

## **An Assessment of Educationally Disadvantaged Migrant Ebira Farmers Access to Basic Education**

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### **Abstract**

*In Nigeria, the Fulani herders, Ijaw fishermen and migrant farmers are generally behind others in terms of access to basic education. Even so, attention is rarely paid to migrant farmers when it comes to nomadic education. The migrant Ebira farmers are particularly disadvantaged in terms of access to basic education. The study was aimed at determining the level of access of migrant Ebira farmers' children/wards to basic education. Specifically, the study assessed the level of access to basic education of this group. It examined the opportunities available to them to access basic education and identified the major barriers to their accessing basic education. The study also determined the extent to which the barriers hinder the farmers' children and wards access to basic education. The survey research design was adopted for the study and a representative sample of migrant Ebira farmers predominantly located in farm settlements in four (4) states namely, Kogi, Edo, Ekiti, Ondo. The sampling method involved using the simple random sampling technique first to select four settlements within each state and then the cluster sampling to select the participant farmers. A self-designed questionnaire and structured interview schedule was constructed and administered on the participants in the selected settlements to generate data for the study. The data obtained was analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and chi square test of independence. The results show that enrollment in primary school and JSS were quite low, averagely 19.2 % for primary school and 18.1% for junior secondary school (JSS). Conversely, those not accessing basic education was quite high on the average 80.8% for primary education and 81.9% for JSS. The proportion of children by genders who are attending primary school and JSS was equitably distributed between the sexes, even though the access to these levels of basic education is low across the selected states. Out of the five primary schools and one JSS available to the entire group across the sixteen farming settlements in all the states, only one of the schools is close to one of the settlements while the others are not. In addition, the available schools were generally of poor qualities.*

*Findings indicates that factors such as non-availability of schools; distance (proximity) of settlements to schools, child labour, indirect cost of education, direct cost and inaccessible location rank top six, 1st – 6th in that order, among factors prohibiting their children from accessing basic education. As well, non-availability of school affects access of this group to basic education to very 'large extent', whereas proximity of settlements to school and inaccessible location by road affect them to a 'large extent'. Factors like indirect cost of education, child labour in the farm, and insecurity affect them to only a 'moderate extent'.*

*Findings also show that there is a significant independence between the farmers' attitude toward basic education and their sex. Similarly, it was found that the farmers' attitude toward basic education is independent of their literacy level. However, the farmers' attitude to formal education is significantly dependent on their financial ability. Farmers with less financial means tend to be more positively disposed to their children receiving basic education than the more able ones.*

*The farmers suggest the establishment of schools, provision of infrastructure, facilities, teachers, equipments etc. creating awareness/sensitization and mounting special ebira sensitization programme on the need to embrace formal education as some of the way of improving their children's access to basic education. Other suggestions include the provision of free education, access road to their settlements, special pupil feeding programme. Based on the findings, it was recommended that relevant authorities should establish basic schools within the farming settlements, link settlements with access road to main towns and villages and offer their children free education with free school feeding.*

**Keywords:** *Access to barrier, basic education, disadvantaged/marginalized, group, migrant Ebira farmer, nomadic education.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties trained and skills developed. This conceptualization portrays education as a most important and desirous acquisition for individual. It equally makes it an important instrument for effective national development (NPE, 2014). Education fosters the worth and development of the individual as a citizen, both for the individual's sake and for the society in general.

Developed countries have long recognized the importance of education; therefore, in many of the advanced countries, access to education is given uninhibited. But for many developing countries especially in sub-Saharan Africa like Nigeria, struggling economically, education is a luxury and inaccessible, unavailable and unaffordable to many of its citizens. Developing countries have come to also recently recognize the importance of education for overall national development.

Nigeria is signatory to a number of covenant and protocols to provide and promote basic education for all without exemption. Some of the covenants and protocols to which Nigeria is a part include the Jomtien 1990 declaration and framework for action on basic education for all; The Amman re-affirmation, 1995 for the forceful pursuit of the Jomtien recommendation for basic education for all; and the OAU decade of education in African (1997-2006) with a strong emphasis on the vigorous pursuit of basic education (UBE, 2002). Of course, it is one thing to recognize the importance of providing basic education to all, it is another to make practical commitment and take effective steps to actualize it.

In the documents mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, it is intended that access to basic education be liberalized, universalized and inclusive in the signatory countries. This implies that persons in all manners and conditions of physical, spatial and psychological existence would benefit from basic education. And it also means that special attention would be paid to special groups so that special needs of all sectors of the population will be taken into account (UBE, 2002). The scope of the Nigerian Universal Basic Education covers provision of special programme for nomadic population and access to formal regular school system from the beginning of primary education to the end of the Junior Secondary School (UBE, 2002) , now regarded as basic education.

Access to basic education could mean a number of things. According to Amadi (1998), access to education implies the availability of schools for those who wish to go to school to do so. It is the opportunity and right an individual child has to enroll or register for basic education class. This includes on schedule enrolment and progression at the appropriate age, regular attendance and learning consistently without interruption. According to Okeke (2009) access to education implies free and unlimited, unhindered and unfettered opportunities at each level of education to obtain knowledge, skills and abilities available at that level needed to optionally participate and contribute to development in the society. One should add that access to education is bound to its compulsory nature. Thus, all children of school age must be granted access from any form of discrimination.

### **Problem Statement/Justification**

There is a growing universal recognition of access to basic education as the alienable right of the child. However, in the developing countries, there is inequality in the access to basic education among various sections and strata of the society. The migrant population in Nigeria such as the herders, fishermen and migrant farmers still lag behind in access to basic education. This is why the scope of the UBE brings within its ambit special programme for nomadic population.

The factors responsible for the marginalization of the educationally disadvantaged migrant groups have been traced to various factors within the peculiarity of their environment such as the terrain, habitation, occupation, economic status, and attitudes to education. The Fulani herders, the Ijaw fishermen and migrant farmers form the bulk of this nomadic group in Nigeria.

Somewhat herders and fishermen have received considerable attention in the national policy on education implementation with the establishment of the directorate for nomadic education. Those of the migrant farmers have not been given considerable attention and intervention. And interventions and attentions have focused on the education of the migrant Fulani herdsmen and the riverine fishermen by the various levels of Nigerian governments and scholars. On the other hand, little attention has been paid to migrant farmers' education, especially the Ebira migrant farmers spread mostly across Kogi, Kwara, Osun, Benue, Edo, Ekiti and Ondo states.

The nomadic education programme of the federal government mainly focuses on Fulani cattle herders and the riverine fishermen. Efforts have been made to establish specialized schools for these groups. Regrettably, the migrant Ebira farmers have not been that fortunate and thus have been seriously neglected in terms of access to basic education.

There is no doubt that inequality and marginalization still exist in access to many opportunities for individuals in Nigeria especially for the nomadic population with respect to education. Why this is so is a big question that deserves to be given a closer look.

Several factors have been implicated for the disparity between groups and the non-migrant sedentary group. The migrant groups relative to their settled counterparts have low access to education due to a number of reasons including historical, geographical, social and economic standpoint. A complex combination of factors could actually account for the low access of migrant farmer /population to formal basic education. But which of the factors really apply in the case of migrant Ebira farmers and how they affect their access to basic education remains a guess.

The present study will attempt to designed to determine the factors responsible for migrant Ebira farmers' low access to basic education and also to find out the extent the indentified factors influence their access to basic education in some Ebira farmers settlements in Kogi State and some neighboring states.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The proposed study was designed to assess migrant ebira farmers' access to basic education, identify the factors responsible for the level of access to basic education and to determine the extent the identified factors influence access to basic education.

Specially, the objectives of study were to:

1. find out the level of the migrant Ebira farmers' children and wards access to basic education;
2. find out opportunities available to the migrant Ebira farmers' children and wards to access basic education;
3. identify the factors influencing the level of access to basic education for the migrant Ebira farmers' children and wards access to basic education.;
4. determine the extent of the effects of the identified factors on the migrant Ebira farmers' children and wards access to basic education;
5. determine whether migrant Ebira farmers attitude to basic education is dependent on the farmers' gender literacy level and family financial ability/background; and
6. find out ways of improving access to basic education for the Ebira migrant farmers

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered in this study

1. What is the level of access to basic education of the migrant Ebira farmers' children and wards?.
2. What are the opportunities available to the migrant Ebira farmers' children and wards to access to basic education?
3. What are the factors influencing the level of access to basic education of migrant Ebira farmers children and wards?
4. To what extent do the identified factors or barriers to basic education affect Ebira migrant farmers' children and wards access to basic education?
5. Is the attitude to basic education of migrant Ebira farmers' independent of their gender, family financial ability and literacy level?
6. What are the ways of improving access to basic education for the Ebira migrant farmers' children and wards?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Access to Basic Education Situation**

Access to education entails enrolment, attendance and completion and possible readiness to transition to the next level (Okeke, 2008). But unfortunately, not everybody entitled to an education has access to even basic education in most developing countries, especially Nigeria.

Many groups of people are marginalized or excluded from basic education in Nigeria even though it is supposed to be compulsory and universal. The marginalized group generally include national ethnic linguistic minority, people with disabilities, migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, people living in poverty among others. Nigeria has recognized that education is at the heart of sustainable development especially as she strives to be among the twenty (20) developed nations by the year 2020 (Federal Ministry of Education, May, 2009).

Education is a veritable and effective tool that can be used by man to solve his problems, to improve his life and make it comfortable (Boyi, 2013). There is a world-wide trend in the

increase in access to formal schooling particularly at the primary and secondary levels of education in the last few decades (Schewel & Frensten, 2018).

The UBE involves six (6) years of primary school education and 3 years of junior secondary school education culminating in 9 years of uninterrupted schooling and transiting from one class to another. Basic education is very fundamentally important to the educational system because it is the foundational education for the children (Adanna, Jegede & Ogunode, June, 2022). Basic education is foundational education level (Kanno & Onyeachu, 2015). This may also by implication be seen and perceived as the most fundamental education that is given to people.

### **Barriers to Basic Education**

Basic education in Nigeria is universal implying that every citizen is supposed to be able to access it. But however, not all groups of Nigeria have unfettered access to basic education as envisaged. For migrant groups, the issue often revolves around enrolling remaining (i.e. continuing) and completing basic education. According to Tahir, Muhammad & Muhammed, (2005), the enrolment rate of nomads in formal education is very low and literacy rate is between 0.2 and 2.0 percent. Nomads can be classified into three categories namely, nomadic pastoralist, the itinerant fishermen and migrant farmers (Ezema & Ali, 2011).

One of the major challenges of educational development in Nigeria generally is having access to basic education. The education of nomads in Nigeria is generally affected by defective policy, inadequate funding, faulty school placements, incessant migration of children of migrants, unreliable and obsolete data, cultural and even religious taboo.

Adanna, Jegede & Ogunode (2022) identified some of the common problems of basic education in Nigeria to include inadequate professional teachers, corruption, insecurity problem, poor supervision, poor learning outcome, and poor implementation of policies among others. Similarly, Ogunode, Jegede & Ajape (2021) see the problems of public schools in Nigeria as inadequate professional teachers, shortage of infrastructural facilities, inadequate instructional aid and poor supervision. Basic education is generally poorly funded (Ogunode, 2021).

The major objectives of nomadic education which focus primarily on herders and fishermen are the inculcation of national consciousness and unity; development of the right type of attitude and values; and training of the mind in understanding with world around them. The education that migrant children receive is not only one – way related to their individual development but also plays a big role in migrant family's adaption and integration into the society (Telsac, Karazoz & Telsac, 2022). Thus the Federal Government of Nigeria has realized and attempted to make special intervention at educating the nomads by establishing the National Commission for Nomadic Education NCNE (Uneze, 2006).

According to Amadioha (2020) the education given to nomads is characterized by poor budgetary allocation to the education sector, poverty, ignorance among the people, poor learning environment and culture, lack of competent teachers, poor motivation of teaching personnel, poor infrastructural facilities, non-availability or inadequate learning materials, poor attention to sports and recreational activities poor mobilization of partners, corruption poor policy planning and implementation strategies, inadequate statistical data for planning and poor logistic supply.

Shahzad, Ali, Dad, Ghazi, & Gilani. (2010) identified the following as reasons given by some Pakistani parents for not enrolling their children in school: schools not available (62%), security problem (60.5%), unwillingness of children (55.5%), cost of education (expensive) (54%), making money (earning) for the family (poverty) (51%), teachers' absenteeism (50.5%), lack of

guidance at home (48%), availability of basic facilities (44.5%) and non-availability of books (36%).

In a similar study, Udu, Aime, & Akpera (2017) in a survey study investigated how non-payment of fees, gender, prevalence rate, herdsmen/farmers clashes (insecurity), level of parental income and child interest present as barriers to equitable access to basic education in a local government area in Benue State of Nigeria. The survey used a sample of 32 head teachers and 400 parent and volunteers to provide data for the study. They found that in 2016/2017 academic session that the major barrier to basic education access in the area was the non-payment of fees. The most affected groups were orphans, career givers, physically challenged, girls and displaced children.

Shahzad et al (2010) survey, indicates that parents identified poverty (68%), long family size, parent illiteracy (57.5%), lack of competent teachers (58%), shortage of professionally trained teachers (55%), teachers' harsh behavior (52%), lack of interest of parents (49.5%), uninteresting (irrelevant) curriculum (47%), long distance between school and home as reasons children drop out of school.

They also identified unattractive school environment (60%), lack of encouragement at home (59.5%), support in household work (58%), as family related factors for children not enrolling in the school. The school related factors they identified include non-availability of school building (41%), difficult syllabus (60%), lack of facilities (toilets) (58%), repeated failure (poor achievement) (52%) and lack of drinking water (44%).

Shahzad, et al (2010) survey also shows teacher opinion for students dropping out of school to include parents' illiteracy (65.5%), poverty (63%), lack of interest of parents (59.5%), lack of competent teachers (55%), uninteresting (irrelevant) syllabus (54%), shortage of teachers (52%), large family size (51%), as major reasons for leaving school before completion. The school-related factor implicated in teachers opinion for leaving school include unavailability of physical facilities at the primary level, no library (61.5%), no play ground (57%), lack of furniture (56.5%), electricity (55.5%), no drinking water (52.5%) and no toilet (50.5%).

## **METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH**

### **Area of the Study**

The migrant Ebira farmers are an ethnic linguistic group whose original homeland is located in the four local government areas (LGAs) of the central senatorial district of Kogi state. They come from Adavi, Ajaokuta, Okene and Okehi LGAs of the state. The migrant Ebira farmers migrated to other places in search of arable land to farm. This group of farmers can be found mainly in farm settlements in Kogi State, neighboring states and the federal capital territory. Specifically, they can be found in large numbers in mostly Edo State, Ekiti State, Ondo State, the FCT and Kwara State sharing boundaries with Kogi State. These farmers engage mainly in the cultivation or production of food crops and marketing of the crops.

The migration of Ebira farmers to other lands to satisfy economic or environmental needs dates back a long way (Ojo, 2022). This migrant was attracted by availability of fertile land for agricultural opportunities and labour market services and commercial prospects.

### **Research Design**

The survey research design was adopted for the study. Data was collected from homestead/households representative sample of migrant Ebira farmers in each of the identified and selected farm settlements in the five states including Kogi State selected on purpose. The

survey method was used in the study because they are research that aim to describe a situation that still exist today or in part as it exists (Telsac, Karagoz &Telsac, 2022).

### **Population of the Study**

The population of the study consists of migrant Ebira farmers within Kogi State and some neighboring states and the FCT around the state. These groups live in homesteads within the farming communities where they make their farms. The four neighboring states considered in the study include Edo State, Ekiti State, Kwara State, Ondo State and Kogi State itself where a large number of migrant farmers who left their original birth places can be found.

The specific number of the farmers and their family members and settlements or communities is unknown but it is certainly in hundreds of thousands put together (Ojo, 2022).

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Samples of migrant Ebira farmers homestead or households was obtained through multistage sampling approach. At the first stage, four (4) neighboring States to Kogi State that have a high population of this group was selected purposely. Kogi State was also included in the sample because of the preponderance of migrant Ebira farming settlements within their home state. The four (4) neighboring states purposely selected was Edo, Ekiti, Ondo and Ekiti states. In each state, four (4) Ebira farmers' settlements will be selected by method of simple random sampling in such a way that they will be selected from different local government areas within the state. The settlements considered were made up of at least twenty (20) homesteads and the settlements were taken as a cluster. All the existing and available households/homesteads were involved in the study.

### **Administration of Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was administered to the heads of the family, either the father or mother or both and those in position to provide the needed information solicited. The administration involved house to house collection of data within each settlement. With the consent of the participants the researcher or research assistants administer the instruments on the target participants and assisted them to complete the questionnaire where necessary. Oral interview was also be conducted to support the data obtained through the questionnaire.

### **Data Analysis**

Data collected was analyzed using both the descriptive and inferential statistics. Computation of percentages, mean, standard deviation were used and interpreted. Studentized chi square test was also be used to determine independence of farmers attitude to basic education viz- a -viz their gender, literacy and financial ability.

### **Significance of the Study**

One of the important objectives of the Nigerian education is to prepare the children for citizenship education (FRN, 2004). It is believed that an educated populace will be an asset rather than a liability to the country. Therefore, no group of people should be left out in access to basic "education for all". The outcomes of this study would illuminate the areas the Nigerian government needs to direct its efforts to in order to eliminate or reduce the obstacles or barrier to assess to basic education by migrant Ebira farmers. Specials needs of the basic education of this population segment will be highlighted by evidence.

On a general note, increase access to quality basic education is aimed at the evaluation of illiteracy, ignorance and poverty as well as the stimulation and accelerated national development, political consciousness and national integration in Nigeria. Access to basic education is critical to long term improvement in productivity, reduction of poverty, preventive health care, empowerment of the farming community, and reduction in inequality in access to education.

Children who do not have access to basic education face considerable barrier to employment and earning potentials later in life. They are more likely to suffer adverse health conditions or outcomes and less likely to participate in decision making that affect them, thus threatening their ability to shape a better future for themselves and their societies.

The findings of the present study would serve as a feedback to the governments of Nigeria on its target of liberalizing access to formal education in the process of providing educational opportunities to Nigerians. Therefore, the goal of not denying any Nigerian child access to basic and self-fulfill on the basic some perceived condition like social status, social stereotype, and discrimination would be unveiled.

Liberalizing access to basic education for migrant group in general and Ebira migrant farmers would be a catalyst for them to actualize their potentials. Severe marginalization and alienation of a group of people from accessing basic education seriously affect national development and social balance.

### Results of the Study

The research questions were aimed at determining the level of access to basic education of migrant ebira farmers' children and wards living in farming communities or colonies in four states of Nigeria. The results of the data analysis are presented in Table 1a to Table 6.

### Research Question

What is the level of access of the migrant Ebira farmers' children and wards to basic education?

**Table 1a: Access of migrant ebira farmers' children and wards to primary education.**

Sate	No Children/ Ward	of Number not in Sch*	Number/% Access*	School Access*	Interpret: access % / gender bal
Kogi	272	219 (80.5)	53 (19.5)	M 28 (52.8) F 25(47.2)	Low/ Equitable
Edo	212	173 (81.6)	39 (18.4)	M 18 (46.2) F 21 (53.8)	Low/ Equitable
Ondo	256	211 (82.4)	45 (17.6)	M 20 (44.4) F 25(55.6)	Low/ Equitable
Ekiti	262	207 (79.0)	55 (21.0)	M 30 (54.5) F 25 (45.5)	Low/ Equitable
<b>Total</b>	1002	810 (80.8)	192 (19.2)	M 96(50.0) F 96 (50.0)	Low/ Equitable

\*Percentage in bracket

Table 1a shows the proportion (percentages) of children aged between 6 -12 years old with and without access to basic primary education in the four settlements each. It indicates that the percentage of these children/wards of the farming communities who are not accessing primary schools, that is, not enrolled in primary school, range from (79.0% in Ekiti State to 82.4% in Kogi State, implying that only between 17.6% and 21.0% have accesses to primary education across the four states. The table equally presents the proportion of children/ward by genders who are attending primary school, which is equitably distributed between the sexes. These sex based access ranges from (44.3 and 54.1%) for male and (45.9% and 55.6 %) for female across the states. Overall, access to primary education in the four states is generally low, only about 19.2 % on the average.

**Table 1b: Access of migrant ebira farmers children/wards to junior secondary education**

Sate	No of Children/Ward	Not in Sch*	Number in JSS*	Number /Sex	School Access % to JSS*	Interpret. of access % / gender bal
Kogi	160	131 (81.9)	29 (18.1)		M16 (54.0) F13(46.0)	Low/ Equitable
Edo	152	127 (83.6)	25 (16.4)		M13(46.6) F12 (53.5)	Low/ Equitable
Ondo	128	105 (82,0)	23 (18,0)		M11 (45.7) F12 (54.3)	Low/ Equitable
Ekiti	157	126 (80.3)	31 (19.7)		M13 (42.2) F18(57.8)	Low/ Equitable
<b>Total</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>489 (81.9)</b>	<b>108 (18.1)</b>		<b>M 53(47.4) F55(52.6)</b>	<b>Low/ Equitable</b>

\*Percentage in bracket

Table 1b shows the proportion (percentages) of children between ages 12+ and 18 years old with and without access to basic Junior Secondary School (JSS) education in farming settlements/ communities in each of the four states. It indicates that the percentages of these children/wards in the farming communities who are not accessing primary school, range from 80.3% in Ekiti State to 83.6% in Edo State, implying that only between 16.4% and 19.7% (averagely, 18.1%) have accesses to Junior Secondary School education across the states. The table equally presents the proportion of children/wards by genders who are attending junior secondary school. This ranges from (42.2% and 54.0%) for male and (46.0% and 57.8%) for female across the four states. Overall, non access to junior secondary education in the four states is generally high, averagely about 81.1 percent.

### Research Question

What are the opportunities of basic education available to the migrant Ebira farmers' children and wards in their settlements?

**Table 2: Availability of basic education to migrant Ebira farmer's children/ward**

Sate	Primary Schools Available/level	Proximity	Quality
Kogi			
Settlement A	1 Pry	Close	Poor
B	0	NA	NA
C	1 Jss	Far	Poor
D	0	NA	NA
Edo			
Settlement E	0	NA	NA
F	1 Pry	Not Too far	V. Poor
G	0	NA	NA
H	0	NA	NA
Ondo			
Settlement I	0	NA	NA
J	1 Pry	Not Too Far	Poor
K	0	NA	NA
L	0	NA	NA
Ekiti			
Settlement M	1 Pry	Not Too Far	Poor
N	0	NA	NA
O	1 Pry	Far	Poor
P	0	NA	NA

Table 2 shows that there are five primary schools and one JSS accessible to the children/wards of this group of farmers. It indicates that Kogi State and Ekiti State has two schools each while Edo State and Ondo State each has one. It shows that out of the five primary schools and one JSS available to this group across the sixteen farming settlements in all of the settlements sampled, only one out of these schools is close to one of the settlements while the others are not. In terms of the quality and the conditions of the available schools, they range from poor to very poor characterized by dilapidated structures, lack of infrastructural facilities and equipment.

### Research Question

What are the factors influencing the level of access to basic education of Ebira migrant farmers children and wards?

**Table 3: Factors affecting migrant ebira farmers access to basic education (N= 471)**

S/N	Factor	No Respondents	of Percent %	Rank
1.	Non-availability of School	421	89.4	1
2.	Direct Cost	298	63.3	5
3.	Indirect Cost	301	63.9	4
4.	Child Labour (engagement)	335	71.1	3
5.	Distance	384	81.5	2
6.	Inaccessible Location	276	58.6	6
7.	Discrimination	96	20.4	12
8.	Disability	157	33.3	10
9.	Lang. & Comm. Barriers	162	34.4	9
10.	Curricular Content	213	45.2	7
11.	In security	185	39.3	8
12.	Attitude to Schooling	105	22.3	11

In Table 3 shows the perceived factors affecting the access to basic education from the view point of the farmers themselves across the sixteen settlements in the four States. The table indicates that factors such as non-availability of schools; distance (proximity) of settlements to schools, child labour, indirect cost of education, direct cost and inaccessible location rank 1st – 6<sup>th</sup> in that order are the top six factors prohibiting this group of farmers from accessing basic education. Other factors also indentified include curricular content, insecurity language barriers and physical challenges (disability) ranking 7<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> in that order. Discrimination against their children and their attitude toward education come behind all other factors as less influential.

### Research Question

How do the identified factors or barriers to basic education affect Ebira migrant farmers' children and wards influence access to basic education?

**Table 4: Extent of the effects of the identified factors influencing the level of access of migrant Ebira farmers children/ward to basic education (N=471).**

S/N	Factor	× <sup>-</sup>	S	Interpretation
1.	Non-availability of School	4.98	0.781	Very large extent
2.	Direct Cost	2.03	0.421	Little extent
3.	Indirect Cost	2.61	0.514	Moderate extent
4.	Child Labour (engagement)	2.73	0.382	Moderate extent
5.	Distance/Proximity	3.75	0.863	Large extent
6.	Inaccessible Location	3.89	0.886	Large extent
7.	Discrimination	2.17	0.510	Little extent
8.	Disability	1.33	0.423	Very little extent
9.	Lang.& Comm. Barriers	1.52	0.255	Little extent
10.	Curricular Content	1.28	0.426	Very Little extent
11.	Insecurity	2.64	0.797	Moderate extent
12.	Attitude to education	1.48	0.389	Little extent

Table 4 indicates that the factors identified above in Table 3 are affecting migrant ebira farmers' children and wards access to basic education to different degrees or extent. While non-availability of school affect access of this group to basic education to very large extent, proximity of settlements to school, inaccessible location (by road to settlements) affects them also to a large extent. Factors like indirect cost of education, child labour (engagement in the farm), and insecurity affect them to only a moderate extent. And other factors such as direct cost, language barrier, discrimination, disability, curricular content and their attitude to education affect the group's children and wards access to basic education to only a little or very little extent.

### Research Question

Is the attitude to basic education of migrant Ebira farmers' children/ward dependent on parents' gender, literacy level and family financial ability across the settlements?

**Table 5a: Chi square analysis of independence between respondents' (farmers') gender and farmers' attitude toward basic education.**

Respondents Sex	Position Attitude	Neutral Indifferent	Negative Attitude	$\chi^2$	Conclusion
Male	197 (198.8)	15 (14.9)	39 (37.3)	0.2035	NS
Female	176 (174.2)	13 (13.1)	31 (32.7)		

$\chi^2$  Table value = 3.84 NS = Not significant at 0.05 level \*Expect freq in bracket

Table 5a shows the  $\chi^2$  analysis of the independence between gender (i. e. sex) of the respondents and their attitude to basic education. The calculated  $\chi^2$  value of 0.2035 is less than the table value of chi square value of 3.84 (at alpha = 0.05). This implies that there is no significant relationship/dependence between sex of parents and their attitude toward basic schooling/education or that parent's attitude to school is independent of their sex. In other words, values obtained for attitude scores are due to chance factors.

**Table 5b Chi- square analysis of the independence between farmers' level of education and the parents' attitude to basic education.**

Parents' education	Positive Attitude*	Indifferent Attitude*	Negative Attitude*	$\chi^2$	Sig
Non literate	145 (137.8)	20 (22.6)	36 (40.5)	0.504 9	NS
One literate	127 (126.9)	18	40		
Both literate	51 (58.3)	15 (9.6)	19 (17.1)		

$\chi^2$  table value = 5.99 NS = not significant at 0.05 level \* Expected freq in bracket

Table 5b also indicates that the calculated  $\chi^2$  value of 0.5049 is less than  $\chi^2$  table of 5.99 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is no significant relationship between parents' level of literacy and their attitude toward basic education. This thus imply that the farmers' attitude to basic schooling is significantly independent of their literacy level. The obtained values for parents' attitudes are largely due to chance.

**Table 5c: Chi-square analysis of the independence between farmers' financial ability and the farmers' attitude to basic education.**

Parents' Financial Ability	Positive Attitude*	Indifferent Attitude*	Negative Attitude*	$\chi^2$	Sig
Fairly able	68 (77.8)	21 (15.2)	23 (14.3)	10.1527	.
Poorly able	229 (216.6)	36 (39.9)	29 (37.5)		Sig
Not able	50 (47.9)	7 (8.8)	8 (8.3)		

$\chi^2$  table value = 5.99 sig = significant at 0.05 level. \*Expected freq in bracket

Table 5c indicates that the calculated chi square value of 10.1527 is greater than the table value of 5.99 at the 0.05 level of significance i.e., significant. This implies that there is a significance dependence (or relationship) between parents' financial ability and their attitude to basic education and the migrant Ebira farmers' children and wards. The obtained value for attitudes scale is systematic, meaning it is not due to chance factor. This thus imply that attitude toward basic education is significantly dependent on the parents' level of financial ability.

### Research Question

What are the ways of improving access to basic education for the Ebira migrant farmers' children/wards from the opinion of the farmers?

**Table 6: Respondents/migrant ebira farmers suggestions for improving access to basic education for the settlements (N=471)**

S/No	Suggestions	Freq.	Percent	Rank
1.	Establish schools	378	80.3	1
2.	Provide Infrastructure, Facilities, Teachers, Equipment, etc.	265	56.3	2
3.	Access Road	172	36.5	5
4.	Free education	184	39.1	4
5.	Farmers support programme	99	21.0	7
6.	Create Awareness	243	51.	3
7.	Special Ebira Programme	87	18.5	8
8.	Pupils Feeding Programme	116	24.6	6

Table 6 shows the suggestions and the ranking of the solutions proffered by the migrant ebira farmers themselves for improving the access of their children and ward to basic education comprising primary and junior secondary schools. Suggested opinions indicate that establishment of schools, provision of infrastructure, facilities, teachers, equipment's etc. creating awareness/sensitization cum special ebira programme of the farmers to need for educating their children in that order rank top on the suggestions. The provision of free education, access road to their settlements, special pupil feeding programme follow.

### Discussion of Results

The results in Tables 1a and 1b show that access to primary and JSS are generally low. Table 1a indicates that access to primary education is only between 17.6% - 21.0% for this group across the settlements and across the states. Conversely, this also means that as large as 79% - 82.4% don't have access to basic primary education among the children and wards of the migrant Ebira farmers. The result in table 1b also shows that only 16.4% - 19.7% have access to basic junior secondary education among the migrant Ebira farmers' children and wards, leaving 80.3% and above without access to this level of education. This calls for concern as according to Okeke (2008), access to basic educational enrolment at this level is important for promoting individual and national development. This finding is particularly worrying because basic education is foundational for children (Adanna, Jegede and Ogunnode, 2022 Kanno and Onyeachi, 2015). Those who miss out at these levels of schooling may never be able to access any other level of formal education after.

The availability and opportunity to access basic education for this group is also very poor. Table 2 shows that across the sixteen farming settlements, only five primary schools are accessible to them. Out of these schools only one is located within or close to one of the settlements in Kogi State. Also, only one runs the JSS education near to one of the settlements; other available schools are either far or not too far from the settlement. Eleven out of the sixteen sampled of the communities have no access to basic school, whether at all whether primary or JSS. According to Amadi (1998), access to basic education means availability of schools for everyone who wishes to do so. It should be the inalienable, free, unhindered right and unfettered opportunity of the child to register for basic education (Okeke, 2009).

Table 3 flags those factors that influence the low enrolment of the children/want of this group in basic levels of schools, while Table 4 indicates the extent to which the factors affect them. It can be seen from these tables that the ebira migrant farmers' children access to basic education is affected by a combination of factors including non-availability of schools, proximity to school, inaccessible roads, indirect cost, child labour, insecurity among other serious factors barring them from accessing basic education. Some of these factors have also been identified in similar earlier studies of other educationally disadvantaged groups (e.g. Ajape, 2021; Adanna, Jegede and Ogunnode, 2022; Aime and Akpera, 2017; Shahzad et al, 2010). In communities where schools are available, the education of this group is also characterized by ignorance, poor learning environment, lack of teachers, poor infrastructural facilities learning materials.

Tables 5a and 5b indicate that the attitude of parents to basic education is largely positive irrespective of the gender/sex and level of literacy of parents. Thus, this finding is quite

encouraging as these groups actually and eagerly awaits the governments and well-meaning organizations and individuals to come to their rescue.

The suggestions of the respondents for improving the access to basic education for them is as shown in Table 6, and appeals to common sense. Establishment of schools, provision of facilities, infrastructure, teachers, equipment etc, creating awareness/sensitization of farmers and provision of free education top the list. Other useful suggestions include construction of access road, pupil feeding programme, farmers support programme and special Ebira language programme.

### **Conclusion**

Access to basic education is a serious issue of concern in education among the developing countries generally, and especially among the disadvantaged groups among them. Education is so very important for the development of the individual and the nation. Access to basic education cannot be taken for granted and left for the individuals or disadvantaged communities to sort out. Marginalized groups like the migrant Ebira farmers must not be left behind in access to basic education. Education of migrant Ebira farmers like the other nomadic nationals should be put at the front burner, deliberately planned and implemented as with the other nomadic groups such as the Fulani herders and Ijaw fishermen that have national education policy deliberately and specifically directed at them The reason for this advocacy is because migrant farmers are also nomadic by nature (Ezenna & Ali 2011) and should not be left out or behind in access to basic education.

Migrant ebira farmers' education policy when put in place will enable them as citizens of the Nigeria to become part of the intended, liberalized and inclusive education for all Nigerian citizens. Therefore, the barriers hindering them from accessing basic education must be addressed intentionally. This will play a big role in their absorption and integration into the society.

### **Recommendations**

The obstacles and challenges migrant Ebira farmers face in accessing basic education is traceable to their social, cultural, economic and educational background. Thus, the following measures are therefore suggested as ways of improving the access of this group to basic education.

1. Governments at all levels, religious bodies and charitable organizations, as well as well meaning individual should come to the aid of this people by establishing good quality primary and basic junior secondary schools in the farming settlements for children/wards of school going age to access.
2. basic access roads, even if its feeder roads should be constructed by the government to connect these communities to major towns and villages close to them to where they can access basic education.
3. Sensitization and awareness programme should be mounted in these communities to enlighten them on the need to prioritize and give their children/ward basic education.
4. Schools existing in the farming settlements should be provided with quality teachers, improved infrastructure facilities, equipment, etc., to operate reasonably and effectively.

5. Free education pupil/feeding programme, special farmers support programme and special Ebira programme should be put in place to assist members of this community who are predominantly poor because they only subsistence farmers. These done will make education attractive and affordable to the farmers.

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