



THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOS) IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: AN ASSESSMENT OF JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE COMMISSION (JDPC) IN JOS NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF PLATEAU STATE

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ABSTRACT

Rural development in Jos North, Plateau State and Nigeria at large faces numerous challenges, including poverty, lack of infrastructure, and limited access to resources. Corruption, poor implementation of development projects, and policy inconsistencies further hinder progress. This research was therefore prompted to investigate the role of non-governmental organisations in rural development in Nigeria with focus on Justice, Development and Peace Commission in Jos North. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 152 staff of JDPC in Jos North out of which a sample of 109 respondents were selected through the simple random sampling technique. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The data collected in the study was analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and mean score. The findings of the study revealed that JDPC has contributed immensely to providing means of income to rural families and has contributed immensely to building small and medium enterprises in rural areas and empowering farmers with fertilizers and seedlings for bountiful harvest. Also, JDPC has provided job opportunities for youths in rural areas. JDPC has contributed to providing infrastructural development in rural areas in Jos North by providing clean water in rural areas, contributing to development of agriculture, provision of instructional facilities in schools and provision of electricity in rural areas. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that the Plateau State Government in conjunction with JDPC and other NGOs in Jos North should embark on a serious campaign to promote peace and ethno-religious tolerance through inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue. The Plateau State Government in conjunction with JDPC and other NGOs in Jos North should initiate programmes to rehabilitate and empower youths in rural areas in Nigeria.

Keywords: Non-governmental organizations, Role, Rural, Development, Jos North, Plateau State.

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INTRODUCTION

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in rural development globally, acting as vital partners with governments in addressing the unique challenges faced by rural communities. They contribute through various initiatives, including human capital development, technical assistance, support for small-scale farmers, research, advocacy, and conflict resolution. NGOs are particularly effective due to their non-partisan nature, project-specific focus, manageable size, ability to attract funding, and emphasis on community participation (Lembani, 2019).

NGOs invest in education, vocational training, and skill development programs, empowering rural populations to improve their livelihoods and contribute to their communities. They also provide technical expertise in areas like agriculture, health, and infrastructure development. NGOs play a crucial role in supporting small-scale farmers by providing access to resources, training, and markets. They facilitate the adoption of improved agricultural practices, promote sustainable farming methods, and help farmers access fair prices for their produce. NGOs conduct research to understand the specific needs and challenges of rural communities. They also monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of development programs, ensuring that resources are utilized efficiently and that interventions are tailored to local contexts (Linda & Frik, 2024).

NGOs are expected to raise awareness about important issues such as health, sanitation, education, and women's rights. They also advocate for the rights and needs of rural communities, ensuring that their voices are heard in policy-making processes. In conflict-affected rural areas, NGOs play a critical role in facilitating dialogue, promoting reconciliation, and building peace. NGOs prioritize community participation in all stages of development projects, from planning to implementation and evaluation. This ensures that interventions are relevant, sustainable, and owned by the local communities (Issa, 2025). For instance, the United States of America, Several NGOs have significantly contributed to rural development in the United States. Organizations like Heifer International focus on livestock development and sustainable agriculture, while the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funds projects that address environmental challenges and promote rural livelihoods. Additionally, organizations such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) work to empower smallholder farmers through grants and loans, emphasizing participatory approaches.

In Nigeria, NGOs have significantly contributed to rural development in Nigeria. Some notable examples include Oxfam Nigeria, ActionAid Nigeria, the Women Farmers Advancement Network (WOFAN) and JDPC. These organizations focus on various aspects of rural development, such as agriculture, livelihoods, and empowering women and youths (Lembani, 2019). Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) are now recognized as crucial actors in global development in human rights, humanitarian action, the environment, and many other areas of public activities (Shiuji, 2024). Primarily, they are renowned for two distinct yet closely connected forms of engagement. The first involves providing essential services to individuals in various situations of vulnerability, while the second centres around orchestrating policy advocacy and public campaigns. These endeavours aim to bring about significant social transformation, foster democracy, resolve conflicts, uphold human rights, preserve cultural heritage, champion environmental causes, conduct policy analysis and research, and disseminate crucial information, among other pivotal components that collectively contribute to the advancement of society. Many scholars, like Elliott (2017), and Garilao (2017) concur that the

voluntary sector holds a superior position in articulating the needs of impoverished. JDPC is an acronym for Justice, Development and Peace Commission. The Justice, Development and Peace Commission, is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission in Nigeria (Elliot, 2017). As a registered Non-Governmental Organization with the Corporate Affairs Commission in Nigeria, JDPC main concern is to bring about the Kingdom of God by liberating men and women from every oppressive force that keeps them under bondage irrespective of race, religion, creed and gender. JDPC is a national network of 54 Catholic Dioceses in Nigeria. The coordination is further broken down to Provincial, Diocesan and Parish levels. With other civil society groups in Nigeria, JDPC plays a leadership role that is recognised by all. JDPC is a structural response of the Catholic Church to the call of the Second Vatican Council to serve humanity (Shiuji, 2024).

One of the key roles expected of JDPC was to provide support for the development of essential infrastructure like schools and healthcare centers. They are expected to address issues like nutrition and hygiene through workshops and trainings. They are expected to actively promote peacebuilding and conflict resolution in rural areas and to work to address the root causes of conflicts and promote social justice. This includes advocating for human rights and good governance and collaborating with various stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and community-based organizations (Hinzen, 2020).

However, despite the roles expected of JDPC and other non-governmental organisations in Jos North and Nigeria, at large, rural development is still very slow and bedeviled with challenges such as ethno-religious crisis, farmer-herder clashes, poor infrastructural facilities such as clean water, access road and health care facilities. JDPC play vital roles in identifying and addressing unjust structures and policies that hinder development and human rights. They advocate for the rights of the marginalized and vulnerable, including prisoners, displaced persons, and victims of social injustice. They also play vital roles in fostering peaceful coexistence within communities and facilitates dialogue between different groups. However, their roles in rural development have not been properly investigated. It is because of this gap that this study was warranted to investigate the extent to which the roles of NGOS in rural development in Nigeria: a review of Justice Development and Peace Commission.

Statement of the Problem

Rural development in Nigeria faces numerous challenges, including poverty, lack of infrastructure, and limited access to resources. Corruption, poor implementation of development projects, and policy inconsistencies further hinders rural development. Additionally, rural-urban migration conflict between herders and farmers, and a lack of political contribution to the difficulties in achieving sustainable rural development. Rural development in Jos North LGA in particular faces numerous challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, lack of access to education and healthcare, economic instability, and social unrest. These challenges hinder the progress of the state's rural areas and affect the livelihoods of its inhabitants.

According to National Human Development Report of 2023/2024 as given by the National Bureau of Statistics, the human poverty index of Plateau state stands at 48.8% with a Human Development Index of .291. This shows that the state has one of the least ranking in terms of human development index. In Jos North, there is a high level of insecurity with frequent reoccurring ethno-religious crisis, farmer-herder clashes and insurgent attack. The state is

characterized by a fragile state of peace which has led to a downturn in economic and social development of the state.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have long been recognized as vital actors in promoting economic and social development in Nigeria through facilities provision, educational development programmes, advocacy, and policy engagement. According to Olatunbosun (2025), NGOs act as supplementary support bodies where the effort of the government may not reach in providing economic and social facilities as well as playing critical roles in enhancing transparency, accountability, and civic consciousness. In Nigeria, however, the effectiveness of NGOs performing their duties is often constrained by multiple systemic factors. These include inadequate funding, political interference, institutional fragmentation, weak capacity, and logistical challenges particularly in reaching remote and underserved communities.

Similarly, there exists a significant gap in empirical research and systematic evaluation regarding the actual extent to which NGOs play vital roles in fostering rural development Nigeria. In the case of Plateau State, for instance, while NGOs such as the Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) and other non-governmental institutions have implemented programmes aimed at providing legal services to less-privileged communities, providing various voter education programmes and lacking infrastructural facilities such as clean water in rural, there is scanty documentation or assessment of their outcomes. Questions remain unanswered: To what extent have these efforts by JDPC improved rural development? Have the programmes implemented by JDPC translated into better living conditions and means of livelihood to rural dwellers? The lack of in-depth documentation and analysis constitutes a critical knowledge gap in both academic and policy discourse. Without an evidence-based understanding of the effectiveness and limitations of the roles of NGOs in rural development, opportunities to improve the lives of rural dwellers in terms of facilities provision, employment, peace and security may be missed. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate the role of NGOs in rural development in Jos North: A review of Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC).

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study include the following:

- To assess the extent to which JDPC has contribute to the provision of employment in rural areas in Jos North
- To determine the extent to which Justice, Development and Peace Commission has contributed to peace-building, fairness and justice to the inhabitants of rural areas in Jos North
- To ascertain the extent to which justice, development and peace commission has contributed to provision of infrastructural facilities such as clean water, access roads and human development in rural areas of Jos North.
- To determine the extent justice, development and peace commission contributed to restoring peace in conflict affected areas of Plateau State.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

- To what extent has Justice, Development and Peace Commission contributed to provision of employment in rural areas in Jos North?
- To what extent has Justice, Development and Peace Commission contributed to peace-building, fairness and justice to the inhabitants of rural areas in Jos North?
- To what extent has Justice, Development and Peace Commission contributed to provision of infrastructural facilities such as clean water, access roads and human development in rural areas of Jos North?
- To what extent has justice, development and peace commission contributed to restoring peace in conflict affected areas of Plateau State?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a survey research design. The survey research design employs application of scientific method by critically examining the source materials, analyzing and interpreting data, and arriving at generalization and prediction. This study adopts a quantitative approach because it is helpful in investigating the role of NGOs in rural development with specific emphasis on JDPC. A quantitative research method quantifies and generalizes results from the sampling population.

The population of the study was made up of 152 staff of JDPC in Jos North LGA of Plateau State while sample was made up of 109 respondents determined through the application of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling formula. The sample size was drawn using the simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire.

The questionnaire for the study was made up of two parts. Part A consisted of questions requiring respondents to answer about their personal data while Part B comprised of questions on the role of JDPC in rural development. Respondents will be required to indicate the level of agreement on the extent by marking on a five point likert-type scale 1 to 5 where 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2=Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree for each of the respective statement. The responses obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using mean score statistics.

Research Question One: To what extent has Justice, Development and Peace Commission contributed to provision of employment in rural areas in Jos North?

Table 1: Extent to which Justice, Development and Peace Commission has contributed to provision of employment in rural areas in Jos North

S/N	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	JDPC has contributed immensely to providing means of income to rural families	50	28	2	19	1	4.16	Agree
2	JDPC has contributed immensely to building small and medium enterprises in rural areas	33	47	2	8	10	3.76	Agree
3	JDPC has contributed to empowering farmers with fertilizers and seedlings for bountiful harvest	20	55	5	8	12	3.58	Agree
4	JDPC has provided job opportunities for youths in rural areas	30	50	10	5	5	3.90	Agree
Grant Mean							3.85	Agree

Table 1 on the extent to Justice, Development and Peace Commission has contributed to provision of employment in rural areas in Jos North revealed that JDPC has contributed immensely to providing means of income to rural families was rated with a mean score of 4.16 and was therefore agreed with. The following items on whether JDPC has contributed immensely to building small and medium enterprises in rural areas was rated with a mean score of 3.76 and was agreed with. The next statement on whether JDPC has contributed to empowering farmers with fertilizers and seedlings for bountiful harvest was rated with a mean score of 3.58 and was therefore agreed with. The next statement on whether JDPC has provided job opportunities for youths in rural areas was rated with a mean score of 3.90 and was therefore agreed with.

From the analysis of data collected, it was discovered that JDPC has contributed immensely with a grand mean of 3.85 in providing the means of income to rural families; and has contributed immensely to building small and medium enterprises in rural areas and empowering farmers with fertilizers and seedlings for bountiful harvest. Also, JDPC has provided job opportunities for youths in rural areas in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Research Question Two: To what extent has justice, development and peace commission contributed to providing infrastructural development in rural areas in Jos North?

Table 2: Extent to which JDPC contributed to providing infrastructural development in rural areas in Jos North?

S/N	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Decision
5	JDPC has contributed immensely to provision of clean water in rural areas	30	50	10	5	5	3.90	Agree
6	JDPC has contributed immensely to the development of agriculture in rural area	40	45	5	3	7	4.06	Agree
7	JDPC has contributed to the provision of instructional material in schools in rural areas	20	55	5	8	12	3.58	Agree
8	JDPC has contributed to the provision of roads in rural areas	15	25	5	20	35	2.42	Disagree
9	JDPC has contributed to provision of electricity in rural areas	42	28	6	14	10	4.03	Agree
Grant Mean							3.59	Agree

Table 2 shows the responses of the respondents on the extent to which JDPC contributed to providing infrastructural development in rural areas in Jos North. The statement on whether JDPC has contributed immensely to provision of clean water in rural areas was rated with a mean score of 3.90 and was therefore agreed with. The following statement on whether JDPC has contributed immensely to the development of agriculture in rural area was rated with a mean score of 4.06 and was agreed with. The following statement on whether JDPC has contributed to the provision of instructional material in schools in rural areas was rated with a mean score of 3.58 and was agreed with. The next statement on whether JDPC has contributed to the provision of roads in rural areas was rated with a mean score of 2.42 and was disagreed with. The last statement on whether JDPC has contributed to provision of electricity in rural areas was rated with a mean score of 4.03 and was agreed with.

From the analysis of responses collected, the grand mean (3.59) showed that JDPC has contributed to providing infrastructural development in rural areas in Jos North by providing

clean water in rural areas, contributing to development of agriculture, provision of instructional facilities in schools and provision of electricity in rural areas.

Research Question Three: To what extent has justice, development and peace commission contributed to providing fairness and justice to the inhabitants of rural areas in Jos North?

Table 3: Extent to which justice, development and peace commission has contributed to providing fairness and justice to the inhabitants of rural areas in Jos North

S/N	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Decision
10	JDPC has contributed in providing legal services to less privileged in rural areas	34	41	5	8	12	3.65	Agree
11	JDPC has contributed to the provision of justice to the less privileged in rural areas	36	44	8	2	10	3.96	Agree
12	JDPC has contributed to ensuring fairness and equality among residents of rural areas	41	30	9	11	9	3.84	Agree
13	JDPC has contributed in settling land dispute among residents of rural areas	51	18	1	18	12	3.75	Agree
Grand Mean							3.80	Agree

Table 3 shows the responses of the respondents on the extent to which Justice, Development and Peace Commission has contributed to providing fairness and justice to the inhabitants of rural areas in Jos North. The statement on whether JDPC has contributed in providing legal services to less privileged in rural areas was rated with a mean score of 3.65 and was therefore agreed with. The next statement on whether JDPC has contributed to the provision of justice to the less privileged in rural areas was rated with a mean score of 3.96 and was agreed with. The next statement on whether JDPC has contributed to ensuring fairness and equality among residents of rural areas was rated with a mean score of 3.84 and was therefore agreed with. The last statement on whether JDPC has contributed in settling land dispute among residents of rural areas was rated with a mean score of 3.75 and was therefore agreed with.

From the analysis of data collected, it could be deduced that JDPC has contributed in providing legal services to less privileged in rural areas, it has contributed to the provision of justice to the less privileged and ensuring fairness and equality among residents of rural areas. JDPC has contributed in settling land dispute among residents of rural areas

Research Question Four: To extent has justice, development and peace commission contributed to restoring peace in conflict affected areas of Plateau State?

Table 4: Extent to which justice, development and peace commission contributed to restoring peace in conflict affected areas of Plateau State

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Decision
14	JDPC has contributed in providing security to rural areas prompt to attacks	30	40	5	19	6	3.63	Agree
15	JDPC has contributed in reconciling aggrieved parties involved in conflict in rural areas	34	36	5	15	10	3.65	Agree
16	JDPC has contributed in restoring peace in rural areas affected by ethno-religious crisis	39	31	1	19	10	3.7	Agree

17	JDPC has contributed in preaching the doctrine of peaceful coexistence among residents of rural areas	50	28	2	19	1	4.16	Agree
18	JDPC has contributed in peaceful resolution of conflict in rural areas	33	47	2	8	10	3.76	Agree
19	JDPC has contributed in provision of relief materials to those affected by conflict in rural areas	34	46	1	5	14	3.77	Agree
Grand Mean							3.77	Agree

Table 4 shows the responses of the respondents on the extent to which Justice, Development and Peace Commission contributed to restoring peace in conflict affected areas of Plateau State. The statement on whether JDPC has contributed in providing security to rural areas prompt to attacks was rated with a mean score of 3.63 and was agreed with. The following statement on whether JDPC has contributed in reconciling aggrieved parties involved in conflict in rural areas was rated with a mean score of 3.65 and was therefore agreed with. The following statement on whether JDPC has contributed in restoring peace in rural areas affected by ethno-religious crisis was rated with a mean score of 3.7 and was agreed with. The following statement on whether JDPC has contributed in preaching the doctrine of peaceful coexistence among residents of rural areas was rated with a mean score of 4.16 and was agreed with. The following statement on whether JDPC has contributed in peaceful resolution of conflict in rural areas was rated with a mean score of 3.76 and was agreed with. The last statement on whether JDPC has contributed in provision of relief materials to those affected by conflict in rural areas was rated with a mean score of 3.77 and was agreed with.

From the analysis of data collected and with a grand mean of 3.77, it is deduced that JDPC has contributed in providing security to rural areas prompt to attacks, and contributed in reconciling aggrieved parties involved in conflict and restoring peace in rural areas affected by ethno-religious crisis. Similarly, JDPC has contributed in preaching the doctrine of peaceful coexistence, peaceful resolution of conflict and provision of relief materials to those affected by conflict in rural areas

DISCUSSION

Findings from the analysis of research question one on the extent to which Justice, Development and Peace Commission has contributed to provision of employment in rural areas in Jos North revealed JDPC has contributed immensely to providing means of income to rural families, it has contributed immensely to building small and medium enterprises in rural areas and empowering farmers with fertilizers and seedlings for bountiful harvest. Also, JDPC has provided job opportunities for youths in rural areas. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Olatunbosun (2025) who discovered that NGOs play vital roles in providing employment opportunities in rural areas in Nigeria.

Research question two on the extent to which Justice, Development and Peace Commission contributed to provision of infrastructural development in rural areas in Jos North is analysed. From the analysis of data collected, it was discovered that JDPC has contributed to providing infrastructural development in rural areas in Jos North by providing clean water in rural areas, contributing to development of agriculture, provision of instructional facilities in schools and provision of electricity in rural areas. This finding is in tandem with Lembani (2019) who discovered that NGOs play vital roles in provision of basic facilities in rural areas.

Findings from the analysis of research question three on the extent to which Justice, Development and Peace Commission has contributed to providing fairness and justice to the inhabitants of rural areas in Jos North revealed that JDPC has contributed in providing legal services to less privileged in rural areas, it has contributed to the provision of justice to the less privileged and ensuring fairness and equality among residents of rural areas. JDPC has contributed in settling land dispute among residents of rural areas. This finding is in conformity with the findings of Issa (2025) who discovered that NGOs help in providing justice and fairness to the less-privileged in Nigeria.

Research question four on the extent to which Justice, Development and Peace Commission contributed to restoring peace in conflict affected areas of Plateau State is analysed. From the analysis of data collected, it was discovered that JDPC has contributed in providing security to rural areas prompt to attacks, it has contributed in reconciling aggrieved parties involved in conflict and restoring peace in rural areas affected by ethno-religious crisis. Similarly, JDPC has contributed in preaching the doctrine of peaceful coexistence, peaceful resolution of conflict and provision of relief materials to those affected by conflict in rural areas. This finding is in conformity with the findings of Okafor (2025) who discovered that NGOs have played vital roles in fostering peace-building in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Rural development in Nigeria faces numerous challenges, including poverty, lack of infrastructure, and limited access to resources. Corruption, poor implementation of development projects, and policy inconsistencies further hinder progress. Additionally, rural-urban migration, conflict between herders and farmers, and a lack of political will contribute to the difficulties in achieving sustainable rural development. Rural development in Jos North in particular faces numerous challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, lack of access to education and healthcare, economic instability, and social unrest. These challenges hinder the progress of the state's rural areas and affect the livelihoods of its inhabitants.

From the findings of this study, it was discovered JDPC play vital roles in fostering rural development in Jos North by providing infrastructural development in rural areas in Jos North by providing clean water in rural areas, contributing to development of agriculture, provision of instructional facilities in schools and provision of electricity in rural areas. Therefore, it was concluded that JDPC has contributed immensely to promoting rural development in rural areas in Jos North.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proffered:

- The Plateau State Government in conjunction with JDPC and other NGOs in Jos North should embark on a serious campaign to promote peace and ethno-religious tolerance through inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue.
- The Plateau State Government in conjunction with JDPC and other NGOs in Jos North should initiate programmes to rehabilitate and empower youths in rural areas in Nigeria

- The Plateau State Government in conjunction with JDPC and other NGOs in Jos North should embark on massive infrastructural facilities provision programme to improve the development of rural areas.

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