
EMPIRICAL EVIDENCES OF THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ON RURAL BAYELSA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The community and social development projects (CSDP) is a conceived development intervention that builds on two existing poverty-reduction oriented programmes which are the poverty reduction project and local empowerment and environmental management project which came into effect in 2004. However, since the inception of the CSDP in many states of the federation, including Bayesla State, little or no empirical research has been carried out to determine the impact on community development in rural Bayelsa. This is the gap that this study filled as it among other things found, out that, CSDP has contributed to the development of community capacity to respond appropriately to their immediate but essential needs such as, water, health, sanitation, education through literacy promotion, and social integration of members. Based on these outcomes, certain recommendations were made to enhance best interventional process.*

KEYWORDS: Empirical Evidences; Community; Social Development; Impact; Projects; Rural Bayelsa.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Drawing from the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) Manual (2011), the CSDP is a conceived development intervention that builds on two existing poverty reduction oriented programmes namely: Community-based Poverty-reduction Project (CPRP) and the Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Project (LEEMP) which came to effect in 2004. In other words, the CSDP agency has remained operational since 2004 till date; thus necessitating a critical analysis of its' vision and mission statement, principles underlying its operation, objectives and achievements, challenges and sustainability factors relative to the expected goals as set for the agency in rural development.

In the CSDP's Manual (2011), it is evident that the areas of linkages between the current Nigeria's development focus and CSDP are those which address Community Driven Developments (CDD) which are socially inclined, engendering social inclusion through gender equality and peoples participation, creation of job opportunities and wealth through the provision of support for various income generating activities. Besides, CSDP is to ensure improved service delivery to all rural dwellers through training in capacity and its' utilization as well as participatory budgeting and financial management in key development sectors.

The focus of CSDP and the linkages with the national development expectation is however targeted at the rural dwellers where community and social development needs respectively are to be guided by basic underlying principles of CSDP development frameworks, namely:

- i. community participation in project identification, design, implementation and monitoring;
- ii. empowering communities and local governments to take charge of their own development needs;
- iii. amelioration of environmental degradation processes with the active participation of rural community
- iv. sustainable management of natural resources to enhance income of rural people;
- v. encouraging transparency and accountability in project management and governance at all levels;
- vi. alleviating poverty;
- vii. creation of employment opportunities;
- viii. ensuring that donor support is appropriately targeted at the community level;
- ix. articulating a workable mechanism for ensuring complementarities of donor support at the community level; and
- x. mainstreaming gender and vulnerable into the development agenda of communities (CSDP Manual, 2011)

It is then obvious that these underlying principles are geared at enhancing accelerated community and social development at grassroot levels where developments have been limited over the years by absence of resources, lack of accountability and transparency in governance among others. Meanwhile, one needs to underscore community development as a process that leads to not only more jobs, income and infrastructure, but also, communities that are better able to manage change, whatever the dimension. Community development is a process conducted by community members, because they can better mobilize existing resources, skills, reframe problems, work cooperatively and use assets in new ways (Aspen Institute, 1994). While providing a synthesis of the concept of community development, Shaffer (1989) conceived community development in the context of community's vitality to arouse the capacity of the local socio-economic system to survive and persist in generating employment, income and wealth and to maintain, if not improve its' relative economic position. The Aspen Institute (1994) explains community development as community capacity with the combined influence of a community's commitment, resources and skills that can be deployed to build on community strengths and address community problems and opportunities.

In another perspective, community development depicts a process where people are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities as communities are integrated into the life of the nation thereby enabling them to contribute fully to national progress (Biggs, 1999). It is this immediate definition of community development that situates social change and transformation within the context of development in any community setting. This is on account that, for community and social development to occur, people in a community must believe that working together can make a difference through self-reliance by organizing to address their shared needs collectively (Akinkayo and Oghenekohwo, 2004; Flora, Spears and Swanson 1992). Besides, as a social action, the change process is driven by collective action. This justified the submission of Christinson and Robinson (1989) that community and social development implies a group of people in a community reaching a decision to initiate a social action process to change their economic, social, cultural and environmental situations.

Given these syntheses, community and social development is not just seen as “growth”, or necessarily as increase in choices, networks or ability to manage change, or but an aggregate of community capacity building, community vitality, empowerment, and self-reliance. It incorporates the core elements of collective action, ownership and improved circumstances of life as common to all change process. Social development then situates as an element of community development in as much as it deals with orientation, positive social outlook, engendering of equity and shared value system among others as enshrined in the principles underlying the CSDP.

Critical to the overall goal of CSDP is to improve access to services for human development. Over the years however, the determination of the quantum of achievement of CSDP in its specific mandates demands empirical evidences. For example, the CSDP Manual (2011) projected that CSDP is to among other things attain the following in rural Bayelsa:

- i. empower communities to plan, part-finance, implement, monitor and maintain sustainable and socially inclusive multi-sectoral micro-projects;
- ii. facilitate and increase community-local government area partnership on human development related projects;
- iii. increase the capacity of LGAs, State and Federal Agencies to implement and monitor CDD policies and interventions; and
- iv. leverage Federal, States and Local government resources for greater coverage of CDD intervention in communities

In this process, impact of CSDP must relate to the outcomes for individual community members, groups, programme context and efficiency of operation in terms of fulfillment of objectives with reference to procedures, administrative organization, the use of resources, and the effectiveness of leadership and methods of executing community development programmes. Consequently, an impact assessment of the CSDP in community and social development projects in rural Bayelsa will require an empirical, but forensic evaluation process, that is to be built around the context, input, process and product (CIPP) evaluation model. According to the CIPP model, an evaluation is a systematic investigation of the value of a programme (CSDP) or other evaland. Consistent with this value oriented definition, the CIPP model operationally defined impact assessment

a process of delineating, obtaining, reporting, and applying descriptive judgemental information about some object's merit, worth, probity and significance in order to guide decision-making, support accountability, disseminate effective practices, and increase understanding of the involved phenomeana (Joint Committee. On Standard for Educational Evaluation, 1988; 1994; 2003)

The standards for such empirical evidences according to the Joint Committee include **utility** (serving the information needs of intended users), **feasibility** (keeping the operations realistic prudent, viable, and frugal), **propriety** (conducting impact assessment legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of participants and those affected by results), and **accuracy** (revealing and conveying technically sound information about the features that determines the

evaluand's merit, worth, probity, and/or significance) (Shadish, Newman, Scheirer and Wye, 1995; US. General Accounting Office, 2003).

It is against the background of these standards that this researcher is not convinced that a project implementation annual report of the CSDP is enough justification for the sustainability of community and social development indicators that bear on human capacity building, empowerment, wealth and job creation among other expected evidences of community and social development as encapsulated in the general and specific mandates of CSDP.

Statement of the Problem

Given the above background, it is therefore very doubtful, if these assessment expectations have ever been engaged in the CSDP in any form of empirical study. Besides, the self annual report 2011 never took into consideration the above CSDP expectations consequent upon which the outcomes could be very distorted, doubtful, unempirical and lacking in propriety, accuracy, probity, consistency and utility. This now constitute an existing gap in knowledge, which this present study filled as it provided empirical evidences of the impact of community and social development project (CSDP) on poverty reduction, community capacity building, job and wealth creation among other expectations of CSDP.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives include among other things to:

- i. find out the constituents of CSDP projects in rural Bayelsa;
- ii. ascertain the joint and relative impact of CSDP on community and social development on the social-well-being of rural dwellers;
- iii. find out the extent of CSDP intervention in community capacity building, empowerment, leadership training, poverty reduction and wealth creation among the rural dwellers;
- iv. determine the elements of community and social development in CSDP activities towards rural transformation; and
- v. determine the constraints of CSDP in the development of rural Bayelsa.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study.

1. What are CSDP constituent projects in rural Beyelsa?
2. What are the general and specific impact of the CSDP on the social-well-being of rural dwellers?
3. What are the specific development interventions of CSDP that focus on community and social development among rural dwellers?
4. How does CSDP intervene in community capacity building, empowerment, leadership training, poverty reduction and wealth creation among rural dwellers?

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of CSDP communities was 21,000 target groups while the CSDP officials were 35 staff. Using the proportional systematic random sampling technique, 5% of the population (1,050) and 80% of the CSDP staff (28) from 5 project communities were selected and 1022 respondents participated

in the study. A 4- point rating scale questionnaire tagged. “Community and Social Development Impact Scale” (CSDIS) with a reliability value of 0.86 obtained through the pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used for data collection. The data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics at 0.05alpha.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the participants demographic characteristics showed that, 22(78.6%) male and 6(21.4%) female of CSDP were involved in the study. On the other hand, 718(70.3%) female and 304 (29.7%) male members of the project communities participated in the study. The mean age of the participants from the project communities was 41 years while that of those CSDP official was 38 years. Majority of the CSDP staff participants were married 19(67.9%), while 846 (82.8%) accounted for members of the project communities. In terms of educational qualifications, it was established that all the CSDP officials had tertiary education background while the education background for members of the CSDP project communities stood as those without formal education (27%), primary education certificate (31%), secondary school certificate (24%) and tertiary education (18%). Occupation wise, results indicated that farmers accounted for 23.4%, fishers (10.6%), traders (15.5%), local craft (11.1%), Civil servants (12.3%) while those not employed accounted for 20.9% and others not accounted for amounted to 6.2%.

Results of Research Questions

1. What are SCDP constituent projects for the social and economic transformation of rural Bayelsa?

Table 1: Distribution of the Constituent Projects Provided by CSDP for Rural Bayelsa

CSDP Projects	Frequency & Percentage		Frequency & Percentage		Total Frequency & Percentage
	SA	A	D	SD	
Health Care Centres	362(35.4)	254(24.9)	243(23.8)	163(15.9)	1022 (100%)
Bore-hole Water	449(44)	357(34.9)	87(8.5)	129(12.6)	1022 (100%)
Electricity	195(19.1)	211(20.6)	396(38.8)	220(21.5)	1022 (100%)
Corpers lodge	509(49.8)	337(33)	93(9.1)	83(8.1)	1022 (100%)
Town Halls	150(14.7)	416(40.7)	288(28.2)	168(16.4)	1022 (100%)
Culverts	296(28.9)	320(31.3)	159(15.6)	247(24.2)	1022 (100%)
Walkways	311(30.4)	346(33.9)	196(19.2)	169(16.5)	1022 (100%)
Bridges	298(29.2)	306(29.9)	162(15.9)	256(25)	1022 (100%)
Drainage Construction	352(34.4)	294(28.8)	148(14.5)	228(22.3)	1022 (100%)
Health Staff Quarters	393(38.5)	261(25.5)	179(17.5)	189(18.5)	1022 (100%)

The CSDP constituents’ projects identified in this study run across social and economic driven infrastructural facilities that all formed the quantum of community and social development in rural Bayelsa. Given the report contained in the project implementation Manual, 2011, CSDP is to access poor people to social and natural resources infrastructure as the eligible micro-projects are classified as physical, social, economic infrastructure, environmental and natural resources management and safety net support. The menu of projects that are supported by CSDP for it to

have wide significant impact on the poor and interested communities includes, but not limited to the following:

Feeder roads: construction and rehabilitation; culverts, bridges, drifts and stock routes; Boreholes (with or without pumps; deep open concrete cement well; and social infrastructure such as health facilities; portable water supply facilities; rural electrification; construction and rehabilitation of primary and secondary schools, dormitory blocks, and classrooms, staff quarters, laboratories; ventilated improved pit (VIP) toilets; television viewing centers; water transportation (provision of engine boats, speed boats, etc).

Research Question 2

What are the general and specific impacts of the CSDP on the social-well-being of rural dwellers?

Table 2a Regression Analysis on the Composite And Relative Impact of CSDP on the Social-well-being of rural Dwellers

Source of variation	Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F	Sis
Regression	15,355.350	3	15,355.350	112.120	.000
Residual	164,893.14	1019	136.954		
Total	18,0248.49	1022			
R = .292					
R ² = .085					
Adj R ² = .084					

The results of the multiple regression analysis shown in table 2 above indicate that the composite impact of the independent variable (CSDP) on the social-well-being (SWB) dependent variable was significant ($F_{(3,1019)} = 112.120$; $R = .292$; $R^2 = .085$; $\text{Adj } R^2 = .084$ $p < .05$) Composite wise, the results indicate that about 9% of the total variation of CSDP constituents accounted for the social-well-being of rural dwellers. Relatively however, table 2b below shows that at a (B constant) value of 61.412 and std. error 1.948; the β ate of .292 was obtained with a t- value of 10.589; $p < .05$). Thus, CSDP contributed significantly to the social-well-being of rural dwellers (see table 2b below).

Table 2b: Relative Impact of CSAP on Social-Well-Being of Rural Dwellers

CSDP	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	+	sig
	B	std. Error	B		
(Constant)	61.412	1.948		31.520	.000
Social-well-being	.818	.077	.292	10.589	.000

The table as explained above shows a relatively significant impact on social well being which represents a function as mathematically expressed thus $SWB = f(E_1, E_2, E_3 F_1 SD, I)$ where:

SWB	=	Social-well-being
f	=	function
E ₁	=	Equity
E ₂	=	Employability
E ₃	=	Efficiency
F	=	Flexibility
SD	=	social demand satisfaction
I	=	Immeasurable items

Of course, the CSDP project implementation Manual (2011) reported that CSDP provides support to communities in rural areas by upgrading and constructing of infrastructural facilities in the areas of education, health, and water supply. Besides, the manual noted that CSDP engaged in the improvement of socio-economic service delivery in the target rural communities for the strengthening of sustainable micro-projects which are community driven.

Research Question 3

How do the specific micro-project interventions of CSDP impact in community and social development among rural dwellers?

Table 3: Quantum of CSDP Micro-Projects Impact on Rural Dwellers

S/No	Quantum of CSDP impact on Social & community Development	Frequency & Percentage		Frequency & Percentage		Total Percentage
		SA	A	D	SD	
i	The level of satisfactory services provided by SCDP is more now than before micro-projects were put in place.	376(36.8%)	238(23.3%)	199(20.5%)	209(20.5%)	1022 (100%)
ii	There has been visible changes in communities response to development since the introduction of CSDP projects.	338 (33%)	343 (33.6%)	187 18.3%	154 15.1%	1022 (100%)
iii	Quality social and economic development micro-projects' executed by CSDP in communities	416 (40.7%)	325 (31.8%)	193 (18.9%)	88 (8.6%)	1022 (100%)

	are evident in health care, water supply, sanitation, walkway job creation school rehabilitation aspect					
iv	Members of community achieve support from CSDP micro-project	392 (38.4%)	288 (28.2%)	186 (18.2%)	156 (15.2%)	1022 (100%)
v	CSDP micro project promotes economic engagement, youth employment and community resource management	389 (38.1%)	377 (36.9%)	106 (10.4%)	150 (14.7%)	1022 (100%)

Table 3 above shows how specific – micro projects of CSDP intervention impact significantly on community and social development of the rural dwellers. There were five specific areas in which the quantum of such interventions were evident. Among these five micro-projects were health care, water supply, creation of wealth, job creation among youth all accounting for a positive response of 72.5% of the total responses item (iii) of the scale. Besides, CSDP micro-projects promoted economic engagement, through youth employment, and effective and efficient community resource management (75%). Other areas of interventions are evident in taste 3 that also represents the quantum of achievement by CSDP micro-projects among rural dwellers.

Research Question 4

How does CSDP intervene in community capacity building, empowerment, leadership training, poverty reduction and wealth creation among rural dweller?

Table 4: CSDP Intervention Strategies on Integrated Programmes Among Rural Dweller

CSDP Strategic Intervention Process on Integrated Development Programmes	Yes	No
	F(%)	F(%)
Creation of micro credit facilities for rural economics	738(72.2%)	284(27.8%)
Engagement of youth & Women through direct participation in project in work	681(66.6%)	341(33.4%)
Provision of transportation facilities that reduce the cost of movement between communities	766(74.9%)	256(25.1%)
Creation of wealth through the promotion of small scale business in fishing and production of fishing nets	823(80.5%)	199(19.5%)
Increased social activities by building town halls for regular meetings, cultural activities,	652(63.8%)	370(36.2%)
Encouragement of joint-decision making regarding project needs and management of micro-projects	674(65.9%)	348(34.1%)
Mobilization of more children to schools renovation of schools and engagement in learning activities	586(57.3%)	436(42.7%)
Enhanced community networking and learning of about new projects that promotes the well-being of rural dwellers	807(79%)	215(21%)

The results shown in table 4 above indicated the areas of CSDP interventions in rural communities that bear impact on rural dwellers' capacity building, empowerment of youth and women, leadership training on decision-making process, poverty reduction and creation of wealth. The field survey showed among other things that the creation of wealth through the promotion of micro-business support in fishing and production of fishing net accounted as the most evident CSDP intervention (80.5%). This was followed by an enhanced community networking as well as learning about new projects that promotes the well-being of rural dwellers.

The general inference that is drawn from the results in table 4 is that, the CSDP intervention strategies are consistent with its mandate to address rural poverty thereby assisting in the accelerated development of rural areas. The impact of CSDP on the reduction of poverty and promotion of community well-being, is also evident as more strategic response to wealth creation and social development initiatives among rural dwellers. This is consistent with its' strategy of mobilizing rural communities in collaboration with local and state governments in concert with external assistance from the World Bank to encourage micro-credit (Khandar, 1998) which facilitates wealth creation for rural dwellers' engagement and empowerment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results from this study has once again justified the capacity of community driven development (CDD) interventions to exclude rural dweller from poverty and get them included into the mainstream of economic and social development.

Given the challenges of under-development in rural Bayelsa, CSDP response is seen as an instrument and process of inclusion into the development process through engagement, empowerment and sharing of experience that must be evident in the attainment and sustenance of the variants of the social-well-being in an all inclusive society that is not environmentally, institutionally, technologically, and humanly excluded. Based on the outcomes of this study, it is hereby recommended that:

1. the CSDP should expand its' community and social intervention projects to include the establishment of cottage industries, handicraft centres for training of skills in order to sustain the wealth creation mechanism.
2. proper funding through adequate and prompt release of local and state government counter-part fund is sustained .
3. insecurity and threats to the operations of CSDP activities especially in very remote communities must be checked by the local and state governments. This will enhance the monitoring exercise of CSDP official in order to replicate projects where applicable.

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