

Evaluating the Impact of Community Development Fund Committees on Project Planning and Management in Local Communities

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Abstract: This study evaluates the impact of Community Development Fund Committees (CDFCs) on project planning and management within local communities, focusing on the Zambian context. Recognizing CDFCs as pivotal in fostering local development, the research investigates how these committees facilitate community engagement, measure the effectiveness of their projects, and address challenges impacting their functionality. Guided by Social Capital and Integral Theories, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to capture both measurable data and nuanced insights. Findings indicate that while CDFCs play a critical role in promoting community participation and addressing localized needs, their effectiveness is often undermined by challenges such as inadequate resources, political interference, and limited technical expertise. Despite these hurdles, communities report moderate satisfaction with project outcomes, particularly in areas directly aligned with their priorities, such as infrastructure and service delivery. However, sustainability remains a concern, as many projects lack long-term viability due to resource constraints and governance issues. The study highlights the importance of strengthening community engagement mechanisms, enhancing transparency, and providing targeted training for CDFC members. It also highlights the need for policy interventions to address systemic barriers, such as political patronage and funding inadequacies. By offering a comprehensive analysis of CDFC operations, the research contributes to the broader discourse on community-driven development and provides actionable recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of CDFC-led initiatives in Zambia and similar contexts.

Keywords: Community Development Funds (CDF), CDF Committees, Community Project Planning and Management, Committees, Effectiveness, Lusaka, Zambia.

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I. INTRODUCTION

➤ *Background*

Community development is a multifaceted process aimed at improving the quality of life for individuals and groups within a community. It encompasses various strategies, including economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. One critical aspect of community development is the establishment and functioning of Community Development Fund Committees (CDFCs), which are designed to facilitate project planning and management at the local level. These committees often serve as intermediaries between local communities and funding agencies, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to meet community needs. The role of CDFCs in project planning and management has garnered significant attention in academic literature. Scholars have explored how these committees influence decision-making processes, resource

allocation, and overall project outcomes. For instance, research indicates that effective CDFCs can enhance community participation in project planning, leading to more relevant and sustainable outcomes. However, despite the recognized importance of CDFCs, there remains a gap in empirical studies evaluating their actual impact on project planning and management within local communities. Many existing studies focus on theoretical frameworks or case studies from specific regions without providing comprehensive analyses across diverse contexts (Harris et al.). This lack of empirical evidence makes it challenging for policymakers to understand the effectiveness of CDFCs fully. Moreover, the dynamics within communities—such as socio-economic status, cultural factors, and existing governance structures—can significantly influence how CDFCs operate and their subsequent impact on projects (Putnam). Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing tailored strategies that enhance the effectiveness of CDFCs in

different settings. This research study aims to fill this gap by systematically evaluating the impact of Community Development Fund Committees on project planning and management in local communities. By employing a mixed-methods approach that includes qualitative interviews with committee members and quantitative analysis of project outcomes, this study seeks to provide an nuanced understanding of how CDFCs function in various contexts.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

The role of Community Development Fund Committees (CDFCs) in project planning and management is critical for the sustainable development of local communities, particularly in Zambia. Despite the establishment of these committees to enhance community participation and resource allocation, there remains a significant gap in understanding their actual impact on project outcomes. Many local communities continue to face challenges related to inadequate infrastructure, limited access to essential services, and ineffective resource utilization (Mwanza 45). Research indicates that while CDFCs are intended to empower communities by involving them in decision-making processes, there is often a disconnect between committee activities and the needs of the community (Chanda 112). This disconnect can lead to misallocation of funds, lack of transparency, and ultimately hindered development efforts. Furthermore, existing literature has not sufficiently addressed how these committees influence project planning methodologies or management practices within local contexts (Kaunda 78). In Zambia, where community-driven development initiatives are increasingly prioritized by both government and non-governmental organizations, it becomes imperative to evaluate the effectiveness of CDFCs. Understanding their impact can provide insights into best practices for enhancing community engagement and ensuring that development projects align with local priorities (Phiri 201). Therefore, this research aims to critically assess the role of CDFCs in project planning and management within Zambian communities, identifying both successes and areas for improvement. The problem lies in the lack of comprehensive evaluations that assess how CDFCs influence project planning and management processes within local communities. Existing literature often highlights the theoretical frameworks surrounding community participation and development; however, empirical studies focusing specifically on Zambia's context are scarce. This gap in research raises questions about the operational efficiency of CDFCs, their decision-making processes, and their overall impact on community-led development initiatives. Furthermore, there is a need to understand how socio-cultural factors, governance structures, and resource allocation affect the performance of CDFCs in Zambia. Without a thorough evaluation of these committees' roles and contributions to project planning and management, policymakers may struggle to design effective interventions that enhance community development outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the impact of Community Development Fund Committees on project planning and management in local communities across Zambia.

➤ *General Objective*

To evaluate the effectiveness and influence of Community Development Fund Committees (CDFCs) on project planning and management within local communities.

III. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To analyze how CDFCs facilitate community engagement in project planning and decision-making processes,
- To measure the effectiveness of projects initiated or managed by CDFCs in terms of community satisfaction.
- To explore the challenges and barriers faced by CDFCs in executing their roles effectively.

• *Theoretical Framework: Social Capital and Sustainable Community Development*

This study employs Social Capital theory as a foundational framework to analyze the dynamics affecting the efficacy of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committees in promoting sustainable community projects. Originating from the work of Putnam (2000), Social Capital theory emphasizes the intrinsic value of social networks, trust, and community relationships. Within this framework, social capital comprises bonding, bridging, and linking ties, each of which contributes differently to sustainable development efforts. Bonding social capital refers to close relationships among similar individuals within a community, which strengthens internal cohesion and trust within CDF committees. Bridging social capital, on the other hand, connects diverse groups across communities, fostering knowledge exchange and innovative solutions for project sustainability. Linking social capital, which involves connections with external institutions and authorities, provides communities with access to additional resources, skills, and support from external stakeholders. Woolcock and Narayan (2000) argue that these forms of social capital are crucial for effective decision-making and implementation of planning and management mechanisms within CDF committees. The study further posits that social capital enhances community participation, a critical element in sustainable development. When community members feel connected and trust each other, they are more likely to engage in CDF projects actively. High levels of social capital within a community can also facilitate efficient decision-making, as trust and mutual respect reduce potential conflicts and enhance cooperation among stakeholders. By investigating how social capital impacts community engagement and the functioning of CDF committees, this study aims to provide a clear understanding of the social dynamics that shape the planning and management of community-driven initiatives.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines the crucial role of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committees in fostering sustainable community projects, highlighting significant gaps in existing research. While studies, particularly in developed nations (e.g., Srinivasan, 2016), demonstrate the positive influence of active CDF committees on project longevity by promoting local ownership and accountability, there's a dearth of research exploring these

dynamics in developing regions, notably sub-Saharan Africa and Zambia. This gap necessitates further investigation into the unique challenges faced by CDF committees in these contexts, including resource constraints, governance issues, and socio-cultural dynamics. A key limitation across the literature is the scarcity of longitudinal studies tracking the long-term impact of CDF-led initiatives (Aryeetey, 2019). Understanding whether initial positive outcomes are sustained over time and identifying factors contributing to or hindering long-term sustainability requires in-depth, long-term analysis. Furthermore, comparative research examining the effectiveness of CDF committees in diverse settings, particularly urban versus rural contexts (Brown, 2021), is lacking. Such comparative analyses are crucial for developing tailored strategies that address the specific needs and challenges of different communities. Within the African context, existing research often focuses broadly on community development without specifically analyzing the role and function of CDF committees (Ogunbameru & Olowosulu, 2018). This necessitates more focused research exploring the interplay between CDF committees and existing local governance structures, including traditional leadership (Nkamnebe et al., 2017). Furthermore, the impact of political and economic instability, prevalent in many African nations, on CDF committee operations and project sustainability warrants deeper investigation (Kabeya & Chiweshe, 2019). In Zambia specifically, research on CDF committees is particularly limited (Musumali & Chileshe, 2018). The country's unique socio-political and cultural landscape, including the influence of traditional cultural norms and local governance practices (Ngulube et al., 2019), necessitates context-specific research to understand how these factors shape CDF committee effectiveness and adaptability. Furthermore, the interplay between CDF committees, local government authorities, and political dynamics (Mukupa & Chitumbo, 2020) requires further scrutiny to understand the potential influence of political affiliations and patronage networks on resource allocation and project outcomes. Beyond the operational aspects of CDF committees, the literature also highlights the critical importance of community participation in project success. However, further research is needed to explore the complexities of community engagement, including the influence of cultural contexts on participation levels, the impact of socio-economic factors on inclusivity, and the potential of technology to enhance or hinder community involvement. Addressing these research gaps will significantly contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of CDF committees and their role in driving sustainable community development. In Zambia specifically, literature on CDF planning and management mechanisms emphasizes the importance of tailoring approaches to local contexts. However, existing studies reveal significant gaps, particularly regarding urban-rural variations, the role of traditional leadership structures, and the impact of economic factors. Studies tend to focus on rural communities, leaving urban settings underrepresented despite their unique challenges, such as higher population densities and greater resource competition (Mwila & Bwembya, 2022). Comparative research between urban and rural areas could offer insights into location-specific

mechanisms that address the distinct demands of each setting. The influence of traditional leadership on planning and management mechanisms is another critical factor in Zambian communities. Traditional leaders hold significant authority and respect within their communities, and their support can bolster planning and management through increased community involvement and adherence to cultural norms (Kaluba & Mulenga, 2021). However, limited research exists on how traditional leadership shapes CDF project outcomes. Understanding this influence is essential for designing planning and management mechanisms that align with local governance and community structures. Regional diversity within Zambia also presents unique challenges for project sustainability, as each province may face different socioeconomic and political conditions. Sichilima and Mwanza (2023) suggest that provincial comparisons are necessary to capture the full range of factors influencing sustainability. A geographically diverse approach to studying CDF mechanisms could provide a more comprehensive understanding, leading to strategies that account for Zambia's varied regional contexts. Furthermore, economic factors and social inequalities are critical to understanding planning and management in Zambia. In economically disadvantaged regions, limited financial resources can hinder community contributions to CDF projects, reducing the chances of long-term success (Ngoma & Chikumbi, 2022). Integrating economic considerations into planning and management mechanisms could help create more inclusive strategies that ensure projects benefit the broader community and are resilient to economic fluctuations. Lastly, gender dynamics in planning and management mechanisms remain underexplored, although they are essential for inclusive community participation. Gender roles and social expectations may influence the extent to which men and women are involved in CDF projects, affecting their planning and management (Mukwala & Kaluba, 2019). Addressing gender dynamics in project planning and implementation could foster a more balanced approach, ensuring that all community members have a voice in planning and management efforts. While CDF committee planning and management mechanisms are recognized as vital for long-term community development, several areas require further research to develop a clear understanding. Addressing gaps related to standardized evaluation frameworks, cultural factors, external influences, urban-rural variations, traditional leadership, economic conditions, gender dynamics, and incorporating longitudinal perspectives would provide a more comprehensive picture of CDF planning and management efforts. This expanded approach could inform more adaptable, context-sensitive strategies for fostering sustainable community-driven projects worldwide. While the literature acknowledges the critical role of CDF committees in sustaining community-driven projects, it also highlights significant gaps. Addressing these gaps through standardized frameworks, culturally sensitive strategies, adaptive mechanisms for political and economic challenges, and inclusive practices could significantly enhance project longevity. A multidisciplinary and context-sensitive research agenda will be vital to advancing the effectiveness and resilience of CDF planning and management mechanisms globally. In summary, this chapter delves into the extensive

body of research on Community Development Fund (CDF) committees, offering a global perspective with a specific focus on Africa and Zambia. It underlines the central role of CDF committees in community-driven development and the importance of effective planning and management mechanisms. Despite the valuable insights gained from existing studies, critical gaps are identified, including the absence of standardized evaluation frameworks, limited exploration of cultural and contextual, and insufficient understanding of the influence of political, economic, and traditional factors. The chapter calls for future research to address these gaps, emphasizing the need for comparative analysis, exploration of gender dynamics, consideration of technological influences, and the implementation of longitudinal studies to track sustained impacts over time. This comprehensive understanding is crucial for shaping informed policies and practices that enhance the effectiveness and planning and management of CDF committees in diverse contexts.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research onion framework was used as a guide for the research design. The research onion framework provided a structured and systematic approach to conducting research, ensuring that all aspects of the study were thoroughly considered and executed. The use of the research onion model is credited to Saunders et al. (2018). The framework consists of multiple layers. The research adopted a positivist philosophy and used both deductive and inductive approaches. A mixed-methods design involving a self-administered questionnaire and interviews was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data, respectively. Descriptive and inferential statistics, as well as thematic analysis, were used to analyze the data. (Bryman, 2016). This study employed both deductive and inductive research approaches. The deductive approach involved testing pre-existing theories and hypotheses using empirical data. The deductive approach was deemed appropriate for this study because it aligns with the positivist research strategy and allows for the testing of pre-existing theories and hypotheses. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), the deductive approach was suitable for studies that aim to test pre-existing theories and hypotheses, hence the reason for adopting this approach for the study. On the other hand, the inductive approach involves collecting and analyzing data to develop new theories or hypotheses that explain observed phenomena (Hatch, 2018). This study collected qualitative data through interviews and observations, and the analysis of the data was used to develop new theories or hypotheses about the impact of employee motivation on organizational performance (Charmaz, 2014). The inductive approach was suitable for this study because it allowed for the exploration of new ideas and the development of new theories or hypotheses (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). It also aligned with the positivist research strategy adopted for this study.

The target population for this study includes members of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Committees within the constituencies of Lusaka district. These committee members represent the primary stakeholders responsible for

the utilization of allocated funds in CDF projects. The population comprises both elected and appointed committee members, including community representatives, government officials, and other individuals involved in the decision-making and oversight of CDF projects. Sampling techniques were employed to select a representative sample from this population to ensure the study's findings can be generalized to CDF Committees within the chosen constituencies.

Bryman (2017) advocates for this stratified random sampling technique, citing its appropriateness for studies that aim to achieve a representative sample from a diverse population. The sample size (100) was determined using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) formula, which takes into account the population size, the desired precision level, and the confidence level.

This study had employed a multi-stage sampling design to select a representative sample of members from Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Committees within the selected constituencies (Lusaka district). The process had involved stratifying the target population into different categories based on the type of committee member, randomly selecting constituencies from a list within the study Lusaka District, and identifying all CDF Committees within each selected constituency. A proportionate stratified sampling method had been used to determine the number of CDF Committees to be selected from each stratum and the number of committee members to be included in the sample from each CDF Committee. Committee members had been randomly selected to participate in the study using a random sampling technique, and replacements had been selected in the event of non-response or unavailability. This multi-stage sampling design had ensured representation of different types of committee members and geographic diversity within the selected constituencies, thus enhancing the generalizability of the study's findings to CDF Committees in the area.

For this study, a structured questionnaire had been employed as the primary data collection tool for the quantitative phase. The questionnaire had been designed to gather information on various aspects related to the utilization of allocated funds by Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Committees and its impact on project effectiveness and longevity. The questionnaire had included both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to elicit quantifiable responses. The questionnaire had been pre-tested to ensure clarity and effectiveness. Trained enumerators had administered the questionnaires to the selected sample of committee members. Additionally, for the qualitative component of the study, in-depth interview guides had been developed to conduct interviews with key informants. These guides had been semi-structured, allowing for open-ended discussions to gain insights into local governance practices and cultural influences on fund utilization. Data collected through these tools had been instrumental in addressing the research questions and objectives of the study.

Data collection involved systematically acquiring and quantifying information regarding relevant variables to address defined research inquiries, test hypotheses, and assess

outcomes, as stated by Giamatti (2005). The researcher initiated the process by securing permission or an introductory from the university. Following their approval, the researcher proceeded to gather data, administering the questionnaires and conducting individual interviews with the respondents.

Triangulation is a commonly used technique in research that involves the use of multiple methods to collect and analyze data to increase the validity and reliability of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The study utilized triangulation by using both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the data collected. Thematic analysis and content analysis were used to identify patterns and themes in the qualitative data obtained from interviews and observations. Meanwhile, descriptive and inferential statistical analysis methods were used to analyze the quantitative data gathered from questionnaires. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods enables researchers to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The qualitative methods provided rich, detailed insights into participant's experiences and perspectives, while the quantitative methods were allowed testing of hypotheses and drawing of generalizable conclusions from the data (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The use of statistical software, such as SPSS, facilitated the analysis of large datasets and the performance of complex statistical analyses (Field, 2018). By combining both qualitative and quantitative methods and utilizing appropriate software and statistical methods, the study triangulated the findings and provided a more robust and reliable analysis of the data.

This study adhered to ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. Participants were informed about the study's purpose and their right to withdraw from the study at any time they wished. Their identities were kept confidential, and pseudonyms were used to protect their anonymity. The researcher ensured that the study was conducted in a fair and equitable manner, without any discrimination or bias towards any particular group. To address the ethical issues, the researcher obtained approval from institutional ethics committee and adhered to ethical guidelines and standards set by the relevant regulatory bodies (Brown, 2018).

VI. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

➤ Overview

This chapter presented the findings using descriptive statistics, tables, and charts to illustrate frequencies and percentages. Following the methodology described, a sample size of 100. Questionnaires were distributed among these 100 participants, but out of the total distributed, 84 were completed and returned, serving as the responsive instruments for data analysis. This resulted in a response rate of 84%. According to Saunders et al. (2003), a response rate of 50% is considered sufficient for making statistical generalization.

➤ Presentation of Results on Background

This section presents the background characteristics of the respondents who participated in the research.

➤ Characteristics of the Respondents

The research question aimed to explore the gender distribution among respondents, and the obtained results revealed a slightly higher representation of females at 55% compared to males at 45%. This distribution suggests a relatively balanced gender composition within the study participants. The majority of respondents fell into the age range of 25-34, comprising 37.7% of the participants. This suggests a significant presence of individuals in the mid to late twenties and early thirties within the study. Following closely, the age group of 35-44 represented 31.2% of the respondents, contributing substantially to the overall distribution. The age group of 18-24 constituted 20.8% of the participants, reflecting a presence of younger individuals within the study. Meanwhile, respondents aged 45-54 represented 10.4%, indicating a smaller but still notable representation of individuals in the mid-forties to mid-fifties age range.

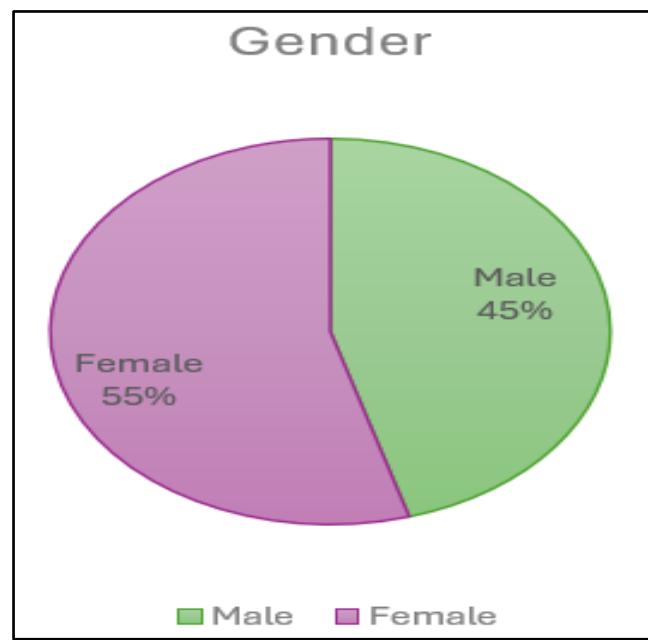


Fig 1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

The sought to understand the educational background of the respondents, and the obtained results reveal a diverse distribution across different levels of education. A notable percentage of respondents, accounting for 42.9%, reported having completed secondary education. This suggests a substantial representation of individuals with a foundational level of education beyond the primary stage but not extending to tertiary education. The category of respondents with tertiary education constituted 13% of the participants, indicating a smaller but still significant presence of individuals with higher education qualifications. This group likely includes individuals with degrees or other advanced certifications beyond secondary schooling. Moreover, 15.6% of the respondents reported having completed only primary education, while 26.6% indicated having no formal

education. The presence of individuals with no formal education or only primary education emphasizes the

importance of recognizing and accommodating diverse educational backgrounds within the study population.

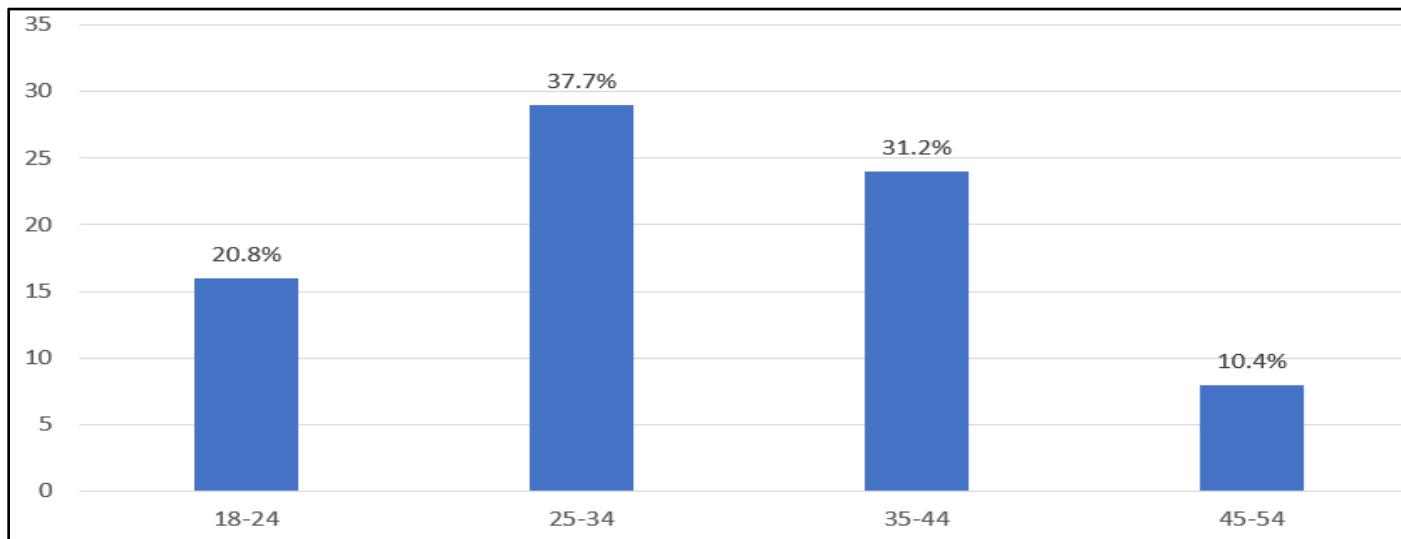


Fig 2 Percentage Distribution of Respondents By Age Group

The study revealed that the majority of respondents were not frequently consulted by the CDFC during project planning. This was evident as 55% of respondents indicated they were 'Never' consulted, 30% said 'Rarely', and only 15% reported being consulted 'Often'. The mean score of 4.25 suggested that, on average, respondents leaned towards less frequent consultation. The negative skewness of -1.331 indicated a left-skewed distribution, meaning most responses were on the lower end (less frequent consultation), with a few higher values (more frequent consultation). The standard

deviation of 1.049 highlighted variability in consultation frequency among participants. A significant portion of individuals who rarely or never participated in consultations with the CDFC for project planning. This suggested potential areas for improvement in communication or involvement processes within projects. The high percentage of 'Never' responses indicated a need for the CDFC to enhance stakeholder engagement and ensure more inclusive planning processes.

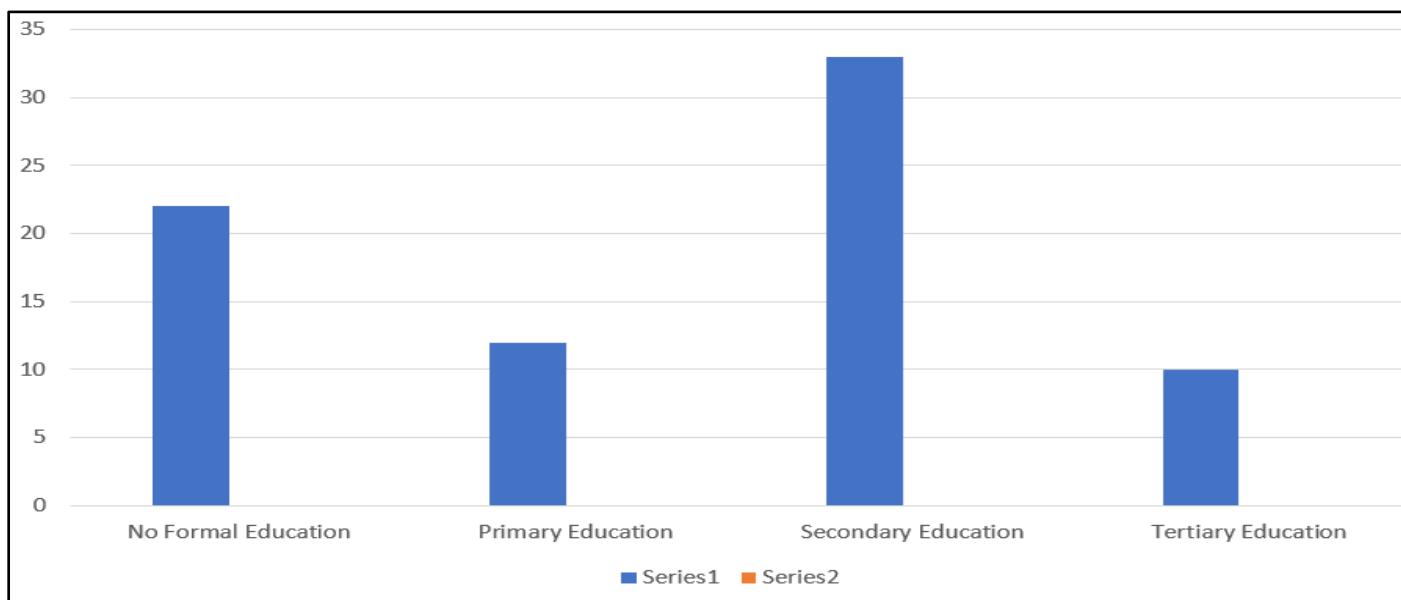


Fig 3 Educational Attainment of Respondents

The survey results shown in the figure, the study interpreted that a significant majority of respondents did not feel their input was valued by the CDFC in decision-making. This was evident as 50% of respondents selected 'Strongly Disagree', 20% chose 'Disagree', 20% were 'Neutral', and only 10% 'Agreed' that their input was valued. The mean

score of 4.10 suggested that, on average, respondents leaned towards negative perceptions regarding the value of their input. The negative skewness of -0.742 indicated a moderately left-skewed distribution, meaning more responses were on the lower end (disagreement), with fewer higher values (agreement). The standard deviation of 1.051

highlighted some variability in responses but not excessively so. A significant portion of individuals who felt their input was not valued by the CDFC in decision-making. This suggested potential areas for improvement in how the CDFC

engaged with stakeholders and considered their input. The high percentage of 'Strongly Disagree' responses indicated a clear trend of dissatisfaction among participants regarding their involvement or influence within the organization.

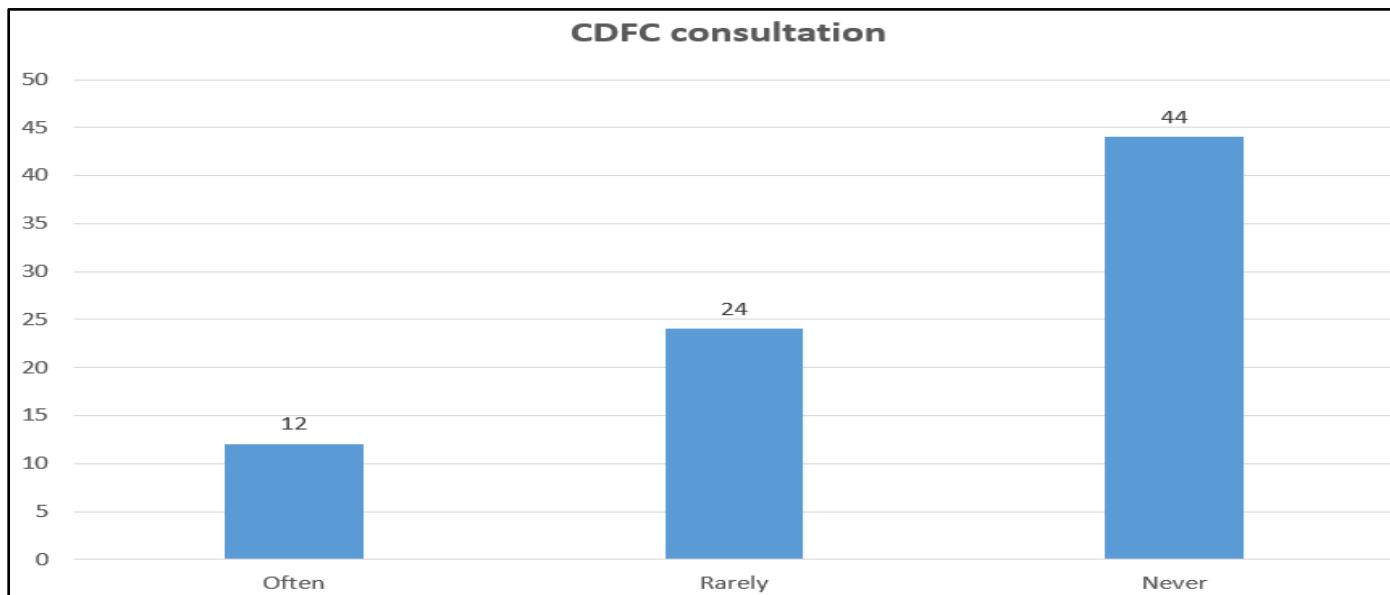


Fig 4 CDFC Consultation

Based on the survey results shown in the figure, the study showed that community meetings to discuss project plans were not frequently organized. This was evident as the majority of respondents indicated 'Rarely' (60%) or 'Never' (5%), with only 5% selecting 'Often' and 30% choosing 'Sometimes'. The mean score of 3.65 suggested that, on average, respondents leaned towards 'Rarely' in terms of the frequency of community meetings. The negative skewness of -0.577 indicated a moderate left-skewed distribution, meaning more responses were on the lower end (less frequent meetings). The standard deviation of 0.658 highlighted some variability in responses but not excessively so. The study revealed that there was room for improvement in organizing

community meetings more frequently. The high percentage of 'Rarely' responses suggested potential disengagement or lack of proactive communication between those organizing projects and the community. This indicated a need for more regular and structured community meetings to ensure better involvement and feedback from stakeholders. On strategies or mechanisms used by the CDFC to gather input from the community, the key informants indicated: "One effective strategy is conducting household visits to engage directly with community members and understand their needs. The CDFC also collaborates with local leaders and representatives to ensure all demographics are heard, including marginalized groups."

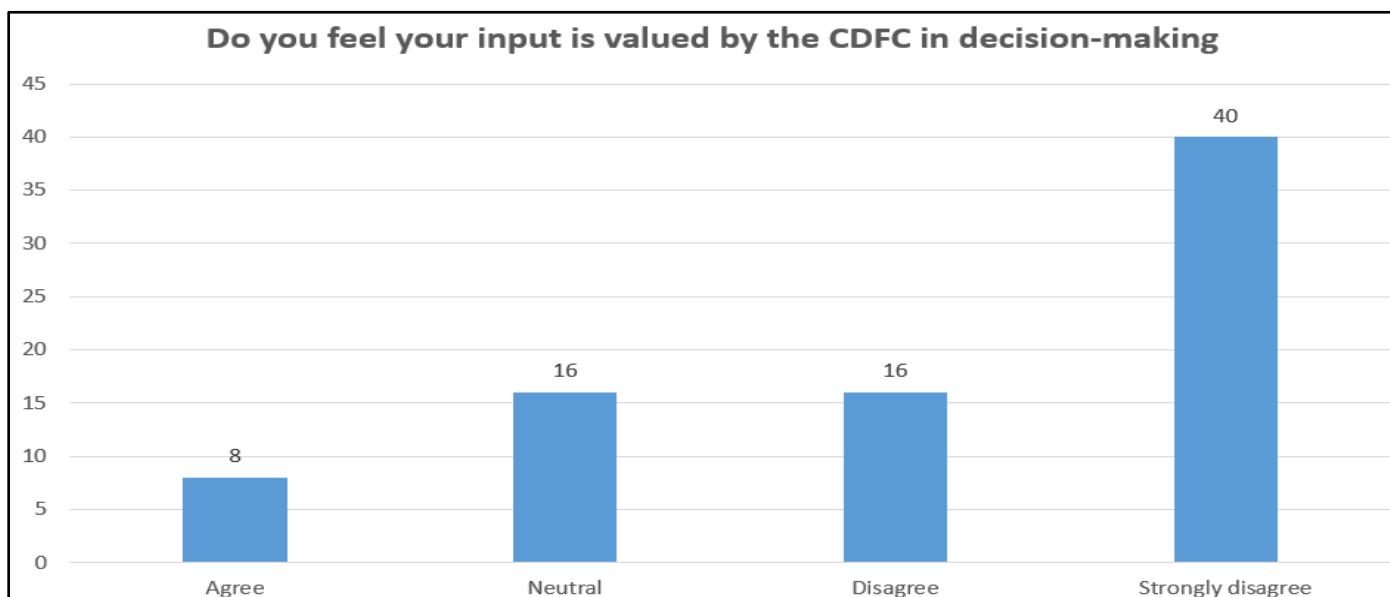


Fig 5 Do You Feel Your Input is Valued by the CDFC in Decision-Making

The study interpreted that respondents generally did not feel that the CDFC represented the interests of the entire community in planning to a high degree. This was evident as 40% of respondents rated the representation as 'Low' and 20% as 'Very Low', with only 10% indicating 'High' and 30% 'Moderate'. The mean score of 3.70 suggested that, on average, respondents leaned towards a lower perception of representation by the CDFC. The negative skewness of -0.206 indicated a slight left-skewed distribution, meaning responses were somewhat more concentrated towards the

lower end (less representation). The standard deviation of 0.906 highlighted some variability in responses but not excessively so. The study also revealed a significant portion of individuals who felt that the CDFC did not adequately represent the interests of the entire community in planning. This suggested potential areas for improvement in how the CDFC engaged with and represented community interests. The high percentage of 'Low' and 'Very Low' responses indicated a clear trend of dissatisfaction among participants regarding the CDFC's representation.

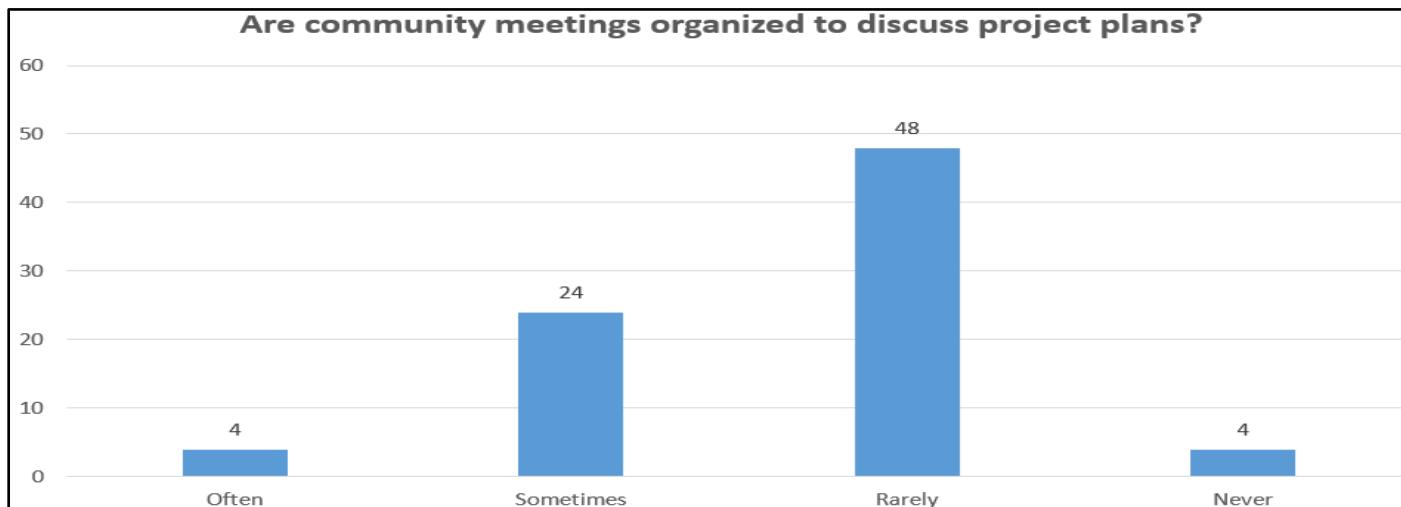


Fig 6 Are Community Meetings Organized to Discuss Project Plans

Based on the results shown in the figure above, the study interpreted that respondents had a moderate level of satisfaction with the projects initiated or managed by the CDFC. This was evident as the mean satisfaction score was 3.35 on a scale (presumably 1 to 5), indicating an average level of contentment among respondents. The mean score of 3.35 suggested that, on average, respondents were neither highly satisfied nor highly dissatisfied with the CDFC's projects. The standard deviation of 1.069 indicated some variability in responses, meaning there were differing levels of satisfaction among the respondents. The skewness value of 0.020 indicated that the distribution of satisfaction scores was very close to symmetrical around the mean. It was also

revealed that while 30% of respondents were satisfied, a combined total of 35% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. This suggested that there was a significant portion of contentment among stakeholders, but also a substantial group who were not satisfied with the CDFC's initiatives. The neutral responses (20%) indicated that a portion of respondents were indifferent or had mixed feelings about the projects. The key informant added: "Overall, community members are moderately satisfied. Factors such as timely project completion, quality of work, and alignment with community priorities heavily influence satisfaction levels. However, dissatisfaction arises when projects face delays or do not address pressing needs."

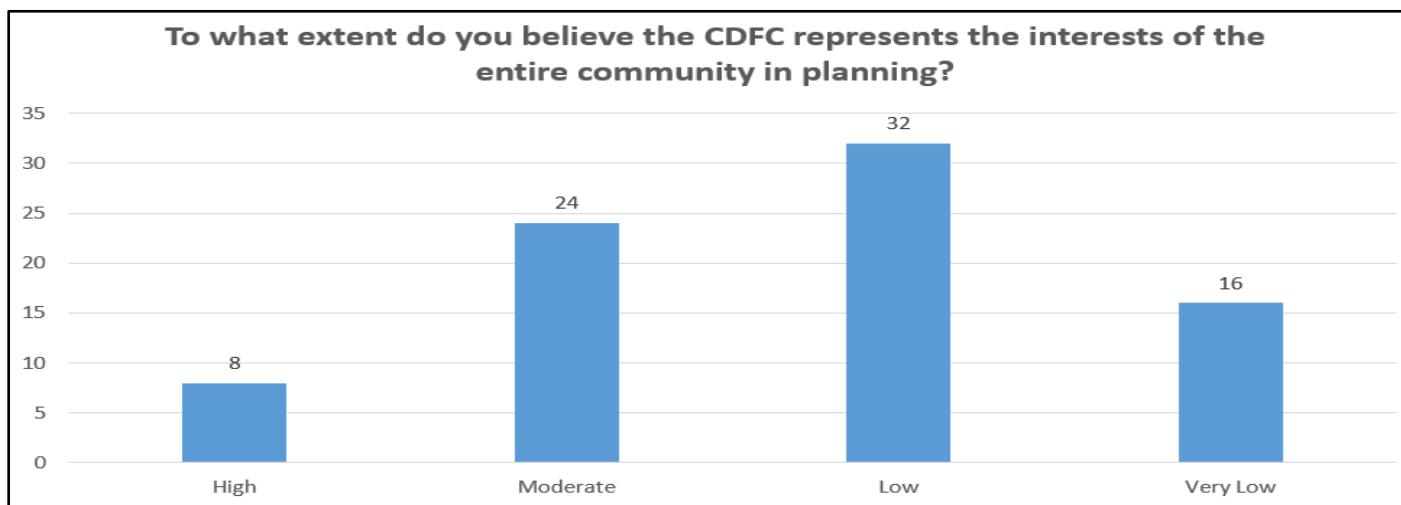


Fig 7 To what Extent Do You Believe the CDFC Represents the Interests of the Entire Community in Planning

The study showed that opinions on whether CDFC projects meet the immediate needs of the community were varied. This was evident as 30% of respondents were neutral, 30% disagreed, 15% strongly disagreed, 15% agreed, and 10% strongly agreed. The mean score of 3.25 suggested a slightly positive tilt towards agreement but not strongly so. The standard deviation of 1.185 indicated moderate variability in responses, meaning there were differing levels of agreement among the respondents. The skewness value of -0.316 indicated a slight skew towards disagreement, but the

distribution was fairly symmetrical around the mean. The study revealed that there was no overwhelming consensus on whether CDFC projects met the immediate needs of the community. The relatively even distribution across different levels of agreement and disagreement suggested that while some respondents felt the projects were beneficial, others did not share this view. The high percentage of neutral responses indicated uncertainty or indifference among a significant portion of respondents.

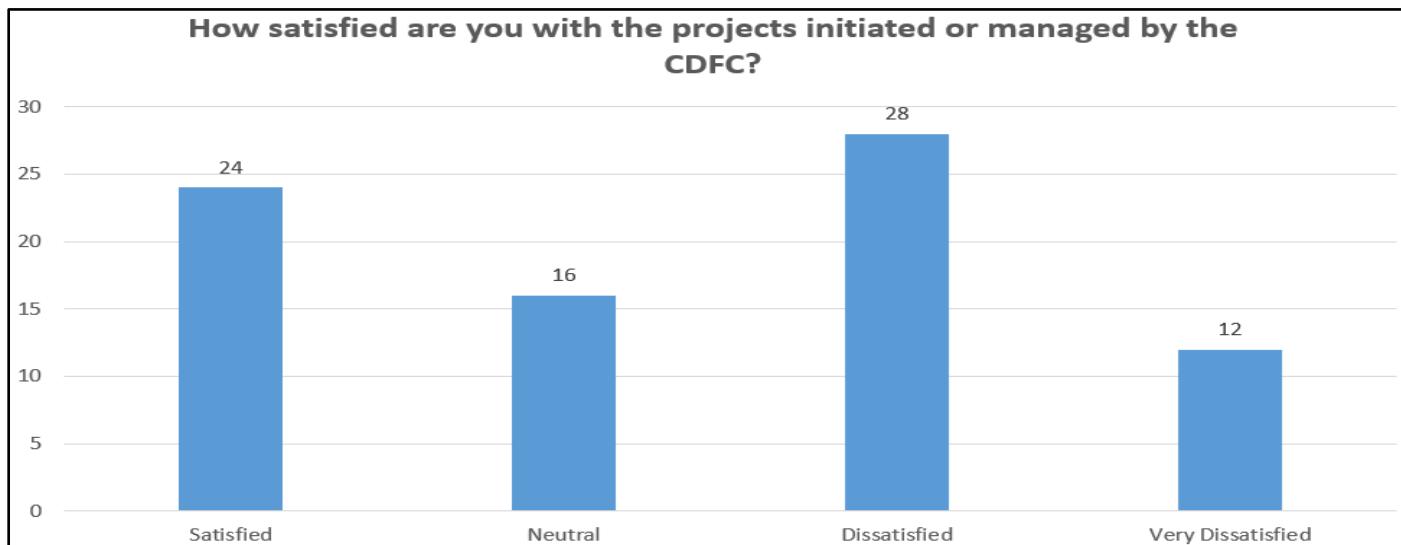


Fig 8 How Satisfied are you with the Projects Initiated or Managed by the CDFC

Based on the survey results shown in the figure above, the study interpreted that respondents rated the quality of completed projects by the CDFC as slightly above average. This was evident as the mean score was 3.45 on a scale (presumably 1 to 5), indicating a moderate level of satisfaction with the project quality. The mean score of 3.45 suggested that, on average, respondents viewed the quality of completed projects as slightly better than average. The standard deviation of 1.078 indicated some variability in responses, meaning there were differing opinions on the

project quality. The skewness value of -0.241 indicated a slight skew towards lower ratings, but the distribution was fairly symmetrical around the mean. The study revealed that while a majority of respondents rated the project quality as average or better, a significant portion (40%) rated it as poor or very poor. Only a small fraction (5%) considered the projects to be of excellent quality. This suggested that while there was a general sense of adequacy, there were notable concerns about the quality of some projects.

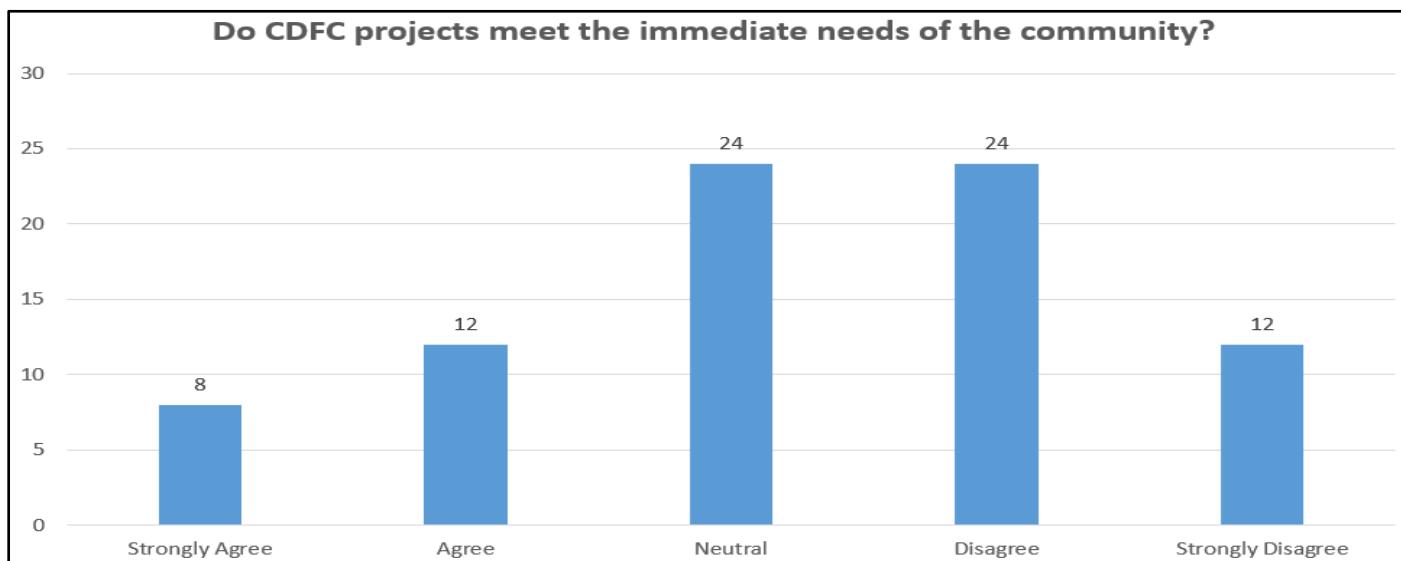


Fig 9 Do CDFC Projects Meet the Immediate Needs of the Community

The results shown in the figure above, the study interpreted that opinions on the sustainability of projects managed by the CDFC over time were varied. This was evident as 60% of respondents were neutral, 15% agreed, 10% strongly agreed, 15% disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.10 suggested a neutral stance on the sustainability of CDFC projects. The standard deviation of 1.001 indicated moderate variability in responses, meaning there were differing opinions on the sustainability of the projects. The skewness value of -0.205 indicated a slight skew towards disagreement, but the distribution was fairly symmetrical around the mean. The

study revealed that a majority of respondents held a neutral stance regarding the sustainability of CDFC projects. This suggested either uncertainty about or perceived variability in the sustainability of the projects. The relatively even distribution across different levels of agreement and disagreement indicated that while some respondents believed the projects were sustainable, others did not share this view. It was disclosed that: "The impact is significant, especially for projects like water supply systems and school renovations. These initiatives have improved access to essential services. However, some projects, like road repairs, have been less impactful due to poor execution or lack of maintenance."

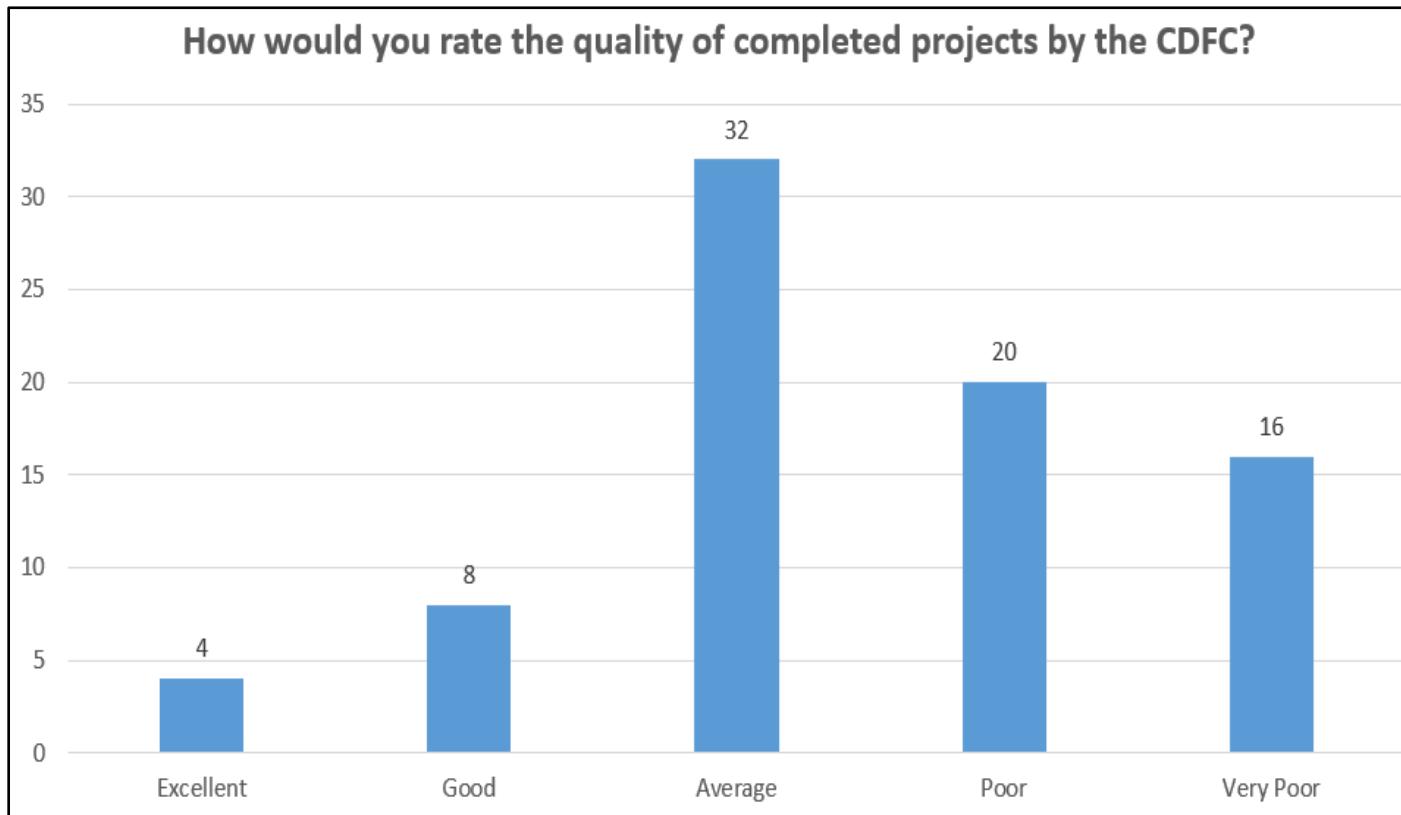


Fig 10 How Would You Rate the Quality of Completed Projects by the CDFC

Based on the survey results shown in the figure above, the study interpreted that respondents generally felt that the CDFC did not have adequate resources to implement projects effectively. This was evident as the mean score was 1.95 on a scale (presumably 1 to 5), indicating a low level of perceived adequacy in resources. The mean score of 1.95 suggested that, on average, respondents leaned towards disagreement with the statement that the CDFC had adequate resources. The standard deviation of 1.211 indicated moderate variability in responses, meaning there were differing opinions on the adequacy of resources. The skewness value of 1.151 indicated a positive skew, meaning there were more responses on the lower end (disagreement) and fewer on the higher end (agreement). The study revealed

that a significant portion of respondents did not believe that the CDFC had sufficient resources to implement projects effectively. This suggested potential challenges in resource allocation, funding, or management within the CDFC. The high standard deviation indicated that while most respondents disagreed, there were some who felt differently, highlighting variability in perceptions. On challenges, one key informant said: "The main challenges include inadequate funding, which limits the scope of projects, and delays in resource allocation. Additionally, insufficient technical expertise among committee members sometimes leads to poor project execution. These challenges often result in projects that do not fully meet community expectations."

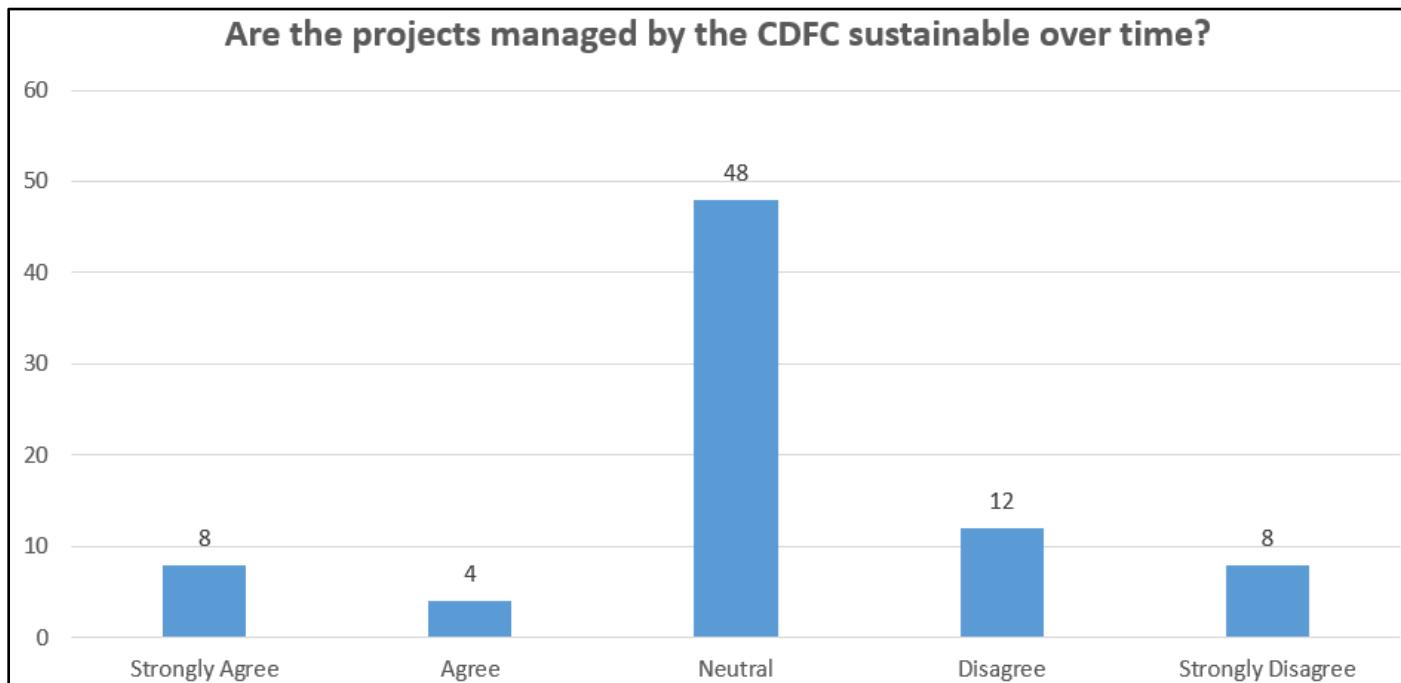


Fig 11 Are the Projects Managed by the CDFC Sustainable Over Time

The study revealed that poor leadership was perceived as the most significant challenge faced by the CDFC. This was evident as 45% of respondents identified it as the major challenge. Other challenges included inadequate community participation (25%), limited technical expertise (20%), and lack of funding (10%). The mean score of 2.55 suggested that, on average, respondents rated poor leadership between “inadequate community participation” and “limited technical expertise” in terms of severity as a challenge. The standard deviation of 0.926 indicated some variability in responses but not extremely wide-ranging opinions. The skewness value of

0.242 suggested a slight tilt towards one end of the response distribution but generally indicated a fairly symmetrical distribution. The study revealed that poor leadership was the most frequently cited challenge, indicating significant concerns about the effectiveness of the CDFC’s leadership. Inadequate community participation and limited technical expertise were also notable challenges, suggesting issues with engagement and skill levels within the organization. Lack of funding, while still a challenge, was perceived as less significant compared to the other issues.

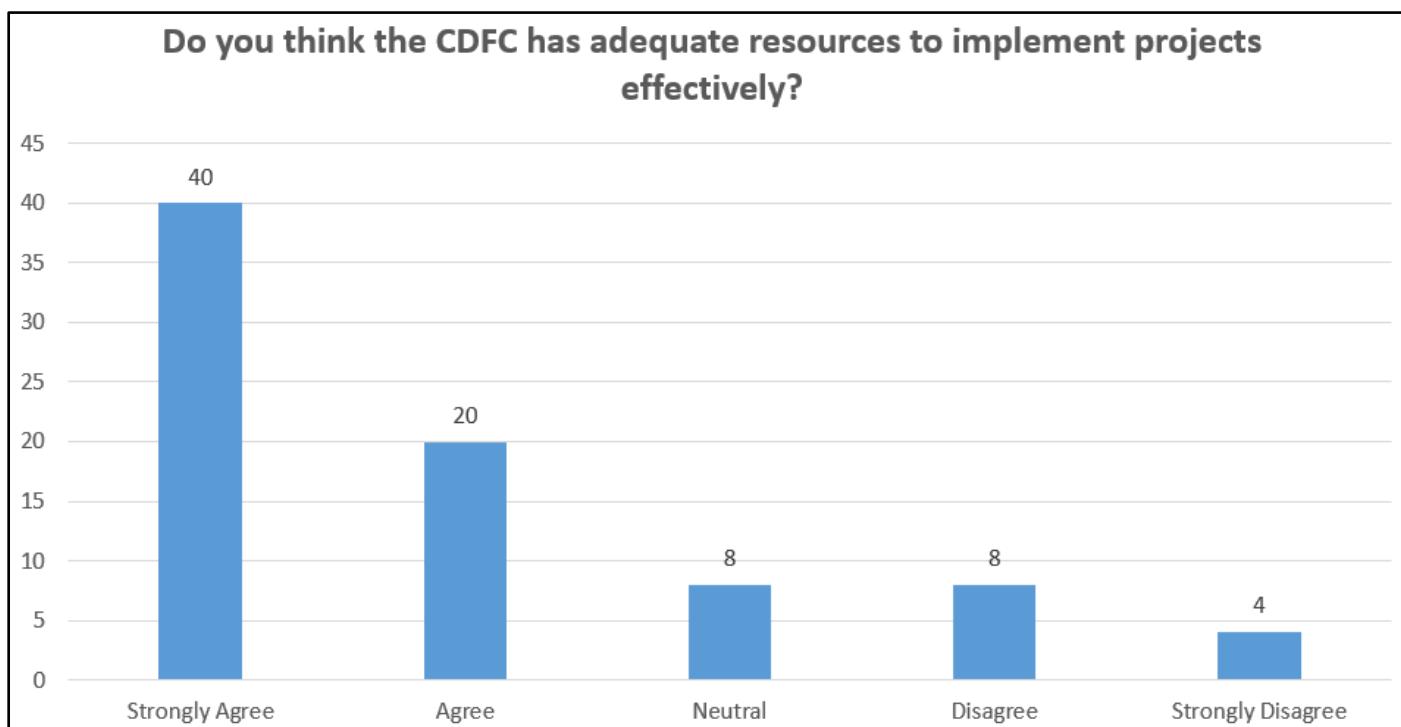


Fig 12 DO You Think the CDFC Has Adequate Resources to Implement Projects Effectively

Results shows that delays in the implementation of CDFC projects were a common occurrence. This was evident as 35% of respondents indicated that delays always occurred, and 45% said they often occurred. The mean score of 1.95 suggested that, on average, respondents leaned towards the higher frequency of delays, with the scale likely coded such that lower values indicated more frequent delays. The standard deviation of 0.926 indicated moderate variability in responses, meaning there were differing opinions on the frequency of delays. The skewness value of 0.885 indicated a

positive skew, meaning there were more responses on the lower end (more frequent delays) and fewer on the higher end (less frequent delays). A significant portion of respondents (80%) reported that delays occurred either always or often. This suggested that delays were a prevalent issue in the implementation of CDFC projects. The high frequency of reported delays indicated potential challenges in project management, resource allocation, or other operational aspects within the CDFC.

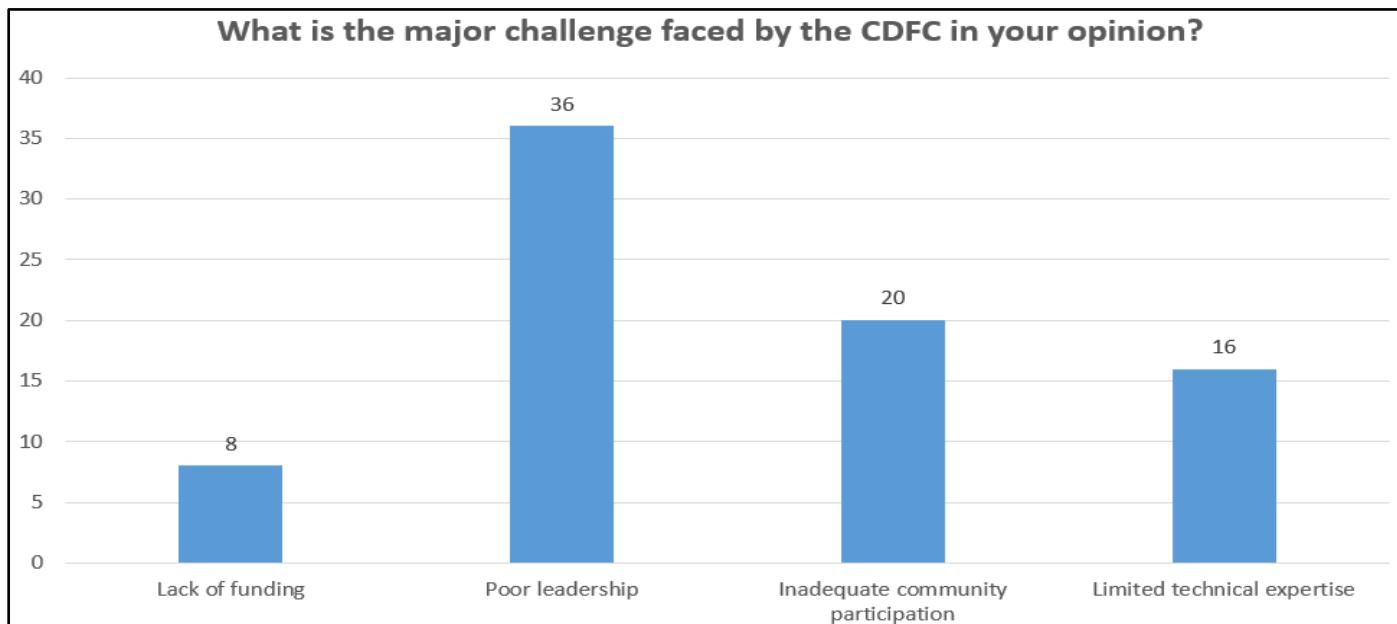


Fig 13 What is the Major Challenge Faced by the CDFC in Your Opinion

Based on the results shown in the figure, the study interpreted that political influences significantly affected the effectiveness of CDFC operations. This was evident as 65% of respondents strongly agreed, and 10% agreed with the

statement. The mean score of 1.80 suggested that, on average, respondents leaned towards strong agreement with the statement that political influences affected CDFC operations.

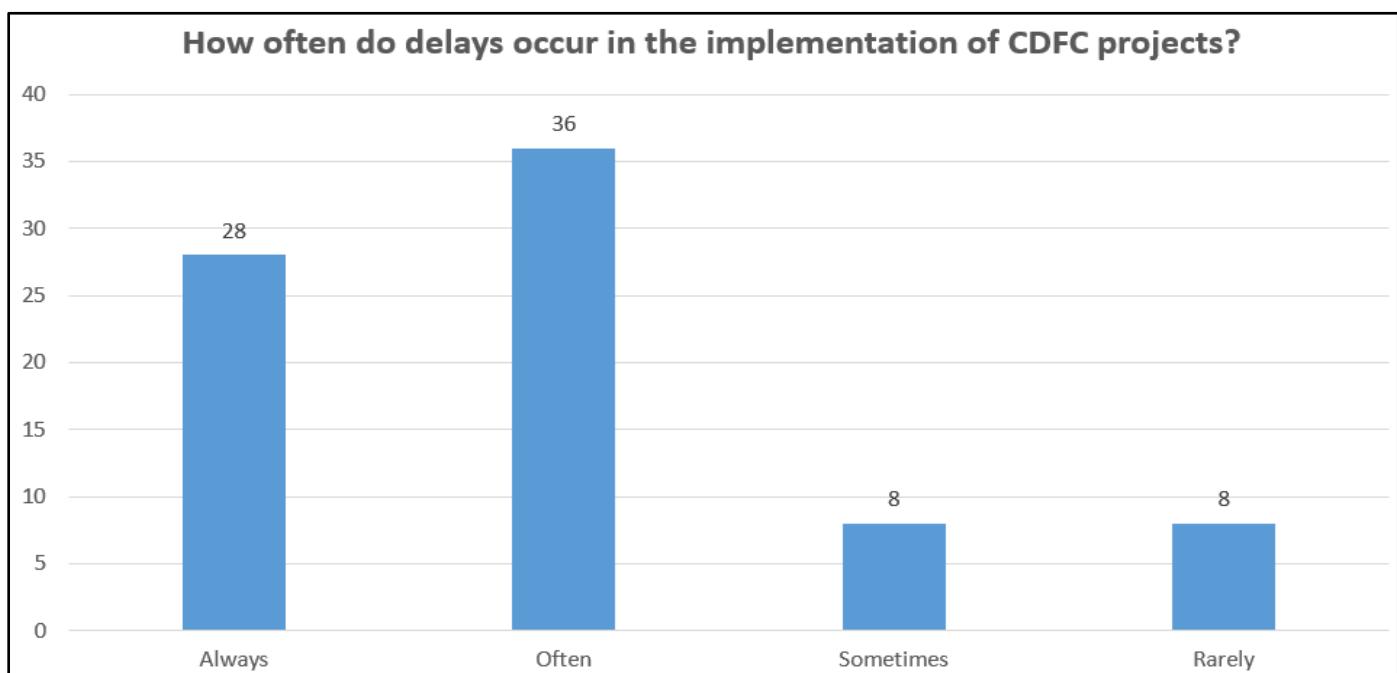


Fig 14 How Often Do Delays Occur in the Implementation of CDFC Projects

The standard deviation of 1.257 indicated moderate variability in responses, meaning there were differing opinions on the extent of political influence. The skewness value of 1.331 indicated a positive skew, meaning there were more responses on the lower end (strong agreement) and fewer on the higher end (disagreement). A significant portion

of respondents (75%) believed that political influences affected the effectiveness of CDFC operations. This suggested that political factors played a substantial role in the organization's operations, potentially impacting decision-making, resource allocation, and project implementation.

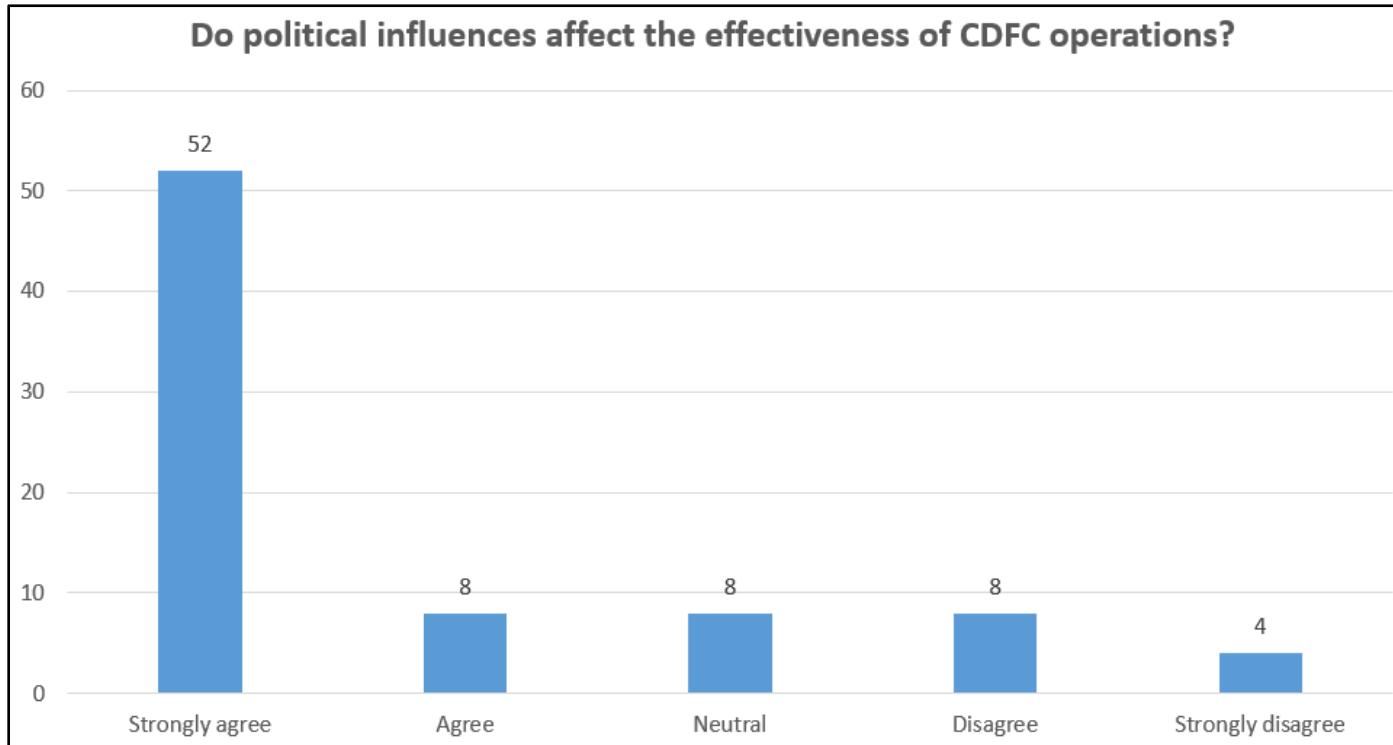


Fig 15 Do Political Influences Affect the Effectiveness of CDFC Operations

The high standard deviation indicated that while most respondents strongly agreed, there were some who felt differently, highlighting variability in perceptions. When asked on how political influence, impact the ability of CDFCs to execute their roles effectively. It was revealed that: "Political influence is a significant barrier as it often shifts the focus away from community needs toward political agendas. Funding limitations also mean that only a fraction of proposed projects can be undertaken, leaving critical needs unmet."

processes. This mirrors findings by Mansuri and Rao (2013), who observed that local organizations often fail to adequately integrate community feedback, leading to disengagement. To counteract this, the study recommended improving the transparency of feedback mechanisms and creating platforms where community voices can meaningfully influence decisions. Infrequent community meetings emerged as another challenge, contributing to limited stakeholder participation. Research by Wilcox (1994) corroborates that regular and well-structured community interactions foster trust and collaboration. The study's proposal to increase the frequency of meetings and actively encourage participation is consistent with these findings. The perception that the Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC) poorly represented community interests underlines a need for more inclusive representation. Studies by Fung (2006) indicate that collaborative governance frameworks, where diverse stakeholders are involved in planning and monitoring, result in improved outcomes. The study advocated for such inclusive practices to enhance trust and effectiveness in CDFC operations.

4.5.2 Effectiveness of CDFC-Initiated Projects

Findings on stakeholder satisfaction revealed mixed perceptions, with satisfaction levels varying significantly among respondents. Factors contributing to dissatisfaction, such as insufficient transparency and inadequate community involvement, align with findings by Isham and Kähkönen (2002), who noted that community participation is vital for project acceptance. The study emphasized the importance of

➤ Discussion of Findings

4.5.1 Community Engagement in Project Planning and Decision-Making

The study revealed that a significant number of respondents reported "never" being consulted during project planning and decision-making, highlighting the critical gaps in stakeholder engagement. Previous research has similarly noted barriers to effective consultation, such as limited communication channels and lack of representation in local governance structures (Arnstein, 1969). Strategies to address these barriers, including regular community meetings, transparent communication mechanisms, and inclusive decision-making processes, align with findings from studies advocating participatory approaches to community development (Tshabalala & Lombard, 2009). The lack of value placed on stakeholder input was another prominent finding, suggesting that community members feel marginalized in decision-making

addressing these gaps through better communication and targeted engagement strategies. A notable portion of respondents remained neutral regarding project effectiveness and sustainability. These findings suggest a lack of clarity about project goals or inconsistent benefits, a phenomenon also observed in studies on community-based development projects (Pretty, 1995). Strategies proposed by the study, including more transparent goal-setting and sustainability assessments, are consistent with recommendations for enhancing project inclusivity and long-term viability (Chambers, 1997). The perception of substandard project quality highlighted the need for stricter quality controls and enhanced oversight mechanisms. Similarly, Gugerty and Kremer (2008) found that increased stakeholder involvement in project execution can mitigate quality concerns. The study proposed measures such as engaging local expertise and instituting robust evaluation frameworks to ensure alignment with community expectations.

4.5.3 Challenges and Barriers Faced by CDFCs

The study identified inadequate resources as a major challenge, a finding supported by studies on local governance highlighting resource constraints as a common barrier to effective service delivery (World Bank, 2004). Recommendations such as advocating for increased funding and improving resource management practices align with best practices for optimizing limited resources (Bardhan, 2002). Poor leadership was another recurring theme, with the study emphasizing its cascading effects on community engagement and operational efficiency. This aligns with findings by Northouse (2018), who argued that leadership quality directly influences organizational effectiveness. The proposed solutions, including leadership training and improved governance practices, reflect established approaches for addressing leadership deficiencies. Frequent project delays due to resource constraints, bureaucratic hurdles, and inadequate planning also emerged as significant barriers. These findings are consistent with research by Flyvbjerg (2009), which identified similar issues in project management. The study's recommendation to streamline processes and improve planning aligns with evidence-based strategies for reducing delays and enhancing efficiency. Lastly, the study highlighted the detrimental impact of political influences on CDFC operations. This is corroborated by Banerjee and Duflo (2008), who found that political interference often undermines the objectivity and efficiency of development projects. Strengthening governance structures and promoting transparency, as suggested by the study, are critical steps toward mitigating such influences and enhancing stakeholder trust.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ Conclusion

This study evaluated the impact of Community Development Fund Committees (CDFCs) on project planning and management in local communities, focusing on community engagement, project effectiveness, and operational challenges. The findings revealed significant gaps in stakeholder consultation, representation, and the perceived value of community input during project planning and decision-making processes. The frequency and quality of community engagement were found to be inadequate,

resulting in limited collaboration and trust between the CDFCs and the communities they serve. In terms of project effectiveness, the study highlighted mixed levels of satisfaction among stakeholders, reflecting inconsistencies in project quality, sustainability, and alignment with community needs. These issues highlight the importance of adopting more inclusive and transparent practices to ensure projects address the diverse interests of stakeholders effectively. The study also identified key challenges faced by CDFCs, including inadequate resources, poor leadership, political interference, and frequent project delays. These barriers hinder the committees' ability to execute their roles effectively, undermining their credibility and the sustainability of their initiatives. Overall, the study concluded that while CDFCs have the potential to significantly contribute to community development, addressing the identified gaps is crucial for their success.

➤ Recommendations

Enhancing Community Engagement Regular Consultation and Feedback Mechanisms: Introduce structured feedback mechanisms and hold frequent community meetings to ensure diverse input is gathered during project planning. **Inclusive Representation:** Promote equitable representation of all community groups within CDFCs to enhance trust and inclusivity in decision-making processes. **Capacity-Building Initiatives:** Train CDFC members and community stakeholders on participatory planning techniques to improve collaboration and foster mutual understanding. **Improving Project Effectiveness Quality:**

Assurance Systems: Implement strict quality control measures to ensure that projects meet community standards and expectations. **Transparency in Project Management:** Enhance communication about project goals, budgets, and timelines to build community confidence and reduce misunderstandings.

Sustainability Planning: Conduct regular evaluations to assess the long-term viability of projects and make necessary adjustments to align with changing community needs. **Addressing Challenges and Barriers** Adequate Resource Allocation: Advocate for increased funding and ensure efficient use of available resources through improved financial management practices.

Leadership Development: Introduce leadership training programs for CDFC members to enhance governance and decision-making capabilities. **Mitigating Political Interference:** Strengthen governance frameworks to promote independence, accountability, and transparency in CDFC operations.

Streamlined Processes: Simplify bureaucratic procedures and adopt efficient project planning and management tools to minimize delays and enhance project execution. By implementing these recommendations, CDFCs can strengthen their role in fostering community development, improving stakeholder satisfaction, and ensuring the sustainability of their initiatives.

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