Corruption-Related Factors Limiting the Success of Community and Social Development Projects (CSDP) in Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract   The study analyzed corruption-related factors limiting the effectiveness of Community and Social Development Projects (CSDP) in Imo State, Nigeria. Specifically, it determined the people's participation in the projects, assessed their perceived effectiveness of the projects, and identified corruption-related constraints to the success of the projects in the study area. Multistage sampling technique was used to select a sample of 216 respondents. A set of structured questionnaire was used to elicit data from the respondents. Data were analyzed using percentages and mean. Results show that effective projects were water borehole (88.4%), drainage systems (88.4%), solid waste management (86.6%) and construction of health centres (86.6%). The result further revealed that theft (90.0%), untimely release of counterpart fund (80.8%), embezzlement of funds by government officials (79.9%), diversion of project equipment (78.0%) and bloating of project cost (78.2%) were the major constraints to CSDP in the study area. The use of participatory approaches in the running of the projects, proper need assessment and strict monitoring and evaluation of projects were recommended for the effectiveness of the project in the study area.

Keywords: community and social development project, constraints, effectiveness, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Many of the projects and services embarked upon by successive governments in the past aimed at reducing poverty in rural areas in Nigeria can never be said to have yielded desired results perhaps because of their top-down supply and non-participatory nature. This notion could be supported by the absence of basic amenities which has culminated to severe poverty condition in many rural areas in Nigeria. According to United Nations Development Programme Report [21] the country's human development index (HDI) is 0.514 – which puts the country in the low human development category – positioning it at 152 out of 188 countries. Though, the country's HDI increased with 10.1 between 2005 and 2014, the current value is below the average for countries in sub-Saharan Africa (0.518). The report further reveals that about 51% of Nigerians are multidimensionally poor while an additional 18.4 % live near multidimensional poverty; the breadth of deprivation in Nigeria is 54.8%. This alarming rate of poverty in the country necessitated the search for service delivery mechanisms that are demand-driven, covering multiple sectors and depending on specific community-determined needs.

According to Gombe State Community and Social Development Project (GCSDP) (2011) some projects then in the portfolio of the World Bank partnership with Nigeria are the outcome of this search. Specifically, these projects utilize the community driven development (CDD) approach in design, implementation and evaluation. It was further noted that of these projects, the three; community-based poverty-reduction project (CPRP), FADAMA II and the local empowerment and environmental management project (LEEMP) operated largely in rural communities and were quite similar in their approaches, even though there were marked differences in both mandate and tools. Following the success of these projects, the World Bank and the federal government of Nigeria unanimously agreed to sustain the projects and their harmonization led to the emergence of CSDP which was formed by merging CPRP and LEEMP.

Community and social development project is a developmental strategy which is anchored on community driven development (CDD) approach. It was established by the Federal Republic of Nigeria in collaboration with the World Bank (WB) and state governments. It came into existence as a result of experiences drawn from projects namely local empowerment and environmental management project (LEEMP) and community-based poverty reduction proje(CPRP). It is therefore an intervention that would build on the LEEMP and CPRP structures to effectively target social and environmental infrastructure at the community level as well as improve LGA responsibility to service delivery (GCSDP, 2011).

The overall goal of CSDP is to improve access to services for human development. To achieve this goal, the project hopes to empower communities to plan, part-finance, implement, monitor and maintain sustainable and socially inclusive multi-sectoral micro-projects; facilitate and increase community-LGA partnership on HD-related projects; increase the capacity of LGAs, state and Federal agencies to implement and monitor CDD policies and interventions; and leverage federal, state and local government resources for greater coverage of CDD intervention in communities. The components of CSDP include the social and community-driven investments (SCDI, LGAs and state agencies capacity building and project coordination and support (GCSDP, 2011).

Corruption has been described as a major setback to development in many developing countries. According to Osuagwu [16] it involves the violation of established rules, practices and procedures for personal and/or group interests. It is concerned with actions directed towards securing wealth, power, authority, influence, relevance or advantage through illegal means. Corruption seems to be everywhere afflicting profit and non-profiting organizations [6]. Dike [1] posits that corruption is not only found in democratic and dictatorial polities but also in feudal, capitalist and socialist economies. Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist cultures are equally bedeviled by corruption.

Corruption has been identified as a canker worm that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigeria and has stunted growth in all its sectors (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission [EFCC], 2005). It has been the reason behind the country's difficulties in developing fast (Independent Corrupt Practices Commission [ICPC], 2006). Dike [1] argues that it has contributed tremendously to poverty and misery of a large segment of the Nigerian population. This is evident in the Transparency International's consistent rating of Nigeria as among the most corrupt nations in the world where it currently ranks 143 with an index of 2.4 [20]. Mo [9] points out that corruption is beneficial to a specific group of people, mainly the elites and political affiliates and creates unfairness in opportunities. Besides, it results in reduction in productivity due to discrimination in giving opportunities and inequality in opportunities giving rise to income and wealth inequality which, in turn leads to frustration and social, economic and political instability. Gyimah-Brempong [5] found out that corruption reduces economic growth directly and indirectly through fall in investment in physical capital, increased corruption is positively correlated with income inequality and the combined effects implies that corruption adversely affects the poor more than the rich in African countries.

In the views of Uma and Eboh [2] corruption has paralyzed industrial and infrastructural provision in Nigeria as no meaningful development can be achieved without short, medium and long-term industrialization strategies. He maintains that the problem of allocated resources not being fully employed in certain establishments or targets as budgeted due to corruption, retards productivity and resource utilization, thereby tying Nigerians in the vicious cycle of poverty. Obayelu [14] argues that the poor state of infrastructure such as electricity, good roads, pipe-borne water, markets and hospitals reveals the high level of corruption in the country. Ofoh (2008) reported that several development programmes tried in the past in Nigeria failed. Their failure could be linked to the corrupt practices common in the country.

While corruption has been identified as among the major logs in the wheel of economic, social and political development in Nigeria, it is necessary to investigate the various forms of it that occur. Several studies [6,8] have dwelt on corruption in Nigeria, however much still needs to be done regarding corruption and developmental programmes/projects. It is in line with this thinking that the study seeks to investigate corruption related constraints limiting the effectiveness of community and social development projects (CSDP) in Nigeria.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate corruption-related constraints limiting the effectiveness of CSDP in Imo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. describe the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents;

2. determine their participation in CSDP;

3. assess the perceived effectiveness of the project; and

4. identify corruption-related constraints to the success of CSDP in the study area.

3. Materials and Method

The study was carried out in Imo state Nigeria. The state is among the five states in the southeastern geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It is located within latitude $4^{o}45'$ N and 7° 15' N and longitude $6^{o}50E$ and $7^{o}25'E$. with land area of 5,530 Km^2 (http://www.wikipedia.com). The state is bordered on the East by Abia State, on the West by River Niger and Delta state, on the North by Anambra State and Rivers state on the South; the state has a population of 4.8 millioin people and annual growth rate of 3.35 percent [11].

Imo state is administratively divided into three geopolitical zones namely Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe which are further broken into 27 local government areas (LGAs). It lies within the rainforest zone of Nigeria and is home to large forest vegetation containing woods and tree crops that complement the inhabitants' income sources. Drained by Otamiri, Nwaorie, Njaba, and Urashi rivers, the state has its annual rainfall varying from 1990 – 2200 m, with about 20°C annual temperature and 75% relative humidity (http://www.imostate.gov.ng). The major economic activity of the people is farming however, they engage in other economic activities like trading, agro-processing etc. Prominent crops produced in the area include cocoyam, yam, vegetables cassava, maize etc. while the major livestock include sheep, goats, poultry (http://www.imostate.gov.ng).

The population for the study constituted all the people participating in CSDP in all the participating local government areas in the state. Multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. The first stage of the sampling was the purposive selection of two LGAs from each of the three geopolitical zones in the state. This was done to ensure good representation. The

second stage was the selection of three communities from each of the selected LGAs using purposive sampling technique to give a total of 18 communities. This was done to ensure that only participating communities were selected. The third stage was the selection of 12 members from each of the selected communities. Out of these 12, two members (the chairman and secretary) were purposively selected while the remaining 10 were selected using simple random sampling technique. This gave a total of 216 people which constituted the sample size for the study. Data were collected using a set of structured questionnaire and the data generated were analyzed using simple descriptive statistical tools.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents

Data in Table 1 show that majority (68.1%) of the respondents were male while 31.9% were female; majority (79.2%) were married with the remaining 10.6%, 7.9%, 1.9% and 0.9% being widowed, single, divorced and separated respectively. The result further showed that a greater proportion (47.2%) of the respondents spent 7 – 12 years in schools while the reaming 29.6%, 18.1%, 2.8% and 2.3% spent 13 – 18 years, 1 – 6 years, 0 years and greater than 18 years in school respectively. The mean number of years spent in school was 9.3 years. It was also revealed in the result that (38.9%), 34.7%, 12.0%, 10.7% and 3.7% respectively. The mean age was 49.0 years. The result also showed that 37.5% of the respondents were farmers while 24.5%, 17.6%, 11.6% and 8.8% were traders, artisans, civil servants and fashion designers respectively. The Table finally revealed that majority (63.4%) of the respondents earned between 100001 and 200000 naira monthly while the remaining 25.0%, 10.2% and 1.4% earned a monthly income of 10001 – 100000 naira, above 200000 naira and less than or equal to 10000 naira respectively. The mean monthly income was 38,268 naira.

The dominance of male in the project could be as a result of cultural, religious and social factors which limit female's participation in social activities. In some cultures, women are not free to partake in social activities like the male folk. This however limits their contributions to development. Mutongu (n.d) argues that as a result of cultural dictates, women are allocated different roles from those of men in many African societies. He further maintains that women are largely responsible for care of the family and this deeply held value limits women's participation in public organizations [17]. The dominance of people that acquired formal education in the project could enhance understanding and decision making. Acquisition of formal education could promote cohesion and synergy among people. Theron [19] argues that illiteracy is an inhibiting factor to participation in community projects. This according to him is because illiterate people could be marginalized by professional and technical communication during the community participation process. The result also showed that the project members were still in their economically active ages. Young people are less conservative and could easily

engage in any thing that could bring about positive changes in their communities. Also, their physical strength could promote their involvement in community development projects.

The project members being mainly farmers imply that the communities are rural. According to Ekong [4] agriculture is the major occupation of rural people. Considering the deplorable conditions of social amenities in most rural communities in Nigeria, there is a need for concerted effort among the people and collaboration with external agencies to bring about development. Furthermore, the earning of income by the people could enable them to participate actively in the project. Sometimes, beneficiary communities are mandated to contribute certain amount of money for projects. However, people's participation and perception of projects tend be high when they contribute financially, they begin to see the projects are theirs. Thangata et al. [18] argue that households with higher income are more likely to participate in projects than those with lower income.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to socioeconomic characteristics

Socioeconomic characteristic	%	M
Sex		
Male	68.1	
Female	31.9	
Marital status		
Single	7.9	
Married	79.2	
Separated	0.4	
Divorced	1.9	
Widowed	10.6	
Number of years spent in school		
0	2.8	
1 – 6	18.1	
7 – 12	47.2	
13 – 18	29.6	9.3
> 18	2.3	
Age (Years)		
≤ 30	3.7	
31 – 40	12.0	
41 – 50	38.9	49.0
51 – 60	34.7	
> 60	10.7	
Occupation		
Farming Artisan	37.5	
Artisan	17.6	
Civil Servant	11.6	
Fashion Designer	8.8	
Trader	24.5	
Monthly Income (Naira)		
≤ 10000	1.4	
10001 – 100000	25.0	
100001 – 200000	63.4	38,268
> 200000	10.2	

Source: Field Survey Data, 2015, M = Mean.

4.2. Participation in Projects by Community Members

Entries in Table 2 show that the community members participated mostly in water projects (74.1%), market

construction and store fencing (64.9%), road rehabilitation and rural feeder roads (63.9%), community roads and culvert construction (61.6%), construction of new school buildings (55.6%), construction of private and public sanitation facilities (54.2%) and renovation of old schools (50.9%). This result implies a good participation in the projects by the people. Nekwaya [12] opines that community participation is main prerequisite for securing effective sustainable development. According to Ngugi et al. [13] the decision to participate in community projects is driven by how much utility derivable from the projects. They further maintained that issues like whether the project benefits are accruable to the community or individual and the length of time for this accrual will influence the willingness to participate among the people. The result suggests proper consultation of community members which led to good participation in the projects by the people.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to project types

Types of project	%
Community roads and culvert construction	61.6
Renovation of old schools	50.9
Construction of new school building	55.6
Rehabilitation of rural feeder roads	63.9
Water project	74.1
Rural electrification	48.7
Agro-processing cottage industries	46.2
Erosion control	42.7
Drainage systems	36.0
Private and public sanitation facilities	54.2
Solid waste management	25.9
Market construction and store fencing	64.9
Fish/snail farm projects	20.3
Produce/storage facilities/equipment	28.8
Healthcare programme	29.5
Construction of bus stop	31.0
Information communication technology	6.5
Construction of civic centres	5.8

Source: Field Survey Data, 2015.

4.3. Projects Perceived to be Effective

Data in Table 3 reveal that construction of drainage systems (88.6%), water boreholes (88.4%), erosion control (88.6%), construction of classroom blocks (83.3%), health centres (81.5%) and construction/rehabilitation of rural roads (79.1%) ranked highest among the projects perceived to be highly effective in the area. A careful look at this result will reveal that the projects participated in by the community members (in Table 2) were the most effective projects. When community members are properly consulted and carried along especially before project selection, there is the likelihood that projects chosen will represent their interests and needs. This result supports the finding of a study by [13] where the involvement of target community members at all stages of projects was associated with the success of the projects. The involvement of community members in projects enkindles in them the sense of belonging and ownership. Projects could be considered effective when they meet the needs and aspirations of the beneficiaries.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to perceived effectiveness of projects

Community development projects	Perception %		
	Low	Moderate	High
Lock up stores	10.6	31.9	57.5
Market structures	6.9	14.8	78.3
Rural electrification	12.9	16.2	70.9
Water borehole	2.8	8.8	88.4
Erosion control	3.2	10.2	86.6
Health centres	2.8	15.7	81.5
School blocks	3.7	13.0	83.3
Construction/rehabilitation of roads	7.4	13.4	79.2
Community farm projects	17.1	28.7	54.2
Modern oil mills	2.8	8.8	88.4
Drainage systems	5.1	8.3	86.6
Solid waste management	33.8	30.1	36.1
Bus stop	19.4	43.1	37.5
Information communication technology centres	38.4	48.1	13.5
Construction of civic centres	13.3	22.4	64.3

Source: Field Survey Data, 2015.

4.4. Corruption-related Factors Militating against the Success of CSDP

Entries in Figure 1 show that theft (90.0%), untimely release of counterpart fund (80.8%), embezzlement of fund (79.9%), bloating of project cost (79.9%), elite capture (78.2%) and award of contract to friends/relatives (50.1%) were identified as factors militating against the success of CSDP in the study area. It has become a common sight in many rural areas in Nigeria where hoodlums vandalize and steal facilities built for public use. A typical example is the incessant vandalism of facilities for electricity which has left many rural areas without electricity in Nigeria. This apart from stagnating economic activities in the areas will increase the cost of power which most low income households may not afford.

Untimely release of counterpart fund could delay project kick-off which might weaken the credibility of the people on the service provided. It may also discourage the continued participation of partnering agencies especially the foreign ones, thus jeopardizing the sustainability of the projects. Embezzlement of public fund is so much an issue in Nigeria that it has great impacts on economic development of the country. It has caused a serious imbalance in the distribution of wealth and public goods. Ogbulie [15] observes that majority of Nigerians are living in abject poverty while few are very wealthy to the international standard.

Elite capture is common in rural areas where the few elites influence projects that are perceived beneficial to them mostly at the detriment of other community members. This could discourage the less privileged members of the communities from participating in community development projects thus leaving the communities under-developed.

World Bank (2013) puts the total amount of bribes paid in both developed and developing countries in 2001/2002 at 1 trillion dollars, about 3% of world GDP at the time.
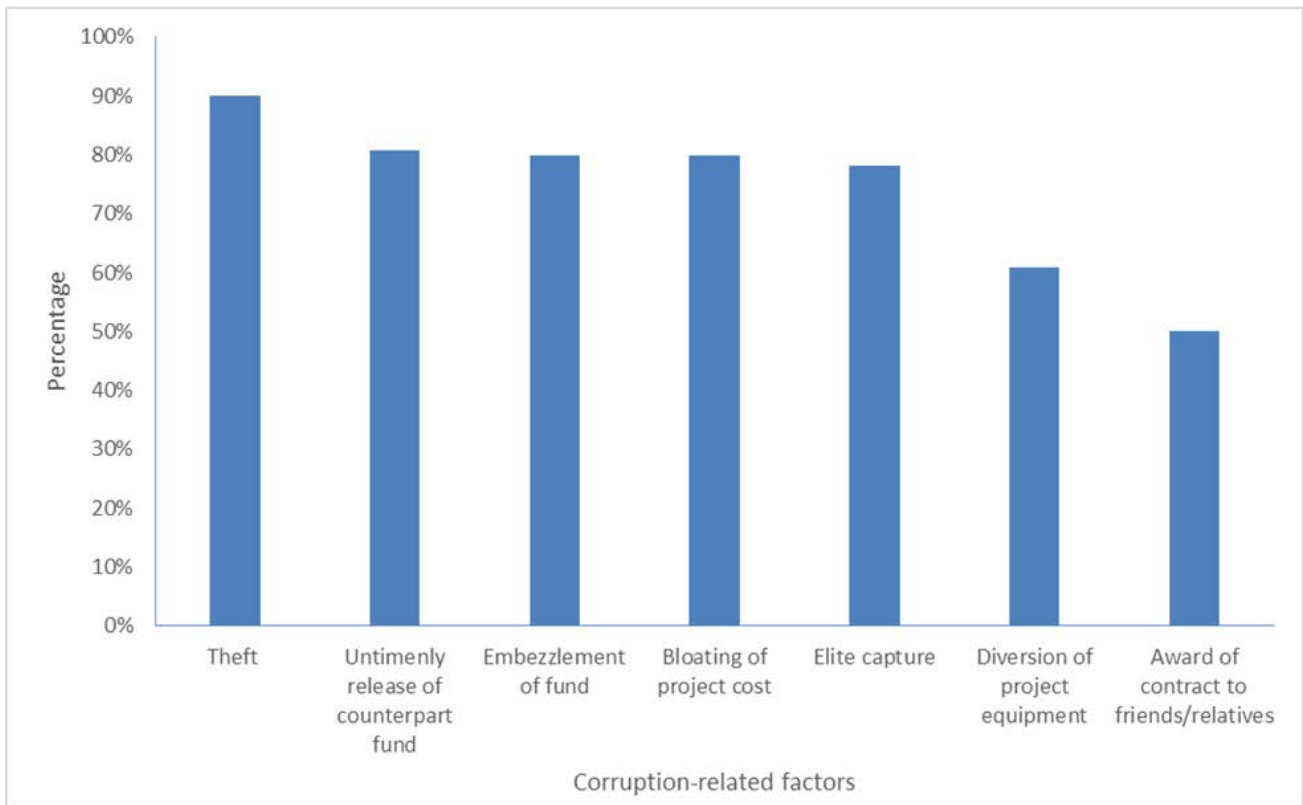
Figure 1.

5. Conclusion

As a project aimed at promoting development in rural areas, CSDP has fared well in the participating communities in Imo State, Nigeria. It has brought about the undertaking of important projects in the communities by mobilizing community members for collective actions. This has increased the sense of social responsibility among the people while promoting social cohesion in the communities. Unfortunately, factors related to corruption constrain the effectiveness of the project. Considering the need for social and economic development in Nigeria especially at the grass roots, these constraints should be addressed in order to improve the living standard of people in these areas. This has become very necessary now the country is facing serious economic challenges and cannot meet her challenges alone. Addressing these issues will however require concerted efforts by all stakeholders.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were therefore made:

1. CSDP should be scaled-up considering the fact that it is successful in participating communities. This could be achieved by the inclusion of more communities in the project.

2. Governments (i.e. local, state and federal) should ensure timely payment of their counterpart fund so as to enhance proper utilization of the fund. Machinery should be put in place for effective monitoring and evaluation of the projects.

3. Proper needs assessment should be conducted before projects are selected. This will ensure the selection of projects that meet the needs and interests of the people. This will encourage people's participation and support for the project and inculcate in them the feeling of belonging. It will also promote the effective and efficient use of resources.

4. Efforts should be made to eliminate corrupt government officials and community members from the executives of the projects. This can be achieved by allowing the people to choose their representatives from among themselves. Also, tougher sanctions should be used against corrupt government officials as a deterrent.

5. Advertisement and bidding for projects should be as fair and transparent as possible. Due process should be followed in advertising, bidding and awarding of contracts.

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