

Tackling Development Through Community and Social Development Project, 2008 – 2019: The Case of Ejigbo Local Government Area, Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract— *The aim of the paper is to show that if adequately encouraged, the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) can bring about a turn around in the fortunes of the rural areas in Nigeria and, by extension, the country as a whole. The paper is based on both primary and secondary data, which were used to generate the position taken in this paper. It is noteworthy that CSDP is a name for a rural development and poverty alleviation programme in Nigeria. Findings show that it is capable of living up to its billings and also that some issues hamper its effectiveness. The paper concludes that though CSDP is a laudable programme the issues that hamper it need to be addressed to make it function as required.*

Keywords— CSDP, Development, Ejigbo LGA, Infrastructure.

I. INTRODUCTION

Attempts at improving the fortunes of rural areas in Nigeria began many decades ago. The first of the attempts, as far as attempts by indigenous rulers are concerned, can be seen in the Farm Settlement Scheme. It is important to point out that the scheme was not a nation-wide programme. It was limited to the defunct Eastern and Western Regions. That of the defunct Western Region to which the area of the present day Osun State belong started in 1959.¹ The first nation-wide effort was the Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) which was launched in 1972.² Many others came after the ADP. They include the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS) River Basin and Development Authority (RBDA), Better Life for Rural Women, Family Support Programme (FSP), Green Revolution and the Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI).³ The list given above may be long; it is by no means exhaustive as there are many left unmentioned because of space constraints. That notwithstanding, not much happened to the rural areas and, by extension, the country as a whole. The situation was, no doubt, unacceptable to the Chief Olusegun Obasanjo led Federal Government that was inaugurated on 29th May, 1999. This was why the Federal Government met with the State Governments and donor agencies to review the situation. What came out of the meeting was the Community-Based Poverty Reduction Project (CPRP) that came into existence in December, 1999.⁴

What brought about the above mentioned review is traceable to the desire of Chief Obasanjo to reform the economy. This desire brought about a four year medium plan document called National Economic Direction (1999 – 2003).⁵ It is instructive to note that the much touted Obasanjo's reform was multi-pronged of which the CPRP was one. The CPRP was based on the concept of Community Driven Development (CDD). By this (i.e CDD), is meant an approach that allows a benefitting community ample say in the projects executed for them. This is done by allowing the control of the resources, the development of process and decision-making authority to reside directly in groups in the community. This has to be so because of the belief that if enough resources and information are available, the best would be got out of people and their communities.⁶ CPRP has two phases. This is why we have CPRP I and II. Osun State, it is necessary to note, was not part of the first phase. This has to do with the criterion used for choosing participating states. The choice of the six states that started the first phase was based on the level of poverty prevailing in the states. It is not as if they were the six states with the highest rate of poverty in the country. Rather each was the one with the highest poverty rate in its geo-political zone. For the South-West geo-political zone, made up of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo States, it was Ekiti State. Osun State qualified for the second phase because each zone was to have the two states with the highest prevailing rate of poverty included in the programme.⁷

II. NOTE ON THE STUDY AREA

Ejigbo Local Government Area (LGA) is one of the thirty (30) Local Government Areas of Osun State. According to the 2006 population census, it is home to 132,641 number of persons and covers a land area of 373Sq Kilometres.⁸

On this expanse of land are located four (4) district headquarters that are fairly urban and no less than twenty-nine (29) villages. The four district headquarters are Ejigbo town, Ife Odan, Ola and Ilawo while Ike, Iwata, Aye, Oguro, Agurodo, Aato, Adori-Oke, Aponla, Idigba, Ika, Olori, Owu, Ologege, Masifa, Isundunrin and Isoko are among the villages.⁹ According to the poverty map of the state, Ejigbo

Local Government Area has the highest poverty rate in the Ede/Egbedore/Ejigbo geo-political zone, which is also a Federal Constituency and the third in the state. It could not have been otherwise because the Local Government Area is largely a rural area. As would be expected, the greater part of the area lacks basic amenities. In the few areas that have them, the facilities are below par in terms of number and performance¹⁰. The implications of this on the Local Government Area will be better appreciated when one realises the benefits realisable from the amenities. Some of them are:

- (i) they help to improve the living conditions of the rural people;
- (ii) they bring about employment opportunities;
- (iii) agricultural productivity is boosted by means of adequate irrigation and mechanisation of farming and
- (iv) they facilitate the establishment of agricultural and commercial activities.¹¹

The economic activity of the people revolves around agriculture. They raise both food crops and tree crops. Among the food crops in question are yam, cassava and corn while the tree crops include cocoa, oil palm tree and kolanut. They also engage in commerce especially palm oil which they produce and sell. As a matter of fact, palm oil business is so common place a business there that Ejigbo has become synonymous with it. In addition to palm oil the women also engage in the sale of farm products. Apart from all the above, there are those who are into provision of services like tailoring, hairdressing, barbing and welding.

In a nutshell, Ejigbo Local Government Area is a rural community and, as a result, shares in things that mark out a rural settlement. One such characteristic is the vicious cycle of poverty¹². This is because, like other rural dwellings, the dwellers earn low income from their economic ventures. This, in turn, leads to very low savings. A fall out of the low savings are low investment and the attendant low capital formation. This scenario cannot but foist poverty on a community that finds itself in it. Little wonder that the area ranks high in the poverty map of the state, as we saw earlier.

III. AN OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT

Several definitions of development not only exist, but they also reflect the problems that usually affect efforts by scholars to define the concept they use. Some of the problems relate to the discipline and/or ideology of the person defining the concept, some others relate to time, etc. This explains why Lawal and Abe observed that development, as a concept “is a victim of definitional pluralism”¹³. Nevertheless, the problems do not make it impossible to arrive at something acceptable as shall be seen later. One of the definitions highlighted here is from Seers who sees it from the perspective of improvement in societal welfare. This improvement, he further said, comes about when poverty, inequality and unemployment are minimised¹⁴. In essence, the extent to which the three aforementioned issues are present in a society gives an insight into that society’s level of development. Afigbo on his part, sees it as something that has to do with improvement in the quality of life of people and their society. He went further to say that this can only come about when certain things are in place. These

are elimination of unemployment, poverty and want and the increment in material wealth and availability of labour saving devices.¹⁵

Mention must also be made of Lawal and Abe who cited Gboyega. For them, development is all about an all round improvement in the situation of human beings. This improvement they added, must cut across the society. That is, no group, whether rich or poor, should be left out. The implications of this, they continued, is that whatever brings about inequality of access to the good things of life among the populace should be removed, or at least minimised¹⁶. Finally, is Naomi who noted that development should not be seen only as an economic growth, but should also be seen as something that has to do with “equitable distribution (and) provision of health care, education, housing and other essential services all with a view to improving the individual and collective quality of life”¹⁷.

From the foregoing, the following deductions can be made. Firstly, is that development denotes improvement. That is, it brings about a situation that is better than what existed before. The second thing is that it is a process. That is, it is usually a series of issues, which culminate in something positive and better. Third point is that infrastructural facilities aid it. Finally, it brings about a situation where majority of the populace are able to procure with minimal stress the basic necessities of life and for living a life of frugal and assured comfort. Put in another way, development can be seen as a change process that brings about an improvement in the different facets of life of a people and their society. It is made manifest in the increased capacity of a people and/or society to deal with their environment and eliminate poverty, unemployment and want. The point being made is that the impact of CSDP on the study area shall be assessed with the above in mind.

IV. ABOUT THE COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (CSDP)

Another name for the phase II of the Community-Based Poverty Reduction Project is Community and Social Development Project (CSDP). It took off in Osun State in 2009 with a project life-span of five years (2009-2013). That is, the first phase of its life in Osun State should end in 2013. The implication of this is that whatever the CSDP is doing in Osun after 2013, should rightly be classified as another phase of its life. However, this is not so as the agency’s first phase has been extended twice. The first extension ended in 2016 while the second extension will end by June 2020¹⁸. The objectives of the CSDP include:

- (i) empowering communities to plan, part finance, implement, monitor and maintain sustainable and socially inclusive multi-sectoral micro projects;
- (ii) increasing the capacity of local government areas, state and federal agencies to implement and monitor community driven-development policies and intervention, and
- (iii) leveraging federal, state and local government resources for greater coverage of community driven-development intervention in communities¹⁹

The agency's projects, which are usually called micro projects cut across the needs of the various groups in the society. The projects, as a rule must not cost more than ten million naira (₦10M) each. Projects in this category are also classified as fundable projects while the ones whose costs exceed ten million naira (₦10M) are regarded as non-fundable or macro projects. CSDP, as a rule, turns its back on non-fundable projects. There are other things that can make CSDP turn its back on a project. They are:

- (i) if the project can contribute to, or aggravate environmental degradation;
- (ii) if the project can bring about conflict in the society and
- (iii) if the project is elitist²⁰

The fundable projects, at any rate, can be grouped under five (5) headings as shown below:

- (i) *Physical Infrastructure*: This has to do with feeder roads, culverts, bridges and boreholes
- (ii) *Social infrastructure*: This refers to things like health facilities, rural electrification, construction and rehabilitation of primary and post primary schools, provision of potable water, building and/or equipping laboratory, construction of VIP toilets, television viewing centres, civic centre and provision of engine boats and speed boats for water transportation
- (iii) *Other infrastructure*: In this category are rural market facilities, vocational training centres (skills acquisition centre), and community common facilities.
- (iv) *Environmental and Natural Resources Management*: This has to do with issues like soil conservation/erosion and flood control, agro-forestry, desertification control, drainage systems and decentralized nurseries for raising seedlings of economic trees, indigenous tree/grass species and medicinal plants.
- (v) *Safety Net Support*: This has to do with assistance to vulnerable members of the society with the view to enabling them have access to improved social and natural resources infrastructure services.²¹

At this point, it may be necessary to point out that CSDP is not just a name for another rural development programme but a name for a rural development programme with a difference. This is because CSDP approach differs from the approaches of earlier rural development programmes. This difference can be seen in the modus operandi of CSDP, which revolves around bottom-top approach. In a nutshell, this means that the agency never imposes any project on a community. Rather what it does is to execute the projects chosen by the community. In this regard, the agency ensures that what is called the choice of the community is really what every segment of the community – the rich, the elite, the poor, the vulnerable group (persons living with disability the elderly, the children, women etc)-unanimously agreed upon. This has to be the case because, in a nutshell, the hinge on which CSDP revolves is community participation²². An aspect of this community participation is the payment of 10% counterpart fund by the community for each project that is to be executed for them. The remaining 90% is paid by the state government. The payment by the community can be in cash or materials needed for the project. The revenue from the government comes from

what the World Bank gives and the counterpart fund from the state that is added to it.²³

The execution of a project by the CSDP for any community starts from a formal application by the community to the agency. Other things that follow include a visit by officials of the CSDP to ascertain the veracity of the application and another letter by the community for Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). The essence of the visit is for the CSDP to confirm that the application is not a ploy by some individuals to dupe both the government and the community. If the CSDP is satisfied with what is on ground, they will come for PRA. At the PRA, many members of the community are usually in attendance. Also members of the Community Project Monitoring Committee (CPMC) are elected. This committee is to ensure that the aim of the community is achieved. It does this by ensuring that money released is utilized for the purpose it is meant for. There are also Procurement Committee, Operation and Maintenance and Monitoring and Evaluation Committees. While the Procurement Committee handles the purchase of the materials needed for the project, the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee monitors and evaluates the work done. Finally, that of Operation is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the project.²⁴

After these committees have been put in place, Field Appraisal follows. This has to do with the visit of officials of CSDP and professionals from the ministry that is relevant to the project being executed to appraise the work done. If the afore-mentioned officials are satisfied, seminar will follow. The seminar which is for a day is meant to sensitise and enlighten the leaders of the community on how best to go about the project. For instance at the seminar, elementary book keeping and accounts are taught the people. The essence of this is to help communities manage the project's funds judiciously. This is essential because CSDP does not tolerate abandonment of projects and embezzlement of public fund. To discourage the abandonment of any project, part of the preliminary things done by the CSDP for project is to ascertain the financial implications of the project. Thereafter the fund for it is set aside. By so doing, the question of lack of funds midway into a project is obviated. Added to this is the fact that the leaders of the benefitting community are encouraged not only to meet regularly, but also to ensure that decisions are based on consensus. In the same vein, women are encouraged to participate actively in project activities. As a way of ensuring this as well as gingering the women into action, the post of Treasurer is usually reserved for them²⁵.

It may be necessary to point out that the afore-mentioned seminar is usually a prelude to the presentation of cheque for the first tranche of the money approved for the project in a community. It is noteworthy that the amount approved for any project is normally divided into three tranches. The presentation for the first tranche, which is usually done by the General Manager takes place in the benefitting community. The payment for the remaining two tranches which takes place in the agency's head office in Osogbo is done on the basis of how judiciously the preceding tranche was used.²⁶

V. ACTIVITIES OF CSDP IN EJIGBO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

One of the areas CSDP worked in Osun State is Ejigbo Local Government Area. We saw earlier that Ejigbo Local Government Area ranks high in the poverty map of the state. We also saw that the people did not resign themselves to fate. A proof of this is that CSDP did some projects and are still doing projects in the area. The above position cannot but be true considering the fact that CSOP does not do any project in any area if it is not invited. With all the above at the back of our minds, the paper proceeds to discuss the activities of the agency in the area of study. This shall be done under the three headings, namely: Physical, Infrastructure, Social Infrastructure and Safety Net Support.

Physical Infrastructure: In the area of physical infrastructure, two sets of projects were executed. These are reinforced concrete twin box culvert (mini bridge) RC lined drainage and laterite filling and borehole projects. The first was done over Omi River, Oke Somilo Community of Ola district. It was constructed at the cost of ₦5,494.00. The importance of this project cannot be over-emphasised. For instance, it brought about an all year round accessibility of the area. By so doing, the isolation of the area was not only brought to an end, but also it improved the chances of the community to market their farm produce. As a matter of fact, the culvert so improved the condition of the road that vehicles became regular on the route. This in turn, brought about a reduction in transport fare.²⁷

In the area of pipe borne water, the agency has been helpful too. This was also done in Ola district. That water is essential to life is not in doubt. This is because man requires water for cooking, drinking, washing, general sanitation, agriculture and manufacturing processes. The average daily requirement of an adult for alimentation only is 2.5 litres. This could increase to double for people living in our hot tropical environment. As a matter of fact, man can survive longer without food than without water²⁸. The water project is sited in Oguro and it cost ₦24480.00. Prior to the completion of the project, the people made do with stream water from a neighbouring community. According to Oloyede, her interviewees were agreed on the fact that the water project not only reduced the time they spent and the distance they covered to fetch water, but it also reduced the incidence of ailments arising from the water. To make things relatively easy for the people, nine (9) fetching points were provided for the people²⁹. Other areas in the local government area that had water project are Oju-Oja and Ibiseke communities.³⁰

Social Infrastructure: The CSDP did a number of projects in this regard. One of such projects was the construction and equipping of science laboratory for Titilope Secondary School, Ejigbo. This, no doubt, will put the school in a good position to bring up science-oriented students. In the area of electricity, CSDP did procure and install transformers for some communities. Oluwalogbon Community in Ejigbo is one of the beneficiaries. The project which was executed in 2019 at the cost of ₦5,324,800.00 has been of immense benefit to the community. Prior to its installation, the light situation in

the area was appalling as what they got could hardly power any electrical gadget³¹. Ayedun, Oke-Itunu and Mobaolorunduro communities are other beneficiaries of the electricity project by the CSDP.³² Mention must also be made of the construction of modern toilet facility called VIP toilet. Ola community in Ola district was the beneficiary. They were encouraged to go for it after the successful completion of their water project. Prior to the execution of this project, the people made use of the bushes around them with all the attendant hazards.³³ Another project worth mentioning is a civic centre built in Oguro community at the cost of ₦7,582,149.00.³⁴

Safety Net Support: This has to do with issues relating to the vulnerable group. That is, people living with disabilities, women, the elderly and children. One of the projects done for them is located at Obatedo village. The project is a civic centre but the users prefer to call it 'Meeting Centre'. This was built for the elderly in the area who specifically requested for it –i.e. a place of relaxation strictly for them. Facilities in the place include a big television set, and in door games like Ludo and Ayo Olopon. This was completed in 2019³⁵. Another category of the vulnerable group who benefitted from the CSDP are members of the Joint Association of People Living with Disabilities (JONAPWID) in Ejigbo. This people had a skills acquisition centre built for them in 2019. In the same vein, People Living with HIV/AIDS has a four room lock up shop built for them in 2018. The interesting thing about the projects done for the JONAPWID and People Living with HIV/AIDS is that Ejigbo Local Government Council assisted considerably. This they did by giving the HIV/AIDS people the plot of land for the lock up shops while it gave JONAPWID members ₦200,000.00 for the counterpart fund and the two plots of land where their project is sited.³⁶

Apart from the afore-mentioned projects, there are still many in the pipeline. The reason for this is that the eyes of the other villages have been opened by what the agency has done. As a result, they have written to CSDP for projects to be done. In the same vein, the agency has been sensitising palm oil producers for a project. However, the palm oil producers have been conservative. They are yet to fully appreciate the benefits inherent in using an oil press. This is because the chaff (sponge-like material) that is left after oil has been pressed out of it has some value if manually pressed. But when it is done by machine, oil is squeezed out entirely from it making it valueless. The little amount they make from it is blinding them to the more revenue that will accrue to them from the increased quantity of palm oil, which the oil press makes possible³⁷.

VI. CHALLENGES CONFRONTING CSDP

As an idea, the community and Social Development Project is good. However, this good idea is being hampered by some challenges. One such challenge has to do with paucity of funds. With poor finances, there is little if any, an organisation can do. One of the reasons for the paucity of funds is that state governments have not been diligent in paying what they are supposed to pay as counterpart fund. The reason for this is the reduced revenue that has been their lot ever since revenue from petroleum dropped. The awry financial situation of the

states got to an all time high when the economy went into a recession. It got to a stage that many stage governments including Osun could not pay salaries regularly. If the World Bank had tied the release of their share of the fund to the payment of counterpart fund by states, CSDP could have been scrapped long ago. As a matter of fact, the bulk of the fund used by the agency for their work comes from what the World Bank releases. The financial situation is not made any better by the fact that the projects executed in the different communities have opened the eyes of others to the importance of CSDP. As a result, the CSDP's office is being inundated on daily basis with requests for project by different communities and groups. The point being made is that the ratio of available funds to the requests on ground for projects has become smaller as a result³⁸.

Another challenge facing CSDP in its activities in Ejigbo Local Government Area is the conservatism of some groups. A good example is the palm oil producers. This has been dealt with extensively in an earlier section of this paper and, as a result we need not detain ourselves by repeating the story here. The point being made is that with the kind of attitude exhibited by the palm oil producers, it will be pretty difficult for CSDP to make any meaningful progress when it is exhibited by many groups. This is because the consent of a group/community is needed before any project can be executed for them³⁹.

Mention must also be made of the twin issue of distance and accessibility. Some of communities are very far from the CSDP head office while some are inaccessible. Some possess those two disadvantages. The problem with distance is that it slows down the action of the agency due to logistics issues. On the other hand, accessibility hampers their work greatly as it makes it difficult, if not impossible for the mobilisation of materials to the site⁴⁰.

There is also the issue of lack of cooperation from Local Government Councils. A number of them often plead paucity of funds as reason why they cannot get involved in CSDP projects. That the Councils are vital is not in doubt because in some cases, nothing can be done without them. An example is health centre project. It is the Council that will staff and equip it after completion. If they are not willing to do that, such a project cannot be executed⁴¹. In this regard, kudos must be given to the Ejigbo Council for what they did for some of the vulnerable group members as seen earlier.

In conclusion, CSDP is laudable and should be encouraged. If given the required attention by the authorities, it will be a matter of time before the entire nation is transformed and poverty check mated or rolled back. As part of addressing the challenges, government should prioritize the sensitisation of the people about CSDP.

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