

Urban-Rural Differential In Teaching And Learning Of Geography In Ahiazu Mbaise And Owerri Municipal Council In Imo State

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ABSTRACT: The all important need for self-reliance and technology in Nigeria calls for teachers to meet the requirement of the new national policy on Education. The concern of this study is therefore focused on the problems of Geography education in Nigeria. It examines the rural-urban variables affecting the teaching and learning of geography in Imo State. The sample for the study comprises ten schools, five each from rural and urban areas. Structured questionnaires were distributed to school principals and Geography teachers of the sampled schools and contingency analysis employed to test for the significant differences. The major findings of the study include the following. That one consistent indicator of differences in schools certificate geography achievement is school location. That the urban environment tends to be capable of raising and reinforcing children's cognitive behaviour more than rural environment. That difference in the supply and availability of geography teachers both in the right quantity and quality Geography equipment, library and text books create differences in the teaching and learning of geography in the rural and urban schools. Finally, that given the necessary qualified staff and equipment, students in the rural schools will perform equally well as those in the urban schools. [Report and Opinion 2010;2(9):33-44]. (ISSN: 1553-9873).

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INTRODUCTION

The planet earth so far is the only dwelling place for man among the other eight planets. Numerous activities and interactions have some causes and effects. To understand these causes and effects, one has to understand his environment. Therefore a general knowledge of what geography is all about and its importance to the society should be understood. The importance of Geography has clearly shown in the senior secondary school geography curriculum via.

- (a) To understand the concept of differential character a spatial relationship of the surface features of the earth.
- (b) To understand the concept of man-environment relations to examine the life of man within his physical and cultural environment and to explain their interactions.
- (c) To appreciate and develop a sense of responsibility towards ones own

society and intelligent interest in the formation of rational goals, and policies especially as they influence the different resources and regions of the areas.

- (d) To develop sympathetic understanding of the people of other lands based on the recognition and they may have different assemblies of resources, different goals and different problems from the people of their area.
- (e) To organize and formulate principles according to acquired Geographic concepts which they use to analyze and interpret spatial problems in their environment.
- (f) To develop skills and techniques for accurate orderly and objective geographical investigation to be carried out both in the classroom and in the immediate environment. Hence most countries have already recognized the dependence of their social, cultural, environmental

development on their geographical studies much as one could therefore normally expect decades after independent that the foundation for geography should have been well laid in Nigeria, but the truth is that the foundation not only remains rickety but infact crumbling. Geography is relegated to the background, while history, social studies, government are being projected in our primary, junior and secondary schools of the current 6-3-3-4 educational system.

Secondary education has been recognized as playing very crucial roles in providing suitable preparation for further education. The state of formal education at secondary school level is a very important determinant of the quality and quantity of intake into tertiary level of education. On the same vein, the development of geographic studies in Nigeria is itself a function of the type of geographic teaching going on in our various schools. The poor quality of Geography education in Nigeria is itself a function of the type of Geographic education teaching going on in our various schools. The poor quality of Geography in Nigeria might become a caricature of the real thing especially in the new and less established schools, which is in very bad condition for effective meaningful Geographic teaching.

Statement of the Problem: That differences exists in the teaching and learning of Geography in urban areas has raised dust in several quarters in most recent times. It is in this light that the research will be carried out to examine the differences in teaching and learning of Geography in urban and rural areas with a view to ascertaining the causes of the differences. As at present, there is poor student enrolment in the basic Geography courses in our institutions of higher learning. This is due to problems associated with Geography teaching in our various secondary schools such as field studies, text books and poor teaching methods among others. These problems seem to be serious in the various rural schools for example, while it is not uncommon to find in some of our urban secondary schools an

over concentration of qualified graduate teachers, students of the same subject in rural schools are compelled to make do with either unqualified teachers or none at all. It is generally believed to day that students in urban schools perform better than rural counterparts in School Certificate Examinations. Is the assumption then true that differences in opportunities offered for the teaching and learning of Geography in both urban and rural environment affect students' performance? What are some of these problems and how are they likely to be minimized if not eliminated?

These and other related issues constitute the focus of the problems that are to be investigated.

Purpose of Study. It is against the above background that this study sets out to examine some of the environmental differentials affecting the teaching and learning of Geography in Owerri municipal council and Ahiazu Mbaise local government of Imo State. More specifically the study attempts to do the following:

1. To ascertain whether school locations affect School Certificate Geography achievement.
2. To establish whether school location affects quality and quantity of Geography teachers in secondary schools.
3. To determine if school location is related to availability of library and geography text books
4. To make inventory of number of field studies and Geography teaching aids and determine their relationship to school location.

Hypothesis or Research Questions: In investigating into factors causing the differences in the teaching of Geography in some selected secondary schools in Ahiazu Mbaise local Government Area, the following hypothesis were formulated in the null form.

1. There is no significant difference between School Certificate Geography in both rural and urban schools.

2. There is no significant difference between teacher quality and quantity and School Certificate Geography performance in rural and urban schools.
3. There is no difference in the availability of Geography teaching aids and equipment in rural urban schools.

Review of Related Literature: Rural-urban location has been found all over the world to be an important indicator or differences in performance for examples, Anastasis (1958:9) Indicated through a review of text of intelligence carried out among rural and urban children in USA, that school located in rural environment attain lower scores when compared to their urban counterparts. (1972) discovered through the test of intelligence administered to 5th grade elementary schools that there is a marked superiority of town (urban) boys over (country side) rural boys. Coming home to Nigeria, Ede (1982) discovered rural-urban differentials in scholastic aptitude of primary school finalists in Lagos. According to him "children from urban school on the average perform significantly better than their rural counterparts on both the verbal and numerical aptitude test. Other researches which support the contention that school location affects achievement include Dele and Miver (1972:21) in their study of the first year university students' background, and their academic performance in Wales University College, Wales found that students from urban secondary schools performed quite better than students from rural schools. They concluded by saying that urban environment has a moral stimulating effect on learning and social interaction which the rural students are not accustomed. So also Davis (1969) employing latitudinal study on two schools, one each in what he calls stimulating and enriched environment (i.e urban) and the other a restricted and deprived environment (rural) concludes that school learning is more susceptible to improvement in certain environment than in others.

Quality and Quantity of Teachers: The teacher is an important force in school

learning. His personality and method has direct and cumulative impact on the lives and learning habits of pupils (Bernard 1972:62). Infact, psychologists have identified the teacher as an important agency which can make or mar any successful learning within the formal system of education. For example, Cookey and Dunhill (1962) wrote that "inadequate supply of suitable qualified teachers is not in doubt, but our various schools have to do without their services, or make do with unqualified ones. This is very serious in the physical science as well as social sciences like Geography.

The professional and academic training of the teacher can raise the prospects of a student's performance and attainments. Ukeje (1978) remarked that there is a direct relationship between the quality of the teaching personnel and the quality of educational process. He identified the defects of the present Nigeria educational system and opines that they are partly the result of poor teaching. This important conclusion is that there can not be good schools unless there are good teachers.

Adediram (1971) while writing on the important role of the teacher in any society opines. "The role of the teacher in the society lies at the heart of its intellectual and social life, and it is through the teacher that each generation comes to terms with its heritage, produces new knowledge and learns to deal with change." The need for more qualified and trained teachers in social sciences in developed countries is straight forward, because the teacher is only faced with presenting an already familiar subject in a stimulating and interesting way. But teaching in a developing continent like Africa raises problems which are very different from what obtains in developed countries.

Apart from the fact that there is a general shortage of teachers in schools today, it is significant that a higher percentage of existing teaching staff, for the secondary school are professionally unqualified to teach (Ajaebgu 1979). He is of the view that the problem is thus clearly not only quantitative but more seriously qualitative.

The Geography teacher of today is not only seen as an expert in his own right, but expected to function as a facilitator and catalyst to education in general. The following are the functions of a Geography teacher among others.

- I. To help future geographers and practitioners understand and appreciate the forms and features of the landscape and human imprint on the physical environment, and how the physical environment influences man economically, socially, politically and culturally.
- II. To help the majority of our pupils to cultivate curious and inquisitive minds which can investigate and correlate, organize and rationalize the phenomena on the earth.
- III. To help the pupils to understand the thinking of the Geographer, questioning and experimenting, seeking for the causes of things, and also to note the effects of conditions and happenings upon the earth and man.

It is only a qualified teacher that knows when and how to present learning materials to students in such a way it would encourage them to actively learn. We need dedicated geography teachers in our school system; teachers who teach not only geography facts and techniques, but also inculcate the spirit of geography and attitude of inquiry in the minds of students. This is very important in the third world countries like Nigeria.

It is clear that every way one cares to look, there is a clear need for more adequately qualified Geography teachers in our secondary schools in Nigeria, because the shortage of qualified teachers has largely contributed to the poor enrolment figures of Geography candidates into our higher institutions of learning.

ADEQUATE TEACHING AIDS/FIELD STUDIES

“Geography is a creative, problem-solving practical and intellectually stimulating school subject”. Accordingly experimentation in Geography is best undertaken in the field which is the Geographer’s laboratory. Abegunde goes on

to say that if geography is to be learned effectively, it must be experienced, as Geography by its very nature, requires active participation on the part of both the teacher and the students. Geography as a field-centered course “features discoveries of the generalities and principles which unify geography and make it easier to understand”. Justifications for field studies in Geography are deeply rooted in scientific methodology and educational psychology.” This is true because “the laboratory (field) is a place where persons or group of persons engage in human enterprise of examining natural phenomena” (Addiran, 1971). It should be argued then that field studies/trip is part and parcel of process of teaching and learning Geography.

Afolabi (1978) notes that field studies can be used to achieve wide ranging goals which include the development of creative thinking, increasing understanding of scientific method and the development of problem solving skills. So also Anaton (1975) is of the view that “field studies is organized to convey a sense of geography as an inquiry and that many field studies serve the traditional purpose of making clear and vivid materials expounded by the textbook”. In the same view Aimoke (1975) argues that practical work should form the basis of teaching Geography. According to him “since the field studies/trip is an instructional procedure, the Geography teacher should assume a position of a manager of learning with the field as a place where learning is discovered”. The objective of Geography field studies have been summarized (1985) as follows:

- i. As a means of verifying a geographic principle, law, or theory already known to the student.
- ii. Practicing and developing skills and techniques for accurate, orderly and objective geographical investigation to be carried out in the classroom

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the methodology that was applied in data collection. As the purpose of any research is to verify whether the assumption made about a particular

topic being considered can be seen to exist in the real life or practice, and accurate and reliable data gathered through questionnaire, interview and publications are of vital importance.

AREA OF STUDY

This research study covers about (ten) secondary schools in Imo state, five from Ahiazu Mbaise local government area as rural schools and five from Owerri Municipal council as urban schools.

Population of the Study

At the time we carried out this research work, it is assumed that all the secondary schools in Ahiazu Mbaise and Owerri Municipal council of Imo state are offering Geography as one of the School Certificate subjects. Out of 13 secondary schools in Ahiazu Mbaise, Five (5) school were randomly selected thus

- i. Pater Noster Secondary School, Ekwerazu, Ahiazu Mbaise
- ii. Ahiazu Secondary School, Ahiazu Mbaise
- iii. Ekwerazu Girls Secondary School, Ahiazu Mbaise
- iv. St Patricks Secondary School, Ogbe, Ahiazu Mbaise
- v. Ahiaza Technical Secondary School, Ahiazu Mbaise

Out of 9 secondary schools in Owerri Municipal Council, five schools were also randomly selected thus:

- i. Emmanuel College, Owerri
- ii. Holy Ghost College, Owerri
- iii. Owerri Girls' Secondary School
- iv. Girls' Secondary School Ikenegbu
- v. Development Urban Secondary School

These selected schools both in urban and rural areas in Imo state constitute the population for this research work.

POPULATION SAMPLE

Since the population is moderate, the researchers used the school principals, Geography teachers and students in the ten selected secondary schools: Five schools from urban areas and five schools from rural areas giving a total number of (10) ten. The Geography teachers and students were randomly selected so as to achieve an

unbiased result. As to how the geography teachers and students were selected. The first (2) geography teachers we saw in each school on the day of administration of the questionnaire were sampled and the first (10) ten students we saw in each school on the day of administration were sampled.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

This study of the Urban-Rural differential in teaching and learning Geography in Imo state will take two approaches namely the use of questionnaire and library reference. The past West African Examination Council result were also used from 1997-2000.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The nature of a problem determines to a great extent the approach to its solution. Whereas some problems require a lot of statistical analysis to solve them, others involve mere description and/or cartographic illustration.

For the purpose of this research, the statistical analysis method that was employed in the analysis of various data is the contingency analysis which is known as chi-square method of analysis. This method is in the B1-variate level of statistical analysis. It was employed in other to enable the researchers to test for significant differences.

ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter, the results of the data on school certificate Geography performances of selected secondary schools from both the rural and urban areas of Imo State are presented. It deals with the statistical analysis of the various data obtained. The results are presented in two sections.

Section A deals with the School Certificate Geography result in both Owerri municipal and Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area (L.G.A). It compares the results of the two areas (Urban and Rural) to see if any significant difference arises as a result of school locations, while section B takes care of the likely Rural-Urban differentials that have produced the observed differences noted in section A.

SECTION A: School certificate Geography results for selected school in rural and urban areas of Imo state

Table 4.1 School Certificate geography results of the individuals. Ten schools 2008

	SECONDARY SCHOOLS	GRADES				
		A	C	P	F	TOTAL
1	Emmanuel College Owerri	-	3(25)	2(16.66)	7(58.3)	12(100)
2	Holy Ghost College Owerri	1(5.55)	2(11.11)	6(33.33)	10(55.55)	18(100)
3	Owerri Girls Sec. Sch.	1(5.88)	2(11.11)	5(33.33)	9(52.94)	17(100)
4	Ikenegbu Girls Sec. Sch.	3(15)	-	5(25.00)	12(60)	20(100)
5	Dev. Urban Sec. Sch. Owerri	-	1(2.63)	1(2.63)	36(94.73)	38(100)
6	Pater Noster Sec Sch. Ekwereazu	-	-	1(14.28)	6(85.71)	7(100)
7	Ahiazu Sec. Sch Ahiazu Mbaise	-	-	-	-	-
8	Ekwerazu Girls Sec Sch. Mbaise	-	4(4.25)	7(7.45)	83(88.30)	94(100)
9	St Patricks Ogbe Sec. Sch Mbaise	-	-	1(20)	4(80)	5(100)
10	Ahiara Technical Sec.Sch. Mbaise	-	1(20)	1(20)	3(60)	5(100)

(figure in parentheses are percentage)

Table 4.2: School Certificate Geography results of the individual schools for June 2008

SECONDARY SCHOOLS	GRADE				
	A	C	P	F	TOTAL
1	-	-	2(18.18)	9(81.81)	11(100)
2	1(6.25)	-	3(18.75)	12(75)	16(100)
3	-	1(8.33)	2(16.66)	9(75)	12(100)
4	-	5(21.73)	2(8.69)	16(69.56)	23(100)
5	-	1(2.94)	2(5.88)	31(91.17)	34(100)
6	2(8.32)	1(4.16)	5(20.83)	16(66.66)	24(100)
7	7(9.21)	12(15.79)	25(32.89)	32(42.11)	76(100)
8	1(1.08)	2(2.15)	14(15.05)	76(8.72)	93(100)
9	-	2(20)	1(10)	7(70)	10(100)
10	-	2(18.18)	2(18.18)	7(63.63)	11(100)

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

Table 4.3 schools certificate geography result of individual ten selected schools for June 2008

SECONDARY SCHOOLS	GRADE				
	A	C	P	F	TOTAL
1	3(50)	1(16.66)	-	2(33.33)	6(100)
2	-	3(1.30)	5(21.73)	15(65.21)	23(100)
3	1(16.66)	2(33.33)	-	3(50.00)	6(100)
4	-	-	2(20)	8(80)	10(100)
5	3(30)	2(20)	-	5(50)	10(100)
6	-	1(9.09)	1(9.09)	9(81.81)	11(100)
7	1(6.66)	2(13.32)	3(20)	9(60)	15(100)
8	-	3(9.68)	5(16.13)	23(74.19)	31(100)
9	3(30)	2(20)	-	5(50)	10(100)
10	-	1(16.66)	1(16.66)	4(66.66)	6(100)

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

SECONDARY SCHOOLS	GRADE				TOTAL
	A	C	P	F	
1	-	-	1(25)	3(75)	4(100)
2	1(33.33)	-	1(33.33)	1(233.33)	3(100)
3	1(14.28)	1(14.28)	2(28.57)	3(42.85)	7(100)
4	-	-	-	5(100)	5(100)
5	3(30)	2(20)	3(30)	2(20)	10(100)
6	2(20)	1(10)	2(20)	5(50)	10(100)
7	197.69	4(30.76)	3(75)	-	4(100)
8	-	1(25)	3(75)	-	4(100)
9	3(30)	2(20)	3(30)	2(20)	10(100)
10	-	-	22(2.23)	7(77.77)	9(100)

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

The above four tables (4.1-4.4) show the School Certificate Geography result of the ten selected schools for four consecutive years. Schools 1-5 are urban schools in Owerri municipal while schools 6-10 are rural schools in Ahiazu Mbaize Local Government Area. From these School Certificate results, the contingency table was used to test if there is any statistical difference in the performance of both urban and rural schools for the periods between 2000.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between School Certificate Geography performance in both rural and urban schools

This hypothesis is tested by means of the contingency analysis where by the student grades are used as discrete data.

Table 4.1 Contingency analysis of school location on School Certificate Geography grades for June 1997.

SCHOOL LOCATION	GRADES				TOTAL
	A	C	P	F	
URBAN	5(4.71)	8(7.54)	19(17.92)	74(69.81)	106(100)
RURAL	-	1(5.88)	3(17.64)	13(76.47)	17(100)
TOTAL	5(4.06)	9(7.31)	22(17.88)	87(70.73)	123(100)

Figures in parentheses are percentages.

The contingency analysis shows that the distribution of the grades of the students by school location is significantly different as can be seen by the chi-square value which is significant at 0.05 level. This is because the value of 7.81 is much lower than the calculated value 32.33

Table 4.6 Contingency Analysis of school location by School Certificate Geography grades for June 2008.

SCHOOL LOCATION	GRADES				TOTAL
	A	C	P	F	
URBAN	1(2.77)	7(19.44)	11(30.55)	17(47.22)	36(100)
RURAL	2(4.44)	5(11.11)	8(17.77)	30(66.66)	45(100)
TOTAL	3(3.70)	12(14.81)	19(23.45)	47(58.02)	18(100)

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

The contingency table above shows that the distribution of the grade of the study by school location is significantly different because the chi-square table value 7.81 is much smaller than the calculated value which is 50.86 at five percent confidence level.

Table 4.7 Contingency Analysis of school location by School Certificate Geography grades for June 2009.

SCHOOL	GRADES				
LOCATION	A	C	P	F	TOTAL
URBAN	7(12.72)	8(14.54)	7(12.72)	33(60)	55(100)
RURAL	4(10)	5(12.5)	4(10)	27(67.5)	40(100)
TOTAL	11(12.18)	13(13.68)	11(12.18)	60(63.15)	95(100)

(Figures in parentheses are percentages).

Table 4.8 Contingency analysis of school location by school certificate Geography grades for June 2009

SCHOOL	GRADES				
LOCATION	A	C	P	F	TOTAL
URBAN	5(17.24)	3(10.34)	7(24.13)	14(48.27)	29(100)
RURAL	6(3.04)	8(17.39)	13(28.26)	19(41.30)	46(100)
TOTAL	11(14.66)	11(14.66)	20(26.66)	33(34)	75(100)

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

The contingency analysis shows that the distribution of the grades of the students by school location is significantly different as can be seen by the chi-square value which is significant at 0.05 level. This is because the value of 7.81 is much lower than the calculated value of 36.33

The contingency table shown that the distribution of grades of students by school location is significantly different. The calculated chi-square value of 102.29 is statistically significant because the value is quite higher than the table value of 7.81 given five percent error margin.

In view of the high statistical significance of school location by School Certificate Geography grades for June 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, as discussed above, the null-hypotheses earlier formulated is therefore rejected.

SECTION B: Rural/Urban differentials in the teaching and learning of Geography in Imo state.

In this section the responses of secondary school Principals and Geography teachers are considered in relation to School Certificate Geography performance. This allows one to determine success related factors in school located in Rural and urban environment.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between teacher's quality and quantity on School Certificate Geography performance in rural and urban schools.

Table 4.9 Teachers qualifications by school location

SCHOOL	TEACHER'S QUALIFICATION			
LOCATION	GRADUATE	HND	NCE	TOTAL
URBAN	10(55.56)	2(11.11)	6(33.33)	18(100)
RURAL	4(40)	1(10)	5(50)	10(100)
TOTAL	14	3	3	28

(Figures in parentheses are percentage)

From table 4.9 above, it could be observed that there are more Geography teachers in the selected five urban schools than the selected five rural schools. So also, a greater percentage of the urban school teachers are graduates.

Table 4.10: Geography Teachers' years of experience by school Location

SCHOOL LOCATION	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE OF TEACHERS				TOTAL
	0.5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15yrs	15+yrs	
URBAN	6(33.33)	8(44.4)	3(16.67)	1(5.56)	18(100)
RURAL	9(90)	1(10)	-	-	10(100)
TOTAL	15	9	3	1	28

(Figures in parenthesis are percentages)

Apart from the fact that Geography teachers in urban schools are more qualified than those in the rural schools, Geography teachers in urban schools are more experienced as it could be observed in table 4.10 above. To show if one teacher's qualifications are related to School Certificate Geography performance, the performance of students is compared with the qualifications of the teachers who taught them using the contingency table analysis.

Table 4.11: Teachers Qualification by student's School Certificate Geography grades in urban schools

TEACHERS QUALIFICATION	GRADES				TOTAL
	A	C	P	F	
H.N.D & N.C.E	25(17.73)	20(14.18)	36(25.53)	60(42.55)	141(100)
GRADUATES	8(24.55)	137(41.02)	70(20.96)	45(13.47)	334(100)
TOTAL	107	157	106	105	475

Table 4.12: Teachers' Qualifications by students' school certificate geography grades in rural schools.

QUALIFICATION	A	C	P	F	TOTAL
H.N.D & N.C.E	1(1.49)	10(14.93)	23(34.33)	33(49.25)	67(100)
GRADUATES	6(4.20)	18(12.59)	39(27.27)	80(55.94)	143(100)
TOTAL	7	28	62	113	210

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

The contingency table 4.10 and 4.11 shows that the distributions of grades of students by teachers' qualifications is significantly different for urban schools given five percent error margin and not significantly different for rural schools.

This is shown by the calculated chi-square of the urban schools of 60.55 which is higher than the table value of 7.81. In the case of rural schools, the calculated value of 2.33 is smaller than the table value of 7.81. Reasons will be adduced for this difference in the next chapter.

The above two tables (ie table 4.10 and 4.11) are compared to see if the distributions of Geography teachers in both rural and urban schools show any significant difference in school certificate geography.

Table 4.13: This distribution of teachers' qualifications in rural and urban schools by School Certificate Geography grades

SCHOOL LOCATION	QUALIFICATION OF TEACHERS	GRADES				TOTAL
		A	C	P	F	
Urban	H.N.D. &	25	20	36	60	141
	OTHERS	(17.73)	(14.18)	25.53)	(42.55)	(100)
	GRADUATES	1	10	23	33	67
		(1.49)	(14.93)	(24.33)	(49.25)	(100)
RURAL	N.N.D.&	6	18	39	8	143
	OTHERS	(4.20)	(12.57)	(27.27)	(55.94)	(100)
	GRADUATES					
	TOTAL	114	185	168	218	685

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

The above contingency table shows that the distribution of student's geography grades by teacher's qualifications in rural and urban environments is significantly different. This is because the calculated chi-square value of 160.92 is much higher than the table value of 16.92 at 95% confident level. Thus from the above discussion and findings, the above stated hypothesis 2 is accordingly rejected.

Perpetuate injustices. The Imo state Government through the ministry of Education should therefore rise up to the challenge and come to the aid of rural schools by helping them out of their present predicament.

SUMMARY, IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study has been concerned with rural-urban differentials in the teaching and learning of Geography in Imo state. The study was out to investigate performance of students from urban and rural schools in Geography and to account for the observed differences.

The yearly performance in the School Certificate Geography examinations of students from rural schools has been shown to be very poor when compared with that of their counterparts from the urban schools. These results conform with the other earlier researches on the issue of the importance of environments. Examples include Cuttance (1980), Dale and Miller (1972), and Anastasis (1958). These show that one consistent indicator of differences in the level of educational achievement recognized by researchers is that of the environment, that is, the characteristics of the learning, setting or environment of students have been discovered to be capable of evoking and reinforcing children's cognitive behaviour.

Although it has become an established fact that urban schools tend to have better results than rural schools, yet, given the necessary qualified staff and equipment, rural schools will perform comparatively well as schools in the urban centers in School Certificate Geography examination.

But often, because the rural schools lack qualified teachers, equipments and facilities, students who attend them are in serious disadvantages. It should be noted, however, that this neglect of rural schools in terms of equipments and personnel are the result of the prevailing practice of seeing Nigeria from the perspective of urban dwellers, that is, only people in the urban centres are entitled to the good things of life while the rural dwellers are left to their harsh and hard living conditions.

"Academically, the village teacher cannot compare favourably with his counterpart in the town...the environment in which the works does not favour his advancement in learning....there are no refresh courses, no retaining, no seminars, no libraries, no nothings." Thus to make rural students be at par with their urban counterparts in School Certificate Geography performance, the following differentials revealed by the present study should be well noted and provided for

1. Although the teacher is an important force in school learning as their personality and method have direct and cumulative impact on the lives and learning habits of pupils, yet their continuous scarcity both in quantity and quality in such social science subjects as Geography is unfortunate.

An adequate supply for suitably qualified teachers, the teacher is the basis for all successful programmes in education. The implication of the above, therefore is that one cannot expect any successful programme in education in Nigeria with the present scarcity of Geography teachers. As this study shows, the rural environment is the worst hit both in quantity and quality of Geography teachers. If the present government must, as a matter of urgency start a reorganization of secondary schools especially those in the rural areas. Secondly, a need for more Geography teachers in Nigeria.

Thirdly, incentives should be provided to retain those trained in the teaching profession. For example, the high rate at which teachers are leaving the profession is

creating more shortages of Geography teachers. The private sector of the economy is tempting in terms of pay to Geography teachers, and so unless Geography teachers pay is made to be at par with that of their counterparts elsewhere, one would still expect many more to leave teaching. This will not augur well for our schools and the coming generation who will have to compete in a world where Geography and other social science subjects is the answer to all things.

Another suggestion to ameliorate the problem of qualified teachers in Geography is in line with the view that the problem of science teachers is daily becoming much desperate and seems to defy solution one will have to suggest that a crash programme be extended to convert non-science School Certificate holders to geography in order to produce adequate number for training in Geography in the higher institutions.

So also, as trained Geography teachers tend to concentrate in the urban schools at the expense of rural schools, government should make provision for the obvious disadvantages which Geography teachers posted to the rural areas might have suffered. This will not doubt encourage more geography teachers to stay in rural area. Moreover the general service conditions of our existing teachers should be greatly improved through good regard for their valuable service to the nation. Finally, teaching should be made a career which many of our intellectually brilliant children could gladly embrace.

2. The importance of Geography weather station to the teaching and learning process in Geography has been consistently stressed by Geography educationists. For example, Ajaegbu (1979) argues that field and practical work forms the basis of Geography teaching. The study also shows that the weather station is an indispensable tool to Geography learning. As an indicator that models and instrument are provided in schools which present candidates for Geography in the School Certificate Examination, practical examination (manpower) forms part and

parcel of School Certificate Geography examinations. However, much as model and weather station are prerequisite to Geography teaching and learning, their continuous absence in rural schools has become the rule rather than the exception. Geography teachers in rural schools are asked to teach Geography without instruments. This inadequacy denies the students ample opportunity to learn by doing. Thus to the rural school children, Geography teaching has become uninteresting because practical work which constitutes one of its abiding attractions is neglected. To make up for this inadequacy of laboratory facilities which will ensure quality geography teaching, the government should ensure that all rural schools are provided with well-equipped weather station. The children should be provided with tools and equipment with which to learn by making the unfamiliar subject straight forward, practical, stimulating and interesting.

This is one of the easy ways to improve the teaching and learning situation of Geography in our secondary schools. The problems of the few Geography teachers in our rural schools should therefore be made lighter by the provision of adequate working materials.

Finally, library assistants in charge of the various schools libraries should be made to undergo some basic training in librarianship.

These suggestions are in line with the policy statement on school libraries in the national policy of education. According to the document "libraries are one of the most important educational services. Every state ministry needs to provide funds for the establishment of libraries in all our educational institutions and to train librarians and library assistants for this service (F.G.N, 1981, P. 43).

There is no doubt that this policy statement is far reaching if implemented. Thus, for the school library to train our desired objectives and effectively perform its role, it needs to be properly equipped, organized and controlled. It is therefore our concerted view that if school administrators/educational

planners and government take all these recommendations into consideration and implements, then well, the disparities in the present level of performance between rural and urban schools would not only be reduced but bridged.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES/RESEARCH

In a study of factors related to students achievement in academics such as this, one factor or another may be neglected, so also, because of its restrictiveness, making a general conclusion may not be so easy. Since the study was carried out within the scope of two local government areas, it is suggested that similar studies be carried out to incorporate all the other twenty-seven local government areas of Imo state.

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