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**The Roles of Education in the Development of Rural Communities in Uyo Local  
Government Area of Akwa Ibom State**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study sought to investigate the roles played by education in the development of rural communities in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The casual comparative method was used in the study. To obtain adequate and accurate information, structured questionnaire, verbal interviews and observations are employed to invoke responses from the people on the contributions of education in the development of rural areas. The researcher randomly selected five rural areas in Uyo Local Government for the study. The total population in the rural study area was 3,000. Out of this, 5% of the total population was selected for the study. This therefore gives a total of fifteen (15) persons to be contacted per community for the five areas selected. Thus there were fifteen respondents in one study area for all the five communities selected. A total of 150 questionnaires were given to the five rural areas and each community had (30) thirty to invoke responses from people. Also, random sampling method was used in the distribution of the instrument to ensure meaningful and objective data collection for the study. The study concludes that although there was no higher institution in the communities where the study was undertaken, all the communities realized the importance of establishing schools ranging from Primary to Secondary Schools. This realization projects education as the pillar of progress. It was therefore recommended that Government should expedite actions to develop the rural communities of Uyo Local Government of Akwa Ibom State and beyond. In addition, higher Institutions such as Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Universities be cited in the rural areas. This will help to attract governments attention to these communities and also provide the necessary amenities to the people.*

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**KEYWORDS:** Education, Development, Rural Communities, Uyo Local Government Area.

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**Introduction**

Education is an instrument of social, economic, political and cultural change of any meaningful society. The contributions of education to the development of rural areas cannot be over emphasized education gives rise to meaningful community development. It provides enlightenment to people which in turn enable them to provide essential amenities such as health facilities, pipe borne water, electrification and others to the rural dwellers. For education to fulfil its aims and objectives in development, its content has to reflect the societal needs, (Adler, 2015). During the colonial era, formal education in Nigeria was patterned after the English system. After the attainment of independence in 1960, many educators expressed concern about the lack of relevance of the Nigerian Educational System in meeting the pressing economic, social and cultural needs of the nation. Mostly, the rural areas were deprived of educational advantages at the expense of concentrating on the urban development. It was the realization of these facts and others that several attempts were made

by educationists to bring the lime-light the type of education that should exist in Nigeria, (Adeniyi, 2015).

The National Policy on Education was in 1981 to spell out the system of education in Nigeria based on the needs of the people. Based on the importance attached to education, the Federal Government decided to finance education adequately so as to bring about the expected meaningful changes in the society. This is contained in the National Policy on Education (1981). All these were made based on the interest which government had for rural dwellers in Nigeria. Today, emphasis lies on rural development. Most communities are experiencing progress and development with education as a major activator. The rural development is not only economic in its narrow sense, but is also a balanced physical and socio-economic development. The major programmes sponsored by the Federal Government, include the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DEFRI), Rural Electrification, Food and Agriculture, Rural Water and Sanitation, Rural Housing and Better Life for Rural Dwellers etc. All these programmes are designed to improve the quality of life and standard of living of rural people in Uyo Local Government Area in Akwa Ibom State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Education is the bedrock of a progressive society. This is so because for a society to ensure continuity, it must design the educational system to suit its needs and aspirations. Since the education produces the tools for the development of the society, a change of such society then becomes imperative so as to embrace the current development trend. Though the rural people in Uyo Local Government Area in Akwa Ibom State benefits from essential amenities, there are still some communities without good roads and water supply. This means that education still has a lot to do in the rural communities in generating interest in the people for development. This is the rationale behind this study: which is to investigate the significant role played by education in the development of rural communities.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The main objective of this study was to investigate the roles played by education in the development of rural communities in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Evaluate the contributions of education towards the development of rural communities in Uyo Local Government Area.
2. Ascertain whether there are still much to be done by education in the development drive of rural communities in Uyo Local Government Area.

### **Research Questions**

1. Are there any significant contributions made by education to the progress or urban and rural areas of Uyo Local Government Area?
2. Is there any need to send children to schools in the urban and rural areas of Uyo Local Government Area?
3. Are there adequate social amenities to make life comfortable for the people of Uyo both in Urban and Rural Areas
4. Are there any significant problems militating against the development of rural and urban communities in Uyo Local Government Area?

### **Hypotheses**

1. There are no significant contributions of education to the development of rural communities in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.
2. There is no need sending children to schools in Uyo Local Government Area.
3. There are no adequate social amenities to make life comfortable in the rural and urban communities of Uyo Local Government Area.

## **Significance of the Study**

Since the study is to assess the role of education in the development of rural communities the study then shall point out various educational contributions; and shall single out what are still left to be done in the development of rural areas by education. Therefore, the researcher considers this study to be of immense benefit to the educational policy makers, since it will provide them consultancy services in matters relating to educational planning and development. The study shall also help future researchers who may want to carry out further investigations on rural development in Nigeria generally and in Akwa Ibom State in particular.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Concept of Education**

There are various definitions of education in addition to varying views and perspectives of people about education. Education is a concept which people do not generally agree on a single definition. One of the reason is that there is no university accepted definition of education. The Encyclopedia International sees education in the broad sense as an increase of skill or development of knowledge and understanding as a result of training, study or experience. Education exists in all societies to ensure community. A society must pass on its basic skills, information and beliefs from one generation to the next. Education is an activity which goes on in a society, whose aims and method depend on the nature of the society in which it takes place.

A philosophical definition of education, according to Peters' (1966) in Abrahamson, D. & Sánchez-García, (2016) implies that something worthwhile being or has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner. Again Hirst and Peters (1979) assert that educating people suggest a family of process whose principle of unity in the development of desirable qualities in them. These desirable qualities are the values of the society and the culture in its totality whether as transmitted, preserved or improved upon. Philosophically, education cannot be said to have taken place unless some change for the better has occurred. Dewey (1966) in Adeniyi, (2015) states that education is the reconstruction or re-organisation of experience. Also, education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform. In relation to individual development, it is important that intelligence be developed if real education is to take place. Peter (1970) in Abrahamson, & Sánchez-García, (2016) gives three conditions in his definition of education: Education must involve knowledge and understanding and some sort of cognitive perspective which is not inert; education implies the transmission of something worthwhile to those who become committed to it; and education at least rules out some procedures of transmission on the ground that the lack willingness and voluntariness on the part of the learners. Whatever definition is advanced; education exist to bring about transformation of life.

### **Informal and Formal Education**

Education is usually classified into formal and informal. The researcher has to acknowledge the traditional or indigenous educational system prevalent in Africa before the arrival of formal education brought by the missionaries. Fafunwa (1974) states that informal or traditional education is the learning which occurs generally outside the school programmes. In the traditional African society, every community had its own system of training and educating its young ones. The aims of education are the same but the content and method of approach differ, based on the nature of the society. For Fafunwa (1974), in the pre-literate time was generally for an immediate induction into society and preparation for an adulthood. Emphasis was on social responsibility, job orientation, political participation and spiritual and moral values. This type of education was primarily concerned with the transmission of culture. Essel-Cobbah (1988) in Ahmed, (2018) states that the methods used in this education were observation, imitation and participation. However, this education differed in curriculum methods and organizational design as compared with the present day formal education.

According to Aderinoye, (2007), with the advent of western education in Nigeria and Africa as a whole by the Christian Missionaries, education ceased to be informal in its contents and methods. Formal education is the type of education obtained in schools in which teachers imparted knowledge to the learners in a systematic way. It is an institutionalized system with a well-defined curriculum, instructional materials, contents and a clear out disciplinary measures for every learner. This is regulated by means of educational policies made by the Ministry of Education.

### **Rural Life**

“Rural” as applied in this context, refers to those areas or communities that are totally lacking in basic amenities or those in which these amenities are grossly inadequate. This makes life in such areas to be uncomfortable. As a result, people in these areas tend to migrate to the urban centres. In the past, government emphasis was on the development of the urban cities at the expense of the rural ones. This one sided development made life difficult for the rural dwellers. Rural dwellers had little or no knowledge about health care, hygiene and family planning, “Known diseases were attributed to the handiwork of witches and wizards” (Better Life Programme for Rural Dwellers, Akwa Ibom State Experience, 1989).

Also, people here suffered from traditional beliefs which made life difficult. The communities were dominated by lack of infrastructures, co-operative ventures, financial assistance, medical institution and enlightenment. All these contributed to make life in the rural areas unattractive and unprogressive. Today, Government has seen the need of improving life in rural areas. Rural dwellers have been embraced by successive administrations. Any government sponsored development programme starts from the grassroots, being the rural communities. Emphasis have, at varying points been placed on agriculture. Model farms have been established. There are also available infrastructures and other things that make life comfortable. All these have been provided through education.

### **Education as the instrument of change**

Dubey and others assert that it is through the educational system that people are taught how to meet changing situations. According to them, schools are opened by communities not only to preserve culture and maintain continuity but also to bring about progressive changes in such communities. Students are taught to live in a dynamic society. “Through education, individuals acquire usable and socially acceptable vocational skills” (Dubey, et. al. 1979 in Adcock, P. K. 2014). One is bound to be productive which ensures individual and group survival. Education, among other social institutions is a vehicle for changing society. It has

been and is being used for the transformation of the economic, political and social system. The development of education has noticeable effects on ideas, level of knowledge values and ways of life generally. A slowing down of educational growth would limit changes and hinder development. Education produces the required manpower needed by the society. The educational and economic system interact to change each other, (Aderinoye, R. (2007).

### **The design of the study**

In this chapter, the researcher describes the design and methodology or procedures as well as the instrument used in the study.

### **Research procedure and instrument**

The researcher used the casual comparative method in the study. To obtain adequate and accurate information, structured questionnaire, verbal interviews and observations are employed to invoke responses from the people on the contributions of education in the development of rural areas as well as revealing the problems left to be solved.

### **Choice of the area**

The researcher randomly selected five rural areas in Uyo Local Government for the study. The Areas included:

- |                      |   |          |
|----------------------|---|----------|
| 1. Mbak Etoi         | - | Etoi     |
| 2. Nung Oku Akpasima | - | Ibesikpo |
| 3. Nsukara Offot     | - | Offot    |
| 4. Ikot Akpan Abia   | - | Ibesikpo |
| 5. Use Ikot Ebio     | - | Offot    |

The Researcher thought that, these communities through benefiting from the government are yet to benefit sufficiently from Government Rural Development Scheme.

The underlined urban areas are also selected for the study. These include:

- |              |   |       |
|--------------|---|-------|
| 1. Aka Offot | - | Offot |
| 2. Iboko     | - | Offot |
| 3. Oku       | - | Uyo   |

The reason for selecting them is that these areas are thus fall within the Uyo municipality area thus they benefit more from rural development.

### **Sample**

The total population in the rural study area was 3,000. Out of this, 5% of the total population was selected for the study. This therefore gives a total of fifteen (15) persons to be contacted per community for the five areas selected. Thus there were fifteen respondents in one study area for all the five communities selected. A total of 150 questionnaires were given to the five rural areas and each community had (30) thirty to invoke responses from people. Also, booth males and females (adults) and young people from 18 years of age cover the population for the study in the chosen rural areas. Also, random sampling method was used in the distribution of the instrument to ensure meaningful and objective data collection for the study.

### **Analysis and interpretation**

As earlier stated, the purpose of the study was to examine the influence of education in the development of rural communities in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Data presented here were collected from both rural and urban communities.

The questionnaires were administered by the researcher individually to the respondents both in the urban and rural communities. The return of the questionnaire was a huge success.

## Data presentation

**Table 1: Rural Community**

1. Educational Institutions	Adult/non-formal	Nursery School	Nursery Primary	Sec. Sch.	Higher Inst.	Primary/ Sec.	All of the Above	Total
Percentage	-	-	6	-	3	129	12	150
	-	-	4	-	2	86	8	100
2. Educational Standard	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	-	-	Total
Percentage	33	9	18	33	57	-	-	150
	22	6	12	22	38	-	-	100
3. Changes in Edu. Standard	Yes	No	Undecided					Total
Percentage	150	-	-					150
	100	-	-					100
4. Availability Of Essential Amenities	Yes	No						Total
Percentage	75	75						150
	50	50						100
5. Support of Children Education	Very Much	Partial	Not at all	Un-decide				Total
Percentage	129	9	3	9				150
	86	6	2	6				100
6. Essential Amenities Present	Health Facilities	Water/ Health	Electricity	Good Roads	Road/ Water		All of the Above	Total
Percentage	24	45	21	3	51		6	150
	16	30	14	2	34		4	100
7. Benefit Derivation	No	Yes	Uncertain					Total
Percentage	87	48	15					150
	58	32	10					100
8. Rural Dev. Enlightenment	Yes	No	Undecided					Total
Percentage	125	21	3					150
	84	14	2					100
9. Working Sectors	Public	Private	Self	Public/ Private	Not at All			Total
Percentage	18	15	-	102	15			150
	12	10	-	68	10			100
10. Development Hindrance	Lack of Fund	Disunity	Leadership	Lack of Gov't Assistance	Illiteracy			Total
Percentage	18	15	12	72	33			150
	12	10	8	48	22			100
11. Remedies	Education for All	Formation of Co-operative Society	Launching for Fund	Appointing Community Leaders	All of the Above			Total
Percentage	72	6	-	12	60			150
	48	4	-	8	40			100

**Table II: Urban**

1. Educational Institution	Adult/ Non-Formal	Nursery School	Nursery Primary	Sec. Sch.	Higher Inst.	Primary/ Sec.	All of the Above	Total
Percentage	3 2	9 6	12 8	6 4	- -	66 44	54 36	150 100
2. Educational Standard	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low			Total
Percentage	15 10	15 10	39 26	66 44	15 10			150 100
3. Changes in Education Standard	Yes	No	Uncertain					Total
Percentage	150 100	- -	- -					150 100
4. Availability Of Essential Amenities	Yes	No						Total
Percentage	72 48	78 52						150 100
5. Support of Children's Education	Very Much	Partially	Not at All	Undecided				Total
Percentage	150 100	- -	- -	- -				150 100
6. Essential Amenities Present	Health Facilities	Water/ Health	Electricity	Good Roads	Road/ Water	All of the Above		Total
Percentage	45 30	30 20	12 8	3 2	54 36	6 4		150 100
7. Benefit Derivation	No	Yes	Uncertain					Total
Percentage	87 58	51 34	12 8					150 100
8. Educational Enlightenment	Yes		No	Undecided			Total	
Percentage	132 88		15 10	3 2			150 100	
9. Working Sectors	Public		Private	Self	Not at All	Public/ Private	Total	
Percentage	42 28		3 2	12 8	12 8	81 54	150 100	
10. Dev. Hindrance	Lack of Fund		Disunity	Leadership	Lack of Gov't Assistance	Illiteracy	Total	
Percentage	48 32		15 10	15 10	33 22	39 26	150 100	
11. Remedies	Education for All		Formation of Cooperative Society	Launching foe Funds	Appointing Community Leaders	All of the Above	Total	
Percentage	84 56		3 2	9 6	- -	54 36	150 100	

## Data Analysis

### Educational institution:

From table I and II above, it is observed that there were no Nursery Schools in the rural areas under investigation whereas in the urban there were nine Nursery/Primary schools representing 8%. Also, in the rural community, there were no Adult and Non-Formal education but in urban there were two accounting for 2%. While the rural had no Secondary School, urban communities had a total of six representing 4%. Concerning higher institution,

the rural had three representing 2%, but the urban had a reverse. From the same table, the rural areas one hundred and twenty-nine Primary/Secondary Schools representing 86% while the urban had sixty-six representing 44%. Fifty-four representing 36% agreed that they had all the above institution in the urban whereas twelve respondents representing 8% was accounting for rural communities.

### **Educational Standard:**

From table I and II it is observed that thirty-three representing 22% was the level of educational standard regarding very high for the rural communities whereas fifteen representing 10% was for the urban. In the rural communities, nine accounting for 6% was regarded as high while fifteen representing 10% was for urban.

Eighteen respondents in the rural areas agreed that the standard of education was moderate and this represented 12% but in the urban, thirty-nine representing 26% agreed on the same issue. Those that said there was a low standard of education in the rural were thirty-three representing 22% while the urban had sixty-six representing 44%. Fifteen accounted for 10% shows very low standard in the urban while fifty-seven representing 38% is for rural.

### **Changes Through Education**

From the two tables above, both rural and urban areas agreed that there were changes brought about by education. Both communities had a total of one hundred and fifty representing 100%. There was one suggestion.

### **Availability of Essential Amenities**

In the rural area, seventy-five representing 50% agreed that there was essential amenities at least pipe borne water in their area of residence whereas in the urban only seventy-two representing 48% agreed on the same issue. Those who stated that they had no amenities in the rural were also seventy-five representing 50% whereas the respondents in the urban were seventy-eight representing 52%.

### **Children's Education:**

Those who supported the view very strongly that children in their area be sent to school in the rural were one hundred and twenty-nine representing 86 % whereas in the urban, one hundred and fifty supported representing 100%. Partially supporting respondents in the rural accounted for 6%, three representing 2% were for not at all and nine representing 6% were undecided. In the urban, none respondents were either partially, not at all nor undecided.

### **Availability of Essential Amenities**

Those in the rural communities claimed to enjoy health facilities were twenty-four representing 16%. The urban had forty-five representing 30%. Water and health respondents were forty-five and electricity were twenty-one representing 30% and 14% respectively for the rural. The urban had thirty for water and health twelve for electricity representing 20% and 8% respectively. The rural had three respondents enjoying good roads which was 2% and the urban also had the same number. In urban, there was a total of fifty-four representing 36% as the number enjoying good roads and water while the rural had a total of fifty-one representing 34%. A total of six were for all of the above for both rural and urban communities representing 4% respectively.

## **Benefits Derivation**

From the above tables, it is observed that the benefit derived from the Federal Government by the rural dwellers amounted to 32% whereas the urban had 34%. Those who did not benefit in all in the rural were 58%. The uncertain respondents in the rural were fifteen representing 10%. The non-benefited respondent in the urban were eighty-seven while the uncertain were twelve representing 34% and 8% respectively.

## **Rural Enlightenment**

Both communities agreed that they had rural development enlightenment while one hundred and twenty-six representing 84% was for rural, one hundred and thirty-two representing 88% was for the urban. Those that opposed the view were twenty-one in the rural representing 14% while fifteen representing 10% was for the urban. The undecided were three for both communities representing 2% respectively.

## **Working Sector**

It is observed that, in the rural, only eighteen people representing 12% were those working in public sectors whereas in the urban, there were forty-two representing 28%. In the private sector, only fifteen for the rural and three for the urban representing 10% and 2% respectively. In the rural, there were no self employed while twelve accounted for 8% in the urban. The negative view respondents were fifteen for rural and twelve for urban accounting for 10% and 8% respectively. Public/private sectors had a total of one hundred and two in the rural and eighty-one in the urban representing 68% and 54% respectively.

## **Development Hindrance**

In the rural area eighteen people representing 12% agreed that lack of funds is a major hindrance to the development of their area. Forty-eight in the urban representing 32% agreed to some issue. Both communities agreed equally that lack of co-operation also affect development in their areas. A total of fifteen people representing 10% supporting the above view. In the urban, twelve people were of the opinion that poor leadership militated against the development, while twelve agreed on the same issue in the rural. These accounted for 10% and 8% respectively. In the rural, the number that stood for lack of Government assistance were seventy-two representing 48% while the urban had thirty-three representing 22%. Illiteracy also accounted for the draw back in both communities. Thirty-three representing 22% was for the rural while thirty-nine representing 26% was for the urban.

## **Solution to Under-Development-Leadership Selection**

The suggestion to appoint the community leaders in the rural areas as a remedy to under-development were twelve. This represented 8%, while the urban area had no respondents. Seventy-two representing 48% for the rural and eighty-four representing 56% supported education for all. A total of three respondents in the urban and six in the rural making 2% and 4% respectively agreed on the formation of co-operative society to enhance the progress of the communities.

In the urban, nine representing 6% supported launching for funds, while the rural had no respondents for such issue. All of the above respondents in the rural were sixty representing 4% whereas the urban had fifty-four representing 36%.

## **Discussion**

The study reveals that the rural communities under study have educational institutions ranging from Primary Schools to Secondary Schools. This shows that each of the rural communities has realized the importance of establishing such institutions taking into consideration the significant role of education to the society. The urban communities in addition to Primary Schools and Secondary Schools had also Nursery and Higher Institutions. This may be due to the fact that they had realized the importance of education more than the rural communities. This is why people in the rural communities have to move to urban areas to attend higher institutions.

The study also reveals that the educational standard of both communities before the establishment of institutions were not very high. This suggests that the establishment of these institutions brought more enlightenment to both communities.

Based on the findings of the study that education has generated changes to the communities, one can agree that education is infact an instrument of change and development.

Consequently, a researcher strongly supports that children should be sent to school in both rural and urban communities so that they can realize the influence of education on mankind.

As regards the availability of social amenities, both communities acknowledge the fact that as a result of educational awareness, there exist essential amenities which added further impetus to the development of these communities. The essential amenities discovered included health facilities, pipe borne water, rural electrification scheme and good road networks. All these have impacts on the improvement on social, economic, political and cultural condition of people in the communities.

Base on the data, it could be seen that though the rural dwellers benefitted from essential amenities, there are still some communities without good roads and water supply. This means that education still has a lot to do in the rural communities in generating interest in the people for development.

Based on the findings of the study, it seems that the communities also benefiting from one or more of the Federal Government Rural Development Programmes such as Expanded Programme on Immunization, Directorate for food, Road And Rural Infrastructure Programmes, Better Life. All these are projects undertaken and provided for by the educated elites.

One can therefore see the importance of education in producing various categories of Labour Force needed by the society. Some people in both the rural and urban communities earn their living by working in either the Private or Public Sector or by being self employed. Education, as the study reveals is therefore the corner stone of development towards set objectives.

As for the problems hindering development, the study reveals that both communities should have faith in education for progress of the communities. The major problems as the study reveals were:

1. Lack of adequate fund;
2. Lack of Government Assistance;
3. Disunity Among the People;
4. Poor Leadership and

## 5. High Rate of Illiteracy

### Conclusion

Although there was no higher institution in the communities where the study was undertaken, all the communities realized the importance of establishing schools ranging from Primary to Secondary Schools. This realization projects education as the pillar of progress. Most rural people now-a-days are useful members of their societies because of their educational background. There are essential amenities now available in the rural areas are attributed to the impact of educational awareness. The positive influences of education in rural development are numerous but there are still major impediments in rural progress. Such impediments as adequate funds, land tenure system, bad administration, leadership conflicts among others can only be overcome through education. Hence, education must be seen not only as an instrument of rapid transformation of communities but also as the gateway to development in the society.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher hereby proposes the following recommendations:

- ❖ Government should expedite actions to develop the rural communities of Uyo Local Government of Akwa Ibom State and beyond.
- ❖ Higher Institutions such as Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Universities be cited in the rural areas. This will help to attract governments attention to these communities and also provide the necessary amenities to the people.
- ❖ Government and philanthropists should provide incentives such as scholarship, bursary awards to the rural dwellers to enable them further their education.
- ❖ Certain organization such as Co-operative Society, Company and others should be formed and unity should be their watchword.
- ❖ Conferences, Seminars, Symposia and Workshop should be organized for rural dwellers by the educationists on rural development.
- ❖ Education should be made to produce the manpower needed by the rural communities so as to help eradicate rural poverty which endangers the progress in the community.

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