

**ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFORT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN RURAL
DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF JALINGO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF
TARABA STATE**

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ABSTRACT

Local Government was created to engage in projects and programmes for rural development. Section 7 (3) of the 1999 Constitution provided Local Governments to carry out economic planning and development of their rural areas. It is on this note that this study was conducted to assess the effort of Jalingo LG in rural development in Taraba State. The major objective of the study was to assess the effort of Jalingo LG in rural development while the specific objectives are to: (1) assess the effort of Jalingo LG in rural development from 2015 to 2020.(2) S determine the extent Jalingo LG had developed rural areas from 2015 to 2020. This research work is an evaluation research and it was designed as a survey research design. It combined the use of both qualitative and quantitative data for the study. The population of the study is 360, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was adopted to determine sample size while Proportionate Stratified Sampling Technique (PSST) was used to determine the sample. Data generated were analyzed using Chi-Square method of data analysis. The study finds out that there are no developmental projects put in place in rural areas of Jalingo LG from 2015 to 2020 and as a result of this there was very low level of development in rural areas of Jalingo LG from 2015 and 2020. The study concluded that the effort of Jalingo LG in rural development in Taraba State need to be re-emphasized. The council need to put more effort in carrying out its traditional role as stipulated in the constitution. Jalingo LG should be encouraged to discharge its statutory and traditional responsibilities such as provision of healthcare facilities, primary education, feeder roads, market stalls, portable water and agricultural implements to ensure even rural development.

Keywords: Local Government, Rural Development, Rural Areas and Social Amenities.

1. Introduction

Nigeria since political independence has been engaging in rural development projects ranging from health, water, education to road networks that are executed in rural settlements by Local Governments. Local Government according to Obi-Ani & Isiani, (2020) is the bedrock for rural transformation. Iloh (2020) stated that the idea of Local Government was born out on the need to bring government closer to the people as a mechanism for good governance at the grassroots level. In the views of Mgbenka, Mbah, and Ezeano (2019) reported that, the reasons for establishing local

government is to bring good governance in the rural areas so that local people can participate fully in the process of governance, to provide essential local services and speed up the pace of socio-economic and political development. Section 7 (3) of the 1999 Constitution provided that local governments participate in the economic development and planning of their areas (Obi-Ani & Isiani, 2020).

Over 80 percent of the inhabitants of the rural areas are primarily engaged in farming and produce more than 70 percent of the food consumed in Nigeria. Despite the contributions of the rural people to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), development of the rural areas has not been given the desired attention. As a consequence, rural people suffer untold hardships; they have been described as "Nigeria's neglected rural majority" and the "stagnant sector" in the Nigerian economy (Rafindadi & Kondo2018).

Nigeria operates a federal system of governments where the governmental powers are constitutionally shared among the Centre and the Regions (federal and states), Local Government Councils are the appendage of State Government and are the closer unit of government to the grass root. According to Chidiebere & Ndaguba (2018), Local Government is machinery for the provision of social services to the rural areas and this indicates how significant Local Government is to grass root and national development. Local government is the unit of government close to the people and mandated with some powers to exercise control on the affairs or activities of the people in that area and is expected to carry out the responsibility of promoting democratic ideals of the localities and coordinating transformation programs as well as serving as the basis of economic development of the rural areas (Imhanlahimi, 2011). Egwu & Obiorah (2017) opined that the essence of Local Government in Nigeria is to bring the government closer to the people and to facilitate grass root development. In the past, huge amount have been allocated to the Local Government Councils in Nigeria but they are still confronted with several setbacks that have prevented them from developing the rural areas as expected (Nwogwugwu, 2015).

There were so many initiatives of rural development put in place by Nigerian government at both Federal and State levels which includes Directorate for Food Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI); River Basin Development Authorities (REDAS); Industrial Development Corporation (IDC); Rural Banking Scheme (RBS) Peoples Bank of Nigeria (PBN); National Directorate of Employment (NDE); Better Life for Rural Women (BLRW); Community Banking Programme (CBP); Family Support Programme (FSP); Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP); National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) etc. These programmes for rural development yielded little or no benefits in rural areas specifically in Jalingo LGA.

Therefore, it is on this background that this study was conducted to assess the effort of Jalingo LG in rural development in Taraba State specifically between 2015 and 2020.

2. Statement of the Problem

There is a relationship that exists between the Local Government at the grass root level and rural development which is the key reason why Local Government Councils were established all over the world. It is as well the reason that Jalingo LGA was created in Taraba State so that it will transform the rural areas and by extension improving the living condition of the rural people. But over the years, this goal has not really been achieved and the rural communities in Jalingo LGA are still living in poverty and inadequate basic social amenities. Rural areas in Jalingo LGA are characterised by agrarian livelihood with poor basic and social amenities for instance, health services, primary education, source of water, feeder roads are inadequate to the disadvantage of the rural population.

As a result, absent of these developmental potentials, rural areas in Jalingo LG are facing different kinds of basic social infrastructure and isolation. Jalingo LGA which was created to provide basic and social amenities that will improve standard of living of the rural people has not been able to do so. As a result the rural areas have no access to portable drinking water, good primary education, good roads, good nutrition; good health services etc. It is on this prevailing circumstance that this study was conducted to determine the role of Jalingo LG in rural development in Taraba State specifically between 2015 and 2020.

3. Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study was to assess the effort of Jalingo LG in rural development, while the specific objective is to:

- i. Assess the efforts of Jalingo LG in rural development between 2015 to 2020
- ii. Determine the extent Jalingo LG has developed rural areas from 2015 to 2020.

4. Research Questions

- i. What are the rural development efforts undertaken by Jalingo LGC from 2015 to 2020?
- ii. To what extent has Jalingo LGA developed rural areas from 2015 to 2020?

5. Statement of Hypotheses

Ho1: The development project in rural areas is not a function of the efforts of Jalingo LGC from 2015 to 2020.

Ho2: There was a very low level of development in rural areas of Jalingo LG from 2015 to 2020.

6. Review of Related Literatures (Conceptual Underpinnings)

6.1 Meaning of Development

According to Olewe, (2021), development is a multidimensional process that normally connotes change from a less to a more desirable state. Traditionally, development meant the capacity of a national economy, whose initial economic condition has been more or less static for a long time, to generate and sustain an annual increase in its Gross National Product (GNP) at rates perhaps 5% to 7% or more (Todaro & Smith 2020). Woods and Cejudo (2016) sees development as a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capita incomes through more modern production methods and improved social organization.

Rodney (1972) views development both from the level of the individual and that of the society as a whole. At the level of the individual, development implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. On the level of the society, development cannot be seen purely as an economic affair, but rather as an overall social process which is dependent upon the outcome of man's efforts to deal with his natural environment.

Agbani and Ugwoke (2019) conceived development as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of poverty. This meaning of development is generated from Dudley Seers' question of what is been happening to poverty, unemployment and inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country (Seers 1969). Development must represent the whole gamut of change by which an entire social system, tuned to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within that system, moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory towards a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better (Todaro and Smith, 2020).

Development is the coincidence of structural change and liberation of men from exploitation and oppression, perpetrated by international capitalist bourgeois and their internal collaborators. Real development involves a structural transformation of the economy, society, policy and culture that permits the self-generating and self-perpetuating use and development of the people's potential (Agbodike et al 2019).

Therefore, within the context of this study, development is meant to be the improvement in the provision of social and basic infrastructure in rural areas of Jalingo LG which is provided by the LGC such as health centers, primary education, portable source of water, access to good road networks etc that need to be sustainable in nature. It is the kind of development advocated by Agbani and Ugwoke (2019) that involves major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, national and

local institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of poverty.

6.2. Meaning of Rural Development

Rural development means improving the living standards of the masses of low income residing in rural areas, and making the process of their development and self-sustaining (Douglas 2016). It can also be seen as the articulation, provision and stimulation of economic activities, health and educational advancement facilities, and utilities for rural dwellers (Ugwu, 2009). Rural development is an effort towards urbanizing the rural environment by way of encouraging rural dwellers to participate in activities that will promote economic and social development and enhance their living standards.

Rural development in the position of World Bank is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social lives of a specific group of people. Rural development involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas (Rafindadi & Kondo, 2018). In another perspective, Ayuba (2021) stated that the essence of rural development is the all-round development of the rural areas or villages with the efforts of the people. He contended that the need for citizens participation in plan formulation and implementation processes has been repeatedly stated as the gateway to bringing about social, economic and political development in the rural areas.

According to Tang & Zhu (2020), the main concern in rural development is supposed to be the modernization of rural society through a transition from traditional isolation to integration with the national economy for equitable and balanced development of the nation. To Moya (2016), rural development activities can be undertaken by governments or international agencies which may be private or public. Rural development constitutes a process of planned change for which one approach or the other is adopted for improvement and or transformation of the lot of the rural populace. Rural development is simply an economic issue raising the low levels of rural income through agricultural modernization (World Bank 1975)

Ndem, Angioha and Dike (2020) explained that rural development entails the exploitation of the human and physical potentialities with which the rural areas are endowed for the benefits of raising the living standards of the rural poor. Azumah, Davies and Ogele (2021) sees rural development as essentially a human process and defines it as being concerned with the improvement of the living standards of the low income population living in the rural areas on self-sustaining basis through transforming the socio-spatial structures of their productive activities. Rural development implies a broad-based re-organization and mobilization of the rural masses and resources so as to enhance the capacity of the rural population to cope effectively with the daily tasks of their lives and with the changes consequent upon these.

William (2018) opined that rural development involves changes in the social and economic structures, institutions, relations and processes of the rural population. He reiterated that generation of new employment opportunities, more equitable distribution of income and widespread improvement in housing nutrition, health and investment on one hand and creating wider opportunities to realize their full potentials through education, sharing in the decision and actions which affect their lives on the other hand are issues that are tackled in rural development. It is a process that seeks to ensure an overall improvement in the standard of living of the rural dwellers. It has to do with institutional and economic reconstruction in which the people are the architects of construction as well as beneficiaries. According to Titola (2018) rural development relates not only to a sustained increase in the level of production and productivity of all rural dwellers, including farmers, and sustained improvement in their well-being, manifested by increased per capita income and standard of living, but also leads to a sustained physical, social and economic improvement of rural dwellers. “The goals of rural development embrace a systematic improvement of living condition of rural people”. Rural development is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of the people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. Rural development has traditionally centered on the exploitation of land-intensive natural resources such as agriculture and forestry.

Having understood the meaning of rural development, it is important to note that this study is concern with the caliber of rural development that articulates, provide and stimulate economic activities, health services, portable drinking water, feeder roads, employment opportunities and educational advancement facilities to improve peoples’ standard of living in rural areas of Jalingo LG of Taraba State.

7. Materials and Methods

This study is an evaluation research and it was designed as a survey research. It is an evaluation research because the study intends to assess the effort of Jalingo LG in development of its rural areas in Taraba State. It is a survey research design because structured questionnaires were used for collecting data. It combined the use of both qualitative and quantitative data for the study. The study was conducted in Jalingo LGA of Taraba State, it was selected on the bases of government neglect of its surrounding rural areas because of being an urban center and also it was based on the conveniences of the researcher. The population of the study was 360 which was divided into strata and it comprises of 170 staff of Jalingo LGC, 90 staff of Bureau for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, 25 Community Stake Holders (5 selected each from five communities), 75 community inhabitants selected randomly from the five communities (see table 1 below).

In order to simplify the process of determining the sample size for the population, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was adopted and the researcher arrived at the sample size of 186. In order to determine the samples out of the sample size, Proportionate Stratified Sampling Technique (PSST) was used on the

selected populations since they are into strata. The sample for each stratum is 87 for Council staff, 46 for Bureau staff, 15 for stakeholders and 38 for community dwellers. A total number of 186 questionnaires were filled and distributed and 176 were returned; this gave the researcher 90.9% rate returned. Data that was generated for the study were analyzed using Chi-Square method of data analysis.

8. Presentation and Analysis of Data

8.1 Financial Disbursement (Allocation) to Jalingo LGC from 2015 to 2020 by Year

Table 1

No.	YEAR	AMOUNT (N)
1	2015	3,365,149,208.78
2	2016	4,096,787,891.21
3	2017	4,117,371,300.09
4	2018	5,554,400,928.76
5	2019	6,399,719,250.49
6	2020	6,727,390,481.17
Total	6 Years	21,550,816,970.5

Source: TSBLGTCA (2015), (2016), (2017), (2018), (2019), (2020). Fieldwork (2023)

The table below represents the total annual allocation to Jalingo LGC from 2015 to 2020, it shows that twenty-one billion, five hundred and fifty million, eight hundred and sixteen thousand, nine hundred and seventy naira and five kobo were received during the period.

8.1 Questionnaires Distributed, Returned and Not Returned

Table 2: Indicates the number of Questionnaires Distributed, Returned and Not Returned.

No	Respondents	Population of the Study	Questionnaire Distributed (Sample)	Questionnaire Returned (Sample Size)	Questionnaire Not Returned
1	Council Staff	170	87	82	5
2	Staff of Bureau	90	46	44	2
3	Stakeholders	25	15	15	0
4	Community Members	75	38	35	3
	Total	360	186	176	10

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 above indicated that the population of the study is 360, a total of 186 copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, out of which a total of 176 copies were retrieved, while 10copies were not retrieved. Moreover, the high response rate recorded was as a result of frequent visits and phone calls made by the researcher to the respondents.

8.2. The Development Projects in rural areas is not a function of the role of Jalingo LGC between 2025 -2020.

Table 3: Respondents Opinion on Development Projects Executed in Rural Areas of Jalingo LGC between 2015 and 2010.

Responses/Opinion	SA (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total
Provision of educational facilities	28(15.9)	30(17.0)	31(17.6)	40(22.7)	47(26.7)	176
Distribution of farm materials	37(21.0)	34(19.3)	32(18.2)	35(19.9)	38(21.6)	176
Electrification of rural areas	39(22.6)	28(15.9)	30(17.4)	34(19.3)	45(25.5)	176
Construction/renovation of markets	35(19.9)	33(18.7)	31(17.6)	44(25)	33(18.7)	176
Constructions of access/feeder roads	33(18.7)	32(18.2)	40(22.7)	34(19.3)	37(21.0)	176
Provision of access to drinking water	34(19.3)	32(18.2)	35(19.9)	37(21.0)	38(21.6)	176
Provision of health facilities	23(13.1)	27(15.3)	37(21.0)	42(23.9)	47(26.7)	176
Provision of credit facilities to rural famers	23(13.1)	27(15.3)	27(15.3)	53(30.1)	46(26.1)	176
Total	252	243	263	319	331	

Source; Field Survey 2023

Table 3: Summary of Respondents Opinion on Table 5 above

Opinion	Responses (fo)
SA	252
A	243
UD	263
SD	319
D	331
Total	1,408

Table 5: Chi-Square Analysis for Table 4 H₁ above

OPINION	FO	FE	FO-FE	(FO-FE) ²	(FO-FE) ² /FE
SA	252	281.6	-29.6	876.16	3.11
A	243	281.6	-38.6	1489.96	5.29
UD	263	281.6	-18.6	345.96	1.22
D	319	281.6	37.4	1398.76	4.96
SD	331	281.6	49.4	2440.26	8.66
Total	1,408				X² = 23.24

DF = (Nr - 1) (Nc - 1)

Where; DF -Degree of freedom, Nr -Numbers of rows, Nc -Numbers of columns

Nr = 5, Nc = 5, (5 - 1) (5 - 1), (4) (4), DF = 16

To obtain the Table Value by checking DF = 16 under 5% (0.05) significant level, the Table Value is 26.23. Therefore, X² = 23.24, DF = 16, TV = 26.23

Decision Rule: Since the computed Chi-Square (X² = 23.24) is less than the Table Value (TV = 26.23), the rule of the game stipulates that we reject the alternative hypotheses (H₁) and accept the null hypotheses (H₀) which states that *'the developmental projects in rural areas from 2015 to 2020 is not a function of the efforts Jalingo LGC'*

8.3 The Extent of Development in Rural Areas of Jalingo LGA from 2015 to 2020

Table 6: Respondents Opinion on the Extent of Development in Rural Areas of Jalingo LG from 2015 to 2020.

Responses/Opinion	Very High Extent (SA) (%)	High Extent (A) (%)	No Extent (UD)(%)	Low Extent (D) (%)	Very Low Extent (SD) (%)	Total
Provision of educational facilities	38(21.6)	39(22.6)	27(15.3)	36(20.4)	36(20.4)	176
Distribution of farm inputs and materials	52(29.5)	32(18.2)	34(19.3)	32(18.2)	26(14.8)	176
Electrification of rural areas	35(19.9)	41(23.3)	31(17.6)	37(21.0)	32(18.2)	176
Construction of markets	38(21.6)	52(29.5)	25(14.2)	32(18.2)	29(16.5)	176
Constructions of access roads and culverts	34(19.3)	23(13.1)	41(23.3)	36(20.5)	42(23.9)	176
Provision of drinkable water	42(23.9)	31(17.6)	43(24.4)	41(23.3)	19(10.8)	176
Provision of health facilities	35(19.9)	43(24.4)	35(19.9)	32(18.2)	31(17.6)	176
Provision of credit facilities	47(26.7)	35(19.9)	27(15.3)	37(21.0)	30(17.0)	176
TOTAL	321	296	263	283	245	

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 7: Summary of Respondents Opinion of Table 3 above

Opinion	Responses (fo)
SA (Very High Extent)	321
A (High Extent)	296
UD(No Extent)	263
SD(Low Extent)	283
D(Very Low Extent)	245
Total	1,408

Table 8: Chi-Square Analysis for H₁ above

OPINION	FO	FE	FO-FE	(FO-FE) ²	(FO-FE) ² /FE
SA	321	281.6	39.4	1552.36	5.51
A	296	281.6	14.4	207.36	0.73
UD	263	281.6	-18.6	345.96	1.22
D	283	281.6	1.4	1.96	0.00
SD	245	281.6	-36.6	1339.56	4.75
TOTAL	1,408				X² = 12.21

DF = (Nr – 1) (Nc – 1)

Where; DF - degree of freedom, Nr -Numbers of rows, Nc -Numbers of columns

Nr = 5, Nc = 5, (5 - 1) (5 - 1), (4) (4), DF = 16

To obtain the Table value by checking DF = 16 under 5% (0.05) significant level, the table value is 26.23. Therefore, X² = 12.21, DF = 16, TV = 26.23

Decision Rule: Since the computed Chi-Square (X² = 12.21) is less than the Table Value (TV = 26.23), the rule of the game stipulates that we reject the alternative hypotheses (H₁) and accept the null hypotheses (H₀), *there was a very low level of development in rural areas of Jalingo LG from 2015 to 2020.*

8.4 Discussion of Findings (Results)

HO₁:- Development project in rural areas is not a function of the effort of Jalingo LGC from 2015 to 2020.

The result of the analysis shows that the value of Chi-Square 23.24 is less than the Table Value 26.23. This indicates that the development projects in rural areas is not a function of the role of Jalingo LGC. The findings further meant that some of the existing development projects in rural areas of Jalingo LG were not undertaken by the Council despite huge amount of money allocated to the council (see table 1 above). It could be the development projects of non-governmental organization, or state government executed projects. Some may be the constituency projects of the national assembly members, for instance, the health Centre, source of drinking water, electrification of rural areas, construction of culverts, grading of rural roads etc were not executed by the Jalingo LGC.

HO2:- There was very low level of development in rural areas of Jalingo LG from 2015 to 2020.

Based on the result of the analysis, the Chi-Square value 12.21 is less than the Table Value 26.23. It is indicated that there was very low level of development in rural areas of Jalingo LG from 2015 to 2020. This means that in rural areas of Jalingo LG there was little or no effort put in place to develop rural areas and the local council has not provided social and basic amenities to the benefit of the people as over twenty-one billion naira was allocated between 2015 and 2020 (see table 5 above). The council has not performed any of its traditional role as stipulated in the section 7 (3) and schedule 4 No. 1 and 2 of the 1999 constitution. Consequently, it is the reason why rural areas in Jalingo LGA are still underdeveloped. In our opinion, so many basic and social infrastructures in the rural areas of Jalingo LG were provided by the State Government or Federal Government or a politician as a constituencies projects. There was very low level of development in rural areas by Jalingo LGA in Taraba State.

9. Conclusion and Recommendation

Therefore, the role of Jalingo LG in rural development in Taraba State need to be re-emphasized. The Council need to put more effort in carrying out its traditional role as stipulated in the constitution. Local Government is the unit of government that is close to the people and its major functions is to provide social and basic amenities and ensure development of rural areas.

Based on the findings, the study recommends that;

- i. State governments should provide conducive atmosphere without interference for the Local government in Nigeria to perform its functions effectively. They should be encouraged to discharge their statutory responsibilities and traditional role such as provision of healthcare facilities, primary education, feeder roads, market stalls, portable water and agricultural implements. This will be achieved by given Local Government Councils their allocation as at when due.
- ii. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Donor Agencies, World Bank, Philanthropists and Politicians should be encouraged to concentrate much more in the development of rural areas so as to change the life and living condition of the rural people. They should concentrate on the provision of healthcare facilities, primary education, feeder roads, market stalls, portable water and agricultural implements, among others.
- iii. Local government representatives/leaders that are saddled with the responsibility to pilot the affairs of Local Government should ensure rural development be just and fair in the discharge of their duties and also need to focus on provision of basic and social amenities. This must be accompanied by accountability, transparency, justice and equity.
- iv. The traditional rulers, community stakeholders and community organizations must support any development initiative by either the State Government or NGOs to ensure rural development.

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