

1056-97-209

A. N. Meremikwu* (annemeremiku@yahoo.com), Block 15 Plot 5 Road 2 FHE, GPO Box 1211, Calabar, CRS 540001, Nigeria. *Why do children in public and rural primary schools perform worse in mathematics: unresolved questions on equitable access to early childhood education?*

Pupils drawn from public, private, urban, rural primary schools in Calabar South-eastern Nigeria were studied. Methods: Study design was Quasi-experimental with a 2x2x3x2 factorial design. Main Results: Pupils in private schools performed better than their public school counterparts. Also pupils in urban residential areas performed better than their rural areas. A post hoc analysis showed that the adjusted mean achievement of pupils in private urban schools (=68.284) is significantly greater than that of pupils in public urban schools (= 63.912), public semi-urban schools (= 64.363) and public rural schools (= 64.719). Pupils in private rural schools had significantly greater adjusted mean achievement score (=68.0) than those in public urban schools (= 63.912), public semi-urban (= 64.363) and public rural (= 64.719) schools ($p < 0.05$, $t = 1.645$, $MSE = 56.839$). Conclusions: Disparity in mathematics achievement between children in low-income settings demonstrates inequity in access to early childhood education. (Received August 15, 2009)