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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

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Abstract:

This research was concerned with examining activities of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency and the development of Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The exploratory and descriptive research designs were adopted for the study. Data were collected from 400 purposively selected respondents. A 39-itemed questionnaire was developed by the researcher and validated by the supervisor. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the population of study. Empowerment theory was reviewed to give a foundation for the study. Two hypotheses were drawn for the study based on the identified major variables, namely; provision of infrastructure and quality of life. The study used simple percentages, dependent t- test and Analysis of Variance supported with the Fisher's least significant difference (LSD) The findings revealed that provision of infrastructure and improvement in quality of life have statistical significance effects on the socio economic development of Bekwara local government area. The major conclusion was that there is a significant level of awareness in the provision of infrastructure among the rural dwellers in Bekwara local government. Based on the findings, a number of recommendations were made, one of such was that government should ensure that projects constructed in rural communities are headed by qualified people and are being put to use so that the purpose of the intervention is achieved

Keywords: Cross River State Community, Social development agency's activities and socio economic development

1. Introduction

The desire to do something to improve community life, involves structured intervention that gives control over their lives. The necessary prerequisites of development involve the transformation of rural communities from the old ways of doing things to a more modern way so as to enable them take charge over their destiny. Therefore, development strategy that is intended to bring about sustainable change must be geared towards the transformation of society by knowing the possible catalysts as well as barriers to change. However, community development enhances the lives of individuals by expanding their choices and freedoms thereby reducing their sense of isolation and abandonment (Bhatnagar, 2002).

Several factors may be adduced for the renewed interest of community development agencies to transform rural communities socio-economically. In many cases, government institutions have poor records about rural areas, including the giving of inadequate credit and technical assistance. Furthermore, community development agencies are reported to be closer to the rural population than the government. A typical example is the United States Aid for International Development (USAID) which particularly, uses the private sector including community development agencies for small-scale income generating projects in developing countries for community development (Cernea, 2005).

There have been several developmental policies and efforts in Nigeria which have given rise to schemes and agencies such as Community and Social Development Agency (CSDA), Rural Development Agency (RUDA), Rural Access and Mobility Project (RAMP), State Electrification Agency (SEA), Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWATTSSA), Border Communities Development Commission (BORDERCOM), Rural Enterprise Project (REP), Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and in other counties like Agha Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in Northern Pakistan, etc. These agencies and schemes are meant to reduce poverty and are geared towards community development but many of them did not yield the desired results for which they were established (Alaba, 2005).

Observations reveal that rural communities in Bekwarra Local Government Area lack sustainable development programmes and facilities (especially external initiations from governments and Agencies). Although community members individually or collectively have contributed financially and mentally towards rural community development in this local government area, meaningful rural development has still eluded rural communities within the area of study as evident in the poor state of schools, lack of proper health facilities within the local government area, people trekking miles in search of portable drinking water, poor sanitary condition which lead to disease outbreak, poor road network because of failed culverts and mini-bridges causing untold hardship in order to farmers accessing their farmlands (Mody, 1997).

Despite the existence of Cross River State Community and Social Development agency and her activities in rural communities, it is however not clear whether her activities have impacted on the socio-economic development of Bekwarra LGA of Cross River State as have been seen in other local government areas. This is however a source of worry to developmental experts and other people in related fields. It is on the basis of the poor state of rural communities in Bekwarra Local Government Area that this research draws its significance and necessity to proffer solutions. It is along this line that the study seeks to give answers to such questions as: Are the activities of Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency relevant in improving the socio economic life of rural communities in Bekwarra L.G.A? Has the intervention of the Agency in Bekwarra LGA brought about infrastructural changes? What are the challenges inhibiting the success of the agency activities in the study area?

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

1. Investigate the level of change in infrastructural provision in the rural areas of Bekwarra Local Government Area.
2. Determine the extent to which these infrastructures have affected or improved the quality of life of the rural populace;

1.2. Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the provision of infrastructure and socio-economic development of rural communities in Bekwarra Local Government Area by (CRSCSDA)
2. There is no significant difference in the quality of life of rural dwellers resulting from community and social development agency (CSDA) intervention in Bekwarra Local Government Area.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The concept of Development

The term development in global perspective includes the need and the resources by which conscious effort is made to offer better lives for the people in poor nations. According to Ugwuja (2008: 6), "It includes not only economic growth, although that is crucial, but also human development-providing for health, nutrition, education and a clean environment". The word development is multifaceted. The concept is a many-sided process, as well as context bound. To some persons, it means change and others see it as improvement, advancement and progress (Ugwuja, 2008).

The realization of these aspects of individual development is indisputably linked to the state of the larger society. In general, development can be said to be the increase in competence to control internal and external associations. This implies the capacity to protect the freedom of the persons within the societies and not to infringe on their independence (Ugwuja,2008).

Development is seen as attacking widespread lack, deepening inequalities and eradicating the problem of redundancy within the condition of an increasing economy (Abah 2010). However, the basic need approach require that development should provide the basic necessities of life which include adequate health facilities, quality education, food, shelter, clothing and employment opportunities that would make life meaningful for the majority of its citizens (Abah 2010).

In the view of Ariyo (2009 :102-103), "development is seen as a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty. A precursor of such changes capable of fostering economic development is the ability of [policy makers to induce desirable changes in the economic structure of any nation. Such policies must induce a wide range of changes in the entire social system, tuned to the diverse basic needs and desired of individuals and social groups within the system." (Ariyo, 2009). More so, Rodney (2005:87) sees development as "not just a matter of having plenty of money nor is it purely an economic phenomenon. It embraces all aspects of social behaviour, the establishment of law and order, scrupulousness in business dealings including dealings with the revenue authorities, relationships between the family, literacy, and familiarity with mechanical gadgets and so on", and not the African context where people in positions of authority carries government money to enrich themselves and believe that the country is developing.

In a global perspective, it means an increase and control of resources given to man by God and found around his environment to enable man better his/her life Ezeah (2005). According to Todaro and Smith (2006:7-9)

"Development can also be said to be concern with the transformation of society in all ramifications, which include making human the focal point of development effort and seeking to develop its potentialities in a total sense. Specifically, development is concerned with the maximum improvement of the cultural, material, social and political aspects. Social development embraces programmes and activities, which enhance the capacities of members of society to fulfil existing and changing social roles expectations and accomplish their various personal goals. It entails the democratization of the development process and the orientation of development effort to the needs and interest of the masses. It ensures equitable sharing in the benefits and burdens of development, the recovery of self-

confidence and delineation. More concretely, social development involves comprehensive human resources development; raising living standards and quality of life, improving health and human welfare, ensuring social justice and equality, and providing adequate social security for all segments of the population”.

Economically, development includes advancing technology to enhance efficiency of labour, total modernisation of rural societies into an industrial one, increasing people’s choice on the varieties in terms of merchandise available and to create a favourable environment which would improve people’s personality and through the provision of economic organisations and to encourage human dignity and self-esteem (Todaro & Smith, 2006).

2.2. Infrastructure and Socio Economic Development

Infrastructure encapsulates all facilities, physical or otherwise, which help to boost economic and social activities in a nation and which are necessary for raising the productivity of other factors of production and standard of living of the people. Generally, it encompasses all aspect of life to include law and order, public health, communication, education, transportation, electricity supply, water supply and irrigation and drainage system (Jerome, 1999). Traditionally, infrastructure is categorised into two major groups viz: economic and social infrastructure. Social infrastructure consists of health and education, which make possible the provision of trained and healthy personnel to handle and operate other resources in the economy. Economic infrastructure on the other hand entails facilities that afford the society with services essential to accomplish daily life and to engage in productive activities (Todaro & Smith, 2006).

Infrastructural facilities by Hirschman (1958) in Olayinwola and Adeleye (2005), means the basic necessities of life which would aid primary, secondary and tertiary activities of production to take place and function properly. Generally, it has to do with all public services which include; education, transportation, communication, public health and water supply. In a similar vein, Aigbokhan (2000) categorised a nation’s infrastructural amenities into three most important types: namely, physical infrastructure which include rural electrification, roads, water storage as well as processing facilities, social infrastructure can be seen to include, educational facilities, health facilities, community centres, fire and security services while institutional infrastructure to comprise financial and credit institutions and agricultural research facilities. However, Aigbokhan (2000), state that poverty situation in the country (Nigeria) is more prevalent in rural areas than the urban centres. According to Obinozie (1999) and Alaba (2005) in their study carried out discovered that about 67 per cent of urban population have access to portable drinking water while 31 per cent in the rural communities have access to portable drinking water. They also pointed that, these people are poor not because they wished to be poor but because they don’t have access to basic necessities of life. However, improvement in the provision of basic necessities of life using a community based approach can help us tackle low quality of human and reduce poverty (Olayinwola & Adeleye, 2005).

2.3. Quality of life of Rural Dwellers Resulting from Community and Social Development

Community Driven Development (CDD) is an approach to community development that gives the benefiting community opportunity to identify projects of choice, plan, part finance and implements. CDD gives room and create an avenue for the rural people to be at the driver’s seat of its development (Thirion, 2006). However, for Thirion (2006), the starting point is to make communities have ownership by empowering them and giving them more resources and power to flexibly put them to use. Since this method cannot be sustained through emergency funds or through short-lived donor programmes, there is a strong and urgent need to embed this in a permanent institutional structure such as the local government structure.

According to Adeyemo and Adejumbi (2002: 36) “Community- based organizations are set up by collective efforts of indigenous people of homo or heterogeneous attributes but living or working within the same environment. Their coming together creates conditions which broaden the base of self governance and diffusion of power through a wider circle of the population”. Furthermore, Abegunde (2004: 39) asserts that “it is seen as voluntary, non-profit, non-governmental and highly localized or neighbourhood institutions whose membership is placed on equal level and whose main goal is the improvement of the social and economic well being of every member.”

Community-based organisations are associations or institutions locally found in communities geared towards improving their collective well being. Their target is not to make profit but to contribute towards the upliftment of the community as every member of the community would contribute in one way or another towards developing their environment and not waiting for government to better their lots. According to Claudia (2003:189) “Community based organizations open ways for participation at grassroots level. It involves the local and indigenous people in the identification of their local needs and conception formulation and implementation of any project in order to develop the necessary self-reliance and self-confidence in their immediate environment”.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Empowerment base theory by Whitmore (1988), Keiffers (1984), Rappaport (1987). This theory is seen to be a method of transformation. Keiffers (1984) recommended that for persons to have authority, they have to get knowledge and information concerning themselves and their surroundings and also work with people who can aid them to change their situation and improve their wellbeing.

Fundamentally, the empowerment based theory seek to clearly understand and articulate the various processes and activities through which individuals gain resources by doing certain jobs, services or responsibilities to take assignments leading to development of society. According to Whitmore (1988:301) “empowerment theory is as an interactive process through which people experience personal and social change, enabling them to take action to achieve influence over the organizations and institutions which affect their

lives and the communities in which they live”. Hence, the empowerment theory was adopted due to its usefulness and relevance to assist us to trace the rural community underdevelopment as governments have not been able to come up with a programme where the communities are given the opportunity to effect changes that would make their surroundings helpful because they live there and seem to understand their own problems better and should have the authority to make alterations for their well-being better than anyone. Every single one has the capacity upon which they can maintain, build and move on with life if only they are given the opportunity to show their talents. Empowerment is a lifelong endeavour and should be encouraged so as to bring development to our rural communities; individual knowledge, experience and practice are important and helpful in coping effectively with the challenges of life.

3. Research Methodology

The research design adopted was the exploratory and descriptive design. The study area was Bekwarra LGA which occupies a large expanse of land approximately 345 square kilometres and lies between latitude 6^o37 and 6^o47 and longitude 8^o48^o and 9^o East. The population of Bekwarra LGA was put at 105,852 (Males 54,585 and females 51,267) as per the 2006 National Population Commission’s census (NPC, 2006).

The sample size for the study was 400 respondents (males and females) derived using Taro Yameni’s formulation. These respondents were purposively selected from the study area. Data collection instrument was questionnaire.

S/No.	Statements/phrases	Response category			
		Yes	Percent	No	Percent
1	Health centres	245	63.97	138	36.03
2	Rural roads (drainages, culverts and mini bridge)	298	77.81	85	22.19
3	Building of new classroom blocks	143	37.34	240	62.66
4	Renovation of old structures	230	60.05	153	39.95
5	VIP toilets	205	53.62	178	46.38
6	Afforestation	263	68.66	123	31.33
7	Water	268	69.97	115	30.03

*Table 1: Respondents’ assessment of projects/embarked on in communities by CRSCSDA
Source: Field work 2014*

Table 1 presented projects/embarked on in communities by CRSCSDA. reveals that seven major areas of concentration in Bekwarra LGA that Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency (CRSCSDA) is focused on; Health centres, Rural roads (Drainages, culverts, Mini Bridges), construction of new class room blocks, renovation of old structures, construction of VIP toilets, afforestation and water supply. However, out of the total number of respondents, 245 respondents representing 63.97 per cent confirmed that health centres were built in their places while 138 respondents representing 36.03 per cent refuted that such projects were not embarked on their communities.

298 respondents representing 77.81 per cent equally confirmed that transport facilities (culverts, mini-bridges, drainages) were built in their communities, while 85 respondents representing 22.19 per cent disowned that such projects were not embarked on in their communities. 143 respondents representing 37.34 per cent agreed that new classroom blocks were constructed while 240 respondents representing 62.66 per cent disagreed that new classrooms were not constructed in their communities. For renovation of old structures, 230 respondents representing 60.05 per cent of the sample owned up that renovation of old structures were constructed, but 153 respondents representing 39.95 per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that such projects were not constructed in their communities. 205 respondents representing 53.62 per cent confirmed that VIP toilets were constructed in their communities while 178 respondents disagreed with the claims. 263 respondents representing 68.66 per cent of the sample owned up that trees were planted in their schools and communities while 123 respondents representing 31.33 disagreed that such projects were not carried on in their communities. Finally, 268 respondents representing 69.97 per cent responded that water projects were implemented in their communities while 115 respondents representing 30.03 percent of the respondents refuted that such a project was not implemented in their communities. This implies that the health centres, rural transport facilities (drainages, culverts and mini bridges), renovation of existing structures, afforestation and water supply had above 60 per cent spread in the rural communities in all the wards of Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	p-level
Awareness Level	383	73.52	1.67	584	31.55	.000
Population mean = 73.00						

*Table 2: Population t-test of the provision of infrastructure by (CRSCSDA) activities in Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State
* significant@.05 level, df=382; critical t=1.96; t-calculated=31.55*

Table 2 reveals that there is a significant level of awareness in the level of intervention in the provision of infrastructure in Bekwarra Local Government Area by Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency (CRSCSDA) activities. The calculated t-value of 31.55 at 382 degrees of freedom at .05 level of significance was seen to be greater than the critical t-value 1.96 at .05 level of significance. This means that there is a significant level of provision of infrastructure by (CRSCSDA) in Bekwarra Local Government Area.

Category	N	Mean	SD		
Low	84	12.1709	1.99694		
Moderate	187	13.9713	1.64226		
High	112	15.1481	1.85635		
Total	383	13.9915	2.06941		
Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	640.754	2	320.377		
Within Groups	1860.204	380	3.196	100.24	.000*
Total	2500.957	382			

Table 3: One-way analysis of variance of quality of life of rural dwellers resulting from (CRSCSDA) activities in Bekwarra Local Government Area

*significant at .05 level; df = 2, 382; 100.24; critical F-value = 1.97

Table 3 indicates One-way analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis which states that quality of life of rural dwellers is not significantly influence by (CRSCSDA) intervention in Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross Rivers State at p <.05. The result in table 4.8 showed a significant mean differences between the groups (F=2, 382) = 100.24, p <.05). The result reveals that life of rural dwellers was significantly influence by (CRSCSDA) intervention in Bekwarra LGA. The mean value for respondents who have high quality of life was higher (M = 15.1481; SD = 1.85) than respondents whose quality of life was moderate (M =13.97; SD=1.64) and the group with the least mean value is respondents in the low quality of life group (M = 12.1709; SD =1.86).

Variables	Groups MSW=3.196	High n ₁ =112	Moderate n ₂ =187	Low n ₃ =84
(CRSCSDA) intervention	High	15.15 ^a	1.18 ^b	2.98
	Moderate	2.15 ^{*c}	13.97	1.80
	Low MSW=3.196	5.24 [*]	1.62	12.17

Table 4: Fishers LSD of the interactive effect of quality of life of Rural Dwellers as influenced by (CRSCSDA) intervention: n₁ =112; n₂=189; n₃=84

- (a) = group means are on the diagonal
- (b) = difference between group means are above the diagonal
- (c) = Fishers' LSD t-values are below the diagonal.

P < .05; df =; 189; 194; 269, and; critical t = 1.98.

The results as shown in Table 4:8 Show that the calculated LSD= t-values are;

Quality of life (i) High/moderate intervention, t=2,15*, df=189; P>0.05

(ii) High/low intervention, t=5.24*, df=194; P>0.05

(iii) Moderate/low intervention, t=1.62; df=269; P0. <05

This imply that there was a significant interactive effect of groups; high/moderate; and highly/lowly but not significant between moderately/low interaction quality of life as influenced by (CRSCSDA) intervention. This is so because the calculated Fisher's LSD t-values for high/moderate (t=2.15) and high/low (t=5.24) were seen to be greater than the critical value of t=1.98 at 0.05 level of significance. On the contrary there was no significant interactive difference between moderate/low (t=1.62) was seen to be lower than the critical (t=1.96) at 269 degree of freedom.

3.1. Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis One: states that there is no significant difference in the provision of infrastructure and socio economic development in rural communities by Cross River State Community and Social Development Agency (CRSCSDA). This hypothesis was tested using the population t-test at 0.5 level of significance and the result reveals that there is a significant level of provision of infrastructure by (CRSCSDA) in Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State. Since there is a significant level of provision of infrastructure in Bekwarra LGA, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was upheld. Therefore, in supportive of these findings, Halest and Ryser (2012) noted that infrastructures are important because they have the power to help and sustain daily activities, quality of life and economic base in rural areas. Infrastructure can also help solve five major problems in the rural areas and these are social, health, environment, development and economic problems.

Hypothesis two: states that there is no significant difference in the quality of life of rural dwellers resulting from Cross River State community and social development agency's activities. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to test this hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The result reveals that life of rural dwellers in Bekwarra LGA has significantly been influenced by CRSCSDA activities. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was upheld, since there is a significant difference resulting from CRSCSDA activities in Bekwarra LGA on the quality of life of rural dwellers in the study area. To further examine the direction of the difference of the quality of life as to categorise whether there are low, moderate and high. The Fisher's least significance difference (LSD) multiple pair wise comparison analysis was employed and the result of the (LSD) analysis reveals that there was a significant interactive effect of groups high/moderate: highly/lowly and moderately/low interaction in the quality of life as affected by CRSCSDA activities.

Therefore, the result of this finding is in line with Moseley (2003:8) that defines rural development to be "the process of improving the quality of life and economic well being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated area". Also in the view of Nyagba (2009), rural development is "a multi-dimensional process aimed at uplifting the life of the rural dwellers in the society". He says further that the purpose of rural development is the enhancement of the spatial and socio-economic surrounding of the rural space that would provide the improvement of the individual's capacity to look after his/her well-being and to better his environment.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of these study, it was concluded that there is adequate awareness of the activities of CRSCSDA in Bekwarra LGA, and that the rural residents have benefited significantly from the presence and intervention of CRSCSDA in the study area, though the people are faced with the problem of community participation and the challenge of getting counterpart funding because of the poor state of the area of study.

4.1. The Study Recommends That

- i. Government should ensure that there is a synergy between various agencies of government who are into rural/community development so as to avoid duplication of projects.
- ii. Government should ensure that projects constructed in rural communities are headed by qualified people and are been put to use so that the purpose of the intervention is achieved.
- iii. Community driven development (CDD) approach should be encouraged and replicated in all policies targeted towards rural/community development as it gives the rural populace the power to plan, implement and maintain projects to serve their needs which will give them a sense of ownership

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APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire 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

Dear Respondent,

I am a post graduate student in the department of sociology, University of Calabar, Calabar carrying out a research 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

Kindly answer the questions asked to the best of your knowledge as all information would be used purely for academic purposes and treated with outmost confidentiality.

Thanks for your assistance and cooperation.
Yours faithfully

Isaac Aganyi
Researcher

APPENDIX 2

PART 1: Demographic information (Please, mark only one box for each question)

- 1) Sex: Male Female
- 2) Age <19yrs 20-29yrs 30-39yrs 40-49yrs 50-59yrs 60yrs and above
- 3) Religion: Christianity Moslem others specify
- 4) Marital Status: Single Married Divorced widow widower
- 5) Educational Qualification: No formal Education FSLC SSCE OND/NCE Degree/HND Post graduate
- 6) Occupation: Farming Public servant self employed Artisan Trading Unemployed others
- 7) Income Level: Below 17, 000 18,000-28,000 29,000-38,000 39,000-48,000 49,000 and above

PART 2:

8) What are the possible problems faced by CRSCSDA in Bekwarra LGA. Please list as many as possible

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v.
- vi.
- vii.
- viii.

9) The projects embarked on in my community by CRSCSDA are; tick as many as possible

- i. Health centre
- ii. School block
- iii. Rural road (bridges culverts)
- iv. Drainages
- v. Renovation of classroom block
- vi. VIP toilet
- vii. Afforestation
- viii. Water
- ix. Market stalls
- x. Others specify

Please, tick the appropriate box that best express your opinion with the options: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A) or strongly Agree (SA)

Section A: Awareness level		SD	D	A	SA
		1	2	3	4
10	Have you heard of community development Agency in your Community?				
11	Are Communities in Bekwarra L.G area aware of community development Agency				
14	Have you heard of community driven development (CDD)				
15	Are community based organization relevant in community development activities				
16	Does community participation enhance rural community development				
17	Have your community benefitted from community development agencies activities				
18	Have you been ask to contribute monies towards community development in your community				
19	Is the counterpart fund community contribution relevant in project execution				
Section B: Quality of life		SD	D	A	SA
20	Does community project reduce poverty				
21	Are the activities of community development agency relevant in improving the living standard of the people				
22	All community members benefit in the community development agency's activities in your community				
23	Does the projects create improved social life				
24	Do you have adequate access to the services being provided by the projects implemented/ executed?				
25	Whether or not you participated in CRSCSDA programmes, we now have good water to drink				
26	Movement is easy now because of the access roads created by CRSCSDA				
27	We now have conducive classroom environment for our children				
28	The health centre in our community is a very big relief				
29	The approach is effective in enhancing rural development				
Section C: Provision of social amenities		SD	D	A	SA
30	We now have good road (bridges, culverts) network in our community				
31	There is health centre in our community				
32	There is classroom block in our community				
33	The old school block has been renovated in our community				
34	There is portable water in our community				
35	The erosion site has been controlled in our community				
36	There is skill acquisition centre in our community				
37	There is Afforestation project in our community				
38	There is VIP in our community				
39	There is science laboratory/Library in our community				