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## SPATIAL VARIATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNAL MIGRATION IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA



**ANDREW G. ONOKERHORAYE**

This Policy Paper is supported by the *Think Tank Initiative Programme* initiated and managed by the *International Development and Research Centre (IDRC)*

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Preface .....	iv
Introduction .....	1
Conceptual Framework .....	2
Methodology .....	5
Board Patterns of Development among the Rural Communities ....	9
Rural Socio-Economic Development and the Patterns of Internal Migration .....	13
Conclusion .....	17
References .....	17

## PREFACE

This policy research paper is part of the on-going research of the *Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED)* on the research theme titled *Growth with Equity* in the current strategic plan (2010-2014) of the Centre. Often, policy makers and indeed many researchers rarely pay attention to patterns of spatial inequalities within rural areas. There is a tendency to focus attention mainly on the disparities between urban and rural areas in term of policy instruments to promote equity in socio-economic development. The marked variations in socio-economic development within rural areas are often not appreciated and given necessary attention. The existence of disparities in living standards within rural communities make the analysis of the patterns of development in rural areas in African countries imperative in order to identify areas of deprivation which should require adequate attention from policy makers and indeed donors. Only through such an analysis can the imbalance in the achievement of spatial development within African countries be understood. This form of analysis is particularly important in the volatile Niger Delta region of Nigeria, where inadequate and ineffective rural infrastructure is a major characteristic of rural areas. These disparities have provoked anger among many communities in the region resulting in violence which are still persisting. Accordingly, governments at the federal, state and local levels have to recognize the importance of equity in socio-economic development within rural areas so that appropriate policy instruments can be articulated and implemented to ensure that socio-economic development benefits all rural communities as much as possible. It is against this background that this paper examines the patterns of socio-economic development among 18 rural communities in Delta State in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as well as their effects on the nature and pattern of internal migration.

We are particularly grateful to the *Think Tank Initiative* for the support to CPED which has enabled the Centre to carry out the study that led to this policy paper.

## INTRODUCTION

Spatial variations in socio-economic development are important features of many African countries and these appear to increase with socio-economic development. The geographical variations often lead to spatial inequalities in socio-economic development and welfare. From economic perspective spatial inequality may be beneficial or harmful depending on the prevailing circumstances. If spatial inequality results from regional specialization based on comparative advantage or returns to scale in production, then spatial inequality may be beneficial as productivity is increased. But if spatial inequality is caused by external economies that are not internalized, then the level of inequality may not be optimal (Kim, 2008). In particular, spatial inequality in the form of the excessive concentration of urban population in large primate cities may impose a variety of social ills in society. From the standpoint of equity, spatial inequality may be socially undesirable if it contributes to social inequality across regions. Moreover, spatial inequality may be socially destabilizing if the regional divergence in economic welfare and political interests contributes to general social instability.

In the context of many African countries, there is a tendency to assume that spatial inequality in socio-economic development is basically a rural urban dichotomy. Although this

could be the situation during the colonial and early independence periods when spatial variations in socio-economic development between urban and rural areas stimulated a strong wave of rural-urban migration, the pattern has changed in recent years. In the last thirty years attention has been paid to stimulating socio-economic development in rural areas through the activities of governments, international agencies, other donors and some private sector organizations that exploit resources in rural communities and therefore contribute to improving the socio-economic situation in the areas where they carry out their activities. The overall effect of these developments is that socio-economic development has extended to rural areas in many African countries. However, this socio-economic development activities targeting rural areas has not benefited many localities and this has resulted in marked spatial inequality in the patterns of development in rural areas of many African countries. The spatial variation in the availability and access to rural infrastructure results in spatial disparities in living standards between rural localities. Thus, inequalities exist between rural communities as they do between individuals (Madu, 2003, 2007). Such inequalities often influence the pattern of internal migration as people tend to move from rural communities depressed by lack of infrastructures, social services and employment opportunities to other

rural areas which they consider more prosperous and offer opportunities for better livelihood. Such internal movement of people particularly of able bodied men and women from 'backward' communities to 'prosperous' ones tend to further aggravate the problems of inequality in rural development.

Often, policy makers and indeed many researchers rarely pay attention to patterns of spatial inequalities within rural areas. There is a tendency to focus attention mainly on the disparities between urban and rural areas in term of policy instruments to promote equity in socio-economic development. The marked variations in socio-economic development within rural areas are often not appreciated and given necessary attention. The existence of disparities in living standards within rural communities make the analysis of the patterns of development in rural areas in African countries imperative in order to identify areas of deprivation which should require adequate attention from policy makers and indeed donors. Only through such an analysis can the imbalance in the achievement of spatial development within African countries be understood. This form of analysis is particularly important in the volatile Niger Delta region of Nigeria, where inadequate and ineffective rural infrastructure is a major characteristic of rural areas. These disparities have provoked anger among many

communities in the region resulting in violence which are still persisting. Accordingly, governments at the federal, state and local levels have to recognize the importance of equity in socio-economic development within rural areas so that appropriate policy instruments can be articulated and implemented to ensure that socio-economic development benefits all rural communities as much as possible.

It is against this background that this paper examines the patterns of socio-economic development among 18 rural communities in Delta State in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as well as their effects on the nature and pattern of internal migration. The remaining part of the paper is divided into five sections. The first section outlines the conceptual framework while the second presents the methodology. The third section discusses the patterns of socio-economic development among the survey 18 communities while the fourth examines the relationship between socio-economic development and internal migration. The final section concludes the paper.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

There are two classes of models that possess very different policy implications for dealing with spatial inequality. The first is based on the standard neoclassical assumptions of constant returns to scale and perfect

competition. In these groups of models the role of government involvement in influencing socio-economic development is basically limited to infrastructural provision that affect the mobility of goods, labour, and other factors affecting production. Governments may have little ability to influence centripetal forces that are based on comparative advantage stemming from technology or resources, but it may increase regional specialization or inequality by lowering the mobility of goods or may decrease inequality by lowering the mobility of factors (Kim, 2008). In the second class of models otherwise known as “new models of economic geography”, the role for government intervention is significantly higher based on imperfect competition and increasing returns. First, due to the potential for “cumulative causation” forces, small subsidies can potentially have significant first-order effects. Second, infrastructural provision that increase the mobility of goods, labour, and capital may have significant impact on spatial inequality due to the self-enforcing nature of increasing returns. Third, since the equilibrium market allocations are inefficient in these models, markets will not reach the optimal level of spatial inequality without government intervention (Kim, 2008).

For policy makers in African countries, it is important to understand that these standard geographical models of spatial

inequality in development may prove to be an inadequate guide for understanding regional inequality in their countries. Most of these models are static and do not contain elements of a structural shift in economic activities from agriculture to manufacturing and services—one of the hallmarks of development. First, the extent of regional inequality may be limited by the manufacturing firms’ ability to recruit workers from the agricultural sector. Thus, the potential for agglomeration depends critically upon the labour mobility of workers between the two sectors. Second, the level of regional inequality may be constrained by consumer expenditure patterns. Regional inequality generally arises as an economy shifts from agriculture to manufacturing, but the degree of shift may depend on the rapidity by which consumers increase their expenditure shares in manufacturing. Thirdly, the role of government in terms of providing infrastructure based on political decisions rather than the optimal analysis of need and efficiency can contribute remarkably to regional inequality in African countries. What emerges from the contemporary models of regional inequality when examined in the context of Africa is that the evidence on regional spatial inequality is much more robust and consistent across countries. The main source of spatial inequality in African nations seems to be driven by geographic differences in the provision



of infrastructure which in turn influences industrial concentration. Since some industries such as textiles are much more geographically concentrated than industries such as food or electrical machinery, spatial inequality is caused by the spatial variations in concentrated industries. In general, other industries such as agricultural and mining tend to contribute to spatial inequality as natural resources are distributed unequally, whereas most services, especially those that serve local markets, tend to reduce spatial inequality.

The linkage between spatial inequality in development and migration is well recognized in the literature. Migration is conceived as a reaction to inequalities and opportunities which forces people to move to areas of prosperity. However, over the years, it has been shown that migration is not conditioned solely by socio-economic differences in development. Other factors play important roles in the decision of people to migrate and in their choice of destination. The primary objective of migration models is to provide an analytic structure through which the direct and indirect influences on migration are identified, migration trends are charted, and the impact on migration of exogenous shocks, including policy changes, are predicted. Statistical models are used to test specific hypotheses derived from migration theories and estimate the

magnitude of migration determinants and impacts. Estimated models, along with programming techniques, are used to explore or simulate the effects of policy and other influences on migration decisions. Simulations alter exogenous context variables, which are the only variables that researchers and policy makers are free to change directly (Taylor, E. 2003).

The evolution of migration theory shapes both models and data collection. The earliest migration models are rooted in the theory of the geographer E.G. Ravenstein (1885), who proposed 11 laws of migration based on the observation of migration patterns in Great Britain and, later, the United States. He proposed that although most migrants travel short distances, longer-distance migrants prefer to go to centres of commerce or industry; each stream of migration produces a counter stream; large towns owe more of their growth to migration than to natural increase; the volume of migration increases with the development of industry and commerce and as transportation improves; most migration is from agricultural areas to centres of commerce and industry; and the main causes of migration are economic. These observations motivated a plethora of quantitative models of migration flows and the aggregate variables that affect those flows.

Decisions about migration are shaped by economic, social, and cultural factors. Migration models formalize these determinants. They also may describe the effects of migration at its origin and destination and the interactions between those effects. Most formal migration models focus on economic determinants: opportunities and constraints on income at migrant origins (limited capital and technology, scarcity of employment, imperfect market environments), income opportunities at migrant destinations (demand for migrant labour in urban centres), and migration costs (travel costs, networks of contacts at prospective migrant destinations, border policies). Not all context variables are exogenous to migration; some may be influenced by migration decisions, as occurs when migrant remittances create labour scarcities or loosen financial constraints on production in migrant-sending areas, with ramifications for both migrant and non-migrant households. A growing body of migration research attempts to elucidate these indirect or feedback effects of migration. Although the results of sociological research usually agree that migration is the result of rational decisions by individual actors, such research often adds noneconomic variables to the list of determinants, viewing migration as a social process. Anthropological research generally deemphasizes formal or quantitative modelling in favour of ethnographic

research, viewing migration within a cultural, historical, and political-economic context (Taylor, 2003). This paper is placed in the context of these models of spatial inequality in development in rural communities as well as the pattern of migration associated with such inequalities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Data collection*

This study was based largely on data collected from the field. It is therefore important to give details of the field survey activities that generated the data used in this study. The sample size of any study depends to a large extent on three key factors: The degree of accuracy required; the extent of variation in the population under investigation with regards to key characteristics of the study and the size of the population under investigation. The sample size also needs to be sufficiently large to allow for meaningful analysis bearing in mind the objective of the study. Delta State is divided into three Senatorial Districts and these provided the initial basis for the sample selection process for this study. The twenty-five Local Government Areas (LGAs) within Delta State are distributed almost equally among the three Senatorial Districts. Consequently, the list of LGAs in each Senatorial District was compiled. From that list a table of random numbers was used to select three LGAs from each Senatorial District. In each randomly selected LGA the list of rural communities with a population of less than 20,000 was pooled together in an *Excel File* and sorted out alphabetically within each LGA. It is this frame that provided the basis for the

selection of rural communities. The selection of two communities in each LGA was carried out also by simple random sampling using a table of random numbers. Thus a total of 18 communities were selected for the survey.

The pre-testing of the questionnaires/survey instruments was carried out within the framework of the survey design. This ensured that all components of the surveys including the identification of wards, housing units, households, as well as the selection process of households and the administration of the survey instruments were tested. This facilitated the appropriate modifications to the survey instruments and methodology before the commencement of field surveys. The pre-testing took place in one LGA, which was not in the sample for this study. The results of the pilot test from the different pilot rural communities were used to further refine the survey instruments. The pilot test also gave some idea of the timing for the household surveys and the necessary logistics. After the first round of pre-testing of the instruments and the appropriate modifications made, the second round of field-testing was carried out with the training of enumerators. Training supervisors and enumerators for the administration of the survey instruments was crucial to the success and quality of the survey. The training programme of supervisors and enumerators took place in the capital of Delta State, Asaba. The

enumerators were recruited from the different sampled LGAs. The duration of training was five days including the second round of field testing. They were trained in survey techniques, the objectives of this survey, methods of soliciting cooperation and maintaining rapport and the content of the questionnaire.

A field survey manual is a document containing the survey design and the procedures to be adopted in selecting the samples and completing the questionnaires. In this study the supervisor and enumerator's manual served as the main training instruments. They were distributed to all supervisors and enumerators as a guide to the conduct of the field survey activities. Twenty-seven Supervisors and Interviewers (15 males and 12 females) carried out the survey activities under the overall direction of the Research Team Leader. Fieldwork progress varied. Initially interviewers encountered a series of problems including poor cooperation, and outright refusal by the respondents. Few questionnaires were completed during the first week. The timely intervention by the research team leader, supervisors and local leaders was very helpful; in the process, the interviewers also became familiar with the communities and acquired more experience on the best way to interact with the villagers. After the first week, the research team reviewed problems and compared experiences; on the spot

checks and supervision were intensified to enhance the quality of the fieldwork. The survey lasted three months and, on average, 250 questionnaires were completed for each village. The average performance of 1-2 completed questionnaires per interviewer per day varied between communities and interviewers. Overall, the level of cooperation achieved was high judged by the few refusals and non-response. However, the non-response rate was high for questions that tax respondents' memory. The high non-response for the question on income is understood particularly among farmers that do not keep records of their financial transactions.

The completed questionnaires were edited; the coding took three months. The household record form obtained data on the characteristics of all members of the households: age, sex, education, occupation, migration status, ethnicity and marital status. The out-migration schedule sought information on all members of the household currently living outside the community: their age, education, occupation and marital status at time of departure and during the survey, and nature of links with 'home'. Similarly, the return migration form solicits information on the characteristics of returnees at time of return, as well as current occupation. The main body of the questionnaire sought information on employment and migration history of household heads, links with home

place, membership of associations and future migration plans. In addition to household questionnaire administration in each of the sampled communities, other surveys were carried out including key informant interviews, semi-structured interviews, participant observations and focus group discussions. These later surveys and data collection processes were carried out by the Supervisors and the research team leader.

#### *Data analysis*

Data analysis methods reflected the qualitative and quantitative data collected. Broadly, the analysis entailed historical analysis, content analysis, descriptive statistical analysis and multivariate statistical techniques. The key variables used to analyse the variation in socio-economic development among the 18 rural communities are indicated in Table 1. These variables basically represent key aspects of the patterns of socio-economic development or welfare among the 18 rural communities and they brought out the differences among the communities with respect to these variables. It is therefore essential to use these key indicators of welfare to summarise the overall patterns of socio-economic welfare among the different rural communities.

Table 1: Variables used to analyse patterns of socio-economic development among 18 rural communities in Delta State

No	Variable
1.	Population Density
2.	Dependency Ratio
3.	% Households of 1 - 6 people
4.	% Households of 7 or more people
5.	% of employed in non-agricultural sector
6.	% Income level of over 20,000
7.	% Employment in Private Sector
8.	% Unemployed
9.	% within 5 km of Marketing facilities
10.	% of households satisfaction with primary education
11.	% of Houses with walls built of cement/sandstones
12.	% of household that complete Post-Primary Education
13.	% of within 5 km of motorable road or all season water Transport Facilities
14.	% of households within 5 km of Postal Services
15.	% of households having adequate land for farming/fishing
16.	% of households within 5 km to Newspapers
17.	% of households having electricity supply
18.	% of households having access to safe water
19.	% of households within 5 km of Primary Education
20.	Enrolment ratio in Primary Schools
21.	Enrolment ratio in Post-primary Education Facilities
22.	% enrolment in Post-primary Education
23.	% of households within 20 km of Hospital Facilities
24.	% of households within 5 km of Primary health Care Facilities
25.	% of females having access to credit
26.	% of females participating in community development projects
27.	% of household that gave a positive assessment of economic situation in their community

In order to interpret concisely the spatial variations in socio-economic development among the 18 communities with respect to the 27 indicators, a multivariate statistical technique known as *principal components analysis* was used. It is a technique which has already proved valuable in attempts to develop socio-economic indicators because it enables a large set of variables to be efficiently reduced to a small number of new variables (called components) which are derived directly from the original variables and which account for a large proportion of the variation in the original data. The analysis of the data on the communities began by determining the overall strength and direction of relationships among the 27 variables in the 18 communities. This was done through correlation analysis. The correlation matrix of the variables provides good evidence of the spatial associations among the pairs of input variables of socio-economic welfare of the rural communities. This gave a total of 378 inter-relationships in the matrix. With 17 degrees of freedom,

co-efficient of  $\pm 0.42$  and over are significant at the .05 level. Of the 294 inter-relationships, which were significant, 201 were positive while 93 were negative. This indicates that the vast proportion of the socio-economic variables used in the analysis change in the same direction across the 18 rural communities.

The application of principal components analysis to the correlation matrix revealed five important components, which are clusters of specific indicators. The performance of each of the 18 rural communities with regards to the five clusters of socio-economic indicators was identified through their scores on the components. In order to get an overall pattern of socio-economic development among the 18 rural communities, the scores of each community on each of the five components (or clusters of socio-economic) indicators were used to classify them. The classification produced four sets of communities, which are at different levels of socio-economic development as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Grouping of 18 rural communities in Delta State according to level of development

<p><b>A. Most Advanced Communities</b>                  Umunede                  Amukpe                  Aladja                  Ogulagha                  Mosogar</p>
<p><b>B Fairly Advanced Communities</b></p>

<p>Abbi                  Emevor                  Obiaruku                  Illa                  Koko</p> <p><b>C Less Advanced Communities</b>                  Ekpan                  Orogun                  Ashaka                  Enhwe</p> <p><b>D Relatively Backward Communities</b>                  Ayakoromo                  Ekakpamre                  Ekuku Agbor                  Olomoro</p>
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**BROAD PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT AMONG THE RURAL COMMUNITIES**

The four groups of rural communities reflect the differences in the patterns of prosperity, welfare and opportunity that exist among them. These patterns show not only the distribution of physical and human resources but also the limitations of past development programmes and policies as they affect the 18 communities.

*The Most Advanced communities*

On the basis of the 27 composite indicators of prosperity, welfare and development used in this analysis, five communities, Umunede, Amukpe, Aladja, Ogulagha, and Mosogar emerged as the most developed among the eighteen sampled communities in Delta State. A detailed examination of their scores with respect to the indicators shows that their population sizes are among the highest across the communities. The dependency ratio is lowest in these communities and they

also have the highest concentration of non-agricultural employment. The concentration of houses built of cement/sandstone is highest in these communities while enrolment in primary and post primary schools is higher than those of other curative and preventive health facilities among the sampled communities.

#### *Fairly Advanced communities*

The second group of rural communities comprising Abbi, Emevor, Obiaruku, Illa, and Koko are not as advanced in terms of the 27 indicators of socio-economic development as those in the first group. Consequently while the communities are less developed than those in the first group, they are more developed than those in the third and fourth groups. Like in the advanced communities, the second group of rural communities is characterized by a fairly high population density but the level of non-agricultural employment is quite low so that between 80 and 90 per cent of the labour force is still engaged in agricultural and other related occupations. The level of income in the communities is above average. Household sizes are generally large indicating the fact that extended family is still the dominant form of social organization among the people. However, the dependency ratio is not quite low as in the first group of communities. As far as access to infrastructural and social facilities and their utilization is concerned, the communities are above the average for

communities. The access of these communities to communications facilities is highest while there is a high female access to credit, which is another indicator of socio-economic development. Finally, these communities have a better access to the sampled communities. Similarly the level of female access to credit in the communities in this category is a little above the average across the sampled communities.

#### *Less Advanced communities*

The third group of communities, which comprises Ekpan, Orogun, and Ashaka less developed than those in the second group. The general level of development in this group of communities is not only below the first two discussed above but also below the average level for sampled communities in the state. Consequently, the communities are characterized by few of the indices of socio-economic development associated with the groups of communities identified above. Some of the communities in this category have adequate access to infrastructural and social facilities including their utilization such as enrolment in primary and post-primary schools. However, most of the communities do not have such access and this has affected the level of utilization. With regards to the other indices of development used in this analysis, the third group of

communities lags far behind the first and second groups of communities. Population size is generally very low; there is a very low level of industrial development; a vast majority of the labour force is engaged in agricultural and related activities; the literacy rate is quite low; the quality of agricultural technology is very low; majority of the houses are built of mud and there is generally negative assessment of the economic situation by the inhabitants.

*The Backward Communities*

The fourth and final group of communities, which emerged from this analysis of the indicators of socio-economic development, comprises Ayakoromo, Ekakpamre, Ekuku Agbor and Olomoro. These four communities can be regarded as representing the least developed part of Delta State. They lag behind all other communities in virtually all the indices of development used in the analysis. They are characterized by relatively low population size and dependency ratio are the highest among the sampled communities. There are few opportunities for non-agricultural employment in the communities in this group. The only available small-scale industries are of the traditional type. The literacy rate is the lowest among the communities while there are virtually no opportunities for women to have access to credit. There are very few infrastructural and social facilities available in these communities and often these are concentrated in specific

areas. Consequently a vast proportion of the people living in these communities are not within the reach of a secondary school as well as a hospital. The transport facilities to the communities are poor. The implication of this pattern is that many people in the communities do not have access to market places and even information flows within Delta State. The people therefore live largely in isolation from the main stream of information flow within the state and in the country at large.

*Factors responsible for the patterns of socio-economic development among the 18 rural communities*

A number of environmental, human and institutional factors have influenced the pattern of socio-economic welfare among the 18 target rural communities in Delta State. The first and second groups of communities which are the most developed ones are located in those parts of Delta State where environmental and human factors have been favourable to development in the context of the socio-economic and political set up of Nigeria during the last sixty years. Among the favourable factors is the availability of forest resources; the ability of those areas to produce export crops; and the fertility of the soil, which has encouraged local food production. These initial advantages induced other developments, which had remarkable effects on the rate of socio-economic changes in those areas



where these communities are located compared with other parts of Delta State. Among the other changes induced are immigration from other parts of the State as well as other parts of the country to such areas; growth in non-agricultural employment opportunities, road and water transport development, and the provision of infrastructure and social facilities. Even when other parts of the state, which initially had little positive environmental resources latter emerged as important areas for the production of exportable resources such as oil, the benefits went largely to the socio-economically advanced parts of the state.

On the other hand, the third and fourth groups of communities, which are less developed, are located in parts of Delta State, which were initially at a disadvantage in terms of the availability of a favourable environmental and human resources. This is because they were not significant producers of export crops during the period of British colonial administration. Consequently they have not been able to induce other positive changes such as the attraction of in-migrants, modern non-agricultural establishments, road and water transport development, and the provision of other infrastructural and social facilities. In addition to the above initial disadvantages in terms of the availability of positive environmental resources, there is the

problem of what can be called hostile physical environment particularly in the waterside areas which have hindered the construction of motorable roads at reasonable costs as well as the concentration of population of a reasonably large size in most parts of the area. All these factors have slowed down the rate of socio-economic development in such areas.

Finally, the disparity between the relatively 'developed' and the 'backward' communities of Delta State has been intensified by the policies and programmes of the federal, State and local governments during the last three decades. These governments that have played major roles in the existing patterns of socio-economic development in the state, have failed to give adequate attention to the elimination of the disparities, which exist, in the level of prosperity, social welfare and opportunity. Rather they have, by their policies and programmes, intensified inter-community disparity. For example, industries have been encouraged to concentrate in those parts of the state where the vast proportion of the available industrial establishments are already located. Furthermore, road development has been largely concentrated in those areas where it is easier and cheaper to construct roads at the expense of the other areas where the physical environment has not been favourable to the construction of modern roads. Furthermore, social

services have often been concentrated in localities where private and voluntary agencies have already established a large number of such facilities. These patterns are due largely to the lack of a regional development policies and programmes in the state.

### **RURAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE PATTERNS OF INTERNAL MIGRATION**

Internal migration in the 18 study communities is characterized by three dominant patterns. The first is out-migration from these communities to other parts of the country the second is in-migration from other areas while the third relates to return migration to these communities, which is characterized by out-migrants returning home to their communities after years of out-migration. Each of these types of internal migration has its distinct characteristics and implications for socio-economic development among the 18 target rural communities covered in this study.

#### *Length of stay of out-migrants from their home communities*

Key informant interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders in the 18 communities indicate that the communities have varied experiences in terms of the pattern of out-migration. What emerged from these interactions indicate that some communities are characterised by a higher level of out-migration than

others. The stakeholders in the communities where out-migration is relatively high complained of lack of facilities and employment opportunities which tend to force the youth to migrate to other areas in search of employment and education. Such movements they argued has negatively affected the communities in the sense that most of the young men and women tend to be out of their communities for many years and in most cases permanently. They pointed out that poor yields from over-exploited farmlands have further encouraged local farmers to move out of their communities to other rural areas. Table 3 shows that 23.2 per cent of the out-migrants across the 18 communities have been away for between one and four years while 24.5 per cent have been away for 5 to 9 years. The proportion of the out-migrants that have been away for 20-39 years is 11.5 per cent while 8.7 per cent were away for 40 and more years. Table 3 further indicates that some differences exist between communities which are classified earlier as 'advanced' or 'fairly advanced' in socio-economic terms with respect to the period of absence of out-migrants and communities classified as less advanced or backward. In the 'less advanced' and 'backward communities' a larger proportion of the out-migrants have been away for 20 or more years for example Enhwe (42 Per cent), Ayakoromo (35 per cent), Ashaka (48.2 per cent). In contrast the

proportions are lower in communities classified as ‘advanced’ and ‘fairly advanced’. This pattern reflects the differences between the communities in terms of the opportunities available in them which keep their members away for a long or shorter period.

*Reasons for out-migration*

The trend in out-migration is further reflected in the reasons for the out-migration of people from the communities. Table 4 shows that most of the migrants (28.9 per cent) from across the 18 communities left to pursue education while 27.1 per cent left in search of employment. The proportion that went to learn a trade accounted for 21.4 per cent while those who left because of the change of their jobs accounted for 17.1 per cent. The

situation with respect to the individual communities is different especially between the more socio-economically developed communities and the less developed ones. Table 4 indicates that communities such as Enhwe, Ayakoromo, Ekpan, Orogun and Olomoro that are in the category of less developed communities had a greater proportion of their out-migrants leaving the communities because of their desire for education and employment compared with those advanced communities where the proportions are lower. This can be explained by the fact that opportunities for education and employment are higher in the later communities than the former.

*Table 3: Percentage distribution of out-migrant household members according to period of absence*

Community	1-4 years	5-9 years	10-19 years	20-39 years	40 years and more
<b>Average</b>	23.2	24.5	32.1	11.5	8.7
Abbi	26.7	20.9	22.2	16.4	13.8
Enhwe	12.8	23.9	21.3	21.6	20.4
Emevor	29.0	33.8	18.8	6.0	12.4
Obiaruku	41.2	25.1	20.2	12.3	1.2
Ayakoromo	8.5	15.9	40.7	18.2	16.8
Ekpan	15.4	37.7	20.0	10.7	6.2
Ekakpamre	2.2	20.2	12.2	3.7	2.0
Umunede	51.5	23.4	51.5	21.6	0.6
Orogun	23.1	20.1	49.3	6.1	1.4
Ekuku Agbor	6.3	20.2	55.2	9.0	9.4
Amukpe	40.4	35.2	13.4	5.5	3.5
Illa	31.9	24.8	28.4	12.6	2.3
Aladja	2.9	23.3	67.6	5.1	1.1
Ashaka	13.5	14.4	24.5	26.3	22.1
Olomoro	0.8	14.4	79.7	3.3	1.8
Koko	38.6	26.2	20.2	8.9	6.1

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Ogulagha	32.7	32.0	17.1	11.3	6.9
Mosogar	39.2	30.3	16.2	7.6	6.7

Source: Author's Survey, 2004-2008

*Table 4: Percentage distribution of out-migrant household members according to reasons for migration*

<b>Community</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Look for work</b>	<b>Change of job</b>	<b>Learn a trade</b>	<b>Join husband or relation</b>	<b>Not stated</b>
<b>Average</b>	28.9	27.1	17.0	21.4	5.6	0.5
Abbi	24.4	21.3	29.0	16.4	9.0	1.5
Enhwe	38.8	35.3	15.9	7.8	2.2	1.8
Emevor	25.3	17.1	27.8	26.6	3.1	0.3
Obiaruku	29.4	17.9	21.9	23.3	7.5	0.0
Ayakoromo	25.7	56.1	9.5	5.5	3.2	0.3
Ekpan	25.9	40.1	10.2	17.6	6.3	0.0
Ekakpamre	22.2	31.0	25.4	18.1	3.2	0.0
Umunede	27.5	20.1	18.2	32.1	2.1	0.0
Orogun	30.7	33.9	9.6	10.8	14.9	0.0
Ekuku Agbor	21.9	31.1	19.6	20.0	7.4	0.0
Amukpe	25.1	22.7	36.7	11.8	3.6	0.0
Illa	29.7	14.0	29.8	19.6	6.9	0.0
Aladja	35.2	13.3	31.0	16.2	4.3	0.0
Ashaka	15.2	36.6	17.6	25.6	5.0	0.0
Olomoro	32.7	38.7	15.4	4.4	8.8	0.0
Koko	35.0	11.2	29.8	15.7	2.3	6.0
Ogulagha	35.4	10.5	30.7	21.4	2.0	0.0
Mosogar	40.3	36.7	17.9	3.1	2.0	0.0

Source: Author's Survey, 2004-2008

**Table 5:** Percentage distribution of return-migrant household members according to period of absence

Community	1-4 years	5-9 years	10-19 years	20-39 years	40 years and more
<b>Average</b>	23.1	25.1	25.4	19.6	6.8
Abbi	32.1	30.9	18.1	15.0	4.9
Enhwe	10.9	30.8	39.8	15.8	3.1
Emevor	25.4	30.0	24.1	16.6	4.0
Obiaruku	24.0	34.0	17.5	23.5	1.0
Ayakoromo	5.0	10.7	60.5	22.7	5.4
Ekpan	9.4	40.2	37.6	47.0	11.3
Ekakpamre	7.5	19.0	22.1	28.9	5.4
Umunede	42.2	20.0	13.8	17.7	6.3
Orogun	12.1	21.7	45.4	15.4	4.2
Ekuku Agbor	2.5	25.2	31.7	30.0	11.5
Amukpe	36.0	31.0	15.6	11.7	5.7
Illa	32.3	30.0	16.7	20.0	3.4
Aladja	49.4	16.7	23.0	24.1	0.0
Ashaka	6.5	18.2	31.5	25.4	18.4
Olomoro	17.8	19.1	43.0	30.8	19.1
Koko	32.1	30.0	18.0	17.0	0.9
Ogulagha	35.9	29.0	15.9	13.3	5.9
Mosogar	35.0	31.0	19.5	14.5	0.5

Source: Author's Survey, 2004-2008

*Pattern of return migration*

Some of the out-migrants from the 18 communities return home after years of absence from their communities. Table 5 indicates that 23.1 per cent of the former out-migrants who had returned home stayed away for between 1 and 4 years while 25.1 per cent were away for between 5 and 9 years. The proportion of return migrants who stayed away for between 10 and 19 years before returning was 25.4 per cent. Those who were away for between 20 and 39 years constituted 19.6 per cent while only

about 7 per cent were away for 40 and more years. Again there are remarkable difference between the different communities which also reflected their pattern of socio-economic development. In the less advanced communities migrants who returned spent longer years away from their communities before returning compared with those who returned to the more advanced communities. Table 5 shows that in communities such as Ayakoromo, Enhwe, Ekpan, Ekakpamre, Orogun, Ekuku Agbor, Ashaka, and Olomoro which are

comparatively less developed had most of their return out-migrants staying between 10 and more years compared with more advanced communities such as Abbi, Umunede, Amukpe, Aladja, Koko and Mosogar where most of their return out-migrants spent less than 10 years away from home. These patterns also show that migrants from comparatively advanced communities stay shorter periods from home because with better opportunities in their home communities, they are attracted back early while those from less advanced communities stay longer and in fact return when they are of retirement age.

## CONCLUSION

This study of the pattern of rural development in Delta State has shown that rural communities in the state are at different stages of socio-economic development as some are better developed than others. The study also shows that migration patterns and trends are closely related to the patterns of socio-economic development of the rural communities. The less developed communities were characterised by out-migrants who have been away for longer years compared with those who left the more advanced communities. Furthermore, the out-migrants from the less advanced rural communities left in search of employment or to learn a trade while education and change of job accounted for most of those who out-migrated from the more advanced communities. Finally, a greater

proportion of the out-migrants from the advanced communities returned after less than 10 years compared with those who left the less advanced countries who stayed longer or permanently in their areas of destination. The challenge of equitable rural socio-economic development in Delta State basically relates to the need to devise strategies for raising the level of development in the less developed rural communities as well as ensure the future equitable development of all rural communities in the state and other parts of the Niger Delta region.

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