

A Sociological Analysis of The Impact of Roman Catholic Social Teachings on Human Development in Makurdi Diocese, Benue State

Erdoo Akighir¹ and David Terfaa Akighir²

¹Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, Benue State University, Makurdi

²Department of Economics, Benue State University, Makurdi

¹Corresponding Author: Email: akighirdavidterfa@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated the impact of the Roman Catholic Church's social teachings on human development in Makurdi Diocese of Benue State, Nigeria. It employed a qualitative research design using both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data were collected using oral interviews. The Directors and Coordinators of Education and Health institutions as well as the Heads of Schools and Hospitals/Clinics in Makurdi Diocese were interviewed. Secondary data were sourced from literary works such as books, journals, internet sources and various directories. Using descriptive and analytical tools, the study found that Makurdi Diocese has been actively involved in human development especially in terms of educational provision and health care delivery services. Makurdi Diocese has established 49 schools and 9 health institutions. The educational institutions in the diocese have annual average students' enrollment of 8,235 students, while the health facilities in the diocese have an average daily attendance of 150 patients across the facilities. The study made the following recommendations. First, the Catholic Church in Makurdi Diocese should consolidate on her social teachings and continue to make improvements to ensure that the intended benefits of her human development strides get to the target population in line with the Church's principle of the subsidiarity. Second, the diocese should strive to make health care delivery services available to the various Local Governments under her coverage to ensure easy accessibility of health care services especially in the rural areas among others.

Keywords: Human Development, Makurdi Diocese, Roman Catholic, Social Teaching, Sociological

Introduction

Conceptually, the College of St. Scholastica, described the Roman Catholic Social Teachings as a set of writings and teachings from the Roman Catholic Church tradition about building a just society and living lives of connection to members of the society and around the world, amid the challenges of modern society.¹ Also, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defined human development as "the process of enlarging people's choices. The choices can be enlarged by allowing them to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated, to enjoy a decent standard of living, as well as enjoying political freedom. Guaranteed human rights and human development lies at the heart of social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. As a touchstone for Catholic social thought, integral human development is central and the Church strives to promote human advancement in terms of provision of educational services, health care delivery, skills acquisition, employment creation, human development peace, and justice. The Catholic Church started intervening in issues of human development since 1891 when the industrial revolution created avenue for the exploitation of workers by the capitalist. The situation prompted Pope Leo XIII to issue an encyclical called the *Rerum Novarum* (On Workers Condition) that condemned the exploitative tendencies of workers and advocated for just wages for workers. Since then, various Popes have issued prophetic statements aimed at integral human development.³

¹The College of St. Scholastica. Catholic Social Teaching. Duluth, United States, 2019.

²United Nations Development Program; Human Development Report: New York, 2018.

³ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum: Acta Leonis XIII*, 11(1892), 97-144.

Following this intervention, the Catholic Church all over the world has been involved in social teaching especially in the areas of educational services and healthcare delivery. According to the Global Catholic Education Report, globally, Catholic schools have enrolled 35.0 million children in the primary Catholic schools; 19.3 million children in the Catholic Secondary Schools; and 6.5 million youths in the Catholic higher institutions. ⁴ In the area of health, the Roman Catholic Church is the largest non-government provider of health care services in the world. It has around 18,000 clinics, 16,000 homes for the elderly and those with special needs, and 5,500 hospitals, with 65% of them located in developing countries. The Roman Catholic Church manages 26% of the world's health care facilities.⁵

In Nigeria, the Catholic Church is one of the largest churches that has the spread even in the core Muslim areas in the country. Given the universal model of operations of the Church, the Catholic Church in Nigeria under the auspices of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Nigeria has responded greatly to developmental issues especially in the direction of human development needs of education and healthcare delivery. In Benue State, the Roman Catholic Church has very significant presence with four dioceses at present. These are: Makurdi, Otukpo, Gboko and Katsina-Ala Dioceses. Each of these Dioceses in Benue State is deeply involved in education and health apostolates which are all aimed at human development.

This study therefore, focuses on the Roman Catholic Church's social teaching and human development strives in Makurdi Diocese. The choice of Makurdi Diocese is predicated upon the fact that Makurdi Diocese was the first diocese created by the missionaries in the state. Thus, studying the impact of the Catholic social teaching on human development in the Diocese has both religious, social, political, economic and academic as well as policy implications for the development of humanity in Benue State.

⁴ Global Catholic Education Report, Education Pluralism, Learning poverty, and Right to education (2021), accessed June 13, 2022, <http://www.globalcatholiceducation.org/global-report>.

⁵ The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, Nairobi, Kenya, Pauline Publications, Africa, 2004.

First, on the religious front, the findings of this study will unravel the contributions of the Catholic Church to human development in the State in terms of educational development and healthcare delivery. This may motivate other faith-based organisations operating in the State to borrow a leaf from the Roman Catholic Church. This will consequently help to overcome the educational and healthcare challenges of the State as well as reduce the high level of unemployment and poverty levels in the State.

Second, socially, politically and economically, this study is relevant in that, the findings of this study will show clearly the social concerns of the Roman Catholic Church for the general society as explicitly incorporated in her principle of the common good. It shows the role of the Church in political and social responsibility. Politically, it will reveal the collaboration of the Roman Catholic Church with the government and other stakeholders in providing the basic necessities of life for the citizenry in the diocese and the State. On the economic front, the findings would contribute to the Catholic Church's social teachings in terms of holistic human capabilities that lead to economic emancipation in the society.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this paper is to sociologically examine the impact of the Roman Catholic Church's social teachings on human development in Makurdi Diocese of Benue State, focusing on education and health care delivery. The specific objectives of the study include:

- i. To give a brief history of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Makurdi.
- ii. To trace the emergence of the Roman Catholic education in Makurdi Diocese.
- iii. To explain the impact of the Roman Catholic education on human development in Makurdi Diocese.
- iv. To discuss the emergence of the Roman Catholic health care system in Makurdi Diocese.
- v. To highlight the impact of the Roman Catholic healthcare system on human development in Makurdi Diocese.

Materials and Methods

The study used both primary and secondary data for the investigation. The primary data were sourced from oral interviews with Director of Catholic

education and the health Coordinator of Makurdi Diocese as well as the heads of sampled schools and health institutions. In doing this, eight schools and five health institutions were purposively selected. These are: Mount Saint Gabriel's Secondary School, Makurdi; St. Michael's Science Secondary School, Agasha; Peace College, Naka; St. John Bosco Commercial College, Aliade; St. Dominic Nursery and Primary School, Shachi-Makurdi; Immaculate Nursery/Primary School, Udei; Dr Brew Grave's Nursery/Primary School, Agagbe and Our Lady of Consolation Catholic Secondary School, Agan. The five health institutions sampled include: Bishop Murray Medical Centre, Makurdi; St. Vincent's Hospital, Aliade; St. Michael's Primary Health Care, Agasha; St. Gregory's Hospital, Ikpayongo and Father Mathias Health Centre, Naka. The secondary data were collection from the records of Catholic educational and health institutions of Makurdi Diocese.

The data were analysed using mixed methods which include, the historic analysis, qualitative and quantitative techniques such as: tables, counts and simple percentages.

Results

This sub-section presents the results of the study. The analysis in this section is presented according to the predetermined objectives of the study.

A Brief History of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi

This sub-section has explored the historic perspective of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi. The ecclesiastical territory of Makurdi Diocese was part of the newly formed Prefecture Apostolic of lower Niger between 1889 and 1920. The Prefecture covered the entire land area within the east of River Niger and to the south of River Benue. In 1920, its status within the Catholic Church was raised to that of Vicariate Apostolic of Southern Nigeria though maintaining its boundaries. The missionary priests who first evangelized in this area were French Holy Ghost Fathers in 1880. They were joined by Holy Ghost Priests and brothers from Ireland, and it was the latter that from 1911 began to make contact with the Benue in the Northern part of the vicariate. The strategy to evangelize the Lower Benue was hinged on the notion of the *Tiv* Mission.⁶

⁶ Wegh, Shagbor Francis. "The Emergence of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi." In *Catholic Diocese of Makurdi at 50: A celebrate of Service to Humanity*, edited by Wegh, Shagbor Francis, 1-15, Makurdi Selfers Academic Press Ltd, 2010.

The idea was to launch an evangelizing drive from Ogoja in Cross River State. Father Groetz soon realised the weakness of trying to approach the *Tiv* from Ogoja. The weakness lay in the fact that Ogoja from where he expected to conduct the *Tiv* Mission was actually far from Tivland. He further pointed out that unlike the Ogoja situation where 15 different languages were spoken making evangelisation painfully slow, the *Tiv* spoke the same language. Furthermore, the *Tiv* had a very strong antipathy for anything coming from Southern Nigeria and that would not augur well for a mission launched from Ogoja.

In 1929, Father Joseph Soul one of the General Councilors, came to the vicariate for an official visitation. At the end of his visit, he found time to spare, so he visited Obudu and from there moved into Tivland. Soul spent a short time among the *Tiv*, but the impressions he had did not leave him when he returned to Paris. He kept thinking about the abandoned state of the *Tiv* and all other people of Northern Nigeria. Father Soul's visit to Tivland was however providential. The accidental visit resulted in the spiritans finally deciding to make some serious attempts to evangelize the people of the lower Benue, the *Tiv*, Idoma, Igala, and other smaller groups.

The German priests and brothers made tremendous efforts and covered the whole area from Idah on the River Niger to Wukari near the boundary of Benue and Adamawa provinces. A major setback though came following the outbreak of the Second World War in 1936 as all the priests and brothers being German nationals were obliged by the British authorities to leave Nigeria. By 1945 when the German Fathers were replaced by those from the English province, Bishop Heery described the Benue as the most promising Mission in all of Nigeria after Onitsha-Owerri.⁷

In 1959 Monsignor James Hagan, the Perfect Apostolic of Otukpo was made a Bishop and in 1960 he transferred his Cathedral seat to Makurdi, thus becoming the first Bishop of Makurdi. The *Tiv* mission project had metamorphosed into the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi. Ill-health however,

⁷Catholic Diocese of Makurdi. 2021 Directory and Diary. Publication of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi, 2021

forced him to resign in 1966. This led to the emergence in January, 1968 of Bishop Murray as the second Bishop of Makurdi. For 21 years that Bishop Murray administered the Diocese, the church experienced phenomenal growth in various aspects of ecclesial life. This is evident in the increase in the numbers of religious, diocesan priests, and seminarians. The hope of truly indigenous Church became more realised when the then Father Athanasius Usuah was ordained the first Co-adjutor Bishop of the Diocese. Since Bishop Usuh was installed on the 21st October, 1989 as the Bishop of the Diocese after the retirement of Bishop Murray, the Church in the Diocese within his jurisdiction continued to experience tremendous growth in terms of manpower and general development. This is evident in the creation of Otukpo Catholic Diocese in 1995 and Lafia Catholic Diocese in the year 2001. On November 28th, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Monsignor William Avenya as the Auxiliary Bishop of Makurdi. On December 29th, 2013 Pope Benedict XVI created Gboko and Katsina Ala Dioceses out of Makurdi with Bishop William Avenya and Monsignor Peter Adoboh of the blessed memory as local ordinaries.⁸

On July 8, 2014, the Holy Father Pope Francis appointed Father Wilfred Anagbe CMF as Co-adjutor for Makurdi Diocese. Monsignor Wilfred Anagbe was ordained Coadjutor on October 4, 2014. On July 25, 2015 Bishop Wilfred Anagbe Cmf, who had taken over the diocese from A.A. Usuh on March 28, 2015 was formally installed at a public ceremony at IBB square Makurdi. Since his ordination as the Bishop of Makurdi, the diocese has witnessed rapid spiritual and infrastructural growth.

⁸ Wegh, Shagbor F. "The Emergence of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi." In Catholic Diocese of Makurdi at 50: A celebrate of Service to Humanity, edited by Wegh Shagbaor Francis, 1-15, Makurdi selfers Academic Press Ltd, 2010.

The diocese witnessed thousands who continue to require the Sacrament of Confirmation during pastoral visits. The spiritual development in the Church in Benue State may be explained by the increased realization that God is the only way to follow by the Benue people; hence the need for additional Bishops to assist Bishop Usuh who even had health challenges. The diocese is made up of Makurdi, Guma, Gwer and Gwer East local government areas. The diocese is actively involved in medical/health ministry and educational apostolate as tools of evangelisation.⁹

Emergence of Catholic Education in Makurdi Diocese

The Catholic Church in Makurdi Diocese has demonstrated tremendous interest in the area of education. The Diocese realised the use of education as a tool for the enhancement of evangelization and consequently, human development right from its inception. The missionaries firmly believed that the people needed to be educated in order to understand the challenge of the Christian message. They believed that by establishing schools, people would be trained to read the Bible and the educated ones would be able to interpret the Christian message to those who cannot read and write; and by so doing, the gospel of God will be propagated especially among the *Tiv* people that English language and Christianity were alien to them. In fact, formal education in Benue State had a religious foundation in a way based on Catholic education.¹⁰

The Roman Catholic Priests arrived Makurdi in 1924; and by 1927, the first primary school, Sacred Heart was established at Udei and by 1930 another primary school was established in Makurdi known as Holy Ghost Primary School. The establishment of the above-named schools was a springing point of the educational activities of the diocese and gradually, spread with the establishment of many primary schools in other areas of the State.¹⁰

Given the presence of primary schools, the need for secondary schools gave birth to the establishment of its first Roman Catholic Secondary School, Mount Saint Michael's Secondary School, Aliade in 1953 for boys only. St. James Minor Seminary Yandev also for boys in 1953 and Queen of the Rosary Secondary School, Gboko was opened in 1963 for girls.

Other secondary schools established by the Catholic Church were, Mount St. Gabriel's Secondary School, Makurdi in 1964, St. Andrew's Secondary School, Adikpo in 1967; St. Peter's Secondary School, Vandeikya in 1973; and there was a rapid increase in the establishment of secondary schools in the 1970s and 80s. This aggressive effort to evangelize through educational institutions went beyond the provision of schools for the development of the society to the establishment of higher educational institutions like St. Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary situated in Makurdi. The education provided in these schools was all encompassing and touched on religious and secular issues. The ideological formation of these schools was based on the philosophy of education of the Roman Catholic Church which upholds that, religious instructions in school is not intended to produce converts or to make mini theologians out of the recipients; but to produce good citizens; people who behave according to the norms of their society; and who will always and consistently act in accordance with right reason.¹¹

Thus, schools established by the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi ensured that children got a balanced education that catered for body and soul. This is self-evident in the number of prominent well-meaning leaders, clergy, captains of industries and citizens in the country and beyond who are products of Catholic education in Makurdi Diocese.

Catholic Schools and Human Development in Makurdi Diocese

According to the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi educational services Office, there are 49 educational institutions in the Diocese. These schools are presented in the following table.

⁹Catholic Diocese of Makurdi. 2021 Directory and Diary. Publication of Catholic Diocese of Makurdi, 2021.

¹⁰Udaa, Godwin. "The History of Education in the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi". In Catholic Diocese of Makurdi at 50: A Celebration of Services to Humanity, edited by Wagh Shagbaor Francis, 23-29, Makurdi: Selfers Academic Press Ltd, 2010.

¹¹Udaa, Godwin. "The History of Education in the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi". In Catholic Diocese of Makurdi at 50: A Celebration of Services to Humanity, edited by Wagh Shagbaor Francis, 23-29, Makurdi: Selfers Academic Press Ltd, 2010. Print

Table 1: Number of Catholic Educational Institutions in Makurdi Diocese

Type of School	Number	of Percentage
Nursery/Primary Schools	21	42.86
Secondary Schools	26	53.10
Seminary Schools	2	4.08
Total	49	100.00

Source: The Catholic Diocese of Makurdi educational services Office, 2021¹²

Table 1 has revealed that there are 21 nursery/primary schools in Makurdi Diocese which represents 42.86% of the total educational institutions in the diocese. Also, there are 26 secondary schools in the diocese which represents 53.10% of the total educational institutions in the diocese. Again, the table shows that there are 2 Seminary Schools in the diocese which represents 4.08% of the total educational institutions in the diocese. These institutions are: St. Thomas Aquinas' Major Seminary, Makurdi; St. Charles Lwanga Preparatory Seminary, Makurdi;

Mount Saint Michael's Secondary School, Aliade; Nativity College, Makurdi; Saint Joseph's Science and Technical College, Makurdi; Our Lady of Mount Carmel College, Makurdi; Mount Saint Gabriel's Secondary School, Makurdi; St. Dominic College Sachi-Makurdi; St. Joseph's College, Nyiman-Makurdi; St. Paul's Academy, Kertyo; St. Francis Xavier Secondary School, Agagbe; Holy Child Secondary School, Makurdi; St. John Bosco Commercial College, Aliade; St. Mary's Secondary School North Bank, Makurdi; St. Mark's Secondary School, Apir; St. Michael's Science School, Agasha; Sacred Heart Secondary School, Udei; St. Theresa's Secondary School, Gbajimba; St. Patrick's Secondary School, Ikpayongo; St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School, Agboughul; St. Athanasius Secondary School, Gbajimba; Peace College, Naka; Our Lady of Consolation College, Agan; and Divine Mercy Junior Seminary, Makurdi. The Nursery/Primary Schools in the Diocese are Dr. Brew

Grave's Nursery and Primary School, Agagbe; St. Peter Private School, Wurukum-Makurdi; St. Paul Nursery/Primary School, Ahule-Makurdi; St. Dominic Nursery/Primary School, Sachi-Makurdi; St. Joseph Nursery/Primary School, Akpehe-Makurdi; Holy Ghost Private School, Makurdi; Holy Family Nursery/Primary School, North Bank-Makurdi; St. Theresa Private School, Makurdi; Immaculate Nursery/Primary School, Udei; St. Joseph Nursery/Primary School, Nyon; Mount Saint Michael Nursery/Primary School, Aliade; St. Mary Nursery/Primary School, North Bank; Our Lady of Perpetual Help Nursery/Primary School, Makurdi; St. Michael Nursery School, Agasha; St. Luck Nursery/Primary School, Apir; Father Hunter Academy, Nyiman-Makurdi; St. Athanasius Nursery/Primary School, Gbajimba and St. Irenaeus Nursery/Primary School, Akpehe, Makurdi.¹³

A close look at the Catholic educational institutions in Makurdi Diocese of Benue State reveals that, the Diocese provides schools both at the primary, secondary school levels and tertiary levels. This implies that, the Diocese provides educational services for young people of all the ages. Also, it can be seen that the distribution of schools in the diocese cut across all the local government areas that make up the diocese, at least each local government has one Catholic school.

In order to show the functionality of schools in Makurdi Diocese, four schools were randomly sampled in the diocese; namely, St. Dominic's Nursery/Primary School Shachi-Makurdi; Peace College, Naka; St. Michael's Secondary School, Agasha and Immaculate Nursery/Primary School, Udei and the Principals/head teachers of these schools were interviewed.

In St. Dominic's Nursery/Primary School Shachi-Makurdi, Mrs Victoria Okamgba, the head teacher, in an interview, explained that admission into St. Dominic's Nursery/Primary school, Shachi is opened to all children of primary school age irrespective of religion, tribe and ethnicity. The school teaches morals in addition to cognitive skills in line with the Makurdi Diocesan policy on education.

¹²The Catholic Diocese of Makurdi educational services Office, Students Enrollments. Publication of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi, 2021.

¹³The Catholic Diocese of Makurdi. 2021 Directory and Diary, 45-47, Publication of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi, 2021.

In Peace College Naka, the Mr. Jime Justin, the principal in an interview explained that, the school admits students who are qualified to study in secondary school in line with the guidelines of the Catholic Education of the Makurdi Diocese in collaboration with the Benue State ministry of education. He revealed that, admission into the school is based on passing of the prescribed entrance examinations in addition to meeting other requirements such as age, attending and graduating from approved primary schools. The admission is opened to all qualified students without recourse to religion, tribe and ethnicity. The school teaches moral education and Catholic education in addition to conventional cognitive skills in line with the Makurdi Diocesan policy on education and Benue state ministry of education's guide lines.

In St. Micheal's Science Secondary School, Agasha in Guma Local Government area, Mr. Barnbas Msende in an interview revealed that, the school is a science faith-based secondary school that operates on the basis of the ethos of the Roman Catholic education. He stated that, admission into the school is based on passing the Catholic common entrance examinations for JSS I class and for the SS I class, it is based on writing and passing all the prescribed examinations in the Benue State Junior Secondary examinations with the qualifications to study science-based subjects in addition to internal examinations and interviews. Qualified students are admitted into the school irrespective of their religious background, tribe, nationality and ethnicity. The students who graduate from the school are exceling in various endeavour of sciences in different facets of the world.

Finally, the principal of John Bosco commercial college, Aliade in an interview also reiterated the fact that, admission into the school is opened to all students of secondary school age irrespective of religion, tribe and ethnicity. The school teaches morals in addition to cognitive skills in line with the Makurdi Diocesan policy on education and Benue state ministry of education's guidelines.

Mr. Abraham Veratoh, the Deputy Education Director and the principal, Our Lady of Consolation College, Agan, in an interview opined that, the philosophy of Catholic Education in Makurdi Diocese is based on the belief that people are created to know God, love Him, Serve Him and be with Him

eternally. Thus, Catholic education in Makurdi Diocese is the sacred task of forming the character of a child and aiding him/her to attain the purpose of existence as stated by Pope Pius XI in 1929¹⁴.

Abraham Veratoh, further stated that, Catholic Education in Makurdi Diocese is generally viewed as the development of the whole man and it embraces the whole of man's activity: physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual. It also embraces the domestic and social activities of man. In line with the national Catholic policy on education, the Catholic Church in Makurdi Diocese uses Catholic education as a tool of evangelization and human development. Thus, in providing educational services, the Catholic Church teaches morals in the areas of self-discipline, self-confidence and sexual morality. These morals are taught alongside with the conventional educational services provided by the government and other partners in the educational sector.

Basically, the Catholic Church in Makurdi diocese just like other educational services providers, offers educational services in the areas of religious education, commercial education, humanities and arts education, sciences and technical/vocational education. The diocese has Saint Joseph's Science and Technical college, Makurdi to promote vocational studies. All these holistically develop young people for higher education in various endeavours. The Church in Makurdi diocese provides educational services with the aid of the government and other donors. The educational institutions in the diocese have an average annual school enrollment of 8,235 Students, out of which, 4,406 are from Nursery/Primary Schools and 3,829 Students from Secondary Schools.

According to Veratoh, the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi through her educational services has trained well-meaning citizens who are professors within and outside Nigeria, engineers, medical doctors, teachers, clergies, administrators, managers of reputable companies in Nigeria, accountants, lawyers, amongst other vital aspects of human endeavours. Aside these conventional educational services, the diocese has started building school for special needs at Kighir to cater for those with physical disabilities in the diocese. Veratoh further explained that, in providing these educational services aimed at holistic human development, these Catholic educational

¹⁴ Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno*: AAS 23(1929), 196-197.

institutions have provided employments to many people who are employed in such institutions as teachers, non-academic staff such as security personnel, drivers, cashiers, cooks, cleaners and other clerical services. The institutions have employed 1,1670 staff in the Secondary schools and 945,242 staff in Nursery/Primary schools.¹⁶

From the foregoing, it means that the Catholic schools in Makurdi diocese have immensely contributed to human development by training people right from the nursery school level to tertiary level of education thereby giving them the requisite skills to be productive in the society and earn income to live decent standard of living.

Emergence of Catholic Health Care System in Makurdi Diocese

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Makurdi provides psychosocial and emotional healing services through the healing ministry of Jesus. In order to provide physical healing, the Catholic Church established health institutions across the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi. These health facilities are coordinated via the Integrated Health Programme. The Catholic Diocese of Makurdi as a faith-based umbrella organisation provides health care services to the people of Benue State and beyond.¹⁷

The programme began her health care delivery in 1930s; the missionaries firmly believed that the people needed good health and sound minds to appreciate the Christian message. In this regard, the missionaries got involved in the healing apostolate by establishing hospitals to cure people of various ailments that could affect their physical and spiritual lives. This pastoral care for the sick made many people to be convinced about the decision to follow Christ.¹⁸

The earliest health care service delivery in the Diocese was a joint approach between the Government and Medical Missionaries who came to deliver health care services to the sick and disabled in some designated centres in the diocese. Those centres eventually became health posts for control of communicable diseases such as: leprosy, tuberculosis, cholera, measles and other diseases.

Clinics and hospitals in 1960s and became the first-generation health facilities in the diocese. In 1969, the late Bishop Murray founded the sisters of Nativity to augment medical services. This became necessary given the special place the Church has given to pastoral care of the sick. Thus, Diocesan hospitals like: Bishop Murray Hospital, Makurdi; St. Vincent, Aliade; St. Monica's Hospital, Adikpo; St. Thomas Hospital Ihugh were established.¹⁸

¹⁶ Educational Office of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi. *School Enrollments, Makurdi*, Publication of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi, 2022.

¹⁷ Catholic Diocese of Makurdi. *A History of the Integrated Health Programme Policy*, A publication of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi.

¹⁸ Orhungur Moses M. "Education as a Tools for Evangelization". Catholic Diocese of Makurdi at 50: A Celebration of Services to Humanity, edited by Wegh Shagbaor Francis. Makurdi: Selters Academic Publishing, 2010

Catholic Hospitals/Clinics and Human Development in Makurdi Diocese
According to the Makurdi Diocese Health Care Institution (MDHCI) Policy, there are nine hospitals/Clinics in Makurdi Diocese. These health institutions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of Catholic Health Facilities in Makurdi Diocese

Type of Facility	Number of Facilities	Percentage
Hospitals	4	44.40
Primary Health Centres (PHC)	5	55.60
Total	9	100.00

Source: Makurdi Diocese Health Care Institution (MDHCI), 2021¹⁷

Table 2 has shown that there are 4 hospitals in Makurdi Diocese which represents 44.40% of the total of health facilities in the diocese. Also, the table reveals that there are 5 Primary Health Centres (PHC) in the diocese which represents 55.60% of the total of number of health facilities in the diocese. These health care institutions are: Bishop Murray Medical Centre, Makurdi; Father Matthias Health Care Unit, Naka; St. Vincent's Hospital, Aliade; St. Gregory's Hospital, Ikpayongo; St. Michael's Clinic, Agasha; St. Francis Primary Health Centre, Agagbe; and St. Veronica's Health Clinic, Aondona, St. Martins Clinic Uoo Lele and Sacred Heart Clinic Udei. A close look at the spatial distribution of health facilities in Makurdi Diocese by the Catholic Church indicates that in each of the local government that make up the Diocese, there is at least one health facility situated in it. This implies that the Church is fair in the distribution of the health facilities aimed at catering for the health needs of the people.

In order to show the functionality of Catholic hospitals in Makurdi Diocese, a sample of four Catholic hospitals/clinics in the Diocese were selected and the units' heads were interviewed.

Mrs. Josephine Ijir, in an oral interview revealed that medical services at Bishop Murray Medical Centre, Makurdi are opened to all sick people

seeking medication, irrespective of religion, tribe and ethnicity in line with the Church's social teachings. In St. Vincent's Hospital, Aliade, Jonathan Tsav, in an interview explained that, hospital provides medical services to the sick people who come for medical services in the hospital. He explained that the poor and the vulnerable are given a lot of concession in the hospital. Furthermore, Mrs. Veronica Maaver in an interview explained that, in St. Michael's clinic Agasha, the facility is open to any body that approaches the clinic for medical services without recourse to one's religious or tribe. The poor and the vulnerable are given even more attention than rich people in the clinic.

Father Paleve, in an interview stated that, the health facilities of the Makurdi diocese provide health care services to patients who come with ailments such as, Diarrhea cases, diabetes, accidents, snake bites cases, Tuberculosis, Malaria, severe and complicated hypertension. Other cases include antenatal services, normal delivery, assisted and caesarian section (CS) and immunization services. These services are provided at in and out-patients departments during admission. These facilities provide referral services both in and out referrals.

From the foregoing, it can be inferred that the Catholic Church in Makurdi Diocese has made concerted efforts at providing health care to the people in Benue State irrespective of religious affiliations. These wide range of medical services provided by the diocese have helped to save a lot of lives and have given people physical healings and the enablement to engage in productivity activities as well as provision of employment opportunities to people.

Discussion

Historically, the present Makurdi Diocese undergone some development stages. In 1920, the status of Makurdi Diocese was raised to that of Vicariate Apostolic of Southern Nigeria though still maintaining its boundaries. In 1959 Monsignor James Hagan, the Perfect Apostolic of Otukpo was made a Bishop and in 1960 he transferred his Cathedral seat to Makurdi, thus becoming the first Bishop of Makurdi. The Roman Catholic Priests arrived Makurdi in 1924; and by 1927, the first primary school, Sacred Heart was established at Udei and by 1930 another primary school was established in Makurdi known as Holy Ghost Primary School. The establishment of the above-named schools was a spinning point of the educational activities of

the diocese and gradually, spread with the establishment of many primary schools in other areas of the State.

In a bid to enhance human development through educational development, the Catholic Church in Makurdi Diocese continued with the establishment of schools in the area. At present, there are 21 nursery/primary schools in Makurdi Diocese which represents 42.86% of the total educational institutions in the diocese. Also, there are 26 secondary schools in the diocese which represents 53.10% of the total educational institutions in the diocese. Again, there are two Seminary Schools in the diocese which represents 4.08% of the total educational institutions in the diocese.

These Catholic schools in Makurdi diocese just like other educational services providers, offers educational services in the areas of religious education, commercial education, humanities and arts education, sciences and technical/vocational education. The schools are established in all the local government areas that made up the diocese.

The Church in Makurdi diocese provides educational services with the aid of the government and other donors. The educational institutions in the diocese have an average annual school enrollment of 8,235 Students. These schools have trained well-meaning citizens who are professors within and outside Nigeria, engineers, medical doctors, teachers, clergies, administrators, managers of reputable companies in Nigeria, accountants, lawyers, amongst other vital aspects of human endeavours. The institutions have employed 1,1670 staff in the Secondary schools and 945,242 staff in Nursery/Primary schools who earned incomes for a living.

Furthermore, in the area of health services, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Makurdi provides psychosocial and emotional healing services through the healing ministry of Jesus through the Integrated Health Programme. The programme began her health care delivery in 1930s; the missionaries firmly believed that the people needed good health and sound minds to appreciate the Christian message. In this regard, the missionaries got involved in the healing apostolate by establishing hospitals to cure people of various ailments that could affect their physical and spiritual lives. Through this programme, the Church has established four hospitals in Makurdi Diocese which represents 44.40% of the total of health facilities in the diocese. Also, the Church has established five Primary Health Centres (PHC) in the diocese which represents 55.60% of the total of number of health facilities

in the diocese. These health facilities in the Makurdi diocese provide health care services to patients who come with ailments such as, diarrhea cases, diabetes, accidents, snake bites cases, tuberculosis, malaria, severe and complicated hypertension. Other cases include antenatal services, normal delivery, assisted and caesarian section (CS) and immunization services. These services are provided at in and out-patients departments during admission. These facilities provide referral services both in and out referrals.

Aside these services, the health facilities organise medical out-reaches to rural areas and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from time to time. The health sector of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi have average patients' attendance of 150 patients daily across the health facilities and these facilities have employed a total number of 539 staff, out of which 182 are medical related personnel while the other (357) are non-medical.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it is clear that the Catholic Church in Makurdi Diocese has a long-standing history in Benue State. The diocese has made remarkable achievements in the area of human development in the state especially in the areas of education and health care delivery which are the core drivers of human development according the United Nations Development Programme. These achievements are done with the collaborative efforts of the state government especially in the area of education where the government assists in the payment of salaries of some of the staff of grant aided schools and the provision of some learning facilities. For sustainability and further advancement, the diocese should consolidate on these developmental strides and continually evolve strategies to improve on these strides in order to deliver the gains of social teachings of the Church to the people.

Arising from the above findings, the paper makes the following recommendations:

- a. The Catholic Church in Makurdi Diocese should consolidate on her social teachings and continue to make improvements to ensure that the intended benefits of her human development strides get to the target population in line with the Church's principle of the common good and subsidiarity.

- b. The Dioceses should strive to make health care delivery services available to the various local governments of her coverage to ensure easy of accessibility of health care services especially in rural areas.
- c. The Diocese should strive to establish a Catholic conventional tertiary institution like a University or Polytechnic in addition to St. Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary. This will in no small measure ameliorate the challenge of admissions into higher institutions of learning in Benue State.

Conflict of Interest Declaration:

The Authors have clearly declared that, there is no conflict of interest here.

IJMGs NOUN

Bibliography

- Abuh, J. (2010). "The Evangelizing Strides of the Holy Rosary Sisters in Makurdi Diocese" In *Catholic Diocese of Makurdi at Fifty: A Celebration of Service to Humanity*, edited by Wagh Shagbaor Francis, 45-51, Makurdi: Selfers Academic Press.
- Catholic Bishop Conference of Nigeria (2015). *The Catholic Church Policy on Education in Nigeria*. Catholic Secretariat, Abuja.
- Catholic Charites of St. Paul and Minneapolis, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 1997.
- Catholic Diocese of Makurdi (2021). *2021 Directory and Diary*, Makurdi: The Office of Communications, Bishop's House.
- Council Vatican II, Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum Educationis*. Vatican City, 1965.
- Indyer, K. (2010). The Contribution of Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers to the Birth and Growth of Makurdi Diocese, In *Catholic Diocese of Makurdi at Fifty: A Celebration of Service to Humanity*, edited by Wagh Shagbaor Francis, 38-41, Makurdi: Selfers Academic Press.
- Iortyom, A.D. (1999). *A Survey of Educational Activities of Christian Mission in Tivland*. Mkar: Lupa Press.
- John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 41: AAS 83 (1991) 843-845. Print.
- John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 1987 p. No 23.
- Jon Igelmo Zaldivar. (2019). Gravissimum Educationis, and the Jesuit Theologians of Loyola Province, Spain. *Espacio, Tiempo Y Education*, 6(1) pp 101-115. 2019 retrieved at <http://dx.doi.org/10.14516/lette.261>.

Orhungur, Moses M. (2010). In Catholic Diocese of Makurdi at 50: A Celebration of Services to Humanity, edited by Wagh Shabaor Francis, 23-29, Makurdi: Selfers Academic Publishing.

Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, 26 March 1967.

Pontifical Council for Justice. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Lagos: Paulines Publications Africa, 2005.

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. *The Catholic School*. Vatican City: Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977. Print.

Udaa, Godwin. (2010). "The History of Education in the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi". In Catholic Diocese of Makurdi at 50: A Celebration of Services to Humanity, edited by Wagh Shagbaor Francis, Makurdi: Selfers Academic Press Ltd.

United Nations Development Program (2018). *Human Development Report* New York.

Vatican congregation for catholic Education. *Letter of ensuring Excellence in Catholic Education*, 5 October, Vatican Archives, Vatican City, 2006.

Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education (1988). *The Religion Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*. Dublin, Veritas.

Wagh, Shagbor F. (2010). "The Emergence of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi." In Catholic Diocese of Makurdi at 50: A celebrate of Service to Humanity, edited by Wagh Shagbaor Francis, 1-15, Makurdi selfers Academic Press Ltd.