

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITIES AT THE DOWNSTREAM SECTOR OF JEBBA DAM, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Downstream communities have been neglected in dam construction planning process in Nigeria. A survey was carried out on some randomly selected downstream communities of Jebba dam namely Gungu, Gana, Fanga, Bele, Gaba and Baru communities, using structured interviews administered to people in the selected communities. The research result showed that the Jebba dam has negative effect on settlements downstream. About 5% of the houses in each of the villages have been displaced and the value of land has also depreciated by 20%. Farming and fishing in various communities have been affected due to land appropriation, flooding and soil erosion. Only Gungu and Gana are connected to electricity supply while road accessibility is very poor in all the villages except Gungu and Gana. The impacts of these changes are magnified by changes in the flow pattern of the River Niger downstream that is caused by the operations of the dam. These changes, whether in total streamflow in seasonal timing or in short-term, even hourly fluctuations in flows, generate a range of impacts on the River. This is because the aquatic lives in and around the river is tightly linked to the existing flow patterns of river. It is recommended that all villages that are affected by the activities of the dam should be connected to the national grid; this will enhance the socio-economic activities in the area. It is also suggested as a principle that a program to monitor the impacts of the development (particularly in downstream communities) should be an integral element of the planning process, and should be matched by the resources to mitigate impacts not addressed fully by the planning processes.

Key words: Downstream communities, Socio-economic, Sector, Dam, Characteristics, Flow pattern