involves manifesting the love of Christ to the needy, the hungry and the poor (Pierson 1985:8). In this sense, it means that Christian involvement in people's challenges is both a social service and a social action, that is, a proclamation and demonstration of what is preached. It becomes social service when provision is made for people who are victims of natural and human disasters, for example. It becomes social action when the church works towards breaking manmade barriers to the wellbeing of people. Social service is the kind of social ministry geared towards meeting the needs of individuals and groups of people in a direct and immediate way. However, social action is aims at changing social structures, for example, if the government of a particular area or an individual mistreats a minority group, the church could step in to correct the injustice (Wagner 1989:122). A similar reality is found in the Bible as in the case of the poor at the time of Amos or

Nehemiah. Individuals who became dominant and acted unjustly towards the poor were openly rebuked and called to repent and to have a change of heart and attitude.

The church's expression of pastoral care and love for those in situations of hopelessness is equally important because in it, the church becomes the voice of the voiceless. For example, members of the church who are unemployed or who have lost their jobs could continually look to the church to plead their case. Not all who are jobless are lazy as some genuinely lack the opportunity to make productive living. They should not be stigmatized simply because they are jobless. Stott (1990:175) suggests that the role of the church in this regard is to welcome these unemployed members into the local church and support them as members of the body of Christ. This brings us to another concrete way in which the church may empower people especially in poor and underdeveloped areas.

4.5.3.2.2. Creating Job Opportunities

Apart from giving a moral support, the church could also initiate or introduce some socio-economic development activities that will create employment in and outside the church environment such as cooperative, training and vocational centres. Stott (1990:180) also notes that what gives an individual a sense of self-respect and self-worth is significant work. When people are employed, the benefit accrues not only to the individual but also to their families as well as the community and the society at large. The church could also benefit from the newly employed some of whom could choose to support those who are in the mission field financially. Sometimes, individuals may also voluntarily offer services to the community or family members that need help.

4.5.3.2.3. Programs that fit the targeted people

It is assumed here that the failure of any development project to yield good results could be attributed to inadequate programs. For development to be people-centred, the church should be able to put in place the right development policies/programs. David M. Chavis, a community development psychologist, asks whether such programs "stimulate opportunities for membership for people [with] mutual needs to be met and for the shared emotional ties and support to be developed?" (Chavis 2000:768). This is an indication that people will be encouraged to participate actively in their individual as well as community or national development if the program is well designed and implemented. For the aims and objectives of any organization to be achieved, the policies and programs that are suitable for the members should be well developed and implemented. Furthermore, the kind of programs that are

designed for that organization will always determine how the beneficiaries respond to or patronize the organization's activities.

Therefore, the programs must fit the targeted people in order to motivate them to act. Clearly, people should be empowered to participate actively in development, and the benefits of development programs that accrue to them should be based on individual merit, competition and individual effort (Chavis 2000:768). This will discourage apathy among people who want to rely on others or government to do everything for them. It is possible for sustainable rural or urban development to take place with the effort of people who are determined to work for the benefit of their families and of the community or society at large.

However, since this research is done in the context of the church, one other way the church can effectively meet the target is to organize Bible clubs, discipleship classes, and house fellowships to bring people closer in a space where they are free to express their feelings and where they could be nurtured. There, they could ask questions or share their troubles.

4.5.3.2.4. Job training and technical assistance

Education has been described as a means by which people are equipped to live in the real world, to be socialized into their cultures and to obtain skills to earn their keep. It implies that people are nurtured and trained to be sensitive to issues that affect their lives, to one another and to their environment (Doble 2000:191). Of course, community development and community competence cannot take place without training, education, and other supports provided through enabling systems (Chavis 2000:769). Providing job-training opportunities for the minority in terms of skill trades such as carpentry, painting, drawling, and masonry is a major tool for enhancing the ministry of the church that gives hope to the people.

Providing job-training opportunities is a good strategy that the church could use to organize, train and render technical assistance to the people. Training people for self-reliant employment is a way of empowering people could settle the problem of unemployment in any society. At the same time, it sets people free from dependency (Reed 1994:83).

The method could certainly allow the community to attain to its goal as competent people are developed within the community to move things forward. This process is known as a learning process by development professionals (August 2010:3-4). In the process, people's capacity is built to enable them to manage the resources within their reach. When learning takes place, people use their initiative as they learn new ways to address the physical, social, economic, and political needs in their communities. This is because learning builds capacity and leads to

concrete action. The following list illustrates areas in which the church can train the community to practice self-reliance:

1. Catering
2. Selling foodstuffs
3. Poultry
4. Tea making
5. Fish farming
6. Carpentry
7. Vehicle mechanic
8. Wood design/carving
9. Fashion designing
10. Hairdressing
11. Radio mechanic
12. Graphic designing
13. Laundering
14. Painting
15. Drawing
16. Weaving

4.5.3.3.   Raising godly leaders

Experience has shown that in many cases, the problem of underdevelopment results from poor or inadequate leadership. Many groups, organizations, communities and even nations have suffered setbacks because they lack visionary and responsible leaders. Thus, raising godly leaders is an important element of empowerment towards development. Leadership can be seen as a process of influencing people to take action that is in accord with the leader's purposes or the shared purposes of all. People-centred Christian leaders therefore can use scriptural guidelines to raise others to higher levels of motivation and morality.

According to Overstreet (2008:482), leadership is usually equated with influence and it has been a subject of great debate and concern in both the secular world and the global church. He points out that God recognizes and values leadership and that is why he called forth leaders to bless nations (Abraham), to lead his people to the Promised Land (Moses), to establish an earthly kingdom (David), to proclaim his name (Paul), and so forth. It means that if God the Creator is concerned about raising leaders to take care of his people, then, the church will have no option than to be sensitive in this regard.

However, distribution of power is a key issue in the discussion of people-centred development (that is, the idea of sovereignty to the people). Sen (1999:3) also states that development is about removing whatever hinders freedom such as political freedom, economic freedom, and spiritual power. In the context of this research, it is apparent that the problem of the people of Nasarawa State is not the need of technological equipment for development, but simply the absence of good governance and policies that are suitable to meet their needs. However, people may not enjoy the dividends of democracy unless they

have leaders who are God fearing. Therefore, bringing up Christian leaders in our communities is a fundamental task of the church if it is to witness a healthy society.

Parkins (2003a:23) suggests yet another important and related angle namely that the Christian role in community development is to put a strong accent on youth development, winning youths to Christ at an early age, following them all the way through college with spiritual and educational nurturing and creating opportunities for leadership when they return to their communities. Parkis also (2003b:71) outlines three key elements of leadership needed for today's broken communities:

- Leaders are the stabilizing glue that holds communities together.
- Refilling the leadership vacuum in communities of needs will require unselfish leadership at the grassroots level.
- Leaders see the essence of the historical situation, take personal responsibility, go to the problem level, and make the sacrifice necessary for a solution.

In the Old Testament, Nehemiah serves as a good example of a community leader who qualifies as a biblical model for us today because he was a leader who had a divine encounter with God, had set goals and values, and was a selfless leader who was willing to move from the palace to the field (Parkins 2003b:71-72). Nehemiah was considered a successful leader because with his energy, ingenuity and dependence on God's guidance, he brought new life to the dying Jewish community in Jerusalem (North 1992:1069). Nehemiah presents a picture of the ideal behaviour of an administrator because as governor he renounced every economic privilege that might weigh upon the shoulders of the people. He claimed that he did not act or lead as lord over labourers (the community workers), but rather as a just and considerate leader (Neh. 5:14-15). The practical strategies the church can adopt to develop leaders is to choose few people from many, teach them, be a servant to them and make disciples of them (Gordon 2003:193).

Considering the reality of the global challenges of insecurity, inequality, poverty, injustice, corruption, poor economic opportunities, systemic social deprivation, in various societies especially in the so-called Third World, the church needs to raise and nurture godly or God-fearing leaders who are filled with the Holy Spirit and who possess great determination, compassion and love for the unloved, the poor and the vulnerable to restore joy and peace to them.

4.6. Summary of Chapter

This chapter has explained people-centred development in the context of a theology of development and community development, and how it may edify the effort and participation of the church in community development in Nasarawa State. To address the subject matter, a brief review of the theology of development and of a biblical concept of human development is carried out. The concepts of liberation and its relationship to development were also discussed with a focus on the liberation theology, human rights theology, feminist theology and human dignity as key components that can foster development. Finally, the chapter also considers the role of the church in community development, while paying attention to the goals of the church in community development, its public role and in the empowerment of individuals and communities.

It is argued in this chapter that the aim of a theology of development is to recognize the power of the powerless. Although the God who created the universe created men and women with equal opportunities and potential to grow and prosper, sin distorted God's plan and resulted in all forms of oppression and inhuman treatment. Therefore, the chapter employs Christian theology to argue that people-centred development is holistic and is not only concerned with spiritual matters but also with people's physical needs.

The main point in this chapter is that people-centred development approach in theology is holistic. It is an integral mission of the church which focuses on physical and the spiritual needs of the people. As much as the gospel of Christ ought to nourish the spiritual elements in a Christian's life, the people's physical nourishment should also not be neglected. In other words, the spiritual deposits of the Gospel should exist tentatively and in tandem with the physical needs of the individual to create balance. The approach is therefore holistic because the focus is on both the physical and the spiritual needs of people. Therefore, the church in Nasarawa State is urged to embrace wholeheartedly and apply the idea of people-centred community development approach to make its ministry holistic.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

In this research, the possibility of adopting a people-centred development approach in theology in response to the socio-economic challenges in the rural communities of Nasarawa State, Nigeria has been examined. This last chapter represents the summary, evaluation of the findings, conclusion and recommendations in the light of the research question (1.4).

5.2. Summary and conclusion

The **first chapter** of the research serves as a general introduction which presented the background of the research main ideas and aims of the research. The overview and summary of chapters were included in the chapter. This chapter argues that development is not only about economic growth, it must improve people's livelihood, and be characterized by adequate provision of basic human needs and social services for all. Furthermore, human dignity is enhanced when people are self-reliant and capable of organizing themselves in order to fulfil their potential.

The **second chapter** described and analyzed the situation in Nasarawa State beginning with the historical background, socio-economic potential, economic activities and the current efforts in the socio-economic development of Nasarawa State. The chapter further explores some development challenges which cause the persistence of poverty and its impact on the rural communities in the State. The primary aim of the chapter was to understand the factors that characterize the current state of socio-economic development in Nasarawa State and the challenges that have hindered the State from sufficiently attending to the needs of its people in a holistic way. This chapter fulfilled the first aim of the research. It also fits into the task of practical theology as outlined by Osmer (see 1.6) whereby the description of the situation in Nasarawa led to the understanding of what is going on and the reason why things are going on, which also motivated one to examined the concept of people-centred to show what is expected and to suggest possible ways on how the State, church and the individuals are to respond.

The **third chapter** deals with theories and approaches to development in view of a coherent vision for a holistic community development, that is, a "people-centred development approach." It begins with an overview of various definitions of development, of socio-

economic development and the concept of basic human needs. The chapter also explores modernization approach, NGOs development approach and the concept of people-centred. Included in this chapter were discussions of various concepts of community development, philosophy and process of community development such as participation, empowerment, self-reliant and sustainability as basic component in the process of community development and finally the role of community development worker. The reflections of various concepts and approaches in this chapter were crucial to the discussion of holistic approach to development from a theological perspective in the next chapter.

The **fourth chapter** focuses on Christian theology and development from a practical theological perspective. It highlights the background of the theology of development with a biblical concept of human development. Liberation towards development is a major area of reflection in this chapter especially in relation to liberation theology, human rights theology, feminist theology and human dignity. The role of the church as an agent of development and the goal of the church in community development are discussed. The result of this chapter achieved the third aim of the research.

In this **final chapter**, a summary of the research as well as the conclusion and recommendations are outlined. The claim is that the church can either partner with the government to foster development or serve as a defender of the poor and the oppressed.

In gleaning from the above summaries of chapters the research shows that despite the efforts of the Nasarawa State government towards socio-economic development in the State, poverty and underdevelopment remain rampant. The lack of a fitting approach to development probably contributes to the persistence of poverty in rural communities of Nasarawa State. The research therefore emanates from the assumption that a people-centred approach to development can contribute to a solution of the problem especially when approach from theological perspective. It could enhance human growth, wellbeing, equity and sustainability in all areas of life. This approach is considered as holistic in this research because it focuses on both physical and spiritual aspects of human life, and it could be the best alternative way that can enhance the efforts for community development. The church stands the better chance to ensure the holistic people-centered development.

Further, it is argued that meaningful development cannot take place without the willingness of the communities or individuals since development should not be undertaken on people's behalf; rather, individuals or communities carry it out by and for themselves. Attaining

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excellence change will require determination, diligence and self-discipline but self-motivation and participation are fundamental to successful and sustainable development. People must be aware that prosperity and success are not all about availability of natural resources, fertile land, infrastructure such as good roads, educational system, modern factories and access to public work; the most important thing is having a right relationship with God and fellow human beings. This is because even when good plans and good vision are there people can remain poor if there are inadequate relationships.

The research also shows that sin is the foundation of poverty and of the barriers to people-centred development. Sin causes distorted relationships with God and fellow human beings, which lead to the neglect, exploitation and oppression of the people. The church as an agent of development is the custodian of the theological approach which offers a balanced, blended approach to the context or experience of the community. The church has the duty to relate God's word to people by calling them to repentance, and to share the grace and love of God. This is because a spiritually healthy community is a starting place for sustainable development. Therefore, the church and the State could collaborate to care for and defend the rights of the powerless and vulnerable, create job opportunities, and embark on skills training to attain sustainable development. Development from a biblical and theological point of view can help more people to fulfil God's plan for them in all areas of their lives. People's energy can be redirected at becoming what God intended them to be rather than striving to be more like those who possess material things.

The research shows, in addition, that the scope of practical theology or the field of Christian education guided by biblical truth is not limited to biblical exposition. Theological schools, for example, seek to develop clergies and laities with a worldview and perspective that enable them to appreciate and live the Christian life in the world (cf. August 2010). In the same way, human rights theology, liberation theology and feminist theology are important stepping-stones towards people's empowerment and sustainable development. For example, note should be taken of the gender element in job creation, skills training and development projects which either do not reach women or are done in an environment that is not conducive for women. Christian mission and ministries must put more effort in helping the individual not only in terms of developing their ability to separate the truth from error, but also to appreciate the facts and issues of everyday life.

The above scenario is seen in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and in the response of his disciples and of the world in which they evangelize. Moreover, the presence of God's Holy

Spirit in community development takes community development beyond a mere programming methodology or science and technology that aim at economic growth or merely meeting physical needs of people. The community worker (clergy or laity) in this process should rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to provide value to human life and to reconcile people to God and to one another. The research argues that development that is carried out with the aim of empowering individuals to take control of their lives, to use their potential, capabilities and initiative, and to value and respect human dignity, can lead to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty.

The church therefore is well placed to fight for a just society in which every human being lives with dignity, works to eradicate exploitation and to share their wealth (cf. Nyerere 1987:117). The church as a Christian community is equipped with knowledge to make right decisions, and has the potential and discernment to advocate God's will for the world. This is possible because Christians are witnesses of God and his works in human life and are therefore called to this responsibility of addressing the concrete reality of everyday life, the world of unrighteousness and disorder, of evil and corruption (cf. Alston 2004:133).

Subsequently, the non supportive attitude of pastors toward holistic development as highlighted in (4.5.1), hence the church (e.g. ECWA) in Nasarawa State of Nigeria as a religious institution is urged to take up its public role by becoming actively involved in socio-economic development and poverty alleviation through a holistic people-centred approach. Clearly, poverty, crime, corruption and HIV/AIDS are on the increase, therefore this research challenges faith communities and individual believers to combat social evils in a corporate way.

Therefore, one can conclude at this point that a people-centred development approach in theology may offer a solution or enhance socio-economic development efforts in Nasarawa State. The research also serves as a contribution to the field of development within the discipline of practical theology, as it calls on the church to employ its spiritual resources and insight in community development efforts. The results of this research could contribute to principles for effective community development if adopted by the Nasarawa State Government and the church.

5.3. Recommendations

Finally, in an attempt to fulfil the task of practical theology, the following suggestions are to serve as a call to the State, church and individuals.

5.3.1. The State

This research calls on the government to provide basic social amenities in the rural areas to curtail the problem of rural-urban migration. The areas that need attention are itemized below:

- Building factories and/or industries in the villages where raw materials are found will reduce the rate of urban migration.

- Life should be made pleasurable in the rural areas through job creation, affordable and better schools and adequate health care.

- Creating employment opportunity can be a solution to poverty reduction and it is another indicator of socio-economic development, but gender dimensions in employment is crucial considering the role of women in the family and in the society.

- Training people to improve on low-cost farming, traditional or local technique of storage or reservation of food is essential to development.

- Skills training and subsequent job opportunities should be provided to educated youths.

- Ensuring that the masses obtain security in terms of better healthcare, better education (formal and informal), crop prices, developing local tools which are affordable for a small farmer is top priority in long-term development. Furthermore, there is a need to encourage family cohesion, group cooperation and the worth of each member of the community.

5.3.2. The church

The following recommendations are also addressed to the church:

- The church should teach community members to love, care for, serve and encourage one another

- The church needs to reconcile and mobilize people of diverse cultures to work as a team which has been united in Christ.

- The church needs to disciple and mentor churchgoers and their communities teaching them principles of innovation, self-reliance and hard work.

- The church should find ways to contribute to job creation efforts in the community.

- The church should advocate for the poor and the oppressed and challenge any structure that oppresses and exploits the poor.

- The church should identify the poor and initiate development projects with them.

- It should also identify artisans and individuals with various skills and attach them to development programs.

5.3.3. Individuals

Development makes sense if change is motivated from within an individual (Burkey 1993:35). This is because people's attitudes play a larger role in community and in national development than their physical abilities or natural resources. In other words, different life perspectives yield different levels of development (Miller 1989:93-94). The value people place on their individual lives and on their society will also determine their commitment to the development of the community. People may have access to resources but if they fail to utilize it, they could wallow in abundance yet enjoy none of its benefits. The research therefore recommends that the people:

- Re-examine their daily lives and experience of reality to see if they could transcend their apathy and cultures that hinder others from freedom of participation where it is necessary such as gender inequality.
- Develop their God-given abilities, utilize their skills and stop depending on others for their basic needs.
- Cooperate with those willing to help them develop such as government, churches and NGOs.

If these recommendations and suggestions are applied properly by these agencies (State church and individuals) millions of unemployed people will be taken off the street and placed in gainful self-employment. This is because variety and value of goods and services in the economy will improve, crimes will certainly be reduced and the number of customers willing and able to invest in agriculture, solid minerals and tourism in the State will increase. Above all, the spiritual nourishment will also take place which is a key component to sustainable development, because development effort that focuses on physical and spiritual aspects of human life is the best alternative for effective community development.

5.3.4. For further research

This research was a review of existing scholarly materials. Therefore further research can be conducted to critically evaluate the existing development programs of the church and the State and find possible ways in which the State and church will complement each other in the efforts of holistic community development.

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