



Quarry Economics and Community Development in Mbajôv, Southern Tivland, 1960-2017

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Abstract

This study focuses on quarry, an aspect of economic activities in Mbajôv Community that has not received attention from scholars. It investigates the historical foundations and discusses the extraction processes of quarry in Mbajôv community of the Southern Tiv axis of Central Nigeria. The study uses interdisciplinary methodology or cross-cutting research method (in line with the use of written and oral sources of data collection for corroborative analysis and objectivity); employing both descriptive, narrative, prescriptive, pictorial, analytical and empirical tools in the course of investigation and analysis of the subject. It examines the challenges of quarry in Mbajôv with specific attention on manual labor, lack of access roads to quarry sites, poor prices, and occupational hazards, among others. The study has discovered that the quarry industry contributed marginally to the development of the focal area. The argument is that, if the challenges that constrained quarry during the period under consideration are done away with, this would go a long way in enhancing effective extraction, marketing, and transformation of the industry, as well as the whole community and even beyond. To achieve these, the paper recommends *inter alia*, that the Benue State Government should construct roads leading to quarry sites and also empower quarry operators with modern tools of extraction.

Keywords: Quarry; Economics; Community; Community Development; Mbajôv; Southern Tivland.

Introduction

No human community can exist and survive without economic activities. The nature of the economic activities of every community depends largely on its climatic, environmental conditions, and geological conditions. In these wise, different communities across the globe engaged in different kinds of economic activities to earn a living. Most of these economic activities are determined by geological, geomorphologic, and geographical endowments. This implies that people nurture nature to enhance their socio-economic wellbeing. The situation in Africa, Nigeria, Benue State, Tivland, and even in Mbajôv Community in Southern Tivland is also the same. Some people are farmers, some traders, others are auto-mechanics, drivers, markers, cyclists (Okada riders), and artisans, among others professionals. In Mbajôv Community, some people earned their living from the soil, like farmers, builders, surveyors, pottery-makers, and the like. A good number of members of the community under consideration earned their living from the rocks. This is to say that, they depend on quarry to achieve their needs. However, this aspect of the people's economic life has been neglected by scholars of Geology, Geography, Agriculture, and Economic History, among others. Thus, this study is borne out of the need to fill this vacuum by analyzing the economics of quarry in Mbajôv Community in Southern Tiv axis of Central Nigeria.

Methodologically, it adopts the interdisciplinary approach to assess the roles of quarry in community development

in Mbajôv, Southern Tiv area of Central Nigeria. The alignment of this study with interdisciplinary methods is justified by the fact that allied disciplines enable the historian to refine and make more explicit their procedure of explanation. In amplifying the above position, Carr (1964: 5) asserts that "social scientists and historians are all engaged in different branches of the same study; the study of man and his environment and his environment on man". According to Tung cited in Adamu (2002: xxxi) "when you heed only to one side you will be benighted, but when, however, you listen to both sides you will be enlightened". Correspondingly, Smeby (2005:71) opines that "exposing the reader to diverse perspectives is no bad thing since variety in perspective should provide intellectual stimulus". These emphasized the relevance of an interdisciplinary approach in conducting research works such as this. Here, the researcher makes use of materials from Geography, Environmental Science, Urban and Regional Planning, Economics, and History, among others to treat the phenomena under consideration. During the process of writing, the researcher visited some Nigerian universities libraries such as Benue State University Library, Makurdi, University of Agricultural Library, Makurdi, University of Ibadan Library, Ibadan, and the University of Abuja, Library.

The fieldwork consists essentially of identifying printed materials in form of books, journals articles, internet materials that treat urban issues in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world. In addition, oral interviews were conducted with both quarry operators and traders of quarried materials. Members of the general public were also interviewed. Interview

proceedings were handwritten and also recorded on the Global System Mobile (GSM) phone. The names and particulars of the informants are included in the reference section. A total number of twelve persons were interviewed and their names and particulars (in some cases with their pictures) have been included in the reference section with their consents. The information gathered from these sources was carefully analyzed and matched with written sources to enhance a better understanding of the phenomena under consideration. Again, the interdisciplinary approach has not been restricted to the methodology of information and data collection. It has also been extended to the method of analysis, interpretation, and presentation of data. The conceptual and theoretical perspectives from the various disciplines and backgrounds have been brought to bear in the present study. To accomplish the set goal, this paper delves into conceptual clarifications of the key terms, namely: quarry, economics, community, and community development. A theoretical anchorage has been provided to pillar the analysis of the phenomena. It further discusses the geography of Mbajôv Community, and by extension, the Southern Tiv axis of Central Nigeria. The study traces the historical foundations and explains the processes of Quarry in the Mbajôv Community. It finally examines critically the impact and challenges of the quarry in the area under consideration.

Conceptual Premise

A clear understanding of certain words would enhance a profound understanding of this study. The terms/words attracting clarification here are the quarry, economics, community, and community development. Quarry, on the one hand, is a

derivative of the Latin word *Quadrus* which means hewn stone. From the derivative of *quadrum* came old French *Quarrere*, meaning “pit for cutting stone”, which was borrowed into English and eventually altered to quarry (<https://www.merriamwebster.com/quarry>). Quarry refers to a place from which dimension stones, rock, construction aggregate, riprap, sand, gravel, or slate have been excavated from the foundation (<https://www.google.com/search?>). A quarry is the same thing as an open-pit mine from which minerals are extracted. In conceptualizing quarry the online version of the Walter (2018) opines that:

A quarry is a place, typically a large deep pit, from which stone or other materials are or have been extracted. A limestone quarry. The materials extracted from the quarries contain large quantities of fibrous amphiboles; these materials are usually widely in the local building industry.

Quarry also means a site where stone or gravel extracts a variety of raw materials from the earth. The common types of material extracted in quarrying activities include limestone, granite, and sand. This can be done with machines or manually. In the context of this study, quarry implies the processes of extracting stone from the ground (site) into different shapes for grinding and building purposes.

The concept of economics, on the other hand, lacks a precise generally agreed definition. For example, one of the great Victorian economists, Marshall quoted in Eyiuche (2000) conceives economics “as the study of mankind in the everyday business of life”. Relatively, this definition seems to be more realistic in that he draws a demarcation to the unique

features of human society, revealing the fact that man, unlike other animals, provides for his every need using a complex system of productive activities; distribution, exchange, and communication. Human society builds, modifies, and innovates in the process of its economic activities. It often involves topics like wealth and finance, but it is not all about money. Economics is a broad discipline that helps us understand historical trends, interpret current situations, and make predictions. According to Harper, Economics is the social science that analyses the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services (eduresourcecentre.blogspot.com/7210/11). The United States National Library of Medicine defines "Economics as the science of utilization, distribution, and consumption of services and materials" (sanieconomics.blogspot.com/2011).

Thus it is on one side of the study of wealth and the other more important mostly widely acceptable definition of Economics is Lionel Robbins, a British economist said that "Economics is a science that deals with the study of human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which we have alternative uses" (Robbins cited in Jhingan, 2009:2). Extrapolating from the above definitions, we arrived at the work definition of economics as the science that determines how people use limited scarce resources in attempting to satisfy their unlimited wants.

Community, on the other hand, is not restricted to rural population concentration alone. The term community popularly has been used loosely to refer to groups such as a community of nations 'Christian communities', 'ethnic communities, or

'migrant communities'. Such usages do not fit the sociological interpretation of community as a concept (<https://www.northstonematerials.com>). A community is also defined as "a group of people living in one place, locality or district." It also refers to "a conglomeration of people with common or uncommon purpose living within a defined boundary or territory" (Chitamber, 1973; 194). A community is linked or connected through formal or informal means and shares a high sense of solidarity. Essentially, a community embraces four critical elements as espoused by Flichter quoted by Ukase and Ezeogueri- Oyewole (2017: 3-14) include:

Close personnel relations with other persons are sometimes called primary face-to-face intimate relations. An emotional, sensitive involvement on the part of the individual in the social functions and affairs of the group. Moral dedication, or commitment, to the values that are considered high and significant by the group. A sense of solidarity with other members of the group.

What characterizes community social relations is the extent to which an individual cooperates positively in all the major groups. Conversely, a community refers to a group of people whose behavior patterns, social relations, and roles are structured and organized. A community is intrinsically a cluster, or network, of smaller groups, but in its totality, can be identified in many ways as a large social group. Three essential elements define a community; solidarity – relations and structure (Flichter quoted by Ukase and Ezeogueri- Oyewole (2017). It is however important to note that the kind of social

solidarity that usually exists in a total folk village does not exist in the metropolis. Whereas the folk village exhibits the social solidarity called community, the city does not. Thus, sociologists have tried to modernize the concept of community to signify neighborhood. The modern suburbs which are newer neighborhoods often make a deliberate attempt to foster community spirit among the people, and in some instances, these neighborhoods may be technically described as communities (Awotokun cited by Ukase and Ezeogueri-Oyewole (2017).

The above conceptualization has led us to community development. The United Nations (UN) (2014) defines community development as “a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems”. This definition is educative but its major weakness is that it emphasizes the issue of collective action to neglect the fact that individual efforts can also be led to community development. The Community Development Challenge report, which was produced by a working party comprising leading United Kingdom (UK) organizations in the field including the (now defunct) Community Development Foundation, the (now defunct) Community Development Exchange, and the (now defunct) Federation for Community Development Learning (2018), defines community development as:

A set of values and practices which plays a special role in overcoming poverty and disadvantage, knitting society together at the grassroots, and deepening democracy. There is a community development profession, defined by national occupational standards and a body of theory and

experience going back the best part of a century. Some active citizens use community development techniques voluntarily, and there are also other professions and agencies which use a community development approach or some aspects of it.

Community Development Exchange (2018) defines community development as:

Both as an occupation (such as a community development worker in a local authority and a way of working with communities. Its key purpose is to build communities based on justice, equality, and mutual respect. Community development involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and people in positions of power so that everyone can take part in the issues that affect their lives. It starts from the principle that within any community there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which, if used in creative ways, can be channeled into collective action to achieve the communities' desired goals. Community development practitioners work alongside people in communities to help build relationships with key people and organizations and to identify common concerns. They create opportunities for the community to learn new skills and, by enabling people to act together, community development practitioners help to foster social inclusion and equality.

In the context of this study, community development is progressive in different areas of community living ranging from social, economic, cultural, and environmental, among others. It is about continual improvement, first with the help of change agents and later by people

themselves to bring about change in their lives, which ultimately improve their standard of living.

Theoretical Anchorage

This paper is anchored on the Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) to discuss the economics of the quarry industry in the Mbajôv community in the Southern Tiv area of Central Nigeria. Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) is the brainchild of the Department for International Development (DFID). It centers on both people and their livelihood; prioritizing both the tangible and intangible assets they utilize to achieve their desires. The approach also considers the vulnerable environment the poor operate in and their ability to withstand shocks and stresses, amidst external forces such as policies that affect the accessibility of the assets upon which people depend. A livelihood according to Chambers and Conway (1992) comprises capabilities, assets, and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is considered sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the long and short term. Helmore and Singh (2001) conceive a sustainable livelihood as one that maintains the ecological integrity of the environment.

This approach is founded on a belief that people require a range of assets to achieve positive livelihood outcomes. No single category of assets on its own is sufficient to yield the varied livelihood outcomes that people seek but are utilized synergistically to pursue the different

livelihoods people aspire. This situation can be likened to the Mbajôv community in the Southern Tiv axis in Central Nigeria who deeply engaged themselves in agricultural activities but still deeply participated in the commercial quarry to supplement whatever income they derived from agricultural activities.

The relevance of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach lies in the fact that it is people-centered. It seeks to gain an accurate and realistic understanding of people's strengths (assets or capital endowments) and how they endeavor to convert these into positive livelihood outcomes. The approach does not perceive the poor to be in "lack of" but it recognizes the inherent potential in individuals, households, and communities, which is used to build positive livelihood outcomes (Helmore and Singh, 2001). Mbajôv community too takes advantage of the natural presence of quarry sites to work harder in the process of capital formation. The SLF is relevant to stone quarrying in that it stimulates a lucid understanding of how individuals meet their needs using minimal financial input, simple technology, and indigenous resources amidst a competitive formal market. Quarry workers use different assets (human, capital, financial, physical, natural, and social capital) they have to achieve different livelihood outcomes.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) forms the core of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and serves as an instrument for the investigation of poor people's livelihoods. The framework is divided into five key components, which include the Vulnerability Context, Livelihood Assets, Transforming Structures and Processes (Policy, Institutions, and Processes),

Livelihood Strategies, and Livelihood Outcomes. The vulnerability context in the framework is viewed as the external environment in which people exist (DFID, 1999). Concerning quarrying, the Vulnerability context encompasses shocks such as accidents, diseases, and death occasioned by the activity. It also includes price fluctuations, loss of stone products, and loss of money during business transactions. Seasonality and trends in the framework can also be related to stress, which are predictable events that affect livelihood outcomes attained from a livelihood strategy. Seasonality about stone quarrying can be related to the weather changes that affect productivity at the quarry especially during the rainy season. Seasonality can also be related to the price fluctuations that are mainly determined by the demand for stone products. All these may have a temporal or permanent effect on the income flow of an average or poor-income household.

The vulnerability context also acknowledges how people cope with stresses and shocks associated with their livelihood activity. As for coping strategies, the stone workers would diversify their livelihood portfolios or lean on other family members to survive. Common in informal activities such as stone quarrying is the reliance on social networks such as family, friends for material and immaterial support. Assets according to the framework are presented in the asset pentagon, which shows the different assets people use to realize livelihood outcomes. Ellis (2000) approaches assets as natural capital (such as land, water, forests), human capital (including skills, knowledge, physical capability, and ability of labor), physical capital (infrastructure such as roads), and

social capital (safety networks, social claims, social relations). Thus within a certain context, the use of these assets and appropriate strategies would yield livelihood outcomes. This framework largely guides the analysis of the phenomenon under review.

Understanding the Study Area

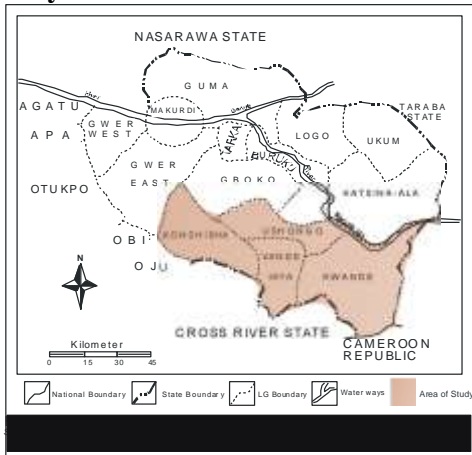
Mbajôv Community is located in Konshisha Local Government Area in the Southern axis of central Nigeria. Mbajôv Community is divided into micro-communities of Mbakwanige, Mbakuku, Mbashan, Mbaagba and Mbasuan (Oral interview with Joe Piev, 2018). Mbajôv Community shares boundaries with other communities namely: Mbasor, Mbaimo, Mbakyom, and Cross River State. Mbajôv is a low-level land but made of rocky areas. In fact, according to Joe Piev, all the families in the micro-communities in Mbajôv have their quarry sites. The industry helps them to supplement their farming income (Oral interview with Joe Piev, 2018). This community is one of the rural communities in the Southern Tiv axis that participates in lumbering activities.

The Southern Tiv axis is peopled by the Turan, Ikyurav-Ya, Shangev-Ya, Nanev, Usar, Iyon, and Ugbe people of the present-day Kwande Local Government Area. The area is also inhabited by the Kunav people composed of ten clans of the present-day Vandeikya Local Government Area. These clans include Mbaduku, Mbayongo, Mbagbera, Mbakaange, Ningeve, Mbagbam, Mbakyaha, Tsambe, Mbajor and Mbadede. Other clans of the said area include the Gaav and Ishangev-Tiev of Konshisha Local Government Area, which in turn divided into Mbake, Mbagben, Mbanor, Mbayegh, Mbaikyase, Mbatwer, Mbavaa, Mbagusa, and Mbatser

among others, and the people of Ukan of Ushongo Local government Area who comprises Mbakuha, Mbaviende, Mbanyam, Mbagwa, Mbayem and Ugee (Anloho, 2008).

Geographically, the Kwande axis of Southern Tiv Area is bounded in the South East by the Republic of Cameroun, the Northern Cross River Basin inhabited by ethnic groups collectively known by the Tiv people as Udam with whom the Shangev-Ya, Kunav, Gaav, and Ishangev-Tiev also share common frontiers. The Konshisha axis on the other hand is bounded by the Igede people of Oju as well as Gwer Local Government Areas of Benue State.

Fig. 1: Map of Tivland Showing the Study Area



Source: Ministry of Lands and Survey, Makurdi (2012).

The climate of Southern Tivland is not different from the rest of the Tiv area. The Tiv area witnessed two air masses: the tropical continental air mass which occurs from May to the month of October and the tropical maritime occurs from November to the month of April yearly.

Associated with these are the two seasons experienced in the area, namely, the wet and dry seasons (Kwanga and Kerenku, 2007: 41). The wet period is the period of rainfall while the dry season is occasioned by the harmattan winds. Rainfall in the Southern hilly part of Tivland is heaviest receiving an annual average of 1.75cm (Igirgi, 2007:41). There exist different species of trees in Southern Tivland. Some of the trees found in this area include *Nune* (pakia clappertoniana), *Gbaaye* (prosopis Africana), *Yiase* (alsera Africana), *Haa* (kyaya senegalensis), *Chiha* (daniella oliveri), *Chamegh* (vitelavia paradoxa), *Mho* (syzygiumguineensis), *Gbagbongom* (burkea Africana), *Kuugh* (borassus aethiopum), *Umanatumba* (steropernum kunthianum), *Akinde* (fiscus thonngiri) and *Ivile* (elaesis guineensis) (Igirgi, 2007:41). Apart from the aforementioned trees species, there are tree crops such as citrus and mango in Southern Tivland. *Alie* are commonly found in Kunav clans. In the areas where no many trees are covering the vegetation, grasses of various kinds are the dominant vegetational cover.

The area is also blessed with mountains and hills. Some of the prominent mountains and hills in this area include the following: *Ngokugh*, *Selagi*, *Agilla*, *Ave-ikondo*, *Wanwade*, *Agundu*, *Ikyuen* hills, and many more. Southern Tivland is properly drained with streams that can be described as big and small flowing in almost all parts of the area. These streams include *Amire*, *Aya*, *Sambe*, *Kpa*, *Konshisha*, and *Bar*, to mention but a few. These streams are of great significance to the social and economic existence of the people. Mile (1998) opines that these streams have served as sources of water supply for domestic and

industrial needs. In terms of the soil; the area is endowed with loamy, sandy, and clay soil types. It is worth noting that most of the places in the Southern Tiv axis of Central Nigeria have more than one soil type. Such places with more than one soil type have either sandy-loamy soil or sandy-clay. In Vandeikya and Kwande areas, for instance, there exist sandy-loamy soil types. In Ushongo and Konshisha Local Government areas, the common soil type is sandy-clay (Mile, 1998, Ityonzughul, 2013).

History and Processes of Quarry in Mbajôv Community in Southern Tiv Axis of Central Nigeria, 1960-2017

Although there is literature on quarry in Nigeria that contains copious references to quarry in Nigeria, there is yet no comprehensive overview of the origin and processes in the Mbajôv Community from the earliest times to the contemporary era. However, an attempt will be made here to provide an overview of the major developments in the industry under consideration. Quarry industry in Mbajôv community and elsewhere is rooted in antiquity dated from the Neolithic period in prehistory when humans began to demonstrate plants and animals and formed nucleated settlement (Oral interview with Tyolumun Gur, 2018).

According to a quarry operator, Sunday Gur, God gave them (the people of Mbajôv) stones naturally, however, it took a long time before they became aware of their uses (Oral interview with Sunday Gur, 2018). Before their uses were discovered, women instead of grinding pepper were pounding it as a condiment for cooking. But when people started using small pieces of stones for breaking kernels for consumption and oil making, they

discovered that stones will be very useful for grinding condiments.

When this was discovered, Akpo Igbian, Iortyom Sambe, and Teghtegh Kende in their cooperative efforts rolled some big and small (heavy) stones to their homes and started using them for grinding purposes. During that time, the grinding stones were not properly broken into big and smaller pieces (*nashe* and *ashwa*). This was because they lacked the tools and technical expertise to do so (Oral interview with Sunday Gur, 2018). However, during colonialism, the metallic digger was introduced in Tivland and elsewhere in the country to enhance colonial labor. This implement spread far and wide in the nooks and crannies of Nigeria including the study area. Digger became a tool for quarrying in Mbajôv Community. The Quarry operators used it to expose the stones underground before rolling them to their various houses (Oral interview with Sunday Gur, 2018).

The grinding stones were usually kept in the kitchen close to the fire were place. When these stones became soft and started dissolving, by the chance, the people knew that if stones are properly heated, they can easily break. This enabled the people to easily quarry the grinding stone. These grinding stones were exchanged for salt and other articles of trade. They took these grinding stones to different settlements (within and outside Mbajôv and Tivland by extension to sell). These places included Katsina-Ala, Abintsi, Korinya, Ihugh, Tse-Agberagba, Gbeda, Ukuku, and Alifo-Ukpa in Cross River State (Oral interview with Chia Tyongule, 2018).

Another innovation that took place in the quarry industry in the area under review is the use of a harmer for the breaking of stones. According to Sunday

Gur, the harmer was introduced in Tivland by the railway workers. Since then, the use of harmer was adopted by people of different occupations. The quarry operators in Mbajôv too use it to enhance productivity (Oral interview with Sunday Gur, 2018). These processes are demonstrated with the use of pictures thus.

Figure 1: A Quarry Operator, Sunday Gur



Source: The Author's Field Survey, 09.06.2018.

Figure 1 above shows how Sunday Gur, a member of Mbajôv Community, set to work on their family quarry *kuluba*. He dressed site cloths, properly known among the Tiv as *Kuluba*. He holds a harmer by his right and a Chisel by his left hand.

Figure 2: A Quarry Operator Starts Work



Source: The Author's Field Survey, 09.06.2018.

The image in figure 2 depicts how Sunday Gur, a quarry operator started work. He makes use of manual and hard labor. He hits manual a metallic harmer on the fact flat bottom of the chisel to break the stones.

Figure 3: Stones Ready for Shaping



Source: The Author's Field Survey, 09.06.2018.

In figure 3 we see that the quarry operator starts the result of his labor. He quarried pieces of stones and keep for reshaping.

Figure 4: A Quarry Operator Reshaping the Stone



Source: The Author's Field Survey, 09.06.2018.

The picture depicts a quarry operator reshaping a stone into a desirable shape. He has set out to cave a grinding stone. See him operating with his manual tools above.

Figure 5: A Quarry Operator, Putting Touches to a Grinding Stone



Source: The Author's Field Survey, 09.06.2018.

The above picture shows Mr. Chia Tyongule putting finishing touches to a grinding stone. The other stones besides him are also not wasted, they would be turned into different shapes as he desired.

Figure 6: Grinding Stones Ready for Sell



Source: The Author's Field Survey, 09.06.2018.

Figure 6 shows how grinding stones are produced and kept for sale. The prices of these grinding stones vary as started earlier in the paper. Some people go to Mbajôv Community to buy in the Quarry sites while others buy at the market centres.

Figure 7: Quarrying gravel in Mbajôv Community in Southern Tiv axis in Central Nigeria



Source: The Author's Field Survey, 09.06.2018.

The picture above shows Mama Lilian Utsugh, breaking gravel into small pieces to sell. She depended so much on this business to achieve her needs. Besides her is her daughter who usually assists her on quarry sites.

Figure 8: Victoria Adugh



Source: The Author's Field Survey, 09.06.2018.

The woman above in figure 8 is also breaking pieces of stones into smaller pieces for gravel. This is usually done from the big pieces of stones available after carving grinding stones. This task is mostly handled by women since it is less stressful compared with the carrying of grinding stones. The logs of wood behind

her were used for putting big pieces of wood on it before breaking.

Figure 9: Another Woman Breaking of Gravel into Smaller Pieces



Source: The Author's Field Survey, 09.06.2018.

The figure reflects another woman, Ape Ugbor breaking bigger pieces of gravel into smaller pieces for sale. She has been in this occupation since her marriage in Mbajôv Community, over 30 years.

Figure 10: Gravel in Quarry Site in Mbajôv Ready for Sale



Source: The Author's Field Survey, 09.06.2018.

Figure 10 is a picture of gravel kept for sales. The road and building contractors usually go to the quarry sites in the study area to buy gravel. The producers do not take gravel to sell in the market as was the case in grinding stones. Since the cost of transporting is higher, dealers usually come to the sites to buy instead of waiting for quarry operators to take to the market

centers before they could buy.

The Roles and Challenges of Quarry in the Development of Mbajôv Community, 1960-2017

The quarry industry has played critical roles in the development of the Mbajôv Community in the Southern Tiv axis of Central Nigeria. Prominent among these roles is the provision of employment opportunities, infrastructural development enhancement of farming activities, and the preservation and exploitation of cultural heritage, among other roles. These roles are discussed one after the other in the succeeding discourse.

Provision of employment opportunities; even though farming is the major activity of the whole Tiv nation (including Mbajôv Community), the people still engaged themselves in other economic activities including quarry. Many people in the Community are quarry operators. They have adopted quarrying as their major economic activity. It is in this respect that, an informant, Joe Piev (2018) reiterates that:

Every family in Mbajôv Community has at least a quarry site and quarry operators have depended so much on the proceeds generated from their quarry activities to ensure success. They fend for themselves and members of their families. They sent their children to different schools, some have graduated and become engineers, lecturers, medical doctors, and the like. The quarry has become part and parcel of communal life in Mbajôv.

Though there is no statistical evidence to show the exact number of people who

engaged in quarrying in Mbajôv the above citation signifies that, many people took to quarry to earn their living. Relatedly, an elder in the community, Tyolumun Gur notes that "we have gotten our quarry sites as a gift from God right from prehistory era and anybody that refuses to maintain and exploit them refuses to appreciate God Almighty" (Oral interview with Tyolumun Gur, 2018).

Infrastructural development; quarry has facilitated the development of infrastructure in the Mbajôv community and beyond. For example, it has provided materials that helped, in the construction of schools, churches, and houses. The industry has facilitated the construction of Awange Bridge, Sambe Bridge, and Ule Bridge. The gravel obtained from Quarrying was also used for the maintenance of rural roads across the Konshisha Local Government Area and beyond. Those who produced gravel sold it to road contractors, school contractors, clinics and churches, and so forth (Nguungwan Utsugh, 2018).

Quarry enhances farming activities; as stated elsewhere in this paper, the dominant economic activities in Mbajôv in the period under study were farming; a considerable number of persons also partook in quarrying. The money, generated from quarries was also used for the development of their agricultural activities. Those who used money, they generated from quarry to excel in farming were, famously: Sunday Utsugh, Bem Shior, Sam Ticha, Titus Mtsor, Jacob Huoun, Stephen Tyo, Msugh Tyo, Pius Gur, Orngu Iboshen, Zer Sambe, Suega Geoffery Terhembra, Lawrence Shior, and Hycenth Ajeer, among other persons (Oral interview with Ape Ugbor, 2018).

Preservation and exploitation of

cultural heritage are some of the roles of quarry in the way of life of the people. It encompasses their economic activities. The extraction of stones using hard labor is a demonstration of the cultural elements of the people of Mbajôv. The people believed that nature has given them quarry sites right from the time of antiquity. The usage of the grinding stones and gravel also depicts the culture of the people Mbajôv and elsewhere in Tivland and Nigeria from a broader perspective (Oral interview with Terna Tyo, 2018).

Though Quarry impacted positively on the community under study, there were a lot of factors that limited its healthy growth and development. These factors were manual labor, lack of access roads, poor prices, occupational hazards, and environmental degradation.

Manual labor, even though, the people of Mbajôv have deeply engaged themselves in quarrying, they operated on manual tools. This made the work very cumbersome for them. The manual operation has also hindered them from the full extraction of the stones. Relatedly, an interviewee, Mrs. Victoria Adugh (2018) notes that:

We (Quarry operators) devoted a lot of energy and time to the quarry. But with manual labor, our productivity is not up to the desired capacity. They are heavy stones, very deeply rooted in the ground, but with manual labor, we cannot exploit up to half of their depth. We look forward to the government, philanthropists, and charity organizations to empower us (quarry operators) but up till today, nothing has been done to that effect.

Lack of poor access roads; Mbajôv Community is located in a rural setting and

as such, roads leading to the community are very bad; coupled with the issue of distant markets made it difficult for the quarry operators to transact their business effectively. Many people are away from the operation of quarry in the Mbajôv but going to buy (grinding stones and gravel) directly from the operation sites has constituted a challenge for them. Heavy-duty vehicles usually serve the task of transporting heavy articles of trade but when the roads are bad, it becomes difficult to operate in such areas. Apart from Korinya Jov Market, Agberagba Market, and Wuese Market all others served as transact platforms for quarry products are located far away from Mbajôv community and it became difficult for quarry operators to transport their articles of trade to such areas. Those who tried to do so incurred high-cost, sometimes recording losses, even though a Tivman conceives an adage, “*Or gbe ken iwenge ga*” which means, one does not lose by selling what one obtains through personal labor (Ityonzughul, 2013, and Oral interview with Mercy Teryila, 2018).

Another factor that limited quarry in Mbajôv was the poor prices of their articles of trade. Even though, the quarrying in the community is done in a tedious manner and with the use of manual implements the prices of selling quarried materials were not commensurate to labor involved in the course of production. For example, the big grinding stone (*Nashe*) is sold between N400 – N500 while the small one (*Anshwa*) is sold between N100 – N200 only. 40 Compared to the present economic condition the above figures are meager to help the people to effectively meet up with daily life challenges. However, it cannot be denied many people in the said community have achieved

quarry through the industry (Oral interview with Mercy Teryila, 2018).

There was the problem of environmental degradation (Oral interview with Gber Ihwa, 2018). The operation of the quarry industry has caused harm to the environment. This has affected the agricultural activities in the area. of the people. Contributing on this matter, an interview with Chia Tyongule (2018) emphasized that:

Our lands have lost their fertility as a result of constant quarry activities. All the quarried areas in Mbajôv recorded poor yield. Indeed, the quarry industry has led to the loss of soil nutrients. We have been cultivating large acreage areas of land but little in turn. This is an implication that our efforts are almost in vain.

The above material does not in any way implies that, the people of Mbajôv community lack food. What they cultivated usually takes care of their consumption purposes but very little to exchange for money. This situation has led to their contestation overland with the people of Cross River that they shared a common boundary (Oral interview with Chia Tyongule, 2018).

Additionally, the occupational hazards; quarrying in the area under review have been done in a hazardous manner (Oral interview with Terna Tyo, 2018). The quarry operators engaged in the breaking of stones manually and without even covering their noses and eyes. They inhale the rock particles especially during heating and hammering of the stones to turn into their desired shapes. In line with this, is the industrial accident, there are cases whereby quarry operators had encountered industrial accidents in the

course of using hand implements. As noted earlier, the digging, breaking, and packing of stones for their final preparation are done manually, and as such the operators are at risk. Those who suffered such accidents include Gber Ihwa, Ape Ugbor, and Mercy Teryila, among others (Oral interview with Terna Tyo, 2018). Despite all these, challenges; quarry is one of the dominant economic activities in Mbajôv community in the Southern axis of Central Nigeria.

Conclusion

In closing, this study has traced the origin of quarry in Mbajôv community to the distant past. It has emphasized that apart from farming, quarrying is the mainspring of the economy of Mbajôv Community in the Southern Tiv axis of Central Nigeria. The study has recognized the roles of the quarry in the development of the community. Yet, it argued that the quarry industry in the area during the period under review encountered some critical challenges ranging from manual labor, lack of access road, poor prices, and occupational hazards. These have impeded full-fledge exploitation of the quarry. To better the status of quarry in Mbajôv community, all the challenges facing the quarry industry should be addressed. In this regard, the paper recommends *inter alia* that the Benue State government should construct roads leading to the community under review, the quarry operators need to be empowered, they should be an improvement in the prices of selling quarry products to motivate the operators, and quarry operators should find ways of surmounting or at least ameliorating the hazards associated with operational processes.

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