EFFECT OF BASIC AMENITIES ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS IN BENUE STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
The study determined the effect of basic amenities on socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria. The study specifically determined the effect of primary healthcare, pipe-borne water, education, and rural electrification on socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design and data were collected using structured questionnaire. The population of the study consists of 1,023, 000 people in three selected local government areas in Benue State namely, Vandeikya, Buruku and Ogbadibo. A sample size of 400 was determined using Taro Yamane's formula. The data collected were analysed using inferential statistics (regression analysis). Findings of the study indicated that primary healthcare, pipe-borne water, education, and rural electrification have significant effect on socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria. The study concluded that basic amenities have helped in the transformation of rural areas in Benue State. It recommended amongst others that Local government areas in Benue State should always provide healthcare facilities and improve on healthcare services for the rural dwellers. This will help to improve the living conditions of the people in rural areas, Local government councils in Benue State should always ensure that water is made available and accessible to rural dwellers to help alleviate their sufferings. Local government should also ensure the maintenance and repair of pipe-borne water in rural areas, Local government areas in Benue State should assist the state government in the establishment and maintenance of rural education as well as ensure the provision of textbooks and audio-visual materials in primary schools to help the plight of the less privileged and to help improve rural electrification, local government areas in Benue State should always provide support and constant maintenance for steady electrification as it has the highest contribution to socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue state, Nigeria.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The complexity of life and environmental degradation has been growing recognition of the importance of socioeconomic development through infrastructural development of the rural communities specially building of basic amenities in our rural areas in a contemporary developing world. The glaring gap between the rural and urban areas in terms of infrastructural, resources distribution, human resources development and employment, which has made rural development imperative in this study. The need for active rural development policies hasbecome imperative in addressing development issues as seventy-five (75 %) of the world impoverished live in the rural areas (Nweneka, 2018).

Kafle and Karkee (2003) basic amenities are the things considered to be essential to make life easier and more pleasant. It means a toilet, personal washing facilities, or cooking facilities. The government intends to provide the isolated town with basic amenities, such as roads, running water, and electricity. It is the fundamental human right. While, according to Okafor (2014) socio-economic development, therefore, is the process of social and economic development in a society. It is measured with indicators, such as gross domestic product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy, and lev els of employment.

In Nigeria, the recognition of rural communities as the third tier of government responsibility in 1976 reform placed the local government on the front burner for local peculiarities and problems. Subsequent reforms like 1988 and 1991 lent credence to the autonomy of local government. These reforms introduced to the local government, the presidential system of government as it used to be at the federal and state levels. The underlying philosophy surrounding the existence of local government is not at variance with the universally amplified virtues of decentralisation (Ibenegbu, 2018). Local government areas in Nigeria contribute to rural development through the provision of schools, agriculture, pipe-borne water, electricity, rural roads amongst others (Okoli, 2015). Tolu (2014) stated that opening of rural markets, provision of rural health facilities, provision of essential amenities, agricultural sector, general security, industrialization, education sector, transportation and communication sector are the primary assignment of local governments in Nigeria (Yahaya, 2019). It is against this background that this study examines the effect of basic amenitieson socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

From the background, the establishment of local government in Nigeria arises from the need to facilitate rural socioeconomic development through infrastructural development and service delivery. Local government system in Nigeria has no doubt remained one of the key institutional players of socioeconomic development of the rural communities and its impact on the daily lives of citizens cannot be overemphasised. Rural dwellers are intimately affected by the activities of local government daily in Benue state and Nigeria at large. Local government areas are expected to become more meaningful in facilitating improved socioeconomic lives of the rural dwellers. Basic facilities such as roads, bridges, markets, health institutions, primary and post-primary institutions have been provided in different parts of the country through self-help development programmes (Okafor (2014).

Local governments are constitutionally empowered to construct and maintain rural roads, streetlights, water and drains and other public highways or such public facilities. Local government areas have previously made effort to improve rural development by focusing on peoples' needs and basic amenities such as provision of good roads, electricity, health centres, markets, schools, among others. However, rural areas in Benue are still characterized by inadequate social amenities such as primary healthcare, education, pipe borne water, rural electrification, and so on.

Previous studies by IlO, Chikeleze, Chukwuemeka and Onele (2023) focused on local government administration on grassroots development in Southeast Nigeria using healthcare services, educational services, and rural roads networks as the variables. A study by Obiani (2023) focused on administrative abuses and socio-economic development in the Nigerian local government. The previous studies focused on different locations and dimensions of local government administration. Also, some

studies such as Abbas and Ahmad (2012) and Ola (2019) assessed the challenges of local governments in Nigeria while neglecting the role of local government in rural development. To fill the gap in literature the current study conducted research study "Effect of Basic Amenities on Socioeconomic Development of Rural Areas in Benue State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to determine the effect of basic amenitieson socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

i. determine effect of primary healthcare serviceson socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria,

ii. investigatethe effect of pipe-borne water socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria.

iii. ascertain the effect of rural education on socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria.

iv. assess the effect of rural electrificationon socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria.

The findings of the study will be of benefits to the stakeholders including policy makers that are clamouring for restructuring in Nigeria, government will use the study as a guide, rural people will benefit from developmental policies and programs at the grass root., researchers and students will use the study as a reference material.

This study focuses on basic amenitiesand socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria. However, due to the large number of local governments in Benue State, the study selected threelocal government areas in Benue State namely, Vandeikya, Buruku and Ogbadibo local government areas representing Zone A, B & C respectively. The local governments were chosen because of the geographical zones and large number of people dwelling in such areas. The study covered a period of seven years (2014-2021).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Efficiency Service Theory

The efficiency service theory developed by Ola (1984) has been agreed with by some scholars who are of the view that Local Government exists to provide basic essential services and as such, it will be judged on the scale of efficiency over how best these services are provided. The efficiency service theory is one of the theories that locate the rationale for Local Government in the provision of services in an efficient manner in the politics of the world especially in Nigeria setting. The theory postulates that the main purpose of localgovernment is to provide services to the local people on the grounds that it is the mostefficient agent for providing those services that are essentially local. The proponents arguethat the efficient delivery of some local services is so compelling that if local government does not exist, something else will have to be created in its place, implying that localgovernment is indispensable. The central point of this school is that the primary purpose of the local government systems is to provide social services such as law and order, local roads, primary education, sanitation and others efficiently (Adeyemo, 2010).

The efficiency service school believes that what is germane and pertinent to local government is by its ability and capacity to provide services in an adequate and efficient manner that is up to national standard. This implies that if local government did not exist, something else would be created in its place so as to compel the efficient performance of these services. The cardinal points and primary purpose of this theory is for local government to provide social services such as law and order, local roads, primary education, sanitation, and others efficiently.

The theory opines that the essentialfunction of local government is to provide services and that local government musttherefore be judged by the success they achieve in providing services measurable by national standards (Ola and Tonwe, 2007). The school believes that the idea of democratic participationdoes not apply to different political systems in the same manner; that it was equally falseto see local government as a setting for political education and democracy. Kafle and Karkee (2003) also agrees that the theory ensure that local

government exists primarily to propagate efficient-service delivery, and this is expected to pre-occupy the ways and manners their power, resources and time would be channeled. This theory is relevant and applicable to this study because the expectation from political leaders is to deliver service to the populace in a satisfactory, timely, adequate and efficient manner.

Local government also forms a good base for effective mobilization of the support and resources of the people towards government projects and programs. For instance, local government can generate revenue internally and use it alongside the funds made available to it by the state and national government to improve on the lives of the people within their areas of operation. In Nigeria, for instance, there have been various local government reforms to strengthen the capacity of the local governments to deliver services effectively and efficiently to the local and grassroots people. This is why the local governments usually takes the blame where local roads are bad, where there are no market stalls, no functional motor park, no health centres, no portable water, no drugs in local dispensaries and where refuse is littered around the places (Akani, 2017).

Nico (2008) argues again that by the nature of local government, it brings government closer to the people, making translation of community preference into responsive policy and programs more likely. Indeed, locally based decisions and development programs are often more practical and sustainable in that they acknowledge and accommodate local diversities and historical complexities that may exist within a particular locality. In such circumstance, the provision of local public goods and services will reflect more, the local tastes and preferences. It also allows for flexibility in decisionmaking and implementation. Impliedly, since the officials of the local government councils are indigenes of the areas, they are in a better position to understand the needs of the people and provide efficient services for their welfare.

The theory clearly demonstrates how local government creates an appropriate and conducive environment for the people at the local level through efficient and effective service delivery. The local government is essentially created as a viable political and administrative organ for the transformation of all communities and for delivery of essential services to the citizens. Local government areas play a central role in enabling the achievement of development at the grassroot level. Local governments are mandated to provide services such as the establishment and maintenance of roads within the towns of the district, including sidewalks, streetlights, and street drainage system, construction of water reservoirs in towns and villages, construction, and management of primary schools amongst others. The theory is therefore in line with variables used (healthcare facilities, pipe-borne water, primary education, and agriculture development).

Concept of Basic Amenities

According to Arowolo (2008 basic amenity in rural area includes primary health care, running water, education, electricity, and so on. It depends on where you are, but these are considered important and are things that you normally have wherever you go. Local government has been the concern of every responsive political system in the world. This is because; local government basically, is the involvement of grassroots people in the provision of social and economic amenities to the local areas. It is based on the principle that local problems and needs can be understood by the people of the locality better than by Central or State government (Arowolo, 2008). The existence of local government has always been defended on the basis that it is a crucial aspect of democratization and intensification of mass participation in the decision-making process. No political system is considered complete and democratic if it does not have a system of local government (Shah, 2006). Local government serves a two-fold purpose. The first is the administrative purpose of supplying goods and services; the other purpose is to represent and involve citizens in determining specific local public needs and how these local needs can be met. Local representative government is a process that span and connects representation and administration at local levels within local government structures (Appadorai, 2004)

Dimensions of Basic Amenities

The dimensions of basic amenities according to Awotokun (2005) are:

i. **Primary Healthcare Services:** a health facility is any location where healthcare is provided. Health facilities range from small clinics and doctor's offices to urgent

carecentres and large hospitals with elaborate emergency rooms and trauma centres(Abdullahi and Ahmad, 2018). The number and quality of health facilities in a country or region is one common measure of that area's prosperity and quality of life (Lawal and Oladunjoye, 2010).

ii. Provision of Pipe-borne Water: The World Bank (2011) describes water resources as when individuals have access to a safe water source (SWS) of good quality, positioned not more than 200 m away from dwelling, further implying that a considerable amount of time should not be spent when collecting water.

iii. Education: education is expansively considered and accepted as the path to economic prosperity in the world over. Kalusi (2001) also argued that any nation that failed to provide good education for its populace should not expect any rapid growth in their social and economic development, because sound and relevant education is the bedrock for any concrete development.

iv. Rural Electrification: In the context of sustainable energy, rural electrification refers to the build-out of super grids with energy storage to accommodate the energy transition to renewable energy and the switch of end-uses to electricity (Shiru, 2008).

Concept of Socioeconomic Development

According to Okafor (2014) socio-economic development, therefore, is the process of social and economic development in a society. It is measured with indicators, such as gross domestic
product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy, and lev els of employment. Rural development is the process by which people create and recreatethemselves and their life circumstances to realize higherlevels of civilization in accordance with their own choiceand values (Ovubude, 2000). It also a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social order to producehigher per-capital income and levels of living throughmore modern production methods and improved socialorganization (Akintola, 2007). Rural development is any effort that isgeared towards the improvement and/orenhancement of rural livelihoods in thesocial and economic domains. Itinvolves both the transformation oflives and landscape to ensure asignificant improvement in the quality of life of the rural folk (Chukwuemeka, 2013).

Measures of Socioeconomic Development

The measures of socioeconomic development include poverty reduction, improvement in standard of living and empowerment of the citizens as illustrated by Nkhwangwa, (2014) which were used in the study as follow:

v. **Poverty reduction:** poverty is universally measured in monetary expenditure terms, and individuals that are considered poor are those living on less than US$1.25 per day (Nkhwangwa, 2014).

vi. **Standard of Living:** standard of living is defined as the level of welfare available to individual or to the group of people. It concerns goods and services people are able to consume and the resources they have access to (Wadhwa and Parimoo, 2015).

vii. **Empowerment:** empowerment has been defined as an intentional ongoing process cantered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources; or a process by which people gain control over their lives, democratic participation in the life of their community, and a critical understanding of their environment (Ibenegbu, 2018).

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Omatsola (2011) investigated on the role of local government in rural development in Warri North Local Government Area of Delta State. Findings of the study revealed that the council has not performed well in developing the rural areas over the years. Otoghile, *et at* (2011) examined Local Government Administration and Development: a survey of Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State Nigeria. The authors found out that though funds available to local governments are grossly inadequate,

there is the general impression that the little money made available are directed into private pockets. Zakari (2014) assessed the impact of Local Government on rural development in Soba and Zaria Local Government areas, Kaduna State, Nigeria. It was discovered that inadequate funding has been the bane of rural development in study areas. Adedire (2014) conducted a study on local government and the challenges of rural development in Nigeria from 1999 to 2013. The study showed that local governments were faced with such challenges like inadequate finance, corruption, poor implementation of projects, lack of competent manpower, high level of illiteracy, lack of due consultation and non-involvement of local dwellers in policy decisions and hijack of local government allocation by the state government.

Mgenka, *et at*(2015) examined the effect of agricultural activities on rural development in selected Local Government Areas in South-East, Nigeria.Results of the study showed that there is improvement in agricultural development activities of LGCs such as buying and distributing fertilizer, acquisition of land for agricultural programmes, production of livestock, tree planting programme, animal feed formulation, educating farmers on safe handling of pesticides and insecticides, among others. Nneamaka (2015) investigated on the role performance of local government councils in agricultural development in South-East Nigeria. Students' t' test was used to test for differences between the opinions of LG staff and farmers on LGCs' role expectations and achievements, while factors inhibiting role performance of LGCs were further subjected to factor analysis. Akujuru (2015) carried out a study titled "Local Government, Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Findings of the study indicated that there are many problems affecting good governance, sustainable development and the economic empowerment of the people in local government areas in Nigeria.

Marcus (2015) investigated on community development as a strategy for sustainable development in Chikun Local Government Area, Kaduna State. The study found that most government plans and implementation of community development projects and programmes did not properly involve the beneficiaries, from its initial stage to completion. Egwu and Obiorah (2017) carried out critical reflections on the local government system and rural development in Nigeria.Thestudy discovered the factors that hinder the optimal performance of localgovernment system towards attainment of rural development, namely: corruption, lack of autonomy, paucity of fund, non-periodic elections; conflictof inter-governmental relations, over-bloated workforce, high levels ofpartisanship, and joint-account syndrome. Ogbette, *et al (*2018) investigated on "Local Government Administration and Rural Development in Enugu State, Nigeria2007-2015". The study used secondary information collected from other studies to arrive at conclusions, but this might not be realistic since views of the respondents were neglected. The current study adopted a survey research design to help the researcher to collect different views of the participants regarding local government administration and rural development.

Hamza and Yahaya (2019) examined the role of Local Government in rural development in Lafia Local Government Area over a period of 2015 to 2019.The findings of the study revealed that Lafia local government enhances rural development through provision of social amenities to the locality. Akinseye (2020) investigated the administration of primary health care program in local government in Nigeria with focus on Ibadan Southwest Local Government. The results showed that the management of primary healthcare is efficient at the local level and that efficient management of the primary health care will enhance the Nigerian primary healthcare system. Ananti, *et al* (2021) examined the effect of local government administration on grassroots development in Anambra State. Findings revealed that local government administrations have not been able to significantly provide social services (health, education) and basic physical infrastructural facilities (community/farm roads, portable water, motor parks, food markets, rural electrification) in their constituent communities in Anambra State. Kawi (2021) investigated the impact of state/local government Joint Account on the performance of selected local government councils in Borno State. The findings of the study indicated that local government council are not effective in terms of execution of capital projects, community development and prompt payment of salaries.

Tobi and Oikhala (2021) conducted a study on "Local Government Reforms and Grassroots Development in Nigeria". The study found that

apart from poor implementation of recommendations of various committees, inconsistencies in the provisions of the constitutions, inadequate funding, and resistance by state governments have collectively undermined the effectiveness of local governments as the agents of grassroots governance and development in Nigeria. Agboeze, *et al* (2021) examined the role of local government in community development in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. The study revealed that the budget allocation sent by the government to the responsible departments in the local government is not always received as and when due for the effective implementation of community development projects. IlO, *et al* (2023) examined the effect of Local Government Administration on Grassroots Development in Southeast Nigeria. The findings showed that local government administrations have contributed significantly to the provision of health care services, basic educational services and rural road networks in Southeast Nigeria.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Research Design: the study adopteda survey research design. The survey research design was considered appropriate since data would be collected from the elements or subjects without imposing any condition or treatment on them by using a questionnaire.

Population of the Study: thepopulation of the study is 1,023,000 total population of three selected local government areas in Benue State which includeVandeikya (487,000), Buruku(367,200) and Ogbadibo(168,800) according to National Population Commission and National Bureau of Statistics Estimates (2022).

Sample and Sampling Technique: to determine the sample size for the study, Taro Yamane's formula is used. The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)2}$$

where, n = Sample size,

N = Total Population,

e = Level of significance (tolerable error) at 5%, 1= Constant

Therefore, $n = \frac{1,023,000}{1+ 1,023,000\ (0.05)2}$

$$, n = \frac{1,023,000}{1+1,023,000\ (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1,023,000}{1+2,557.5}, n = 400.$$

A proportionate percentage contribution of stratum population was used. While simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents from each stratum. The choice of the above population became necessary for the purpose of accuracy and objective in this research.

Instrument of Data Collection

The questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection for this study. A close-ended questionnaire was used to elicit data from respondents. The questionnaire was used to help facilitate timely collection of responses from the respondents. The questionnaire was developed in accordance with the research objectives and was divided into two major parts.

Validation of the Instrument: validity is carried out to ensure that the research instrument measures what it attempts to measure. To ensure validity of the instruments, the face validity was carried out by the sexperts in the field of public administration who read and approved the questionnaire before it was used for data collection. Construct validity was also carried out to check if the variables are independent of each other. Factor analysis was employed in this study since the instrument has many options. Factor analysis also allowed the researcher to condense a large set of variables or scale items down to a smaller or manageable number of dimensions of factors.

Reliability of the Instrument: for reliability of the measurement instrument, a pilot test was done on $^1/_3$ of the sample size (0.33 x 400 = 132). This was necessary to ensure the consistency of the results. The Cronbach's Alpha for each of the constructs was greater than 0.95. This implied that all the constructs were

reliable and so were used in the study as recommended by Fraenkel and Wallen (2000).

Model Specification: in this study basic amenities rural is regarded as a function of socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue state, Nigeria. This study suggests that;

Socioeconomic Development = f (Primary Healthcare, Pipe Borne Water, Education, Rural Electrification)

SED = f (BSA) (1)

SED = f (PHC, PBW, EDU, REL) (2)

where;

SED= Socioeconomic Development (Dependent Variable)

BSA = Basic Amenities (Independent Variable)

PHC = Primary Healthcare Services

PBW= Pipe-borne Water

EDU= Education

REL = Rural Electrification

Thus, the explicit form of the model for this study is as follows:

$SED = \alpha + b_1PHC + b_2 PBW + b_3EDU + b_4REL + \varepsilon$ (3)

ε = error term

$b_1>0$, $b_2>0$, $b_3>0$, $b_4>0$.

Based on the theories b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4 are all expected to have positive signs implying a direct relationship with the dependent variable (socioeconomicdevelopment).

Data Analysis Techniques: the study multiple regression used for data analysis with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23). The decision rule for accepting or rejecting the null hypotheses using regression is stated thus: If the standard error ofb_i [S (b_i) $>^1/_2 b_i$] we accept the null hypothesis, that is, we accept that the estimate b_i is not statistically significant at the 5% (0.05) level of significance. If the standard error of b_i [S (b_i) $<^1/_{2i}$] we reject the null hypothesis, in other words, we accept that the estimate b_i is statistically significant at the 5% (0.05) level of significance.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results were analysed and discussed as shown below:

Table 1: Model Summary

R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
.982[a]	.955	.951	.201	1.567

a. Predictors (Constant), PHC, EDU, PBWA, REL
b. Dependent Variable: SED

Source: *Field Survey, 2024*

The result from Table 1, shows that coefficient of determination (R square) explains the variation in the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variable. The R square value of .951 is an indication that there was 95.1 % variation in rural development at 95% confidence interval. The remaining 5% is explained by other factors that contribute to rural development. Also, the value of R (.982) from Table 1 shows that there was a significant

relationship between basic amenities and socioeconomic developmentof rural areas in Benue State Nigeria.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	303.475	4	75.869	1710.036	.000[b]
Residual	17.525	395	.044		
Total	321.00	399			

a. Dependent Variable: SED

b. Predictors (Constant), PHC, EDU, PBW, REL.

Source: *Field Survey, 2024.*

The result from the ANOVA statistics in Table 2, indicates that the processed data, which is the population parameters, had a significance level of .000 which is less than the p-value (0.05). This implies that the overall regression model is statistically significant, valid, and fit (F=1710.036; P=.000). The model is fit and significant in explaining the relationship between basic amenities and socioeconomic development of rural areas.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.324	.077		4.219	.000
PHC	.435	.016	.429	2.113	.035
BWA	.360	.017	.350	3.554	.000
EDU	.545	.016	.539	2.844	.005
REL .943	.013	.930	7.162	.000	

a. Dependent Variable: SED

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The regression results in table 3 showed that local government administration variables (primary healthcare care, pipe-borne water, education, and rural electrification) contribute

significantly to socioeconomic development in Benue State, Nigeria. The result indicated that a unit increase inprimary healthcare would increase socioeconomic development by 42.9%; a unit increase in pipe-borne water would result to 35.0 % increase in socioeconomic development; a change in education activities by the local government would result to 53.9 % increase in rural development and an increase in rural electrification would result to 93.0% change in socioeconomic development. The study found that the p-value for the variables was less than 0.05, which indicates that primaryhealthcare, pipe-borne water, education, and rural electrification have a positive and significant effect on socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria. The result further revealed that rural electrification has the highest significant effect on socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one, the null hypothesis was rejected, and we concluded that primaryhealthcare has a positive and significant effect on socioeconomic developmentof rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis two, the null hypothesis was rejected, and we conclude thatpipe-borne water hasa positive and significant effect on socioeconomic developmentof rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis three, the null hypothesis was rejected, and we conclude thateducation has a positive and significant effect on socioeconomic developmentof rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis four, the null hypothesis was rejected, and we conclude that rural electrification has a positive and significant effect on socioeconomic developmentof rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

From the test of hypotheses, the study found that; primary healthcare hasa positive and significant effect onsocioeconomic developmentof rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria, which is in line withthe result ofAlabi (2011) and Anita (2014) who affirmed that local governments in Nigeria provide primary healthcare services to rural dwellers to improve their standard of living.Previous studies by Fatoke (2014) and Akani (2017) showed that local government has helped in the provision of health facilities in rural areas. In support of this result, Nwoba (2015) argued that the provision of health facilities such as hospitals and clinics in rural areas is possible when there is accountability in the local government system. Akinseye (2020) established that the management of primary healthcare is efficient at the local level and that efficient management of the PHC will enhance the Nigerian primary healthcare system.

That pipe-borne water has a positive and significant effect on socioeconomic developmentof rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria, in a similar manner, Ezenwaji, Eduputa and Okoye (2016) also reported a significant effect of water access on rural development in Nigeria. Contrarily, Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013) found no significant relationship between access to water and rural development in Nigeria.

That education has a positive and significant effect on socioeconomic developmentof rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria, the result agrees with Odewale (2019) who found that local government has significantly contributed to the operation of primary education in Nigeria.Famade (2014) stated that the provision of rural education in Nigeria is the sole responsibility of local government areas. Local governments in Nigeria are involved in funding rural education at the primary school level.

That rural electrificationhas a positive and significant effect onsocioeconomic developmentof rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria, the result agrees with Nwalieji, Igbokwe and Nsoanya (2012) whoidentified the provision of rural electrification by local governments in Nigeria as significant factors in enhancing socioeconomic development of the rural dwellers. A study by Hamza and Yahaya (2019) found a significant effect of local government administration on rural electrification development in the local government.

5.0 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

The study found that: primary healthcare has a positive significant effect on socioeconomic developmentof rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria(P-value 0.000 < 0.05; β=.429; t=2.113), pipe-borne water has a positive significant effect on socioeconomic developmentof rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria(P-value 0.000 < 0.05; β=.350; t=3.554), education has a positive significant effect on socioeconomic developmentof rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria(P-value 0.005 <0.05; β=.539; t=2.844), rural electrificationhas a positive significant effect on socioeconomic developmentof rural areas in Benue State, Nigeria(P-value 0.000 < 0.05; β=.930; t=7.162).

Conclusion

The study concluded that; local government helped in the provision of primary healthcare in Benue State, Nigeria thereby improving socioeconomic development, provision of pipe-borne water by local government has positively affected socioeconomic development in Benue State, provision of education by local governments positively affects socioeconomic development in Benue State, Nigeria and local government has helped to improve socioeconomic development by providing rural electrification in Benue State.

Recommendations

Based on findings and conclusion of the study, the study recommended that:

i. Local government areas in Benue State should always provide healthcare facilities and improve on healthcare services for the rural dwellers. This will help to improve the living conditions of the people in rural areas.

ii. Local government councils in Benue State should always ensure that water is made available and accessible to rural dwellers to help alleviate their sufferings. Local government should also ensure the maintenance and repair of pipe-borne water in rural areas.

iii. Local government areas in Benue State should assist the state government in the establishment and maintenance of rural education as well as ensure the provision of textbooks and audio-visual materials in primary schools to help the plight of the less privileged.

iv. To help improve rural electrification, local government areas in Benue State should always provide support and constant maintenance for steady electrification as it has the highest contribution to socioeconomic development of rural areas in Benue state, Nigeria.

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