



**EVALUATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS BY
KOLOKUMA/OPOKUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION FOR
IMPROVING LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES OF RURAL DWELLERS (2019-2022)**

Ominikari, Abraham Godwin

Department of Agricultural Economics, Extension and Rural Development,
Niger Delta University Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Corresponding Author's E-mail: ominikarigodwin@ndu.edu.ng **Tel.:** +2347030447472

ABSTRACT

The study evaluates rural development projects embarked by the Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government administration from 2019-2022 in improving livelihood activities of rural dwellers. Identification of livelihood activities of household heads, identification of rural development projects; and evaluation of benefits derived by rural dwellers were the objectives of the study. A snowball sampling technique was used to select 200 respondents as sample size. Data obtained were analyzed with descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage and mean; while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the formulated hypothesis for the study. Findings from the study showed that farming, processing of farm produce, marketing of farm produce, non-farm business, tailoring, welding and fabrication, hair dressing, barbing, transportation, public/civil service, automobile mechanic, etc were among the most common livelihood activities of the rural dwellers in the study with mean score of >2.50. Provision of portable water in all 11 wards, construction/furnishing of skill acquisition center, rebuilding and refurbishing of Kaiama divisional police headquarters, training of youths in the areas of welding and fabrication, fashion and design, hairdressing, catering, renovation of Kaiama motor pack, etc., were the visible rural development projects embarked upon by the current Administration with mean scores of >3.00. Acquisition of skill, source of employment, understanding of foreign language, availability of market for my products, availability of pipe born water, leadership opportunity, a better security situation in my area, availability of good roads, and source of income were the benefits rural dwellers derived from the rural development projects with mean scores > 2.50. There is significant positive relationship between livelihood activities of rural dwellers and the benefits derived from rural development projects. The study concluded that benefits derived from rural development projects of the current administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area by rural dwellers significantly brings about a positive increase in the livelihood activities of the rural dwellers. It was therefore recommended that succeeding administrations in the LGA should ensure that such rural developmental projects are continuously embarked up on by as it offers great benefits to the rural dwellers.

Keywords: Development, Dwellers, Evaluation, Improving livelihood, Projects, Rural.

INTRODUCTION

Rural areas in Nigeria make critical contributions to national development in such areas as food availability, industrial raw materials, revenue generation through taxation and foreign exchange earnings through export of crops, democracy, manpower availability and tourism, among others (Nwosu, 2015). The rural sector holds a central place in the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria; nevertheless, these rural areas usually face neglect and strong deprivations from governments in the country. As a result, the rural areas are characterized



generally by high level of illiteracy, abject poverty, unemployment and lack of other basic infrastructural facilities as well as housing, electricity and inadequate communication facilities. Generally, the standard of living is low, which has partly caused the drift to urban areas where basic facilities are relatively more available and standards of living are higher. The unremitting rural drift no doubt poses a serious threat to the economy of third world countries in general and Nigeria in particular.

Most developing countries, particularly Nigeria, have inadequate livelihood in the rural areas as one major issue. In spite the fact that these rural areas significantly contribute to the overall development of the nation through the supply of food, supply of raw materials for agro-allied industries, surplus labour, and markets for goods produced in other sectors of the economy, etc. (Muhammad *et al.*, 2017).

The greatest problems of third world countries are the high rate of rural-urban migration, making the inhabitants in the cities, more difficult to manage. According to Otto (2008), rural urban flow created serious challenges to the third world countries as only very few governments in the cities have the resources and facilities to manage with such rapidly growing population. The major cause of the high movement to the urban areas is the neglect of rural areas, in spite of the fact that more than 65 percent of Nigeria populations are rural dwellers ((Muhammad *et al.*, 2017).

Nwosu 2015 also established that the local government, which is the third tier of government in Nigeria, has the most important responsibility of developing the rural areas and improving the quality of rural life. Regrettably, the local government councils have failed to improve the quality of life of the average Nigerian dweller. It was of this note the researcher assessed the rural development projects embarked by the current Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Administration from 2019-2022 and ascertained the rural dwellers' standard of living through their livelihood activities with the following objectives:

- i. Describe the livelihood activities of household heads in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area;
- ii. Describe the rural development projects embarked by the current Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government administration from 2019-2022 in improving livelihood activities; and
- iii. Evaluate benefits derived by rural dwellers from the rural development projects.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area

The study was carried out in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area (LGA) of Bayelsa State, Nigeria with headquarter in Kaiama community. It has an area of 361 km² and a population of 77,292 at the 2006 census, (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2007). The LGA has a projected population of 105,900 in 2016 (Wikipedia, 2020). It has an Area of 361km² and made up of 20 communities across the two clans, the LGA lies between latitudes 08' North and longitude 06'18 east of the equatorial rainforest. The area has two distinct seasons; dry season, starting from (November – February) and the rainy season starting from (March – October). The mean temperature is 27°c– 30°c with high humidity of 90 mm and a high annual rainfall of 2,400 mm, the two clans are Kolokuma and Opokuma respectively, (Manpower Nigeria, 2020).

The LGA was created in the year 1996 during the late Sani Abacha's regime, and since then, a lot of administrators such as Executive Chairmen through election, Sole Administrators, and Transition Management Committee Chairmen among others have ruled in the LGA.



Presently, the LGA is under the leadership of Chief Hon. Dendrix Dengiye Ubarugu who was elected August, 2019.

The LGA share boundaries with Sagbama, Southern Ijaw, and Yenagoa Local Government Areas (LGAs), and is made up of communities such as Odi, Kaiama, Okorotomu, Olobiri, Kalama, Sampou, Ayibabiri, Sabagrigha, Okoloba, Igbedi, Gbaranama, Ayakoro-ama, Orubiri, Ofonibiri, Igbainwari, Ekpuwari, Oyobu, Akanrabiri, Gbaranbiri, and Abuwari. The Ijaw Language is widely spoken in the area, while English is the official language and Christianity is the widely practiced religion in the area (Manpower Nigeria, 2020). Farming, fishing, trading, and wrestling are some of the occupation and culture of the people.

Sampling Techniques

The snowball sampling technique was used to achieve a reliable data for the study; this is because the current administration of Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government embarked on Rural/Community Development Projects based on the 11 political wards, whereby, all the communities in the LGA are embedded within these wards. Two hundred (200) rural dwellers that served as respondents were sampled from the eleven wards, 18 were selected from 10 wards while, 20 respondents were selected from a particular ward for having several communities in that particular ward making the sample size to be 200

Method of Data Collection

Primary data and secondary information were the sources of data collection. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaire that was administered to indigenes/residents (community stakeholders) of the sampled communities, as well as secondary information retrieved from the internet, textbooks, magazines, etc.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques such as frequency, percentages, and mean score, while the hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

Objective i which sought to assess the livelihood activities of household heads in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area was analyzed using mean score. The item statements were rated on a four-point Likert rating scale of strongly agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. In using the four-point rating scale to obtain the mean score, a midpoint was obtained by adding the weights of the rating scales of 4+3+2+1 which gives 10 points, and we divided the total point of 10 by 4 to obtain a mean score of 2.50 which was then used for the purpose of decision making. Any mean score response greater than or equal to 2.50 was accepted as the livelihood activity engaged by household heads in the study, while, any mean score response less than 2.50 was rejected as livelihood activity that is not been engaged by household heads in the study.

Objective ii which sought to ascertain the rural development projects embarked by the current Local Government Administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma was analyzed using mean score. The item statements were rated on a five-point Likert rating scale of strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, undecided = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. In using the five-point rating scale to obtain the mean score, a midpoint was obtained by adding the weights of the rating scales of 5+ 4+ 3+ 2+1 which gives 15 points, and we divided the total point of 15 by 5 to obtain a mean score of 3.00 which was then used for the purpose of decision making. Any mean score response greater than or equal to 3.00 was accepted as the rural development projects embarked by the current Local Government Administration, while, a mean score response less than 3.00 was rejected as the rural development projects that is not part of projects embarked by the current Local Government Administration in the study.



Objective iii which sought to assess the benefits derived from the rural development projects of the current Local Government Administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma was analyzed using mean score. The item statements were rated on a four-point Likert rating scale of strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. In using the four-point rating scale to obtain the mean score, a midpoint was obtained by adding the weights of the rating scales of 4+3+2+1 which gives 10 points, and we divided the total point of 10 by 4 to obtain a mean score of 2.50 which was then used for the purpose of decision making. Any mean score response greater than or equal to 2.50 was accepted as the benefits derived from the rural development projects of the current Local Government Administration, while a mean score response less than 2.50 was rejected as a factor.

The mean score on a 5-point rating scale is mathematically expressed as:

X-bar = (SAx(5) + Ax(4) + UNx(3) + Dx(2) + SDx(1)) / n ... (1)

The mean score on a 4-point rating scale is mathematically expressed as;

X-bar = (SAx(4) + Ax(3) + Dx(2) + SDx(1)) / n ... (2)

where;

X-bar = Mean score rating of item statements;

SA = Pooled frequency responses for strongly agree rating;

A = Pooled frequency responses for agree rating;

UN = Pooled frequency responses for undecided rating;

D = Pooled frequency responses for disagree rating;

SD = Pooled frequency responses for strongly disagree rating;

x = Multiplication sign;

Σ = Summation sign;

n = Total number of respondents.

The hypotheses of the study were Ho1: There is no significant positive relationship between livelihood activities of rural dwellers and the benefits they derived from rural development projects of the current administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area. This hypothesis was tested using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r). The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) that was specified was used to test the hypothesis that there is no significant positive relationship between livelihood activities of rural dwellers and the benefits they derived from rural development projects of the current administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area. The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 percent level of significance; the bivariate Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Coefficient (r) statistic is given as:

r = (n Σ xy - (Σ x)(Σ y)) / sqrt(n(Σ x^2) - (Σ x)^2) * sqrt(n(Σ y^2) - (Σ y)^2) ... (3)

where;

r = Correlation coefficient

Σ xy = Sum of the product of paired scores;

Σ x = Sum of the livelihood activities of rural dwellers score;

Σ y = Sum of the benefits derived from rural development projects score;

Σ x^2 = Sum of squared of the livelihood activities of rural dwellers score;

Σ y^2 = Sum of squared of the benefits derived from rural development projects score.



n = Number of pairs of data

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Livelihood Activities of the Household Heads in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government

Table 1 shows the mean responses of the respondents on the livelihood activities of household heads in the Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area. On a 4-point scale, the respondents' grand mean response on the livelihood activities of household heads in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area was 2.95, which was higher than the decision mean cut-point of 2.50. This means that the majority of respondents agreed that the enumerated livelihood activities are what the people in the area do for a living.

Table 1: Mean score of respondents' livelihood activities of the household heads in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area

Table with 8 columns: Livelihood activities, Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree, Weighted sum of response, Mean score, Remark. Rows include Farming, Processing of farm produce, Marketing of farm produce, Non-farm business, Tailoring, Welding and fabrication, Hair dressing, Barbing, Transportation, Public/civil service, Automobile mechanic, Generator mechanic, Electrical work, Vulcanizer, Computer operator, Art work, Tiling work, Grand mean, Number of respondents, and Decision cut-point mean.

Source: Field survey data, 2022

As reported in Table 1, the respondents had mean responses of greater than 2.50 on all 17 enlisted statements bordering on the various types of livelihood activities being engaged in by rural dwellers in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area, indicating that farming, processing of farm produce, marketing of farm produce, non-farm business, tailoring, welding and fabrication, hair dressing, barbing, transportation, public/civil service, automobile mechanic, generator mechanic, electrical work, vulcanizing, computer operator, art work, and



tiling work are among the most common livelihood activities. This indicates that rural residents in the study area have a variety of livelihood possibilities. As a result, farming and non-farm activities are some of the most prevalent sources of income for the rural people investigated. The existence of rural livelihood provides a significant problem because these populations are frequently impoverished and lack the fundamental needs of life. A rural household with a range of income-earning activities has a better probability of financial survival than one with only one source. Diverse livelihoods refer to a person's reliance on a range of activities over the course of a year (Ezenwa *et al.*, 2018). In other for rural economy to grow and develop in their various localities', a variety of livelihood options are required. This is because sustainable livelihoods require human, social, economic, financial, physical, and natural capital. Diversification of livelihoods improves a household's prospects of economic growth and survival. This finding is similar to those of (Ezenwa *et al.*, 2018) and Barbier and Hochard (2014) who affirmed that rural populace, may earn a living from both farming and non-farming activities.

Rural Development Projects Embarked by the Current Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Administration from 2019-2022

The mean responses of the respondents on the rural development projects embarked by the current Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government administration are presented in Table 2 below. In response to the rural development initiatives undertaken by the present Local Government administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma, the respondents' grand mean response on a 5-point scale was 3.86, which was higher than the decision mean cut-point of 3.00. In other words, the vast majority of respondents believed that the aforementioned rural development initiatives were initiated by the present Local Government Area administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma. On all 14 enlisted statements concerning rural development projects undertaken by the current Local Government administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma, the respondents had mean responses greater than 3.00 on all 14 enlisted statements, indicating that provision of portable water in all 11 wards, construction/furnishing of skill acquisition center, rebuilding and refurbishing of Kaiama divisional police headquarters, training of youths in the areas of welding and fabrication, fashion and design, hairdressing, catering, etc., training of youths to acquire foreign language such as French, Russia, China, Ukraine, etc., construction of concrete road in the council secretariat, erection of cenotaph/playground in honour of our fallen heroes, interlocking of council courtyard, rebuilding of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) nursery and primary school building, provision of laptops for youths empowerment, rebuilding of fallen fence at Sabagea health centre, reconstruction of Odi market, provision of toilet and borehole for traders at market squares, and interlocking of governor's lodge, Kaiama, and renovation/building of more structures at Kaiama motor pack that was not enlisted in table two were the visible rural development projects embarked upon by the current Administration in the study.

The results of Table 2 further show that the present Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government administration is extensively engaged in rural development projects and programs in terms of education, capacity building, health, infrastructure, and other aspects of daily life, among other things. Rural development must be supported by the existing Local Government Area administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma, as it will go a long way toward improving the living circumstances of the underprivileged people in the rural area. The development of rural areas is just as vital as the growth of metropolitan areas. The alleviation of the sufferings of rural people is critical to the development of rural areas. The present Local Government Area



administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma is making efforts to improve rural areas, with the goal of building infrastructure and job possibilities. The population density in cities would be reduced as a result of this. The rural dwellers especially the youths would be able to prosper in the town itself, rather than needing to consider relocating to another location in order to earn their living. A similar conclusion was reached by Nwosu (2015) who observed that the majority of rural development initiatives undertaken by most local government administrations are focused on education, health, infrastructure development as well as human development capabilities and empowerment.

Table 2: Mean scores of the rural development projects embarked by the current Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government administration

Table with 9 columns: Rural development projects, SA, A, UN, D, SD, Weighted sum of responses, Mean score, Remark. Rows include various projects like 'Provision of portable water in all the eleven (11) wards' and 'Grand mean'.

Note: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; UN = Uncertain; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree
Source: Field survey data, 2022



Benefits Derived by Rural Dwellers from the Rural Development Projects

The result of the mean response of the respondents on the benefits they derived from the rural development projects of the current Local Government administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma is presented in Table 3. The grand mean response of the respondents on the benefits they derived from the rural development projects of the current Local Government administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma of 3.16 was higher than the decision mean cut-point of 2.50 on a 4-point scale. This implies that the respondents on the average accepted to have derived some benefits from the rural development projects from the current administration.

Out of the nine (9) enlisted benefits they derived from the rural development projects of the current Local Government Area administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma, the result showed that the respondents had mean responses of greater than 2.50 on all the nine (9) items; suggesting that acquisition of skill, source of employment, understanding of foreign language, availability of market for my products, availability of pipe born water, leadership opportunity, availability of motor pack for my transportation business, a better security situation in my area, availability of good roads, and source of income were the benefits they derived from the rural development projects of the current Local Government Area administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma.

Table 3: Mean score respondents’ benefits they derived from the rural development projects of the current Local Government Area administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma

Benefits	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Weighted sum of responses	Mean score	Remark
a. Acquisition of skill	89	79	30	2	655	3.28	Benefited
2. Source of employment	132	36	12	20	680	3.40	Benefited
3. Understanding of foreign language		91	36	6	619	3.10	Benefited
4. Availability of market for my products	90	70	35	5	645	3.23	Benefited
5. Availability of pipe born water	91	80	20	9	653	3.27	Benefited
6. Leadership opportunity	54	82	52	12	578	2.89	Benefited
7. A better security situation in my area	76	62	44	18	596	2.98	Benefited
8. Availability of good roads	66	91	38	5	618	3.09	Benefited
9. Source of income	99	51	40	10	639	3.20	Benefited
Grand mean score						3.16	
Number of respondents						200	
Decision mean cut-point						2.50	

Note: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree
 Source: Field survey Data, 2022

From Table 3, acquisition of skills will help rural residents to start their own businesses, allowing them to cope with the current economic hardships in the country. The present LGA



administration's rural development projects, which serve as a source of employment, will enable rural residents to be gainfully employed and able to meet their family's needs. This will serve to lessen restlessness among local youngsters and deter them from engaging in other social vices. The area is projected to undergo a transformation as a result of this. The ability of rural residents to understand foreign languages will aid in the improvement of their international relationships as well as expand employment options for them, particularly in overseas jobs. The availability of a market for products will allow rural residents to sell their farm products on a regular basis, eliminating postharvest losses. The availability of pipe-borne water will allow rural residents to drink clean, safe water and avoid diseases like cholera, which are linked to drinking from contaminated water sources. Rural people will be better positioned to take care of the infrastructures and assure their maintenance as a result of the leadership opportunity provided by the present LGA administration's rural development projects. The presence of a better security situation in the rural area will ensure the safety of lives and property in the area, as well as the safe movement of people and their belongings. It will also facilitate the establishment of local and international businesses in the area, resulting in more job opportunities for the people. Good roads will make it easier to transport farm produce from the farm to the market, resulting in better profits. The present LGA administration's rural development projects will help the area's economy flourish by providing a source of income for the residents. The study's findings are similar to those of Onunka *et al.* (2017); Ibeagwu *et al.* (2012); Makate and Mango (2017); and Oche *et al.* (2018).

Hypothesis of the Study

This is stated as (H_0): There is no significant positive relationship between livelihood activities of rural dwellers and the benefits they derived from rural development projects of the current administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to test the hypothesis that there is no significant positive relationship between livelihood activities of rural dwellers and the benefits they derived from rural development projects of the current administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area. The result of the correlation analysis used to test this hypothesis is presented in Table 4.

The result in Table 4 showed that there was a significant positive correlation existing between livelihood activities of rural dwellers and the benefits they derived from rural development projects of the current administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) of the relationship between livelihood activities of rural dwellers and the benefits they derived from rural development projects of the current administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area was 0.879. This Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.879 in absolute term is above the 0.8 bench mark which is taken to imply the existence of a very high (very strong) correlation between two continuous variables in line with Oche *et al.* (2018).

Therefore, the result of the Pearson correlation coefficient indicates that a very strong significant correlation existed between livelihood activities of rural dwellers and the benefits they derived from rural development projects of the current administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area ($r = 0.879$, at $P < 0.05$). Thus, increase in the benefits derived from rural development projects of the current administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area by rural dwellers significantly brings about a positive increase in the livelihood activities of the rural dwellers.



Table 4: Correlation result of the significant positive relationship between livelihood activities of rural dwellers and the benefits they derived from rural development projects of the current administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area

Variable	Correlation coefficients (r)	Sig.	Remark
Benefits derived from rural development projects of the current administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area by rural dwellers	0.879	***	Very strong positive correlation

Note: Values of Pearson correlation coefficient at 2- tailed significance; ***significant at 1% level.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study assessed rural developmental projects embarked by the current Kolokuma/Opokuma administration in improving livelihood activities of rural dwellers. Livelihood activities of household heads in the Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area include farming, processing of farm produce, and marketing of farm produce among others. The Local Government administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma is extensively engaged in rural development programs/projects in terms of education, capacity building, health, infrastructure, and other aspects of daily life among other things. Benefits derived from the rural development projects of the current Local Government administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma, include acquisition of skill, source of employment, understanding of foreign language, availability of market for my products, availability of pipe born water, leadership opportunity, a better security situation in my area, availability of good roads, and source of income. Increase in the benefits derived from rural development projects of the current administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area by rural dwellers significantly brings about a positive increase in the livelihood activities of the rural dwellers. The study recommended that, succeeding administration in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area should ensure that such rural developmental projects are continuously embarked up on by as it offers great benefits to the rural dwellers.

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