

Full Length Research Paper

Socio-cultural and economic determinants of fertility differentials in rural and urban Cross Rivers State, Nigeria

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This study examines the socio-cultural and economic determinants of fertility differentials in rural and urban Cross River State, Nigeria with specific focus on Calabar and Bendi communities. Survey design was adopted and a sample of eight hundred and eighty respondents was drawn with the use of purposive, quota and systematic sampling techniques. The study elicited data via structure questionnaire and focus group discussions (FGD). Hypotheses of the study were tested using bi-variate and multi-variate techniques. Findings revealed that age at entry into marital union, contraceptive use and educational level significantly determined fertility differentials between rural and urban communities in Cross River State. It was recommended among others that public enlightenment campaigns on the use of contraceptives and proper family planning should be embarked upon by concerned agencies.

Key words: Educational level, marital union, fertility differential.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of population in Nigeria is an issue of immense concern given the scarce resources of society (Ushie, 2009). Significant improvement in the standard of living in Africa would remain a mirage unless population growth is slowed. "On the current trends, Africa will increasingly be unable to feed its children and find jobs for its school leavers" (World Bank, 1989). In spite of the warning, fertility continues to grow and at the same time, the level of mortality decreases significantly in response to the advances in medicine and nutritional intake. Consequently, the quality of the population in terms of education, jobs, medical provision and ratio of policemen to citizens, among others, is affected. Even in the light of this grim situation, the fertility rate in Nigeria generally remains above six children per woman; the trend is even higher among rural women. The explanation for such differential fertility in terms of spatial consideration has

presented a challenge of enormous dimension (Ushie, 2009).

Indeed, one would expect that government's population policy would address the population problem squarely, but the situation is far more than just the formulation of policies (Obono, 2003). Robust and rigorous regime of research has to be conducted to first of all provide information on the exact cause and effect relationship, or association of variables with fertility.

Many multi-variate studies have been conducted to examine the causal factors linked with fertility. However, these studies have proved inadequate, and in many cases, the key problematic is the issue of methodology, that is, of data collection. Most researchers depend on official statistics which for obvious political and other reasons may be unreliable. Thus, findings from such studies do reflect the data, which are usually unreliable.

It is in the light of the obvious gaps in the available knowledge and the intractable nature of the problem that this study is designed to fill the said lacunae by investigating into the determinants of fertility differentials in rural and urban areas of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study

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would specifically investigate the implication of differences in age at entry into marital union between rural and urban areas for differential fertility. The study would also consider the impact of contraceptive use between rural and urban areas on fertility differentials. The study would describe the effects of differences in education between rural and urban areas with regards to fertility differentials.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fertility situation in Africa

Over the years, Africa has consistently been leading the world in terms of fertility rates. Fertility rate here refers to the relative frequency with which births actually occur within a given population; while fertility is the frequency of child bearing in a given population. Fertility is a function of two basic variables, namely: Biological and individual choices. Whereas biology is influenced by genetic inheritance, individual choice is modified by socio-cultural and economic conditions. It is in this wise one note that complete fertility varies among groups and societies (Ushie, 2009).

Fertility rates are higher in Africa than in any other major region of the world; consequently controversy surrounds the likelihood of these rates declining in the near future. The total fertility rate in Africa, taken together is approximately 6.0 to 6.5 births per woman. The problem is that a steady total fertility rate of 6.5 in the face of substantially declining mortality does lead to a substantially high growth in size of the population (Cohen, 1993).

It was also estimated that fertility rate in Africa would increase by 72% if the fertility inhibiting effects of breast feeding and postpartum abstinence is removed. Whereas heeding such warning is actually desirable, it is not an easy thing to do. In this era of improved child nutrition additives outside of the breast, makes it possible for mothers to shorten the period of lactation without bringing any adverse nutritional effects on the baby. Consequently, trends in Africa fertility has been constant in decline at a snail pace rate (Bongaarts et al., 1990).

Within the broad continent of Africa, there exist serious deficiencies in fertility rates among regions and among countries. For example, the population growth rate in Nigeria is 3% (in terms of the 1991 Census, the estimate of 1994 and the 2006 Population Census) means that Nigeria can double in size in just 23 years. The total fertility rate of Nigerian women indicates that at the end of a woman's childbearing age, given the current fertility situation, she should give birth to 6 live children. The situation in Nigeria taken in the context of the declining mortality rate, does spell doom for the country and to compound the situation, life expectancy is currently given at 52.6 years. The implication is that the rate of population growth is in sharp contrast to the level of economic

growth. Thus, the quality of the population is compromised for quantity (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1996; Ushie, 2009).

Rural and urban fertility behaviour

Andorka (1978), Li and Wang (1994) and Findley (2005) characterized the relationship between fertility behaviour and place of residence as having a direct linkage. There is a fairly consistent correlation between urban or rural trait of the place of residence and fertility. The place of residence has a property of natural or man-made environment. On the other hand, the trait in rural area is determined by families living in relatively small apartment houses. Andorka (1978) argue that this ecological characteristic of urban-rural differential is also connected with different monetary costs and efforts necessary for raising and educating children that are much greater in urban than in the rural areas.

Mackensen (1982), posit that, one general theory of fertility that could adequately explain fertility behaviour in all societies and at all periods of time is neither possible nor justifiable. He is convinced that for this reason, every explanation, observation and research of fertility behaviour like any other social behaviour should proceed from the concept of specific structural and cultural characteristics of each society which is the product of certain historical processes. Similarly, Hoffman-Novoting (1987) asserts that fertility behaviour of an individual is connected with structural and cultural characteristics of his/her micro and macro social environment. Boyle (2003) also stressed the importance of geographical variations in place or context in understanding fertility decision-making of individuals.

Cernic-Istenic and Kveder (2008), posits that fertility behaviour of individuals is closely linked with economic and social characteristics of their life settings. Djurfeldt (1991) observe that, over the last decades, the social structure and culture of rural areas in Europe and other industrially developed countries has changed significantly due to massive abandonment of agriculture by a great part of rural population and their engagement in other occupations, rural areas became multifunctional and multi-structural.

The improved communication links among urban and rural areas, the entire societies became increasingly urbanized, "infected" with urban values and the urban way of life. Owing to these changes, it could be supposed that urban-rural difference in fertility behaviour is diminishing or even vanishing (Djurfeldt, 1999). However Cernic-Istenic and Kveder (2008) argue that changes in social behaviour do not occur quickly, or at the run of one single generation.

In a study to examine the factors responsible for rural-urban fertility differences, Yang (2003) selected education, occupational class, income, and the participation of women in the labour force. He tested the hypothesis

that the educational level, economic status, and proportion of women working had direct negative effects on a community's fertility level; and these effects varied with place of residence. Findings showed significant rural-urban difference in each of the variables. No rural-urban differences were found in the relationship between fertility and occupational class. They were inversely related in both rural and urban areas. In rural areas, education had a direct negative effect, income had a positive effect, and women working had no effect on fertility. In urban areas, education and income had no direct effect on fertility, while women working had positive effect on fertility.

Education and fertility rate

The effect of education in fertility reveals that many issues can be discernable from it. Uneducated women who live in societies where large proportion are literate or where educational level is high, may have a fertility rate from that of uneducated woman elsewhere. The better educated may be influenced by the educational distribution in the community. If aggregate educational distribution has, on the whole, a substantial depressing effect, fertility will decline more sharply in response to an increase in women's education than suggested by the estimates of individual level effects. In effect, this means that the higher the proportion of better educated women in a community, the lower the fertility rate in that community. Since the net effect of community education outweighs individual level of education in fertility (Kraudal, 2000).

A rural area with lower community-level education ultimately has higher fertility than the urban areas. A better educated woman notwithstanding her residence may experience different fertility to uneducated woman (Lesthaegle et al., 1985). Barber et al. (2002) investigated the effects of average length of the woman's own education in Peru. They concluded that women who spend a long time getting education are likely to have fewer numbers of children than those who spend less or no time at all. Of course this is because the woman has spent a long period of childbearing years in school, thus shortening the years of risk of pregnancies.

Education is widely held to be a key determinant of fertility (Leon, 2004; McGary and Royer, 2006) and from a theoretical perspective; several casual channels have been emphasized. Education raises a woman's permanent income through earning tilting her optimal fertility choices towards fewer off springs of higher quality (Becker, 1960; Mincer, 1963; Becker and Lewis, 1973; Willis, 1973; Bollen et al., 2001; Barden-O' Fallon, 2005). Education may improve an individual's knowledge of, and ability to process information regarding fertility options and healthy pregnancy behaviour (Grossman, 1972; Carr et al., 2006).

Age at entry into marriage and fertility rate

Age is a great influence in fertility levels. In some communities, especially in highly developed countries, couples in their late 30s and 40s are still attempting first pregnancy due to high level of delay in starting a family. However, in African countries (example Nigeria), women as young as 14 years have given birth or are in marriage unions and at the risk of pregnancy and childbirth (Ushie, 2009).

Age at marriage is a proximate or intermediate determinant of fertility. However, the determination of when to start family or age at marriage is determined by socio-economic variables such as educational demands, career, law, suitable suitors, and economic backgrounds (Davis and Blake, 1956, Bongaarts, 1978). In Nigeria for instance, the law states that a girl must at least complete her basic education and must be at least 18 years before entering into marriage union. However, enforcing such law in Nigeria has been an uphill task given the cultural diversity in the country (Obono, 2003). This is because culture and religion plays significant positive influence on age of entry in marriage union and on fertility level (Lutz, 2002).

Uniform policy of reducing fertility by increasing age at marriage to 18 years for all Nigeria does not recognize the fact that among the Igbos and Yoruba's, the age at first marriage is already higher than 18 years. Thus in the rural areas and in the Northern Nigeria, the age at first marriage is usually between 14 and 17 years (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1996; Obono, 2003).

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION

This study utilized two theories to examine fertility differentials in Nigeria. Including economic theory of fertility by Gary Becker and intergenerational wealth flow theory by John Caldwell, the main thrust of the economic theory of fertility is that fertility is rational. Families chose a fertility level in order to maximize their wellbeing which is represented by a utility function. This function, according to Becker (1960), is subjected to exogenously determined constraints or budget constraints which balances household expenditure with income. Suggesting that the demand for children is affected by both income and price effects.

Mincer (1963) made some contributions to the refinement of the economic theory of fertility with his inclusion of other inputs (goods) such as time of the mother and the cost of education needed to raise quality children. Fertility is therefore a rational behaviour not in the true cost accounting sense, but to the extent that couples will have as many children as they consciously or subconsciously perceived are sustainable with a given socio-economic and cultural context. However, the economic sense of more children to a rural resident who

has enough communal land at his disposal and does engage in farming cannot be diminished just first as the rational choice of fewer children to the urban dweller who must be housing, feeding, clothing and, most especially, the educational needs of the children.

The intergenerational wealth flow theory borrowed significantly from the economic theory but however differs from it in that it expands the definition of intergenerational transfers across the life course and by directly linking changing values system regarding intergenerational transfer of wealth to fertility transition. The theory assumes that there is a direct link between family structures and fertility. The implication is that fertility decisions in all societies are economically rational response to family wealth flows. In societies with net upward flows, the economically rational decision is to have as many surviving children as possible, because each additional child adds positively to a parent's wealth, security at old age and social wellbeing.

In societies, with net downward wealth flows, the economically rational decision is to have no child or the minimum number allowed by a psychological disposition that derives pleasure from children and parenting. Thus, the global transition from high to low fertility is a function of the change in family wealth structure from upward wealth flows. This implies that as long as wealth flows from children to parents, fertility will remain high since it is economically rational to parents.

Intergenerational wealth flow theory by Caldwell is relevant to an investigation into the causes of differential fertility among different societies, and in this present study between rural and urban areas. The wealth flows theory had been tested in African countries and found to be useful. Makinwa-Adebusoye (1994) found through inter-analysis of sub-Saharan Africa national level survey data that parents' perceived upward wealth flows in high fertility contexts.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREAS

This study is a comparative study of Calabar (as an urban area) and Bendi community in Obanliku as a rural area. Calabar is located at the Southern extreme of the habitable sketch of land along the Calabar River. It lies approximately on latitude 04°58' North of the equator and longitude 08°58 East of the Greenwich Meridian (Ushie, 2009; Agba et al., 2010). Calabar metropolis consists of two local government areas including Calabar municipality and Calabar South Local Government Area (Agba et al., 2010). The city of Calabar lies within the tropical region with high precipitation of about 2835 mm per annum, high rainfall density during the rainy season that is April to October, and high relative humidity of about 82% during wet season and slightly below that in dry season.

Calabar represents and acts as the cultural, political and economic nerves of Cross River State. The

development of Calabar as an urban center has generated an influx of professionals, traders and administrators to take advantage of the new job opportunities and also to exploit the commercial and economic potentials of the state (Ushie, 2009).

Historically, Calabar belongs to the Efik, the Qua and Efut who migrated to the city at different times (Effiong-Fuller, 1996; Aye, 1967). Politically, the three ethnic groups are autonomous; each having its traditional rulers none is subordinate to the other. The "Obong" (Chief) of Calabar is for the Efik, the "Ndidem" (Chief) is for the Quas and "Muri Munene" is for the Efuts. Calabar metropolis is reputed for its creative culture; dance especially the "Ekpe". In terms of trade, it has modern markets Watt and Ika Ika Oqua markets. Educationally, it is the home of two important institutions of higher learning; the University of Calabar and the Main Campus of the Cross River University of Technology, Calabar.

The second study area is Bendi community in Obanliku Local Government Area. Bendi is located in Northern Senatorial districts, and is divided into two political wards for administrative convenience. Bendi consists of ten major villages and its people are believed to have migrated from the Cameroon Mountains. With an estimated population of 45,625 people, Bendi indigenes are generally believed to be of the same cultural affinity.

In Bendi, the family is made up of the man, wife or wives and the children. The house is a composite of different families, but often having a common descent of grandfather or great grandfather. The compound or lineage is made up of different house which form a corporate group and headed by the leader called "Ukandi Ushiale". Traditional institution in Bendi consists of all families and village chiefs who rule by customs and traditions and settle disputes.

Bendi people are predominantly farmers. The favourable climatic conditions and the rich humus-laden, loamy soil which characterized the area made agriculture the mainstay of the people's economy. Food plants from Bendi include yams, cassava, oil palm trees, kola nuts etc.

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted in this study was survey design. It was opted for because it allowed the researcher to use a representative sample of a population of study to make inference about the whole population. The population of study consisted of all married and ever married men and women in Bendi and Calabar. The study used a total sample of 880 households. A breakdown shows that 340 respondents were selected from Bendi (that is the rural area) and 540 respondents were from Calabar metropolis that is the urban area. To select the actual households, purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used.

The study made use of both quantitative and qualitative techniques in the collection of data. The quantitative method involved the use of structured questionnaire. The instrument consists of 37 questions were divided into four sections. The first section contained questions relating to socio-demographic variables. Other

Table 1. Coding of variables.

Response option	Position	Negative
SA	4	1
A	3	2
D	2	3
SD	1	4

SA, Strongly agree; A, agree; D, disagree, and SD, strongly disagree.

variables. Other sections were based on the different variables involved in the study. The questionnaires were screened to ensure that they are duly completed. The 880 authenticated questionnaires were coded for various responses on the four point Likert Scale as shown in Table 1.

As depicted in Table 1, positive response to a positive question was ranked the highest (4) that is strongly agree (SA), while negative response to negative answer received the highest score of (4) for strongly disagree (SD). Other scores follow the same order.

The qualitative method of data collection was the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). It was used because FGD generates information which can easily be overlooked in the questionnaire method or the person-to-person interview. There was two focus group discussions (FGDs) each having 8 to 12 persons, one for rural and another for urban area.

Six field assistants were recruited and trained to help in the process of administering the questionnaire and conducting the FGDs and the entire process lasted for one month (4 weeks). Elicited data from the questionnaire were analyzed using uni-, bi-, such as percentages and frequencies were used in the description of respondents' bio-data. The bi-variate and multi-variate techniques were used in testing the hypotheses in this study.

RESULTS

Profile of respondents

The result in Table 2 shows that 12.5 and 22.2% of the respondents in Bendi and Calabar Metropolis, respectively, were male. Female respondents comprised 26.13 and 39.2% representing Bendi and Calabar. Those below 20 years in Bendi were 11.5% while 11.27% were from Calabar. Between 20 to 30 years, Bendi had 23.63% and Calabar 34.67%. Participants for age 30 and above were 3.52 and 15.44%, respectively for Bendi and Calabar.

Table 2 further depict that majority of the respondents had secondary education; Calabar had 33.06% and Bendi 15.9%. Those who were married from Calabar was 43.7% while 14.20% were from Bendi. Most respondents in Bendi and Calabar were Christians. In Calabar, majority of the respondents (24.21%) were civil servants while in Bendi respondents (22.84%) were farmers. Most respondents in Bendi and Calabar earn less than 10,000 Naira per annum. Only 0.6 from Bendi earns 41,000 Naira; while 8.7% are from Calabar.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant difference in age of entry into

marital unions between rural and urban settlement. The variables in this hypothesis are age of entry into marital union which was classified into three (below 20, 20 to 30 and 30 above); and rural/urban residents. The result is presented in Table 3. The result in Table 3 shows that, the calculated X^2 -value of 90.91 is higher than the critical X^2 -value of 9.49 at 0.05 level of significance with 4 degree of freedom. This implies that difference in age at entry into marital unions between rural and urban residential is significantly related to rural/urban fertility difference.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant difference in contraceptive use between rural and urban residents. The variables in this hypothesis are location (rural and urban residents) and the use of contraceptive. Chi-square statistical analysis technique was adopted to test this hypothesis.

The result in Table 4 indicates that, the calculated X^2 -value of 1133.55* is higher than the critical X^2 -value of 5.99 at 0.05 level of significance with 2 degree of freedom. This suggests that there is a significant difference between rural and urban residents in contraceptive use.

Hypothesis three

Education does not play any significant role in the determination of rural and urban fertility differences. The variables involved in the hypothesis are educational level which is categorized into four (no formal education, primary, secondary and tertiary) and rural and urban fertility different. Chi-square (X^2) statistical analysis technique was adopted to test this hypothesis. In testing the hypothesis, respondents' views on education and fertility differential were categorized and collated into rural and urban areas as shown in Table 5.

The result in Table 5 reveals that, the calculated X^2 value of 221.58 is higher than the critical X^2 -value of 12.59 at 0.05 level of significance with 6 degrees of freedom. With the result, the null hypothesis that is, education does not play any significant role in the determination of rural and urban fertility differences was rejected. This result therefore implies that education plays a significant role in the determination of rural and urban fertility differences.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that differences in age of entry into marital unions between rural and urban residents are significantly related to rural/urban fertility differentials. The findings are in accordance with Bhatia (1978), Obono (2003) and Leon (2004), who all observed that age at marriage whether proximate or intermediate has

Table 2. Demographic data of respondents.

	Item	Bendi (%)	Response by locality (Calabar)	Total	Percentage
Sex	Male	110 (12.5)	195 (22.2)	305	34.66
	Female	230 (26.13)	345 (39.2)	575	65.34
	Total	340	540	880	100
Age	Below 20	101 (11.5)	99 (11.27)	200	27.73
	20-30	208 (23.63)	305 (34.67)	513	53.30
	Above 30	31 (3.52)	136 (15.44)	167	18.97
	Total	340	540	880	100
Education	No formal education	30 (3.40)	50 (5.72)	80	0.09
	Primary education	70 (7.95)	90 (10.22)	160	18.18
	Secondary education	140 (15.9)	291 (33.06)	431	48.98
	Tertiary education	100 (11.4)	109 (12.4)	209	23.75
	Total	340	540	880	100
Marital status	Married	125 (14.20)	384 (43.7%)	509	57.84
	Separated	30 (3.40)	71 (8.11)	101	11.48
	Divorced	26 (2.95)	34 (3.86%)	60	6.82
	Widowed	159 (18.06)	51 (5.8)	210	23.86
	Total	340	540	880	100.0
Religion	Traditional religion	105 (11.93)	165 (18.74)	270	30.68
	Christianity	128 (2.11)	276 (31.35)	404	45.91
	Islam	3 (0.34)	7 (0.82)	10	1.14
	Others	104 (11.81)	92 (10.5)	196	22.27
	Total	340	540	880	100
Occupation	Farming	201 (22.84)	160 (18.21)	361	41.02
	Business	38 (4.31)	95 (10.78)	133	15.11
	Civil servants	67 (7.61)	213 (24.21)	280	31.82
	Students	26 (2.95)	38 (4.3)	64	7.27
	Politicians	8 (0.90)	34 (3.9)	42	4.77
	Total	340	540	880	100
Income	Less than 10,000	50 (9.7)	61 (11.8)	111	10.8
	10,000 - 20,000	130 (25.2)	133 (25.8)	263	25.5
	21,000 - 30,000	143 (27.7)	152 (29.5)	295	28.6
	31,000 - 40,000	101 (19.6)	111 (21.5)	212	20.5
	41,000 and above	92 (17.8)	59 (11.4)	151	14.6
	Total	516 (100.0)	516 (100.0)	1032	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2010.

direct bearing or effect on fertility. Bhatia (1978), argue that the determination of when to start family or age at marriage was a function of socio-economic variables such as educational demands, chosen career, suitable suitors, and economic backgrounds. The age of entry into marriage union could also be determined by law; Leon (2004) posits that Nigerian Law permits the girl to marry when she is done with basic education and must be at

least 18 years.

Obono (2003) noted that Nigerian social and cultural environment differs; he argued that a uniform policy of reducing fertility by increasing age at marriage to 18 for all Nigerians does not recognize the fact that among the Igbos and Yorubas the age at first marriage is already higher than 18 years. In the rural areas and in the Northern Nigeria, the age at first marriage is usually

Table 3. Chi-square (X^2) statistical analysis of the age of entry into marital union and rural, densely urban/low densely urban fertility differentials (N = 880).

Rural/urban fertility differentials					
Age	Rural	Densely urban	Low densely	Total	X^2 value
Below 20	101 (77.27)	79 (93.18)	20 (29.55)	200	90.91
20-30	208 (198.20)	255 (239.01)	50 (75.78)	513	
30 and above	31 (64.52)	76 (77.81)	60 (24.67)	167	
Total	340	410	130	880	

*Significant at .05 level, critical $X^2 = 9.49$, $df = 4$.

Table 4. Chi-square (X^2) statistical analysis of the difference between rural, densely urban and low densely urban residents in contraceptive use (N = 880).

Contraceptive use				
Residents	Use	Non-use	Total	X^2 value
Rural	23 (161.89)	317 (178.11)	340	1133.55*
Densely urban	268 (195.22)	142 (214.78)	410	
Low densely urban	128 (61.90)	2 (68.10)	130	
Total	419	461	880	

*Significant at 0.05 level, critical $X^2 = 5.99$, $df = 2$.

Table 5. Chi-square (X^2) statistical analysis of the influence of education in the determination of rural and urban fertility differences (N = 880).

Rural/urban fertility differentials					
Education	Rural	Densely urban	Low densely urban	Total	X^2 value
No formal education	41 (30.91)	34 (37.27)	5 (11.82)	80	221.58*
Primary	55 (61.82)	85 (75.55)	20 (23.64)	160	
Secondary	200 (166.52)	221 (200.81)	10 (63.67)	431	
Tertiary	44 (80.75)	70 (97.38)	95 (30.88)	209	
Total	340	410	130	880	

*Significant at 0.05 level, critical $X^2 = 5.99$, $df = 2$.

between 14 and 17 years. Thus the influence of religious practices and cultures in early marriage in rural areas and Northern Nigeria cannot be over emphasized.

During the FGD sessions in Bendi, discussants observed that, though there is no specific age for marriage, when the organs have developed, then marriage is accepted. Also marriage is a personal decision and that a girl who does not control herself can get into marriage before she is ready for it. Discussants further asserted that family background can make a child enter into early marriage. The untimely loss of parents, need to settle down, no formal education and the fact that there is no specific age for marriage provided one is matured.

The study also revealed that a significant difference

exists between rural and urban residents in the use of contraceptive. This finding corroborates Carr et al (2007), who observed that part of rural-urban fertility differentials are accounted for by occupational and educational characteristics of rural residents including urban residents. Carr et al. (2006) argued that, the focal point is the individual and their characteristics, aspirations and idiosyncrasies. It is argued that urban women are more likely to be better educated, to be employed in the modern sectors, or to have choice. Again urban women often earn higher income than their rural counterparts, as such; they are more inclined to contraceptive use.

During the two FGD sessions to corroborate the quantitative findings conducted, it was the general

expression among all discussants in Bendi that children are gift from God and only Him controls how they come, they do not have control over fertility. They argued that contraceptive destroys the womb and abortion is murder which attracts serious sanctions such as ostracism. In contrast discussants from Calabar metropolis opined that family planning is most preferred, but any pregnancy that threatens the life of a woman should be aborted. That though they do not determine fertility, they can control. The implication of this finding is that level of awareness and use of contraceptives various and affects fertility outcome.

The study further revealed that education plays a significant role in the determination of rural and urban fertility difference. This finding is consistent with the works of Kraudal (2000) who examined woman's own education and how it affected fertility. He observed that uneducated women who lived in societies where large proportion are literate or where educational level is high, might have fertility rate different from that of uneducated women elsewhere.

The more educated a community is, the better understanding of issues, example the realization that a child is not just born but must be trained adequately which the responsibility falls on parents and the more the number, the much the problem becomes. Also the realization of education as liberating force and a window of opportunities which every parent must strive to afford for their children. It equally depicts differences in the level of education of a people and how they perceive life situations.

Conclusion

Human population is a vital issue in development plan. It is a strong determinant of the socio-economic and political prosperity of a nation. However, rapid population growth in the absence of commensurate material and financial resources could constitute a significant problem in society; consequently, factors that influence regional population growth is of great importance to policy makers, researchers and students. This was the concern of this study. The research findings revealed that a significant difference exists in age of entry into marital unions between rural and urban residents and this is responsible for fertility differentials in the two areas. Also that the contraceptive use between rural and urban residents greatly differs hence its influence on fertility level. It is also pertinent to say that education plays a significant role in rural and urban fertility level differences. We therefore recommended that government and non-governmental agencies should embark on public enlightenment campaign to create awareness on the importance of fertility control. Government should also regulate the age of entry into marital unions. Stakeholders should gear-up awareness campaign on the use of contraceptives especially in rural areas of Nigeria.

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