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**Universal Basic Education (UBE) Program Implementation and the Socioeconomic dimensions of Rural Labor Migration in Bekwarra Local Area Government, Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

This study investigated the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Bekwarra and how this has influenced labor migration and also examined the socioeconomic dimensions of labor migration in Bekwarra local government area. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. The survey research design was adopted for the study, the study area is Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. A sample of 1172 respondents, representing 0.5% of the total study population was selected for the study. The instrument for data collection was the researchers designed structured questionnaire based on the three research questions formulated for the study. The researchers personally administered the research instrument based on the accidental and purposeful methods of administration. There was 100% return rate, which was coded and used for analysis using simple percentage. The result of data analyzed indicated that the UBE program was properly implemented in Bekwarra LGA. 668 (57.0%) agreed that it was properly implemented, while 504 (43.0%) respondents disagreed that the UBE program was not properly implemented in Bekwarra LGA. The result of the second question shows that 696 (59.4%) agreed that the UBE program implemented has sufficiently influenced labor migration in Bekwarra, while 476 (40.6%) respondents disagreed that the UBE program implemented has not influenced labor migration in any way in Bekwarra. It was also found that labor migration has some socioeconomic dimensions which are both positive and negative at some points. Based on these results, it was however concluded that the implementation of the UBE program has influenced labor migration which also has some socioeconomic dimensions in Bekwarra Local Government Area. It was therefore recommended among others that government and private individuals should establish plantation agriculture and other cottage

industries in the rural communities to harness the cheap labor by engaging the youth to discourage the incidence of labor migration with its attendants' socioeconomic problems in Bekwarra.

*Keywords: UBE program implementation, labor migration, socioeconomic effects of migration, left behind persons, entrepreneurship education and skills acquisitions*

## **Introduction**

Human migration from rural to urban or semi-urban areas for greener pastures in recent times has become established. Most migration occurs when most of the able-bodied young men feels their destinies lies in a distant land away from their ancestral home. Most often, during these migrations, both skilled and unskilled labor migrates too. Most often than not, these migrations have affected the socioeconomic and agricultural base and productivity of these rural economies, as a result of the shortage of man power due to migration. Scholars have found that during migration, effects are observed from two major folds, the left behind family livelihood is crumbled, their impacts on the productive base of the rural economy and above all their new destinations also feel the impacts both negatively and positively too.

Robles & Oropesa, (2011) saw labor migration as the movement of able- bodied young men who would have ordinarily provided the needed man-power for their rural economy from their original ancestral home in search of greener pastures to distant land where they may not have known before. Abramo & Valenzuela, (2005) posited that the implication is that there is usually a shortage of man power in their source destination, while in some cases too, they become excess of manpower in their destination. The migration of labor from rural to urban centers are usually characterized by the flow of skills from the source of movement to the place of destination, this affects agricultural productivity in the rural economy, bringing about food shortage, local economy like petty trading are affected, families and relationships are severed, taxes are lost due to the migration of those who would pay taxes, artisans are also lost to this trend (Cerrutti & Parrado, 2007; de Haas, 2007; Calero, Bedi, Robert, 2008; de la Garza, 2010 ;Ada, Akpama & Eneji, 2019).

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Dreby, (2010) found that most often, migration is limited in scope to mean going for menial labor or such low-income labor. The author further posited that people migrate for economic reasons, they also migrate for further studies, trainings and business, the end result is that most of these migrated people come back spent in their later lives. While discussing the different types of labor migration people undertake, Kandel & Kao, (2000) observed that there are seasonal migration and long-term migrations. In seasonal migrations, labor is taken to where they have shortages of labor, for example, from March to November every year, young Bekwarra children like children from other climes migrate to the western states of Nigeria: Ondo, Osun, Edo, Ogun, Oyo and Kwara states, while others move to Taraba and Nasarawa states, yet others within the state to Boki, Ikom, Etung, Obubra among others to either cultivate mounds, rent cocoa plantation or harvest palm fruits for plantation owners. In all these, they make reasonable money for their livelihoods.

In the long-term migration, young men leave their fatherland to another land to acquire land for farming, for public service jobs among others. Here, they live long time enough from ten years to so many years in the new found land. In this type of migration, people live very long time in their destination, by the time they come back, they have already spent their useful age, they become burdens to the family members they came back to meet at home (Kandel & Kao, 2001; McKenzie & Rapoport, 2007).

Eneji, Ubom, Eneji, Obogo & Dunnamah, (2013) in their study found that most often than not, excuses given for their migration is that they have nobody to sponsor them, while others feel they cannot go to school because of their age, some still want to go and make money before coming back to school. With the discovery that their complains has always been to meet their livelihood demands, how best can this be tackled? One will expect that with the introduction of the Universal Basic Education, (UBE) by the President Olusegun Obasanjo's regime in 1999, the menace of rural – urban migration will be drastically reduced if not completely eradicated (Fernel, 2010; Ekanem, 2011).

Oladele, (2018), observed that the Universal Basic Education (UBE) is an educational program introduced by the federal government of Nigeria in 1999 during the regime of President Olusegun Obasanjo. Musa & Isa, (2018), observed that the sole aim of the program as enunciated by the enabling laws is to provide a greater access to and ensuring quality basic education throughout Nigeria to all Nigerian children of school going age for a nine-year program. Majorly, the objectives of the program include:

To reduce school drop-outs among Nigerian children of school going age by improving relevant, quality, efficient education at all levels of education to these group of children

To ensure uninterrupted access to 9-years formal education for all Nigerian children of school going age, by providing free and compulsory basic education for every child of these age, not minding the gender, religion, tribe or culture. Note that the first six years is for primary education, while the three additional years is to cater for the lower secondary school (Junior Secondary school; JSS) program. These three years should provide quality early childhood care development and education (ECCDE).

To bring about the acquisition of literacy, numeracy, life enhancement skills and values for a lifelong education and useful living. Musa & Joseph, (2019) posited that the implication of the acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills is for the recipients of this program to be able to read, write and communicate in English language and do some arithmetics for everyday life, while the acquisition of lifelong skills is for useful living, basic skills to be able to do business for a purposeful living, artisan, entrepreneurs, agriculturalist, gardeners, horticulturalist, etc. (Oni, 2018; Musa & Joseph, 2019). These skills should be able to put food on the table and also provide for the family's needs. This is to reduce poverty and dependence on government for white collar jobs (El-Yakub, 2001; Adara & Onyemaechi, 2018; Chung, Jeon, Lee, Lee & Yoo, 2018). Naroş & Simionescu, (2019) observed that it should be understood that the introduction of the Universal Basic Education was to create in the learners the needed skills to build a self-reliant citizen who are aware of the world of work within the skills generated or learnt from the program. Florian &

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Beaton, (2018); Oluyemi, Ajayi, Abiola & Ajibade, (2018); Naroş & Simionescu, (2019) had variously posited that the introduction of the UBE program was to help produce middle manpower to bridge the gap. But when these people who were supposed to bridge the gap migrate to distant lands for greener pastures, who then can we bring to the classroom to acquire this literacy and basic skills? It is on this strength that the researchers initiated this study to examine the influence of UBE on labor migration in Bekwarra LGA of Cross River State, Nigeria.

The UBE program implementation in Bekwarra like many other LGAs and states has been on since its inception in 1999 and budgetary allocations have been made annually, teacher's recruitments, facility development and the provision of instructional facilities have also been done, but has the objectives of the program been achieved? This paper therefore seeks to evaluate the extent of UBE program implementation and the influence the program has exerted on labor migration and its socioeconomic impacts in Bekwarra Local Government Area of cross river state, Nigeria.

The following objectives would be pursued vigorously:

Access the extent of implementation of the UBE program in Bekwarra LGA

Access the influence of UBE on labor migration in Bekwarra

Investigate how labor migration influence the socioeconomic development of Bekwarra LGA

Based on these objectives, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study thus:

How has the UBE program been implemented in Bekwarra LGA?

How did the UBE program implemented influenced labor migration in Bekwarra LGA?

What are the socioeconomic implications of labor migration in Bekwarra LGA?

### **Research design/methodology**

The research design for this study is the survey research design, the choice of this design is because the research subjects are the citizens of Bekwarra who at one point or the other migrated to other parts of the country for greener pastures and those charged with the responsibilities of implementing the UBE program in Bekwarra, teachers of the programs and monitoring, supervisors and evaluation officers in the Ministry of Education (primary and junior secondary divisions). Bekwarra Local Government Area (LGA) is located between Latitude  $6^{\circ} 41' 38''$  N of the equator and Longitude  $8^{\circ} 58' 03''$  E of the Greenwich Meridian, occupying a landmass of about 3106 Km<sup>2</sup> (118 Sq Miles).

Bekwarra LGA shares common boundaries in the North with the Vandeikya people of Benue state, to the West, Bekwarra is bounded by Yache and Echumofana in Yala LGA, to the South, Bekwarra is bounded by Ishibori in Ogoja LGA, to the East, Bekwarra is bounded by Mbube and Utugwang of Ogoja and Obudu LGAs respectively. According to Google population projection for 2019, Bekwarra has a projected population of about 234,356 persons (Google Population Projection, 2019). Predominantly, the major occupation of the people of Bekwarra are farmers, businessmen, palm wine tappers, hunting, civil and public servants, while a larger chunk of the younger generations are students, where most of these population fend for their schooling and academics.

The study population is made up of teachers in primary and secondary schools, school administrators from the ministry, school supervisors, monitors and supervisors, staff of UBE offices in the Local Government Area and the state, students and those involved in seasonal/long term migration. In all, one thousand, one hundred and seventy-two (1,172) respondents were selected for the study based on 0.5% sample size. Both accidental and stage-wise sampling techniques were used for sample selection. The instrument adopted for this study is the researchers designed structured questionnaire covering the main objectives of the study. The instrument administration was done by the researchers directly after identifying the respondents through the stage-wise and accidental sampling technique. In all, the instrument administered were returned

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100%. Data analysis was done after coding the instrument using simple percentage, results of data analyses are presented on the following tables.

**Results and discussions**

Three research questions were asked, the instrument was designed to cover the three questions, the analysis of data is done based on the three questions using simple percentage. The results of data analyzed are presented on tables 1-3.

**Question one:** How has the UBE program been implemented in Bekwarra LGA? The result of respondent’s opinion as to how the UBE program was implemented in Bekwarra Local Government Area is presented on table 1.

**Table 1: Universal Basic Education (UBE) program Implementation in Bekwarra LGA**

Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagreed		Total
Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score
340	29	445	38	282	24	105	9	1172
246	21	492	42	223	19	211	18	1172
211	18	305	26	351	30	305	26	1172
270	23	351	30	375	32	176	15	1172
398	34	258	22	188	16	328	28	1172
504	43	328	28	152	13	188	16	1172
457	39	398	34	188	16	129	11	1172
398	34	422	36	270	23	82	7	1172
152	13	246	21	340	29	434	37	1172
141	12	164	14	480	41	387	33	1172
270	23	363	31	281	24	258	22	1172
422	36	387	33	246	21	117	10	1172
258	22	316	27	422	36	176	15	1172
398	34	281	24	293	25	199	17	1172
422	36	375	32	141	12	234	20	1172
<b>4887</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>5131</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>4232</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>3329</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>17580</b>
<b>326</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>1172</b>
<b>668</b>		<b>57.0</b>		<b>504</b>		<b>43.0</b>		

Based on the question as to how the UBE program was/is implemented in Bekwarra LGA, 326 respondents, representing 27.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that UBE program as designed was properly implemented, though there were hitches and some issues here and there, but these issues were overcome. 342 respondents, representing 29.2% agreed that the UBE program was

properly and adequately implemented, but not without some militating issues, which were though addressed. Two hundred and eighty-two respondents (24.1%) disagreed that the UBE program was not properly implemented in Bekwarra LGA, their reasons being that there were a lot of hick ups and issues as a result of the program plan and implementation, while two hundred and twenty-two (222) respondents, representing 18.9% strongly disagreed that the UBE program as implemented was not properly done. Their reasons being that the program was and has been haphazardly implemented and most of the teachers recruited to drive the program, were either ill qualified or poorly trained, while some neither have the requisite teaching and pedagogic knowledge of teaching or have a proper grasp of subject matter of the classes and subjects they were supposed to teach within the UBE program.

Issues raised during the instrument administration shows that the UBE program implemented did not make adequate arrangement for school facilities like libraries, instructional materials, classroom blocks, no proper training of qualified army of teachers to drive the process of the implementation of the UBE program. Others still suggest that some of the teachers were just pushed into the system to satisfy their friends, relatives and cronies by politicians for the benefit of receiving their monthly salaries, while most use students to cultivate and tend their farms within the school setting, others are interested in collecting local craft from the pupils, while others hardly come to school to teach the children.

A further look at the result further suggest that six hundred and sixty-eight (668) respondents, representing 57.0% agreed that the UBE program is properly and effectively implemented in Bekwarra Local Government Area, their postulation is not ignorant of the fact that there were some hitches during the program implementation here and there. These group anchor their opinion on the fact that there has been about 85% increase in school enrolment among pupils of school going age. This is a complete departure from the traditional primary education system, where most pupils of school going age were seen on the street hawking wares, goods and other services instead of being in the school. Five hundred and four (504) respondents, representing 43.0% disagreed that



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the UBE program was/is not properly and effectively implemented. Draw inferentially from the result of the analysis, 668 respondents (57%) is greater than 504 (43%), so, the result shows that the implementation of the UBE program in Bekwarra was properly implemented, despite the fact that the results was not 100% successful. These respondents believed that there is increase in the number of schools opened, increased in the number of school classroom blocks constructed, increased in the number of pupil's enrolment in schools and the increase in the number of teachers and other support staff employed. This was further buttressed by the introduction of the school feeding program to supplement and compliment the feeding of children of school going age, which they could not get from their poor homes. This singular measure, have increased the number of pupils enrolled into schools at the UBE program level.

**Question two:** How did the UBE program implemented influenced labor migration in Bekwarra LGA?

Table two shows data analysis as generated from the instrument to answer the question as to how the UBE program implemented has influenced labor migration in Bekwarra LGA. The result on table 2 shows that 330 respondents, representing 28.1% strongly agreed that the implementation of the UBE program has greatly influenced labor migration in Bekwarra Local Government Area.

The direction of influenced is in the negative, this is because, since the introduction of the program, despite it has some reasonable changes, more pupils have now registered and are now in school. This is as against the traditional practice where pupils migrate to western states, and to some places to go for menial labor in the farms to meet their livelihood obligations. Three hundred and sixty- six (366) respondents representing 31.3% of the respondents also agreed that the implementation of the UBE program in Bekwarra has seriously and negatively too influenced labor migration in Bekwarra Local Government Area. Two hundred and forty-eight respondents (21.1%) disagreed that the implementation of the UBE program has not influenced labor migration in any way in Bekwarra Local Government Area, while two hundred and twenty- eight respondents

(19.5%) also strongly disagreed that the implementation of the UBE program has not in any way influenced labor migration in Bekwarra Local Government Area. Their position is anchored on the fact that year in-year out, young children who would have been in school to service the program migrate to the western states of Ondo, Ogun, Lagos, Kwarra, Edo, etc in search of menial jobs and farm labor seeking for greener pastures, so why are they not in school? Based on this, these group of respondents hold tenaciously that the UBE program as implemented has not significantly discouraged any labor migration in Bekwarra Local Government Area.

**Table 2: UBE implementation and Labor migration in Bekwarra Local Government Area**

Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagreed		Total
Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	
527	45	387	33	164	14	94	8	1172
270	23	187	16	387	33	328	28	1172
410	35	387	33	199	17	176	15	1172
270	23	270	23	327	28	305	26	1172
199	17	223	19	527	45	223	19	1172
317	27	422	36	234	20	199	17	1172
398	34	340	29	211	18	223	19	1172
328	28	504	43	141	12	199	17	1172
270	23	480	41	188	16	234	20	1172
328	28	504	43	141	12	199	17	1172
422	36	375	32	141	12	234	20	1172
211	18	305	26	351	30	305	26	1172
328	28	504	43	141	12	199	17	1172
398	34	258	22	188	16	328	28	1172
270	23	351	30	375	32	176	15	1172
<b>4946</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>5497</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>3715</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>3422</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>17580</b>
<b>330</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>1172</b>
		<b>696</b>				<b>476</b>		
<b>Total</b>		<b>59.4</b>				<b>40.6</b>		<b>100</b>

A critical look at the combine figures of the respondents shows that six hundred and ninety- six (696) respondents, representing 59.4% agreed that the implementation of the UBE program has impacted seriously on labor migration in Bekwarra Local Government Area. This can be assessed in terms of new schools, increased pupils’ enrolment, increased number of teachers employed, increased establishment of new schools among others. Four hundred and seventy- six respondents

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(40.6%) hold that the implementation of the UBE program has not significantly influence labor migration in any way. They anchor their argument on the fact that, there is still serious migration of young pupils who were supposed to be in school migrating to most western states to provide cheap labor in palm, cocoa and other plantation to improve their livelihoods. They further opined that these migrations are also done even within the state, in some cases, temporal, while in most cases, permanent.

**Question three:** What are the socioeconomic implications of labor migration in Bekwarra LGA?

Table 3 shows data analyzed in an attempt to answer the question of what is the socio-economic impact or effects of labor migration in Bekwarra Local Government Area.

The result of simple percentage analysis on table 3 shows that three hundred and sixty- three (363) respondents, representing 31.0% strongly agreed that labor migration comes with socioeconomic effects which becomes very detrimental to the growth of the community where the labor is migrating from. Three hundred and fifty-seven respondents (357), representing 30.5% agreed that labor migration has some socioeconomic effects on both the destination and source communities. Two hundred and eighteen respondents (218), representing 18.6% disagreed that labor migration does not have any socioeconomic implications both at the source or destination point, whereas, two hundred and thirty-four (234) respondents, representing 19.9% strongly disagreed that labor migration does not have any socioeconomic effects on Bekwarra Local Government economy.

Their argument is anchored on the fact that when these people migrate and better their socioeconomic status, when they come back from their various destinations, some build houses, others buy motor bike, others still buy vehicles for commercial purposes, all these can still generate income to make up for the loss of some socioeconomic benefits while they were away. How this impact on the residents who originally own some business ventures which may eventually collapse, is what they did not mention.

**Table 3: Socioeconomic impacts of labor migration in Bekwarra Local Government Area**

Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagreed		Total
Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	
422	36	375	32	141	12	234	20	1172
328	28	504	43	141	12	199	17	1172
398	34	258	22	188	16	328	28	1172
270	23	351	30	375	32	176	15	1172
340	29	445	38	281	24	106	9	1172
398	34	258	22	188	16	328	28	1172
445	38	340	29	141	12	246	21	1172
351	30	270	23	211	18	340	29	1172
270	23	351	30	375	32	176	15	1172
398	34	258	22	188	16	328	28	1172
328	28	504	43	141	12	199	17	1172
504	43	328	28	199	17	141	12	1172
398	34	258	22	188	16	328	28	1172
270	23	351	30	375	32	176	15	1172
328	28	504	43	141	12	199	17	1172
<b>5448</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>5355</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>3273</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>3504</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>17580</b>
<b>363</b>	<b>31.0</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>1172</b>
	<b>720</b>		<b>61.5</b>		<b>452</b>		<b>38.5</b>	<b>100</b>

Taking a further critical look at the results on table 3, it was observed that seven hundred and twenty (720) respondents, representing 61.5% agreed that labor migration strongly influence the socioeconomic activities and its benefits in the communities where these labor migrate from, and also the destination point, while four hundred and fifty-two (452) respondents, representing 38.5% of the studied sample disagreed that labor migration does not influence the socioeconomic activities and wellbeing of the people in any way. This assumption is premised on the fact that despite labor migration, people still come back with funds to carry out some development activities including farming, business and other ventures that can still improve the people’s livelihoods in the communities where such labor forces migrated from.

Based on the scores as analyzed, more persons agreed that labor migration affect the socioeconomic activities and benefits of the communities when labor migration occurs. This result is true because when people migrate for whatever reasons, be it labor or looking for greener pastures, most people who migrate are both skilled and unskilled labor, hence their migration affects the activities in the community. Labor become scarce and expensive to hire, agricultural

productivity becomes reduced and food production is also reduced, while the prices of food stuffs become very high and expensive.

### **Discussion of finding**

Looking at the result on the extent of the implementation of the UBE program in Bekwarra, since those who ticked that the program was properly and effectively implemented were more than those who said the program was not properly implemented, 668 respondents (57.0%) as against 504 respondents (43.0%), therefore, the UBE program was properly and effectively implemented in Bekwarra LGA. This result is similar to those of Adara & Onyemaechi, (2018) and Oladele, (2018) whose result in their different studies show that the implementation of the UBE program by government across the country shows a success rate of about 79% in terms of infrastructural development, establishment of new schools, expansion of existing schools, teachers' recruitment and increased number of pupil's enrolment in the program.

Other studies like those of Oluyemi, Ajayi, Abiola & Ajibade, (2018) and Oni, (2018) though with similar results posited that most rural communities now have at least a school to cater for the educational needs of its people, where most children who used to be out of school children are now enrolled in the government's UBE program. This has seen an evidential decrease in the number of out of school children, thereby reducing the issue of street hawking and migration for cheap labor and other menial jobs. The number of schools established had capacity to cater for the rising number of school pupils anticipated for the program, hence the program was principally implemented properly in Bekwarra Local Government Area.

Despite this result, it is true that there is a tremendous increase in pupils enrolment in the UBE program, but most studies found a dissenting result that shows that the program was haphazardly implemented, studies like those of Musa & Isa, (2018) and Musa & Joseph, (2019) found respectively that though the UBE program was launched with a good intention to cater for the need of the teeming population of the out of school children, but the implementation of the

program was not properly handled by those saddled with the responsibilities of implementing the program. Funds were rather diverted for personal use, contracts for supplies and construction of school facilities were rather given to friends and cronies of the awarding agencies. It was even worst with teacher's recruitments where those in charge saw the opportunity to empower their friends, families and cronies, rather bringing in the best brains and hands to implement the program, some teachers recruited never went to conventional school for proper training in the pedagogy of teaching, while others who had attempted secondary schools were asked to rush a crash program to put them on the job.

In education, the principles and methodology of teaching is a core course, which gives every intending teacher the basics of teaching methods, classroom management skills, writing skills on the board, knowledge of subject matter and audience and individual difference analysis. It is unfortunate to state that most of the teachers recruited for the program barely know or have acquired these teaching skills to pilot the program properly. The implementation of the program also suffered a lot of setbacks in the sense that there was hardly any program monitoring and evaluation during and after the implementation.

This was one major issue that kept recurring through the program implementation of the UBE program in Bekwarra and most other communities where the program were implemented. By and large, the result of data analyzed said the program was properly implemented in Bekwarra LGA of Cross River State, Nigeria. The implication of this result is that, since the UBE program was properly implemented in Bekwarra, it should be able to reduce the number of out of school children, not only that, it should also reduce the number of children hawking in the streets.

In answering the second question as to how the UBE program implemented influenced labor migration in Bekwarra, 696 (59.4%) respondents strongly agreed that the implementation of the UBE education program in Bekwarra has significantly influence labor migration negatively, while 476 respondents (40.6%) said the implementation of the Universal Basic Education program in Bekwarra has not influenced labor migration in any way. From the result of data analysis, since the

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number of respondents who agreed that the implementation of the UBE program in Bekwarra has significantly influence labor migration (697,59.4%) is far higher than those who said the implementation of the UBE program in Bekwarra has not influenced labor migration (476, 40.6%), it is strongly held that the implementation of the UBE program in Bekwarra has significantly influenced labor migration in Bekwarra Local Government Area.

This result is a confirmation of the earlier finding of Chung, Jeon, Lee, Lee & Yoo, (2018), who found that when there is institutional support for out of school children to be in school, the incidence of child labor and labor migration can be drastically reduced. This data analyzed also confirm the finding of McKenzie. & Rapoport, (2007) who found that when there is education equality in Mexico, the extent of labor in Mexico will be seriously reduced, hence labor can be available at the source community. Farmers within can still employ the services of these labor within the community after school hours, likewise other socioeconomic activities which these school children contribute can be retained within the community instead of going to distant lands to offer cheap and menial jobs to the detriments of their education.

Other studies too had also been confirmed by the result of this study, studies like those of Momo, Cabus, De Witte & Groot, (2018) and Naroş & Simionescu, (2019) found a striking similarity with this result. They found a significant relationship between education and labor migration, whereby educational opportunities afforded people the opportunities to have a means of livelihoods which will keep them self-reliant and dependent on themselves without necessarily looking for work outside their homes and communities. In their opinion, education provides people with the necessary entrepreneurial skills and opportunity to be self-employed, be employers of labor if they so wish. This is entrepreneurship education or education for self -sustenance.

Despite this result, authors like Kandel & Kao, (2000); Kandel & Kao, (2001) and Ekanem, (2011) found different result in their studies, for example, Kandel and Kao, (2000) found that education does not prevent labor migration, that labor migration is a wide term with ambiguity in

tis explanations, Kandel and Kao, (2001) also hold the same position that education only helps to expose the recipients to the world of opportunities, but does not prevent or discourage labor from migrating to other distant places. Ekanem, (2011) found that education is only a tool for human empowerment and not for depriving people from movement to seek for greener pastures. This author observed that there is mobility of labor, which is a form of migration, geographical and occupational mobility of labor are all forms of migration, where people may move from one occupation to another or relocate to different locations in the course of their life struggles. So to these authors, education cannot prevent people from migrating to other lands for greener pastures.

The direction of this influence is in the positive direction, this is so because the main objectives of the UBE program was to enable a large population of the out of school children enroll in the UBE program, this the program has achieved and this has drastically reduced the number of out of school children on the street and reduced the number of those who migrate for menial labor under the guise that they have no body to sponsor their education in terms of payment of fees, buying of textbooks and other sundry expenses. This is because the program has taken care of these complaints. Based on the result here, this study found that the implementation of the UBE program has drastically influenced labor migration because most children of school going age are now fully in school and the incidence of labor migration has also been reduced and the number of out of school children have drastically reduced as most of the children are now in school, courtesy of the UBE program as introduced and implemented by the federal government of Nigeria.

The socioeconomic implication of labor migration in Bekwarra Local Government Area was also assessed to determine the extent of socioeconomic effects labor migration has on Bekwarra LGA. Seven hundred and twenty (720) respondents, representing 61.5% agreed that labor migration has some serious socioeconomic implications on the source communities, while four hundred and fifty-two (452) respondents (38.5%) disagreed that labor migration does not affect the socioeconomic gains and activities of the source community and destination. From the result of data analyzed, since the number of respondent who agreed that labor migration has some



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socioeconomic implications (720;61.5%) are higher than those who disagreed that labor migration has no effects on the socioeconomic gains of the community (452'38.5%). Therefore, labor migration has some significant socioeconomic effects on the community both the source and the destination.

Abramo & Valenzuela, (2005) got a similar result, to these authors, labor migration reduces the labor force of the source and destination and make labor hiring very expensive, the effects are multifaceted, source of farm labor increase in cost, artisans become short in supply, the burden of caring for the aged left behind family members are very daunting and laborious. Agricultural production becomes reduced because labor force migrates out of the communities. Chung, et al., (2018) and Ada, et al, (2019) found that when education is introduced with components that can provide skills and entrepreneurial skills to the recipients, they become creative in thinking, business conscious and also industrialist, thereby living to make a worthy living for themselves and others. Here the issue of labor migration is hardly felt. These authors advocate for the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in all school curriculum. Once they possess the requisite skills for self-empowerment and reliance, they would become productive members of the society, where they meet their national and societal obligation of contributing to the development of the community.

Authors like de Haas, (2007); de la Garza, (2010) and Dreby, (2010), had similar results in their respective studies, they found that crimes become the order of the day in their destinations if on arrival, they have no work to engage in making a legitimate living, they resort to illegal activities just to make ends meet in their destination, while back home where they left, the aged left behind become vulnerable and susceptible to all forms of molestation and attack from criminal and other social deviants, the case is equally pathetic. These authors found that taxes are seldom paid by these migrants, they do not contribute to their community development and other social obligations are hardly paid. This is because they pay their taxes where they reside and contribute to the development of the areas to the detriments of their own communities.

However, authors like Cerrutti & Parrado, (2007); Calero, (2008); Fernel, (2010) disagreed with the results found here, these authors in their respective studies found that when people engage in labor migration, they usually remit whatever they earned back home to invest or develop infrastructures for their families and themselves. Others build houses, some buy cars and motor bike for business purposes, while others still take care of their siblings in school and trade. Therefore, to these authors, labor migration has very many positive socioeconomic gains.

Despite how true this postulation could be, the result of data analysis carried out to answer this question suggest that labor migration has some socioeconomic effects in the development of Bekwarra Local Government Are. This is so because 720 (61.5%) of the respondents agreed that there are some socioeconomic effects of labor migration in Bekwarra Local Government Area, while 452(38.5%) of the respondents disagreed that labor migration does not have any serious socioeconomic effects on Bekwarra Local Government economy. Taking a closer look at their postulation, when migrants remit their earnings back home, it helps in building houses, buying of cars and motor bikes and other investment, these are all socioeconomic gains from migration, hence, labor migration has some socioeconomic effects in Bekwarra Local Government Area.

## **Conclusion**

This research set out to examine the influence of implementation of the UBE program on labor migration and how this in turn affect the socioeconomic development of Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The simple percentage analyses from respondent's view showed that the UBE program was properly implemented in Bekwarra Local Government Area, this is evidenced in the increase in the number of out of school children' enrolment in the UBE program, the establishment of new schools, the expansion of existing schools, the increase in the number of people engaged in implementing the programs amongst others.

It was also established that the implementation of the UBE program has drastically reduced the number of those engaged in labor migration, since they can attend schools without necessarily

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bearing the burden of the school charges and other sundry expenses which had already been borne by the UBE program. The result of the analysis also shows that labor migration comes with some attendant socioeconomic effects, these effects include increase in the cost of labor for agricultural purposes, taxes are lost, the burden of catering for the left behind aged people increases, cost of food rises because there will be reduction in the number of people engaging in agriculture and the cheap labor for such agricultural engagements become very high.

Other social vices arise, especially if the migrants cannot get any meaningful job to earn a living in their destination as soon as they arrive the new place. Some migrant also earn income which they save and remit back home for building construction, buying of cars and motor bike for commercial purposes and others do other sorts of investment for their livelihoods. These are some of the socioeconomic benefits and effects that labor migration has on the community and the migrants in Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Based on this result, it is therefore concluded that the UBE program as carried out in Bekwarra was properly implemented, thus, reducing the number of out of school children and those engaged in labor migration in Bekwarra Local Government Area. The implication of this is that, with the reduction in labor migration, there are some socioeconomic benefits which has been accrued to Bekwarra from labor migration, these effects are both positive and negative as enumerated above in the main work. Despite the result indicating that the program was properly implemented, there are some challenges faced by the program, these challenges would have been identified earlier in the program life cycle, if proper monitoring and evaluation were done early enough at different phases of the program.

#### **Recommendation for policy directions**

Arising from the results, finding and conclusion drawn from the study, the following recommendations was done to influence policy direction thus:

- a) Proper monitoring and evaluation of the UBE program should be carried out holistically to identify and address the challenges faced by the UBE program implementation.
- b) There is the urgent need to introduced Entrepreneurship Education into our primary and secondary school curriculum, this will develop in the learners the entrepreneurial skills which can become useful at the completion of their school program.
- c) Skill acquisition centers should be developed in different parts of the state to encourage those who do not have the flare to proceed to conventional schools to learn new and functional skills for their livelihoods.
- d) Parents and guardians should encourage every out of school child (ren) within their domain to enroll in the UBE program, while also discouraging labor migration to distant lands
- e) The Youth in Agriculture programs should be revived and pursued vigorously to enable the younger generations to engage in agriculture, which can comfortably cater for food production and also put money in their pockets.
- f) Bekwarra people should encourage and engage in plantation agriculture like cocoa, palms, plantain, tea, coffee, etc, these will enable our youths have farms they can channel their energy and harvest from there can guarantee them steady flow of income for their livelihoods.
- g) Government should draw a deliberate policy to establish industries and plantations in most rural communities to tap the cheap labor available, this will discourage labor migration, since labor is a major factor in any production process.
- h) Government can also draw deliberate plans for establishing markets for different kinds of agricultural produce, and also make access roads to enable these rural farmers have access to the market with their perishable goods to meet buyers before the produce get bad as is the current situation.
- i) Government should also encourage the establishment of more secondary schools with the same design as the UBE program to carter for the need of those who may wish to proceed beyond the UBE program.

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