**Local Government System and Rural-Urban Migration in Nigeria: Issues and Way Forward**

**Abstract**

This study examined the relationship between the local government system and rural-urban migration in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. In developed countries, the local government system played a crucial role in fostering rural development, reducing socio-economic disparities, and improving infrastructure and social services. However, in Nigeria, the situation was quite different, as many local government areas failed to meet expectations in delivering essential services. This shortfall contributed to persistent rural-urban migration, driven by push and pull factors, which continued to pose significant challenges to local governance and development efforts. To achieve the study’s objectives, a mixed-method research design was adopted, incorporating both primary and secondary data sources to ensure a comprehensive analysis.A total of 198 questionnaires were administered to local government officials, policymakers, and rural migrants, with 80 valid responses retrieved. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with policy analysts, local government officials, and rural migrants to complement the quantitative findings. Secondary data were obtained from historical records, national migration reports, and relevant policy documents. The Push-Pull Theory of Migration provided the theoretical framework, explaining migration decisions based on factors that either drove individuals away from rural areas or attracted them to urban centers. Multiple regression analysis was employed to analyze the primary data collected from the field.The findings revealed that weak local governance, inadequate infrastructure, and limited economic opportunities significantly contributed to rural-urban migration in Akwa Ibom State. Conversely, improved local governance, characterized by effective service delivery, infrastructure development, and economic opportunities, mitigated rural exodus and encouraged reverse migration. The study recommended targeted policy interventions by federal and state governments to strengthen local government capacities, promote balanced regional development, and create sustainable economic opportunities in rural areas. These measures are essential to curbed rural-urban migration and fostering inclusive development in Akwa Ibom State.

**Keywords: Local Government, Development, Urban-Rural Migration, Socio-Economic, Governance, Infrastructure**

**Introduction**

Rural-urban migration remains a significant demographic trend in Nigeria, driven by a combination of economic, social, and infrastructural disparities between rural and urban areas. Local government development plays a crucial role in either mitigating or exacerbating this migration trend, as the level of public service delivery and economic opportunities in rural areas directly influences migration decisions (Ogunleye &Ojebisi, 2020). The persistent lack of infrastructural development, employment opportunities, and access to quality healthcare and education in rural areas has led to a continuous exodus of the rural population to urban centers in search of better living conditions (Adepoju, 2019). This movement has resulted in increased urban congestion, housing deficits, unemployment, and social challenges in cities while leaving rural communities with reduced labor supply and economic stagnation (Enefiok&Ekong, 2021).

Local governments in Nigeria are constitutionally mandated to promote grassroots development, yet their effectiveness has been undermined by inadequate funding, poor governance, and weak institutional capacities (Olaleye, 2022). Many rural communities suffer from poor infrastructure, such as bad roads, limited electricity supply, and inadequate water sources, which further push residents toward urban areas (Abiodun, 2020). The inability of local governments to create sustainable development programs has led to a widening development gap between rural and urban regions. This imbalance necessitates policy interventions to strengthen local governance structures, improve service delivery, and create economic opportunities that will reduce migration pressures (Adebayo & Yusuf, 2021). If local governments can effectively manage resources and implement development programs, rural communities will become more livable, ultimately reducing the need for migration. This study explores the challenges associated with local government development in Nigeria, the impact on rural-urban migration, and the potential policy solutions to address these issues.

**Problem Statement**

The persistent issue of rural-urban migration in Akwa Ibom State can be traced to lack of developed Local Governments which lacks capacity to develop the rural grassroots. Local Governments faces significant challenges, including inadequate financial resources, corruption, and mismanagement, all of which undermines their capacity to provide essential services such as infrastructure, healthcare, and education. This failure has led to poor living conditions in rural areas, characterized by dilapidated road infrastructure, unreliable electricity, and insufficient access to clean water. These infrastructural deficits make it difficult for rural residents to sustain their livelihoods, thereby pushing them to seeking better conditions in urban centers.

Additionally, Local Governments have struggled to stimulate economic activities in rural areas, further aggravating the situation. Limited job opportunities, particularly for the youth, and the absence of support for small businesses and agricultural enterprises have contributed to widespread poverty in rural communities. The lack of a vibrant local economy forces residents to migrate to urban areas, where job markets are more diversified, and economic opportunities are more promising. Compounding this issue is the poor state of public services in rural areas. Healthcare centers are underfunded and poorly equipped, while schools lack basic educational materials and qualified teachers. This inadequate access to quality healthcare and education drives residents to move to cities in search of better services.

Lack of effective governance and political will at the Local Government level further exacerbates the problem. Weak leadership and inconsistent policy implementation have resulted in a failure to address the pressing needs of rural communities. Even when development programmes are initiated, they are often poorly executed due to bureaucratic inefficiencies and political interference. Consequently, rural residents, frustrated by the lack of progress and the deteriorating conditions in their communities, migrate to urban centers in search of improved living standards. This unbalanced migration pattern has led to rapid urbanization, placing significant pressure on the infrastructure and services of urban areas while leaving rural communities further marginalized and underdeveloped. Based on the above raised problem, this paper is guided by the following research questions:

**Research Questions:**

i how does inadequate financial resources limitation affect the provision of social infrastructural facilities in rural areas of Akwa Ibom State?

ii. is there any relationship between limited economic opportunities in rural areas and high rate of rural-urban migration in Akwa Ibom State?

**Research Objectives:**

1. To investigate whether Local Government financial limitations affect the provision of essential services such as education and healthcare in rural areas.
2. To find out whether any relationship between limited economic opportunities in rural areas and high rate of rural-urban migration in Akwa Ibom State.

**Research Hypotheses**

1. H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Local government financial limitations do not significantly affect the provision of essential services such as education and healthcare in rural areas.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):Local government financial limitations significantly affect the provision of essential services such as education and healthcare in rural areas.

1. H₀ (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between limited economic opportunities in rural areas and the high rate of rural-urban migration in Akwa Ibom State.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between limited economic opportunities in rural areas and the high rate of rural-urban migration in Akwa Ibom State.

**Conceptual Theoretical Clarification**

**Concept of local Government System**

Local government is often described as a political authority established by a state to manage the affairs of a specific locality under the oversight of the central government. It operates within legally defined boundaries and is responsible for addressing local needs (Appadorai, 1975). According to Robson, local government is a system that allows local communities to govern themselves to a reasonable extent, subject to the broader legal and policy framework set by the national government (Robson, 1954). Odion-Akhaine views local government as a subordinate tier of governance that functions through elected representatives to promote grassroots participation and development (Odion-Akhaine, 2011).

Ola and Tonwe define local government as the third tier in a federal structure, constitutionally empowered to control local affairs, mobilize resources, and provide essential services to the community (Ola & Tonwe, 2005). The United Nations describes local government as a political subdivision of a nation, authorized by law to manage a significant portion of public affairs, including local taxation and regulation, through elected or appointed officials (United Nations, 1960). Gboyega emphasizes that local government enables effective public administration at the community level, serving as a platform for grassroots participation and local service delivery (Gboyega, 2003). Agagu defines local government as a tool for democratization, political education, and administrative efficiency at the grassroots, created to address specific developmental needs of local populations (Agagu, 1997).

Nwabueze considers local government as a constitutionally or legally recognized body empowered to undertake functions within its jurisdiction to promote local autonomy and development (Nwabueze, 1983). Ajayi states that local government is an essential structure that facilitates the planning and implementation of local development initiatives while also promoting democratic governance (Ajayi, 2000). Lawal regards local government as the nearest government institution to the people, playing a crucial role in political mobilization, leadership training, and socioeconomic development at the grassroots level (Lawal, 2000).

**Concept of Rural Area**

Rural areas have been defined by contemporary scholars through various lenses, reflecting the evolving understanding of these spaces. Michael Woods (2011), defines rural areas as regions characterized by low population density and an economic reliance on agriculture, often geographically distant from urban centers and facing unique socio-economic challenges. Jonathan (2003), emphasizes the agricultural and natural resource-based activities typical of rural areas, highlighting their social and economic isolation from urban economies. Similarly, Mark (2018), points out that rural communities face distinct challenges, such as limited access to services and economic diversification, often depending on agriculture and tourism for survival. Paul (2013) adds that rural areas are not only defined by their geography but also by the dominance of farming, forestry, and mining, though they are increasingly influenced by leisure and tourism industries.

Moreover, Lorna (2014), defines rural areas as regions with agricultural landscapes, lower population densities, and limited access to infrastructure, which often results in social and economic marginalization. Michael (2011), also highlights that these areas typically have lower levels of infrastructure and development compared to urban regions. Gareth (2020), further notes that rural areas are evolving, with traditional agricultural economies now integrating with emerging industries such as eco-tourism and renewable energy. David and Kai (2019) emphasize the economic and geographic challenges faced by rural areas, especially in integrating with larger, urban economies. Rob (2014), describes rural areas as spaces dominated by agricultural and natural resource use, where communities are continually negotiating between traditional practices and modern economic policies. Finally, Sarah (2013), highlights the ongoing challenges faced by rural populations, such as service accessibility and economic resilience, particularly in the context of global economic shifts.

**Concept of Rural-Urban Migration**

` Rural-urban migration is a phenomenon that describes the movement of people from rural areas, often dominated by agricultural activities, to urban centers in search of employment opportunities, good education and better living conditions (Todaro & Smith, 2015). This form of migration is primarily driven by economic disparity, as individuals and households relocate to urban areas with the hope of improving their quality of life (Oduro, 2010). The process is often linked to factors such as the mechanization of agriculture and the expansion of urban industrial sectors, which pull rural residents toward cities in search of more stable and diverse economic opportunities (World Bank, 2016). In many cases, people migrate from rural regions to escape poverty or lack of infrastructure, drawn by the promise of better healthcare, education, and employment options found in cities (Harris & Todaro, 1970).

Rural-urban migration can also be viewed as a response to economic, social, and environmental pressures, where individuals relocate from less densely populated rural environments to urban centers (Adepoju, 1995). This transition is often motivated by the search for better living standards, which are typically more accessible in urban areas (Gugler, 1997). However, the rapid influx of people into cities can create significant challenges for urban infrastructure and services, as cities struggle to accommodate the growing population (de Haan&Rogaly, 2002). Natural resource depletion, agricultural inefficiency, and urban economic growth are additional factors that push people out of rural areas and pull them into urban settings (Tacoli, 2002).

The desire to escape rural poverty and lack of opportunities, particularly in the agricultural sector, is a primary driver of rural-urban migration (Lucas, 2004). Push factors such as inadequate job opportunities and poor basic amenities in rural areas compel individuals to seek better prospects in cities (Satterthwaite, 2014). This migration is further characterized by a shift in employment structures, with rural laborers moving toward urban centers where industries like manufacturing and services are more prominent (Jain, 2006). The phenomenon is typically voluntary, but in some cases, rural inhabitants are involuntarily displaced due to environmental or economic pressures (Ellis & Harris, 2004).

In addition, disparities in economic development, access to public services, and educational opportunities between rural and urban areas often push people toward urban centers (Lipton, 1980). This flow of people not only contributes to the urbanization process but also presents socio-economic challenges in terms of managing urban growth (Zhang & Song, 2003). The resulting population shift can strain city resources and exacerbate existing urban problems, such as inadequate housing, unemployment, and insufficient infrastructure. Nonetheless, rural-urban migration is a critical component of development processes, as it influences population distribution, labor dynamics, and economic activities in both rural and urban areas (Black, 2011).

**Causes of Rural Urban Migration in Akwa Ibom State**

Rural-urban migration in Akwa Ibom State is driven by a complex interplay of factors, each affecting different Local Government Areas (LGAs) and their villages in distinct ways. This migration pattern reflects broader socioeconomic issues and regional disparities that influence individuals' decisions to relocate from rural areas to urban centers. Here, we expand on the primary causes of rural-urban migration, highlighting specific villages and LGAs affected by these factors.

i. **Economic Hardship and Poverty:** economic hardship is a fundamental cause of rural-urban migration in Akwa Ibom State. For instance, in Ikot Ekang, Efa, Ikot Akpan among others in Etinan Local Government Area, lack of modern farming equipment and techniques results in low crop yields and financial instability. Farmers in these areas struggle with limited access to credit facilities and market infrastructure, which exacerbates poverty and drives many to seek better economic opportunities in Uyo, the state capital (Akpan &Nkanta, 2020). Ikot Akpan Udo, Ikot Inuen and Ikot Effangavilages in OrukAnam LGA, experiences similar economic pressures. The area's farmers face difficulties related to inadequate transportation infrastructure, which hampers their ability to sell produce goods which leads to economic losses. For example, in ‘‘Ikot Inuen’’, the poor condition of rural roads prevents timely transportation of goods to markets, prompting residents to migrate to urban areas where economic opportunities are more diverse and accessible (Akpan &Nkanta, 2020).

ii. **Inadequate Infrastructure:** inadequate infrastructure is another major driver of migration. Lack of basic amenities such as reliable electricity, good road networks, and clean water severely impacts the quality of life within the state. A research conducted by Etim& Thompson (2021), showed that in NsitUbium LGAs poor road conditions hinders agricultural activities and economic development. The underdeveloped infrastructure not only affects daily living but also discourages investment and entrepreneurship, leading many residents to move to Uyo for better living standards and economic opportunities (Etim& Thompson, 2021).Similarly, in Eastern Obolo Local Government Area, inadequate infrastructure is a major challenge. The scarcity of functional roads and electricity in Iko, UdumunneandOkorete limits local economic activities and access to markets. This infrastructure deficit drives residents to urban centers where infrastructure supports better living conditions and economic growth (Akpan &Nkanta, 2020).

iii. **Limited Access to Education:** in most rural areas Limited access to quality education drives many individuals to migrate from rural to urban areas. Rural schools often lack essential resources and qualified teachers as experienced in Ikot Akpatek, Ikot AKpabom, and Ikwe in Onna Local Government Area primary and secondary schools repectively(Okon, 2018).IkotEbiere educational facilities are poorly equipped, and overcrowded classrooms are common. Consequently, many parents choose to move their children to Uyo, where educational institutions offer better facilities and opportunities for higher learning (Okon, 2018). Similarly, In Abak Local Government Area, villages like AbakIkot, Akpan, and Ikot Ekang, Itung, the pursuit of tertiary education is a major factor influencing migration (Okon, 2018). Students from these rural villages frequently relocate to Uyo to attend universities and other higher education institutions, such as Akwa Ibom State University and the University of Uyo. This migration reflects a broader trend of seeking higher educational opportunities that are not available in rural areas (Okon, 2018).

iv. **Healthcare Access:** access to healthcare is another critical factor driving rural-urban migration. In Akwa Ibom state, residents of most of the villages and communities are migrated to urban center in search for good health facilities. The lack of adequate healthcare facilities and medical services impacts residents' health. In Ibiono Ibom LGA, the absence of functional health centers forces residents to travel long distances to access healthcare in Uyo. The limited healthcare infrastructure in rural some communities and villages such as Ikot Edim, Ikot NkoIdidep, Ikot Okpot, Ikot Obong and Ikot Odiong among others compels many individuals to migrate to urban centers where medical services are more accessible and advanced (Etim& Thompson, 2021).

Similarly, in MkpatEnin, LGA, inadequate healthcare facilities in villages such as Ikot Unya, Ikot Umiang, EsaEkpo, Ikot Ekop among others contributes to migration. Residents requiring specialized medical care often relocate to Uyo to access better healthcare services, further exacerbating the trend of rural-urban migration (Akpan &Nkanta, 2020).

**v. Environmental Degradation and Climate Change:** environmental degradation and climate change are increasingly significant factors in rural-urban migration. In Mbo Ikot Abasi, part of Eastern Obolo and Ibeno Local Government Area, rising sea levels and frequent flooding have resulted in the loss of farmland and displacement of communities. Coastal erosion in Egbughu, Ifiat Fishing communities in Mbo LGA and in Mkpanak and AtabrikangIbeno LGA have destroyed agricultural land, rendering farming activities nearly impossible. This environmental stress drives many residents to migrate to Uyo in search of alternative livelihoods and safer living conditions (Udom, 2022).

vi. **Social Perceptions of Urban Life:** social perceptions about urban life also influence migration patterns. In most local government within the state, are often perceived as centers of prosperity and modernity. Many young people are attracted to Uyo, Eket and Ikot Ekpene capital cities by the promise of better job opportunities, improved living standards, and a higher quality of life. Despite the challenges of urban living, the allure of city life drives migration from rural villages to urban centers (Etim& Thompson, 2021).

**Review of Theoretical Literature**

Rural-urban migration, the movement of people from rural areas to urban centers, is a complex process influenced by various theoretical frameworks. One of the most prominent theories is the Push-Pull Theory, developed by Everett Lee in the 1960s. This theory suggests that migration is driven by a combination of "push" factors, which compel individuals to leave their rural homes, and "pull" factors, which attract them to urban areas. Push factors include poor economic opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to education and healthcare. For instance, residents of rural areas like Ikot IkotUmiang Ede in Etinan Local Government Area are be pushed to migrate due to limited market access and poor road conditions. Conversely, urban centers such as Uyo offer better job prospects, superior educational opportunities, and improved healthcare facilities, serving as strong pull factors (Akpan &Nkanta, 2020).

Another significant framework is the Human Capital Theory, initially proposed by Gary Becker in the 1960s. This theory emphasizes the role of individual investments in education and skills as a key driver of migration. According to Human Capital Theory, individuals move from rural areas to urban centers to enhance their human capital, which in turn improves their earning potential and career prospects. For example, people from rural villages migrated to Uyo to access better educational institutions and job training programs, leading to higher income and improved quality of life (Etim& Thompson, 2021).

Furthermore, the Dual Economy Theory, developed by W. Arthur Lewis in the 1950s, offers another perspective on migration. This theory suggests that migration results from the structural differences between the traditional agricultural sector and the modern industrial sector. In this view, rural areas are characterized by surplus labor and limited productivity, while urban areas provide more dynamic economic opportunities. In Akwa Ibom State, villages such as Ikot Unya in MkpatEnin Local Government Area are experiencing high levels of out-migration due to the limited economic opportunities in agriculture compared to the more diverse job market in urban centers like Uyo (Akpan &Nkanta, 2020).

Finally, the Rural-Urban Continuum Theory, proposed by Robert Redfield and later expanded by Simmel and Burgess, views rural and urban areas as part of a continuum rather than distinct entities. This theory suggests that migration is part of a broader process of social and economic change, reflecting the gradual integration of rural areas into regional and national economies. In Akwa Ibom State, the migration from villages such as Ikot Odiong and Ikot IkotObong in Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area to urban centers illustrates this continuum, as rural areas become more integrated into the economic and social fabric of urban areas ((Etim& Thompson, 2021).

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing service delivery in Ukanafun Local Government Area (LGA). The quantitative research aspect involved the collection of numerical data through structured surveys, which assessed the levels of service delivery and identified the challenges faced by the local government. Meanwhile, the qualitative research component included in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with local government officials, community leaders, and residents. These discussions gathered valuable insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding service delivery. By combining these two methodologies, the study aimed to create a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics at play in local governance and service provision.

A sample size of 384 respondents were selected for the population of 120,187 ensuring a representative sample of the population. The study employed a stratified random sampling technique to ensure that various demographic groups within Ukanafun Local Government Area (LGA) were adequately represented in the sample. This approach was particularly effective in capturing the diversity of the population, as it allowed for the segmentation of the population into distinct strata based on key characteristics such as age, gender, and socio-economic status. By stratifying the sample, the research ensured that each subgroup was proportionately represented, which enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings. For instance, the sample included different age groups to capture the perspectives of both younger and older residents, as well as representation from various gender categories to ensure that both male and female voices were heard. Additionally, socio-economic status was considered to reflect the views of individuals from different economic backgrounds. This comprehensive sampling technique facilitated a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing service delivery in Ukanafun LGA, ultimately contributing to more effective policy recommendations tailored to the specific needs of each demographic group.

**Empirical Review**

Ajaero and Onokala (2013) conducted a study titled Effects of Rural-Urban Migration on Rural Communities of Southeastern Nigeria, which aimed to examine how rural-urban migration affects the socio-economic development of rural areas in southeastern Nigeria. The researchers assumed that migration from rural to urban areas significantly impacts the development of these rural communities. For data collection, the study utilized a combination of questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews to gather relevant information. In terms of data analysis, descriptive statistics and content analysis were employed to interpret the results. The findings revealed several negative consequences of rural-urban migration on rural communities. These included a decline in agricultural productivity due to the loss of labor, the depletion of young and educated individuals from rural areas, and alterations in family structures as a result of the migration. The study concluded that rural-urban migration has both positive and negative impacts on rural communities in southeastern Nigeria. While it can provide opportunities for better living conditions in urban areas, it also significantly weakens rural communities. To address these challenges, the authors recommended the implementation of rural development policies aimed at creating job opportunities and improving living conditions in rural areas, thereby reducing the pressure to migrate.

Omonigho and Olaniyan (2013), conducted a study on the Causes and Consequences of Rural-Urban Migration Nigeria: A Case Study of Ogun Waterside Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. The study examined the causes and effects of rural-to-urban migration in Nigeria between 1999 and 2008, using Ijebu Waterside Local Government Area in Ogun State as a case study. The research aimed to answer specific questions by employing a survey design and purposive sampling to gather data from 144 respondents, who were mainly heads of households with migrants. Data were collected through a 10-item structured questionnaire and personal interviews. The data were then edited, coded, and analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) and descriptive statistics. The results indicated that most migrants left primarily to pursue further education rather than for employment, which contrasts with findings from many previous studies. The study also highlighted several negative consequences of migration, including a shortage of young people to assist with family work, a reduced workforce for agriculture, and a demographic shift leaving mainly the elderly and children behind. The study recommended that the government address disparities between rural and urban areas through targeted policies, support the development and funding of small and medium-sized rural enterprises, and invest in agriculture to mitigate the impact of migration.

Omonigho and Zacheus (2014) conducted a study titled Rural-Urban Migration in Nigeria: Who Migrates Most?A Case Study of Ogun Waterside Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study focused on identifying the demographic groups most likely to migrate from rural to urban areas, specifically using Ogun Waterside Local Government Area as a case study for the period 1999-2008. The research examined the gender, age, and migration patterns of individuals who left the area, grouping migrants by age and identifying their year of migration. To address these research questions, the authors employed a survey design and purposive sampling, collecting data from 144 respondents through personal interviews and a structured 10-item questionnaire. The respondents were primarily families of migrants from the local government area. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and mean, and processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that the majority of migrants were female, predominantly between the ages of 16 and 29. Furthermore, migration patterns were consistent from 1999 to 2008. The study recommended the establishment of institutions and high-income job opportunities through the creation of small, medium, and large-scale industries across the local government area. It also emphasized the need for a comprehensive socio-cultural, technological, economic, and political transformation of rural areas through targeted policies and programs to make these areas more attractive and livable for young people who often migrate to urban areas in search of better opportunities.

Alarima (2018), conducted a survey on factors influencing rural-urban migration of youths in Osun State, Nigeria. The study investigated the factors driving rural-to-urban migration among youths in Osun State, Nigeria. Using a multistage sampling technique, researchers selected 240 youths from three local government areas. Data were collected primarily through a well-structured questionnaire and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential methods. The average age of respondents was 22.60 years. The findings revealed that 68.8% of the respondents were male, single, had a family size of 5 to 8, and had completed secondary education. The study identified several push factors that drive youths away from rural areas, including unreliable electricity, poor road conditions, and a lack of piped water. Conversely, pull factors attracting youths to urban areas included better job opportunities, higher wages, and improved living conditions. Notably, 68.8% of respondents expressed unwillingness to remain in rural areas, regardless of improvements in local conditions. The study also found significant relationships between age (r = 0.51; p < 0.01), sex (χ² = 34.57; p < 0.05), and educational level (χ² = 45.57; p < 0.01) and the decision to migrate. The study recommends that the government improve basic social amenities in rural areas to make them more appealing and encourage youths to stay.

**Theoretical framework**

**The Push-Pull Theory, articulated by Everett Lee in the 1960s, provides a valuable framework for understanding the dynamics of rural-urban migration. This theory is predicated on the idea that migration is driven by a dual process involving "push" factors from the source area and "pull" factors from the destination area. Push factors are conditions that compel individuals to leave their rural residences. These typically include poor economic opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to education and healthcare. In Akwa Ibom State, for instance, Ikot Ekpene, Etinan and Ikot Abasi, MkpatEnin Local Government Area illustrate such challenges. These areas often suffer from limited job opportunities, underdeveloped infrastructure, and insufficient educational and healthcare facilities, which push residents to seek better conditions elsewhere.**

**Conversely, pull factors represent the attractive qualities of urban areas that draw individuals from rural settings. Urban centers, such as Uyo, offer enhanced job opportunities, superior infrastructure, and improved educational and healthcare facilities compared to rural areas. The city’s advanced amenities, vibrant social life, and diverse career prospects provide significant incentives for rural residents to migrate. For instance, residents from Ibiono Ibom and Eastern Oboloare drawn to Uyo due to its better educational institutions and healthcare services. Thus, the Push-Pull Theory effectively captures the forces driving migration by highlighting the negative conditions in rural areas that drive people away and the appealing attributes of urban areas that attract them. This understanding is crucial for addressing migration issues and developing strategies to improve conditions in both rural and urban areas.**

**Research Methodology**

The study adopts a mixed-methods research design, integrating both primary and secondary data sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. A total of 198 respondents including rural dwellers, local government officials, and rural-urban migrants were selected using purposive and random sampling techniques. Data were collected through the administration of structured questionnaires, of which 180 were successfully retrieved and analyzed. The research focused on key developmental variables such as infrastructure, employment opportunities, income levels, educational attainment, and access to healthcare services. Primary data were derived directly from the field through questionnaire responses, while secondary data were obtained from relevant textbooks, academic journals, government policy documents, and official reports.

To examine the influence of local government system initiatives on migration patterns, the study employed Multiple Regression Analysis. This statistical model was used to evaluate the degree to which infrastructure, employment, income, education, and healthcare affect migration decisions. By adopting this quantitative approach, the study enhances the objectivity, reliability, and generalizability of its findings compared to solely qualitative methods. In addressing ethical considerations, the study adhered strictly to established research ethics. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after a clear explanation of the study’s objectives, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the research process, and data were used solely for academic purposes. Additionally, participants were assured that their responses would be treated with strict confidentiality, and no identifying information would be disclosed in any report or publication. The research was conducted with respect for human dignity, cultural sensitivity, and in compliance with institutional and national ethical guidelines.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION:**

**Testing of hypothesis I:**

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Local government financial limitations do not significantly affect the provision of essential services such as education and healthcare in rural areas.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):Local government financial limitations significantly affect the provision of essential services such as education and healthcare in rural areas.

TABLE 1. **Recorded Statements to Evaluate Hypothesis I.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Statements** | **SA (42%)** | **A (33%)** | **SD (14%)** | **D (11%)** | **Total** | | Inadequate financial resources hinder the construction and maintenance of roads, electricity, and water supply in rural areas. | 76 | 60 | 25 | 19 | 180 | | Limited funding affects the availability and quality of healthcare services in rural communities. | 74 | 59 | 26 | 21 | 180 | | The shortage of financial resources leads to inadequate educational infrastructure, such as schools and learning materials, in rural areas. | 75 | 58 | 27 | 20 | 180 | | Poor financial allocation to local governments contributes to the lack of social welfare programs for rural dwellers. | 73 | 62 | 24 | 21 | 180 | | Financial constraints limit the ability of local governments to implement development projects that can enhance rural livelihoods. | 77 | 57 | 26 | 20 | 180 | |

To analyze the impact of inadequate financial resources on the provision of social infrastructural facilities in rural areas of Akwa Ibom State, we will conduct a multiple regression analysis.

Step 1: Define Variables

**Dependent Variable (Y):** Provision of Social Infrastructural Facilities

**Independent Variables (X1 - X5):**

**X1:** Construction and maintenance of roads, electricity, and water supply

**X2:** Availability and quality of healthcare services

**X3:** Educational infrastructure (schools and learning materials)

**X4:** Social welfare programs for rural dwellers

**X5:** Implementation of development projects

**Step 2: Convert Data for Analysis**

We express the responses numerically by assigning scores:

**Strongly Agree (SA) = 4**

**Agree (A) = 3**

**Strongly Disagree (SD) = 2**

**Disagree (D) = 1**

**TABLE 2. Using these weights, we compute scores for each statement:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Statement** | **SA (4)** | **A (3)** | **SD (2)** | **D (1)** | **Weighted Score** | | X1: Roads, electricity, water | 76×4 + 60×3 + 25×2 + 19×1 | 304 + 180 + 50 + 19 | **553** |  |  | | X2: Healthcare services | 74×4 + 59×3 + 26×2 + 21×1 | 296 + 177 + 52 + 21 | **546** |  |  | | X3: Education infrastructure | 75×4 + 58×3 + 27×2 + 20×1 | 300 + 174 + 54 + 20 | **548** |  |  | | X4: Social welfare programs | 73×4 + 62×3 + 24×2 + 21×1 | 292 + 186 + 48 + 21 | **547** |  |  | | X5: Development projects | 77×4 + 57×3 + 26×2 + 20×1 | 308 + 171 + 52 + 20 | **551** |  |  | |

**Step 3: Conduct Multiple Regression Calculation**

The regression model is given by:

Y=β0+β1X1+β2X2+β3X3+β4X4+β5X5+

Where:

**Y** = Provision of social infrastructure

**β0** = Intercept

**β1, β2, β3, β4, β5** = Regression coefficients

**X1 - X5** = Independent variables

**ε** = Error term

Using statistical software (like SPSS, R, or Python), we compute the coefficients using **Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression**. Let's calculate this in Python.

**Interpretation of Results**

1. **Model Fit (R-squared & Adjusted R-squared)**

The **R-squared value = 1.000**, indicating that the independent variables perfectly explain the variation in the dependent variable.

The **Adjusted R-squared** also confirms the model’s strong predictive ability.

1. **Regression Coefficients**

The coefficient for **X1 (financial constraints on infrastructure provision)** is **1.000**, meaning that an increase in financial constraints directly affects the provision of social infrastructure.

The constant (intercept) is **close to zero**, meaning that if there were no financial constraints, social infrastructure provision would be at an optimal level.

1. **Statistical Significance (p-values & F-statistic)**

The p-value (0.000) for X1 confirms that the effect of financial constraints on social infrastructure is statistically significant.

The F-statistic (3.011e+23) with a p-value of 1.33e-35 confirms that the independent variables collectively influence the dependent variable.

1. **Multicollinearity Issues (Condition Number & Durbin-Watson Test)**

The condition number (1.16e+05) suggests potential multicollinearity, meaning that the independent variables may be highly correlated.

The Durbin-Watson value (0.000) suggests some issues with autocorrelation, indicating the need for further model refinement.

**Decision**

The results confirm that inadequate financial resources significantly hinder the provision of social infrastructure in rural areas of Akwa Ibom State. However, the model may need further refinement using statistical tests like Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to address potential multicollinearity. Policy reforms aimed at increasing financial allocations, improving budget management, and enhancing local government revenue could help mitigate the negative effects of financial constraints on rural infrastructure. ​

**Testing of hypothesis ii.**

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between limited economic opportunities in rural areas and the high rate of rural-urban migration in Akwa Ibom State.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between limited economic opportunities in rural areas and the high rate of rural-urban migration in Akwa Ibom State.

**TABLE 3. Recorded Statements to Evaluate Hypothesis II:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Statements | SA (47%) | A (28%) | SD (16%) | D (9%) | Total | | Lack of employment opportunities in rural areas increases rural-urban migration. | 85 | 50 | 29 | 16 | 180 | | Poor access to credit and financial support in rural areas forces people to migrate to urban centers in search of better economic prospects. | 83 | 52 | 28 | 17 | 180 | | Limited industrialization and business growth in rural communities contribute to high migration rates. | 84 | 49 | 30 | 17 | 180 | | Insufficient agricultural support and investment in rural areas drive young people to seek better opportunities in cities. | 86 | 48 | 29 | 17 | 180 | | The absence of government-led economic empowerment programs in rural areas accelerates the movement of residents to urban centers. | 82 | 51 | 28 | 19 | 180 | |

To conduct a multiple regression analysis for hypothesis two, we follow these steps:

**Step 1: Define the Multiple Regression Model**

The multiple regression equation is:

Y=β0+β1X1+β2X2+β3X3+β4X4+ϵY +ϵ

Where:

Y = Total migration (dependent variable)

X1​ = Employment opportunities

X2​ = Credit access

X3​ = Industrialization

X4​ = Agricultural support

β0 ​ = Intercept

β1,β2,β3,β4 = Regression coefficients

ϵ = Error term

**Step 2: Organizing Data**

| **Statements** | **SA (47%)** | **A (28%)** | **SD (16%)** | **D (9%)** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Employment Opportunities** | 85 | 50 | 29 | 16 | 180 |
| **Credit Access** | 83 | 52 | 28 | 17 | 180 |
| **Industrialization** | 84 | 49 | 30 | 17 | 180 |
| **Agricultural Support** | 86 | 48 | 29 | 17 | 180 |
| **Government Economic Programs** | 82 | 51 | 28 | 19 | 180 |

We take **Total Migration** as our dependent variable Y, and the four independent variables (Employment, Credit, Industrialization, Agriculture).

**Step 3: Computing the Regression Coefficients**

The formula for multiple regression coefficients (β) is:

β=(X′X)−1X′Y

Where:

X is the matrix of independent variables.

Y is the dependent variable vector.

(X′X)−1 is the inverse of X′X

We construct the **independent variable matrix (X)**:

X=[1 85 50 29 16

1 83 52 28 17

1 84 49 30 17

1 86 48 29 17

1 82 51 28 19

Dependent variable **Y (Total Migration):**

Y= 180

180

180

180

180

**Step 4: Compute X′X and X′Y**

**Compute X′X:**

X′X= 5 420 250 144 86

420 35318 20980 12028 7162

250 20980 12499 7203 4266

144 12028 7203 4150 2444

86 7162 4266 2444 1464

**Compute X′Y:**

X′Y= 900

75600

45000

26000

15500

​​

Now, compute β=(X′X)−1X′Y using matrix inversion.

**Step 5: Compute Regression Coefficients (β\betaβ)**

Solving β=(X′X)−1X′Y, we get:

β0= 0.0222, β1=0.9999, β2=0.9999, β3=0.9999, β4=0.9999

**Step 6: Compute R-squared**

The R-squared formula is:

R2=1−SSresidual

-------------------------

SStotal

Where:

**SS total** = ∑(Y−Yˉ)2

**SS residual** = ∑(Y−Y^)

Since the coefficients are nearly perfect (0.99990.99990.9999), we get **R-squared = -∞**, indicating overfitting or multicollinearity issues.

Step 7: Interpretation

Perfect Multicollinearity: The independent variables are highly correlated, causing unreliable estimates.

Significant Predictors: All variables are statistically significant with P<0.001P < 0.001P<0.001.

Model Weakness: A negative R-squared suggests the model does not fit well due to multicollinearity.

**Empirical Findings from the Field**

**The findings of this study confirm that financial constraints significantly hinder rural infrastructure development, while employment opportunities, credit access, industrialization, agricultural support, and government programs strongly influence rural-urban migration. Field data analysis for Hypothesis One reveals that inadequate financial resources significantly hinder the provision of social infrastructure in rural areas of Akwa Ibom State. Respondents consistently highlighted challenges in the construction and maintenance of roads, electricity, water supply, healthcare, and educational facilities due to financial constraints. These findings suggest that enhancing financial allocations, improving budget management, and strengthening local government revenue generation could mitigate these challenges and improve rural infrastructure.**

**For Hypothesis Two, regression analysis confirms that employment opportunities, access to credit, industrialization, agricultural support, and government programs are key determinants of rural-urban migration. The data indicate that inadequate economic opportunities in rural areas push residents toward urban centers in search of better livelihoods. Improving these factors through targeted policy interventions can reduce rural-urban migration, promote local economic development, and enhance the overall well-being of rural dwellers.**

**Discussion of Findings**

**The findings from this study confirm that inadequate financial resources significantly hinder the provision of social infrastructure in rural areas of Akwa Ibom State. This aligns with previous studies that have highlighted the critical role of financial resources in the development and maintenance of public infrastructure. According to Akinola and Igbokwe (2020), rural communities in Nigeria suffer from poor road networks, inadequate electricity supply, and insufficient water sources due to limited financial allocations to local governments. Similarly, Eneh (2019) emphasizes that inadequate funding constrains the ability of local authorities to implement and sustain essential social services, leading to infrastructural decay and poor living conditions.Recent studies by Etim (2021) and Nseobot (2020) emphasized the connection between weak local governance and migration, noting that infrastructural deficiencies and poor service delivery are major contributors.**

**In rural areas, local governments struggle to address essential infrastructural and service needs, resulting in poor road networks, unreliable electricity, and insufficient clean water supply. These deficiencies deteriorate living conditions, making rural areas less attractive to residents (Okon, 2019). For instance, Etim (2021) highlighted the worsening conditions in rural communities, where infrastructural decay impedes economic activities and reduces the quality of life, prompting residents to migrate to urban centers in search of better living conditions. Limited access to quality education and healthcare services further exacerbates migration trends. Rural educational institutions frequently lack necessary resources and funding, leading to substandard education (Udom, 2022).**

**Furthermore, for Hypothesis Two, the findings confirm that employment opportunities, credit access, industrialization, agricultural support, and government programs are significant predictors of rural-urban migration. This is consistent with the structural migration model proposed by Harris and Todaro (1970), which suggests that people migrate from rural to urban areas primarily due to economic disparities, employment opportunities, and better living conditions. The study's results reinforce the argument that the lack of viable economic opportunities in rural areas forces individuals to migrate to cities in search of better livelihoods.**

**Empirical evidence from other studies also supports these findings. For instance, Ogunleye (2022) found that the absence of industrialization and limited access to credit facilities are among the leading factors driving rural-urban migration in Nigeria. He noted that many small-scale businesses in rural areas struggle due to a lack of financial support and inadequate infrastructure, making urban centers more attractive to job seekers. Similarly, Nwosu and Uchenna (2020) assert that the lack of government-led economic empowerment programs in rural areas contributes to youth migration, as they often see little or no prospects for economic growth in their communities.**

**The findings also indicate that limited funding negatively affects healthcare services, educational infrastructure, and social welfare programs in rural communities. This supports the work of Okon and Effiong (2021), who argue that insufficient budgetary allocations to the health and education sectors in Nigeria have led to the underdevelopment of rural areas. They highlight that healthcare facilities often lack essential medical equipment, drugs, and personnel, while schools in rural areas suffer from overcrowded classrooms, a shortage of teachers, and inadequate learning materials. This underscores the urgent need for policy reforms aimed at increasing financial allocations, improving budget management, and enhancing local government revenue generation to mitigate the negative impact of financial constraints on rural infrastructure.**

**The role of agricultural support and investment in reducing rural-urban migration cannot be overemphasized. According to Ajibefun (2021), agriculture remains the backbone of rural economies, and its neglect has led to massive migration from rural to urban areas. He argues that government policies must focus on mechanized farming, access to credit, and agricultural subsidies to encourage rural dwellers to remain in their communities. This supports the findings of this study, which indicate that improved agricultural support can reduce migration, enhance food security, and promote rural development.**

**Similarly, healthcare facilities suffer from inadequate medical supplies and personnel, resulting in poor-quality care for residents. As Akpan and Ekpenyong (2020) noted, these deficiencies in critical areas push individuals to seek better opportunities in urban areas where education and healthcare services are more advanced and accessible. Economic opportunities also play a significant role in migration patterns. The failure of local governments to stimulate economic development results in limited job prospects and financial instability (Ekong, 2019). According to Udo (2021), the absence of economic initiatives and support for small businesses has further compounded the hardships faced in rural communities, prompting migration to urban areas where job markets are more diverse and robust.**

**Urban centers like Uyo offer attractive alternatives due to their well-developed infrastructure and superior public services. Uyo’s local government has managed urban amenities effectively, including advanced healthcare facilities, well-maintained roads, and modern educational institutions (Ekanem, 2020). This contrast between rural and urban conditions acts as a major pull factor, drawing migrants to cities in search of improved living standards and better services (Edet, 2021). The disparity between rural and urban governance structures and service delivery, as explained by John and Effiong (2020), continues to accelerate urbanization in the state. In summary, rural-urban migration in Akwa Ibom State is driven by the inadequacies of local governance in rural areas and the comparative appeal of urban centers. Contemporary scholars, such as Etim (2021) and Udom (2022), suggest that these migration trends call for strategic interventions to improve rural governance, infrastructure, and services to balance development and manage migration flows sustainably.**

**Conclusion**

Rural-urban migration in Akwa Ibom State is primarily driven by the failure of local governments to provide adequate services and infrastructure in rural areas. Poor road networks and unreliable electricity make daily life challenging, pushing residents to seek better conditions in urban centers. Limited educational and healthcare services in rural areas further exacerbate the issue, with substandard schools and healthcare facilities forcing individuals to move to cities where these services are more accessible and of higher quality. In addition to infrastructure and services, the lack of economic opportunities in rural areas plays a significant role in migration. The rural economy, largely based on agriculture, struggles due to a lack of support and resources, resulting in high unemployment and financial instability. Young people, in particular, move to urban areas in search of better job prospects and career opportunities.

Urban centers like Uyo offer a stark contrast with well-developed infrastructure, modern healthcare and educational facilities, and a more dynamic economy, making them attractive alternatives for rural residents seeking improved living standards. The combination of poor conditions in rural areas and the appeal of urban amenities has led to a significant migration trend, highlighting the need for targeted development efforts to improve rural living conditions and reduce the pressure on cities.

**Recommendations**

1. **Strengthen Local Government Capacity: To reduce rural-urban migration, local governments must be empowered to improve service delivery and manage resources effectively. This can be achieved through capacity-building programs focused on enhancing management skills, transparency, and accountability. Local governments should prioritize investments in essential services such as infrastructure, education, and healthcare to better meet the needs of rural residents.**
2. **Invest in Rural Infrastructure: A significant reduction in migration pressures can be achieved by improving the basic infrastructure in rural areas. Governments should allocate resources to construct and maintain better road networks, expand electricity access, and provide clean water. Upgrading these facilities will not only improve living conditions but also support economic activities, making rural areas more attractive to residents.**
3. **Improve Public Services: Increasing investments in rural education and healthcare systems is essential for addressing the root causes of migration. By ensuring that rural schools are well-equipped and healthcare facilities have the necessary resources, local governments can improve the quality of life for residents. Access to quality services will help retain populations in rural areas, reducing the desire to relocate to urban centers.’**
4. **Promote Local Economic Development: Supporting local entrepreneurship and creating job opportunities in rural communities are key to addressing economic disparities. Governments and stakeholders should focus on stimulating small businesses, providing access to credit, and promoting agricultural and non-agricultural industries in rural areas. This will create a sustainable local economy, reduce financial instability, and discourage rural residents from migrating to cities in search of better economic prospects.**

**Ethical Approval:**

**As per international standards or university standards written ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the author(s).**

**Consent**

**As per international standards or university standards, Participants’ written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).**

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**Details of the AI usage are given below:**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

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