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## **Determinants of Rural Development in Edo State, Nigeria: An Overview (Pp 298-308)**

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### **Abstract**

*About 70% of the total population in Nigeria lives in the rural areas, while half of this population is without proper-formal education (World Bank 2005). Data for this study which is on the Determinants of rural Development in Edo State, Nigeria were collected through the primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through the random administration of (250) questionnaires on respondents in five selected rural communities in Edo State. Simple percentage was used to analyze data. Results from this study show that good transportation system, increase in grants and revenue allocation, provision of infrastructural facilities, quality education, quality housing, employment opportunities and provision of micro credit scheme are impetus to the development of rural communities. The study further recommends that government should pay more attention to the economic and infrastructural development of rural communities; government should see rural areas as potential ports for economic and socio-cultural development*

*of the nation and not as a burden, so as to bridge the gap between rural and urban environments.*

**Keywords:** Determinants, Rural, Environments, Conceptualization and Development

### **Introduction**

About 70% of the total population in Nigeria lives in the rural areas, while half of this people are without proper or formal education (World Bank Report 2005). According to the World Bank Report (2005), it was estimated that about 1.4 billion people lives in Africa in-which Nigeria is one, lives in poverty. World Bank report further stated that, they depend on income less than one U.S Dollar (1\$) per day.

In recent time, the disparity between the rural areas and the urban centres especially in the developing nations is alarming and therefore calls for urgent attention by government, policy makers, professionals and planners to bridge the disparity. Although disagreement may arise from the mode of integration and solution, there is almost a consensus that rural development is not only the central problem of developing nations, but a worldwide concern (David, 2002). This worldwide concern can in fact be said to be the rationale behind the various rural development strategies undertaken in different parts of the world. Similarly, the tending polices of most government clearly reveals this consciousness. Olayide (2002) noted that, it is in recognition of this universal concern that the United Nations (UN) and its supporting establishment named the second development decade in the 1970's the 'Rural Development Decade'.

Since then, different development strategies have tried to provide a better balance and integration between rural and urban developmental activities, and lay more emphasis on rural development than before. Until recently, rural development was considered almost synonymous with agricultural output, rising statistics of farm production was seen as the prime indicator of rural development. This is however being replaced by emerging developmental strategies and reform programmes in Edo State in particular and Nigeria in general. The reform programmes visualizes the basic goals of rural development as being much broader than increased aericul4ural p2oduction and economic growth in a piece meal approach. It involves the equitable distribution of income, better Employment opportunities for rural dwellers, improved health facilities, good housing units standard educational

system, serene environment and adequate infrastructural facilities in the rural environments.

Rilwani and Osayande (2003) observed that majority of the rural areas in Edo State portray an evidence of neglect, characterized by so many problems. They further stated that, this situation is largely as a result of the pattern of government expenditure, which favours the urban settlements more than their rural counterparts. Akinbode (2002) stated that despite the high population concentration in the rural areas, general economic and social progress has remained elusive. Little has been done in respect of socio-economic development of the rural areas. United Nations Population Division (2000) pointed out that the limited understanding and aspirations of the rural people has often resulted in lopsided economic planning, even when planning is adequately made, implementation may be partially carried out or deficient on developmental goals due to socio-economic, political and bureaucratic bottlenecks. This disparity in the level of development between rural and urban areas, more often resulted in expression of dissatisfaction, which takes various dimensions, such as refusal to pay taxes or development levies, protest and migration from rural areas to the more favoured urban centres, which consequently, add to the problems in the urban centres. It is against this background, that this study tries to examine the problems of rural development in Edo State the impetus to the development of her rural communities, and to recommend possible control measures to the identified problems in the study area.

### **The Study Area**

Edo State was created on August 27, 1991, by the administration of President Badamosi Babangida. The state, which was excised from the former Bendel State, was created to satisfy the people's agitation for a state of their own. Edo State lies approximately between longitude  $6^{\circ}04'E$  and  $6^{\circ}43'E$  of the Greenwich Meridian and latitude  $5^{\circ}44'N$  and  $7^{\circ}34'N$  of the equator. It is bounded in the South by Delta State, in the North by Kogi State, in the East by River Niger and Anambra and in the West by Ondo State. The distinct relief regions in Edo State include; the Swamps / Creeks, the Esan Plateau and the dissected uplands of Akoko-Edo Local Government Area. Soil type in the State is generally the red yellow kind of ferrous soil. Variation in Akoko-Edo consists of shallow/stone reddish clay at the feet of inselbergs in the higher sections; lateric clay and fine grained to sandy soil in the upper slope lateric table land ferruginous soils on the crystalline acid rocks of the basement complex.

The climate of Edo State is typically tropical with two major seasons: the wet (rainy) and the dry seasons. The wet season lasts from April to November and the dry season from December to March. The natural vegetation in Edo State consists of rain forest in the Benin lowlands, Esan Plateau and Savanna in the Orle valley / Akoko-Edo uplands. Human interference has however led to the presence of plantation for rubber and oil as well as forest reserves.

The main ecological problems in Edo State are flooding, soil erosion and scarcity of water and out crops of basement rocks. Rainfall and the removal of vegetal cover and unplanned land use development are the main cause of the problems, ([www.edo-nation.net](http://www.edo-nation.net), 2008)

Transportation in Edo State is mainly by road and, to some extent, by air and water. On road transportation, Edo State is transverse by a network of Federal (Trunk A), State (Trunk B) township and rural earth roads (Edo State 2005). Consequently, the state is well linked to other parts of the state and country, particularly Lagos, Abuja, Port-Harcourt, Onitsha and Ibadan etc.

The major urban centres in the state include Benin City, Auchi and Uromi. Other urban settlements include all local government headquarters, a status that was conferred on them by government. All these settlements are on the priority list of government for settlement development.

Edo State is home to some of Nigeria's Premier academic institutions, namely, The University of Benin; Federal University, State owned Ambrose Alli University, and private owned Benson Idahosa University and Igbinedion University, ([www.iuokada.edu.ng](http://www.iuokada.edu.ng), 2008).

### **Conceptual Framework/Literature Review**

The concept of Integrated Rural Development (IRD) is applied to this study. The concept of integrated rural Development was propounded in 1987, following the diversity in the conceptualization of rural development various analytical frameworks and concepts are recognized on evaluating the different rural development approaches.

The nature of the processes of rural development and the size of the problem of promoting economic and social progress in rural areas brought about the concept of the Integrated Rural Development (IRD). Within this context, rural development milieu calls for a set of policies and projects, which when designed and co-ordinated will raise and sustain the standard of living of the rural population as a whole. This concept applies strategies and activities that would bring about an increase in productive power and changes in human

attitudes and cautiously replaces the sense that rural development is dependent on the natural features in our environment, through improvements in the agricultural sector.

This concept further identified the most striking features of the rural economy as, limited access to technical knowledge, under employment of the rural man power, a relatively low per-capital income, and consequently, shortage of capital for financing rural development. Thus, adequate socio-economic resources and infrastructural facilities should be provided, which will in-turn generate development for the rural environments, and as such improves the economy of the poor rural dwellers. The presence of the infrastructural facilities provided will attract investors to the development of the area.

On the review of literatures, World Bank (2005) observed that the underlying problem of rural environments is that of equity and the alleviation of rural poverty, which is reflected in poor nutrition, inadequate shelter and low health standard. This in-turn affects the productivity of the poor and their quality of lives. What then is required is the improvement in productive activities, mutually reinforcing programmes of better nutrition, health, improved water supply, basic sanitation and practical education.

Williams (2004) noted that rural development involves a series of quantitative and qualitative changes occurring among a given rural population, whose conveying effects indicate a sure rise in the standard of living and favourable changes in the way of life of the people concerned.

According to Odeyemi (2006) the provision of community facilities as the determinants of rural development, is a living habit of the locality that should be carefully studied, so as to determine whether modification of the required standard is desirable.

### **Research Methods**

This study employed both the primary and secondary sources to collect data. Primary data were collected through the random administration of two hundred and fifty (250) questionnaires containing variables such as poor transportation, poor infrastructure, poor health facilities, poor living standard and low level of education as determinants of rurality of the communities and good transportation, credit facilities, employment opportunities among others as imperatives of rural development on respondents in five randomly selected rural communities in Edo State, which were Udo Community, Usen

Community, Ehor Community, Oko Community, and Iguomo community, with 50 respondents coming from each community. Factors such as occupation, level of education, social status were considered while selecting subjects. Effort was made to incorporate people from all works of life (educated, artisans, professionals, farmers, students etc) on the list of respondents. The researchers, distributed the questionnaires, to respondents, waited and collected the instruments back from the respondents. The uneducated respondents were assisted by explaining sections of the questionnaire to them. Frequency table and simple percentage were used to analyse the data. The secondary sources of data collected were from articles in journals, newspapers, textbooks, internet resources and unpublished thesis / materials.

### **Results and Discussion**

On the problems of rural development in Edo State, this study reveals that:

- The transportation system in the rural areas was very poor. Most of the existing roads in the area were narrow roads, characterized with pot-holes, and in deplorable condition. This hinders the free flow of transportation of goods and services in and out of the rural areas (rural – urban relationship) and as such discourage investors from investing and settling in the rural areas. This was corroborated by the fact that 119 representing 47.6% of the respondents strongly agree that there is a problem of transportation in the selected communities. Another 68 representing 27.2% also agree to the fact above.
- The available social and infrastructural facilities in the rural areas were highly inadequate, characterized with poor electricity power supply, which hinders mechanical storage of agricultural products from the farms, boring environment; little or no pipe borne water supply, which mainly led to people of the area dependent on water from streams and rivers; coupled with wasted man-hour. All these make the rural areas very boring for able bodied young men and women in the study area to migrate to the urban centres in search for better equipped infrastructurally inclined environment, leaving behind aged men and women in the villages to engage on agricultural activities alone, as such reducing the available man power in the area. For people's opinion on this, see table I.

In the study area, there is the problem of good health care delivery resulting to various types of diseases or illness which affects the rural dwellers. The

available health care facilities in the area are highly inadequate with obsolete equipments. This reduces the health strength and potentials of the people in the area. Malaria, cholera, dysentery and typhoid were discovered to be very rampant in the selected rural areas. This goes a long way in the reduction of productive potency, the population, weakens developmental activities of the people, and reduces the number of migrants into the area. A cursory look at table 1, it was revealed that 161 respondents of the total 250 representing 64.4% believed that poor health care delivery in the communities is a major factor of rurality of the communities.

The standard of living of the people in the selected rural environments was very low. This resulted from the low rural income with little or no savings for investment, and the high cost of purchasing modern agricultural equipments that would bring about increase in output of agricultural activities. As such, the people were being portrayed as less privileged, less materialistic, less aggressive in their pursuit of goals and less convinced of the value of Education. All these led to the general low level of development in the study area.

The level of education of the people in the study area is comparatively very low. This emanated from the low standard of educational facilities in the study area, poor access to standard education in the urban centres, due to financial constraints and lackadaisical attitude of the people towards education. This leaves the people to dwell in ignorance, poor technological know-how and poor attitude towards the development of their rural communities.

A cursory look at table 1, it was revealed that both poor standard of living and low level of education as a result of poor educational facilities contribute in no small measure to the level of rurality of the selected rural areas. 149 respondents representing 59.6 and 143 representing 57.2 respectively strongly agree that both poor standard of living and low level of education were rural development problems in the selected communities.

On the impetus to the development of rural communities in Edo State, it was discovered from the responses of selected respondents from the five communities (see table II) that: The use, development and management of rural resources are dependent on good transportation system of an area. Good roads, railways, waterways, and airports should be sited in the rural communities to link resources area with the urban canter, so that goods and services can be transported with ease, for easy processing of the raw

materials and transportation to market centres, which means greater income and revenue generation into the study area.

Scarcity of funds had often retarded rural development programmes for individuals and communities. There is need for the establishment of affordable rural credit facilities and banks, such as community bank and micro-finance banks in all the rural areas coupled with affordable collateral security or security repayment scheme (SRS) to enable farmers secure loans for the purchase of modern agricultural facilities, for this will improve and increase agricultural production in the rural areas. The increased output will consequently results into increase in the revenue generated from taxes and as such, the revenue will be used for the development of the areas.

There is need for the introduction of diversified economic activities, (such as forestry, tourism) based on rural resources. The identification and promotion of these resources will in-turn offer the rural communities the opportunity to benefit economically from their culture and environment. And as such, provides more employment opportunities with improved standard of living for the people.

Health centres and dispensaries should be located in the rural communities to meet health needs and demands. These medical centres should be provided with modern technological equipments and adequate human resources. Quality medical services will improve the health of the rural dwellers and encourage people to stay in the rural areas. For this will definitely improve the labour force of the study area.

A comparable quality education to what is obtainable in the urban areas should be provided in the rural areas. Knowledge will empower them to accept change and reformation that will enhance rural development. Parents should be encouraged and mandated in sending their children to school. For education provides economic benefits, builds strong societies and politics of the people.

The rural areas should be provided with pipe borne water supply. The rural areas should benefit from the resources flowing from the taps. Drinkable water should be provided to reduce vulnerable diseases contacted through unhygienic water system. Enlightenment on the treatment of water before consumption should be propagated among rural dwellers.

The revenue allocation for the rural communities, by the Federal and State Government Authorities should be improved upon, as well as grants and



donation from United Nation Agencies to enable the Local Government Authorities execute meaningful and tangible projects in the rural communities.

The rural people should be trained in making use of the rural resources available coupled with modern technology in building quality houses in the study area. Local employment in resource-based activities in addition to agriculture could be the basis of housing development in suitable areas. These houses should be developed to social environmental and economic standard, so as to market the available natural resources for optional patronage and utilization.

Electricity power supply is one of the most important infrastructures that modern societies needs. Constant and adequate electricity power supply is highly needed in the study area, for the illumination of homes, streets and the towns. And also as a source of power to offices, industries and various establishments in the area, for this will equally improve the social status of the rural areas, by providing a lively environment for social activities and investors.

### **Further Recommendations**

- There is need for a considerable increase in the budgetary allocation from the Federal and State Governments to the Local Government Areas. This will assist Local Government Authorities in the construction, maintenance and improvement of the existing educational, administrative and health facilities of the area.
- There is need for the development of all sectors in the rural areas, so as to bridge the gap between urban and rural environments. And as such discourage able bodied men and women from migrating to the urban centres.
- Developmental projects in the rural areas should aimed at uplifting the standard of living of rural dwellers and break the vicious and routine cycle of poverty and corruption in the areas.
- There is need to create a serene and accommodating environment in the rural areas, so as to attract investors into the areas.
- All the deplorable roads in the rural areas should be rehabilitated and new one's constructed to enhance the free flow of goods and serves between the rural and the urban centres.

- There is need for the provision of adequate basic socio-amenities and the creation of employment opportunities in the rural areas, to better the lives of dwellers, and also to attract people to settle down in the area.

### **Conclusion**

Government at all levels should see rural areas as potential ports for economic and socio-cultural development of the nation and not as a burden, so as to bridge the gap between rural and urban environments

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**Table I. Determinants of Rurality of Selected Communities in Edo State, Nigeria**

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	%
	Freq. %	Freq. %	Freq. %	Freq. %	Freq. %		
Poor Transportation	114 45.6	66 26.4	14 5.60	28 11.2	28 11.2	250	100
Poor Infrastructure	155 62.0	72 28.8	09 3.60	05 2.0	09 3.60	250	100
Poor Health Facilities	161 64.4	53 21.2	04 1.6	17 6.8	15 6.0	250	100
Poor standard of Living	149 59.6	68 27.2	06 2.4	16 6.4	11 4.4	250	100
Low level / quality of Education	143 57.2	79 31.6	09 3.60	14 5.6	05 2.0	250	100

Source: Authors' Fieldwork 2009

**Table II. Imperatives of Rural Developments of Selected Communities in Edo State, Nigeria**

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	%
	Freq. %	Freq. %	Freq. %	Freq. %	Freq. %		
Good Transportation system	119 47.6	68 27.2	15 6.0	18 7.2	30 12.0	250	100
Affordable Credit Facilities	148 59.2	73 29.2	04 1.6	16 6.4	09 3.6	250	100
Employment opportunities	130 52.0	98 39.2	03 1.2	11 4.4	08 3.2	250	100
Modern Health Facilities	137 54.8	91 36.4	01 0.4	14 5.6	07 2.8	250	100
Improved Education	198 79.2	19 7.6	04 1.6	16 6.4	13 5.2	250	100
Improved Electricity Supply	201 80.4	22 8.8	01 0.4	12 4.8	14 5.6	250	100
Portable Water	188 75.2	27 10.8	03 1.2	14 5.6	18 7.2	250	100
Improved / Quality Housing	166 66.4	54 21.6	06 2.4	13 5.2	11 4.4	250	100

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2009.