

**EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES OF CROSS RIVER STATE COMMUNITY AND
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY IN SOUTHERN SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF
CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study evaluated the Activities of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency (CRSCSDA) in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. To achieve the aim of the study, five research questions were posed to direct the study Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 785 respondents were selected from the population of 26,179. The questionnaire entitled the “Evaluation of activities of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency” (EACRSCSDAQ) was the instrument used for data collection. The research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, simple

percentages, and bar chart). The result of the analysis indicated that provision of rural electrification was adequately provided while healthcare services was inadequately provided by Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. Based on the result it was recommended among others that, CRSCSDA should spread her activities evenly so as to help bridge the gap between the urban and rural communities.

Key words: Evaluation, Community and Social Development.

Introduction

The Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency (CRSCSDA) was established in 2009 by the law of Cross River State House of Assembly as a strategic framework for the implementation of programmes and the provision of social, rehabilitative services to improve the physical, social, emotional and economic wellbeing of people in the state. Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency was established with emphasis on ameliorating the social problems affecting the development of the state. The main goal of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency is the modernization of rural areas in the state through a transition from traditional isolation to integrate with the state economy for equitable and balanced development of the state (CRSCSDA, 2018). The CRSCSDA framework for development constitutes a process of planned change for which one approach or the other is adopted for the improvement or transformation for the benefits of the people in the state. It also includes promoting and improving the rights and wellbeing of people especially (the less privileged), enhancing the capacity building and empowerment of people in the state. The CRSCSDA is also saddled with the responsibility of enhancing the socioeconomic growth and reduction of poverty through the provision of improved rural electrification services, increased employment opportunities and income for target groups as well as improved qualities in basic life needs such as shelter, food, job opportunities, health services, education, water and roads among others in the state (CRSCSDA, 2016).

According to a document from CRSCSDA (2018) on CRSCSDA's activities in the area of healthcare services in Southern Senatorial District includes:

- i) Completion, equipping and furnishing of health post at Ekong Anaku Akamkpa LGA
- ii) Construction of health centre, furnishing and equipping of the health centre with drugs inclusive and construction of 1 unit 4 compartments VIP toilet at Ojor Akamkpa LGA
- iii) Renovation and furnishing of health post at Enuike Biase LGA

The document also revealed that CRSCSDA has provided the following services in the area of rural road infrastructure:

- i) Construction of drainage at Obot Okono ward 10 Calabar Municipality.
- ii) Construction of 3 box culverts with backfilling at Ikpai Akamkpa Local Government Area

Despite the existence of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency and her activities in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, the researchers have keenly observed that social problems such as diseases, poverty, low income and low productivity still abound in the study area. Also, Awatt (2015) reported that, there still exist a high rate of lack of proper healthcare services, inadequate supply of portable drinking water and poor sanitary conditions which lead to disease outbreak, poor road infrastructure due to failed culverts and mini-bridges causing untold hardship for farmers to have easy access to their farmlands. Some of the roads within the town and into the rural areas are not accessible, rural dwellers often trek long distances to market their goods because the mass transit buses are not in existence. Thus, the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State generally lacks basic infrastructural facilities like constant electricity supply, motorable roads, portable and drinkable water supply, good

healthcare services, poor state of schools, underdevelopment of rural areas, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, increase in crime rate, prostitution, and low level of social participation in development activities, and generally, poor quality of life thus resulting to migration of people from rural to urban areas which causes depopulation of the rural populace. It was premised on the above that the study evaluated the activities of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

Statement of Problem

The Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency (CRSCSDA) is the implementing agency for community and social development projects (CSDP) in Cross River State. The agency was established to provide social welfare services such as provision of safe drinking water, improve healthcare and sanitation services, educational facilities, rural roads infrastructure and other basic social services aimed at ameliorating the social and developmental problems affecting the state. Despite the existence of the agency and her activities, the researchers has observed that social problems such as poverty, low income, low productivity, high rate of unemployment, inadequate proper health care services, inadequate supply of portable drinking water, poor sanitary condition which leads to disease outbreak, poor road infrastructure due to failed culverts and mini-bridges causing untold hardship for farmers to have easy access to their farmlands are still prevalent in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. Some of the roads within the town and into the rural areas are not accessible, rural dwellers often trek long distances to market their goods because the mass transit buses are not in existence.

Thus, the area generally lacks basic social infrastructures like constant electricity supply, good educational facilities, good healthcare services and motorable roads – thus resulting to migration of people from rural to urban areas which causes depopulation of the rural area. Also, many people in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State are not aware of various activities of CRSCSDA and those that are aware hardly benefit from such intervention due to some problems which one could describe as poor implementation and evaluation of the agency's activities. Also, some communities benefit more from the agency's activities than other communities, there is no adequate provision of social amenities to better the lives of the people which often result in high rates of social problems such as insecurity, inequalities, economic instability, teenage pregnancy and hunger. Based on this, the researchers evaluated the activities of CRSCSDA in the area of provision of healthcare services/facilities and also provision of rural road infrastructure like mini-bridges, culverts, drainage system in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the activities of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study specifically evaluated the activities of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency in the area of provision of:

1. Rural road infrastructures in southern senatorial district of Cross River State
2. Health care services in southern senatorial district of Cross River State

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study.

1. How has the activities of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency impacted on the provision of rural road infrastructure in southern senatorial district of Cross River State?
2. How has the activities of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency impacted on the provision of health care services in southern senatorial district of Cross River State?

Literature Review

Generally, the rural communities play integral roles in development through its engagement in primary activities which forms the foundation for any socio-economic development. In spite of the significance of rural community services to development, communities often suffer neglect and lack of attention which has made it non-attractive to live in and also increased the poverty index of rural communities in Cross River State. World Bank, (2022) asserted that sustainable community development is a function of a number of factors in which access road or transportation and availability of adequate health care system plays key roles. Since the rural economy depends much on road transportation, in that it facilitates agricultural and other socio-economic activities, the provision and maintenance of the access road is a sine qua non for the development of the rural economy. Ojo, (2013) opined that, access to healthcare services promotes the social, health and economic wellbeing of the local population with particular reference to women and children. Owen (2024) asserted that availability of good road network and proper Health systems can reduce poverty by improving health and by weakening some of the mechanisms through which ill-health causes poverty. Investments in rural road network and health, particularly prevention of ill health, enhance a country's economic output through their effects on educational achievement and skills acquisition, labour productivity and decent employment, increased savings and investment, the demographic transition and impacts on the ecosystem. Deaton, (2016) opines that adequate investment in health services produces improvements in health outcomes, provide financial risk protection to citizens when they are ill, and produce substantial societal benefits beyond health.

In the same vein, Aganyi and Usoroh (2016) conducted a study on Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency's Activities and the socio-economic development of Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The research was aimed at examining the activities of CRSCSDA and the development of Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted an exploratory descriptive survey design. The study population consisted of all residents in Bekwarra L.G.A data were collected from 400 purposively selected respondents. The questionnaire was the instrument used for generating data for the study and its poser therein included ascertain the influence of provision of infrastructure on the socio-economic development of the respondents' communities. One way analysis of variance supported with fisher's least significant difference (LSD) was used in analysis of data. The result revealed that provision of rural infrastructure such as good road network, electrification portable drinking water and proper health care services has a significant influence on socio-economic development within the area under investigation. The findings of the study further revealed the socio-economic development of Bekwarra Local Government Area.

Good health and accessible road network support economic growth and reduces poverty. Poor health and poor road network may reduce an individual's ability to work and generate income or to invest in education (WHO, 2021). Austin (2019) affirmed the crucial role that good road network and health services plays in social and community development by calling for a more comprehensive and all-embracing primary attention for health support services at all levels. Noting that a healthy community is a developed community, therefore government and private agencies within and outside the state should give more priority to healthcare services to improve the health status of community members who serve as agents of community and social development. This call is an imperative one because it is when people are healthy that they can think and work hard to contribute their individual and group quota to societal and national development.

Similarly, an empirical study on assessment of the impact of rural transport on rural development: a case study of Obokun Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria was carried out by Adedeji, Olafiaji, Olanibi, and Lukman (2014), to examine the impact of road transportation on the development of Obokun Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria.

Survey research design was adopted for the study. Randomized systematic stratified sampling technique was applied in the selection of communities used for the survey, and a total of three hundred community dwellers were selected and used for the study. The questionnaire was used to obtain information from the respondents. Data was generated and analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and simple percentages. The findings of the study revealed an inequality in the provision of road infrastructure and rehabilitation of roads in the area, resulting to disparities in the level of development. The poor condition of roads in the area is having negative effects on agricultural activities which is the major source of income of residents, thereby increasing their poverty rate.

Rural roads constitute the major percentage of Nigerian road system and therefore are vital components of community and social development. Therefore, providing rural communities access through rural road network is an essential service and not only for connecting people to jobs, healthcare and families in the ways that enhances their quality of life, but also for contributing to community growth and development by connecting business to customers, goods to markets and tourists to destinations.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was utilized for this study. The population of the study consisted of 26,179 adults both male and female between 18 -50 years residing in communities where the activities of CRSCSDA has been carried out within the study area. The stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 785 adult male and female respondents from the sampled communities in the population of the study. A questionnaire tagged the “Evaluation of activities of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency Questionnaire (EACRSCSDAQ) served as the study instrument for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha. The coefficient of the sub-scale ranged from .70 to .84. The coefficients were high enough for the instruments to be considered reliable for data collection. Data were collected by the researchers and analyzed using Descriptive statistics (percentages, frequencies and Bar chart).

Results

Research question one

How has the activities of CRSCSDA impacted on the provision of rural roads infrastructures in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State? Table 1 provides the result of the descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages of the respondents on provision of rural road infrastructures in communities in the study area. An item by item analysis of the data collected was done to show the respondents opinion with the provision of rural road infrastructure in the study area. Considering Table 1 and figure 1 critically, out of the 785 respondents, it was found that on each item, the responses were either Yes or No with the provision of rural road infrastructures in communities in the study area. On item 1, 95 respondents representing 12.11% accepted that CRSCSDA has constructed mini bridged in their community while 690 respondents representing 87.79% objected to the statement.

On item 2, 260 respondents representing 33.13% accepted that access to road has increased through CRSCSDA activities while 525 respondents representing 66.87% objected to the statement. For item 3, 138 respondents representing 17.58% accepted that CRSCSDA has constructed new drainage system in their communities while 647 respondents representing 82.42% objected to the statement. On item 4, 234 respondents representing 29.81% accepted that they can now transport their farm produce to the market with ease while 551 respondents representing 70.19% objected to the statement.

On item 5, 168 respondents representing 21.41% accepted that their community no longer experience flood due to new gutters and culverts constructed by CRSCSDA while 619 respondents representing 78.59% objected to the statement. On item 6, 104 respondents representing 13.25% accepted that socio-economic activities has improved in their community due to improve road infrastructure provided by CRSCSDA while 681 respondents representing 86.75% objected to the statement. The summarize answer to the research question 3 can be concluded that CRSCSDA has not adequately provided rural road infrastructures in the study area. The column chart provides a better understanding as the modal heights of the bars show where the majority of the respondent fall in the evaluation.

Table 1
Descriptive analysis of responses on provision of rural roads infrastructures in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State by CRSCSDA

S/N	Items	Yes (%)	No (%)
	Rural roads		
1.	CRSCSDA has constructed mini bridges in my community	95 (12.11)	690 (87.79)
2.	Access to roads has increased through CRSCSDA activities	260 (33.13)	525 (66.87)
3.	CRSCSDA has constructed new drainage system in my community	138 (17.58)	647 (82.42)
4.	I can now transport my farm produce to the market with ease	234 (29.81)	551 (70.19)
5.	My community no longer experience floods due to new gutters and culverts constructed by CRSCSDA	168 (21.41)	619 (78.59)
6.	Socio economic activities has improved in my community due to improved roads infrastructures provided by CRSCSDA	104 (13.25)	681 (86.75)

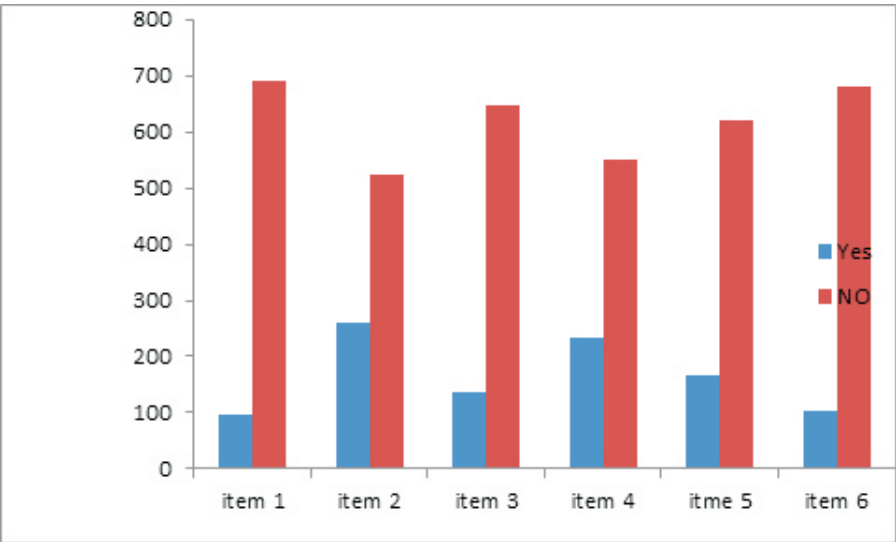


Figure 1: Bar chart of responses on provision of rural roads infrastructures by CRSCSDA in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

Research Question Two

How has the activities of CRSCSDA impacted on the provision of healthcare services in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State? Table 2 provides the result of the descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages of the respondents on provision of healthcare services in communities across the study area. An item by item analysis of the data collected was done to show the respondents opinion with the provision of healthcare services in their communities. Considering Table 2 and figure 2 critically, out of the 785 respondents, it was found that on each item, the responses were either Yes or No with the provision of healthcare services in their communities. On item 1, 116 respondents representing 14.78% accepted that CRSCSDA has built new health centre in their community while 669 respondents representing 85.22% objected to the statement. On item 2, 169 respondents representing 21.53% accepted that CRSCSDA has rehabilitated health centers in their community while 616 respondents representing 78.47% objected to the statement. For item 3, 305 respondents representing 38.86% accepted that CRSCSDA has provided adequate health facilities to health centre in their community while 480 respondents representing 61.14% objected to the statement.

On item 4, 250 respondents representing 31.85% accepted that CRSCSDA has sponsored free health care programmes in their community while 535 respondents representing 68.15% objected to the statement. On item 5, 409 respondents representing 52.11% accepted that they are beneficiaries of CRSCSDA health care programmes while 376 respondents representing 47.89% objected to the statement. Finally, on item 6, 265 respondents representing 33.76% accepted that CRSCSDA has constructed staff quarters for health workers in their community while 520 respondents representing 66.24% objected to the statement. The summarize answer to research question five implies that healthcare services has been inadequately provided by CRSCSDA. The column chart provides a better understanding as the modal heights of the bars show where the majority of the respondent fall in the evaluation.

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis Of Responses On Provision Of Health Care Services By Crscsda In Southern Senatorial District Of Cross River State

S/N	Items	Yes (%)	No (%)
	Health care		
1.	CRSCSDA has built new health centers in my community	116 (14.78)	669 (85.22)
2.	CRSCSDA has rehabilitated health centers in my community	169 (21.53)	616 (78.47)
3.	CRSCSDA has provided adequate health facilities to health centers in my community	305 (38.86)	480 (61.14)
4.	CRSCSDA has sponsored free health care programmes	250 (31.85)	535 (68.15)
5.	I am a beneficiary of CRSCSDA health care programmes	409 (52.11)	376 (47.89)
6.	CRSCSDA has not carried out any health care programme in my community	265 (33.76)	520 (66.24)

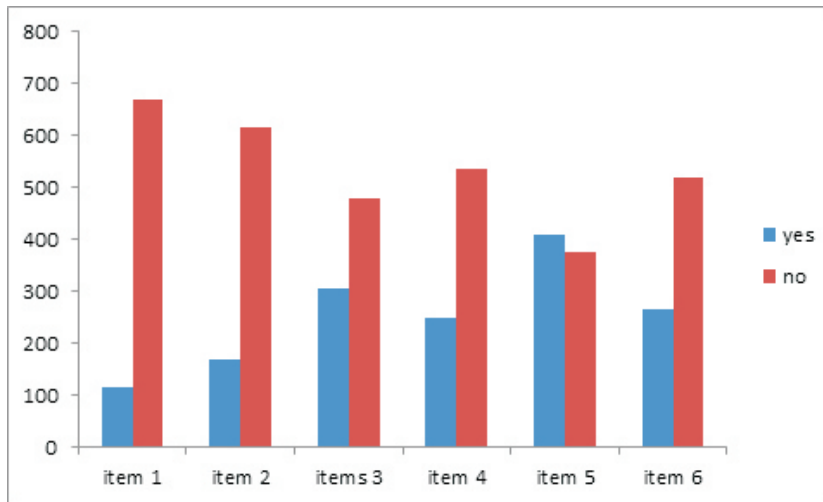


Figure 2: Bar chart of responses on provision of healthcare services by CRSCSDA in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

Discussion of Findings

The first research question stated that how has the activities of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency impacted on the provision of rural road infrastructure services in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State? The result of this research question implies that provision of rural road infrastructure is a priority for CRSCSDA since rural roads serves as the hub for the transportation of raw materials and foods and a dynamic source of capital generation for a country. The result is also in line with the opinion of TiFe (2015) who asserted that poor road infrastructure has become a national shame and further stressed that there is hardly any part of the country that can boast of adequate motorable roads. The result is also in line with the view of Mayne (2016) who opined that Nigerians die daily in avoidable accidents due to bad roads. Man-hours are lost in traffic and the national economy suffers losses despite huge oil revenue, the country lacks good transportation system. The results is also similar to the views of David – West (2015) who reported that the situation of road infrastructure in Nigeria in a way increases the rate of poverty, particularly among the peasants who as farmers, artisan and petty traders inhabit mostly the neglected rural areas.

The second research question stated that how has the activities of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency impacted on the provision of healthcare services in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The result of this research question showed that healthcare services were inadequately provided by CRSCSDA in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. This result is surprising since good health support economic growth. The findings of the study align with that of Chijide (2018) who affirmed Nigeria generally lack adequate health care delivery system. The author further highlighted the crucial role that health services play in social and community development by calling for a more comprehensive and all-embracing primary attention for health support services at all levels. Noting that a healthy community is a developed community, therefore government and private agencies within and outside the state should give more priority to healthcare services to improve the health status of community members who serve as agents of community and social development. Ojo, (2013) asserted that the presence of good health facilities will prompt the rural dwellers access to the facilities at any time and the people will be empowered to work for money and enhance their livelihood.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The outcome of this study reveals that provision of rural electrification services and healthcare services are effective social welfare activities carried out by CRSCSDA towards ameliorating social problems in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. Although, healthcare services was inadequately provided by CRSCSDA in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. However, CRSCSDA could now be seen as an indispensable organ in the fight against poverty and other social problems. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

- i. CRSCSDA should improve on her services in the provision of healthcare services in the study area. This will help in the prevention and control of communicable diseases in the area.
- ii. CRSCSDA and other relevant agencies should provide more rural electrification services so as to boost socio-economic activities in the study area.

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