

**COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION SYSTEM AND THE
DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN DELTA STATE:
EXPECTATIONS AND IMPACTS**

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Abstract

The study examined the role of community based organization system and the development of rural communities in Delta State: expectations and impacts. The specific objectives were: to examine the structure of selected community based organizations (CBO); ascertain the characteristics of community based organization; establish their contributions to the development of rural communities which they operate, and to identify the constraints encountered by them. Data were collected with the aid of structured questionnaire from the President, Vice President or Secretary of each of the 45 CBOs. Frequencies, counts, percentages and mean values were used to analyze the data collected. It was found from the study that most of the CBOs were established for self-help (53.3%) and community development (26.6%). The CBOs admitted mainly indigenes (46.6%) and employed (62.1%). Most of them had monthly meetings (55.6%). Their major areas of impacts include bore hole (15.6%), market stall (14.4%), minor road construction (13.3) and road repair (11.1%). Major constraints were lack of funds ($x=3.5$), high cost of materials ($x=3.3$) and lack of government support ($x=3.2$). Based on the findings, it was recommended that government should establish an efficient monitoring team to ensure effective use of NDDC funds to make sure that it supports CBOs in their efforts to bring about development especially in rural communities Delta State. It is also expected that CBOs should identify and reach out to international donor agencies for assistance. To be able to attract this funding, they should register with a recognized government agency.

Keywords: Community-based, local organizations, rural development, neighbourhood

Introduction

Community based organization otherwise known as local organizations have been given different names in different places. These include community development associations, neighbourhood councils and United Community, among others (Agboola, 1998). Community based organizations are set up by collective efforts of indigenous people of homo or heterogeneous attributes but living or working within the same environment. Their coming together creates conditions which broaden the base of self governance and diffusion of power through a wider circle of the population (Adeyemo, 2002, Adejumobi, 1991). It is seen as voluntary, non-profit, nongovernmental and highly localized or neighbourhood institutions whose membership is placed on equal level and whose main goal is the improvement of the social and economic well-being of every member (Abegunde, 2004).

CBOs are localized institutions in that their spheres of influence hardly extend beyond their immediate communities or neighbourhood. They are nongovernmental because all members contribute economically towards the fulfillment of their responsibilities to the immediate environment and not depend on government before fulfilling these (Claudia, 2003). Benefits accrued from members' contributions to the associations are shared accordingly with fairness.

They are concerned with the development problems of and development programme projects in their various areas (Bratton, 1990). They responded to community felt needs rather than market demand or pressure. They are characterized by *effective leadership, high Performing staff, financial strength, effective Work and organization* (Geldof, 1998). They play the roles of development and operation of infrastructure, supporting innovation, mounting of demonstration and pilot projects, facilitating communication, giving technical assistance and training, researching, monitoring and evaluation of pro-poor support and advocacy programmes.

The idea of co-operation towards community development is a very common long-held phenomenon (Adejumobi, 1991). Government in developing nations are aware of this but gave attention to it later than expected (Abegunde, 2004). The former approach towards development was by polarizing economic activities in cities, leaving lagging regions to fend for self-existence till spread and multiplier effects of industrial establishment was to transform their local economy (Chen and Ravallion, 2004).

The Federal Government of Nigeria designed different programmes such as operation feed the nation (1978), Directorate of Food, Rural Roads and Infrastructure (1982), Community Banks (1990), Better Life for Rural Women (1991) among others which aimed to develop the rural areas and communities. In spite of the lofty ideas of the programmes at inception many of these government activities both at the state and federal levels had little impact on the recipients because the beneficiaries were not involved at the initial stage of planning nor fully carried along at the final stage of execution (Akinola, 2000). The programmes show that government's contributions to CBOs in Nigeria were grossly inadequate.

Table 1: Three Generation classification of CBOs development programme

Classification	Generation		
	First	Second	Third
Defining features	Relief and Welfare	Small Scale, self-reliant local development	Sustainable systems development
Problem Definition	Shortages of goods and services	Local inertia	Institutional and policy constraints
Time frame	Immediate	Project life	Indefinite long term
Spatial Scope	Individual or family	Neighborhood or village	Region or nation
Chief Actors	CBO	CBO + beneficiary organizations	All public and private institutions that define the relevant system
Development Education	Starving children	Community self-help initiatives	Failures in interdependent systems
Management Orientation	Logistics Management	Project management	Strategic management

There is the need for government to be actively involved in CBOs. The issue of allocating money to and monitoring CBOs operations at Federal Level will slow development progress. However,

divergent views surround government's involvement in CBOs operations. Mandondon (1985) believed that CBOs are local initiatives and that interference from government may divert, misguide or adversely influence the CBOs members. Besides, government involvement can assist in integrating CBOs into local development plans. Whatever the case, government involvement must be within the permission of law guiding CBOs operations among people at community level (Albert, 2009). In another dimension, such involvement must be guided by people's permission. Such involvement can be in form of financial contributions to CBOs purses. Community development associations are practiced at local level by people of like passion.

The failure of many government development programmes in Nigeria could be traced to poor organizational structure militating against provision of life-bettering amenities at the grassroots level. The fact has been established that the government is constrained in its efforts to provide citizens with the required social and basic amenities for comfortable living (Anyanwu, 1992). It is the gap arising from poor performance of government and other institutional organization that led to the formation of community based organization (CBOs) as means of improving the socio economic status of their communities. CBOs serve as the apex organization by which community people can embark on small scale industries, vocational trade, agricultural development projects, rural transportation and other socio economic activities (Adejumobi 1991). CBOs play a significant role in community development and these roles need to be clearly understood by the policy makers, government even potential members. This will gradually help in identifying the appropriate support needed by the CBOs in order to improve on community development activities, thereby improving the standard of living in communities and also reducing rural urban drift which is one of the main cause of poor agricultural production in rural communities in Nigeria.

This study is designed to assess the community based organization system and the development of rural communities in Delta State: expectations and impacts. The specific objectives are to: ascertain the characteristics of CBOs in Delta State, examine the structure of selected CBOs., identify the contributions of the organization and identify the constraints encountered by the CBOs.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Delta State, Nigeria. The state lies between longitude 5°00' E and 6°30'N. It is bounded on the north by Edo state and on East by Anambra State, on the South East by Bayelsa State, and on the South by the Bight of Benin which covers about 160 km of the State. The State has an estimated population of 4,098,291 people (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2015). The major tribes in the state are Urhobos, Ibos, Izons and Itsekiris. The major social activities are dancing and family meeting while economic activities include fishing, crops and livestock, art and culture. The major crops grown in the area are yam, melon, cassava, maize, vegetable and livestock which include sheep, goats and chicken. The minor income generating activities are government employment (Civil Service), private enterprise such as welding and fabrication, carpentry, hair making, fashion designing among others. The state is divided into three agricultural zones which are Delta North, Delta South and Delta Central and it has 25 Local Government Area (LGAs). The state covers a land mass of 18,050 km² of which more than 60% is land.

A multiple stage sampling procedure was used in this study. One (1) local government area

which has CBOs was purposively selected from each of the agricultural zones giving a total of 3 LGAs, 3 communities were selected from each chosen L.G.A giving a total of 9 communities. The list of CBOs involved in community development activities in the selected communities were complied with the assistance of key informants such as community leaders or executive members of CBOs. Five (5) CBOs were randomly selected from each chosen community giving a total sample size of 45 CBOs used for the study. Data for the study were collected from respondents by the use of structured interview schedule. The president and/or secretary of selected CBOs were interviewed.

Data generated from the study were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to organize, summarize and analyze the data. The level of constraints which was evaluated by the use of 4 point Likert-like scale was analyzed by use of the mean value

Results and Discussion

Characteristics of community based organization

Entries in Table I showed the various reasons for establishing community based organizations. Result revealed that most of the CBOs were established primarily for self-help (53.3%), community development and humanitarian reasons share equal importance (26.6%) each and promoting social life of its members. All community based organizations were not established for a single reason, they were set up to meet different needs of the people. Some chose self- help and community development because they want to meet their immediate needs and then that of their community, some others were established for promoting social life and self-help such as marriages, burial ceremonies and birthday parties. These findings are in line with Olomola (2001) on the reasons for setting up community development associations in Oshogbo. The most important of all the conditions for membership were that the person has to be an indigene of the community (46.6%) and also have a source of income (62.1%) either self or government employed. This must be to ensure high level commitment becoming members of a community based organization resulting in the spirit of patriotism. In addition, no organization can exist without finance so members need to have a source of income to enable them to contribute in actualizing the objectives of the organization. Moreover, some of the organizations (60%) were not registered, and this is not surprising because of the informal nature of the operations of many of them. The registered ones are likely to be among those that stress education as a criterion for membership and others that have people that are educated and also people who are cosmopolitan.

Table 2: Distribution of community based organization according to characteristics

<i>S/n</i>	<i>Characteristics of CBOs</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	<i>Reason for establishment</i>		
	self-help	24	53.3
	Community development	12	26.6
	Humanitarian	12	26.6
	Promoting social life	9	20
2	<i>Conditions for membership</i>		
	Trading/farming	17	37.7
	Indigene	21	46.6
	Civil service/public service	11	24.4
	Education	5	11.1
	Marriage	8	17.7
3	<i>Registration status</i>		
	Registered	18	40
	Not registered	27	60

Multiple responses were recorded. *Source:* Field survey, 2013.

Gender distribution of community based organization

Table 3 showed that most (80%) community based organizations in the study are gender sensitive which brings a balance and high level of success in community development as all the human and material resources are tapped to bring about success in planning and execution of projects.

Table 3: Gender composition of community based organization

<i>Gender Composition of CBOs</i>	<i>Total number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Male only	3	6.7
Female only	6	13.3
Male and female	36	80

Structure of CBOs

This section gives information on the structure of CBOs, how their organizations are being managed.

Frequency of meetings by community based organization

Information in Table 4 showed that monthly meetings (55.6%) were most popular among CBOs while an appreciable number (22.3%) met quarterly. It is usual for members of organizations to pay dues and sometimes levies at meetings. Some also make savings for Christmas or in form of osusu. Considering the fact that some members are employed and thus receive salary monthly, this will therefore suit their operations. Most community projects were done through self-help by

raising money through levies and monthly dues from members (100%). From this study it is obvious that government input to community development is very small (8.8%) despite the fact that a lot of funds are put into government agencies like Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for the development of the Niger Delta

Some CBOs partnered with government and other agencies such as NDDC for support (42.3%) either in the provision of materials or other resources for carrying out community development project while (57.7%) said they did not partner with anybody for support. This shows that CBOs predominantly rely upon their own self efforts, available and affordable resources to execute their projects. This also confirms that the principles of self- help, self -reliance and citizen participation as recorded by Anyanwu (1992) as some of the ingredients that bring about success in community development are being applied by the communities. To further ensure compliance to rules and regulations sanctions were introduced. The most used were fines for different offences. This is most beneficial to the organization.

Contributions of community based organizations to community development

The information in table 5 shows that the developmental efforts of CBOs were not geared to one project only, but to several projects as perceived by their needs and their affordability.

Table 4: Structural distribution statistics of the CBOs

<i>S/n</i>	<i>Characteristics of CBOs</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	<i>Schedule of meetings</i>		
	<i>Weekly</i>	4	8.8
	<i>Monthly</i>	25	55.6
	<i>Quarterly</i>	10	22.3
	<i>Twice a month</i>	6	13.3
2	<i>Source of funds Dues</i>	45	100
	<i>Government</i>	4	8.8
	<i>Levies</i>	45	100
	<i>Penalties</i>	36	80
	<i>Loans</i>	4	8.8
3	<i>Partnership with government and other agencies</i>		
	<i>Yes</i>	19	43
	<i>No</i>	26	57.7
4	<i>Disciplinary measures used by CBOs</i>		
	<i>Fines</i>	45	100
	<i>Warning</i>	2	4.4
	<i>Suspension</i>	3	6.6
	<i>Deprivation</i>	13	28.8

Multiple responses were recorded. **Source:** Field survey, 2013

The four most embarked on projects are sinking of borehole (15.6%), building of market stall (14.4%), minor road construction (13.3%) and repair of road (11.1%). This is in line with Fakoya, Apantaku and Oyesola (2000) the study in participation of association in community development project in Ifedore LGA of Ondo State. One interesting observation in this result is that most of the CBOs participated in more than one of the listed projects. It is clear from the table that CBOs in the study area tends to conceptualize their development in those areas that will have effect on their community felt needs and help to develop their economy. Hence, participation is one of the prerequisite of sustainability in community based organizational programme. (Akinsorotan and Olujide, 2006).

Constrained encountered by community based organization in community Development efforts

From the data on Table 5, the most important constraints encountered by community based organization in their community development efforts include lack of finance ($x = 3.5$), high cost of materials for executing projects ($x = 3.3$) and lack of government support ($x = 3.2$). It is obvious that most of the community projects require a lot of funds which cannot be raised by some communities.

Table 5: Projects executed/maintenance by community based organization

<i>Projects (both constructed and maintenance)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Market stall	13	14.4
Town hall	5	5.6
Post office	3	3.3
School building	6	6.7
Motor Park	3	3.3
Health care facility	8	8.9
Cinema	2	2.2
Borehole	14	15.6
Electricity supply	5	5.6
Minor road construction	12	13.3
Drainage	9	10
Repair of road	10	11.1

Source: Field survey, 2013

This will likely affect the type of projects they can embark on especially with little or no help from government and donor agencies.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study shows that there are CBOs impacted on the communities by carrying out development activities in their various communities. Prominent among these activities included sinking of bore-hole, building of market stalls, minor road construction and repair of roads. These projects were carried out mainly through contributions by members hence they have financial constraints.

Table 6: Mean score of constraints faced by community based organization

<i>SN</i>	<i>CONSTRAINTS</i>	<i>MEAN SCORE</i>
1	Lack of finance	3.5*
2	Lack of cooperation on the part of the members	2.0
3	Youth restiveness	1.4
4	Bad leadership	1.4
5	Lack of commitment on the parts of the members	1.8
6	Embezzlement of funds	1.3
7	High Cost of materials	3.3*
8	Lack of government support	3.2*

* Important constraints. *Source: Field survey, 2013*

It is expected that the government should establish an efficient monitoring team to ensure effective use of NDDC funds to make sure that it supplements effort by CBOs to bring about development especially in rural communities. It is also expected that CBOs should identify and reach out to international donor agencies for assistance. To be able to attract this funding, they should register with a recognized government agency.

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