

DEVELOPMENTAL STRIDES IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (CSDP) IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN THREE GEO-POLITICAL ZONES OF EBONYI STATE

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Abstract:

This study investigated the activities of Community and Social Development Programmes (CSDP) across communities within the three geo-political zones of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The sample for the study was 566 respondents. Descriptive survey design was adopted, while the instrument for data collection was questionnaire developed by the researcher. Five research questions guided the study. The data collected were analyzed using frequency count and percentages. The findings revealed that they were still prevalence of high poverty rate, high level of ignorance, illiteracy, low capacity building and poor infrastructural base across many communities in Ebonyi State.

The study recommends among other things that Government of Ebonyi State should initiate more programme to tackle problems of poverty and illiteracy squarely so as to reduce them to the barest minimum.

Key words: Development, Community, Social Development Programme

Background to the Study

Man right from creation has developed various strategies for solving certain problems so as to make life more meaningful in every community. Early efforts of man was to work together for common good to improve on the living conditions. Such concerted efforts were seen manifesting in bridge construction, clearing of public roads, construction of public halls and markets. Therefore, community development is as old as mankind. In view this, community development is all about concerted efforts of people occupying a given geographical area to initiate and execute common projects primarily to raise the standard of living of the inhabitants. Community development is rather a process by which people efforts are united and integrated by

economic, social and cultural progress. No meaningful development can be recorded at the national or state levels without achieving wider range of community development. Provision of basic necessities of life is very strategic and crucial for national development. Communities across the globe have at one time or the other mapped out collection projects which had direct bearing on the daily lives of the citizens. As the society advanced in scope and population, some areas became urbanized, while some areas remained rural communities. Self help projects largely in the early eighties and nineties were on ground as registered associations/town unions embarked on developmental activities ranging from road/bridge construction, clearing of roads, building of social and economic facilities.

The fast trend of globalization has made the entire world a common village. Communities in the rural areas of third world countries had continued to suffer set-backs in terms of social and economic facilities needed to raise the living standard of rural dwellers. Government, voluntary bodies, philanthropists, communities in Nigeria have initiated and implemented one programme or the other all in efforts to put our rural areas at the same pedestal with their counterparts of the developed countries, yet the scenario did not change significantly. According to Onah (2010:1), African and other developing countries have since independence been taken measures designed to accelerate development through periodic development plans. Nigeria as a country has had more than five development plans with basic units to address the problems of community needs. Such community centred programmes set up by various administration in the country include: Directorate of food, roads and rural infrastructure (DIFRRI); Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP); National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP); Primary Health Care Programme (PHCP) and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to mention just a few.

In Nigeria, the obvious fact is that the alarming rate of poor community development calls for serious concern particularly in Ebonyi State. In Ebonyi state of Nigeria, the little of the community projects came through registered Development Associations, at the local government level and state ministry of social development and international agencies such as world bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United States of America International Aids (USAID), United Nations International Children and Education Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization(WHO), Global fund and Carter foundation.

In view of the poor community development trend in Ebonyi state, this research paper is designed to investigate into the activities of community and social development programme (CSDP) in selected communities of three geo-political zones of Ebonyi state.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual framework

The practice of community development in human history is not a new trend as it dates back to early efforts of men who worked in harmony to achieve common good of their people. United Nations (1980) defines community development as a process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities and integrating them into life of the nation so as to enable them contribute fully to national progress. In the same vein, Lakshmir (1969) saw community development as a process of social action by which voluntary efforts of people are combined with those of the government towards overall improvement of conditions of community living with and accepted national pattern of social and economic progress. International association for community development (2016) , defines community development as working communities to achieve participatory democracy, sustainable development, equal rights, economic opportunity, equality and justice. Community development is more of a set of values and practices which plays a special role in overcoming poverty, disadvantages and knitting society together at the grassroots level. The implication of this desertion is that community development allows everyone in an area to take part on the issues that affect their lives. In other words, every community possess pool of people with huge wealth of experience and knowledge which if properly harnessed and creatively used could be channeled into collective actions to achieve communities' desired ends. IACD (2016) further states that the practice of community development is usually carried by people in different roles and contexts, including people explicitly called professional community workers, together with professionals in other occupations ranging from social works, health disciplines, architecture, environmental education, youth work, adult education, local economic development to urban planning and regeneration. Community Development Exchange (2010) saw community development (CD) as both an occupation and a

way of working with communities in which the key purpose is to build communities based on justice, equality and mutual respect. Indeed, community development involves changing the relationship between ordinary people and people in positions of power, so that everyone can take part in issues that affect their lives. Through community development, opportunities are created as community learns new skills which enable people to act together to foster social inclusion and equality.

Approaches to Community Development

Practitioners in community development over the years have developed wide range of approaches for working in local areas particularly as it concerns disadvantaged people. Since 1960s and 70s, community development practitioners in both developing and developed countries have been influenced by the structural analyses of the causes of disadvantages and poverty reflecting in inequalities in the distribution of wealth, land, income and political power and the need to mobilize people's efforts to affect social change. Such worldwide acclaimed practitioners include: Paulo Freire, Saul Alinsky and E.F Schumacher. Organizations involved in community development support programmes include: Oxfam, UNICEF, Hunger project, Freedom from Hunger, Run community development programs and host of others. There are numerous approaches to community development some of which are overlapping in process, outcomes/objectives.

- i. Women Self-help Group Approach: This approach focuses on the contributions and activities of women in solving group problems through self-help efforts. Women in history have at different epochs being involved in organizing group efforts to bring about initiatives and projects aimed at uplifting their collective advantages.
- ii. Community Economic Development (CED) Approach: According to Clay, Rogers, and Sussan, (2009) Community Economic Development approach involves strategies which aim at

improving access to affordable housing, medical and child-care. CED is designed to encourage the use of local resources so as to enhance economic benefits needed to improve social conditions of the people.

- iii. Community Driven Development (CDD) Approach: Community driven development approach is an economic development model which shift-attention from over reliance on central government to local communities. In this approach, benefitting communities are allowed to identify and prioritize micro projects of their choice.
- iv. Worker Cooperative Approach: This approach involves strategy which operate as businesses with the ownership and management by the employees. In this regard, management has potentials of creating jobs and providing grassroot supports such as seen in companies providing corporate social responsibilities in communities of operation. For example: oil and mining firms and construction companies usually assist host communities in areas of supply of social amenities and human development and training.
- v. Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR): This approach is a partnership to research which lay emphasis on equitable involvement of community members, organizational representatives and researchers in all aspects of research process. In this regard, partners contribute expertise and share decision and ownership with the aim of integrating knowledge with community development outcomes.
- vi. Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Approach: ABCD is an approach which seek to discover and use the talents and strengths within communities as means of sustainable development.
- vii. Large Group Capacitation Approach: This approach focuses on the activities of individuals and social psychology of

large groups of unemployed or semi-employed participants, many of whom with lower levels of literacy.

Overview of Community and Social Development Programme (CSDP) in Ebonyi State

Statistical report on poverty in Nigeria published by the federal office of statistics in 1999 as contained in CSDP manual (2010) reveals the inherent indices of poverty, inequality in wealth and income distribution, poor infrastructure, lack of social amenities and so on mostly in the rural communities. Ebonyi state is one of the states in Nigeria with high prevalence of community development needs.

In this regard, Ebonyi State community based social and development project (EB-CSDP) was established as an autonomous body under the funding and sponsorship by the World Bank assistance scheme. The institutional arrangement, the structure and staffing of CSDP began in 2008 but all official appraisals, negotiations, federal executive council approval, board approval and signing of financing agreement were completed the same year. EB-CSDP is structured into four management units: the General manager/secretariat, administration, finance/supply and project monitoring unit. According to CSDP (2010) manual of operational modalities:

Community and social development project is a community driven development outfit established by the federal government of Nigeria in collaboration with the world-bank and state government.

EB-CSDP is designed to allow communities identify and apply for projects of their needs through registered town unions/associations usually made up of selected representatives to include men, women and youths of reputable integrity. CSDP at state levels has desk offices spread across thirteen local council areas of the state. Its operation activities cover multi—sectorial areas such as education, health, water, transportation, rural electrification, gender/vulnerability, natural resources and

environment. At the implementation level, the key actors in the project cycle are stratified into federal, state, local government and the community. According to community and social development project (2010) the main objectives of CSDP in Ebonyi state is to assist communities develop, implement, expand and enhance a comprehensive system of rural based poverty reduction projects with the mandate to carryout advocacy visit/campaign, social needs assessment survey, supervise project implementation, disbursement of fund in tranches, provide policy support and to liaise with relevant line ministries, departments, local council areas, donor agencies, research institutions and development association in the execution of poverty reduction projects in benefiting communities.

Theoretical Framework (System Theory)

Essentially, this study adopted system theory developed by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy as analytical framework-used in explaining many factors involved in Community development. According to Ludwig (1968) a system is a set of elements standing in interaction, which have some things in common. Ezeani (2006) defined a system as an assemblage of things interconnected or interdependent so as to form a complex unity. Nwori and Omebe (2013:42) saw system as a whole made up interrelated parts working together for the survival of the entire gamut. Every system is influenced by its environment and operates on the matrix of sinput- output- feedback mechanism. However, sub-systems are found within the larger systems. Note that each system has boundary which is an imaginary line which determine what is inside and what is outside.

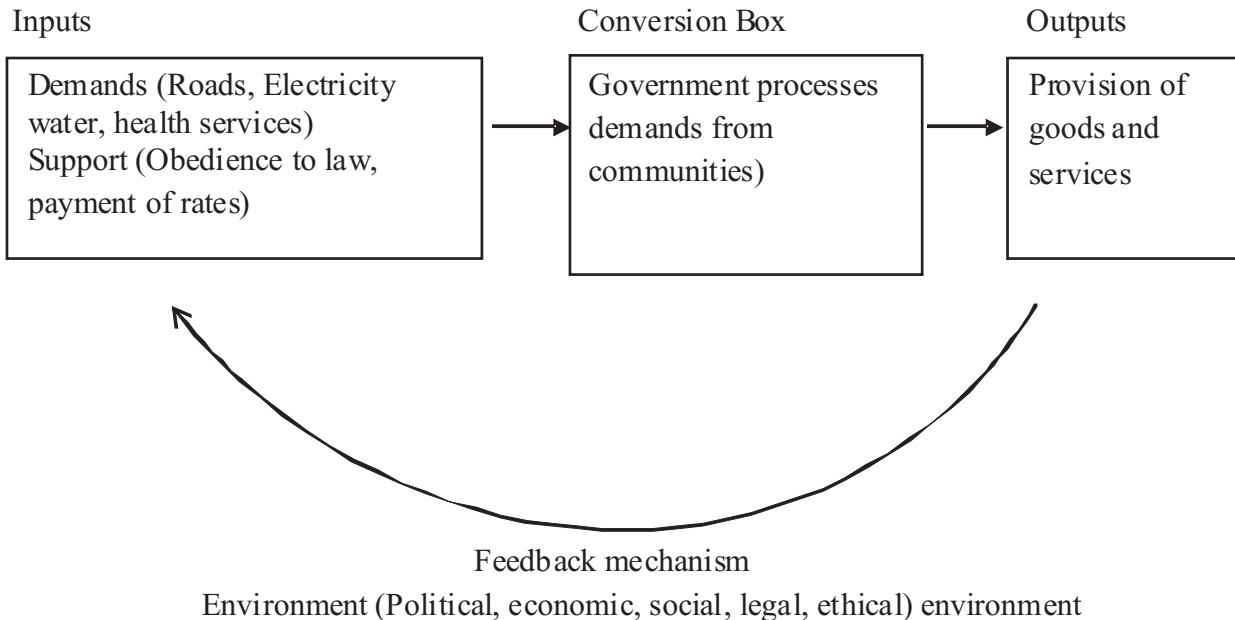
In the context of this study, understanding the dynamics of intergroup relationship and considering the changes involved in planning development activities can be explained more clearly using system theory. In CSDP activities, the intergroup relationship exist between the communities, local government, the state government, federal government and donor/support agencies. In this regard, the state government and donor groups form the sub-

system within Nigeria State,

Local government review committee (LGRC) is

sub to the large system of the state where as communities applying for micro projects are sub-systemsto local government areas.

Diagrammatically, System Theory can be represented thus:



This research study aims at achieving specific purpose as stated hereunder:

- i. To find out why development status is foot-dragging in most communities across the three geo-political zones of Ebonyi state.
- ii. To find out the complimentary roles of participatory groups in community and social development project (CSDP)
- iii. To evaluate the impact of World Bank assistance to community and social development project across the state under review.
- iv. To identify the teething problems working against effective implementation of CSDP projects in Ebonyi state.
- v. To proffer possible solutions for sustainable community development strategies in Nigeria, and Ebonyi state in particular.

The study on development strides in Nigeria focusing on Ebonyi state community and social development agency will be very useful and beneficial to many categories of people and

institutions. Such beneficiaries include: policy makers, student researchers, citizens, the academia, the government and allies, international organizations, non-governmental bodies, public commentators, the media outfits and development associations.

The scope of this study is development strides in Nigeria:

A study of community and social development programme (CSDP) in selected communities in three geo-political zones of Ebonyi state comprising Ebonyi North, Ebonyi Central and Ebonyi South Zones. In each zone, four autonomous communities were selected from two local area councils to balance the spread of the area of research coverage. On the whole, six local government areas and twelve autonomous communities were selected for the study. A total of 566 people were sampled

The Study is guided by five research questions

1. What is the extent of development in the rural communities in Ebonyi State.
2. What are the complementary roles played by participatory groups in

- community and social development programme?
3. What impacts has World Bank assisted community and social development project made across communities in three zones of Ebonyi state?
 4. What are the problems militating against effective administration and implementation of CSDP projects in Ebonyi state?
 5. What should be done to enhance enduring and sustainable community development in Ebonyi

Results

The impact and activities of community and social Development Agency Ebonyi State are presented and analyzed in the tables below. Relevant questionnaire items were drawn from the research questions. All responses of strongly agreed (SA) and Agreed (A) were pulled together, while data on strongly disagreed (SD) and disagreed (D) were summed up with their respective calculated percentages. Table A showed the distribution and analysis of questionnaire in the selected local council areas and communities in the three geo-political zones of Ebonyi State.

Distribution and analysis of questionnaires in the selected Local Government Areas and Communities in three geo-political zones of Ebonyi State.

S/N	ZONE	L.G.A	SELECTED COMMUNITY	NO OF QUESTIONNAIRES	%	NO COMPLETED AND RETURNED	%	NO NOT RETURNED	%
1.	Ebonyi North	Abakaliki	Amachi	60	10%	58	9.7%	2	0.3%
			Enyi-gba	90	15%	86	14.3%	4	0.7%
			Ohaukwu	60	58%	58	9.7%	2	0.3%
			Izhia	40	6.7%	38	6.3%	2	0.3%
			Ukwuagba						
2.	Ebonyi Central	Ezza North	Umuoghara	70	11.7%	66	11%	4	0.7%
			Oriuzor	40	6.7%	39	6.5%	1	0.2%
			Ishielu	30	5%	27	4.3%	3	0.5%
			Ohaofia Agba	60	10%	57	9.5%	3	0.5%
3.	Ebonyi South North	Afikpo North	Itim	25	4.2%	22	3.7%	3	0.5%
			Unwana	50	8.3%	48	8%	2	0.3%
			Ohaozara	35	5.8%	33	3.5%	2	0.3%
			Ugwulangwu						
			Ovuwewa-Umuokpala	40	6.7%	34	5.7%	6	1%
Total	3	6	12	600	100%	566	94.4%	34	5.6%

Source: Authors' field survey 2021

Analysis:

Ebonyi North Zone: In Abakaliki Local Government Area, 150(25%) questionnaires were distributed to selected communities (Amachi and Enyigba), out the number 144(24%) were returned while six (6) representing one (1) percent were not returned. In Ohaukwu L.G.A, 100 (16.7%) questionnaires were distributed in AmikeIzhia and Ukwuagba communities, out of which 96 (16%) were returned and 4 (6%) not returned. Therefore a total of 240 respondents were used for the study from Ebonyi North zone.

Ebonyi Central Zone: In Ezza North L.G.A, a total of 110(18.4%) questionnaires were distributed to Umuoghara and Oriuzor Communities, 105(17.5%) were duly returned and 5 (0.9%) not returned. In Ishielu Local Council Area, 90(15%) of the questionnaires were shared to Biledeba and Ohaofia-Agba Communities respectively, out of which

84(14%) were filled and returned, while 6(1%) of them were not returned to the researcher. Therefore a total of 189 respondents were used for the study from Ebonyi central zone.

Ebonyi South Zone: InAfikpo North LGA, a total of 75(12.5%) of questionnaires were shared to Itim and Unwana communities out of which 70(11.7%) were properly filled and returned, while 5(0.8%) questionnaires were not returned in Ohaozara LGA; 75(12.5%) questionnaires were shared among respondents in Ugwulangwu and Ovuewa-Umuokpala communities. 67(11.2%) questionnaires were filled and returned while 8(1.3%) were not returned. Therefore a total of 137 respondents were used for the study from Ebonyi south zone.

Arising from the research questions of this study, relevant items were presented and analyzed here under:

Table 1: Showing responses to poor development of Ebonyi State despite efforts to better the conditions of the citizen

Item	SA	A	SD	D	TOTAL
There are high rate of poverty in Ebonyi state	304(53.7%)	106(18.7%)	79(14%)	77(13.6%)	566(100%)
High level of ignorance	402(71%)	52(9.2%)	80(14.1%)	32(5.7%)	566(100%)
Illiteracy/Low capacity building	229(40.5%)	126(22.3%)	180(31.8%)	31(5.5%)	566(100%)
Lack of infrastructure at the rural/community levels	425(75%)	68(12%)	43(7.6%)	30(5.3%)	566(100%)

Source: Authors' filed survey 2021.

Analysis:

Table 1 above shows that 410 (72.4%) of the total respondents agreed that there is high rate of poverty in Ebonyi State despite all efforts to change the situation. 156(27.6%) disagreed on the assertion that there is high rate of poverty in Ebonyi State. On issue of high level of

ignorance, 402(80.2%) respondents agreed that there is high level of ignorance in Ebonyi State while 112(19.8%) respondents disagreed to that assertion. Concerning illiteracy/low capacity building, 335(62.8%) of the respondents agreed that there are indices of illiteracy in Ebonyi State just as 211(37.3%) disagreed to that assertion.

493(87%) respondents agreed that infrastructural development is low in rural communities across the three zones of Ebonyi

State, while 73(12.9%) respondents did not agree to that statement.

Table II: Table showing responses to complimentary roles of participating groups in community and social development programmes.

Item	SA	A	SD	D	TOTAL
Local Governments support community development in community levels	232(40%)	180(19.1%)	124(21.9%)	102(18%)	566(100%)
State Government support community and social development projects in your area through counterpart funding of micro-projects	251(44.3%)	113(20%)	153(27%)	99(8.7%)	566(100%)
Development Unions attracts CSDA micro projects in your state and local council area.	246(43.5%)	57(10%)	134(23.7%)	129(22.8%)	566(100%)
Your community ever embarked on self-help projects	311(54.9%)	112(19.8%)	120(21.2%)	23(4.1%)	566(100%)

Source: Authors' field survey 2021.

Analysis:

Item I of the above table shows that 340(59.1%) of the entire respondents agreed that local government area support communities development in their areas; 266(39.9%) number of respondents disagreed to that assertion. Item two, 364(64.3%) of the respondents agreed that State Government support CSDP through Counterpart funding of micro projects, while 252(35.7%) respondents were of the contrary

opinion. Item three indicated 303(53.5%) support assertion that development unions attract micro projects in the state and local council areas, whereas 263(46.5%) respondents did not agree that development unions attract developments in their areas. On the notion of community self-help projects, 423(74.7%) respondents agreed that their communities had embarked on self-help projects, while 143(25.3%) respondents disagreed to that assertion.

Table III: Showing the impact Of World Bank Assistance through community and social development programme (CSDP) in three geo-political zones of Ebonyi State.

Item	SA	A	SD	D	TOTAL
World Bank assists communities through micro projects	310 (54.8%)	50 (8.8%)	104 (18.4%)	102 (18%)	566 (100%)
Communities were usually involved in identifying and prioritizing the needs of people in a participatory and gender sensitive manner	228 (40.3%)	110 (19.4%)	162 (28.6%)	66 (11.7%)	566 (100%)
Communities comply with the standing rule of 10% counterpart funding for identified and approved micro-projects.	312 (55.1%)	105 (18.6%)	97 (17.1%)	52 (9.2%)	566 (100%)
Disbursement of Funds has been in tranches for approved micro-projects in benefiting communities	407 (71.9%)	23 (4.1%)	128 (22.6%)	8 (1.4%)	566 (100%)

Source: Authors' filed survey 2021.

Analysis:

Item I of table III above shows that 360(63.6%) of sampled population agreed that World Bank had assisted their communities in micro projects. A total of 206(36.4%) disagreed to the assertion. Item two shows that 338(59.7%)

respondents agreed on community involvement in project identification and priority needs while 228(40.3%) were of the contrary opinion. In item three, 417(73.7%) respondents were in agreement that communities comply with the standing order of payment of 10% counterpart

funding for approved micro projects, 149(26.3%) number of respondents disagreed with the assertion. Finally 430(76%) of the population sampled agreed that there had

witnessed disbursement of fund for approved micro projects in tranches in their respective community whereas 136(24%) respondents were of the contrary opinions on the issue on ground.

Table 4: Distribution of responses on problems confronting project implementation in CSDP in benefiting communities of Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Item	SA	A	SD	D	TOTAL
Difficult terrain	360 (63.6%)	103 (18.2%)	58 (10.2%)	45 (7.9%)	566 (100%)
Inability to pay counterpart fund by the benefiting communities or State Government	271 (47.6%)	33 (5.8%)	189 (33.4%)	120 (21.2%)	566 (100%)
Lack of awareness/ignorance on the side of rural communities on the programme package of World Bank assisted project.	172 (18.6%)	120 (21.2%)	130 (22.9%)	45 (7.9%)	566 (100%)
Corruption/insincerity of community project management committee (CPMC) and other stakeholders	375 (66.3%)	172 (30.4%)	11 (1.9%)	8 (1.4%)	566 (100%)
Government interference on the activities of implementing agencies	266 (46.9%)	192 (33.9%)	93 (16.4%)	15 (2.7%)	566 (100%)

Source: Authors' field survey 2021.

Analysis:

Item one of this table shows that 463(81.8%) respondents agreed that difficult terrain constitute major problems to CSDA micro project implementation in their communities, while 103(18.1%) disagreed to such notion. In item two, 257(45.4%) agreed that inability of communities and State Government to pay counterpart fund hamper with CSDA micro projects in their areas while 309(54.6%) disagreed on the assertion. Item three indicated

that 391(69.1%) respondents were of the view that lack of awareness/ignorance of the CSDA programme package affect community development; while 175(30.8%) respondents did not agree to that assertion. On item four of table five, 547(96.7%) respondents agreed that there are high indices of corruption/insincerity on the side of community project management committee (CPMC) including other stakeholders while 19(3.3%) of the total population only disagreed. Item five indicated

that 448(80.8%) were in agreement that government interferes in the activities of the implementation agencies whereas 108(19.1%) respondents were not in support of the assertion.

Findings

From the research conducted on the developmental strides in Nigeria focusing on the activities of community and social Development Agency (CSDA) in selected communities in Ebonyi State covering three geo-political zones, the following findings were made:

- Ø That there were still prevalence of high poverty rate, high level of ignorance, illiteracy, low capacity building and poor infrastructural base across many communities in Ebonyi State.
- Ø That the State Government offer supportive roles through payment of counterpart funding of micro projects just as local government councils support development strategies through Community Development Project (COP) usually submitted to the Local Government Review committee (LGRC). It was also gathered that a lot of CSDA micro projects have been attracted through Community Development Unions in the State, while enough indications reveals that communities in Ebonyi State have been embarking on self-help projects.
- Ø It was also discovered that many communities in Ebonyi State have benefited from World Bank assisted micro projects in a participatory and gender sensitive manner where, the needs of the people are identified and prioritized. Again, communities comply with the standing rule of payment of 10% counterpart funding for approved micro projects and that approved funds were disbursed in tranches for approved micro projects.
- Ø The research also found out that problems militating against CSDA micro project implementation in Ebonyi State include: Difficult terrain of communities, ignorance and lack of

awareness on the existence of World Bank assisted programmes in the State, corruption/lack of transparency by community project management committee (CPMC) and other stakeholders and government interference on the activities of implementing agencies.

Recommendations

- v Government of Ebonyi State should initiate more programme to tackle problems of poverty and illiteracy squarely so as to reduce them to the barest minimum.
- v Aside government support to rural development, communities in Ebonyi State should compliment the effort of government through more micro self help project.
- v Due to high prevalence of poor rural development in Ebonyi State, government and other god spirited bodies to attract more assistance from non-governmental organization to development rural areas in Ebonyi State.
- v Access routes should be created by the government of Ebonyi State to reduce problem of difficult terrain in the rural communities.

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