

# **ASSESSMENT OF BASIC INFRASTRUCTURAL NEEDS OF RURAL HOUSEHOLDS IN IGUEBEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE**

**Andrew Onwuemele (PhD)**

*Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER)*

*Physical Development Division,*

*Ojoo, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria*

*Tel: 234-08028935767; 08130569041*

*Email: inofitshout@yahoo.com*

## **Abstract**

*Physical infrastructures are necessary ingredients for the overall development of any area. In Nigeria, more than half of its population resides in rural areas. Paradoxically, inadequate and dearth of infrastructural facilities characterised most of these rural communities and this has been implicated for the persistence of poverty in many rural communities. Despite the importance of rural infrastructure, government investments have largely focused on the urban areas in Nigeria. Governments over the years have adopted the top-bottom approach in the provision of infrastructure. This has led to gross under-utilisation or complete abandonment of most infrastructures. With dwindling government resources in recent time, it is important that resources are utilised in such a way as to meet the priority needs of the people to avoid waste. Thus, with the present effort of the Edo State government in infrastructural provision, it is important to determine the priority infrastructural needs of local communities in the state. The study adopted the survey research design. Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilised. The analysis reveals that access roads, water supply, electricity and hospital facilities are the most important infrastructural needs of people in the area. The study, therefore, recommended that governmental efforts both at the Local Government area and state level in improving the living conditions of the people must target this prioritised needs from the most important need which is access roads to the least which is post office. The study also advocates the need for adopting a basic needs approach in the provision of rural infrastructures in the area of study.*

**Keywords:** *Assessment, Basic Infrastructure, Needs, Rural Households*

## 1. Introduction

Satisfying the infrastructural needs of people is one of the core goals of rural development. Thus, government of different nations in both the developed and developing countries strives to meet the infrastructural needs of its people. Infrastructures are necessary ingredients for the overall development of any territory, rural areas inclusive. Good infrastructure is necessary not only for economic development but also for overall human development and decent standard of living (Meenakshi, 2008). One of the most significant development problems in Nigeria as in other developing countries is the lack of adequate infrastructural facilities in various parts of the country. This problem is aggravated by the persistence of regional inequalities in the distribution of the available infrastructures. This is most severe between urban and rural areas (Onokerhoraye, 1984).

In Nigeria, more than half of its population resides in rural areas (NPC, 2006) where they are primarily engaged in subsistence agriculture using simple implements. Paradoxically, inadequate and dearth of infrastructural facilities characterised most of these rural communities and this has been known to have serious implications for welfare and the persistence of poverty in many rural communities (Fakayode, *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, there are intra-rural disparities in the provision of infrastructural facilities as most of the available infrastructures are located in urban areas. However, this prevalence

of regional disparities in the provision of infrastructure has received little or no attention from policy makers and researchers. The corollary of this has been the lopsidedness in the distribution of the few available infrastructural facilities and the virtually absence of basic infrastructures in some settlements.

### 1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

Several scholars have stressed the importance of infrastructure to the overall development of rural areas (Binswanger *et al.*, 1993; Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO, 2005; PCU-NFDO, 2005; Fakayode, *et al.*, 2008). The importance of infrastructure lies in its capacity to help sustains daily activities, quality of life, and an economic base in rural areas (Halseth and Ryser, 2006). Binswanger *et al.* (1993) notes that better infrastructure improves agricultural investment and output decisions of farmers. Infrastructure also has multiple effects on health and quality of life. FAO, (2005) notes that rural infrastructure plays a crucial role in poverty reduction, economic growth and empowerment for the African rural poor while PCU-NFDO (2005), likened the role played by rural infrastructure in rural communities to that of secondary and tertiary arteries of the body system as they are crucial as the main arteries for blood circulation.

Despite the importance of rural infrastructure, government investments have largely been focussed on the cities in Nigeria. Governmental effort directed

at addressing the rural infrastructure problems of the rural areas over the years can be seen in the establishment of different programmes such as the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) and the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). In spite of these programmes, adequate rural infrastructure has continued to elude the rural people in different parts of Nigeria.

However, an appraisal of government approaches in the provision of basic infrastructures in rural communities in Nigeria reveals that the people are never consulted to determine their basic needs. Rather, it seems that the government feels that every infrastructure is needed by the rural people. A visit to many rural communities in Nigeria will reveal that many rural infrastructures such as lockup stores, markets, postal agencies and health centres, among others are either grossly underutilised or completely abandoned. This situation has been attributed to the non-participation of the local people for who the infrastructures are being provided. With dwindling government resources in recent time, it is important that resources are utilised in such a way as to meet the priority needs of the people to avoid waste. Thus, with the present effort of the Edo State Government in infrastructural provision, it is important to determine the priority infrastructural needs of local communities in the state. It is against this background that this study assesses the basic infrastructural needs of rural

communities in Igueben Local Government Area of Edo state.

In the light of the foregoing, this study therefore seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

- i. What are the basic priority infrastructural needs of local communities in the area of study?
- ii. Are there spatial variations in infrastructural needs across the various rural communities in Edo State?
- iii. What policy measures are germane in meeting the infrastructural needs of local communities in Igueben Local Government Area (LGA)?

## **1.2 Aim and Objective of the Study**

The aim of this study therefore, is to identify the basic priority infrastructural needs of local communities in communities in Igueben Local Government Area of Edo State. This broad aim will be achieved through the following specific objectives. This include to:

- i. determine the basic priority infrastructural needs of local communities in the area of study.
- ii. determine the spatial variations in infrastructural needs in the area of study
- iii. proffer policy measures that will promote rural infrastructural development in rural communities

in Igueben Local Government Area and Edo state at large.

### 1.3 Justification of the Study

It is now increasingly being recognised that the problems of our urban centres cannot be solved unless those of the rural areas are addressed (Akpomuvie, 2010). One major problem of the urban areas which is directly linked with rural areas is population explosion. This problem has emanated from the unprecedented rural-urban migration which has been one of rural people's reactions to poor infrastructural facilities and low living standards in rural areas. Thus, providing the basic infrastructural needs for rural people will not only address the people's needs, it will also help to address the severe pressures on available resources and the already bad situations in urban employment, management, service delivery and liveability. This study which is concerned with the identification of the basic priority infrastructural needs of rural households will not only contribute to rural development but will lessen the severe pressures on the available infrastructures in Benin city and other urban centres in the state.

The dwindling resources of government in recent time also call for proper utilisation of the available resources in terms of its allocation. This can only be achieved if the priority development needs of the people are identified and integrated into the allocation of scarce resources of government. This study which focusses

on the identification of the priority needs of rural households for the purpose of resources allocation will promote the judicious utilisation of scarce resources of government in the area of study. The study area which is Igueben Local Government Areas was chosen (as the study area) because of its predominant rural nature. Igueben is a *Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria*. The headquarters are in the town of Igueben. Igueben has an area of 380 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 69,639 (NPC, 2006). Igueben has a growing economy. The indigenes engage in retail trade of manufactured goods which they buy from major cities like Port Harcourt, Onitsha, Lagos, Sapele and Benin City. Goods traded include building materials, clothing, electronics, mechanical spare parts, etc.

The primary occupation in Igueben is farming. Local produce are cross traded with Northern parts of Nigeria; they sell food products peculiar to the savannah vegetation such as tubular roots like yam, cassava (garri), banana and plantain etc. and buy produce peculiar to arid areas such as beans, onions, groundnuts, potatoes etc. Major infrastructural facilities in the area include Igueben General Hospital, Igueben Grammar School, Igueben College, Igueben Mixed Secondary School, College of Education Igueben, numerous primary schools, Union Bank of Nigeria PLC, Uda Community Bank, two major markets and a Local Government Council Secretariat.

#### **1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The study covers the 10 (ten) wards of the Igueben Local Government Area of Edo State. The main respondents were household heads in the selected communities. The major limitation of the study was its inability to cover the entire local government areas (LGAs) in the state. However, the similarities in the socio-economic characteristics of the LGAs make the findings from this study to be very relevant and applicable to other LGAs in the state.

### **2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

The term infrastructure is defined as the basic installations such as roads, railways, and factories, etc., that determine the economic power of a country (Webster Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus, 2010). When applied to rural areas, rural infrastructure implies services and facilities that are necessary for the overall development and smooth functioning of the rural systems. Rural systems in this regards encompasses rural human resources, natural resources, primary production, agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Infrastructural facilities, according to Hirschman (1958), refer to those basic services without which primary, secondary and tertiary productive activities cannot function. In its wider sense, infrastructural facilities embrace all public services from law and order through education

and public health to transportation, communications and water supply (Mabogunje, 1974; Kahn, 1979). Kahn (1979) classifies rural infrastructural facilities into three main types; namely, physical infrastructure such as roads, water, rural electrification, storage and processing facilities; social infrastructure namely, health and educational facilities, community centres, fire and security services; institutional infrastructure which include credit and financial institutions, agricultural research facilities and social infrastructure. The basic theoretical framework relevant to this study is the Basic Need Approach (BNA).

#### **2.1 The Basic Need Approach**

The idea of basic needs originated in the psychology literature of the 1940s and more specifically in an article by Albert Maslow in the *Psychological Review* of March 1942 in which he distinguished a hierarchy of five needs starting with physiological and ending with selfactualisation needs. The BNA is one of the policy responses to the failure of the conventional policies to bring about any real change in poverty level in the Third World countries. The BNA aims at providing minimum levels of satisfaction of the needs of the poorest members of a society (Igboeli, 1992). The BNA has been defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in terms of certain minimum requirements of a family or household for private consumption. These include adequate food, shelter and clothing (ILO, 1976). They also include essential

services provided by and for the community at large, such as safe water, sanitation, security, public transport and ease of accessibility, as well as health, educational awareness and cultural facilities (Richards, 1981).

Abdullatif (2008) defines the basic need approach as a concept that aims at achieving a better quality of life. It is a participatory, dynamic process of integrated socio-economic development, based on self-reliance and self-management by organised communities supported by coordinated inter-sectoral action. The objectives of the basic need approach include: obtaining improved quality of life (QOL) for all people in a community through the meeting of their own basic needs; managing social development based on people's participation and inter-sectoral collaboration among government sectors; and ensuring community self-reliance for their own development needs. Stewart (1985) while subscribing to the notion that basic needs means certain minimum requirements observes that there are some controversies on the justification for selecting a particular need bundle, that is what constitute basic needs or what items make up the minimum human needs. One approach to the determination of a needs bundle, according to Stewart, is the societal value approach in which the definition of the content of the bundle is based on what the society considers as the minimum bundle.

However, Silva (1979) remarks that there are some basic elements that are essential to all persons and are popular

irrespective of society. Such things as food, clothing, healthcare, education, security and mobility are the set of essential and common needs. Silva also subscribes to the belief that needs are not always the same in different locations and time. There are historical, geographical and cultural factors that underlie the identification of needs. Several current studies in the last decades emphasise the spatial and time dynamics of needs. Therefore, considerable differences exist in the basic needs of communities and countries over time and at different levels or stages of development.

### **3. Materials and Methods**

The cross sectional survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consists of household heads in various communities of Igueben LGA. The study area was divided based on the existing political wards into ten wards. One community each was randomly selected from each ward. A total of ten communities were used. Systematic sampling technique with a random start and a sampling interval of five was used in selecting the final respondents. Fourteen (14) basic infrastructural needs were presented to the respondents. The respondents were asked to score the infrastructures based on their level of importance to them. A rating scale of 1-5 was developed for this purpose. A score of one was given if the infrastructure is not important, 3 was awarded for moderately important while a score of five was awarded on

infrastructure that is very important to the respondent. The result of the scoring was analysed using Z-score transformation technique and principal component analysis (PCA). The basic infrastructural needs are tarred roads ( $X_1$ ), public transit bus ( $X_2$ ), quality housing ( $X_3$ ), water supply ( $X_4$ ), hospital ( $X_5$ ), schools ( $X_6$ ), market ( $X_7$ ), electricity ( $X_8$ ), town hall ( $X_9$ ), public library ( $X_{10}$ ), postal facilities ( $X_{11}$ ), recreational facilities ( $X_{12}$ ), telecommunication ( $X_{13}$ ) and police station ( $X_{14}$ ).

#### 4. Results and Discussions

Of the total 300 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 280 were retrieved from the respondents representing 93.3% of the total respondents. Also, 174 representing 62.1% of the respondents were male while 37.9% were female. Also, the majority (57.4%) of the respondents were above 35 years. This was due to the researchers' emphasis on head of households during the questionnaire administration.

Table 1 shows the aggregate Z-scores of basic needs based on respondents scoring in the area of study.

**Table 1: Aggregate Weight and Z-Scores of Basic Needs**

S/N	Basic Needs	Aggregate Weight	Z-Scores
X <sub>1</sub>	Tarred road	1288	1.50
X <sub>2</sub>	Transits buses	952	0.55
X <sub>3</sub>	Quality Housing	784	0.08
X <sub>4</sub>	Water supply	1232	1.34
X <sub>5</sub>	Hospital	1120	1.03
X <sub>6</sub>	School	896	0.39
X <sub>7</sub>	Recreation	446	-0.87
X <sub>8</sub>	Market	616	-0.39
X <sub>9</sub>	Electricity	1176	1.19
X <sub>10</sub>	Town Hall	392	-1.03
X <sub>11</sub>	Library	504	-0.71
X <sub>12</sub>	Post Office	280	-1.34
X <sub>13</sub>	Telecommunication	560	-0.55
X <sub>14</sub>	Police station	336	-1.19

*Source: Fieldwork, 2011*

Table 1 shows that z-scores range from -1.34 for post office to 1.50 for tarred road as a basic need. Between these two Z-scores are located the rest basic needs. Markets, telecommunication, library, recreation, town hall, police station and post office posted negative z-scores while tarred roads, water supply, electricity, hospital, transit buses, school and quality housing posted positive z-scores. Table 2 shows the ranking of the basic needs in order of their priority.

**Table 2: Ranking of Basic Needs by Value of Z-Scores**

S/N	Basic Needs	Sample Size	Aggregate Weight	Z-Score	Rank
X <sub>1</sub>	Tarred road	280	1288	1.50	1 <sup>st</sup>
X <sub>4</sub>	Water	280	1232	1.34	2 <sup>nd</sup>
X <sub>8</sub>	Electricity	280	1176	1.19	3 <sup>rd</sup>
X <sub>5</sub>	Hospital	280	1120	1.02	4 <sup>th</sup>
X <sub>2</sub>	Transit Buses	280	952	0.55	5 <sup>th</sup>
X <sub>6</sub>	School	280	896	0.39	6 <sup>th</sup>
X <sub>3</sub>	Quality Housing	280	784	0.79	7 <sup>th</sup>
X <sub>7</sub>	Market	280	616	-0.39	8 <sup>th</sup>
X <sub>13</sub>	Telecommunication	280	560	-0.55	9 <sup>th</sup>
X <sub>10</sub>	Library	280	504	-0.71	10 <sup>th</sup>
X <sub>12</sub>	Recreation	280	448	-0.87	11 <sup>th</sup>
X <sub>9</sub>	Town hall	280	392	-1.03	12 <sup>th</sup>
X <sub>14</sub>	Police Station	280	336	-1.19	13 <sup>th</sup>
X <sub>11</sub>	Post office	280	280	-1.34	14 <sup>th</sup>

*Source: Fieldwork, 2011*

Table 2 indicates that tarred roads are the most important basic need of people with z-score of 1.50. Access roads are very important for free and easier movement of people and agricultural produce to the market. Movement in various communities in the study area is hampered by poor access road as witnessed during the field study. The second most important need is water supply which posted a z-score of 1.34. Access to clean water is important to all facets of sustainable development. The third and fourth basic needs of the people are electricity and hospital with z-scores of 1.19 and 1.02 respectively. However, the least of the basic needs of the people are town hall, police station and post office which posted z-scores of -1.03, -1.19 and -1.34 respectively. While Table 2 revealed the order of priority in basic

needs in the study area, the variations in the priority of basic needs across the ten political were not shown. This was achieved by the application of principal component analysis (PCA). The results of the PCA (Varimax rotated) produced a simple structure that can easily be interpreted. The 14 independent variables were reduced to 3 components of basic needs with a cumulative percentage variance of 80.9%, thus leaving only 19.1% of the total variance in the original variance unexplained (Table 3).

**Table 3: Matrix of Components of Basic Needs in Igueben LGA (Varimax Rotated)**

Variables	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
X <sub>1</sub>	0.186	0.676*	0.230
X <sub>2</sub>	0.137	0.762*	-0.285
X <sub>3</sub>	0.950*	0.188	0.011
X <sub>4</sub>	0.878*	0.332	-0.083
X <sub>5</sub>	0.938*	0.067	0.032
X <sub>6</sub>	0.976*	0.096	0.043
X <sub>7</sub>	-0.089	-0.116	0.940*
X <sub>8</sub>	0.783*	0.267	-0.119
X <sub>9</sub>	-0.118	0.249	0.780*
X <sub>10</sub>	0.258	0.572*	0.220
X <sub>11</sub>	0.201	0.864*	0.285
X <sub>12</sub>	0.802*	0.359	-0.259
X <sub>13</sub>	0.163	0.881*	0.084
X <sub>14</sub>	0.855*	-0.019	0.120

*Source: Fieldwork, 2011*

\* Significant loadings

The factor loadings identified 3 patterns of basic need priorities across the 10 wards in study area (Table 4).

**Table 4: Patterns of Basic Need Priority in Igueben LGA**

Components	Label	Eigen value	% of variance	Cumulative % of Variance
1	Domestic Needs	6.67	47.6	47.6
2	Communication Needs	2.99	21.4	69.0
3	Economic and community Needs	1.68	11.9	80.9

*Source: Fieldwork, 2011*

#### 4 Interpretation of Factor Loadings

The PCA reduced the 14 independent variables to 3 components of basic needs with a cumulative percentage variance of 80.9%, thus leaving only 19.1% of the total variance in the variables unexplained. Component 1 has 7 variables loaded on it namely  $X_3$  (housing),  $X_4$  (water),  $X_5$  (hospital),  $X_6$  (school),  $X_8$  (electricity),  $X_9$  (recreation),  $X_{14}$  (police station) and accounts for 47.6% of the total variance. Housing is an important variable that loaded on component one. Housing issues in rural areas are basically that of quality. Most of the houses in the study area are old and lack basic social and sanitary facilities. Water as a variable also loaded on component one. The study area like most other rural areas lack portable water supply. There is the absence public water supply with the exception of few private boreholes where people buy at exorbitant prices. Others made use of the stream and rain water, especially during the raining season. Thus, adequate sources of water supply are highly needed in the study area. Hospital is another important basic need of rural households. The lopsidedness in the distribution of healthcare facilities in Nigeria have short changed the rural dwellers hence their demand for this need. The importance of education in rural areas cannot be over-emphasised. The people are quite aware that the only way to break out of poverty is through acquiring education and hence the demand of the facility in the

neighbourhoods. Electricity is important to many rural households. The presence of electricity will attract the location of small-scale agro-based industries which could provide employment opportunities and thereby leveraging rural out-migration in the study area. Other variables that loaded on component one are recreation and police station. Youth centres such as civil centres are necessary for youth development while police station is needed for the protection of lives and properties.

Component two has five variables loaded on it namely tarred roads, transit buses, library post office and telecommunication with an eigenvalue of 2.99 and explains 21.42% of the total variance. Accessible roads enhance movement of people and goods. The study area has no accessible roads like other rural settlements in Nigeria. The absence of tarred roads have also stymied both private and public transportation system in the community making movement of goods and persons in and out of the communities a Herculean task. Telecommunication, libraries and post office are all means of enhancing communication and keeping social networks. All these are important components of rural development, hence respondents attaches much importance for them.

Component three has two variables loaded on it namely market and town hall with an eigenvalue of 1.68 and explains 11.97% of the total variance. Market is necessary for the buying and selling of rural goods and services

while town halls provide a meeting point for all households. In most communities in the study area, there were the presence of periodic market and a town hall which may explain the low level of importance attached to this needs by respondents. The level of

importance attached to these need indicators varies from ward to ward across the study area. These spatial variations in basic need priorities are shown by the component scores across the wards in Table 5.

**Table 5: Component Scores of Basic Needs in Igueben LGA**

Wards	Component Scores		
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
Ekekhen	-0.260	-0.481	-1.949
Eguare-igueben	0.980	1.069	1.300
Afuda	-0.355	0.707	0.720
Idumongbor	0.236	0.322	0.272
Udo	0.288	0.035	-0.103
Ebelle	-0.683	0.670	-0.970
Okalo	-0.260	-0.440	-0.509
Amahor	1.403	0.757	1.910
Ewossa	0.428	1.100	1.050
Ekpon	1.607	-2.140	-2.910

*Source: Fieldwork, 2011*

Table 5 shows that the importance attached to the various basic needs varies from ward to ward. The highest scores for component one (domestic needs) are found in Ekpon, Amahor and Eguare-Igueben wards. These high component scores only indicate that domestic needs are mostly needed in these wards. Component two (communication needs) are mostly needed in Ewossa, Eguare-Igueben, Afuda and Ebelle wards with component scores of 1.100, 1.069, 0.707 and 0.670 respectively. These wards are

all clustered around the local government Headquarters at Eguare-Igueben while component three (Economic and community needs) are mostly needed at Eguare-Igueben, Afuda, Amahor, Idummogbor and Ewossa wards.

## 5 Conclusion

The study showed that access roads, water supply, electricity and hospital facilities are the most important

infrastructural needs of people in the that governmental efforts both at the council and state level in improving the living conditions of the people must target this prioritised needs from the most important need which is access roads to the least which is post office. This will not only meet the infrastructural needs of the people but will enhance full utilisation and sustainability of the projects while at the same time ensuring that government scarce resources are maximally utilised

area. It is, therefore, recommended to the benefits of all. It is also important that government adopts the basic need approach in planning for development in rural communities.

In addition, government must determine the basic needs of the people before embarking on any development project. This will ensure that the beneficiaries of development project are given the opportunity to participate in the design and implementation of projects that affects their lives.

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