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ASSESSMENT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF SELECTED SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Social Institution is a tool organized by human society to guide and carry out the activities needed for satisfaction of human needs especially in the development of the rural areas. Studies have been carried out on activities of federal, state and NGOs in rural development but none on social institutions. Therefore this study with the aim to assess the activities of some selected social institutions in the development of rural areas in Rivers state, Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 430 respondents and information was gotten from the respondents using structured questionnaire. Mean scores and ANOVA were used to analyse data. From findings, a grand mean of 2.60 on religion activities indicated a high involvement in the rural development projects. Also, the grand mean of family was 3.47 while that of education was 2.77 which indicated that family and education has brought about rural development in the study area. There was a significant relationship between social institutions (family, education and religion) and rural development in the study area at >0.05 . The study concludes that social institutions are involved in rural development. Therefore, recommends that government should invest in education and vocational training programmes to empower rural people with the knowledge and skill needed to participate in the modern economy.

Keywords: Assessment, Activities, Selected Social Institutions, Rural Development

Introduction

The rural sector of Nigeria is very vital in the socio economic development equation of the nation (Nyagba, 2009). However, the need for rural communities to approach development from a wider perspective has created more focus on a broad range of development goals rather than merely creating incentives for agricultural or resources based business.

Despite the different approaches geared towards the development of the rural areas, the rural people still own small area of low and unproductive land without irrigation and other physical facilities. They lack income and access to credit and are unable to improve land productivity. As a result of this, the rural areas are sparsely populated with people leaving for the urban areas to settle, slow

means of communication, lack of education and modern technology, poor infrastructure, insufficient roads and others (Farhat & Hayas 2013). Rural development focuses on programmes that implement projects in different societies through the principles of access, independence, sustainability, going forward, participation and effectiveness. These programmes range from economic, environmental conservation and societal equity through education, public-health and sanitation, women empowerment, infrastructural development, agricultural extension and research facilities, credit facilities, employment opportunities and others.

In Nigeria, some rural development policies geared towards improving the rural areas in the past include, Farm settlement scheme, Operation Feed the nation (OFN) whose major concern, according to Ering (2014), was to bring down the escalating prices of food importation. Others were the River Basin Development Authorities, Green Revolution, and Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRRI), Family Support Programme and Rural Poverty Alleviation programme. However, these programmes were designed to improve and transform the rural people and prevent the exodus of youths from villages to the urban areas but they failed because they were largely incoherent and uncoordinated efforts and programme. Through the adult education programme carried out by some institutions like educational and religious institutions, the rural dwellers develop skills and knowledge and improved in agricultural production through the age of improved seed and animal varieties. The Universal free primary education contributed a lot in reducing

illiteracy, many children from poor parental background benefited from the programme.

The rural development initiatives by the government have created a culture of dependence on the part of the people rather than the people themselves initiating development orientations. While it is the responsibility of government to create the enabling environment for community or rural development, the attendant corruption, greed and mismanagement associated with these institutions and agencies have not allowed them to achieve their desired objectives. In this connection, policy makers in rural development are faced with different problems ranging from leadership factors, non-implementation of projects, insufficiency of financial resources, intra and inter-communal disputes, corruption and embezzlement of funds. It is not only the federal, state and local governments that have put up policies and programmes that have helped in the improvement and development of the rural populace and rural areas, the non-governmental agencies and social institutions/and organizations have also been involved in the development of rural areas. Albert, Nlerum and Ozumuo (2013) ascertained that Non-governmental agencies have intervened by providing skill acquisition programmes towards rural development.

Social Institution is a tool organized by human society to guide and carry out the activities needed for satisfaction of human needs. Bali (2000) saw man as the creator of forms in society, the formulation of rulers, regulations, procedures and forms of behavior governed and controlled by them, in order to function effectively in fulfillment of needs. Social institution constitutes the behavior and relationship pattern of

individuals in a society. It makes up the integral part of the human social life and how humans function in the society. Social institutions are important structural components of modern societies that address one or more fundamental activity and/or specific function (Farhat & Hayas 2013). A modern society cannot exist without a social institution as different institutions inter relate and depend on each other to perform specific and respective functions in a society. Ghauri *et al.* (2009) expressed that the world is experiencing worst food crisis and hunger in rural areas. Rising food prices have developed into a global crisis.

The two major social institutions include primary and secondary institutions. The primary institutions are made up of the family which is also called a Meta institution, political, economic, education and religious which are found among all human groups while the secondary institutions are derived from the primary institutions. For instance, the secondary institutions derived from primary institution include monogamy, marriage, divorce, polyandry and polygamy while that of economy are property, trading, credit and banking and others. Social institutions have key functional roles in the rural areas ranging from socialization, stability, maintenance of law and order, sense of purpose, preservation of social order, transmission of culture, definition of roles and status, decision making, personality and attitude development, among others. Every individual comes from a family, belong to one religious group, sell or buy in the market (economy) and get educated in the educational institutions in his /her area. These individuals who belong to the social institutions have helped in the development of communities where they come from either

as a member of one social organization, religious group, and social group among others.

The activities of social institutions are enormous. Socialization through education institution serves as an important tool in rural development; it is a medium of knowing culture, acquiring knowledge and transmitting customs and values. It provides individual roles for future purpose and need fulfillment. Education as a social institution socializes human through student's role and academic subjects. It also brings social control in the society through values, discipline, respect, obedience, punctuality and perseverance. Education enhances women's ability to acquire more knowledge and also motivates them to participate in agricultural intervention programmes (Albert, Ladu and Isife, 2007). The family builds up an individual's personality and attitude. It serves as the building block of the society through reproduction and socialization. Religion is a system of beliefs and rituals that binds people together through shared worship. It has set of beliefs and practices that pertain to a sacred or supernatural realm that guides human behavior and gives meaning to life among a community of behaviors. Social institutions are characterized by a permanent structure, purposive goal and objectives, value laden with code of conduct, affiliated and inter woven. They are unified as a unit, traditional and enduring.

Rural development according to Bebbington (2001) is the unfolding of capitalism in rural areas and packaging of policy and project interventions that aim to foster socio-economic change and human improvement in rural areas. The process encompasses basic necessities of life, self-respect and freedom

which evolve from a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. The process of rural development helps the rural people seek their livelihood, set priorities for the sustainable improvement in their quality of life. It is against this bedrock that the research problem of this study seeks to assess the activities of some selected social institutions (family, education and religion) on rural development in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The specific objectives were to;

- i. examine the activities of religious institution(churches) on rural development in the study area;
- ii. determine the activities of educational institution(school) on rural development. and
- iii. ascertain the activities of family institution on rural development i. in the study area.

The following hypothesis was tested to achieve the stated objectives of the study.

H0: There is no significant difference in the activities of religious institution (church), family institution and educational institution (school) in rural development activities in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

The study area of this research was Rivers State which is one of the thirty-six (36) states that make up Nigeria. Rivers state is situated at the southern part of Nigeria comprising the Niger River Delta on the Gulf of Guinea and has Port-Harcourt as its capital. It is one of the states that make up the Niger Delta region in the South- South geopolitical zone of Nigeria and it is bounded by the states of

Anambra and Imo on the North, Abia and Akwa Ibom on the east and Bayelsa and Delta on the West. Rivers state contains mangrove swamp, tropical rain forest and many rivers which makes water serve as the principal means of transportation (NPC, 2006) The geographical area of the state is amphibious in nature, comprising both riverine and upland areas all netted in a web of rivers. The state has three senatorial districts namely Rivers West, Rivers South and Rivers East. The people speak different languages ranging from Ikwerre, Okrika. Ogoni, Kalabari, among others.

The study adopted the survey research design; the population of the study consists of all heads of households, heads of churches, heads of schools in the registered selected social institutions such as family, churches and schools in Rivers State. For the educational institution, there are fifty (50) registered government primary and secondary schools in the selected communities in Rivers state, with a population of eighteen thousand (18,000) people, as at 1999 (Retrieved Population Census, 1999). Total number of registered Anglican, Methodist and Catholic churches in the study area is forty-nine (49) with a population of twelve thousand six hundred (12,600) people (Anglican Consultative Council, 2020) while the total population of families in the selected communities in Rivers State is Seven Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety (7,890) (PHC Priority Tables ,2006)

Rivers State has three senatorial districts namely Rivers West (Ogba, /Egbema, Ndoni, Ahoada- East, Ahoada -West, Abua/ Odual, Degema, Akuku-Toru, Asari toru and Bonny), Rivers South (Port-Harcourt, Obio /Akpor, Emohua, Ikwerre, Etche, Omuma, Okrika, and

Ogu Bolo) and Rivers East (Opobo/ Nkoro, Andoni, Oyigbo, Tai, Eleme, Gokana and Khana.) Multistage sampling procedure was employed. First four (4) Local Government Areas from each Senatorial District were randomly selected to make a total of twelve (12) Local Government Areas. Secondly, simple random sampling procedure was used to select two (2) communities with the presence of selected social institutions from each of the selected Local Government Areas to give a total of twenty-four (24) communities. Purposive sampling procedure was finally used to select key officials, like heads of schools, heads of churches, heads of households from the total population of people in registered government schools, Population of people in registered orthodox churches and number of

household respectively from the selected communities due to their relevance to the study. A total of four hundred and eighty (480) respondents representing 80% of the total population served as the sample size. Primary data source was used, such as structured questionnaire, observation and personal interviews. The study adopted the use of descriptive and inferential statistical tools to present and analyze the data from the field work. A four-point rating scale with options strongly agreed (4), agreed (3), strongly disagreed (2) and disagreed (1) was used to get the mean score of 2.50. Variables that are less than 2.50 indicated rejection of the variable while ≥ 2.50 indicated acceptance of the variable and analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse the hypothesis at 0.05 significant level.

RESULTS

Activities of Religious Institutions on Rural Development in the study area

The activities of religious institutions on rural development in the study area are presented in table 1

Table 1: Activities of religious institution on rural development in the Study Area

Activities of Religious Institution	Strongly Agreed (4)	Agreed (3)	Strongly Disagreed (2)	Disagreed (1)	Total Score	Mean (\bar{x})
Provision of educational facilities	80	10	272	68	962	2.24
Provision of Health care facilities	83	10	272	65	971	2.26
Scholarships Building of Public Toilets	84	10	272	64	474	2.27
Water Supply	282	20	94	34	1410	3.28
Building of Skill Acquisition Centers	106	0	288	36	1036	2.41
Encouragement of right lifestyle	282	36	78	34	1392	3.24
Encouragement of Community Service and	110	4	268	48	1036	2.51

Sanitation						
Organization of outreach programme for widows and less privilege people	277	45	64	44	1415	3.29
Discourage unhealthy practices like female Genital mutilation womanhood initiations	258	24	92	56	1344	3.13
Grand Mean						2.50
≥ 2.50 Accepted; ≤ 2.50 Not Accepted						

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The result in Table 1 showed that the respondents attested to the fact that religious institution were involved in organizing outreach programme for widows and less privileged people with a mean of (\bar{x} =3.29), were involved in water supply (3.28), involved in encouragement of right life style (3.24), discourage unhealthy cultural practices like female genital mutilation (3.13) discourage womanhood initiation and others (3.13) and encouragement of community service such as sanitation, repair of road etc (2.51) as they scored above the decision rule of 2.50. However, building of skill acquisition centers (2.41), awarding of scholarships (\bar{x} =2.29), building of public toilets (\bar{x} =2.27), provision of health care facilities (\bar{x} =2.26) and

provision of educational facilities(\bar{x} =2.24) were not accepted by the respondents as activities/contributions of religious institution to rural development in the study area as they scored less than 2.50. A grand mean of 2.50 was obtained which shows a moderate involvement of religious institutions in the rural development projects, since it was equal to the decision rule of 2.50 it is accepted.

Activities of Educational Institution in Rural Development

The activities of educational institutions on rural development in the study area are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Activities of Educational Institution on Rural Development in the Study Area

Activities of Educational Institution	Strongly Agreed (4)	Agreed (3)	Strongly Disagreed (2)	Disagreed (1)	Total Score n=430	Mean (\bar{x})
Increase the labour force	334	2	56	38	1492	3.47
Enhancement of literacy	306	52	68	4	1520	3.53
Development of Vocational Skills	258	24	92	56	1344	3.13
Provision employment opportunities	306	52	68	4	1520	3.53
Increased Trained man power	334	2	56	38	1492	3.47
Personality Development	276	46	64	44	1414	3.47
Help adapt new innovations	118	30	228	54	1072	2.49
Provision of scholarship scheme	58	24	292	56	944	2.19
Transmission of culture.	110	4	268	48	1036	2.41
Help rural people identify felt needs	111	4	268	47	1039	2.42
Provision of recreational facilities	106	0	238	86	986	2.29
Human Resources Development	282	20	94	34	1410	3.28
Technological Improvement	252	66	78	34	1396	3.25
Grand Mean						2.98

≥ 2.50 Accepted; ≤ 2.50 Not Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The information in Table 2 revealed the activities of educational institution in rural development in the study area. The result showed that educational institutions do provide employment opportunities (\bar{x} =3.53), enhancement of literacy (\bar{x} =3.53), increased labor force (\bar{x} =3.47), increased trained manpower (\bar{x} =3.47), personality development

(\bar{x} =3.29), human resources development (\bar{x} =3.28), technological improvements (\bar{x} =3.25) and development for vocational skills (\bar{x} =3.13) as the mean values were greater than 2.50. However, help to adapt new innovations (\bar{x} =2.49), help rural people identify felt needs (\bar{x} =2.42), transmission of culture (\bar{x} =2.41), provision of recreational facilities (\bar{x} =2.29)

and provision of scholarship scheme ($\bar{x}=2.19$) less than 2.50.
were not accepted as their mean values were

Activities of Family Institution in Rural Development in the study area

The activities of family institutions on rural development in the study area are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Activities of Family on Rural Development in the Study Area

Activities of Family Institution	Strongly Agreed (4)	Agreed (3)	Strongly Disagreed (2)	Disagreed (1)	Total Score	Mean (\bar{x})
Amelioration of Poverty	110	4	269	47	1037	2.41
Reduction of Ignorance	110	4	268	48	1036	2.41
Provision of Basic economic maintenance like food shelter, clothing and others	334	2	56	38	1492	3.47
Provision of Security	282	20	94	34	1410	3.28
Organization of property	110	4	268	48	1036	2.41
Socialization	118	30	228	54	1072	2.49
Mate selection	83	10	281	56	980	2.28
Health care	80	10	272	68	962	2.24
Culture Transfer	111	4	268	47	1039	2.42
Care of Aged members	89	10	267	64	984	2.29
Helping Social Control and integration for peaceful co-existence	118	30	228	54	1072	2.49
Status establishment	258	24	92	56	1344	3.13
Reproduction of new members of society	206	52	68	4	1520	3.53
Gender role identification	106	0	238	86	986	2.29
Provision of land for development	276	46	64	44	1414	3.29
Provision of Personnel	84	2	306	38	972	2.26
Allocation of rights of residence and citizenship	306	52	68	4	1520	3.53
Grand Mean						3.08

≥ 2.50 Accepted; ≤ 2.50 not accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The result on the activities of family institution on rural development in the study area as shown in Table 3 indicated that the family institution carry out a lot of rural development activities with a grand mean of 3.08 higher than the decision rule of 2.50.

Among the presented variables, the ones accepted were allocation of rights of residence and citizenship being the highest with a mean of (\bar{x} =3.53), reproduction of new members of society (\bar{x} =3.53), provision of basic economics maintenance like food, shelter, clothing and others had a mean score of (\bar{x} =3.47), provision of land for development had a mean of (\bar{x} =3.29), provision of security had (\bar{x} =3.28) and status establishment has a mean scores of (\bar{x} =3.13). But social control and integration for peaceful co-existence, has a mean score of (\bar{x} =2.49), culture transfer has a mean score of (\bar{x} =2.42), reduction of ignorance has a mean score of (\bar{x} =2.41), amelioration of poverty had (\bar{x} =2.41), organization of property (\bar{x} =2.41), control of aged members and gender role identification has mean score of (\bar{x} =2.29),mate selection (\bar{x} =2.28), finally provision of personnel (\bar{x} =2.26) and health care has mean score of (\bar{x} =2.24).

H0₂: There is no significant difference in the activities of religious institution (church), family institution and educational institution (school) in rural development activities in the study area

The summary of ANOVA result on the significant difference in the activities of religious institution (church), family institution and educational institution (school) in rural development activities in the study area presented in Table 4 showed that the computed f-value is 16.118 with a corresponding probability value of ($p=0.000 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. More so, $F_{\text{calculated}} = 15.632 > F_{\text{tabulate}} (3,383) = 2.60$, hence, the null hypothesis is also rejected and concluded that there is a significant difference in the activities of religious institution (church), family institution and educational institution (school) in rural development activities in the study area.

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA on the activities of religious institution (church), family institution and educational institution (school) in rural development activities in the study area

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig. F-crit
Between Groups	0.268092	2	9.110	15.632	0.000 3.214
Within Groups	89.15287	427	.462		
Total	89.42996	429			

The ANOVA has established that there is a significant difference in the activities of religious institution (church), family institution and educational institution (school) in rural development activities in the study area. The result is subjected to a further analysis to ascertain were the significant differences exist in the activities of religious institution (church), family institution and educational institution (school) in rural

development activities in the study area. The multiple comparisons result in Table 5 shows that the activities of religious (church) was significantly different from the activities of family ($P = 0.000$) and activities of religious ($P = 0.000$). The activities of religious institution (church), family institution and educational institution (school) in the study area were significantly different from each other.

Table 5: Multiple Comparisons of the difference in the activities of religious institution (church), family institution and educational institution (school) in River State

	(I)Selected Social Institution	(J) N-Power Programmes	Mean Difference (I- J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound Upper Bound	
Tukey	Religious	Education	-.76880*	.11234	.000	-1.0587	-.4789
HSD	Institution	Family	-.54144*	.11526	.000	-.8388	-.2440
(Honest							
Significan	Education	Religious	-.58269*	.11782	.000	-.8867	-.2787
t	Institution	Family	-.54144*	.11526	.000	-.8388	-.2440
Differenc							
e)	Family	Religious	-.58269*	.11782	.000	-.8867	-.2787
	Institution	Education	-.76880*	.11234	.000	-1.0587	-.4789

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

DISCUSSION

A grand mean of 2.50 showed a moderate involvement in the rural development projects by religious institution, since it was equal to the decision mean of 2.50 it is accepted. The result revealed that there was a moderate rural development activity by religious institution due to strong community presence as they serve as hubs for social activities, gathering s and support network, which allows them to effectively mobilize community members to embark on development projects. Gbadebo and Rufus (2011) disclosed that shared values and missions of members of religious institutions give them a sense of duty to serve and promote social justice in their communities. Their missions of ten align with principles of compassion, charity and community welfare driving them to engage actively in rural development initiatives. In a discussion with some members of religious institutions, it was gathered that they were highly involved in rural development activities due to access to financial donations, volunteer labor and material goods to support projects. In another vein, Shingirivai and Tafadwa (2017) see trust and creditability of religious leaders and institutions as a reason for increased

community participation and support as their involvement in rural development projects can lend credibility and legitimacy to initiatives.

The grand mean score of 2.98 implies that educational institution as one of the social institutions in the study area impact in the development of rural communities mostly in employment opportunity, training, human development etc and less in infrastructure. This might be due to some financial constraints, rural-urban migration, and lack of classroom, furniture, half-baked teachers and other related factors. This result contradicts contribution to the progress of the society with the findings of Michael (2015) that sees education as incomplete without due consideration being given to the rural areas. Education is supposed to be a powerful medium for individuals to express themselves in a variety of ways in any situation including mental skill. In the same, Albert-Elenwa and Ile (2017) opines that education is a process which brings about changes in the behavior of the society. It enables every individual to efficiently and effectively participate in societal activities and make a positive change. The primary mission

of educational institution is to provide quality education and skills training. Through they might design programmes to enhance employability, excellence and preparing students for future careers (David & Sageo, 2018). The result is in line with the findings of Tigist & Whrom (2020) who observed that educational institutions have limited scope where they might not have the resources, expertise or infrastructure to provide extensive employment opportunities or other long term activities for the rural people.

The result on activities of family on rural development showed that the impact was felt from the family, gender role, identification, care of aged members, and health care. This result implies that family institution in the different activities suggest that the rural development activities were done for their self-interest as most of the activities primarily benefit themselves or their immediate family members rather than the wider community. This conforms to the view of Abukari (2009), who sees limited resources or capacity as a reason why the activities of family institutions are limited. Family efforts might be focused on meeting their own basic needs or achieving short term goals rather than long term community and rural development goals as observed in the study area. Generally speaking, the findings imply that the rural development activities carried out by the family institution in rivers state was geared towards promoting sustainable livelihood, spur development, enhance social functioning of individual and bring about physical and social cleanliness.

The summary of ANOVA result on the significant difference in the activities of religious institution (church), family institution and educational institution (school) in rural development activities in the

study area showed that the computed f-value is 16.118 with a corresponding probability value of ($p=0.000 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. More so, $F_{\text{calculated}} = 15.632 > F_{\text{tabulate}} (3,383) = 2.60$, hence, the null hypothesis is also rejected and concluded that there is a significant difference in the activities of religious institution (church), family institution and educational institution (school) in rural development activities in the study area. The result has shown that the activities of religious institution (church), family institution and educational institution (school) differ significantly in their activities to rural development activities in the study area. Tigist and Whrom (2020) reported that role of education in people wellbeing is different from what family.

The multiple comparisons result showed that the activities of religious (church) was significantly different from the activities of family ($P = 0.000$) and activities of religious ($P = 0.000$). The activities of religious institution (church), family institution and educational institution (school) in the study area were significantly different from each other. Education involves the transmission of knowledge, skill and values which the individual need to master in order to control his physical and social environment and adapt oneself to the demands of the society of which he is a member (Emodi & Elenwa, 2016). The family is one of the foundational social institutions in all societies, although the definition of 'the family' varies from place to place and from time to time. (Thomas, 1996) and religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say set apart and forbidden, beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community, called a church, all those who adhere to them. The findings is contrary to

that of Ogunyemi (2019) who concluded that all the social Institutions i.e. family, education, religion, politics and the economy must unite and work together for development to take place in Nigeria.

Conclusion And Recommendations

The study has been able to ascertain and confirm that the selected social institutions contributes significantly to improving the socio- economic wellbeing of rural people in diverse ways in the study area. The activities of selected social institutions in rural development in the study area showed a significant relationship with rural development. It is recommended that government should invest in education and vocational training programmes to empower rural people with the knowledge and skill needed to participate in the modern economy.

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