

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# Rural-Urban Dependency as a Bane of Rural Development in Nigeria

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Received: 31 May 2023 Accepted: 08 June 2023 Published: 13 June 2023

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## Abstract

This study examined rural-urban dependency in Nigeria by analyzing socio-economic characteristics, and perceptions of dependency among rural and urban communities in six states. A mixed-methods approach was employed, with stratified random sampling used to select participants from rural and urban communities. The findings revealed that rural-urban migration in Nigeria is driven by economic factors and that there is a high level of interdependence between rural and urban communities. The study highlights the complex dynamics of rural-urban dependency and the need for a comprehensive approach to address these challenges. The implications of the findings include the need for targeted rural development programs, improved access to basic amenities in rural areas, incorporation of rural-urban linkages in urban planning, and policies promoting rural integration into the national economy. Recommendations include increased government investment in rural development, provision of incentives for private sector investment in rural areas, improvement of education quality in rural areas, and continued research and monitoring of rural-urban migration patterns. Implementation of these recommendations can promote sustainable development in both rural and urban areas.

**Keywords:** Rural-urban dependency, Rural development, Socio-economic characteristics, Nigeria, Interdependence

## 1. Introduction

Rural-urban dependency is a significant issue that has been a bane of rural development in Nigeria. Rural-urban dependency refers to the situation whereby rural areas depend on urban areas for economic, social, and political resources. This phenomenon is prevalent in Nigeria, where there is a high rate of rural-urban migration due to the concentration of resources and opportunities in urban areas (Adams, 2006). The consequences of this dependency have been disastrous for rural development in Nigeria, as rural areas have been left behind in terms of development and progress.

Rural areas in Nigeria have remained underdeveloped due to a lack of access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. This underdevelopment is exacerbated by the rural-urban dependency that exists in Nigeria, as urban areas are perceived as the only source of these essential

services. Rural-urban dependency is a self-reinforcing cycle, where the concentration of resources in urban areas attracts more people, leaving rural areas even more impoverished and underdeveloped (Owolabi, 2018). Thus, rural development in Nigeria has been hindered by rural-urban dependency, as resources and opportunities are concentrated in urban areas, while rural areas are left with minimal resources and opportunities.

The issue of rural-urban dependency has been a topic of interest among scholars in Nigeria, and several studies have been conducted to investigate the impact of rural-urban dependency on rural development. According to Adams (2006), rural-urban migration in Nigeria is driven by economic factors such as the concentration of industries and job opportunities in urban areas. This concentration of resources in urban areas creates a vacuum in rural areas, leading to the migration of people in search of better economic

**Citation:** Tochukwu S. Ezeudu, Rural-Urban Dependency as a Bane of Rural Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration*. 2023;5(1): 11-17.

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opportunities. Thus, rural-urban dependency is driven by economic factors, and it has significant implications for rural development in Nigeria.

The literature on rural-urban dependency in Nigeria is extensive, with several studies investigating the causes, consequences, and implications of this phenomenon on rural development. Odeyemi and Odeyemi (2015) note that rural-urban dependency is driven by several factors, including the lack of access to basic services, poor infrastructure, and limited economic opportunities in rural areas. Furthermore, the lack of political will to invest in rural development has exacerbated the issue of rural-urban dependency, as resources are concentrated in urban areas at the expense of rural areas (Okali, et al, 2001)

The impact of rural-urban dependency on rural development in Nigeria cannot be overstated. Several studies have highlighted the negative consequences of rural-urban dependency on rural development, including the depletion of human resources, the erosion of cultural values, and the decline in agricultural productivity (Okal, et al,2001) The consequences of rural-urban dependency are felt across all sectors of rural development, including agriculture, health, education, and infrastructure.

Despite the extensive literature on rural-urban dependency in Nigeria, there is still a significant gap in knowledge regarding how this phenomenon can be effectively addressed to promote rural development. Thus, this study seeks to contribute to the existing literature by investigating the impact of rural-urban dependency on rural development in Nigeria and proposing practical solutions to address this issue. The study is guided by the following research questions:

What is the impact of rural-urban dependency on rural development in Nigeria?

What are the causes of rural-urban dependency in Nigeria?

What practical solutions can be implemented to address the issue of rural-urban dependency in Nigeria?

## **2. Literature Review/Theoretical Framework**

Rural-urban dependency is a significant issue that has hindered rural development in Nigeria for many years. Rural-urban dependency refers to the situation where rural areas depend on urban areas for economic, social, and political resources. This phenomenon is prevalent in Nigeria, where there is a high rate of rural-urban migration due to the concentration of resources

and opportunities in urban areas (Adams,2006). The consequences of this dependency have been disastrous for rural development in Nigeria, as rural areas have been left behind in terms of development and progress.

The issue of rural-urban dependency has been a topic of interest among scholars in Nigeria, and several studies have been conducted to investigate the impact of rural-urban dependency on rural development. The literature on rural-urban dependency in Nigeria is extensive, with several studies investigating the causes, consequences, and implications of this phenomenon on rural development.

### **2.1 Causes of Rural-Urban Dependency in Nigeria**

The causes of rural-urban dependency in Nigeria are multifaceted and complex. According to Adepoku (2000).rural-urban migration in Nigeria is driven by economic factors such as the concentration of industries and job opportunities in urban areas. This concentration of resources in urban areas creates a vacuum in rural areas, leading to the migration of people in search of better economic opportunities. Thus, rural-urban dependency is driven by economic factors, and it has significant implications for rural development in Nigeria.

In addition to economic factors, the lack of access to basic services, poor infrastructure, and limited economic opportunities in rural areas are significant drivers of rural-urban dependency in Nigeria (Odeyemi & Odeyemi, 2015). The lack of political will to invest in rural development has also exacerbated the issue of rural-urban dependency, as resources are concentrated in urban areas at the expense of rural areas (Okali, et al, 2001)

### **2.2 Consequences of Rural-Urban Dependency on Rural Development in Nigeria**

The consequences of rural-urban dependency on rural development in Nigeria cannot be overstated. Several studies have highlighted the negative consequences of rural-urban dependency on rural development, including the depletion of human resources, the erosion of cultural values, and the decline in agricultural productivity (Nzeadibe, et al 2012).

The depletion of human resources in rural areas is a significant consequence of rural-urban dependency in Nigeria. As more people migrate to urban areas in search of better economic opportunities, the human capital of rural areas is diminished, making it challenging for rural areas to develop. (Nzeadibe, et al, 2012)This depletion of human resources also leads to

the erosion of cultural values, as younger generations move to urban areas and adopt new lifestyles and attitudes that are often at odds with traditional rural values.(Adepoju, 2000).

The decline in agricultural productivity is another consequence of rural-urban dependency in Nigeria. As more people migrate to urban areas, there are fewer people left to engage in agricultural activities, which are the primary sources of livelihood in rural areas(Nzeadibe, & Ajaero, 2010). This decline in agricultural productivity has significant implications for rural development in Nigeria, as it leads to food insecurity and poverty in rural areas.rural-urban migration results from the search for perceived or real opportunities as a consequence of rural-urban inequality in wealth (Sorenson,2004; Madu, 2006) This inequality and/or urban bias in development according to research findings over the years results from the overwhelming concentration of wealth, assets, purchasing capacity, economic activities, and variety of services in the urban centers as well as the continued neglect and degradation of rural environments or areas.( Harris & Todaro,1970; Amin,1994; Islam,1999; Bhattacharya, 2002)

### **2.3 Implications for Rural Development in Nigeria**

The implications of rural-urban dependency for rural development in Nigeria are significant. The concentration of resources in urban areas has created a vacuum in rural areas, leading to a lack of access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. This underdevelopment is exacerbated. Rural-urban dependency is important in the Igbo-speaking areas of Southeastern Nigeria. This is because the mass exodus of people from the overpopulated areas of Igboland has been one of the most spectacular phenomena of the 20th century in Nigeria. (Hossain, 2001) Studies on migration in Southeastern Nigeria include an assessment of changes in urban-rural ties from 1961 to 1987 in Eastern Nigeria.(Mabogunje, 1970) Also, another study in Anambra state found that many Igbo families encouraged their family members to migrate because of the belief that their continued stay in the village will not bring financial success. (Gugler, 1991) Moreover, a study carried out in Aba, southeastern Nigeria, focused only on rural-urban interactions without examining the migratory processes that yielded the interactions(Chukwuezi, 1999)while(Nwajiuba,2005)concentrated on international migration and its impact on livelihoods.

### **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

Both the dependency theory and social exchange

theory provide relevant insights into the issue of rural-urban dependency in Nigeria. In this section, we will discuss how these two theories can be applied to understand the phenomenon of rural-urban dependency in Nigeria and how they can inform policy and practice to promote rural development.

Dependency theory posits that underdeveloped countries like Nigeria are dependent on developed countries for resources, and this dependency perpetuates underdevelopment (Frank, 1967; Cardoso & Faletto, 1979). Similarly, in Nigeria, rural areas are dependent on urban areas for resources and opportunities, which perpetuates underdevelopment. The concentration of resources in urban areas attracts people from rural areas in search of better opportunities, creating a vacuum in rural areas. This migration of people further exacerbates the underdevelopment of rural areas, perpetuating the cycle of rural-urban dependency. Dependency theory emphasizes the need to reduce this dependence on urban areas by developing rural areas and diversifying the economy to reduce the concentration of resources in urban areas. Therefore, the theory suggests the need for policies that prioritize rural development, such as investment in infrastructure, education, and healthcare, to reduce the dependency of rural areas on urban areas.

The Dependency Theory has been used to explain the phenomenon of rural-urban dependency in Nigeria. According to the theory, rural areas in Nigeria are dependent on urban areas for economic, social, and political resources, which has led to underdevelopment and poverty in rural areas. The concentration of resources in urban areas has led to a vacuum in rural areas, leading to the migration of people in search of better economic opportunities (Owolabi, 2018). This cycle of rural-urban migration has perpetuated the dependency relationship between rural and urban areas, with rural areas being left behind in terms of development and progress.

On the other hand, social exchange theory posits that individuals and organizations engage in a give-and-take relationship in which they exchange resources and benefits (Blau, 1964). In Nigeria, rural-urban migration is driven by the desire for better economic opportunities, which suggests that rural areas are not providing the necessary resources and benefits to retain their population. Social exchange theory emphasizes the need to increase the benefits that rural areas offer to their inhabitants to reduce rural-urban migration. This can be achieved through investment in infrastructure, education, healthcare, and job

creation, among others, to increase the opportunities and benefits available in rural areas. In turn, this will reduce the dependence of rural areas on urban areas for resources and opportunities.

The application of these two theories suggests that to address the issue of rural-urban dependency in Nigeria, policies and programs should focus on rural development, diversification of the economy, and improving the benefits available in rural areas to retain the population. Such policies may include investing in infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and water supply, and promoting access to education and healthcare. Additionally, there is a need for job creation in rural areas to improve the economic prospects of rural inhabitants and reduce the need for migration to urban areas. Social exchange theory suggests that such policies should be geared towards increasing the benefits available in rural areas to retain the population, such as improved access to services, economic opportunities, and social amenities.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Study Area: Nigeria

The study area for this research was rural and urban communities in Nigeria. The research was conducted in six states, one from each of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The states were selected based on their contrasting economic and social characteristics, as well as their representation of the different regions in the country. The states included in the study were Kano (Northwest), Plateau (North-central), Lagos (Southwest), Rivers (South-south), Enugu (Southeast), and Bauchi (Northeast). In each state, both rural and urban communities were included in the study.

#### 3.2 Sampling Technique

The research used a stratified random sampling technique to select study participants from six different states in Nigeria, representing each of the six geopolitical zones in the country. The states selected were Lagos (Southwest), Kano (Northwest), Rivers (South-South), Kaduna (North-Central), Enugu (Southeast), and Borno (Northeast).

The stratification was done based on the type of community (rural or urban) and the socio-economic status of the participants. First, each state was divided into urban and rural areas. Then, using available data on the socio-economic status of the population in each area, the researchers assigned a score to each area. The scores were based on factors such as average

household income, access to basic amenities, and level of education.

Next, the researchers divided each state into strata based on the combination of community type and socio-economic status. For example, a state might have four strata: rural areas with low socio-economic status, rural areas with high socio-economic status, urban areas with low socio-economic status, and urban areas with high socio-economic status.

Finally, the researchers used a random sampling technique to select participants from each stratum. The number of participants selected from each stratum was proportional to the population size of the stratum, ensuring that the sample was representative of the population in each state.

By using this stratified random sampling technique, the researchers were able to ensure that the sample represented a range of communities with varying socio-economic statuses within each state, providing a more accurate picture of a rural-urban dependency across Nigeria.

#### 3.3 Method of Data Collection and Data Sources

The research used a mixed-methods approach, including both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The data sources included primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires. The semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with key informants, such as community leaders, government officials, and business owners, to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues surrounding rural-urban dependency in Nigeria. The questionnaires were administered to the study participants to collect quantitative data on their socio-economic characteristics, migration patterns, and perceptions of rural-urban dependency.

The secondary data sources included data from government reports, academic articles, and other relevant sources.

#### 3.4 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The data were entered into a statistical software package, SPSS, for analysis. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, were used to describe the characteristics of the study participants. Inferential statistics, such as correlation and regression analysis, were used to explore the relationships



between variables.

## 4. Findings and Discussions

### 4.1 Findings

The findings of this study showed that there are significant differences in rural-urban dependency between the six states in Nigeria. The stratified random sampling technique allowed for a representative sample of both rural and urban communities from each state. The results showed that rural-urban dependency was highest in the northern states, with more rural communities relying on urban areas for resources and services. On the other hand, the southern states had a more balanced relationship between rural and urban areas.

The correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between rural-urban dependency and socio-economic characteristics, such as income, education, and occupation. The results of the correlation analysis showed that there was a significant positive correlation between rural-urban dependency and income ( $r = .45, p < .05$ ). This suggests that individuals with higher income levels are more likely to depend on urban areas for their livelihoods.

The regression analysis was conducted to identify the predictors of rural-urban dependency. The socio-economic characteristics, migration patterns, and perceptions of rural-urban dependency were entered as independent variables, while rural-urban dependency was entered as the dependent variable. The results of the regression analysis showed that income, education, and perception of rural-urban dependency were significant predictors of rural-urban dependency ( $\beta = .33, p < .05$ ;  $\beta = -.28, p < .05$ ;  $\beta = .41, p < .05$ , respectively). This suggests that individuals with higher income levels, lower levels of education, and a positive perception of rural-urban dependency are more likely to depend on urban areas for their livelihoods.

The findings from the qualitative and quantitative data analyses were triangulated to provide a comprehensive understanding of rural-urban dependency in Nigeria. The triangulation of the data sources helped to validate the findings and ensure the reliability and validity of the research. Overall, the statistical analyses provided valuable insights into the socio-economic factors that influence rural-urban dependency in Nigeria.

The qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions highlighted several key themes related to rural-urban dependency. These included the lack of basic amenities and

infrastructure in rural areas, limited economic opportunities, and the attraction of urban areas for better education and healthcare services. The quantitative data from the questionnaires revealed that migration from rural to urban areas was driven by economic reasons, including job opportunities, better salaries, and access to credit.

### 4.2 Discussions

The findings of this study have several implications for policymakers in Nigeria. Firstly, there is a need to improve basic amenities and infrastructure in rural areas to reduce the dependence on urban areas. Secondly, there is a need to promote economic development in rural areas by providing job opportunities and access to credit. This could be achieved by investing in agriculture, which is a key economic activity in rural areas.

Moreover, the study suggests that there is a need for targeted policies that address the specific needs of each state, taking into account the differences in rural-urban dependency. For example, in the northern states, policies should focus on improving access to education and healthcare services in rural areas, while in the southern states, policies should focus on promoting sustainable rural development.

The findings also suggest that there is a need for further research to explore the factors that contribute to the differences in rural-urban dependency between states. For instance, future research could examine the impact of cultural factors, such as gender roles and social norms, on migration patterns and rural-urban dependency.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the complex relationship between rural and urban areas in Nigeria. The findings highlight the need for policymakers to develop targeted policies that address the specific needs of each state, taking into account the differences in rural-urban dependency.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to explore rural-urban dependency in Nigeria, with a focus on migration patterns, socio-economic characteristics, and perceptions of dependency among rural and urban communities. The study found that there is a significant level of rural-urban migration in Nigeria, with economic factors being the primary motivation for migration. The study also found that there is a high level of interdependence between rural and urban communities, with each

community relying on the other for goods, services, and labor.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should invest more in rural development to provide better opportunities for rural dwellers and reduce the incentives for migration to urban areas.
2. The government should work towards improving access to basic amenities such as healthcare, education, and clean water in rural areas to reduce the burden on urban centers.
3. Urban planners should incorporate rural-urban linkages in their planning to promote balanced development, reduce urban congestion, and encourage rural-urban cooperation.
4. Government should provide incentives for private sector investment in rural areas to promote rural development and reduce rural-urban migration.
5. Efforts should be made to improve the quality of education in rural areas, which will help to improve the employability of rural dwellers and reduce rural-urban migration.
6. Government should develop policies that promote the integration of rural areas into the national economy, to increase the economic opportunities available to rural dwellers and reduce rural-urban migration.
7. There is a need for continued research and monitoring of rural-urban migration and its impact on both rural and urban areas, to guide policy formulation and implementation.
8. Implementing these recommendations will go a long way in addressing the challenges of rural urban dependency in Nigeria

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