

Analysing Constraints to the Usage of Integrated Rural Development Projects in Nigeria: A Case Study of Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State

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Abstract: Over the decades, it has been observed that most rural development projects in Nigeria meant for the rural people are not being used by the rural dwellers due to several reasons which may include level of awareness, income, participation in the implementation phase, etc. This study therefore seeks to determine the most dominant factors that affect the usage of Integrated Rural Development (IRD) projects in Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State. Specifically, the paper examines the relationship between income and the usage of infrastructural facilities, as well as the relationship between the level of awareness and the usage of infrastructural facilities in the study area. A sample of 80 respondents from 10 villages was drawn using multi-stage sampling method and structured questionnaires were used to obtain information on socio-economic characteristics, availability of infrastructural facilities, frequency of usage, involvement during planning and implementation stage of projects, etc. The findings of study revealed that there was a significant relationship at the 5% level between the income level of the respondents and the usage of IRD facilities in the area. Further than this, a significant relationship at the 5% level was also found between the level of awareness of the respondents and the usage of infrastructural facilities except for market facilities. Beyond these, some constraints for optimum usage of facilities were identified and they include low-income, lack of access roads, lack of involvement of rural people in planning implementation stages of IRD projects, among others. The study therefore recommends that involvement of rural people in the planning/implementation of the IRD projects, providing means of increasing or at least making their income levels sustainable as well as creating greater awareness regarding IRD projects in their areas would enhance the usage as well as maintenance of these facilities and hence would reduce the wastage of government resources that may result due to lack of usage of these facilities.

Key words: Awareness, participation, rural development, infrastructure, usage

INTRODUCTION

Many developing countries of the world including Nigeria have adverse rural problems such as widespread poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, low level of infrastructural development, low standards of living, as well as high rates of rural-urban migration. Meanwhile, about 70% of the populations in some of these developing countries are rural dwellers engaged in subsistent agriculture and also account for over 90% of food production, in most cases.

In consideration of the importance of this vital segment of the population in Nigeria and as part of the general agricultural sector policy objective, Integrated Rural Development (IRD) programmes have been evolved from time to time to address the multi-faceted problems of the rural areas as well as a strategy meant to

check rural-urban drift to already congested cities, plus causing a problem of labour shortage in the rural areas.

By way of exposition, Mabogunye *et al.* (1978) defines integrated rural development projects as infrastructural facilities such as market, medical facilities road network, boreholes, rural electrification facilities, recreational centres, etc established by the application of the knowledge of skill of relevant national and international services in an integrated manner in order to improve the quality of life of the neglected rural majority. These facilities provide services for the rural agricultural sector to develop and create an attractive environment where rural dwellers can live in an increase their productivity and overall wellbeing. According to Uphoff (1984) since the agricultural sector has the capacity to absorb the abundant labour in the rural areas, integrating agricultural production with infrastructural development

would provide a springboard for agro-allied industrial development, hence reducing the need for rural-urban drift.

Clearly, the IRD strategy for rural development combines agricultural development and rural infrastructural development in such a package as would increase productivity of the rural dwellers (hence their incomes), reduce unemployment and illiteracy, improve standards of living in the rural areas and thus reduce movement of unskilled agricultural labour to the urban centres. In spite of this in Nigeria, it has been observed that the provision of IRD facilities, has not achieved its goal as is evident in non-usage/abandonment of such facilities. This, of course, suggests that there may be factors that militate against the optimum usage of these facilities by rural dwellers. Studies have shown that although rural dwellers lack most basic infrastructural facilities that one would feel they need, they are more likely to be more comfortable and partake in the usage and maintenance of those facilities that meet their felt needs. Thus, need assessment and creation of awareness concerning IRD projects may be necessary but not in itself sufficient, as it has been discovered that sometimes development agents scratch where their clients do not itch.

Consequently, the key problem in this study is to examine the factors which constrain the use of the IRD programme facilities in Odukpani Local Government Area with a view to proffering useful recommendations on to adequate usage of the projects as well as their sustainability.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sampling procedure and data: The study area is Odukpani Local Government Area in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. The Local Government Area lies within longitude 8.5°E and latitude 8.25°N, covering a land area of 2,257 Km².

Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the sample for data collection. In the first stage, the Local Government Area was purposively selected from others based on the availability of IRD projects in the area. In the next stage, 10 villages were selected, from which 8 respondents each were randomly selected for the study, making a total of 80 respondents. Structured interview questionnaires were then used to elicit information on socioeconomic characteristics, availability of infrastructural facilities in the community, frequency of usage, involvement during planning and implementation stages, etc.

Data analysis: Data analysis was performed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, means and percentages were used to analyse socioeconomic characteristics and involvement in planning/implementation stages of projects, while an inferential statistic (Chi-square statistic) was used to determine whether there was a significant relationship between income levels of respondents as well as their level of awareness with usage of IRD infrastructural facilities.

The formula for the Chi-square is given as:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(E - O)^2}{E} \quad (1)$$

Where:

χ^2 = The calculated value of the Chi-square

O = Observed frequency

E = Expected frequency

Expected frequency is given as:

$$E = \frac{RT \times CT}{GT} \quad (2)$$

While the Degrees of Freedom (DF) are given as:

$$DF = (C - 1)(R - 1) \quad (3)$$

Where:

RT = Row total and

CT = Column total

GT = Grand Total

C = Number of columns

R = Number of rows

The calculated Chi-square statistic is compared with the theoretical value to either reject or not reject the null hypothesis of significant relationship at the 5% level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' usage of facilities based on level of income:

The results of the respondents' usage of facilities based on their income levels are shown in Table 1. It can be inferred from the table that 71.25% of the respondents claimed that income strongly affects their usage of health facilities, while 67.5, 60 and 36.25% respectively of the respondents affirmed that their usage of educational, market and electricity facilities respectively was affected their incomes. Results also indicate that 12.5, 15, 21.25 and

Table 1: Distribution of respondents' usage of facilities based on level of income

Facilities	Strongly affects	(%)	Partly affects	(%)	No effect	(%)	Meanresponse	Rank
Health facilities	57	71.25	10	12.5	13	16.25	2.55	1
Educational facilities	54	67.5	12	15	14	17.5	2.50	2
Market	48	60	17	21.25	15	18.75	2.41	3
Electricity	45	56.25	20	25	15	18.75	2.38	4

Source: Field work, 2004

Table 2: Distribution of respondent's usage of facilities based on the level of awareness

Facilities	Strongly affects	(%)	Partly affects	(%)	No effect	(%)	Mean response	Rank
Health facilities	35	43.75	10	12.5	35	43.75	2	1
Educational facilities	34	42.5	10	12.5	36	45	1.98	2
Market					80	100	1	4
Electricity	1	1.25	6	7.5	73	91.25	1.1	3

Source: Field work, 2004

Table 3: Distribution of respondents' usage of facilities based on access roads

Facilities	Strongly affects	(%)	Partly affects	(%)	No effect	(%)	Mean response	Rank
Health facilities	55	68.75	19	23.75	6	7.5	2.61	1
Educational facilities	19	22.5	32	40	30	37.5	1.85	2
Market	18	22.5	32	40	30	37.5	1.85	2
Electricity			7	8.75	73	91.25	1.09	3

Source: Field work, 2004

25% of the respondents respectively were partially affected by income in their usage of health, educational, market and electricity facilities, while 16.25, 17.5, 18.75 and 18.75%, respectively of the respondents said income had no effect on their use of health, education, market and electricity facilities. The above information implies that income strongly affects the use of health, education, market and electrical facilities in the study area in that order.

Respondents' usage of facilities based on level of awareness: Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents' usage of facilities based on the level of awareness. From the table, 43.75, 42.5 and 1.25% of the respondents were of the view that awareness strongly affects their use of health, educational and electricity facilities respectively. Similarly, those that were affected partially include 12.5% for health, 12.5% for education and 7.5% for electricity. On the other hand, 43.75, 45, 100 and 91.25%, respectively of the respondents claimed that awareness had no effect on their usage of health, education, market and electricity facilities. These results imply that awareness strongly affects their usage of health and education facilities have less effect on electricity and market in that order.

Respondents' usage of facilities based on access roads: Table 3 shows the distribution of the respondents by usage of facilities based on access roads. From the table, 22.5, 22.5 and 68.75% of the respondents respectively

were strongly affected by access roads in their use of health, educational and market facilities while 23.75, 40, 40 and 8.75%, respectively were partially affected by access roads on their use of health, educational and market and electricity facilities. In contrast, 7.5, 37.5, 37.5 and 91.25% of the respondents, respectively claimed that access roads had no effect on their use of health, educational, market and electricity facilities.

Respondents' usage of facilities based on involvement in planning stage: Table 4 shows that 3.75 and 7.5% of respondents were very much involved at the planning stage of educational and market facilities projects respectively, while 7.5 and 11.25% were partially involved in education and market facilities. On the other hand, 100, 88.75, 81.25 and 100% of the respondents respectively were not involved in the planning stage of health, educational, market and electricity projects.

Respondents' usage of facilities based on involvement in implementation stage: Table 5 shows that 3.75 and 5% were involved in the implementation stage of educational and market facilities projects respectively, while 3.75 and 2.5% were partially involved in the implementation stage of educational and market projects. In contrast, 100, 92.5, 92.5 and 100% of the respondents respectively were not involved in the implementation stages of health, educational, market and electricity projects. These show that respondents were only involved in implementation of facilities such as education and market.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents based on involvement in planning

Facilities	Very much involved	(%)	Partially involved	(%)	Not involved	(%)	Mean response	Rank
Health facilities					80	100	1	3
Educational facilities	3	3.75	6	7.5	71	88.75	1.15	2
Market	6	7.5	7	11.25	65	81.25	1.26	1
Electricity					80	100	1	3

Source: Field work, 2004

Table 5: Distribution of respondents based on involvement in implementation stage

Facilities	Very much involved	(%)	Partially involved	(%)	Not involved	(%)	Mean response	Rank
Health facilities					80	100	1	3
Educational facilities	3	3.75	3	3.75	74	92.5	1.11	2
Market	4	5	2	2.5	74	92.5	1.13	1
Electricity					80	100	1	3

Source: Field work, 2004

Table 6: Distribution of respondent based on their frequency usage of facilities

Facilities	Very often	(%)	Often	(%)	Less often	(%)	Not involved	(%)	Mean response	Rank
Health facilities	2	2.5	12	15	29	37	37	46.25	0.74	3
Educational facilities	3	3.75	4	5	4	5	69	86.25	0.14	4
Market	9	11.25	48	60	23	28.75			1.71	2
Electricity	43	53.75	25	31.25	12	15			2.39	1

Source: Field work, 2004

Respondents' frequency of usage of facilities: From Table 6, 2.5, 3.75, 11.25 and 53.75% of the respondents respectively used health, educational, market and electricity facilities very often. Similarly, 15, 5, 60 and 31.25% of the respondents respectively used health, educational, market and electricity facilities often, while 37, 5, 28.75 and 15% of the respondents respectively used health, educational, market and electricity used health facilities less often. On the other hand, 46.25 and 86.25% of the respondents respectively did not use health and educational facilities at all. This revealed that majority of the people had no access to the use of health and educational facilities and few only use electricity and market facilities.

Relationship between income, level of awareness and use of facilities: The result of the chi-square statistic revealed that the level of income is positively related to the use of facilities at 5% level of significance. Furthermore, the result showed that the usage of health, education and electricity facilities is positively related to the level of awareness at 5% level and not related to the usage of market facilities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study shows that health and educational facilities are the least used by the people in the area. This finding is corroborated with the finding on the strong positive relationship of income with the use of the facilities. Clearly, since income is the most predominant factor that affects the usage of basic facilities and majority of the people in the area are farmers, there is the need for their overall productivity to be increased. This can be achieved by strengthening extension services, provision of improved seedlings, credit facilities, encouraging cooperative formation, etc. and involvement of rural people in the planning/implementation of rural projects.

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