

## **Organic and Service Delivery Orientations of Rural Community Development in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States, Nigeria.**

1.Assoc FestusNkpoyen.2.Obibessong V Mon. 3.EdemEbong.4.DrOdike E Levi.

Department of Sociology. Dept of Continuing Edu. Inst.of P.P.A Department of Sociology.

University of Calabar. &Development Studies. Uni of Calabar Ignatius Ajuru University.

Calabar, Nigeria. Uni of Calabar, Nigeria. edemebong@gmail.com Port Harcourt  
[sabenof@yahoo.com](mailto:sabenof@yahoo.com)[verampuon15@gmail.com](mailto:verampuon15@gmail.com) ebenco104@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

Rural community development is a function of both organic and service delivery. The paper demonstrates the inter-linkages of combined involvement of local and external actors in target community project decisions, psycho-cultural milieu, partnership/service delivery in localities and rural community development explicitly. The neo-endogenous model is the theoretical framework. The study adopted mixed qualitative and quantitative approaches of survey research design. It drew supportive evidences from 672 respondents selected through the multi-stage sampling procedure. Analyses reveal that incorporating local knowledge into external actors/agencies decisions creates balanced social and economic local development. A comprehensive plan for improving local condition must integrate both tangible and less tangible orientations of community development. Rural community development is necessarily a synthesis of local enthusiasm, community norms, emotion, values, beliefs, perceptions and service delivery, information dissemination and discrete initiatives.

Keyword: Organic, service delivery, rural community development.

### **INTRODUCTION.**

Community development is ostensibly meant to benefit the grassroots people, particularly the improvement of sustainable livelihoods with optimal attention paid to the peculiar community psycho-cultural characteristics such as values, perceptions, passion etc. Societies have always been concerned with providing basic life needs to members to create real tangible economic and social gains. Community development is essentially about revitalizing and strengthening rural areas' capacity for a better quality of life. It aims to reposition and reintegrate rural regions into the broader society. Rural community development is based on reproducing and further developing local resources by the people themselves as three-quarters of the world's poor live in rural areas (Cavaye 1999; Gillard 2000; Nkpoyen 2008).

Communities are developed with the aims of satisfying basic needs of food, shelter; cultural, economic and political life; utilizing the natural resources in their environment maximally; increasing their per capita income; raising their standard of living and instilling in its people the love and desire for increased and sustained development (Nkpoyen 2008). The story of the rural community is undertaken with the active participation and, if possible, on the community's initiative. According to the 1948 Colonial Office Annual Conference on African Administration held in Cambridge, documented in Ebong (2003), for community

development to take place, it necessarily involves local people participation and initiatives spontaneously. However, if the initiative is lacking, certain techniques must be designed to secure people's effective and enthusiastic response (Nya 2002). In other words, community participation and community initiatives are excellent and necessary ingredients for rural community development.

However, over the decades, community development has been inadvertently promoted and implemented through macro government rural development programmes and policies. These measures have always had the intrinsic expectations of transforming rural communities. Based on this, Nigeria, as documented by (Nkpoyen, Mbat and Bassey 2013; Nkpoyen, Bassey and Usoroh 2017; Nkpoyen, Bassey and Uyang 2015), has so far experimented with numerous programmes to enhance grassroots development. The evidence of the government's concern abound in the National Development Plan documents: 1962-68; 1970-74; 1975-80; and 1981-85. Also, Integrated Rural Development, River Basin Development Authority, Basic Needs Strategy and Instrument of Local Government (Okoye 1991). Others have included the National Green Revolution, Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure, National Accelerated Food Production Programme; Better Life For Rural Women, National Poverty Eradication Programme etc. (Nkpoyen et al., 2015).

These various programmes testified to the assumed priority attention rural development has received in Nigeria. However, as Nkpoyen (2008) observed, experience in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States' rural communities demonstrates that rather than transforming and modernizing rural communities as expected by the government, these programmes have not recorded significant social and economic gains for these communities. Thus, rural dwellers have not significantly benefitted from the dividends of the "service delivery" policy orientation of government. The anticipated development or positive social and economic alterations in rural communities have not been possible because rural communities have been traditionally conditioned to depend on and be recipients of service delivery and infrastructure maintenance by the government. The implication for this is that service delivery is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for rural community development, especially in sub-Saharan African localities.

Communities in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States of Nigeria have not relied on using their assets in new ways, working cooperatively, improving networks, mobilizing existing skills and putting innovative ideas into action. The outcomes could have been improved standard of living, new jobs, infrastructure and also healthy functioning communities with high socio-economic wellbeing (Christenson, Fendley and Robinson 1989). Observably, communities are not fostering innovation, maintaining enthusiasm, supporting "drivers" and helping turn passion into action to improve their destinies. Also, community development professionals and "external agencies" are unable to assist local people develop networks, build local cooperation and foster local passion (Flora 1997).

Cavaye (2001) documents that many communities can be motivated to build networks, cultivate local enthusiasm and develop substantial capability, thus, turning these into social and economic benefits. However, many initiatives described as community development, according to Cavaye (2001) are false in the sense that they often contribute to infrastructure or community organization with little change in community wellbeing. The outcome has always been pseudo community development. This is the lacuna in rural community development. Thus making development strategy to focus only on the "delivery" of services in the form of information dissemination and provision of resources to meet perceived needs. The consequence, as reported by Tom and Attai (2018), has been that over 80 percent of the inhabitants of rural dwellers are victims of neglect, deprivation and exploitation. Hence

community development programme conceptualization by government has structurally failed to translate the dividends of Nigeria's rural development policies into measurable benefits for rural dwellers(Nkpoyen 2008).

This paper simply argues that there is ample evidence to oppose the claim that government rural development strategy alone can generate improvement in community life.Cavaye( 2001) argues that the processes of engagement and partnership that help local people to act on existing motivation, build enthusiasm and confidence, challenge community attitudes and perceptions, support hidden ''informal'' leaders in communities; also, gain access to appropriate information and resources, build relationship with key individuals inside and outside are de-emphasized. Communities' values are disregarded in the process of community development by the top-down service delivery orientation of external development agencies. These are the organic dimensions of rural community development.

Rural community development relies on both ''organic'' and ''delivered'' orientations. Therefore, authentic community development is a function of the integration of both aspects. This paper admits that fostering and supporting passion, enthusiasm, motivation and attitudes in communities are needed to create authentic socio-economic gains. Rural community development depends on the less tangible components of community initiatives and ownership, community passion, local values, perception and beliefs, network of existing community groups. Measures to develop the rural areas must not only focus on providing infrastructure and services by external agents-donors, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and project facilitators, but also provide a vehicle for context for people to act on their concerns and interest, thus, eliciting development priorities directly from target communities. Therefore, rural community development is the necessary outcome of the simultaneous interplay of service delivery and psycho-cultural components.

Objectives of the paper.

1. To examine the association between combined involvement of both local and external actors in target community project decisions and rural community development.
2. To determine the influence of psycho-cultural milieu(community passion, emotion, values, perception, traditional beliefs) on rural community development.
3. To investigate the association between partnership/service delivery in localities and rural community development.

Research questions.

1. Is combined involvement of both local and external actors in target community project decisions associated with rural community development?
2. To what extent is psycho- cultural milieu associated with rural community development?
3. What is the extent of the relationship between partnership/service delivery and rural community development?

Theoretical framework.

Neo-endogenous model.

The neo-endogenous model is a combination of both exogenous and endogenous models(Lowe, Murdoch and Ward 1995; Ray 2001 and Ray 2003). The main forces of exogenous development were conceived as emanating from outside rural areas. But it was considered in the late 1970s as dependent development, reliant on continued subsidies and policy decisions of distant agencies. A distorted development; development error which

boosted single sectors, selected settlements and certain types of businesses but left others behind and neglected the non-economic aspects of rural life. Scholars in the development circle castigated it as a destructive model which erased cultural and environmental differences of rural areas. The literature considers exogenous model as dictated development devised by external experts and planners from outside the influence of local target areas. It believes in the modernization of physical infrastructure.

Endogenous approaches(driven from within) are based on the assumption that the specific resources of an area-natural, human and cultural-hold the key to the area's sustainable development. The endogenous model sees local resource endowments- climate, land fertility and environmental quality-and the specific characteristics of human and cultural capital as providing the fundamentals for rural community development. It seeks to improve local economic and social circumstances through mobilizing internal resources for broad-based involvement in developing the locality(van der Ploeg and Long 1994; van der Ploeg and van Dijk 1995; Schucksmith 2000).

This paper agrees with (Lowe et.al 1995; Ray 2001) that the notion of rural areas pursuing socio-economic development autonomous of outside influences is not a practical proposition in contemporary sub-Saharan African communities. Any development agenda must embrace a mixture of exogenous and endogenous forces: the local level must interact with the extra-local. The critical point is how to enhance the capacity of local areas to steer these wider processes, resources and actions to their benefits. This is the notion of the neo-endogenous model of development.The key to rural community development in both AkwaIbom and Cross River states is building a local institutional capacity both able to mobilize socio-cultural (internal) resources and cope with service delivery approach of government( external forces) in the region. Local actors must combine both internal and external factors in the development process.

#### Materials and method.

The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches of survey research design. The qualitative approach of Focus Group Discussion(FGD) and quantitative approach of questionnaire enabled the researcher to explore rural community development in both AkwaIbom and Cross River States of Nigeria as a hybridization of organic and service delivery orientations. Geographically, both study areas are situated in the tropics but within the rain forest vegetation zone. The people are predominantly Christians. The main source of livelihood is agriculture. Their rural communities still exhibit characteristics of underdevelopment such as untarred feeder roads, non-availability of pipe-borne water except from polluted streams, open defecation, central weekly markets, no electricity supply, no health centres, inadequate classroom spaces for teaching-learning process etc. There are 31 local government areas(LGAs) in AkwaIbom State, while there are 18 local government areas(LGAs) in Cross River State.

#### Sampling procedure.

A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for selecting the respondents for the study. Firstly, the two states constituted the two major strata of the study. Each stratum contains three senatorial districts. From each major stratum, a simple random sampling method was used to select 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the senatorial district. From AkwaIbom State Eket Senatorial District was selected (Stratum A), from Cross River State, Southern Senatorial District was selected(Stratum B). Using the hat and draw method of simple random sampling, 6 LGAs were selected from each stratum. These constituted 12 minor strata. From the 12 minor strata, a simple random sampling method was still adopted to select 3 communities from each, amounting to 18 communities(clusters).

From each cluster, systematic sampling technique was used to select the actual respondents for the study. The researcher selected 5% respondents per cluster through the proportionate to size sampling technique. This yielded a total of 600 respondents. Three FGDs were conducted per stratum, giving a total of 6FGDs in all. The composition of each FGD was between 10-12 members. Overall, 72 community members participated in the FGD. The total sample size was 672 respondents.

**Table 4.1: Personal characteristics of respondents (N = 600)**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
<b>Age</b>		
35 – 40 years	238	39.67
41 – 45 years	184	30.67
46 – 50 years	102	17.0
51 – 55 years	54	9.0
56 years and above	22	3.66
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	160	26.67
Married	380	63.33
Divorced	45	7.5
Widow	15	2.5
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	575	95.84
Islam	5	0.83
African Tradition	20	3.33
<b>Occupation</b>		
Farming	286	47.66
Fishing	92	15.33
Trading	101	16.83
Civil servant	63	10.5
Unemployed	42	7
Others (Specify)	16	2.66
<b>Educational Level</b>		
Primary education	186	31.0
Secondary education	308	51.33
Informal education	106	17.67
<b>Income Level Per Month</b>		
Less than ₦50, 000	164	27.33
Less than ₦100, 000	240	40.0
Less than ₦200, 000	182	30.33
Above ₦300, 000	14	2.33
<b>Source of Income Per Month</b>		
Profit from fishing	92	15.33
Salary	63	10.5
Profit of enterprise	101	16.83

Profit of agriculture	286	47.66
None	58	9.66
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	278	46.33
Male	322	53.66

**Source: Field Data (2018).**

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic data of respondents. It indicates that 39.67percent (N=238) constitute the age bracket with the largest number of respondents while respondents in 52years and above age bracket constitute the age bracket with the least number of respondents. In terms of marital status, the majority of respondents, 63.33percent (N=380) are married. The respondents, 95.84 percent (N=575) are predominantly Christians. Farming constitutes the major occupation as indicated by 47.66 percent (N=282) of total respondents in the study. Other major occupations are trading and fishing because of the coastal nature of some of the communities. Most of the respondents, 51.33 percent (N= 308) are beneficiaries of secondary education. The rest are also products of primary and informal education. The male respondents, 53.66 (N=322) are more in number compared to the female respondents.

Data analysis.

1. Research question 1: Is combined involvement of both local and external actors in target community project decisions associated with rural community wellbeing in Akwalbom and Cross River States?

**Table 2: Pearson product-moment correlation analysis of the relationship between combined involvement of both local and external actors in target community project decisions and rural community wellbeing in Akwalbom and Cross River States (N=600)**

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-cal
Combined involvement in target community Project decisions.				
a. access to comm. information/resources (X <sub>1</sub> )	1050	1950	1775	0.878
b. Allowing comm. identify needed projects (X <sub>2</sub> )	1055	1970	1750	0.614
c. Strengthen capability for comm. self-initiated projects (X <sub>3</sub> )	1040 1046	1945 1952	1780 1774	0.925 0.860
d. Instill sense of local collective ownership (X <sub>4</sub> )	950	1650		
Local comm. wellbeing (y)				

Significant at 0.05, critical- r= 0.195, df= 598

**Source: Field Data (2018).**

Results of analysis in Table 2 show that the calculated values of 0.878, 0.614, 0.925, 0.860 are greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 at 0.05 level of significance, with 598 degrees of freedom. This means that combined involvement of both local and external actors

in target community project decisions in terms of access to community information and resources, allowing target communities to identify needed projects and recipients, strengthening capability for community self-initiated projects, instilling sense of local community ownership have significant relationship with rural community wellbeing in AkwaIbom and Cross River States.

2. Research question 2: To what extent does socio-psychological variables influence rural community wellbeing in AkwaIbom and Cross River States?

This research question sought to find out the influence of cultural milieu on rural community wellbeing in AkwaIbom and Cross River States of Nigeria. Data were obtained using focus group discussion(FGD) and qualitatively analyzed. The framework analysis approach involving five key stages of analysis was used. These are: familiarization with the data; identification of a thematic framework; indexing; charting and finally mapping and interpretation. (The SURE Collaboration, 2011; Ritchie & Spencer 1994.)

Several themes were identified, such as community passion and motivation of local people, community ownership, traditional beliefs and values, social organization, attitude of self-help, perception and emotion, community practices and local enthusiasm. The respondents were required to discuss the extent to which these socio-psychological processes affect rural community wellbeing.

Research question 3.

What is the extent of the relationship existing between external agents' delivery of services in localities and rural community development?

Delivery of services in localities by government has no significant association with rural community development in AkwaIbom and Cross River states. Delivery of services was classified into: Provision of resources to support community activity/community life, investment in infrastructure, establishing new industries or enterprises, provision of palliatives, activity of cooperative groups. Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) analysis was used to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3

**Table 3: Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) contingency analysis of the association between delivery of services in local economy and rural community development (N =600)**

Variables	Household income		Total
	High	Low	
Delivery of services to localities	55	25	80
Provision of agric./forestryreso.	50	45	95
Investment in rural infrast.	120	30	150
Establishing new industry.	60	40	100
Provision of palliatives.	32	53	85
Cooperative groups' activities.	48	42	90
Adult education services.	365	235	600

**Source: Field Data (2018).**

**Table 4: Contingency table showing the association between service delivery to local economy and rural community development.**

Cell	O	E	O - E	(O - E) <sup>2</sup>	(O - E) <sup>2</sup> /E
1	55	48.67	6.33	40.0689	0.82
2	25	31.33	-6.33	40.0689	1.28
3	50	57.79	-7.79	60.6841	1.05
4	45	37.21	7.79	60.6841	1.63
5	120	91.25	28.75	826.5625	9.06
6	30	58.75	-28.75	826.5625	14.07
7	60	60.83	-0.83	0.6889	0.01
8	40	39.17	0.83	0.6889	0.02
9	32	51.71	-19.71	388.4841	7.51
10	53	33.29	19.71	388.4841	11.67
11	48	54.75	16.75	45.5625	0.83
12	42	35.25	6.75	45.5625	1.29
Total	600				49.24

**Source: Field Data (2019).**

Calculated ( $X^2$ ) value = 49.24

Critical ( $X^2$ ) value = 11.1

Level of significance = 0.05

Degree of freedom = 5

### Conclusion

Results of analysis in Table 3 show that the calculated ( $X^2$ ) value of 49.24 is greater than the critical ( $X^2$ ) of 11.1 at 0.05 level of significance, with 5 degrees of freedom. This means that service delivery to localities has a significant association with rural community development in Akwa Ibom and Cross Rivers States.

### Discussion of findings

1. Combined involvement of both local and external actors in target community project decisions and rural community wellbeing.

The analysis of this research question indicates that a significant relationship exists between the combined involvement of local and external actors in target community project decisions and rural community development. According to Mansuri and Rao (2005) comments that by the mid-1980s, many large scale government-sponsored and initiated development strategies did not produce the expected outcomes. The consequence was responsible for reawakening interest in the local management of resources and decisions. Chambers(1983) observes that the involvement of the poor rural dwellers allow them to be part of the development process, with external agents acting playing the role of facilitators and sources of funds. Rural community development relies on communities to utilize their social capital to organize themselves and be involved in the development process(Gugerty and Miguel 2002).

Trond (2000) admits that the pillar of rural community development initiative is the active participation of owners of the defined community in some aspects of project design and implementation with external assistance from government, civil society organizations and other non-community actors. This paper supports Narayan and Petesch(2000) that the

major goal of involving community members in the process of community development is the incorporation of local knowledge into the project's decision making processes. As documented by Mansuri and Rao(2004) involving key beneficiaries in making key project decisions is advantageous as it makes participation an exercise of voice and choice or empowerment. Incorporating local knowledge with that of the external agency, it is argued, can assist in targeting and reducing informational costs involved in rural community development processes(Narayan 1998; Ostrom, Lam and Lee,1994).If rural community development is to be a dynamic instrument for national purposes, Ekong(2003) asserts that it should facilitate a creative merging of locally expressed needs with national goals so that the impact of local involvement multiplies the opportunity for balanced social and economic development.

## 2. Psycho-cultural variables and rural community development in AkwaIbom and Cross River States.

The analysis of socio-psychological variables was qualitatively carried out using Focus Group Discussion(FGD). The various views of the discussants are summarized here. According to the discussants," Our communities are not operating based on local motivation. Outsiders are not assisting us to develop our locality networks and work on our attitudes. Social amenities and services provided by local government are important, but our people need to be part of the process by demonstrating their concerns and interests. Those outsiders should consider our local passion as a people and try to help us build our community capacity. We are underdeveloped because of relying on outside assistance and especially too due to non- stimulation of local action and spirit of community ownership".

The discussants also commented that "We have not experienced community development the way it should be. This may be because we have not been successful in providing our communities with social amenities through self-help efforts. When much talked-about provision of infrastructure by grassroots government is not yielding expected outcomes. As community people, we also need to consider the positive emotional conditions of our local people and understand the extent to which we have the passion to improve our community. This emotion/passion should be connected with local government programme to improve our condition".

The findings of this document harmonize with the ideas of Cavaye(2001) that for rural community development to occur, it must align with the values, passion and perception of the people. Development project decisions must be guided by community norms, conventions, sentiments and perceptions. The FGDs revealed that "initiatives of our people including their passion are not aroused. Our self-confidence appears to be missing. Since we cannot stimulate self-help action, outsiders such as government, CSOs must conceive and implement projects that meet our felt needs." The discussants further asserted that "whether the government or any external agency likes it or not, our customs, our established attitudes of resignation, non-flexible social and cultural world views inhibit effective action for socio-economic development. Thus, we remain remain backward or underdeveloped as government intervention through partial assistance in the form of infrastructure is plastered on the traditional characteristics of the community. This our socio-cultural outlook creates developmental helplessness".

## 3. Delivery of service to localities and rural community development.

The findings are consistent with Ekong(2003) that rural community development in Nigeria would therefore aim at planning, financing and the development of facilities and services in rural areas to make these areas desirable places to live and carry out business investments.

Investing in infrastructure and availability of local industries have changed some communities. Cavaye(1999) comments that government welfare reforms have significantly impacted on grassroots communities. In rural community development as posited by (Flora 1997; Christenson, Fendley and Robinson 1989; Gillad 2000) support of government and other agencies with the intent of improve rural lives is abbreviated to service delivery. However, Cavaye's(2001) views are supported here. Delivery of services through important, existence of services do not challengecommunity perceptions and guide them to rethink development related issues.

Rural community development agenda must fulfil two major mandates: Firstly, to deliver services and support. Secondly, engage rural areas in an effective partnership to stimulate their capacity to rethink existing challenges examine the possibility of utilizing available skills, resources and identify motivated local people. Community development plan must simultaneously engage beneficiary communities and engender local action. Government agencies admit that their impacts to community development are in domains of delivery of services, support for infrastructure and policy adjustments( Flora 1997; Shaffer 1989). Social and economic alterations in rural communities are increasing challenging the government to combine a dual role of service delivery and support for community capacity.

### Conclusion and recommendation

Rural community development extends beyond the conventional service delivery dimension to include the organic aspects such as partnerships, new assumptions and grassroots motivation. Built into this less tangible domain are significant emphasis on community values, new forms of participation, local perceptions, engendering local confidence etc. A comprehensive agenda that has the huge potential to enhance development outcomes in rural communities involves effective integration of governmentinfrastructure, service delivery, policy andeconomic development initiatives with local passion and motivation of people; attitudes of self-help, effective local leadership, a commitment to learn and change attitudes. Government agencies have traditionally conceptualized their contribution to community development as delivery of services, support for infrastructure and policy adjustments. However, changes in rural areas are increasingly challenging government to develop dual role of service delivery and support for community capacity building. Government rural development measures do not provide appropriate orientation for functional community life. These macro grassroots development strategies have not significantly improve community lives. The central concern of this thesis is that rural community development as service delivery is a development error in Sub Saharan African communities.

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