

Original Research Article

Assessment of Community Development Associations' Involvement in Road Infrastructure Provision in Ibarapa Region of Oyo State

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Abstract: The outcomes of the inadequate provision of road infrastructure in most developing nations have far-reaching consequences, especially given that government intervention is limited. Therefore, cities resorted to self-help initiatives through their community development associations (CDAs). Hence, the impacts on residents' livelihood and economy in these cities are grave. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to examine the involvement of CDAs in the provision of road infrastructure in the Ibarapa Region of Oyo State. This study elicited information from 385 adult residents (≥ 18 years) across six major communities (Igboora, Lanlate, Idere, Ayete, Tapa, and Eruwa) in Ibarapa Region on the types of road projects initiated and stages of community development associations' involvement. The findings were analysed through the use of frequency tables to summarize and organize the findings. The major road projects initiated by Community Development Associations (CDAs) comprised drainage and culvert construction (58 project instances), road safety features installation (52), grading and resurfacing of existing earth roads (39), and construction of new access roads (5). These were achieved through communal voluntary efforts (48.6%), paid labour (17.7%), mixed labour (15.3%), youth engagement only (13.7%) and family labour (4.7%). The major challenges faced in project implementation include: financial constraints (76.9%), technical/skill lag (71.3%), governance/coordination problems (68.7%) and unsustainability of projects delivered (63.5%). This study concludes that CDAs' involvement in project delivery has filled the lag in government provision. It thus recommends that CDAs should be co-opted into project ideation through to the implementation and evaluation, and the government should provide incentives to aid the delivery and improve the quality of CDAs-led projects.

Keywords: Community Development, Road Infrastructure, Self-help initiatives, Ibarapa Region

Introduction

Providing reliable basic services remains a major challenge in many developing countries, particularly in fast-growing urban and peri-urban areas where population increase exceeds infrastructure expansion (Shehu et al., 2023). These challenges affect key sectors such as transport, sanitation, housing, water, education, and healthcare (Ezeudu & Fadeyi, 2024). In Nigeria, the situation is worsened by limited public funding, weak institutions, and unequal resource distribution between urban and rural areas (Dimuna, 2023).

Transportation infrastructure, especially roads, is essential for economic and social activities. It improves mobility, market access, and connections to services like schools and hospitals (Adewoyin, 2025). However, rural areas such as the Ibarapa region in Oyo State face poor road conditions, inadequate maintenance, and seasonal inaccessibility during heavy rains (Akinyemi et al., 2022). Worse still, government efforts have not fully addressed these issues. Since the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986, which marked a shift from centralised infrastructure provision to a more decentralised system, emphasis has been on local participation (Mowjee, 2022). Therefore, there have been continued constraints on livelihoods and economic development (Iderawumi, 2020).

As government capacity declined, grassroots communities began organising through Community Development Associations (CDAs). They have since been playing key roles in planning, provisioning, implementing, and maintaining local infrastructure. Their activities include road grading, small bridge construction, and creating access paths to improve connectivity (Olujimi et al., 2025). The rise of CDAs is further deepened by inadequate public funding and the importance of rural roads for agricultural distribution (Fateye et al., 2021). The encouragement of participatory governance has also led to greater community involvement, with evidence from countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, and Nepal showing that such approaches improve transparency, ownership, and project sustainability (Lesala & Mukumba, 2025).

In Nigeria, studies were largely focused on urban areas, leaving rural regions like Ibarapa with little or no attention. Where CDAs operate, their effectiveness is limited by funding shortages, lack of technical skills, weak coordination, and concerns about project quality and sustainability. Inclusivity issues also persist, with women and youth often excluded from decision-making (Busari-Akinbode & Olusegun, 2020). Although public-private partnerships (PPPs) may support infrastructure delivery, they cannot replace community-driven efforts and must align with local conditions (Ololube, 2025).

Given this context, CDAs in Ibarapa represent a critical grassroots response to infrastructure gaps. Without effective community participation, projects are less likely to succeed, reinforcing socio-economic inequalities. This study, therefore, examines CDA-led road development in Ibarapa by analysing project types, labour arrangements, implementation challenges, and their effects on project sustainability. It aims to provide insights into improving rural road infrastructure through community-driven approaches in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

This review examines global, regional, and Nigerian literature on Community Development Associations (CDAs) and their roles in road infrastructure provision, focusing on contributions, participation, impacts, and challenges.

2.1 Community Participation in Road Projects

Worldwide, community-led road initiatives range from minor rural access improvements to larger transport corridors. In Europe, Asia, and North America, participatory planning exists, but community ownership is often limited (Gupta, M. C., & Gupta, S., 2023). Latin America and the Caribbean show that participatory financing and cooperatives can improve delivery and maintenance, though institutional and financial weaknesses persist (Irazábal, 2020). Asian cases, especially in India and Pakistan, reveal the benefits of engagement for transparency, yet communities often influence only implementation, not decision-making (Zafarullah & Siddiquee, 2021). In Africa, community and donor-supported projects enhance connectivity but remain constrained by funding and technical capacity (Ceesay, 2020). In Nigeria, CDAs actively support road projects, particularly in Lagos, Ogun, Rivers, Anambra, and Oyo states, though efforts are small-scale and unevenly documented (Obar, 2021).

2.2 Level of Participation

CDAs are most engaged in planning and execution, though with limited involvement in maintenance. Early participation improves transparency and accountability, but long-term sustainability depends on structured maintenance systems (Kabiru, 2025). Globally, communities contribute labour and knowledge, but maintenance often suffers from financial or technical constraints (Ceesay, 2020). In Nigeria, participation declines during the post-project due to weak maintenance frameworks, especially in Oyo State and Ibarapa (Momoh *et al.*, 2024).

2.3 Impacts on Community Development

Community-led initiatives enhance socio-economic development, resilience, and service delivery worldwide. In Nigeria, CDAs improve sanitation, mobility, security, and economic activities, particularly for farmers and traders (Fateye et al., 2021). In Ibarapa, CDA interventions in roads, culverts, and agricultural infrastructure strengthen local economies and cohesion, though sustainability remains a challenge due to funding and maintenance gaps.

2.4 Challenges Facing CDAs

Common challenges include inadequate funding, weak governance, limited technical skills, and poor maintenance. Globally, issues such as bureaucracy, corruption, political interference, elite dominance, and donor dependence limit effectiveness (Haliim, 2025). In Nigeria, CDAs also face low compliance with levies, environmental hazards, and poor documentation, particularly in Ibarapa Region and Oyo State (Fateye et al., 2021). Despite these constraints, CDAs remain resilient through local resource mobilisation.

CDAs play a vital role in addressing infrastructure deficits by mobilising resources and promoting participation, but their impact is constrained by weak maintenance, limited expertise, and poor institutional support. Strategic partnerships, capacity building, and sustainable financing are essential to enhance community-driven infrastructure initiatives (Khalatbari, 2024).

2.1 Research Gaps

Key gaps in Nigerian CDA studies include financial sustainability, technical and managerial capacity, governance integration, inclusivity, monitoring and accountability, and adaptation to local contexts. Empirical evidence on how CDAs operationalise long-term financing, technical skills, participatory governance, and digital tools is limited, particularly in rural areas like Ibarapa. Addressing these gaps is critical for improving rural infrastructure delivery. This study, therefore, examines CDA approaches to project initiation, funding, implementation, and socio-political challenges in Ibarapa, aiming to identify strategies for enhancing effectiveness and sustainability.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design to examine the role of Community Development Associations (CDAs) in the provision and maintenance of road infrastructure in the Ibarapa Region of Oyo State, Nigeria. The mixed-methods approach enabled the integration of quantitative and qualitative data, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of community participation, project implementation processes, and infrastructural outcomes.

The study was conducted in six major towns within the Ibarapa Region—Igboora, Eruwa, Lanlate, Ayete, Idere, and Tapa (Figures 1 and 2). These communities were purposively selected because of their established records of CDA-led infrastructure initiatives, including road rehabilitation, drainage construction, culvert installation, and neighbourhood improvement projects.

The target population comprised adult residents, CDA executives, community leaders, and selected local government officials involved in community development activities. The sample size of 385 respondents was determined using the Yamane (1967) sample size formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where n is the sample size, N is the study population, and e is the acceptable sampling error (0.05). The formula yielded a minimum sample size of 385 respondents considered adequate for representing the study population.

A multistage sampling technique was employed. In the first stage, the six communities were purposively selected based on the documented presence and activities of Community Development Associations in road infrastructure development. In the second stage, proportional allocation was used to distribute the 385 questionnaires among the

selected communities according to their relative population sizes and settlement characteristics. This resulted in the administration of 117 questionnaires in Igboora, 96 in Eruwa, 58 in Lanlate, 45 in Ayete, 37 in Idere, and 32 in Tapa. In the third stage, systematic random sampling was used to select households within each community, while one eligible adult respondent was interviewed per selected household.

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to residents, CDA members, and selected government officials. Qualitative information was obtained through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and direct field observations. Secondary data were sourced from CDA records, community development reports, project documents, and local government infrastructure records.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and proportional distributions. Qualitative data obtained from interviews and discussions were transcribed, coded, and analysed thematically to identify recurring issues, experiences, and perspectives regarding CDA participation in road infrastructure development across the study communities.

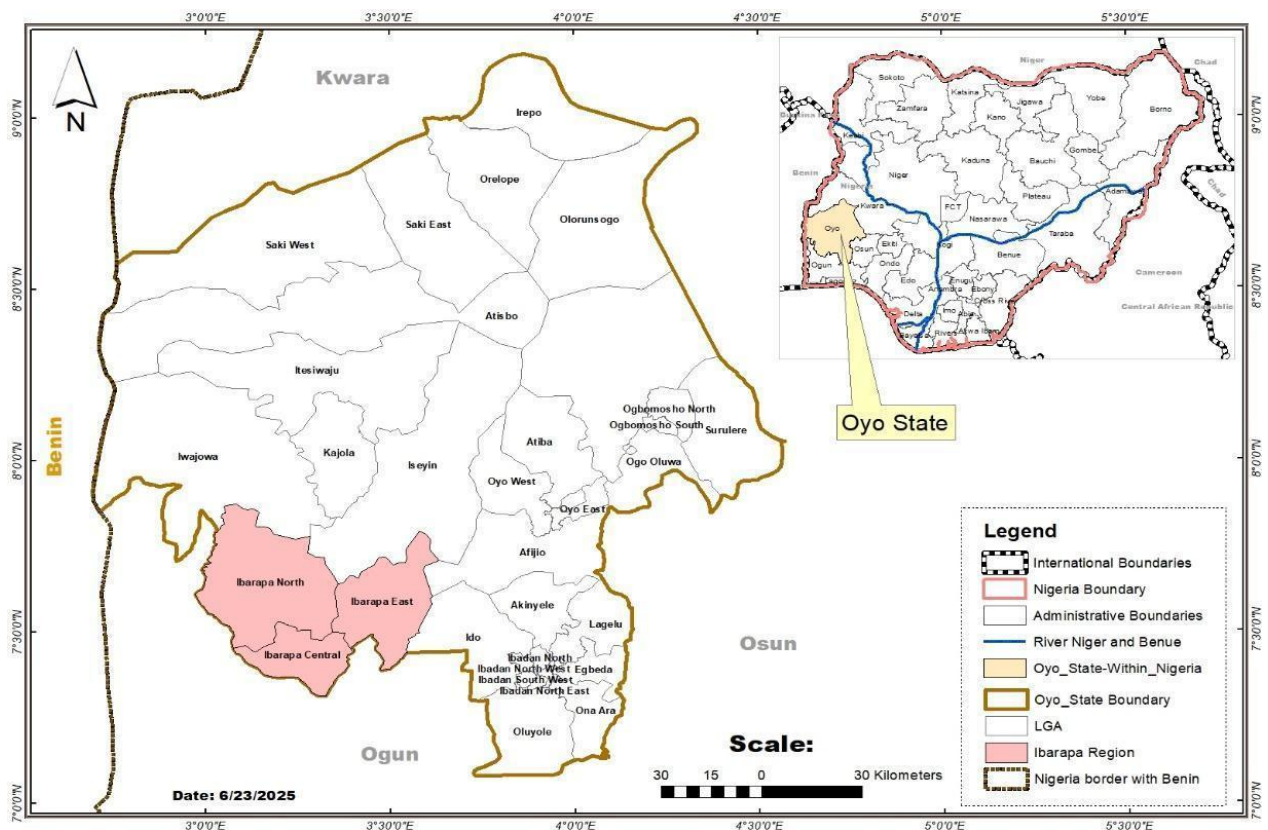


Figure 1: Ibarapa Region, within Oyo state, Nigeria

Source: Author's work, 2025

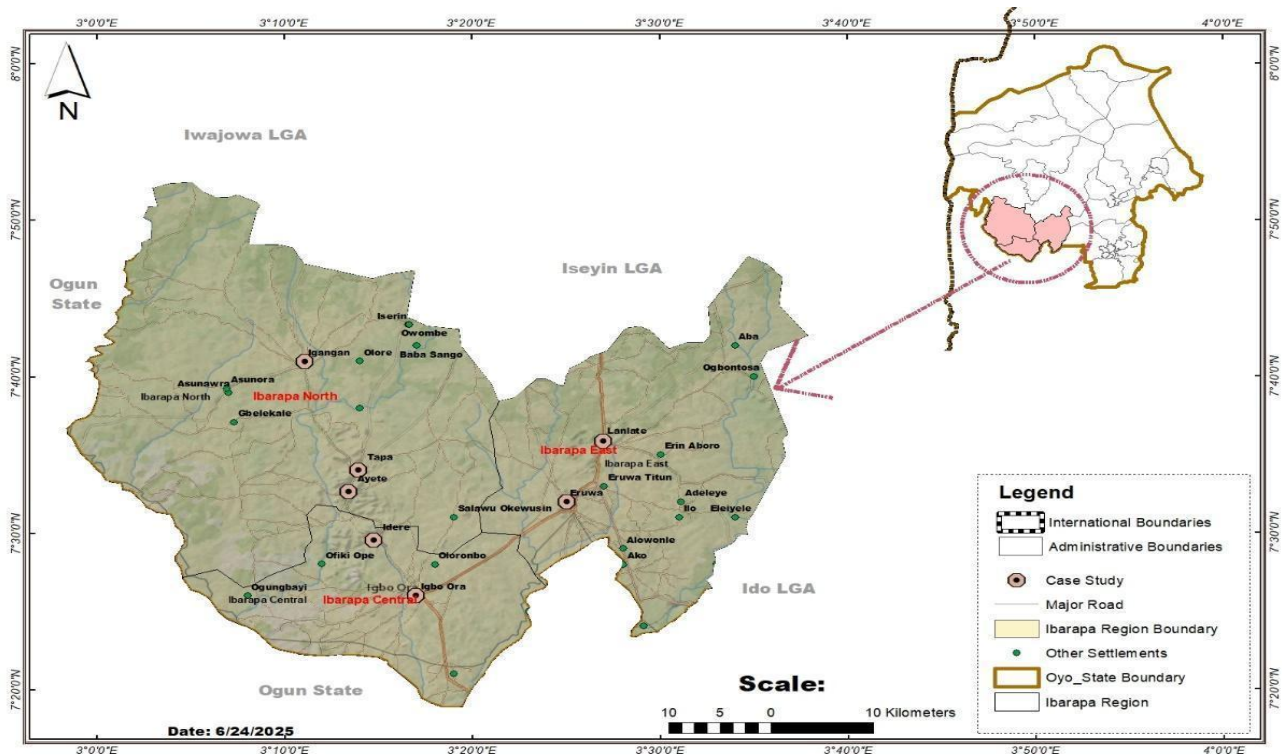


Figure 2: Ibarapa Region, within Oyo State.

Source: Author's work, 2025

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Road Projects Initiated by CDAs in Ibarapa

The results of the study show that the community development associations (CDAs) have been involved in the grading of earth roads, drainage and culvert constructions, road safety features installations and construction of new access roads (see Table 1). Drainage and culvert construction projects were the most frequent, totalling 58 cases out of 154. These entail collaboration with government agencies, CDA leadership, Town unions, other external bodies and youth groups due to technical and financial demands. Road grading and resurfacing were also common across all communities, with 39 recorded instances. CDA leadership, town unions, youth groups and government agencies were particularly active across the study area, underscoring their key roles in routine maintenance. Overall, CDAs mainly handle labour-intensive projects, while more complex works rely on wider stakeholder involvement.

Table 1: Road Project Types and Initiators in Ibarapa Region

Road Project Type	Initiator	Igboora	Eruwa	Lanlate	Ayete	Idere	Tapa	Total
Grading of Earth Roads / Resurfacing	CDA leadership	4	3	2	2	1	2	14
	Town unions	2	1	2	1	1	1	8
	Traditional council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Government agency	2	2	1	2	1	0	8
	Youth groups	3	2	2	1	1	1	10
	Other external body	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	11	8	7	5	4	4	39
Drainage/Culvert Construction	CDA leadership	4	2	2	2	2	1	13
	Town unions	2	2	2	1	2	2	11
	Traditional council	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
	Government agency	4	3	3	2	1	2	15
	Youth groups	1	1	2	1	1	1	7
	Other external body	2	1	2	2	2	1	10
	Total	14	9	12	8	8	7	58
Road Safety Features Installation	CDA leadership	2	2	2	1	1	2	10
	Town unions	1	2	1	2	2	2	10
	Traditional council	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Government agency	3	2	3	2	1	1	12
	Youth groups	2	3	2	2	2	1	12
	Other external body	0	1	1	1	2	1	6
	Total	8	10	9	8	9	8	52
Construction of New Access Roads	CDA leadership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Town unions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Traditional council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Government agency	1	1	1	0	1	0	4
	Youth groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Other external body	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Total	1	1	2	0	1	0	5

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2025

CDAs had limited involvement in large-scale projects like new access roads, focusing instead on road safety measures such as signage and speed calming devices, often working with youth groups and government agencies. Technically complex interventions were mainly led by the government and youth organisations, highlighting the need for specialised skills and formal approvals. Overall, CDAs were most active in routine maintenance and safety-related tasks, while major infrastructure relied on external support. Visual examples of CDA-led projects in Ibarapa are shown in Plates 1 and 2.



Plate 1: Box culvert constructed by Ayedaade Community Development Association in Tapa (Coordinates: 31N 0524920 UTM 0837405)



Plate 2: Drainage and Surface dressing constructed by Isale Bioku CDAs in Lanlate town. Coordinates: 31N 0549240 UTM 0839617

4.2 Role of CDAs in Planning, Execution, and Maintenance

CDAs in Ibarapa actively contribute to road projects by mobilising labour, coordinating stakeholders, and supervising activities. Working with town unions, youth groups, and households, they engage in grading earth roads, constructing culverts and bridges, rehabilitating drainage, repairing potholes, and installing solar streetlights. Examples are drawn from Lanlate, Ayete, Igboora, Tapa, Idere, and Eruwa (see Plates 1 and 2).

4.2.1 Participation in Planning

CDA involvement in planning is structured and deliberate, including prioritising routes, consulting authorities, mobilising resources, and engaging communities. In Lanlate, Isale Bioku and Isale Baale CDAs planned drainage, road surfacing, and solar streetlights (2024–2025). In Ayete, Ayeedade and CMD CDAs prioritised culverts and drainage along market routes. In Eruwa, the Youth Development Association and Town Union planned key road rehabilitations, focusing on high-traffic areas. These efforts ensured resources matched community needs (Table 2).

Table 2: CDA Participation in Planning by Community across Ibarapa Region

Community	Questionnaires Administered	Number Involved	Participation (%)	Key Projects	CDA Involvement
Igboora	117	36	30.8	Culverts, Drainage, Road Repairs	Ifelajulo CDA, Town Union
Eruwa	96	24	25.0	Road Reopening, Drainage	Youth Development Association, Town Union
Lanlate	58	9	15.5	Drainage, Surface Dressing, Solar Lights	Isale Bioku CDA, Isale Balae CDA
Ayete	45	5	11.1	Drainage, Culverts	Ayeedade CDA, CMD Ayete
Idere	37	4	10.8	Drainage, Minor Road Repairs	Local CDAs, Town Union
Tapa	32	3	9.4	Access Roads, Culvert Repairs	Local CDAs, Youth Groups
Total	385	81	21.0	All above	Multiple CDAs

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2025

Spatial Distribution of Planning Participation

Table 2 indicates that Igboora recorded the highest level of planning participation, with 36 respondents directly involved, representing 30.8% of the 117 questionnaires administered in the community. Eruwa followed with 24 respondents (25.0%), reflecting active community engagement in planning activities related to road reopening and drainage improvement. Participation was comparatively lower in Lanlate (9 respondents; 15.5%), Ayete (5 respondents; 11.1%), Idere (4 respondents; 10.8%) and Tapa (3 respondents; 9.4%). These differences suggest varying levels of community engagement in planning processes across the study area. Overall, 81 of the 385 respondents (21.0%) reported direct involvement in planning activities, indicating that while Community Development Associations (CDAs) provide an important platform for participatory planning, active

participation is concentrated in a few communities where road infrastructure initiatives are more prominent.

4.2.2 Participation in Execution

Table 3 indicates that voluntary communal labour was the predominant mode of project execution, with all respondents (100%, $n = 385$) reporting its use across the six communities. This reflects the central role of collective action in implementing community-driven road projects. Paid labour was employed selectively (60–75%) for activities requiring technical expertise, while mixed arrangements combining voluntary and hired labour were adopted for technically demanding projects. Such mixed participation was most evident in Igboora (65%) and Lanlate (62%). Youth participation was also substantial, particularly in Igboora (60%) and Eruwa (58%), where young people contributed mainly to physically intensive activities such as site clearing, earthworks and material transportation. Family labour recorded the lowest level of participation (approximately 18%), being largely confined to routine, non-technical support. Overall, the findings demonstrate that road project execution in the Ibarapa region was sustained primarily through communal voluntary efforts, with paid labour and youth participation providing complementary support for specialized and labour-intensive activities.

4.2.3 Participation in Maintenance

As presented in Table 3, the maintenance of completed road projects similarly depended largely on voluntary communal labour, with all respondents (100%, $n = 385$) indicating community participation in routine maintenance activities. Youth participation averaged approximately 53% across the study communities, reaching its highest level in Igboora (60%), where youths played active roles in physically demanding maintenance tasks such as clearing drainage channels, repairing eroded road sections and maintaining road verges. Family labour remained relatively limited (about 16%) and was generally restricted to minor, non-technical maintenance activities. Paid labour and mixed labour arrangements were used only when technical expertise was required, with Lanlate recording the highest level (72%) for specialized maintenance activities, including drainage rehabilitation and solar-powered street lighting maintenance. These findings indicate that while community participation remains the cornerstone of road infrastructure maintenance, technical interventions continue to require supplementary skilled labour to ensure the sustainability of completed projects.

Table 3: CDAs Participation across Communities in Execution

Community	Questionnaires Retrieved	Voluntary Communal (% , n)	Youth Labour (% , n)	Family Labour (% , n)	Paid/Hybrid Labour (% , n)	Key Activities
Igboora	117	100 (117)	60 (70)	20 (23)	70 (82)	Pothole repair, drainage
Eruwa	96	100 (96)	55 (53)	18 (17)	65 (62)	Road reopening maintenance

Community	Questionnaires Retrieved	Voluntary Communal (% , n)	Youth Labour (% , n)	Family Labour (% , n)	Paid/Hybrid Labour (% , n)	Key Activities
Lanlate	58	100 (58)	58 (34)	15 (9)	72 (42)	Solar light & drainage upkeep
Ayete	45	100 (45)	52 (23)	18 (8)	68 (31)	Culvert & drainage maintenance
Idere	37	100 (37)	50 (19)	15 (6)	60 (22)	Minor road maintenance
Tapa	32	100 (32)	45 (14)	12 (4)	55 (18)	Access road maintenance
Average	385	100 (385)	53 (213)	16 (67)	65 (257)	All maintenance works

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2025

Overall, the results indicate that rural road sustainability in Ibarapa depends on community-based labour, with youth and occasional skilled support. Family labour, though limited, complements these efforts. These locally embedded cooperative systems are essential for the long-term functionality of CDA-led infrastructure projects, as shown in Plate 3.



Plate 3: Rehabilitation of Damaged Road Sections through Rubble Filling, Culvert Construction, and Drainage Development by Ifelajulo CDA along Ori Oke Oyinbo–Saganhun Road, Igboora

Coordinates: 31N 0532446 UTM 0822392

4.3 Challenges in Road Project Implementation

CDAs face multiple challenges shaped by community size, resources, and skills. In Igboora (30.4%), funding shortfalls, land disputes, and technical limits persist despite strong mobilisation. Eruwa (24.9%) faces bureaucratic delays and skill gaps. Mid-sized towns, Lanlate (15.1%) and Ayete (11.7%), encounter financial and land issues that affect effectiveness, while volunteer labour sustains many efforts. Smaller towns, Idere (9.6%) and Tapa (8.3%), face compounded constraints including scarce funds, technical gaps, and limited ICT capacity (see Table 4). Across all communities, inadequate funding, technical skill deficits, land conflicts, and administrative bottlenecks limit CDA capacity. Volunteer and community mobilisation are crucial, but long-term sustainability requires technical support, funding, conflict resolution, and effective governance.

Table 4: Community-Level Summary Analysis of CDA Challenges across the Ibarapa region

Community	Respondents (n, %)	Key CDA Strengths	Primary Challenges	Notes
Igboora	117; 30.4%	High mobilisation, local knowledge	Funding shortfalls, land disputes, and technical gaps	A larger population increases the visibility of challenges
Eruwa	96; 24.9%	Strong social cohesion, active participation	Bureaucratic delays, low technical capacity	Moderately impacted by rising costs
Lanlate	58; 15.1%	Ownership of local projects, moderate technical input	Funding, land disputes, and maintenance weaknesses	The skills gap limits drainage and rehabilitation performance
Ayete	45; 11.7%	Local engagement, ownership	Technical gaps, weak monitoring, and low funding	Projects are primarily sustained through volunteers
Idere	37; 9.6%	Proactive but resource-limited	Severe financial, technical, and participation constraints	Lowest infrastructure coverage and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) outcomes
Tapa	32; 8.3%	Community initiative	Funding, land disputes, technical and ICT limitations	Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) and new-access projects are highly constrained

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2025

4.4 FGDs and KIIs Findings

FGDs and KIIs conducted confirmed that CDA challenges differ across communities. Larger towns face administrative bottlenecks, mid-sized communities have technical skill gaps, and smaller settlements struggle with financial and institutional limitations. Land disputes were common impediments across communities. Overall, CDA challenges are interrelated, encompassing financial, technical, governance, and land-related constraints.

4.5 Impact on Project Durability and Success

Evidence shows these challenges directly affect project sustainability. Voluntary communal labour supports routine maintenance, but technical gaps and limited funding reduce longevity for complex works. Administrative delays and land disputes hinder timely completion in larger towns, while smaller communities face difficulties maintaining roads due to limited skills and resources. Success depends on financial capacity, technical skills, governance efficiency, and community mobilisation. Projects succeed where these factors are addressed, but remain vulnerable where deficiencies exist.

In Igboora, administrative bottlenecks slow progress despite available funds, whereas in Eruwa, technical work like culverts requires external or youth support. In Lanlate, financial and institutional constraints hinder project delivery, while at Ayete, land disputes delay expansions. Smaller towns like Idere and Tapa face compounded financial, technical, and institutional challenges, whereas larger towns are more affected by coordination and administrative inefficiencies, while smaller communities confront fundamental funding, technical, and institutional limitations.

5. Contribution to Knowledge

This study advances understanding of community-driven infrastructure by:

- i. Showing CDAs' focus on labour-intensive works (grading, resurfacing, minor drainage), while complex projects rely on external actors.
- ii. Highlighting participation across planning, execution, and maintenance, with labour mobilisation and local governance central to success.
- iii. Providing spatially grounded evidence of varied impacts on mobility, market access, education, economy, social cohesion, and environment.
- iv. Identifying constraints — funding gaps, technical shortfalls, governance issues, and weak maintenance linked to project outcomes for policy guidance.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

CDAs are vital for rural road development, improving connectivity and socio-economic activity. Sustaining impacts requires financial support, technical assistance, improved governance, and stronger government collaboration. The study recommends the strengthening and mobilisation of smaller communities (such as Idere and Tapa), harnessing communities with targeted technical training and institutionalising CDAs coordination with local governments. There should be further reinforcement of collaboration with Town Unions, youth groups, and government agencies to improve accountability, record-keeping, and monitoring while establishing scheduled maintenance plans and inspection teams.

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