

THE CHURCH AND RURAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN BENUE NORTH-WEST SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This work assessed the impact of Church activities on educational development of rural areas with particular reference to some selected local governments within Benue state. The objective of the work was to evaluate the educational activities of the church in the rural areas and how such activities have impacted on the education of the rural people. Applying the Structural functional theory, structured interview, in-depth-interview and non-participant observation were used to collect data which was analysed using tables, percentages and descriptive interpretive analysis. Findings revealed that, the Church has established several Schools, which rendered the desired services that benefited the rural people in various ways. The Church pioneered the establishment of Schools which boosted the acquisition of formal education in the rural areas, leading to attainment of literacy and numeracy by several rural children. This made it possible for the rural areas to produce educated people and elites obtainable in various works of life in the state. Early child education was made available to rural children, the youth and children access formal education nearer home making it easy for girl child education. It was therefore concluded that the activities of the Church has impacted positively on rural development. Recommendations were made among other things that, new generation churches should key into social gospel in developing rural areas, government should partner with the Church to carry out rural projects, and the host communities to embrace the Church without denominational bias while the Church diversify its activities to ensure rural development.

Keywords: *The Church, Rural Education*

INTRODUCTION

Society is a system, made up of interdependent social institutions which include: the educational institution, health institution, economic institution and the religious institution. The church is part of the religious institution which indicates that it is part and parcel of the social system. The Church is made up of the body of believers who believe in the religion and teaching of Jesus Christ. Moti and Wegh (2001) looked at the Church as an institution established by Christ, charged with the responsibility of preaching the gospel message of salvation. Emejulu (2011) opined that, the Church is viewed as a large, bureaucratic, and hierarchical religious organisation with typical recruits from upper, middle and lower classes with the institution of the priesthood, sacrament and formal liturgy. It is a social institution existing in the society which draws its adherents from all works of life and social background. Odey (2010), considers the Church as the people of God, the body of Christ, the bond of pilgrims, a leavening yeast, salt of the earth, a light on the hill, a crowd of people of all races, colours, tribes and tongues having faith in one saviour Jesus Christ.

In this work however, the word church is used to mean a bureaucratically organised religious institution, hierarchically set up by a group of individuals who share the same faith anchored on Christ Jesus and recruit and teach new members regularly to ensure its continues existence. The Church however has different denominations according to the diversities in liturgy and doctrines, all charged with the responsibility to win souls unto Christ. Since only two Church denominations having records of long existence in Tiv society were studied in this work, the term Church as mentioned in the study depicted only the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) and NKST, Nongu U Kristu U I Ser U Sha Tar, interpreted as Universal Reformed Church of Christ. (URCC). On the other hand the term 'Churches' is used in this work to mean institutions like Parishes and Consistories. These exist both in the urban and rural areas with various degree of influence on the rural societies.

Rural societies are societies considered to be in their original state with a homogenous population which is usually related by a common ancestor and culture. Most attributes of rural societies are obtainable in urban areas as well as rural areas. Explaining further, Idike (1992) described rural areas as having features like depression, degradation, deprivation and low population density. This however does not sufficiently explain

what is meant by rural areas since such conditions are also present with the urban poor. However, Ekong (1988) highlighted the basic characteristics typical of rural societies as low population density, closeness to nature, and simplicity of culture, homogeneous population agriculture as main occupation, low social mobility, low living standard, and high level of illiteracy. This description suits most rural areas in Nigeria, and in particular Tiv land where there is little development and much poverty with low living standard (Dzurgba, 2012). Though not every rural area has all the above listed features, some rural places may have access to some social amenities, yet the population may still be low in density and homogenous in culture.

Rural educational development on the other hand, connotes overall process of improving the nature and pattern of education in rural areas with the view to enhance the quality of life of the rural people, it is an integrated processes which includes, educational, and social aspect of the poorer section of the society leading to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of the rural people. It involves improving the system and pattern of education practiced in the rural areas. Umalele as cited by Alanana (2005) view rural educational development as improving the standard of education of people residing in the rural areas and making the rural populace more knowledgeable and vast in all works of life. It is an improvement from the traditional education to formal education which is multi-directional with the aim of integrating the rural children into the system of the wider society.

The Church as a religious institution found its feet on the Nigerian shores as early as in the 15th century when the Portuguese traders were used by the Catholic Church as the first Missionaries to visit Nigeria. Okori, Adejo, Ueven, Ada and Tor-Anyii (2011) are of the view that, these Missionaries apart from preaching the gospel, saw the need to improve the lives of the adherent through education to enable them read the Bible. As a result of this, a School was established in Badagry (the Nursery of the Infant Church). Gradually, the church in Nigeria has now spread to many parts of the country in such a way that in some states, it has become difficult to travel a distance of ten kilometres without coming in contact with one denominational Church building or the other. The sustainability of the Church in the rural areas is also greater than other developmental organisations due to availability of unpaid volunteer church workers who usually stay longer within the community than hired

community developers sent to stay just for the purpose of completing some developmental projects. (Deji2012)

In Tiv land, Missionary activities began as far back as 1911 by the Dutch Reformed Christian Mission, Sudan United Mission, and later the Roman Catholic Church, these made use of different methods to spread the gospel and get adherents. Utor (2011) rightly observed that, many techniques were used in preaching the gospel, some missionaries operated what was referred to as Bible Schools in the rural areas with the aim of teaching the converts how to read the Bible, others rendered free medical services to those who agreed to be baptised, all these were done to ensure increase in the number of adherents to Christianity. With this, many people within Tiv land belongs to one church denomination or the other and denominational church buildings are scattered all over Tiv land, with members being actively involved in church activities. It then became imperative to assess how the Church on its own apart from the government and other agencies, has affected the educational lives of the rural people thereby bringing about rural development within the study area.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The Church has existed in many rural areas of the country for more than a century, however, when discussing rural development in Nigeria, many scholars emphasis the activities of the government and non-governmental associations, living out the church which is resident in the rural areas. This work is then meant to uncover the value and relevance of the Church to rural educational development and the necessity of involving the Church in matters of educational development in rural areas for adequate and efficient performance. On a very specific note therefore, the problem studied in this work centres on assessing Church educational activities and its impact on rural educational development in Benue North West Senatorial District.

Objectives of the Work

The work is guided by the desire to investigate into the educational activities of the Church as its affects educational development, specifically therefore its objectives are as follows:

- i. To examine rural educational activities of the church in Benue North –West Senatorial District. of Nigeria.

- ii. To assess the impact of church activities on educational development of the rural communities in Benue North-West Senatorial district in Nigeria.
- iii. To investigate into the challenges limiting the efforts of the church towards educational development in rural communities in Benue North-West Senatorial district in Nigeria.

This study is very significant since it has posed a challenge and motivation to other new indigenous churches penetrating into the rural areas to add social gospel to their message thereby, boosting the socio-economic development of the rural areas. It can also be of help to policy makers on rural development, especially Ministry of education which can Partner with the Church for educational policies in rural areas, since it reveals the Church as another agent of educational development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This work is anchored on structural functionalism as a foundation for the analysis of issues in this work. Structural Functionalism as a sociological theory, gives explanation for the evolution and dynamism of human society. This is one of the fundamental sociological theories propounded by August Comte, Herbert Spencer, developed further by Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parson. Functionalism view society as a system, that is, a set of interconnected parts which together form a whole. Its basic unit of analysis is society, and its various parts are understood primarily in terms of their relationship to the whole. Emile Durkheim's perspective of Structural Functionalism gives the best explanations for this work because, he maintained that there is a necessary prerequisite for the survival of the society, if it should be kept alive and healthy enough to reproduce. To ensure this, role differentiation becomes essential such that food production, health, leadership. Low maintenance, education and religion will be maintained to ensure the welfare of members of the society. Thus members of the society also need to be mobilised and encouraged in order to perform their various duties. In view of this, the functional analysis turns to examine the parts of society to investigate how they contributes to the integration of the social system.(Ritzer2008, Haralambos (2004). The Church has adherents who are part of the social system, and operate according to the belief and practices of the Church. The Church also participate in the operation of other institutions like Schools, Hospitals, business centres. Agricultural centres and transport

services in the society. This makes the Church functional and important to the smooth running of the society, the functional nature of the Church has therefore sustained its existence over time within the society. The theory has therefore successfully offered adequate explanations for the existence and sustenance of the Church and its impact on the education of the rural people and is then adopted for analysing issues in this work.

METHODOLOGY

Survey method was applied in the course of this study due to its appropriateness, as it gives room for the selection of a representative sample of the study population. (Buruku, Gwer-west, Tarka and Gwer Local Government Areas) were selected for study, since they were rural local governments as designated by the Benue State Urban Development Board. The Roman Catholic parishes and NKST consistories established in Benue North –West Senatorial District totalled up to thirty seven (37). However, the population of the study was the leaders in the various church institutions which totalled up to 1256 people drawn from, 111 leaders of the various Parishes and consistories, 613 teachers in the 72 church established Schools and 370 elders in the host communities of these Schools

Stratified random sampling was used in selecting fifty percent of the Churches from Gwer-West and Tarka Local government Areas which hosted few Churches while 43 and 35 percent of Churches from Gwer and Bururku Local Government Areas hosting more Churches were sampled respectively. This was to guide against dominant representation from any local government. 15 Picked names of Consistories and parishes from a total of 37, represented the sampled population from where the purposively Data were therefore purposively collected from three categories of respondents, three (3) Church leaders from each of the fifteen (15) Consistories and Parishes studied totalling 45 respondents, three most senior administrative staff from each of the 33 Church established educational institutions making 99 respondents, and 10 most elderly beneficiaries from each of the communities hosting the 15 Churches studied making 150 respondents. These respondents total up to 294. The names of the Churches studied were: NKST Church Biliji, NKST Church Buruku, NKST Church Sev-av, NKST Church Garagboughol, NKST Church Wuna, Iyol I Kristu Abwa Our Lady Queen of Peace Agwabi. NKST Atukpu, St. Theresa's Parish, Naka. NKST Taraku, NKST Alliede, St. Patrick's Parish Taraku, NKST

Central Annune, NKST Uchi and St. Christopher’s Parish Annune. Structured interview, in-depth interview and observation were used to elicit information from the respondents, while descriptive interpretative analysis was employed to complement the quantitative analysis of this study. This warrants the use of tables and percentages to present and analyse the data collected.

Result, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Data were presented and discussed on the educational activities of the church and its impact on the educational development of Benue North west Senatorial District.

Educational Activities of the Church in the Rural Areas of Benue North West Senatorial District

Data were presented on the various educational institutions established by the Church in Benue North West Senatorial District as represented on tables 1 A and B following.

Table 1A Church Established Educational Institutions within Buruku and Gwer L G A.

S/N	Name of School	Place of Establishment	Year Established
1.	NKST Primary School Sev –avBuruku	LGA	1920
2.	St. Patrick’s Primary School Taraku Gwer	“	1932
3.	NKST Primary School BilijiBururku	“	1938
4.	NKST Primary School Taraku Gwer	“	1945
5.	NKST Primary School Garagbogh Buruku	“	1970
6.	School of Health Technology	Buruku “	1975
7.	NKST Primary School Wuna Buruku	“	1976
8.	NKST Sec. Sch. Taraku Gwer	“	1983
9.	NKST Primary School Alliade Gwer	“	1987
10.	NKST Secondary School Alliade Gwer	“	1987
11.	NKST Primary School Akor Gwer	“	1990
12.	NKST Primary School Doki Gwer	“	1992
13.	NKST Sec. Sch. Wunua Buruku	“	2006
14.	Iyol I Kristu Nursery and Primary School Abwa Mbagen “		2010
15.	Our Lady Queen of Peace Agwabi Nursery and Primary School.		2011
16.	Rev. Father Benjamin Adzor’s Science and Technical college Taeaku, Gwer LGA		2013

Field Survey 2016

From table 1A, sixteen (16) Schools were established by the Churches studied in Bururku and Gwer local Government Area, from 1920-2013,

these were scattered in different villages and communities giving the rural children access to formal education. It was then evident that the Church has engaged in the provision of educational opportunities in the rural communities of these local Governments Areas.

In Gwer –west and Tarka Local Government Areas, seventeen (17) educational institutions were set up within the host communities, from 1964 to 2010, most of them were set up in the interior villages to provide the rural people with the opportunity to acquire formal education. The information is seen in the table below.

Table 1B Church Established Educational Institutions Established in Gwer-West and Tarka LGA

Name of School	Location	Year of establishment
1. .Peace College Naka	Gwer-West LGA	1964
2. Roman Catholic Mission Primary	AnnuneTarka	1968
3. NKST Primary School Atukpu	Gwer- West LGA	1969
4. NKST Primary School Akume	Gwer- West LGA	1969
5. NKST Primary School Ukuma	"	1970
6. NKST Primary School Apenda	"	1970
7. NKST Central primary School	AnnuneTarka LGA	1970
8. NKST Primary School Naka	Gwer- West LGA	1973
9. NKST Primary School Naka West	Gwer-West LGA	1981
10. NKST Primary School Apia	Gwer- West LGA	1981
11. St. Theresa primary School	Naka	1982
12. Mount. La.Salle College	Naka	1982
13. NKST Primary School Gbabi	"	1983
14. NKST Primary School Adeke	"	1995
15. NKST Sec.SchAnnuneMbauyaMbakor	Tarka LGA	2006
16. NKST Secondary School Atukpu	Gwer- WestLGA	2010
17. Bishop Kirsten International Primary School	Naka Gwer LGA	2010

Field Survey 2016

Information from the above table indicates that, 17 Schools were set up by the Churches studied in Gwer-West and Tarka Local Governments from 1964 to 2010, these were thirteen (13) primary Schools and four Secondary Schools. The Schools were set up in various rural areas of the local governments, it then indicates that the church gave much attention to the educational development of the people

The Condition of Church Established Educational Institutions

Data were collected from the various Church established educational institutions and presented to assess its conditions and operations. To this end, information were collected and presented on the staff strength of the Schools, nature of facilities, and population of the schools, to assess the capability of such Schools to impact on the educational development of the rural areas. The information were presented on different tables for clarity. Information on the staff strength of the Church established schools indicates that, majority 20(60.6%) of the Schools had enough teaching staff to handle the students effectively while others 13(39.4 %) did not have the required number of staff expected, as presented in the following. table.

Table 2 Staff Strength of the Church Established Schools

Staff/Students ratio	Frequency of Schools	Percentage
1:10-1:50	20	60.6
1:51 and above	13	39.4
Total	33	100

Field Survey 2016

Evidence from the table revealed the readiness of most of the Church established Schools to educate their pupils, 20(60.6%) of the Schools had enough staff with staff/ student ratio of 1:10 to 1:50 which was enough to handle the students and pupils in such Schools. However in 13(39.4%) of the Schools the number of teachers was not up to expectation with the ratio of one teacher to fifty one students and above (1:51 and above). This indicates that majority of the Schools were well staffed to provide the necessary education to the students and pupils.

Information about the learning facilities in Schools became necessary to divulge the capabilities of such schools to educate the students, because, Schools without learning facilities cannot facilitate educational development. It was discovered that most (28) of the Schools had building facilities like enough class rooms, seats and office furniture for the teachers and head teachers, All of the eight (8) secondary schools in the study area had libraries while four (4) of them had Science Laboratories. All the 33 schools had at least one of the locally made instructional materials such as maps, drawings, charts. Only 5 schools had

insufficient building facilities, like few class rooms, no staff room and insufficient seats for the pupils.

By implication, the Church established Schools had most of the necessary facilities needed to give the desired education to its pupils and students. These findings agrees with Obiora (2000) who observed that, Christian missionary Schools and Colleges are usually well attended, in terms of staff and facilities which help to give the students sound moral educational foundation for all generations, in order to bring about excellence in knowledge creation and moral regeneration. It was observed that, most of the first generation Schools set up by the Church were grant aided by the government who took over the management and control of such Schools providing the needed facilities. However, most of the Schools managed solely by the Church also had structures and furniture needed for the training of students and Pupils.

Population of the Church Established Schools

It was discovered that most of the Schools were well populated indicating high level patronage of the Schools by the members of the community as seen in the following table.

Table 3 Population of Church Established Schools Studied

S/N	Range of population	Frequency of Schools	Percentage
1.	Less than 100	5	15.1
2.	100-200	10	30.3
3.	201-300	12	36.4
4.	301 above	6	18.2
	Total	33	100

Field survey: 2015

The table above reveals that the Church established Schools were well attended, 12(36.4%) of the Schools had a population of between 201 to 300, 10 (30.3%) of them had a population of 100 to 200 students, 6 (18.2%) of the Schools had a population of 301 students and above, while only 5 (15.1%) of the schools studied had a population of less than hundred students. Though the population of students in the various Schools seems to be small, It was observed that, in a village setting where

the research was conducted the general population of students and pupils were not much however, the Schools generally enjoyed much population, since majority of the Church established Schools were admitting more than a hundred students, the Schools therefore contributed favourably to the education of the community.

The Impact of Church activities on Rural Development

Investigation revealed that, various aspects of rural lives have been improved by the educational activities of the Church as presented with particular reference to education.

Impact of Church Activities on the Educational Development of Rural Areas

Ninety-nine (99) administrators of the schools and one hundred and fifty (150) beneficiaries within the various host communities of the educational institution interviewed mentioned various ways in which these have improved the education of the rural people as presented below..

Table 5 Schools Administrators about its Impact on the Educational Development of the Rural Community.

S/N	Impact	Frequency	percentage
1.	Easy access to formal education.	26	26.3
2.	Graduation of many students.	12	12.1
3.	Graduation of many pupils.	8	8.0
4.	Production of many elites in the state.	9	9.1
5.	production of well-meaning citizens in the community.	7	7.1
6.	Training of many teachers in the community.	10	10.1
7.	Initiation of girl child education.	5	5.1
8.	Enhancement of adult literacy education.	11	11.1
9.	Awareness on the part of Community members.	3	3
10.	Promotion of early child education.	6	6.1
11.	Promotion of academic consciousness	2	2.1
	Total	99	100

Field Survey 2016

Information from the table above demonstrated clearly how the educational institutions set up in the rural areas actually fulfilled the educational needs of the people .26(26.3%) of the respondents, emphasised the fact that Church established Schools enabled the rural

people to have access to formal education, 12(12.1 %) of the respondents pointed out that several secondary school students graduated from such schools, 8 (8.0 %) were of the view that many pupils had their education from the schools, 9 (9.1%) of the respondents asserts that, many elites from the communities passed through these Schools. 7 (7.1%) of the respondents mentioned the fact that many rich and well placed people in the state were products of Church established schools as these were the first schools set up in the rural areas. 10 (10.1%) of the respondent said that, the schools produced many teachers who were then working in some of the rural schools. 5(5.1%) were of the view that closeness of the schools to the community has made it easy for the people to send girls to schools who were denied education for fear of becoming wayward in town. 11 (11.1%) said that, the Schools have brought about adult literacy to the community. 3(3%) asserted that due to the presence of the schools, members of the community are generally well informed about academic issues. 6(6.1%) were of the view that, the presence of these Schools in the rural community has made it possible for young children to start their educational career at a tender age. 2(2%) of the respondents pointed out that, the Schools have created academic consciousness for the youths and parents in the community who strive to educate their children.

Interestingly it was observed that, Schools set up by the Church were the first to be established in most rural Tiv areas before government and private Schools began to spring up. Therefore most people who were privileged to obtain formal education in the early 1940s and late 1960s attended missionary Schools. The presence of these Schools then brought about the consciousness of training the children and youth in Schools which became a boost to development in Tiv land. Some products of the faith based educational institutions became teachers in the rural Schools, some established Nursery and primary Schools in such areas which further enhanced educational development in the rural communities.

Another open ended question was presented to 150 elderly beneficiaries of the church established educational institutions in the host communities of Church established Schools, in order to assess their perception about the impact of the Schools on the educational development of the rural communities, the views were presented as below.

Table 6 Host Communities about the Impact of the Schools on the Educational Development of the Rural Communities

S/N	Impact	Frequency
	percentage	
1.	Introduction of literacy and numeracy	34 22.7
2.	Pioneering of former education	19 12.7
3.	Production of highly educated people in the community	18 12
4.	Affordable fees.	5 3.3
5.	Promotion of early child education.	6 4.9
6.	Maintenance of high academic standard in rural schools	5 4.1
7.	Increased number of wealthy people in the communities.	7 5.7
8.	Promotion of civilization	11 8.9
9.	Increased number of university graduates in the community.	9 7.3
10.	Increased educational awareness in the community.	11 8.9
11.	Increased number of salary earners.	7 5.7
12.	Introduction of moral training in schools.	6 4.9
13.	Introduction of adult education	9 7.3
14.	Promotion of girl child education	3 2.4
Total	150	100

Information from the table above shows diverse ways in which Schools set up by the Church has impacted on the educational development of the rural communities. Majority 34(22.7%) of them said literacy has been brought by the Schools into the community since the Churches pioneered setting up of schools in the rural areas , 19(12.7%) said that the Churches pioneered the establishment of Schools in the rural areas and this laid the educational foundation for the community, 18(12%) were of the view that highly educated people in the community are products of such schools. 5(3.3%) said that the school is the only educational institution in the community with affordable fees. 6(4.9%) of the respondents were of the view that nearness of the school to the community made it easy for early child education. 5(4.1%) said that, the School was the only one where students were well taught.

7(5.7%) had it that, products of these Schools from the community became wealthy people from the time of the research. 11(8.9%) respondents felt that, the presence of church schools has brought civilization to the rural people in all other aspects of life 9 (7.5%) said that, some products of the Schools were university graduates. 11(8.9%) were of the view that, there is general awareness about formal education created by the presence of the Schools. 7(5.7%) talk of some products of the schools becoming salary earners. 6(4.9%) of the respondents

maintained that these schools produce well behaved students, 9(7.5%) pointed out the fact that, the Schools have trained many adult to read and write thereby making them literate 3(2.4%) of the respondents felt that, the schools being near to the people made it easy for parents to send their girls to School.

It was realised that, these Schools were the life wire of formal education in the Study area, as they pioneered establishment of Schools before government intervention in education, and private individuals latter came up. Female Children who were formerly not allowed to attend school out of home for fear of becoming promiscuous had the opportunity to attend School closer home. By this, the Church has influenced educational development in the rural areas through setting up educational institutions.

Problems Faced by the Church in the bid to operate Schools in Rural Communities

Interview with 45 leaders of the Churches studied revealed some of the major problems limiting the efforts of the Church to impact positively on the educational, lives of the rural people. The respondents noticed diverse problems as seen in the table below.

Table 7 Problems Confronting the Church in Developing Rural Communities.

S/N Percentage	Problems		Frequency
1.	Inadequate finances	19	42
2.	Poverty in the rural areas	13	28.9
3.	Land dispute from host communities	2	4.4
4.	Corruption from managers of the institutions	3	6.7
5.	Lack of cooperation from host communities	2	4.4
6.	Inadequate support from members of the community.	1	2.2
7.	Inexperience on the part of managers of church ventures	5	11.1
	Total	45	100

The above information shows different problems encountered by the Church in its attempt to develop the rural areas. 19(42%) of the respondents viewed inadequate finances as the major problem confronting the Church, hence the rural areas usually host the poorest of the poor who cannot contribute much, it affects the finances of the Church. 13(28.9%) of them considered poverty from the rural society as the main problem because, in most cases the major income of the

Church come from its members, therefore poverty in the communities reflect itself in the finances of the Church. 2(4.4%) of the respondents viewed land disputes from the host communities as the factor limiting their operations. Encroachment on Church land in some places created disunity between the Church and the host communities hindering project executions. 3(6.7%) of the respondents were of the view that, corruption on the part of managers of Church institutions limits its performance, hence funds meant for the execution of certain projects end up in people's pockets 2(4.4%) of the respondents viewed lack of cooperation from host communities as affecting the performance of the Church in rural development. 1(2.2%) of the respondents pointed that, host communities did not give adequate financial support to the Churches in the communities. 5 (11.1%) of the respondents were of the view that most managers of Church ventures were not experts in management and so find it difficult to handle such ventures. While some of the problems emanates from the church other came from the host communities where the Schools were established. In general, some of these problems were blamed on the Church while others were blamed on the members of the host communities of the various Churches.

CONCLUSION

Formal education is so central to the development of any society, however rural Tiv societies were not been opportune to access formal education until its encounter with the church. This study has therefore pointed out how the Church pioneered the establishment of schools in the study area with much impact on the education of the rural people. This clearly revealed that, the church has the potentials to participate successfully in rural development. It is therefore the position of the work that, rural development bodies should partner with the church for more efficiency and the church be recognised as an agent of rural development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this research has established the fact that, the Church though a religious institution has been involved in the rural educational development with a huge success, though not without problems. Therefore something needs to be done to ensure that the Church works unhindered towards developing the rural societies.

- i. The rural churches should liaise with well-meaning products of church established educational institutions for sponsorship of some educational projects where necessary,

- ii. The Church should endeavour to obtain certificates of occupancy for the land acquired in the rural areas to avoid disputes, and encroachment from greed neighbours.
- iii. The Church should avoid being biased and denominational in dealing with members of the community such that, it can enjoy cooperation from all members of the community,
- iv. Members of the rural communities should partner with the Church irrespective of denominational affiliation, through voluntary donations, and rendering of physical services were needed to ensure development in their various communities.
- v. The church should involve experts in the management of its educational, institutions irrespective of denominational affiliation, to ensure proper management and productivity.
- vi. The government should channel its rural development funds and programmes through the Church, because, it is an institution located in the rural areas, it is also in a better position to know the needs of the rural people who are also part of the Church. Moreover, the Church can easily be held responsible for whatever goes wrong. With all these done, the Church will be well positioned and equipped to do more in the rural societies in terms of development

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