



Full Length Research Paper

Contributions of Financial Benefits of Community-Based Forestry to Rural Development in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Community-Based Forestry (CBF) generates revenue in the form of royalty paid by the government to the local communities as economic incentives to encourage participation in sustainable forest management. This was the case between the government and selected local communities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study therefore evaluates the contribution of the proceeds of CBF to development of rural economies through implementation of rural projects in the study areas. Data was obtained through the use of structured questionnaires, Oral interview and desk review of literatures. The sampled communities funded various projects from the royalty realized from CBF. Projects executed include: building of health centres, skill acquisition centres, schools, and town hall; construction of bridge/culvert, sinking of boreholes; and award of scholarship to indigenes. For all the sampled communities, the total of all the contributions of CBF to the projects was ₦ 4,128,000 with an equivalent of 78.6%. For community forestry to be sustained, all stakeholders must show mutual understanding, transparency and commitment in all their dealings with each other. There should be coordinated, honest communication of information between all parties for confidence building and effective partnership. For example, there must be transparency in the sharing of the benefits, and the communities should not be seen as objects for achieving goals of the programme, but as partners.

Key words: *Benefit sharing, community forestry, royalty, rural development and Nigeria*

Introduction

Community-based forestry (CBF) has been defined as the active and meaningful involvement of communities in forests management (Arnold, 1991; Brown, 1999; Djeumo, 2001). CBF is a participatory approach to forest management that strengthens communities' capacity to build vibrant local economies – while protecting and enhancing their local forest ecosystems (Amanor, 2003). According to Egan *et al.* (2002), by integrating ecological, social and economic components into cohesive approaches to forestry issues, a community-based approach gives local residents both the opportunity and the responsibility to manage their natural resources effectively and to enjoy the benefits of that responsibility". The key characteristics of CBF therefore include (1) meaningful community involvement in, or control of, decision-making about forest management and (2) retention of benefits of forests use and management within the community (Egan *et al.* 2002).

The concept of Community Forestry was evident from the increasing attention to forestry for helping the rural poor, under various title such as Forestry for Community Development, Agro-forestry, Village Forestry, Farm and Community Forestry, Forestry for Rural Development and perhaps most comprehensively, Social Forestry. Social forestry has gradually come to cover any kind of forestry activities directed to social needs. These activities were tree planting and management, at the farm, village, or community level by or for small farmers and the landless (Westoby 1989). As informed by Uprety (2005), Community Forestry of Nepal has been contributing to the rural livelihoods mainly in two ways: (1) flow of forest products in an easy and an accessible way, and in a sustainable manner, and (2) contributing in the development of livelihoods assets. As discussed by Carney (1998), the livelihood assets of include natural capital (forests, water, land, fish, minerals); social capital (relationships of trust and reciprocity, groups, networks, customary law); human capital (skills, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, labour ability, and good health); physical capital (basic infrastructure); and financial capital (monetary resources). With improved access to and control over different types of assets, the poor are better able meet basic needs and to create different livelihood options (Singh and Gilman 2000). These assets are the building blocks of livelihoods of the people. A range of assets is needed to achieve positive livelihood outcomes (Warner, 2002).

One of the primary reasons that forests are degraded is because communities can gain substantial financial profits and economic benefits from carrying out economic activities in ways, and at levels, that clear forest land or deplete forest resources. People carry out these unsustainable economic activities to generate subsistence and income, because they often yield higher returns than the income and subsistence benefits accruing from sustainable forest management. It follows that if communities are willing and economically able to involve themselves in sustainable forest management then they must receive greater economic benefits from conserving forests than from degrading them. This requires that broader socio-economic conditions are supportive of community involvement in

sustainable forest management, and that forest management systems themselves generate tangible benefits at the local level. Economic incentives provide tools for ensuring that both of these conditions are fulfilled (Mogaka *et al.*, 2001).

The practice of CBF is very limited in Nigeria. It is only in Cross River state that a semblance of this practice could be found. CBF started in Cross River State in March 1991 with the commencement of the British Government Overseas Development Administration (now known as Department for International Development) assisted forestry project. The project's primary focus was to guarantee the conservation of the remaining one third of tropical rain forest (both tropical moist and dry forest) of the state. Two thirds of the forest estate had earlier been designated as Cross River National Park (CRNP) by decree 36 (now ACT) of the Federal Government of Nigeria. However, participatory forestry practice commenced fully with the inception of the Cross River State Community Forestry Project (CRSCFP) in 1999. The CRSCFP was designed following extensive consultations and research between 1997 and 1998. The project's goal was primarily to ensure that sustainable economic benefits from the natural resource base are secured for women and men in Cross River State through the incorporation of local knowledge into the project's decision making processes.

With the large size of the tropical high forest (THF) still found in Cross River State, the forest no doubt influences the attitude and behavior of the people to environmental issues. Before now communities looked at the forest as so massive that, no matter what they do it cannot finish. They believed that no matter the rate and extent of deforestation, the forest can never finish. This mindset was anti-conservationist and unsustainable. However, this led the forestry sector to rethink its approach. A people centered, participatory and holistic approach was adopted. This approach recognized the local people, other stakeholders, their roles responsibilities and benefits. The local communities were considered as partners. To be effective partners, they were empowered through capacity-building, provision of logistic support, and payment of proceeds in the form of royalty. The study therefore evaluated the financial contribution of proceeds of CBF to rural economies through the implementation of rural projects in Cross River State, Nigeria.

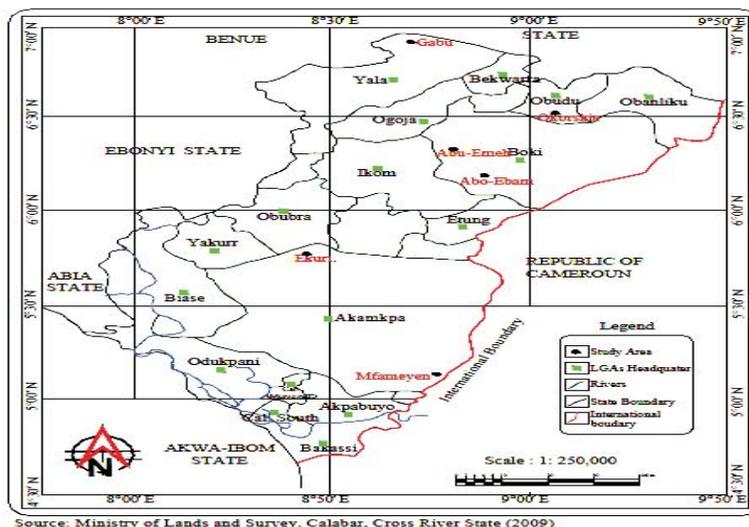
Methodology

The study was carried out in Cross River State, Nigeria. Three-stage sampling technique was employed for the study. As a result of limited adoption of CBF in the state, purposive sampling technique was adopted in selection of the study communities. At the preliminary stage of the study, reconnaissance survey was conducted to identify communities where the practise of CBF was adopted. It was discovered that CBF was practised in selected communities in the North, Southern and Central Senatorial Districts within the state. Because of significant roles they play in the implementation of CBF, Gabu and Okorshie communities were selected from Yala and Obudu LGAs respectively; Abo-Ebam and Abu-Emeh communities were selected in Boki LGA while Ekuri community was selected in Akamkpa LGA (Table 1).

Primary data for the study was collected through administration of structured questionnaire to the local community dwellers in the selected communities where CBF were practiced. Secondary information was collected through desk review of annual reports of Cross River State Forestry Commission (CRSFC) on the revenue generated before and after implementation of CBF in the State. Oral interview was also used to supplement the information collected through the questionnaire. A total of thirty questionnaires were administered in each of the community, making a total of one hundred and twenty (120) in all. However, one hundred and eleven (111) questionnaires were eventually discovered to be adequate for analysis and meaningful interpretation. In each household, the head of the household or an adult female (preferable the mother of the house) was interviewed.

Table 1: Distribution of the study sites where Community-Based Forestry is practised in Cross River State, Nigeria

S/N	Senatorial districts	LGAs	Community
1	Northern	Obudu Yala	Okorshie Gabu
2	Central	Boki	Abo-Ebam and Abu-Emeh
3	Southern	Akamkpa	Ekuri



Source: Ministry of Lands and Survey, Calabar, Cross River State (2009)

Results

Community participation in CBF and motivating factors

About 95% of the sampled respondents participated in CBF practices. The participations were in various ways but the highest was in forest protection (38.7%), closely followed by involving in decision making process (35.1%). About 88.3% of the respondents indicated that adoption of CBF has facilitated the economic growth of their community, moreover 93.7% indicated their willingness to continue their participation in CBF. In essence, benefit sharing and development of community ranked the highest (with 27.9%) among the factors that motivated the communities in getting involved in CBF (Table 2).

Table 2: Factors contributing to participation in CBF in Cross River State, Nigeria

Variables	Frequency n = 111	Percentage
Participation in CBF		
- Yes	95	85.6
- No	16	14.4
Ways of communities participation in CBF		
- No response	1	0.9
- Decision making	39	35.1
- Forest protection	52	46.8
- Plantation Establishment	19	17.1
Factors motivating communities involvement in CBF		
- No response		
- Benefit sharing and development of community	1	0.9
- Awareness on the need for sustainable forest management.	31	27.9
- Conservation and sustainability		
- Knowledge on how to save the ecosystem and bring the people closer to the forest	18	16.2
	20	18.0
	23	20.7
Adoption of CBF has facilitated the economic growth of your community		
- Yes	98	88.3
- No	13	11.7
Willingness to be more involved in CBF		
- Yes	104	93.7
- No	7	6.3

Existing CBF benefit formula in Cross River State

Table 3 presents the benefit sharing formula for the forest products between the government and the communities in the state as obtained during the period of the study. The benefit sharing formula was 50%:50% for forest products obtained from forest reserves; 20%:80% in favor of government for products obtained from the government owned plantation while the sharing formula for the products obtained from community forest was 70%:30% in favour of the communities.

Table 3: Existing benefit formula for the forest products between the government and the community for the CBF in Cross River State, Nigeria

Types of forest	Community Share	Government Share
Forest reserve	50%	50%
Plantation	20%	80%
Community forest	70%	30%

Rural development projects financed using proceeds from CBF

The result of the study revealed that the selected communities funded their various projects from the revenue / royalty realized from their conservation efforts and forest management activities. Projects executed included building of health centres, skill acquisition centres, schools, and town hall; construction of bridge/culvert, sinking of boreholes; and award of scholarship to indigenes.

In Ekuri development projects, construction of school had the highest contribution of ₦630,000 from proceeds of CBF and this covers the total cost of the school project. The total costs (100%) for projects like skills acquisition programme, gender promotion programme and scholarship awards were also from proceeds of CBF (Table 4). As indicated in Table 5, construction of community town hall had the highest share of fund (₦500,000) from CBF project in Abo-Ebam community and this covered the total project value. The total costs for each of the other projects were also covered by funds from CBF.

In Gabu community, roofing of primary school had the highest contribution from CBF and this amounted to ₦88,000 (Table 6). Making of benches for primary schools and a church and construction of a local bridge received the total costs for each of the project from proceeds of CBF. As indicated in Table 7, the total values as well as the amount of CBF contributions to the construction of primary school and health centre in Okorshie community were not disclosed. However, the total amount used in the establishment of a cocoa estate / nursery was ₦20,000 while CBFM contribution was ₦15,000 (75%). For Abu-Emeh community, the highest contribution of CBF among the projects was in the renovation of a five classroom block and this amounted to ₦800,000 (Table 8). Other projects like construction of civic center and bus-stop had 100% of their project funds from CBF.

Table 4: Community development projects in Ekuri funded from CBF

S/N	Name of project	Total value of project (₦)	Amount of CBF contribution (₦)	Percentage contribution of CBF
1	Road	44,500,00	18,000	40.5
2	School	630,000	630,000	100
3	Civic Center	600,000	2,000	3.3
4	Health Center	16,000	3,000	18.8
5	Skill(s) development	480,000	480,000	100
6	Gender promotion programme	38,000	38,000	100
7	Scholarship Award	200,000	200,000	100
Total		2,409,000	1,371,000	56.9

Table 5: Community development projects funded from CBF participation in Abo – Ebam and its total value

S/N	Name of project	Total value (₦)	Amount of CBF contribution (₦)	Percentage contribution of CBF
1	Borehole	160,000	160,000	100
2	A generator for their health centre	130,000	130,000	100
3	Primary school	200,000	200,000	100
4	Community town hall	500,000	500,000	100
Total		990,000	990,000	100

Table 6: Community development projects funded from CBF participation in Gabu and its total value

S/N	Name of project	Total value (₦)	Amount of CBF contribution (₦)	Percentage contribution of CBF
1	Roofing of primary school	150,000	88,000	58.7
2	Benches for the community secondary school	74,000	55,000	74.4
3	Benches for the primary school	15,000	15,000	100
4	Benches for the Church	25,000	25,000	100
5	Repair of borehole	50,000	45,000	90.0
6	Construction of a local bridge for their river	74,000	74,000	100
Total		388,000	302,000	77.8

Table 7: Community development projects funded from CBF participation in Okorshie and its total value

S/N	Name of project	Total value (₦)	Amount of CBF contribution (₦)	Percentage contribution of CBF
1	A primary school	Na	Na	na
2	Health Center	na	na	na
3	Cocoa estate/nursery	20,000	15,000	75.0
Total		20,000	15,000	75.0

na – Not available

Table 8: Community development projects funded from CBF participation in Abu- Emeh and its total value

S/N	Name of project	Total value (₦)	Amount of CBF contribution (₦)	Percentage contribution of CBF
1	Civic Center	500,000	500,000	100
2	Bus-Stop building	150,000	150,000	100
3	A five classroom block renovation	800,000	800,000	100
Total		1,450,000	1,450,000	100

Summary of the contributions of CBF in the communities

The highest relative percentage contribution of CBF to project cost was observed in Abo-Ebam and Abu-Emeh with 100% contribution of CBF in each of the communities. On the contrary, the highest contribution of CBF to implementation of projects was obtained in Abu-Emeh with N1,450,000. For the communities, the total of all the contributions of CBF to the projects was ₦ 4,128,000 with an equivalent of 78.6% (Table 9).

Table 9: Summary of contributions of CBF to Community development projects in Cross River State, Nigeria

S/N	Community	Total amount of project cost for each of the community (₦)	Total contribution of CBF to the projects in each community (₦)	Relative Percentage contribution of CBF
1	Ekuri	2,409,000	1,371,000	56.9
2	Abo-Ebam	990,000	990,000	100
3	Gabu	388,000	302,000	77.8
4	Okorshie	20,000	15,000	75.0
5	Abu-Emeh	1,450,000	1,450,000	100
Total		5,257,000	4,128,000	78.6

Annual Income and Discount Cash Flow (DCF) Analysis of CBFM

Table 10 shows the average annual income generated by the Cross River State Forestry Commission (CRSFC) before the introduction of CBF, while Table 11 shows the average annual income generated by the CRSFC after the introduction of CBF. There were

fluctuations in the revenue generation from 1991 to 1999 after which the review of tariff was introduced and this increased both the annual target and revenue realised from 20,383,550 to 66,350,000 and 13,195,125 to 41,616,796.93 respectively.

As presented in Table 10, the value of net present cost (i.e. discounted annual target) of ₦3,950,600 is less than the net present benefit (i.e. discounted revenue realised) which is ₦23,461,084.47, whereas the figures presented in Table 11 reveals that the Net Present Cost is ₦281,360,834.3 while the Net Present Benefit is ₦1,700,667,145.

Table 10: Average Annual Income Generated by the CRSFC before the Introduction of CBFM

Year	Annual Target (₦)	Revenue Realised (₦)	Discount factor	Net Present Cost (₦)	Net Present Benefit (₦)
1986	0	903,918.00	0.91	0	8,225,565.38
1987	0	985,653.60	0.83	0	818,092.49
1988	1,260,000.00	1,220,804.86	0.75	945,000	915,603.65
1989	1,940,000.00	2,241,102.60	0.68	1,319,200	1,524,153.77
1990	2,720,000.00	1,931,915.00	0.62	1,686,400	1,197,787.19
Total	5,920,000	7,283,697		3,950,600	23,461,084.47

Source: CRSFC 2006, Annual Report.

NB: The Net Present Cost and Net Present Benefit were derived from discounted Annual target and revenue realised respectively using a discount rate of 10%

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Net Present Value (NPV)} &= \text{₦}23,461,084.47 - \text{₦}3,950,600 \\ &= \text{₦}19,510,484.47 \end{aligned}$$

Table 11: Average Annual Income Generated by the CRSFC after the Introduction of CBFM

Year	Annual target (₦)	Revenue realised (₦)	Discount factor	Net Present Cost (₦)	Net Present Benefit (₦)	Remark
1991	2,770,000.00	2,593,383.10	0.91	2520700	2359978.6	
1992	8,212,200.00	2,498,471.51	0.83	6816126	2073731.4	
1993	8,212,000.00	2,785,181.40	0.75	6159000	1873853.6	
1994	9,000,000.00	8,419,363.90	0.68	612000	5725167.5	
1995	11,000,000.00	14,776,391.56	0.62	6820000	9161362.8	
1996	16,275,000.00	11,213,706.23	0.56	9114000	6279675.5	
1997	17,330,000.00	14,164,096.45	0.51	8838300	7223689.2	Review of tariff
1998	18,222,590.00	14,660,498.17	0.47	8564617	6890434.1	
1999	20,383,550.00	13,195,125.96	0.42	8561091	5541952.9	
2000	66,350,000.00	41,616,796.93	0.39	25876500	162305550.8	
2001	60,000,000.00	57,170,320.80	0.35	21000000	20009612.3	
2002	100,000,000.00	73,439,884.01	0.32	32000000	23500762.9	
2003	150,000,000.00	64,632,723.91	0.29	43500000	18743489.9	
2004	149,990,000.00	48,763,986.00	0.26	38997400	12678636.4	
2005	150,000,000.00	45,791,873.00	0.24	36000000	10990049.5	Ban on logging and concession
2006	59,005,000.00	63,724,835.00	0.22	12981100	14019463.7	
2007	65,000,000.00	69,939,963.61	0.20	13000000	13987992.7	Royalty inclusive
Total	911,750,340	549,378,348		281,360,834.3	1,700,667,145	

Source: CRSFC 2006 & 2007, Annual Report.

NB: The Net Present Cost and Net Present Benefit were derived from discounted Annual target and revenue realised respectively using a discount rate of 10%

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Net Present Value (NPV)} &= \text{₦}1,700,667,145 - \text{₦}281,360,834.3 \\ &= \text{₦}1,419,306,310.7 \end{aligned}$$

The results of the gross margin before and after CBFM in Cross River State as presented in Table 13 reveals that the difference in the average annual target and the revenue realised after the introduction of CBFM (₦21,315,999.5) was higher than before its introduction (₦272,739.4).

Table 13: Gross Margin Before and After CBFM in Cross River State, Nigeria

Periods	Years	Annual Target (₦)	Revenue Realised (₦)	Difference (₦)	Average Revenue (₦)
Before BFM	1986-1990	5,920,000	7,283,697	1,363,697	272,739.4
After CBFM	1991-2007	911,750,340	549,378,348	362,371,992	21,315,999.5

Discussion

CBF is a participatory approach to forest management that strengthens communities capacity to build vibrant local economies while protecting and enhancing their local forest ecosystems. By integrating ecological, social and economic components into cohesive approaches to forestry issues, CBF approaches gives local residents both the opportunity and the responsibility to manage their natural resources effectively and to enjoy the benefits of that responsibility. Development involves economic growth and such changes, which leads to a reduction in absolute poverty, such as infrastructural development.

Revenue Generation and Royalty to Communities

The existing benefit sharing formula is 20%:80% in favor of government for government established plantations while communities have 70% : 30% from products from community forest. However, the current sharing formula for the products obtained from the forest reserve is 50%:50%, but most of the respondents did not agree with this formula and instead proposed an alternative formula of 60%:40% in favor of community for forest reserve. For effective implementation of CBFM, there is need for the authority in charge to have a dialogue with the communities with respect to the current sharing formula on the products obtained from the reserve. The communities see forest products as their heritage therefore should have greater share than the government. Despite the desire for increase in the benefit sharing formula, it should be properly examined in other not to cause distortion of existing forestry policies and the sources of alienation of rural people from these policies.

Benefit sharing formula between the communities and the government (Forestry Commission) is a decision taken in the sharing of benefits depending on the forest type for SFM. However, these benefits known as royalties are used for community development projects which are the contribution of CBFM in the Cross River State. This has made the stakeholders realize that sustainable management of these resources is a task that must be collectively achieved. It has also given them a new orientation in the area of resource utilization as they now see the forest resources as personal investment which must be protected from poachers.

“Royalty” means the money paid to communities or stakeholders from resource extraction because they are recognized as resource owner(s). It is one of the benefits accruing to the communities for participating in CBFM. The level of awareness of the benefits of royalty derived from forest product has effect on the level of sustainability of the forest resources and community development. Majority of the respondents were aware of the benefits of royalty to the community. Royalties were used in the community for developmental projects as revealed in the study. All the respondents were aware of the benefits of royalty to the community. The communities funded their various projects from the royalty (revenue) realized from their forest management activities. With the establishment of schools and health centers, the living conditions of the people is likely to improve and this development has significant impact on the economic development of the areas and employment opportunities are opened to youths who would have become nuisance to the communities due to unemployment. Thus, the pressure on the forest resources could be significantly reduced.

The trend of revenue generated by the forestry commission for the past nine years shows fluctuations from ₦13.2m in 1999 to ₦50.4m in 2007. Excluding community royalty, the sum of ₦50,432,775.53 was generated by the CRSFC in 2007. Royalty for 2006 was ₦17,240,306.00. The gross revenue generated by the commission was ₦69, 942, 057.61 out of which ₦19, 509, 282.08 was paid as community royalty in 2007 (CRSFC Annual Report, 2007).

In 2004, there was a ban on logging and concession by the Cross River State Government and this affected both the annual target and revenue realised by the CRSFC after the introduction of CBFM. Moreover, the West African Metal Product Company (WAMPCO), a Chinese Company, was in the central role of forest exploitation in Cross River State. The company was into plywood production and exportation of logs to mostly China and Europe, their activities encouraged a lot of both legal and illegal practices in the tropical high forest of the state. The activities of the company was banned in 2004 and this contributed to a reduction in the forest exploitations as well as the revenue generation.

According to the Forestry Officials, the success and failure of any project depends mostly on funding and good governance. From the study, the contribution of CBFM to sustainable forest management (SFM) was rated high; participation level was equally rated high; the communities’ involvement level was active; and 117.6 hectares of land was regenerated (Plantation establishment). The staff strength of the Forestry Officials was inadequate despite of the fact that a number of them had obtained the required formal training on CBFM.

Contributions to Community Development Projects Implementation

Development involves economic growth and such changes, which leads to a reduction in absolute poverty, such as infrastructural development. The result of the study revealed that the communities funded its various projects from the revenue/royalty realized from their forest management activities. With the establishment of schools and health centres, the living conditions of the people is likely to improve and this development has significant impact on the economic development of the areas and employment opportunities are opened to youths who would have become nuisance to the communities due to unemployment. Thus, the pressure on the forest resources could be significantly reduced.

Many of the respondents agreed that CBFM has contributed to the economic growth of their communities thereby willing to be better involved in CBFM activities in future. From the summary of the contributions of proceeds from CBFM on implementation of projects in the local communities, the highest fund from CBFM on projects implementation was obtained in Abu-Emeh community with about 1,450,000 and this covered the total cost of building a Civic Center, a Bus-Stop, and renovation of a five-classroom block.

Ekuri community had implemented various projects from the proceeds obtained from CBFM. Some of these include road construction; building of schools, civic center, and health center; implementation of skill(s) development; promotion of gender programme; and award of scholarships to four girls who are indigenes of the community. The scholarships were awarded by the women wing of the Ekuri Initiative for girls studying in the University and this has contributed to the academic excellence of the community. This is a laudable project and should be further strengthened.

Transportation has a central role in the development of rural economy. A bridge constructed on Okokori-Ekuri road from CBFM proceeds by Ekuri initiative and culverts in some communities have enhanced transportation of people as well as their forest and farm produce, thereby improving the rural economy resulting from increase in the sale of their products. In Gabu community, roofing of primary school had the highest contribution of (₦88,000) from CBFM. In the same vein, making of benches for primary schools and church (₦15,000), and construction of a local bridge (₦74,000) was funded 100% the total costs for each of the project from CBFM. Repair of borehole also received considerable amount in Gabu community from the proceeds of CBFM. The central role played by CBFM in rural development has long been appreciated by FAO (1978).

Discount Cash Flow (DCF) Analysis

A commonly used approach to weighing the costs and returns over the life of a forestry project is through Discount Cash Flow (DCF) analysis. DCF analysis compares alternative courses of action rather than providing an absolute measure of the outcome. In other words, DCF aids in comparing the alternative to the forestry project in order to effectively allocate resources or determine the relative worth of a project (Elevitch and Wilkinson, 2000).

The results of the gross margin before and after CBFM in Cross River State reveals that the average of the differences of the annual target and the revenue realised after the introduction of CBFM (₦ 21,315,999.5) was more than before the introduction (₦ 272,739.4) of CBFM. This means that more revenue was generated by the Cross River State Forestry Commission after the implementation of CBFM. The reason for this could be that, money lost to illegal activities was reduced and now coming to the coffer of the government.

Conclusion

The Cross River State's CBF initiative is commendable but much is still needed to be done if the state's forest estates are to be effectively and sustainably managed. The power of forest management still resides largely with the state while the proceeds from the forest are under the control of government. For community forestry to be sustained, all stakeholders must show mutual understanding, transparency and commitment in all their dealings with each other. There should be good coordination, honest communication of information between all parties for confidence building and effective partnership. For example, there must be transparency in the sharing of the benefits, and the communities should not be seen as objects for achieving goals of the programme, but as partners.

With the recognition of the poor state of the forest by the Federal Government of Nigeria and the realization of the importance of forests, a National Forest Programme (NFP) that sets out how the sector could best be managed for the attainment of sustainable forest Management (SFM) at all times has been developed. The NFP is a holistic process involving all stakeholders in the forestry sector in decision making, participation, governance, responsibilities and benefits sharing. As already established by the study, CBF has the potentials of managing the forest as well as yielding economic benefits to the stakeholders. The NFP should make other state in Nigeria to adopt the practise of CBF already in place in Cross River State.

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