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**ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS IMPEDING SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIAL AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN IBAJI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF
KOGI STATE, NIGERIA**

By

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Abstract

Small scale industries and community development are subjects of interest and national concern in developing countries like Nigeria. As king pins in freeing the country from problem of unemployment, youth restiveness and poverty, a study of the factors impeding small scale industrial and community development is inevitable. This paper is therefore an assessment of the factors impeding small scale industrial and community development in Ibaji Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. Factors such as energy poverty/crisis, inadequate capital, poor road networks, and inadequate managerial skills were some of the factors discovered and assessed in the paper. The paper recommends that to foster development of small scale industries and communities in rural areas like Ibaji, the people must be empowered financially through provision of soft loans administered by honest men and women. Furthermore, government should speed up the construction of roads in the area, provision of electricity. Government could also pay enhanced salary structured to rural workers to serve as motivation to work in rural areas like Ibaji.

Key Words: Community Development, Small Scale Industry, Energy Poverty, and Factors

INTRODUCTION.

Industrial and community development in a developing country like Nigeria has long occupied the attention of scholars, government and international organizations (often called donor agencies). This is because more than 70 percent of Nigerian population reside in rural areas and industrial development is often considered as a means of economic and social development. Unfortunately, government, community, individuals and international efforts are often impeded by a number of factors.

This paper is therefore an assessment of factors impeding small scale industrial and community development in Ibaji Local Government Area of Kogi State. Nigeria is a federation with a federal capital territory, with 36 states and 774 local government areas. Ibaji is a local government area in Kogi State with a population of 128,129 according to 2006 census estimates. Created in 1996 and located in the southern part of the state separated from Edo State to the west by the River Niger and bordering Delta State in the south (<http://en.wikipedia.org/Ibaji>). It also shares boundary with Anambra and Enugu States. Its headquarters is at Onyedega.

About 90 percent of the inhabitants of Ibaji are farmers with some of them taking to fishing activities to supplement their meals and earn income for themselves. Only a few of them are civil servants and are however involved in small scale industrial activities to supplement their monthly salary which sometimes is irregular due to corruption and bad politics in the management of local government affairs.

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The paper will expand the frontier of knowledge by making recommendations that will enhance small scale industrial and community development thereby contribute in solving perennial social problems like unemployment, youth restiveness, and rural-urban migration, poverty, etc in Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL CONSIDERATION AND BASIC ISSUES

To enhance the understanding of this disquisition, small scale industry and community development will be briefly defined. A small scale industry is an economic activity involving the production of good and services for consumption or further production. It occupies an important component of a nation's economy in terms of employment and revenue generation; skill acquisition and development. In spite of the low industrial activities in Ibaji Local Government Area the following small scale industries are available: palm oil processing industry, rice milling industry , cassava processing factory, tailoring , broom making , furniture and hand craft industries, grinding mill, metal work , bakery industry producing bread and cakes, pure water industry and others.

Most of the small industries that seem to be striving in Ibaji are cassava processing mills located in such places like Ayeke and other locations. Hand craft industry at Igbogbo ,Imabe and other places; rice milling, furniture , and weaving establishments at Unale and other places .Others are palm oil making industry at Ayeke.

Closely related to the concept of small scale industrial development is the term community development. Both concepts are related because directly or indirectly they are aimed at improving the quality of life of man through the application of varying methods. Consequently, most factors impeding small scale industrial development also affects community development. Community development is operationalised to mean self-help movement or a process of social action involving people of a community or locality organizing themselves for identification of their needs, for planning and for action to meet those needs with maximum reliance on their own initiatives and resources, supplemented with assistance in any form, from government and non-governmental organizations (Apeh, 2006; Ezeh, 1999).

Community development could take the form of social action aimed at addressing the health, social, education, security needs of people in a community. In terms of education, a community may establish through self-help movement and the assistance of government, a community secondary school to meet the educational needs of its youth. Examples abound in Ibaji Local Government Area of this initiative. For instance, Unale Community Secondary School was established to meet the educational needs of the people in the community. Extra-moral classes for school dropouts and students could be organized. In the area of security services, vigilante groups are organized to provide security services both in the day and night. By doing this the

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security services offered by the police could be complemented and lives and property of the rural people are protected against theft.

PROBLEMS MILITATING AGAINST SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN IBAJI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA.

Energy poverty/crisis – perhaps it will not be an overstatement to say that one of the key challenges to the development of small scale industries and communities in Nigeria is the problem of epileptic power supply. *Nigerian Tribune* of May 24, 2010 aptly observed that the power sector remains the major headache for Nigeria. As a consequence of unimpressive electricity supply in the country, many production companies have relocated to neighbouring countries. Available data show that access to electricity is still very low in Nigeria with localities like Ibaji Local Government Area worst hit by this challenge. According to the *Nigerian Tribune* of May 24, 2010, only 34% of Nigeria population had access to public supply in 1998. This rose slightly to 45% in 2003. A survey conducted in 1998 shows that small scale firms spend on the average between 10 and 20 percent of initial investment in self generation of electricity (Adenikinju, 2008). This finding is further complemented by a 2010 survey conducted on five villages in Ibaji Local Government Area. The result of this survey is presented in the table below:

Table 1: Poor Infrastructural Facilities as obstacles to Small Scale Industrial and Community Development in Ibaji Local Government Area

villages	No of Respondent	Yes	Percentage %	No	Percentage %
Unale	35	31	88.6	4	11.4
Odohi	30	23	76.7	7	23.3
Igbogbo	30	28	93.3	2	6.7
Enweli	30	24	80	6	20
Ayeke	25	19	76	6	24
Total	150	125	83	25	1

Source; Victoria and Emmanuel Survey, 2010. Adopted with Modification.

Infrastructural facility is a key to the acceleration of economic, social, business and academic activities especially when sufficiently provided. Its absence leads to social, economic and academic deformity among the masses. Such facilities include good road networks, electricity; pipe bore water; health centre; schools and others. Table 1 above shows that Ibaji Local Government Area suffers from poor infrastructural facilities and this militates against the establishment and growth of small scale industries in the area. According to 1998 data on infrastructural facilities of the local government, there are 9 public secondary schools, 38 public hospitals, 2 private

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hospitals (1998 Local Government Yearbook). During rainy season (which is between the months of April to November) most of villages in the local government are difficult to access by vehicles for transportation of persons and agricultural produce like yams, cassava, maize, fish, vegetable, rice, beans, etc.

It is important to note that community projects like community, private and public schools are negatively affected by energy poverty; poor road networks; lack of pipe bore water and functional health centres. For instance, most secondary schools in Ibaji lack English and Mathematics teachers as the few qualified ones in these subjects prefer to stay in cities where their services will be better appreciated and in addition enjoy some infrastructural facilities. One of the ways of attracting qualified teachers to work in rural areas is through the provision of infrastructural facilities and the payment of jumbo salary package for teachers working in rural areas. This therefore becomes a means of developing the human capacity of the country for the production of transformational leaders.

Lack of financial/capital facilities and poor managerial skills: Finance is the life wire of most organizations. It's availability with proper management will go a long way in bringing business and community development initiatives to realities/fruitions. Ibaji Local Government Area has beautiful areas of investment opportunities in small scale industries. These areas include among others fish pond, rice cultivation and milling, cassava cultivation and processing, etc. But the capital and finance to produce them in large quantity is lacking. For instance, during planting seasons, finance is needed for the purchase of fertilizers that will enhance productivity among farmers. Unfortunately, only few farmers are able to buy these farm inputs because of the politics surrounding the supply and distribution of agricultural inputs in government circle. To complicate matters, the *1998 Local Government Yearbook* reported that the local government has only 1 constructed storage facility. Although this does not mean that they are no local storage facilities to store agricultural produce but the capacity of the traditional storage facilities is substantially small.

Table 2 below shows inadequate capital and poor managerial skills as barriers to the development of small scale industries in five villages of Ibaji Local Government Area.

Table 2: Inadequate Capital and poor Managerial Skills as Barriers to Small Scale Industrial and Community Development

Villages	No of Respondents	Yes	Percentage %	No	Percentage
Unale	35	20	57.1	15	42.9
Odolu	30	23	76.7	7	23.3
Igbogbo	30	21	70	9	30
Enweli	30	23	76.7	7	23.3
Ayeke	25	19	76	6	24
Total	150	106	71.3	44	28.6

Source: Modified by based on the field work of Victoria and Emmanuel,2010

Evidently, table 2 shows that insufficient capital and poor managerial skills are obstacles to community development and the establishment and growth of small scale industries in Ibaji Local Government Area. Financial facilities in terms of soft loans are not available and where they are available, they are difficult to access. More so, managerial skills fundamental in planning, organising, directing, coordinating and making key decisions are lacking due to high illiteracy and educational backwardness of the area. Although there are tertiary institutions (like the Federal Polytechnic Idah, Kogi State University, University of Nigeria, Kogi State College of Education, Federal College of Education, Okene) that would have offered training in administration and management, the inhabitants lack requisite qualifications to gain admission. More so, only few of the rural people can afford the cost of attending these schools. Besides, the carrying capacities of these schools cannot accommodate all the applicants seeking for admission.

Poor Communication Network: Communication is a means of transmitting knowledge and information from the giver to the receiver. It plays an important role in every community development effort and the establishment and development of small scale industry. Visions and key decisions of government and communities are transmitted via radio, telephone, newspapers, television, government web sites, letters, etc. The topography and energy crisis in Ibaji Local Government Area affect the effectiveness of the key channels of communication in the area.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As a way of concluding this paper, we wish to state that Ibaji Local Government Area has great potentials for small scale industrial and community development

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provided the enabling environment is created by government and the private sector. More so, the contribution of small scale industry to Nigeria economic growth and development should serve as impetus in helping the Ibajians in small scale industrial and community development programmes.

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