

## **RURAL SOCIOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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**Ugo Chuks OKOLIE**

Department of Political Science, Delta State University, Faculty of Social Sciences,  
Abraka, Nigeria  
*ugookolie3@gmail.com*

**Okwu Augustina ONYEMA**

Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria  
*luk4tinasy@gmail.com*

**Ugo Samuel BASSEY**

Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria  
*ugoluois@gmail.com*

**Abstract:** *This study investigated the impact of rural sociology on rural development in selected rural communities in Delta State, Nigeria's Ethiope East Local Government Area. A total of 400 rural dwellers were chosen at random from a population of 362,753 in Ethiope East, Delta State, Nigeria. Out of the 400 copies distributed, 287 were retrieved and analyzed, yielding a response rate of 71.75 percent. Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to analyze data collected using percentage, Spearman's Correlation, and linear regression analysis. The findings revealed a strong link between rural sociology and rural development. The study also found that rural sociology has a positive and statistically significant impact on rural development in Delta State, Nigeria's Ethiope east local government area. We concluded that rural sociology has a significant impact on rural development based on our findings. The study thus recommends, among other things, that the Nigerian government hire rural sociologists to help implement effective rural policies and programmemes. This will help to stimulate the development of rural communities in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Rural sociology, rural development, rural communities, rural sociologists, rural policies*

### **Introduction**

The ability to see our own and others' lives as part of a larger social structure is essential to sociological imagination. The sociological imagination provides a fresh perspective on and solutions to common dilemmas or development challenges confronting rural communities. Rural sociology as an emancipatory empiricism, aimed at providing empirical foundation for more equitable social policy and better living conditions for rural dwellers. According to Du-Bois (1899, p.6) and Ndiaye (2017, p. 1), rural sociologists focused on improving the livelihoods of rural populations. Their activities range from the introduction and adoption of specific innovations to more broadly focused national government programmemes to stimulate agricultural productivity of small farmers through government and non-governmental organization communication, promotion, and analysis of policy implementation." There is an old adage that if you want to teach a subject to a student, you must first understand not only the subject but also the student. This concept is

applicable not only to classroom instruction, but also to managing and increasing production in industry and agriculture. Knowledge of and technical skill with scientific implements and practices are essential for increasing agricultural production and promoting rural community development, but understanding of the farmer - the rural man and his home and community of which he is a part - is also essential. This is the knowledge that rural sociology makes available (Chitambar, 2016).

Rural community development requires an understanding of rural people and their lives. Thus, effective implementation of improved practices is impossible without a strategy approach based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the rural man, as well as the social and cultural context in which he operates. Rural sociology provides such knowledge and allows for the planning of a strategic approach for desired change; it allows for constant analysis of the rural situation and predicts possible outcomes within reasonable limits. As a result, rural sociology is the scientific study of rural dwellers in relation to the groups with which they interact. Rural sociologists can effectively promote change in Nigerian rural areas by influencing rural people's behavior (attitude, styles, and knowledge) because these changes are desirable in the interests of human, welfare, and national development. Poverty, depression, deprivation, limited economic opportunities, divorce, abuse, alcoholism, and other crises are common in Nigeria's rural areas, but these issues are sometimes exacerbated by the loss of a family business or farm. It is impossible to overstate the importance of rural sociology to rural and national development. This study examines the impact of rural sociology on rural development in the Ethiope East local government area of Delta State, Nigeria.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### *The Concept of Rural Sociology*

Rural sociology is a branch of sociology that studies life in small towns or rural communities. It is the scientific study of social arrangements and behavior among people who are separated from concentrated areas of activity. Rural settlement patterns are typically small in scale and low in density (Jain, 2014). The vast majority of people on the planet live in villages and rural areas, where they follow occupation and life patterns that differ from those found in cities. Their rural environment shapes and influences their behavior, way of life, and beliefs. Thus, rural sociology is a field of study that focuses on men who live in rural areas (Chitambar, 2016). As a result, rural sociology is defined as a specialized field of sociology that provides people with a better understanding of rural people's and rural society's behavior (Chitambar, 2016). Rural sociology, according to Olujide (2021), is a branch of sociology primarily concerned with the study of the social and cultural factors affecting the lives of those in rural and agrarian society. Rural sociology evolved from general sociology. Unlike general sociology, which is more interested in the development of social theories through basic research, rural sociology uses social knowledge appreciation to solve practical problems. It prioritizes experienced field research over theory development and social organization.

Rural sociology is defined in this study as a comprehensive study of rural social settings. It provides us with valuable knowledge about rural social phenomena and social problems, allowing us to better understand rural society and make recommendations for its overall progress and prosperity. As a result, rural sociology focuses on rural social relationships,

how those relationships influence people's behavior, and how societies, as a whole, change and develop as a result of those relationships. As a result, the importance of rural sociology, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria, where rural life is still prevalent, cannot be overstated. These are some examples of the importance of rural sociology:

- i. It sheds light on the main characteristics and problems of rural areas, which are useful in dealing with rural issues fully.
- ii. It informs the government about the needs of rural people so that rural development programmes can be properly designed.
- iii. It provides feedback to the change agency on the progress made and the changes that are required in their change programmes.
- iv. It provides the change agent who has to interact with rural people with sociological knowledge on issues such as leadership, power, roles, more culture, family organization, and so on, which he/she needs to perform his/her work effectively.

Rural sociology, as a result, focuses on the systematic, scientific, and comprehensive study of the rural social organization, its structure, function, and objective development tendencies, in order to discover the laws of its development (Jain, 2014).

#### *Origin and Development of Rural Sociology*

People have always been interested in themselves and their interactions with others. Early philosophers made general observations about human relationships from daily life, but their goals were usually to express desirable ethical standards and codes of conduct rather than to arrive at generalizations about human behavior. However, some predicted the emergence of a science of society and, as a result, took the first steps toward establishing such a science. Among the early philosophers who made such efforts were Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) of Arabia, Giovanni Battista Vico (1668-1747) of Italy, and Charles Montesquieu (1689-1775).

The most influential, however, was France's Auguste Comte (1798-1957), known as the "Father of Sociology. Comte saw sociology as the last offspring of philosophy, and he worked to establish it as a science. The application of the scientific method had already distinguished the physical sciences; Comte attempted to apply the same method to the study of man in society. As a result, sociology was founded on scientific observation rather than authoritative pronouncements or philosophical speculation. Comte divided science into two parts in his work 'A study of positive philosophy.' I Social statistics - the study of major societal subdivisions such as family, government, industry, and religion; (ii) Social Dynamics - the study of society as a whole and its development as an entire unit. In France, England, Italy, Germany, Russia, and the United States, Comte had immediate successors. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) of England published 'Principles of Sociology' in 1976, believing that social science should study the interrelationships between different elements of society, whereas Lester Ward, an American pioneer in sociology, published 'Dynamic Sociology' in 1882. He, like Comte, envisioned rapid progress in society and sociology, taking an active role in efforts to improve (Comte, 1845, Spencer, 1945; Nertrand, 1958, Rogers, 1960; Jain, 2014; Chitambar, 2016; Jakubek & Wood, 2018).

However, to describe the historical background of Rural sociology is to trace its early beginnings in the United States in 19<sup>th</sup> century. The period of 1890-1920 in America saw the rural societies facing many socio-economic problems which attracted the attention of

the intelligentsia thus establishing study of rural society as an academic discipline. The appointment of Country Life Commission by the then United States president Theodore Roosevelt was an important landmark in the history of rural sociology. The Second World War caused heavy destruction and damage to human society which needed reconstruction. As a result, rural sociology got an impetus in USA. The main concern of rural sociology came to be the understanding and diagnosing of the social and economic problems of farmers. The internal structures of community life and the changing composition of rural populations were given more attention than their relationships with land or the social aspects of agricultural production (Jain, 2014; Chitambar, 2016).

The history of rural sociology in the nineteenth century is fascinating. Rural sociology has progressed from humble beginnings and a few pioneers to a full-fledged discipline that provides understanding of rural communities, groups, institutions, cultures, and other forms of human association. Rural sociologists offer some solutions to social problems not only in the United States, but far beyond its borders to countries all over the world, particularly those in the process of developing their rural areas, through scientific analytical study. Rural sociology is not yet a required subject at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Nigeria, but as the subject gains traction in educational institutions and in the field, its practical utility will become more apparent.

#### *Rural Development*

Creating the conditions for the realization of human personality is what development is all about. Poverty, unemployment, inequality, a high level of nutrition, a high health standard, and a low infant mortality rate are all indicators of poor development (Forest, 1981 cited in Kamar, Lawal, Babangida & Jahun, 2014, p. 24). Development, according to this definition, is essentially changing the life of an individual, group, or community in terms of social amenities such as good roads, adequate and clean water, good health care, education, and electricity, all of which make life more meaningful. 'Different disciplines define development on the basis of their individual orientations,' write Kadiri, Muhammed, Raji, and Sulaiman (2015).

Economists define development as increased output and investment, gross domestic product (GDP), and per capita income. Political scientists define it as the enhancement of political resources in which power and related resources are distributed equitably. Sociologists, on the other hand, define development as the process of achieving structural differentiation, peace, order, and social progress. People's participation in development programmes and policies is a major impetus for development. This may support Rogers' (1976) assertion that social change is a widely participatory process of social changes in society intended to bring both social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining control over their environment. This may have influenced Onyikwu's (2004) assertion that whether referring to societies, regions, or individuals, there is an underlying association between development and positive change. It entails the material well-being of the majority of citizens, a reduction in inequality, and, above all, the guarantee of life security and poverty in the nation state.

Rural development, according to Rogers and Whiting (1976), refers not only to providing jobs and increased incomes to rural people, but also to improving the quality of rural living through increased and improved community services. To Olayide (1979), rural

development is a process in which concerted efforts are made to facilitate significant increases in rural resource productivity with the overall goal of increasing rural incomes and employment opportunities in rural areas. Ering, Out, and Archibong (2014) pointed out that the development of rural areas was not given much attention and prominence in Nigeria until recently. Much of her policy focused on changing the urban landscape and the fortunes of city dwellers. Academic scholars, policymakers, and development experts in Nigeria have realized that national development cannot be true development until the vast rural areas of the country are developed and brought into the mainstream of development; only then can we speak of true development. Rural areas in Nigeria have been socially and economically backward since the colonial era. Furthermore, the disparity between rural and urban areas has grown at an alarming rate.

Furthermore, according to Ering et al. (2014), the peasant population who formed the bulk of rural areas and produce much of the agricultural products that the nation depends on seemed neglected by the government, a situation that has resulted in the much orchestrated problems of rural-urban drift, declining agricultural production and its attendant food shortage, unemployment, urban congestion, and overstressed facilities. Rural development is defined in this study as the process of improving the social and economic lives of people living in rural areas.

#### *Rural Development Policies in Nigeria*

Over the years, efforts at developing rural communities have been pursued since the colonial era; concern has been to transform the mostly agrarian society in order to reach a common set of development goals based on the capacities and needs of the people. Policies and programmes aimed at improving rural areas have been implemented and pursued by various governments (local, state, and federal) since the 1960s. Ering et al. (2014) maintained that Nigeria's rural communities have ever before the advent of Colonialization indulged in various forms of community self-help schemes such as construction of village moats, shrines, village squares, market and a host of modern rural development schemes can be traced back to the 1920s when the British colonial office adopted the strategy of community development as a special development model for the rural areas of all colonial territories. The concern at the time was to compensate for the shortcomings of the traditional British school system by improving skills in community development centers such as carpentry, house building, shoe repair, and so on.

However, in the 1960s, the Nigerian government established farm settlement schemes, which gave rise to the various farm plantations found throughout the country. The policy's primary goal was to prevent youth migration from rural to urban areas. The policy, however, failed because it was largely incoherent and uncoordinated within individual settlements. In 1976, the Murtala and Obasanjo administration implemented another rural development policy known as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), which aimed to reduce food prices and the rate of food importation. Other rural development policies include the River Basin and Rural Development Authorities established by the Obasanjo administration in 1978, the Green Revolution in 1980 by the Shagari regime, the Directorate for Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure by the Babangida regime, the Better Life for Rural Women in 1986 by Marian Babangida, the Poverty Alleviation Programme in 1999 by the Obasanjo regime, the Poverty Alleviation Programme in 2011 by the Yardua and Jonathan administration. The goals of these policies and

programmeme were to increase rural income and productivity in rural communities. Unfortunately, these policies and programmemes have not improved the social and economic well-being of rural dwellers. In fact, some of these policies failed due to a lack of a culture of continuity in government programmemes and policies, political corruption, and outright abandonment of policies and programmemes by government officials.

#### *Theoretical Framework*

The modernization theory was used in this study to achieve the goal of a comprehensive review. The theory emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, when many people believed that developing countries would follow in the footsteps of developed countries (Chodak, 1937). According to the modernization theory, development is the natural progression of an evolutionary process in which societies, particularly rural communities, progress from simple to complex economies and institutional structures (Brinkerhoff, White, Ortega & Weitz, 2011). Modernization theory is a description and explanation of the processes that lead to societies transitioning from traditional or underdeveloped to modern. Modernization is thus the process of transition to those types of social, economic, and political systems that emerged in Western Europe and North America from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries and spread to other European countries, as well as to the continents of South America, Asia, and Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth century's. Since the 1950s, modernization theory has been a major perspective in the sociology of national development, rural development, and underdevelopment. The primary focus has been on the processes by which past and present pre-modern societies or rural communities become modern through economic growth and changes in social, political, and cultural structures (Jain, 2014).

Modernization encompasses all of the political and economic changes that occurred as a result of industrialization. It entails extending rights, values, and opportunities from the elites to the masses in a society, particularly in developing countries (Kornblum, 2012). Modernization theory's key points include (1) a degree of self-sustaining growth in the economy, (2) a measure of public participation in the polity, (3) a diffusion of secular-rational norms in society culture, (4) an increase in mobility in society, and (5) a corresponding transformation in the model personality that equips individuals to function effectively in a social order (Kar, 2012). The relevance of modernization theory to this study is based on its ability to justify how social welfare programmemes, services, and benefits help people, particularly rural dwellers, meet their basic social, economic, health, and educational needs (Barker, 2003). The modernization theory is concerned with the social and economic well-being of a society's majority. It provides reasonable security from want and assault; promotes equity and a productive and stable society that paves the way for national and rural development (Chitambar, 2016). However, while Modernization theory is imperfect and attempts to shape society do not always succeed in modern times; most sociologists believe the theory is worthwhile. Furthermore, it can be argued that modernization theory and sociological imagination are more important than ever if we are to control the risk found in contemporary societies and realize the potential for improving the lives of rural people in Nigeria and other developing countries. The study's objectives and null hypotheses were developed in accordance with a review of related literature.

#### *Rural Sociology and Rural Development*

Developing countries (including Nigeria) are more convinced than ever that in order to ensure their countries' overall development, rural areas must be transformed and integrated into the country's development process (Abasiokong, 1982; Ering et al., 2014; Kamar et al. 2014). However, Obianigwe (1999), Ugwu (2003), and Ering et al. (2014) maintained that "the rural dwellers in Nigeria frequently rely on shallow wells and untreated water; the villagers, the majority of whom are farmers, work on the land from sunrise to sunset only to produce food for the uncontrollable teeming urban population. Children with distended tummies and spindly legs can be found in and around villages who lack a complete diet, formal education, and a technical sense of belonging. Most rural communities in Nigeria have self-built schools, but the majority of them lack necessary academic aids. Because of the death of facilities, qualified teachers refuse to work in the majority of them.

In fact, today's rural communities in Nigeria face challenges such as malnutrition, poor living conditions, diseases, illiteracy, high infant mortality, social ill-treatment of certain sections of society, long-term health problems, a lack of proper housing, injustice to women, and a lack of infrastructural facilities, as well as poverty and unemployment due to limited economic opportunities. All of these accurately depict the reality of rural communities in most developing countries, with particular reference to Nigeria. It paints a stark and pitiful picture of poverty, outright neglect, underdevelopment, and ineffective policy and programme implementation. According to Kamar et al. (2014), rural development has not been centrally guided in Nigeria; rather than institutionalizing a rural development ministry, the federal government has rationed development programmemes across several ministries and departments at both the federal and state levels. The critical role of local government as a link between government and rural people remains unattainable. These lapses have prompted Nigeria to continue its search for a new rural development strategy. This research proposes rural sociology, which is critical in harnessing rural initiative for rural development.

It should be noted at this point that many of Nigeria's rural challenges are sociological in nature, and rural sociologists' roles are primarily in the applied field of more effective planning and operation of rural community development programmemes. Most rural development policies and programmemes in Nigeria aim to achieve the following goals: reducing rural poverty and rural unemployment; (2) integrating rural dwellers into the nation's socio-political and economic processes through increased political awareness and consciousness; and recognizing the rural resident first and foremost as an individual citizen entitled to all good things in life, just like his urban counterparts. (3) Increase rural people's incomes from agriculture and non-farm activities such as agro-based industries, petty trading, and rural transportation, (4) improving equity in the distribution of wealth and personal incomes, (5) improving quality of life through the provision of safe drinking water, electricity, health care, good roads, and other basic necessities, and (6) increasing rural value-added products. Rural sociology is widely recognized as a viable tool for rural development and the provision of social services to the people (Rogers, 1960; Ering et al., 2014; Jain, 2014; Chitamber, 2016; Moore & Ndiaye, 2017; Jabubek& Wood, 2018).

As a result, it is believed that rural sociologists are strategically placed to implement the aforementioned rural development policies and programmemes because rural sociologists can effectively promote changes in rural areas by influencing rural people's behavior that is desirable in the interests of human and national welfare, particularly the welfare of the rural poor. A rural sociologist understands what is going on in the minds of rural people;

they understand their relationships and interactions, their groups, institutions, organizations, and the culture they share. All of these factors have an impact on their behavior. Rural sociologists gain insight into rural people's behavior and the impact of culture and society on them; this knowledge is critical for rural community development (Chtambar, 2016). Rural sociology is clearly important in community development in India and other developing countries. As a result, for rural community development programmemes in Africa, and particularly in Nigeria, rural dwellers must be educated in order to change their attitudes toward community projects or programmemes. They require education that awakens human consciousness to the fact that what distinguish rural areas from urban cities is not paved streets, bright lights, opportunities, activities, services, and a high level of human connection. As a result, not only do people in cities need to change their attitudes, beliefs, and outlook on life, but so do people in rural areas. True development in the society cannot be possible without taking into account the contributions of rural dwellers.

### **Objectives of the study**

Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Examine the relationship between rural sociology and rural development in Ethiope east local government area of Delta State, Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the extent to which rural sociology impact on rural development in Ethiope east local government area of Delta State, Nigeria.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

The following null hypotheses were formulated for testing:

1. H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between rural sociology and rural development in Ethiope east local government area of Delta State, Nigeria.
2. H<sub>2</sub>: Rural sociology does not have a significant impact on rural development in Ethiope east local government area of Delta State, Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

#### *Research Design, Population and Sample Size*

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship and impact of rural sociology on rural development in selected rural communities in Delta State, Nigeria, using a cross-sectional research design. The Ethiope east local government area is divided into three districts: Abraka, Agbon, and Isiokolo. According to the 2016 census, it has a land area of 380km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 463,813 people. Abraka, Samagidi, Ikinigho, Oria, Ekerejeta, Umeghe, Ekirigbo, Eku, Okuighele, Orhokpo, Mosogar, Ejenesa, okuke, Erho, Uргуоka, and Adjikpotor are among the communities chosen. As of 2019, the total number of registered voters in Delta State's Ethiope East local government area was 362,753. (INEC, 2019). Using Taro Yemeni's 91971) formula, the following is presented:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N (r^2)}$$

Where: n = sample size



N = Total Registered voters (population size)  
 r = Error terms

$$n = \frac{362,753}{1 + 362,753(0.05^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{362,753}{1 + 362,753 (0.0025)} = 399.50$$

Approximately 400

As shown above, the study sample size is 400 respondents. Sixteen communities in the Ethiopia east local government area were chosen at random, and the research instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers, consisting of 19 items structured along a 5-point likert type scale that ranks responses on a scale of (1) strongly disagree (SD) to (5) strongly agree (SA).

*Validity and Reliability of the instrument*

The validity of the research instrument was determined by subjecting it to face validation by three experts from Delta State University's Department of Sociology and Political Science in Abraka, Nigeria. These experts' opinions and suggestions were used to modify and create the final draft of the instrument. The research instrument was also subjected to a reliability test, which was carried out on 56 participants in the study from the districts of Abraka, Agbon, and Isiokolo. As shown in the table below, the Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the items.

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics of Variables**

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Rural sociology	8	.835
Rural development	11	.817

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2021

The coefficients of 0.835 and 0.817 obtained satisfied the general recommended level of 0.70 for research indicators (Cronbach, 1951). As a result, the researcher satisfied the research instrument's validity and reliability.

*Model Specification*

In order to examine the impact of rural sociology on rural development in selected communities in Ethiopia East local government area of Delta State, Nigeria, the Mathematical Model is specified below given that this study has one dependent variable:

$$RD = f(RS) \text{ ----- } 1$$

Econometrically, the model was specified as:

$$RD = \beta_0 + \beta_1RS + \sum t \text{ ----- } 2$$

Where: RD = Rural Development  
 RS = Rural Sociology  
 $\beta_0$  = Constant  
 $\beta_1$  = Coefficient and apriori expectation sign of independent variable  
 $\Sigma t$  = Error term

From the above, the apriori expectation of the parameter of the model was  $\beta_1 < 0$

*Method of Data Analysis*

Data collected were analyzed using correlation coefficient and linear regression analysis with the aid of statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

**Research Results**

**Table 2: Distribution of Questionnaire and Response**

S/N	Ethiopia East Communities selected	Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Retrieved	Percentage Retrieved
1	Abraka	25	19	4.75
2	Samagidi	25	17	4.25
3	Ikinogho	25	17	4.25
4	Oria	25	21	5.25
5	Ekerejeta	25	20	5.00
6	Umeghe	25	16	4.00
7	Ekirigbo	25	14	3.50
8	Urhuoka	25	17	4.25
9	Ekue	25	18	4.50
10	Okuighele	25	19	4.75
11	Orhokpo	25	19	4.75
12	Mosogar	25	15	3.75
13	Ejenesa	25	21	5.25
14	Okuke	25	18	4.50
15	Erho	25	19	4.75
16	Adjikpotor	25	17	4.25
	Total	400	287	71.75

Sources: Questionnaire Administered, 2021

We had a response rate of 71.75 percent because 287 of the 400 copies of the question were retrieved and analyzed. There were 123 male respondents and 164 female respondents among the 287 total.

**Table 3: Correlation Matrix**

Variables		Rural sociology	Rural development
Rural sociology	Pearson Correlation	1	.823
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	287	287
Rural Development	Pearson Correlation	.823	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.005	
	N	287	287

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level 92-tailed)  
Sources: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2021

**Linea Regression Analysis**

**Table 4: Model Summary**

Model	R	R-Square	Adj. R-Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.745 <sup>a</sup>	.624	.617	.360

Predictors: (Constant) Rural sociology (RS) Dependent variable: Rural development (CD)  
Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Table 5: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T.	F-Stat.	D. W.	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(constant)	.613	.207		3.205	21.386	1.621	.000
RD	.675	.163	.759	8.214	23.845	1.927	.001 <sup>b</sup>

Dependent variable: Rural Development Predictors: (Constant), Rural Sociology  
Source: SPSS Output, 2021

**Discussion of Findings**

Table 3 depicts the relationship between rural sociology and rural development in Delta State, Nigeria's Ethiope East local government area. Rural sociology and rural development have a significant positive high correlation ( $r=0.823$ ,  $n = 287$ ). This suggests that rural sociology has a strong and positive relationship with rural development. The null hypothesis is thus rejected. Table 4 shows an  $R^2$  value of .624 indicating that rural sociology accounts for 62.4 percent of the variation in rural development in Delta State, Nigeria's Ethiope east local government area. That is, changes in rural sociology can explain 62.4 percent of the variation in rural development, while other factors outside of this model can explain 37.6 percent of the variation. Table 5 shows a coefficient of 67.5, indicating that a 1% increase in rural sociology leads to a 0.68 % increase in rural development in Delta State, Nigeria's Ethiope East local government area. The model is statistically significant at 0.05 significant levels, according to the F-statistics of 23.845. The model's Durban-Watson statistics of 1.927 indicate that there is no series autocorrelation in the regression analysis. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The findings revealed, among other things, that there is a positive and strong relationship between rural sociology and rural development in Delta State, Nigeria's Ethiope east local government area. This finding is consistent with the findings of Chitambar (2016), Ndiaye (2017), and Jakubek and Wood (2018), who all believe that there is a strong relationship between rural sociology and rural development. The study's findings also revealed that rural sociology has a positive and statistically significant impact on rural development in Delta State, Nigeria's Ethiope east local government area. This finding is consistent with Bertrand (1958); Ering *et al.* (2014); Jain (2014); Ndiaye (2017) and Jakubek and Wood (2018) views that rural sociology stimulates the design and implementation of effective rural policies that improve rural population livelihoods, and that rural development is achieved through the practical spirit of rural sociology Furthermore, Chitamber (2016) contends that sociologists are concerned with rural dwellers' behavioral and attitudinal

changes, which set the stage for rural and national development. According to Ndiaye (2017), rural sociologists are opposed to African agricultural and rural development policies and programmes.

## Conclusion

The study perceived findings indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between rural sociology and rural development. In addition, the impact of rural sociology on rural development in Delta State, Nigeria's Eastern local government area was confirmed. We concluded that rural sociology has a significant impact on rural development based on our findings. As a result, the study suggests the following: The Nigerian government should hire rural sociologists to help design and implement effective rural policies and programmes. This will help to stimulate the development of rural communities in Nigeria. In Nigeria, the government should also fund rural sociological research. The deliberate development of rural communities in Nigeria remains a major challenge for policymakers. As a result, there is an urgent need in Nigerian universities to make rural sociology a required subject at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The Nigerian government should establish more institutions where rural development can be studied at the national diploma and degree levels. In India, for example, over 15 universities offer a rural development programme as a course of study (Rank, 2010 cited in Kamar et al. 2014)

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