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## COMMUNITY INITIATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL CHILD EDUCATION IN LESS CITY OF IBADAN, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

This study examined the community initiative and development of rural child education. Education is the basic building block of every society and a prerequisite for societal development. Planning is very essential in any development process. The quality of a plan goes a long way in determining the success of a programme and such plan should seek and secure local participation and the needs of the people. The sample was selected using the multi-stage sampling technique. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The main instrument used was the "Community Initiative and Development of the Rural Child Education Questionnaire" (CIDRCEQ). The Community Initiative Scale (CIS) was the research measure used for planning information from 268 respondents. Using Pearson moment correlation and Multiple regression analysis at 0.05 alphas, the findings showed that there was significant contribution between community initiatives and development of rural child education. The findings also revealed that there was relative contribution of each of the independent variables on the dependent, which indicate that all the four independent variables are found significant. It was concluded and recommended that rural child education should not be left in the hands of government alone, development partners and other stakeholders should be involved and the members or group of the community should also support the development through positive collective actions embedded in rural development.

**Keywords:** Community Initiative, Development, Rural Child, Education, Less-city, Nigeria.

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Education is the transfer of the knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people from one generation to the next. It is the basic building block of every society and a prerequisite for societal development. Education transforms the society and it is the bedrock of growth and development of any nation. It is a major tool for bringing about desirable changes and every inhabitants of a community, State or nation has an inalienable right to one form of education or the other.

Patil (2009), emphasized the role of education and literacy as overall human development by saying that education and literacy confer a wide set of benefits not only on individuals and families, but also on communities as a whole. The child is the centre of education and should not be marginalized in any way that will prevent him/her from having all round education that will enhance her/his development educational, technological, economic, social and moral to development.

Throughout the World it is common knowledge that schools located usually operate under excruciating challenges and a number of serious constraints among which are:-

- Untrained or unqualified teachers
- Poverty
- Insufficient funding
- Inadequate or a total lack of infrastructure
- Inadequate of instructional materials

In order to revamp education in the rural areas in Oyo State, Chief (Mrs) Florence Ajimobi launched a programme tagged "Educate a Rural Child (ERC) to ensure that every rural child has the privilege to enjoy what their counterparts in urban centres enjoy with regard to quality education. A key aim of Her Excellency's project is to improve the quality of learning, to make the rural children become productive and excel in whatever they do or wherever they find themselves ; the long-term goal of which is to reduce poverty in the rural areas. ERC is a right direction because it recognizes the importance of giving the right education and creating the right ambience and conducive environment for the rural child to fully realize his/her potentials. The project is in line with the Comprehensive Community Initiative (CCI).

Community initiatives can be described as community-based approaches to solving pressing social and economic problems confronting both individuals and entire members of any community in the rural areas. It involves the voluntary action of members of the community and other associations within the community in the building and the development of the community.

Community initiatives have emerged both in response to recent practices that have proven ineffective and as a reformulation of approaches to community development that have been tried in the past. They also reflect views on the changing role of government and the place that community play in promoting economic and social well-being.

These initiatives draw on the accumulating evidence that services meant to improve the life prospects of poor were often proving ineffective- at least in part because they were so fragmented. They also give greater recognition to the growing body of social research that points to the role which community conditions, sometimes called 'neighbourhood effects', play in perpetuating or reducing poverty (Schorr, 1997). Through community initiatives, a wide range of promising practices is being reworked into a new weave of strategies and policies.

Comprehensive community initiatives typically define themselves in terms of broad goals and a long-term vision. While these goals are crucial for charting the scope of the work, they must be balanced by shorter-term targets and concrete initiatives which provide tangible indications that progress is being made. Such interim targets are needed to generate the momentum to sustain participation and attract additional partners. The initiatives are defined as neighbourhood-based efforts that improved outcomes for individuals and families as well as improvements in neighbourhood conditions by working comprehensively across social and economic sectors.

Comprehensive community initiatives encourage partnering and collaborative work arrangements. They recognize the value of contributions from diverse backgrounds, networks and areas of expertise. Collaborative relationships create new value by bringing additional , resources, insights and expertise to the table. Typically, comprehensive community initiatives are governed by a coordinating mechanism in the form of a leadership roundtable or steering group The coordinating body is at least multi-organizational and, at best, multi-sectoral in composition. It assumes responsibility for acting as champion of the issue, conveying key players, setting out a clear vision for the effort and associated strategic plan, and acting as the liaison between the broader community (including the media) and the comprehensive initiative. Comprehensive community initiatives hold out the prospect of creating well-integrated, long-term strategies customized to local needs. But they must be complemented by efforts on the part of governments to join in local planning processes, engage in interdepartmental and intergovernmental coordination,

and enter into longer-term funding agreements (Torjman and Leviten-Reid, 2003)

CCI is a grassroots initiative that provides resources for families to educate and empower families in order to improve their standard of living to match that of their counterparts in the urban areas. The goal of CCI is to prepare their children for success in school and beyond. This is achieved by empowering parents and arming them with the necessary tools, skills and confidence they need to work with their children in the home (Lyson, 2005). CCI also encourage parents to see themselves as their children's first teacher. Parents are therefore provided with a set of carefully-developed curriculum, books and materials designed to strengthen their children's cognitive skills, early literacy skills, social/emotional and physical development.

CCI encourages parents and the community to take active part in the education of the rural child. An interesting aspect of this is that this is not a totally new concept in Nigeria as we have had communities solely responsible for the establishment and the overall running of different levels of schools in their area. However, due to government take-over of schools and the downturn in the economy, many communities have abandoned this role and left everything in the hands of the government.

The ERC programme could be made more robust if it can empowers participating parents to take active roles in teaching their pre-school children skills that will prepare them for success in school (Hand, 2005). In addition, ERC could offer the following activities:-

- i. **Read to Grow Programme:-** This is a literacy events where children are ready to read and they get choos and keep free new books. Children could also be taught arts and crafts, and other fun activities.
- ii. **Library on Wheel:-** This is when books are delivered to families each month.
- iii. **Connect-with-the-child:-** Assistance with pre-schools screening, school choices and registration.
- iv. **Long Vacation Transition to Elementary Programmes (LVTEP):-** Long vacation programme for children who will begin kindergarten.

The main objective of community initiative on development of rural child education is to improve education in rural communities and at the district level while the specific objectives are as follows:-

- to enhance one's boundaries of perception. Increase educational awareness in rural communities;
- to preserve village identities and culture;

- to create awareness at all levels on the importance of rights of women, the girl-child and other marginalized people;

- protect and promote the rights of women and children.

The activities of CCI in developing the rural child:-

- Personal hygiene and environmental activities in rural communities and schools;
- They should work on food security and livelihood through agricultural activities;
- Advocacy on girl-child education;
- Surveying the number of drop-out and out of school children;
- Sensitize; parents to support their children in school;
- adult literacy for parents as a strategy to instill the value and importance of education;
- functional literacy;
- skills training in carpentry, soap making and weaving;
- Strengthen the role of women in decision-making processes and community development projects.

A major component of the Comprehensive Community Initiative (CCI) is system-change which takes a holistic view of the child in his/her environment . To this end, CCI makes effort to address the following issues in order to be able to educate a rural child:-

- ❖ Appraise readiness for school and discourage drop-out rates.
- ❖ Discourage abuse and neglect
- ❖ Discourage suicidal tendencies, substance abuse, underage drinking and other self-destructive behaviours
- ❖ Improve mental and physical health
- ❖ Discourage delinquency and violence

Development denotes social change, and a major implication is that this change can by deliberately induced to produce the desirable result to improve the system of values, structures and usages of local communities. As a tool for purposive social change, development must be guided by principles aimed at producing in citizens the will to be determined to realize the objectives of community improvement. System change is a change in the way that a community makes decisions about policies, programmes, services and the allocation of resources. It transits into family and community participation in decision-making since they are the one affected by such decisions. As a result, decision reflect a larger, better-informed perspective on family and community needs and priorities. To undertake system change, a community

must collaborate and build bridges between it and multiple agencies, community members and other stakeholders.

According to Adekola (2007), development is the capacity of the people to effectively transform the natural resources of their environment into goods and services through the application of their talents and labour power. Development is central to the existence of every society. Rural development is the total efforts of bringing about the desired changes by people manifested in uplifting and raising the standard of people in the rural areas in positive ways.

According to Ajayi and Otuya (2006), no matter the level of technical and financial assistance offered to self-help groups, the members should share actively in the decision to undertake certain projects that is rather imposing development projects on a community, its members should be allowed to participate meaningfully in the planning and execution. Development is meaningless if it does not harness the potentials of the beneficiaries who are the primary stakeholders. It is therefore important to find out what ways the people think they can participate in the process of achieving their vision. Government should be closer to the people. Development should imbibe the culture of bottom-up approach otherwise, development may be a mirage. The cornerstone of community initiative is the active involvement of members of a defined community in at least some aspects of project design and implementation.

Rural development focuses particularly on poverty, inequality and the improvement of the quality of life of the rural people. Since the government was far from rural areas in terms of development and with the realization that government alone cannot provide all their needs, the people had to learn to "do-it-themselves. The realization of the importance of rural development is an indispensable challenge on which the relevance and growth of nations depend.

On the issue of rural development, the role of women, who constitute about fifty percent of the population of Nigeria, is seen as very important in all facets of national development. They are the agents of change and development in education, social economic and religious sectors. To maintain this relevance, women and their groups should seek more involvement in rural and governmental development activities (Olaleye, 2011). Planning is very essential in any development process. The quality of a plan goes a long way in determining the success of a programme and such plan should seek and secure local participation and the needs of the people.

Human development is the process of enlarging peoples choices. The three essential choices are to lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living. In order to identify where development is coming from and leading to, from poverty and the hardship it implies to freedom, resulting from access to good education and health-care translating to the ability to support oneself through one's choice of living pattern (Rural School and Community Trust, 2004).

Social mobilization is a process that engages and motivates a wide range of partners and allies at national and local levels to raise awareness of and demand for a particular development objective through face-to-face dialogue. Members of institutions, community networks, civil and religious groups and others work in a coordinated way to reach specific groups of people for dialogue with planned messages. Social mobilization no doubt plays a pivotal role in achieving rural development and poverty alleviation programmes. Social mobilization strengthens participation of the rural poor in local decision-making, improves their access to social and production services and efficiency in the use of locally-available financial resources and enhanced opportunities for asset-building by the poorest of the poor.

Community projects have played a significant role in the socio-economic development of various parts of Nigeria. They have been effectively harnessed to provide social services in the rural areas. Community projects which have been playing a significant role in alleviating poverty at the grass - roots level continue to provide amenities which the government, with all its resources strapped, is unable to provide as quickly as they are needed by the people (Olaleye, 2004).

With this background, this study therefore seeks to examine community initiatives on development of the rural child education in the less city; also to explore the contributions of community initiative to the development of rural child education in the less city. Also the study explain the effect of community initiatives on development of rural child education in the less city. The broad objective of this study is to examine the community initiatives on development of rural child education in the less city. The specific objectives are to find out the effectiveness of community initiatives on development of rural child education in the less city; to highlight the contributions of community initiative on development of rural child education in the education in the less city.



## Research Hypotheses

The following research questions are tested for significance at level 0.05:

RQ<sub>1</sub> What are the Community initiatives (leadership, creating awareness for education, reinforcement, involvement of citizen in decision-making) have on development of rural child education?

RQ<sub>2</sub> How effective are the community initiatives (leadership, creating awareness for education, reinforcement, involvement of citizen in decision-making) on development of the rural child education?

## Methodology

### Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. This is appropriate to capture the community initiatives and development of rural child education in the less city. The descriptive survey design is once - for - all observation of the variables with a view to collecting data with which to test the research questions.

### Population of the Study

Based on the information gathered during pilot study, the sample size for this research is 300 participants.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

The multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the sample from among the population. In doing this, Ibadan less city was stratified along the axis of the existing five Local Government Areas that were under rural area of Ibadan as at the time of the study; namely Iddo, Lagelu, Akinyele, Oluyole and Akanran. From each of the LGA, the proportionate sampling technique was used to select sixty respondents, thus three hundred respondents were selected for the study.

### Research Instrument

The main instrument used was the "Community Initiative and Development of the Rural Child Education Questionnaire" (CIDRCEQ). The Community Initiative Scale (CIS) was the research measure used for collecting information from 300 participants.

### Validity and Reliability of the Study

In order to ensure that the instrument measures what it was supposed to measure, both the face and content validity of the instrument were given to experts in field of community social work, rural development, sociology and social work for their expertise input and necessary improvement. Other experts in the researchers' area of

study were also given the instrument for necessary improvement. Based on their comments, some items were reworded, while some were modified to ensure that there were no ambiguities. Cronbach Alpha and Kuder Richardson (KR21) were used to provide reliability estimate of the instrument. KR21 was used for items that were dichotomously scored, while Cronbach Alpha was used for 3, and 4 point items scales. In order to achieve this, a pilot study was carried out with a sample of 40 respondents in Ona-ara L.G.A, Oyo State, Nigeria. The result of reliability coefficient was  $r = 0.68$ . This result indicates that the instrument used for data collection was fairly reliable.

### Analysis of the Data

Frequency distribution (%) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple regression were used to analyse the data to measure the relationship, at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Analysis of the Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

S/N	Items	Variables	Frequency	%
1	Sex	Male	135	45.0
		Female	165	55.0
		Total	300	100
2	Age	20 - 25yrs	86	28.7
		26 - 30yrs	128	42.6
		Above 31yrs	86	28.7
		Total	300	100
3	Marital Status	Single	56	18.7
		Married	193	64.3
		Separated	25	8.4
		Divorced	12	4.0
		Widowed	14	4.6
		Total	300	100
4	Religion	Christianity	110	36.7
		Muslim	186	62.0
		Traditional	4	1.3
		Total	300	100
5	Educational Qualification	Pry /	59	19.7
		/Koranic	224	74.7
		Secondary	17	5.6
		Tertiary	300	100
		Total	300	100

Table 1 shows that, 75 (27.9%) of the respondents were females while 193 (72.1%) were males. The age bracket of the respondents were between 20 to 25 years, 86 (28.7%) respondents, the age bracket between 26 and 30 years were 128 (42.6%) participants while the respondents age above 31 years were also 86 (28.7%). This goes a long way to show that the majority of the respondents used for the study are between 20 and 35. Which indicated that the respondents were educable so that they can also be of assistance to educate their children being the first teacher's of the child before coming to school.

On the marital status of the respondents, 56 (18.7%) were single, 193 (64.3%) were married, 25 (8.4%) respondents were separated, 12 (4.0%) respondents were divorced while 14 (4.6%) were widowed. The religion of the respondents shows that 110 (36.7%) were Christians, 186 (62%) were into Muslims and 4 (1.3%) were traditional believers. On the educational attainment level of the respondents, 59 (19.7%) had primary / Koranic education while those secondary school education were 224 (74.7%) and tertiary education had 17 (5.6%) respondents. This indicated that majority of the respondents were able to read and write, with this if they are empowered train, and enlightened, they will contribute to the development of their children and wards education properly.

### Test of Research Questions

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis according to Community Initiatives and Development of Rural Child Education

Sources of Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	107.391	4	268.848	140.718	.000
Residual	563.609	295	1.911		
Total	1639.000	299			

R = .810

R<sup>2</sup> = .656

Adj. R<sup>2</sup> = .651

Standard Error = 1.6011

It was shown in the above table that the joint effect of independent variables (leadership, awareness creation, reinforcement, involvement of citizen participation in decision-making) on the development of the rural child education was significant (F (4, 295) = 140.718; R = .810, R<sup>2</sup> = .656, Adj. R<sup>2</sup> = .651; P < .05). About 66% of the variation was accounted for by the independent variables. The findings indicated that there is significant contribution as shown in the above table. This implies that community initiative as seen in the findings provided leadership, creating awareness for education, reinforcement and citizen participation of the respondents are good predictors to development of rural child.

Table 3: Pearson Moment Correlation of Coefficient Showing the Relative Effectiveness of Community Initiatives and Development of the Rural Child Education

Variables Description	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient		Sig
	$\hat{a}$	Std error	B	T	
Constant)	1.497	.822		1.820	.070
Leadership	.530	.051	.380	10.386	.000
Creating awareness for education	.676	.058	.437	11.582	.000
Reinforcement	2.708E02	.045	.022	.598	.550
Involvement of Citizen in decision-making	.307	.307	.282	7.592	.000

The result above shows the relative contribution of each of the independent variables on the dependent variable: Leadership ( $\beta = .380$ , P < .05), creating awareness for education ( $\beta = .437$ , P < .05), Reinforcement ( $\beta = .022$ , P < .05) and involvement of citizen in decision-making ( $\beta = .282$ , P < .05). It is shown that all the four independent variables are found significant.

### Discussion

Research question one showed that the joint effect of independent variables (leadership, awareness creation, reinforcement, involvement of citizen participation in decision-making) on the development of the rural child was significant (F (4, 295) = 140.718; R = .810, R<sup>2</sup> = .656, Adj. R<sup>2</sup> = .651; P < .05). About 66% of the variation was accounted for by the independent variables. The findings indicated that there is significant contribution as shown in the above table. This implies that community initiative as seen in the findings provided leadership, creating awareness for education, reinforcement and citizen participation of the respondents are good predictors to development of rural child. This findings is in line with the study of Rural School and Community Trust, 2004 who identified that where development is coming from and leading to, from poverty and the hardship it implies to freedom, resulting from access to good education and health-care translating to the ability to support oneself through one's choice of living pattern.

Research question two also revealed that the relative contribution of each of the independent variables on the dependent variable: Leadership ( $\beta = .380, P < .05$ ), creating awareness for education ( $\beta = .437, P < .05$ ), Reinforcement ( $\beta = .022, P < .05$ ) and involvement of citizen in decision-making ( $\beta = .282, P < .05$ ). It is shown that all the four independent variables are found significant.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The education of rural child in any community is a concern for all and must be taken with all seriousness and commitment. What we have as urban centre of today once had a crude existence but with commitment, dedication through community initiatives and involvement of the entire people, they were able to attain desired development status that brought them to enviable position they are today.

Rural child education should not be left in the hands of government alone, development partners and other stakeholders should be involved and the members or group of the community should also support the development through positive collective actions embedded in rural development. It is therefore established that community initiatives should be structured intervention instrument for rural development in order to educate the rural child.

- i. This paper strongly recommended that parents should not only encourage their children to excel in school but to express their expectations that they will do so.
- ii. Schools should be charged with engaging families in meaningful ways to improve learning.
- iii. Finally, families and communities should join forces in holding poorly performing schools accountable.

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