

Kogi State University

From the Selected Works of Confluence Journal of Environmental Studies (CJES), Kogi State University, Nigeria

Spring June 11, 2012

An Assessment of Community Self-help efforts in the Development of Emuhi Community in South-South Region, Nigeria

S E Ehisuoria, (PhD)

F O Akhimien, (PhD)



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/cjes_kogistateuniversity/16/



An Assessment of Community Self-Help Efforts in the Development of Emuhi Community in South-South Region Nigeria

S.E. Ehisuoria (PhD) and F.O Akhimien (PhD)

Abstract

This paper examines the role of self help efforts in the development of Emuhi community Ekpoma Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. The data used for this study were collected through primary and secondary sources. The paper shows that the needs of the community are numerous such as water, road, quality education and industries. The paper also shows that the government has not positively involved in the provision of these needs. The paper also shows that the community is providing most of their needs through self help effort which includes the provision of water, market and cottage industries and the maintenance of the earth roads that link the settlement. The paper also reveals the constraints of developing the area through self help such as capital shortage, inaccessibility and labour shortages. The conclusion of this paper is that the government and the community should work together to create enabling environment in Emuhi community while recommendations are made which include the provision of enabling environment by the government to stimulate investment in the area.

Keywords: Assessment, self help and Development.

Introduction

The rural areas of the world particularly those of the developing nations have their unique identity. The rural environment is at a disadvantageous position when comparism is made between the urban and the rural environments. The rural communities generally have low population size and low population density, poor infrastructural facilities, poor education, poor housing qualities and they produce more of primary products (Ehisuoria, 2012). These rural poor infrastructural facilities and low economic activities lead to low perpetual income of the rural dwellers, underdevelopment and rural urban migration. In the United Kingdom (UK), rural areas have been defined by the Government Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), as any local government area with less than 25% of its population living in a market town. Howarth (2010) defined a market town as any settlement which has permission to hold a street market.

The transformation of rural environment has become the main challenge to the economic and social development of developing nations like Nigeria (Howarth, 2010). This challenge arises from the need to promote the welfare of the people of the rural community so that they can acquire a better condition of life. Improvement in the quality of rural people will lead to increase perceptual income, diversify the economic base of the people, expand the market potential of the people and reduce rural-urban migration (Akhimien, 2005). Lele (1975) defined rural development as a process which involves improving the standard of living of the masses of the low income population residing in rural areas and making this process of development self-sustaining compared with urban areas. World Bank (2001) identifies rural poverty reduction strategy "that emphasizes community participation" straightening of voluntary producer organization primacy of the private sector in production and trade. These rural transformation strategies have not been focused on the rural areas of Esan West Local Government Area particularly Emuhi community.

Rural development planning in Nigeria is faced with serious challenges which include unfavourable government policies toward rural development, lack of rural resource inventory,

Department of Geography and Regional Planning, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria

inaccurate population data, lack of base map of rural areas, culture, illiteracy and high level of inaccessibility to rural areas (Abbas, 2010). In the rural areas of developing economy particularly in Nigeria, the rural area is faced with low level of accessibility, human capital development, economic development, poor quality of education, high level of poverty and inadequate market. Khun (2000) observed that government over the years has concentrated her investment on cities at the detriment of the rural areas. Edigan (2009) examined the rural development as a tool for revamping Nigeria's economy using Lyakpi community in Etsako West Local Government Area as a case study. His findings revealed that rural development can lead to job creation, income generation, market creation for urban and rural products, provision of raw materials for both rural and urban industries, and above all, reduce rural urban migration. Reduction in rural urban migration will help to reduce the problems created by the rural immigrants in urban centers which include traffic congestion, high cost of living, housing shortage and social vices. He concluded that the provision of these infrastructures should be tackled by the government.

Similarly, Abbas (2009) examined the basic needs of rural communities using Esan land as a case study. She identified their needs to include provision of potable water, educational facilities, access roads, electricity supply and technological development. She went further to say that the government alone cannot provide these facilities. She therefore recommended that, the government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the communities should be concerned to provides these facilities.

Despite the above studies carried out, no one was focused on Emuhi community which is the study area. It is on account of this therefore this research topic is necessary to unveil the role of the community people in the development of the area.

The aim of this paper is to examine the involvement of the community in their respective developmental issues. The objectives of the paper are to examine:

1. The needs of the community people
2. The facilities provided by the government for the community
3. The facilities provided by self help in the community and

4. The constraints of developing the community

Study Area

The study area is Emuhi community in Ekpoma Kingdom in Esan west Local Government Area, Edo State. The area is located between latitude $60^{\circ}40'N$ and $60^{\circ}45'N$ and longitude $60^{\circ}05'E$ and longitude $60^{\circ}10'E$ (Ojeifo, 2005) (Figure 1.1). The study areas is made up of eight quarters namely Ebhojie, Oke, Igor, Idumnigbor, Uvue, Udo, Edueki and Uwehimi. Emuhi community is located in the tropical region. It has equatorial type of climate characterized by wet and dry seasons. The climate regime is controlled by the position of the Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ). The northerly and southerly movement of the ITCZ throughout the year is marked by the onset of the wet and dry seasons (Eseigbe, 2010). The hottest period of the year in the region is between January and March ($34^{\circ}C$) while the lowest temperature is recorded between June and July ($24^{\circ}C$) Omofonmwan, (2005). The soil of Emuhi are forri soils on loose sandy sediments. These soils are less leached and consequently retain the advantages of agricultural activities.

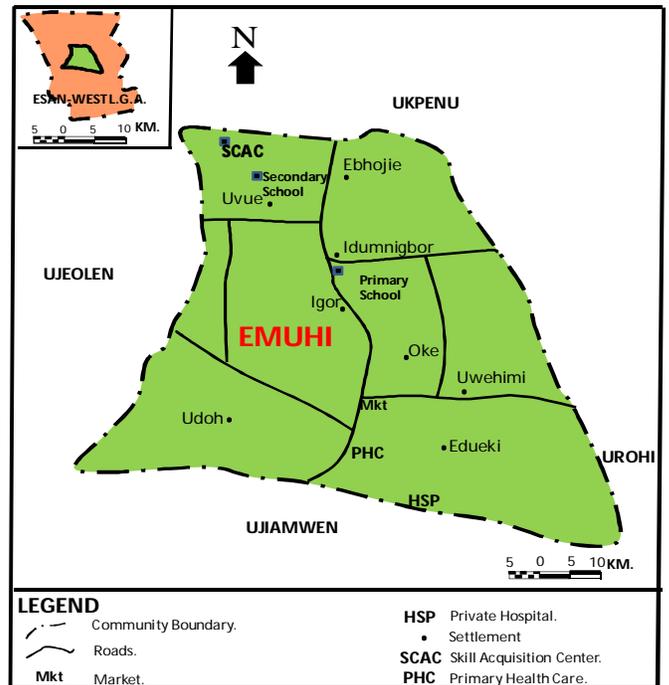


FIG 1:1 LOCATION: EMUHI COMMUNITY.

The economic activities of the people of Emuhi are made up of agricultural and non agricultural sector. The agricultural sector includes the cultivation of crops and the rearing of animals. The crops cultivated include, pineapple, cocoa, pear,

oil palm, yams, cassava, maize, melon, pepper and tomatoes. The animals domesticated are goats, sheep and dogs. The non agricultural sector is the industrial sector. The industries that are located in the area are cottage industries which include, hair dressing saloon, barbing saloon, vulcanizing, welding, restaurants, filling station, health services, motor cycle repair and bicycle repair industries, and shoe mending industry. The population of the area is low. The low population size of the area is due to poor environmental condition of the area. The area lacks good access roads, schools, hospital and other pull factors that are capable of retaining and attracting population in the area. There is mass movement of youths from the community to the urban centers particularly Ekpoma town for education and employment reasons. The population of the study area is estimated at 5,412 people (National Population Commission Office Ekpoma).

Material and Methods

The data for this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source forms the major source of data for this paper. The primary data were collected by use of questionnaire administration and personal observation in the field. One hundred and sixty (160) questionnaires were administered to the residence of the area. Twenty questionnaires were administered in each of the eight quarters that made up of the area. The administration of twenty questionnaires in each quarter was to achieve equal distribution. The random sampling technique was used to select the respondents for interview. Questions were asked on age, sex, locality, nationality, occupation, the state of infrastructural facilities located in the area, the providers of the facilities and the problems associated with the utilities of available facilities. The secondary data were collected from the data

generated by Esan west local government council in charge of the area, ministry of education and the non governmental organizations concern with the development of the area such as the Ikhide socio club of Ekpoma and the Emuhi progressive union of Ekpoma. The data generated were presented using tables, charts, percentages and degree. A lot of constraints were encounter during the field investigation. The constraints include capital shortage, inaccessibility, and the possibility of locating the respondents and their willingness to respond honestly to the questions asked. Despite these constraints, the researcher were able to obtain reliable data hence the researchers are conversant with the people and the geography of the area.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the various needs of Emuhi community. The need for health centre has 5.87%, water has 19.63%, electricity has 17.06%, education has 15.60%, road has 18.90%, market has 4.59%, security has 1.83% while industries has 16.51%. Most of the respondents responded to more than one variable hence the total response in each table is higher than the number of questionnaires administered in the field. Table 2 shows the facilities provided by the government in the area. Out of the total facilities provided by the government, health center has 29.79%, water has 0.00%, electricity has 24.94%, education has 23.91%, road has 6.17%, market has 3.08%, security has 12.34% while industry has 0.00%. Table 3 shows the facilities provided through self help by the community. The table shows that out of the facilities provided by the community, health center has 1.63%, water has 22.76%, electricity has 8.13%, education has 5.69%, road has 18.54%, market has 22.11%, security has 9.76% while industries has 11.38%.

Table 1: The Needs of Emuhi Community

S/NO	COMMUNITY NEEDS	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
1	Health centers	32	5.87
2	Water	107	19.63
3	Electricity	93	17.06
4	Education	85	15.60
5	Roads	103	18.90
6	Market	25	4.59
7	Security	10	1.83
8	Industries	90	16.51
	Total	545	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2012

Table 2: The Facilities Provided by the Government for Emuhi Community

S/NO	NEEDS PROVIDED	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
1	Health centers	115	29.79
2	Water	0	0.00
3	Electricity	97	24.91
4	Education	93	23.91
5	Roads	24	6.17
6	Market	12	3.08
7	Security	48	12.34
8	Industries	0	0.00
	Total	389	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2012

Table 3: Facilities Provided by Self Help in the Community

S/NO	FACILITIES PROVIDED	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
1	Health centers	10	1.63
2	Water	140	22.76
3	Electricity	50	8.13
4	Education	35	5.69
5	Roads	114	18.54
6	Market	136	22.11
7	Security	60	9.76
8	Industries	70	11.38
	Total	615	100.00

Source: field survey, 2012.

Table 4: The Constraints of Developing Emuhi Community

S/NO	CONSTRAINTS	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
1	Capital	82	15.95
2	Technology	37	7.20
3	Accessibility	133	25.88
4	Lack of cooperation	63	12.26
5	Government policy	113	21.98
6	culture	30	5.84
7	Youth migration	56	10.89
	Total	514	100.00

Source: field survey, 2012.

Table 4 reveals the constraints of developing Emuhi community. The table also shows that capital constraints has 15.95%, technological constraint has 7.20%, accessibility constraint has 25.88%, lack of cooperation among the inhabitants has 12.26%, government policy has 21.98%, culture has 5.84% while youth migration has 10.89%.

The results of the field investigation reveal that Emuhi community needs several facilities to live comfortably in the area. Health services are required in the area to exist, healthy and increase the life span of the people. Water is a prerequisite

of life. The field survey shows that water need of the people is for domestic, agriculture and industrial need. For example, water is needed to cook, bathe, wash clothes, and for cleaning. It is also needed for agriculture for planting, mixing of chemical for both herbicide and insecticide. Transport is fundamental in all aspects of life. It is on account of this that Sir Lord Lugard (1909) stated that transport is the life blood of a nation. Transport is needed in the area of agricultural production, industrial activities, political movement, social and domestic needs. The need for electricity in the study area has multipurpose uses. For instance, when the rural residents were

asked why the government and other bodies decided to provide electricity in the area, their responses were that to improve the condition of lives of the people and to encourage small scale industries such as welding, hairdressing, vulcanizing and electrical works. In economic geography, production is said to be incomplete until the goods get to the final consumers. It is on account of this that Adelemi (1978) examined that the existence of a system of market places that facilitate the satisfaction of increasing and mutual demand for the products of one part of a country by another, and this way it functions as a distributive system within the local economy. The people of Emuhi need market to sell their agricultural proceeds such as cassava, yams and pineapple and also buy the agricultural produce cultivated outside the area such as onion, rice and tomatoes.

Industrial development is a strategy for rural development in Nigeria particularly in the study area. The relevance of industrial development in the rural areas can be observed in terms of employment generation, capital accumulation, increase in standard of living and the general well being of the rural people. Segynola (2003) examined the role of rural industrialization in Nigeria. His findings reveals that rural industrialization provide employment, income, infrastructures such as roads, electricity and market. Improvement in the condition of rural environment will reduce rural-urban migration and retaining rural labour force. Emuhi community needs industries in the area. The location of industries in the area will provide market for the agricultural sector, provide employment, income, skill, infrastructure and education. The location of industries in the area will improve the condition of life in the area.

The field survey carried out to know the role of the government in the provision of the facilities need by the community reveals that though the government provides some of the facilities, the quantity and the quality of the facilities provided are low. For example, government is not providing water in the area. The market in the area was built and maintain by the natives. In terms of industrial location, the government has no single production industry in the study area. In the area of health facilities, the government has a health center with one nurse, a cleaner and one security staff. In the provision of education, the government has three primary schools and one college. These schools are unkept compare to urban schools. The

electrification of the area is recent and it was a joint effort by the government and the natives. It is as a result of this poor concern of the government in the provision of these needed facilities in the area that the rural people have decided to involve in the provision of these facilities in the area to enhance the quality of life of the people.

This study also reveals that the Emuhi community provides most of the facilities needed by them through self help efforts. For example, the water use by the people particularly during the dry season is stored in the underground tanks provided by the individual or by a household in the community. The only borehole in the area that provides water during the dry season in the area was provided by European Commission a Non Governmental Organization (NGOS) and the community. Due to lack of adequate funding, the borehole is operating below capacity. The primary schools and single college located in the area by the government are neglected. The maintenance of these schools are done by the community through self help effort. The maintainance of the earth road that links Equare the headquarters of Ekpoma is done through community effort. For example, Ikhide development club of Ekpoma having its members as sons of Emuhi residing in Ekpoma, have graded the road several times. The community also played vital role in the electrification of the area through self help effort. Other areas of self help by the community include the provision of security services. The people have organized vigilante group in the area to check the socio vices particularly among the youths.

The community market was also built through community self help. This market attracts traders all over the country. The Housas, Igbos, Yorubas and the Urhobos come to the market to buy agricultural produce such as plantain, garri, cocoyam and pineapple. Emuhi is the greatest producer of pineapple in Esan kingdom. The maintenance of the market also is the responsibility of the community. The few cottage industries located in the area which include hairdressing, vulcanizing, barbing, welding and the restaurants are owned by the natives. There is no single government established industry in Emuhi community despite the numerous raw materials available particularly for agro-based industries such as pineapple for fruit juice industry. When the industrial operators were asked of their reasons for locating the industries in the area, their response was to improve the condition of life

of the dwellers since the government failed to do so. From the foregoing examination of the role of Emuhi community in the provision of their needs, it is obvious that the government has not actually committed itself to the development of the area. In other to exist as a community, the inhabitants have decided to provide most of their needs through self help development.

Lastly, the study reveals that Emuhi community has some constraints in the provision of the facilities discussed above. These constraints include shortages of capital, technology, accessibility constraints and lack of cooperation from the community dwellers particularly the non-natives living in the area. Other constraints are cultural factor, lack of adequate labour supply to execute the planned projects in the area due to rural urban migration of the youths as a result of the poor environment and unfavourable government policy toward the development of the area by providing enabling environment.

Conclusion

Community self help efforts in rural development particularly in Emuhi community is relevant in the development of the area. The government has failed to provide the needs of the people such as road, quality educational institutions, water and market compare to other rural communities in Ekpoma kingdom such as Iruokpen, Ujoelen and Emaudo. In other to sustain their lives in the area, the community is committed to provide her needs such as market, water and security for themselves. The community is also committed to maintain facilities provided by the government such as the health center, school and the earth road. The self help development strategy of Emuhi community is restricted by some constraints such as inadequate capital, technology and labour. These constraints have reduced the expected development through self help development efforts of the community.

Recommendations

From the foregoing examination, the following recommendations are made for the self help effort development strategy of Emuhi community.

1. The government should provide enabling environment that will enhance Emuhi self help community development strategy.
2. The government should provide favourable policies that will stimulate the community people to invest in the area. Investment in agriculture and in industrial sectors in the area will boost employment, income, demand and the provision of infrastructural facilities.

3. The cultural aspect that hinders the community self help development in the area should be modified.
4. There should be awareness campaign in the area of needs of the people and cooperation in other to achieve the community development through self help effort since the government has failed to provide the needed facilities for the people and
5. The people should be encouraged to form themselves into cooperative societies that will make them viable to seek loan, attract government presence and to be fully represented in the decision making by the government as it affect them.

References

- Abbas, E.O. (2009). An assessment of the basic needs of rural communities. A case study of Esan Area of Edo State. "An unpublished M.Sc. thesis in Department of Geography and Regional planning Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma.
- Abbas, E.O. (2012). An assessment of the basic needs of rural communities. A case study of Esan Area of Edo State. "An unpublished Ph.D thesis in Department of Geography and Regional planning Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma.
- Akhimien, F.O. (2005). The Role of Agro-Based Industries In Rural Development In Esan Land. An Unpublished P.h.D Thesis Department of Geography and Regional Planning, Edo State University, Ekpoma.
- Ehisuoria, S.E. (2012). The Role of Non-agro Based Industries in Rural development in Esan land, Edo State, Nigeria. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Department of Geography and Regional Planning, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma
- Eseigbe, J.O. (2010). The impact of soil erosion on the physical land scape in the planning Benin Metropolis, Edo State, Nigeria. An unpublished Ph.D. Thesis Department of Geography and Regional Planning, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma
- Howarth (2010): The value of rural life in American culture, rural development perspective. Vol. 12 no 1.
- Khun (2000): Eodlerly remittances and urban rural security relationships in Bangladesh paper presented to conference on thinking longitudinally: issue in the design and analysis of panel data for aging research, Singapore.
- Lele Umor (1975). The design of rural development; lessons from Africa. London and Baltimore in F.C. Okafor and A.G. Onokerhoraye. National Population Commission Office (NPC) Ekpoma
- Ojeifo, O. M. (2005). The Planning Implications of Road Network Development in Nigeria Towns. A Case Study of Ekpoma. In Occasional Publication. Rasjel publishers vol. 1 (1).
- Omonmwan, S. I. (2006). The Geography of Esan Land of Edo State. Benin City. Easy Way Publishers. P.6-60.
- Segynola, A.A. (2003). Environment And Integrated Rural Sustainability .A Spatial Perspective. Inaugural Lecture, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma.
- World Bank (2001): World development report. Oxford. Oxford University press.

ISSN: 1597 – 5827

Cite this article as: Ehisuoria, S.E. and Akhimien, F.O. (2012). An Assessment of Community Self-help efforts in the development of Emuhi Community in South-South Region, Nigeria. *Con. J. Env'tal Stds*, 7:34-41