



**ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS BY
SHELL PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY IN EMPOWERING CLUSTER
COMMUNITIES IN KOLOKUMA/OPOKUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF
BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA**

Ominikari, Abraham Godwin and Itokume, Elohor

Department of Agricultural Economics, Extension and Rural Development,
Niger Delta University Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Corresponding Author's E-mail: aominikari@yahoo.com **Tel.:** +2347030447472

ABSTRACT

The study assessed community development projects available by Shell petroleum Development Company (SPDC) in empowering rural dwellers in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 105 respondents. Data obtained were analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings showed that road construction ($m = 2.87$), scholarship to youths ($m = 3.39$) and skill acquisition for youth ($m = 2.85$) were the recognized empowerment projects of SPDC. Availability of SPDC empowerment projects in the study area benefited rural dwellers in terms of provision of employment, serving as source of income, allowing them to acquire knowledge/skills, making some rural infrastructure available, enabling them become an entrepreneur and offers leadership opportunity to them. There was significant difference in the mean ratings on benefits derived by cluster communities on rural development projects. In conclusion, scholarship to youths, and skill acquisition for youth were the empowerment projects of SPDC made available to rural dwellers. The study recommended that there is need to review SPDC projects to make it more robust in providing empowerment projects such as pipe born water, building of schools, building of health centres/general health care, rural electrification, provision of vehicles for rural transportation, and provision of farm equipment which the rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State could not identify as being made available to them by SPDC.

Keywords: Community, Development, Dwellers, Empowering, Projects, Rural.

INTRODUCTION

Community development is a process whereby people from a particular location come together, sometimes with the help of external sources, to work for the economic and social development of their community (Nwachukwu, 2018). Community Development generally is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively remote and sparsely populated areas, which are also known as rural areas (Mosely, 2003).

The main purpose of community development is to improve the living conditions of individuals socially, economically and environmentally. Community development seeks to improve the quality of life of a group of people. It helps the community strengthen its self in order to improve people's lives and address issues that have been identified by the community and it builds upon existing skills and strength within the community (Inkoom, 2011). The concern of community development was in response to growth and nationalism and an outcome of a desire to increase the rate of industrial/economic development (Smith, 2013). Community development entails the process by which community members come together to take collective actions and generate solutions to a common identified problem (Ifeanyi, 2006).



According to Shell Petroleum Development Company 2010, SPDC changed its strategy from the community assistance to community development, with the aim to foster greater partnership. The community development approach placed more emphasis on the empowerment of communities and building community cohesion, planning strategic and research based programs with full participation of communities in other to foster community ownership and control.

In order to achieve the aim, communities were empowered to produce development plans after need identification, assessment and priority setting, (Ite, 2007). As asserted by Nwachukwu (2008) the goal of every development project is to make impact on the benefiting communities in terms of human empowerment and infrastructural development.

The worst hit of all the victims of vandalism and kidnapping, however, are mostly on the oil companies. More than 95% of the kidnap cases in the Niger Delta involved oil workers, and the installations of oil companies were the target of most of the vandalism. It is noteworthy, however, that the degree of these occurrences varies across different oil companies (Aaron & Patrick, 2008). Onua (2005) describes it as a sort of revenge on the multinational oil companies.

While the oil companies claim to be practising community relations and to have invested a lot in the development of their host communities, the communities, on the other hand, either claim that enough has not been done, or that the efforts have been made without due consultations with them. It is of this note that the researchers tend to find out community development projects made available by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) in empowering the rural dwellers in the area of study. In other to close the vacuum, the researchers stated the following objectives to guide the study:

- i. describe SPDC projects made available in the study area;
- ii. evaluate benefits derived from SPDC in making projects available for rural dwellers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area

The study was carried out in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area (LGA) of Bayelsa State, Nigeria with headquarter in Kaiama community. It has an area of 361 km² and a population of 77,292 at the 2006 census, National Bureau of Statistics (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2007), the LGA has a projected population of 105,900 in 2016 (Wikipedia, 2020). It has an Area of 361km² and made up of 20 communities across the two clans, the LGA lies between latitudes 08' North and longitude 06'18 east in the equatorial rainforest. The area has two distinct seasons; dry season, starting from (November – February) and the rainy season starts from (March – October). The mean temperature is 27°C– 30°C with high humidity of 90 mm and a high annual rainfall of 2,400 mm, the two clans are Kolokuma and Opokuma, respectively (Manpower, Nigeria, 2020).

The LGA share boundaries with Sagbama and Yenagoa Local Government Areas (LGAs), and is made up of communities such as Odi, Kaiama, Okorotomu, Olobiri, Kalama, Sampou, Ayibabiri, Sabagrigha, Okoloba, Igbedi, Gbaranama, Ayakoro-ama, Orubiri, Ofonibiri, Igbainwari, Ekpuwari, Oyobu, Akanrabiri, Gbaranbiri, and Abuwari. The Ijaw Language is widely spoken in the area, while English is the official language and Christianity is the widely practiced religion in the area (Manpower, Nigeria, 2020). Farming, fishing, trading, and wrestling are the occupation and culture of the people.

Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the seven cluster communities that benefits developmental projects from SPDC, the communities were Kaiama, Okorotomu,



Gbaranama, Orubiri, Igbainwari, Akaranbiri, Ayibabiri, fifteen (15) respondents were sampled purposively from each of the seven communities making it 105 respondents which serves as sample size of the study.

Method of Data Collection

Primary data and secondary information were the sources of data collection. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaire that was administered to indigenes/residents (community stakeholders) of the cluster communities, as well as secondary information retrieved from the internet, textbooks, magazines, etc.

Method of Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Objective i described SPDC projects made available in the study area, data was generated by presenting the respondents with items rated on a four point Likert type which was based on the question options of: 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree and 4) strongly disagree. The options were quantified as 4, 3, 2, and 1. The mean of 4, 3, 2, and 1 equals 2.50 i.e, $1+2+3+4/4 = 2.50$. Respondents with scale mean of 2.50 and above on each activities (indicators) was regarded as having the average score and therefore seen as item that was made available by SPDC, while items with a mean score below 2.50 was rejected as a factor,

Objective ii evaluated benefits derived from SPDC in making projects available for rural dwellers in cluster communities; data was generated by presenting the respondents with items rated on a five point Likert scale, which was based on the question options of 1); So much: 2; Much: 3; Moderate: 4; Little: 5) and Almost nothing. The options were quantified as 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1. The mean of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 equals 3.0, i.e., $1+2+3+4+5/5 = 3.0$, respondents with scale mean of 3.0 and above on each activities (indicators) was regarded as having the average score and therefore was accepted, while items with a mean score below 3.0 was rejected as a factor.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to test the hypothesis. The study used ANOVA to determine differences between mean among cluster communities under investigation on assessment of community development projects made available by the shell petroleum development company (SPDC) in empowering rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. ANOVA was modeled by Ifeanyichukwu (2017) is given as:

$$F\text{-statistics} = \frac{MS_{\text{Between}}}{MS_{\text{within}}} \quad \dots(1)$$

But,

$$MS_{\text{Between}} = \frac{SS_{\text{Between}}}{Df_{\text{Between}}} \quad \dots(2)$$

$$\text{and } MS_{\text{within}} = \frac{SS_{\text{Within}}}{Df_{\text{Within}}} \quad \dots(3)$$

where;

MS_{Between} = mean sum of squares between the groups;

MS_{Within} = Mean sum of square within the groups;

SS_{Between} = Sum of squares between the groups;

SS_{Within} = sum of Squares within the groups;

Df_{Between} = Degree of freedom between groups given as (k-1);

Df_{Within} = Degree of freedom within groups given as (k-1);

The overall null hypothesis for one-way ANOVA with k groups is expressed mathematically as:



$$H_0: \mu_1 = \dots = \mu_k \quad \dots(4)$$

The alternative hypothesis is that “the population means are not all equal” and is mathematically expressed as:

$$H_A: \exists i, j: \mu_i \neq \mu_j \quad \dots(5)$$

The F-statistics tends to be larger if the alternative hypothesis is true than if the null hypothesis is true. In decision: if $F_{cal} > F_{tab} (P \leq 0.05)$, we reject null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rural Development Projects Made Available in the Study Area

The mean score of the assessment of the various rural development projects made available to rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State is presented in Table 1. The grand mean responses of the respondents on the various rural development projects made available to rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State of 2.43 was lower than the decision mean cut-point of 2.50. This implies that the respondents on the average did not accepted all the various enlisted empowerment projects made available to rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA Area of Bayelsa State by SPDC.

Out of the nine (9) enlisted empowerment projects made available to rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State, the result showed that the respondents had mean responses of greater than 2.50 on items No. 1, No. 4 and No. 9, suggesting that road construction, offering scholarship to youths and offering skill acquisition projects for youths in the study area were the only recognized empowerment projects made available to rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State by SPDC. This presages that there is poor provision of empowerment projects for rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State. Thus, the publicly held believe that SPDC in Bayelsa state have made available such projects as pipe born water, building of schools, building of health centres/general health care, rural electrification, provision of vehicles for rural transportation (car, tricycle, motorcycle, etc.), and provision of farm equipment to empower rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State is not accepted by the respondents. It may be that these projects claimed to have been made available in documents of SPDC are on-going or have gone moribund and thus, not of any benefit to the respondents. This finding is similar to that of Uzoagu (2015), Okoro (2017) and Ite *et al.* (2015) who noted that most of the claimed empowerment projects of SPDC does not exist as documented in some of the cluster communities in Rivers state and Niger-Delta region.



Table 1: Rural Development Projects Made Available to Rural Dwellers in Cluster Communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State

Projects	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	Remark
Road construction	50	11	24	20	2.87	Available
Pipe born water	21	23	27	34	2.30	Not Available
Building Schools	18	7	29	51	1.92	Not Available
Scholarship for youths	61	33	2	9	3.39	Available
Building of health centre/ general health care	19	13	29	44	2.07	Not Available
Rural electricity	12	25	30	38	2.10	Not Available
Provision of vehicles for rural transportation (car, tricycle, motorcycle, etc.	18	15	45	27	2.23	Not Available
Provision of farm equipment	17	20	30	38	2.15	Not Available
Skill acquisition for youths	48	15	20	22	2.85	Available
Grand mean score					2.43	Not Available
Number of respondents					105	
Decision cut-point					2.50	

Note: SA = strongly agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree and SD = strongly disagree

Source: Field survey data (2021)

Benefits Derived from SPDC in Making Projects Available for Rural Dwellers

The mean responses of the rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State on the benefits they derived from SPDC in making projects available in their area is presented in Table 2. The grand mean responses of the respondents on the benefits derived from SPDC in making projects available for rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State of 3.14 was higher than the decision mean cut-point of 3.00. This implies that the respondents on the average accepted benefiting from SPDC projects made available for rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State.

Out of the 12 enlisted benefits derivable from SPDC projects made available for rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State, the result showed that the respondents had mean responses of greater than 3.00 on items (Table 2) No. 1, No. 2, No. 4, No. 6, No. 7, and No. 8, suggesting that getting employed, SPDC projects serving as source of income, knowledge/skills acquisition, availability of rural infrastructure, becoming an entrepreneur, and having leadership opportunities were the recognized benefits derived by the respondents from SPDC in making projects available for rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State.

Employment is an important part of the economic, social and environmental development process and procedure of any country. Being employed due to the projects made available for the people by SPDC will provide financial freedom and decision making power to the rural dwellers and helps to reduce corruption, remove terrorism and prevents youth restiveness among the people. This finding is in line with the finding of Okoro (2017) who noted that SPDC projects and programmes is of benefit to the people as it helps to empower them financially and helps to address social vices among the people.



Table 2: Mean Responses on the Benefits Derived from SPDC in making Projects Available for Rural Dwellers

Benefits of SPDC projects	SA	A	UN	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	Remark
Employment	40	30	7	9	19	3.42	Benefited
Source of income	35	28	13	8	21	3.26	Benefited
Marital status	28	24	10	11	32	2.74	Not benefited
Knowledge/skill acquisition	53	26	7	7	12	3.85	Benefited
Affordable health care	22	25	19	15	24	2.83	Not benefited
Availability of rural infrastructure	34	34	10	6	21	3.31	Benefited
Been an Entrepreneur	24	34	18	11	18	3.16	Benefited
Leadership opportunity	27	49	6	8	15	3.48	Benefited
Access to market	24	23	24	11	23	2.91	Not benefited
Increase agricultural production	26	21	19	18	21	2.92	Not benefited
Food processing/storage	26	24	16	15	24	2.90	Not benefited
Belonging to social group	27	35	5	7	31	2.90	Not benefited
Grand mean score						3.14	Benefited
Number of respondents						105	
Decision cut-point						3.00	

Note: SA = strongly agree; A = Agree; UN = Neutral; D = Disagree and SD = strongly disagree

Source: Field survey data (2021)

SPDC projects serving as source of income to the rural dwellers entails that the respondents can cater for the needs of their family and be able to invest in farm or non-farm related business that will further help to better their standard of living. This finding is in line with the findings of Uzoagu (2015) and Egbon *et al.* (2018) who noted that SPDC projects provide income alternatives to benefiting individuals who work in such project centres or have acquired skills from these projects that enabled them to establish other streams of income.

Knowledge/skill acquisition enables the rural dwellers especially the youths to establish their own business and become an entrepreneur (self-employment). It will also provide the rural dwellers with diverse job opportunities, employment generation, effective function and crime reduction. This finding is similar to that of Ite *et al.* (2015) who noted that empowerment projects of SPDC is of benefit to cluster communities in Niger-Delta as it provides opportunity for acquisition of knowledge and skills by the people.

Availability of rural infrastructure such as good road, schools, health centres water supplies, and markets will make life better in rural area as it is needed in rural areas for the local population to fulfill their basic needs and live a social and economic productive life. It also increases opportunities for employment creation, reduction of rural- urban migration and makes way for faster economic growth and alleviation of poverty. This finding is in line with Ominikari (2016) who noted that social infrastructure enhances social wellbeing and furthers economic growth of project participants by providing basic services and facilities which allow businesses to develop and flourish.

Becoming an entrepreneur due to acquisition of knowledge/skills through SPDC empowerment projects will make rural dweller to become economic drive and allows them to make profitable decisions that will better their business revenue and their standard of living. Ownership of a business will allow for employment creation which betters the economic life of other people in the community. This finding is in line with Ibeagwa *et al.* (2012) who noted that entrepreneurial skills are of benefit in employment creation and in making rational decisions for business sustenance.



Leadership opportunities offered to rural dwellers by SPDC empowerment projects will allow them participate in making key decision for the development of their community. This finding is similar to that of Igbara *et al.* (2014) who noted that empowerment projects of SPDC avails leadership opportunities to rural men, women and youth.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis was tested that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings on benefits derived by cluster communities on rural development projects made available by the SPDC in the study area. Table 3: shows the ANOVA result of the test of difference in the mean rating on benefits derived by cluster communities on rural development projects made available by the SPDC in the study area.

Table 3: ANOVA Result for Test of Significance Difference in the Mean Rating on Benefits Derived by Cluster Communities on Rural Development Projects Made Available by the SPDC in the Study Area

Group	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F _{cal}	F _{tab}	Sig.
Between Groups	3.865	2	1.9325			
Within Groups	45.568	102	0.44675	4.326	3.04***	0.001
Total	49.433	104				

Note: *** = Significant at 1% level; Df = Degree of freedom; H₀ is rejected at 0.05 levels

The result on Table 3 shows that the calculated F-value of 4.326 was significant at 1% and greater than the tabulated F-value of 3.04 at 1%. This implies that significant differences exist in the mean rating on benefits derived by cluster communities on rural development projects made available by the SPDC in the study area among the respondents. This further suggests that the respondents vary in their perception about the benefit they derived from rural development projects of SPDC. The variation in the mean rating of the respondents could be as a result of the inconsistency of SPDC projects and its inability to evenly address the developmental need of the people. Individuals who have participated in one or more of the SPDC projects will see it as being beneficial, this assertion is in line with that of Jemimah *et al.* (2014) on intervention that empowered members of cluster communities with the establishment of fish farms by SPDC; which enable beneficiaries to buy fish at cheaper rates and enjoy a continuous supply to their fish processing businesses, while those who have been excluded in these empowerment projects sees it as not being of any benefit to them. According to Jemimah *et al.* (2014), beneficiaries must belong to a cluster community, which are selected in consultation with participating communities that are recognized by SPDC.

Therefore, SPDC projects made available to rural dwellers in the study area may not have empowered the entire people as expected, thus the variation in the mean rating of the people on the benefits derivable from SPDC projects made available to the rural dwellers. Since the computed F-value of 4.326 was significant at 1% and greater than the tabulated F-value of 3.04 at 1%, we therefore reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings on benefits derived by cluster communities on rural development projects made available by the SPDC in the study area, and accept the alternative hypothesis that there is significant difference in the mean ratings on benefits derived by cluster communities on rural



development projects made available by the SPDC in the study area. The study concludes that rural dwellers view of the benefit derived from SPDC empowerment projects in the study area is peculiar to the people in the study area.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has filled a research gap by identifying the community development projects made available by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) in empowering rural dwellers in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State. The study which was carried out among sampled rural dwellers in the study area showed that road construction, scholarship to youths, and skill acquisition for youths were the empowerment projects of SPDC made available to rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State. Availability of SPDC empowerment projects in the study area benefited the rural dwellers in terms of provision of employment, serving as source of income, allowing them to acquire knowledge/skills, making some rural infrastructure available, enabling them become an entrepreneur and offers leadership opportunity to them. There is significant difference in the mean ratings on benefits derived by cluster communities on rural development projects made available to them by the SPDC in the study area. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is need to review the implementation of SPDC empowerment projects in the study area so as make it more robust in providing empowerment projects such as pipe born water, building of schools, building of health centres/general health care, rural electricity, provision of vehicles for rural transportation (car, tricycle, and motorcycle) and provision of farm equipment which the rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State could not identify as being made available to them by SPDC.
2. Empowerment of the rural dwellers in cluster communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State through SPDC projects should be such that will benefit the people in terms of affordable health care, accessing their market easily, increasing their agricultural production, encouraging food processing and storage and encouraging the people to belong to social groups.
3. There is need for provision of even opportunity to benefit from the empowerment projects of SPDC by the rural dwellers as this will promote unity among the people and eliminate the ill desire of any individual or group of individuals in trying to sabotage the efforts of SPDC in providing empowerment projects in the study area.

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