

**THE ROLE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS FOR  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study investigates the roles and the effectiveness of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in Enugu State. Questionnaire and focus group discussion were used in collecting the data for the study. It covered two urban and two rural Local Government Areas. The study was also based on a sample survey of representatives of 100 CBOs in four Local Government Areas of Enugu State. The primary data were complemented with four Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions for community members in the study area. The quantitative data were analysed with qualitative method of data analysis using frequency distribution, Tables and Chi-square statistics. Four hypotheses were formulated and tested using Chi-square ( $X^2$ ). The analysis of data revealed that CBOs play significant roles in community development processes and are committed to the execution of projects in their communities of operation. Community empowerment and good life-style among members of the community were found to be the top two priorities of the CBOs working in the local communities. Findings also show that there were healthy operational climates and relative independence on the part of the CBOs in relation to the selection and execution of projects. The study equally indicated that illiteracy and poverty were two most outstanding issues that retard the effectiveness of the CBOs. The result of the three hypotheses tested show that active participation of community people and achievement of CBOs objectives showed significant relationship. Significant relationship also existed between the achievement of CBOs that involve women in their operational activities than that of men and between urban on one hand, and rural counterparts on the other hand. These findings have lofty implications for community development in Nigeria. The study accentuated the need to harness the potentials of CBOs for proper mobilization of community members and effective community development.*

**Key Words:** *Community Based Organization improvement of quality of life, community development process, active participation, mobilization of community members.*

**Introduction**

The development of any economy as well as community narratives of a given population is often perceived from the social position of the people, especially those at the grassroots of the community. These specifics help in gaining first-hand information about the people in relation to their apparent problems while building cohesion, equality and reducing poverty amongst them. Yet, part of the current challenges facing development circle generally include the search for ‘human-centered development strategies’ which emphasize active participation of the community members in development efforts. In this respect, efforts are focused on evolving an approach of development that relies on bottom-up realities and social transformation for self-reliance. The quintessence here is to transform the masses of our communities from a welfare-oriented (input) approach which treated them as passive beneficiaries rather than active participants in community development efforts, to a participatory and action-oriented approach that is geared towards helping them so that they can help themselves Ezech, 2005; Lukkarinen,2005).

The above conceptualization has thrown up a nagging contemporary issue in community development as whether to calculate the achievements in community development merely by the number and size or quantum of physical projects accomplished in a community, or the level of participation that triggered empowerment in the community (Gajanayake, 1993, Cummings, 1990). Whichever is the case,

community development is an idea or a process aimed at providing resources that will empower people in order to enable them control their own destinies collectively. To this end therefore, development does not necessarily need to start with 'goods and things' only, but with people in terms of their orientation, organization and discipline. This means that when a society is properly oriented, organized and members empowered, it can be prosperous even at the midst of scanty natural resources or wealth.

Currently, the reality of the social and economic conditions of Nigeria has manifested a compelling need for the re-evaluation of policies that arrogate to the government alone the responsibility of providing social services to the community. In Nigeria the system had increasingly decimated due to financial problem hence the provision of basic needs of life to the citizens are not in the offing (Iyiani, Binns & Shannon, 2011). In other words, the interest of the government on local or Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) with respect to their contributions to the social transformation of their communities is contingent upon this phenomenon. Moreover, the present global economic crises have warranted the inquisitorial of the hitherto prevailing 'top down' development paradigm concomitant to the role of the state in economic and social management in Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that some states in Nigeria including Enugu state are saddled with external dependency, environmental degradation and unequal development. The crises have also compelled the need for a re-examination of the possible contributions of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to socio-economic development that could foster human capital development and social change that are devoid of problems but achievements and prospects in the urban and rural communities of Nigeria.

### **Defining the Problem**

The issue of social transformation that will overcome dependence and hopelessness on the part of the citizenry in Nigeria remains a topical and highly expedient one. In the contemporary times, Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented level of social and economic down-turn, which has serious consequences for the majority of Nigerians. Consequently, the level of poverty, social inequalities, dependency, disempowerment and hopelessness on the part of the masses despite the huge amount of resources which abound in the country are the manifestations of dependent peripheral economy (Iyiani et al, 2011). This prevailing phase of Nigerian's socio-economic development points to the various issues that relate to the structures, character and control of the economy and on the other hand the logic of its operation (Omonuyi, 2001; Kwanashi and Abubakar, 1980).

The Nigerian economy has been characterized by alienation, deprivation and strives, meaning that a whole lot of people are at the 'bottom of the heap' hence decisions concerning them are externally imposed on them. These often include grants-in-aid, technical aid, education and skills that were actually not needed in the communities (Iyiani, Binns & Shannon, 2011). These have tended to increase rather than reduce inequality among the people and have invariably made them vulnerable to different social ills such as armed robbery, kidnapping etc. In the circumstance, power had often rested on few (Luke, 2005) ruling elite groups who consolidated their positions and exploited the people while claiming to have achieved dominant development goals for them even when that did not touch the vested interest of the majority of the people, thus placing them on a disadvantaged position (Donaghy, 2011; Ruth, 1990). The disadvantaged suffer in this context since they are oppressed and exploited, and the bye-products of their domination both at political, socio-economic and cultural levels are marginalization and cases of exclusion from community development decisions. In this case, there is need for the non-state institutions such as Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to represent the marginalized and the excluded section of the population in issues that affect them. Unvaryingly, the community themselves are the necessary prerequisite for better and more egalitarian development in this perspectives (Johnston et al., 2015; Ezeh, 2005).

Sequel to the above, a study conducted by Francis Attah (2006) reveals that quite a number of local and indigenous groups such as age-grades, *Akpuraruas*, *Ohas* (Organisation of elders and opinion leaders) amongst others are found to be active in their various communities in Nigeria. These local and indigenous groups which are generally described as Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) take many different forms, playing diverse and often multiple social and economic roles. In many communities in Enugu State,

the overall quality and coverage of public services have deteriorated while government programmes do not seem to have any appreciative impact (Iyiani, 2002). Consequently, CBOs have apparently been complementing the efforts of the state in providing these essential infrastructural facilities. Yet, in spite of this, much has been done by scholars on the types, structures, functioning, and achievements of these CBOs in concrete terms and their contributions to the socio-economic development of their immediate communities. This apparent neglect has not helped policy makers to appreciate the vital roles CBOs play in transforming their communities. Consequently, they have not received the desired attention at the local levels.

### **Conceptual Framework**

In pursuit of social transformation, community development has the crucial need for development of organizations or local institutions at the community level. This is in line with the 1990s studies on Africa's development (Dia, 1996), which emphasized the need for local institutional factors that can accelerate development process in African communities (World Bank, 1990). Sanchez (2004) posited that 'the main condition for establishing CBO is not for the beneficiaries, although, this is important, but rather it is the creation of local institutions that can ensure the continuation of local community development'. This means that the process of creating local institutions presents an interesting feature of community development at the community level.

However, the World Bank (2006) in its report laments about achievement on the part of local institutions including CBOs since the sustainability of development efforts depends on the character and performance of the institution. Scholars (Holt, 1991; O'sullivan, 1993; Vahie, 1993) have also noted that poverty alleviation projects in particular call for a sound and appropriate local institutional base (CBO), both to ensure that the benefits of such programme reach the poor and secure their sustainability.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study adopts the political Economy theory of Karl Marx as was popularized by Ryndina et al. (1980). According to the theory, 'labour alienation' prevails when production is diverted from people's immediate environment; the resources they know as well as their needs become unreachable. The theory also maintains that labour alienation arises also when the people are denied the knowledge of why their products are necessary, how they are utilized, and how the benefits of such production are distributed. In other words, the people merely produce from the desire not to lose their jobs or from fear of punishment by the exploitative management or the society at large. Thus, there are motives of a higher order expressing the awareness of social interest and thus evoked little or no enthusiasm on their part.

In applying this theory to the study, there is the need to take a look at what the pattern of production generally in a society should be. Here it is expected that in any society, either nation or community, the people have right to determine their own policies in their own interest and have influence in affairs which accord with all their internal resources. They also have a duty to ensure that their economics are organized to address every day economic and social needs, resources and problems of the vast majority of their population. In fact, this development ideals and production processes prevailed in Nigeria prior to the advent of colonialism.

Colonialism then by passed the people and created a system of production based on the dynamics of foreign capital monopoly. It therefore creates a pattern of production that is foreign and strange to the people. This may be the case with our local communities, and their CBOs, where the traditional concept of the community development, as handed down to us by the colonial powers exposed the development concept associated with alienation, deprivation, and efforts at supplying needs not determined by the people, but by the outsiders. The process led to and was based on dependency, whereby the people were made to accept the viewpoints of development agents. In the process, both the nature of the community problem and the solutions were imposed on the people (Posio, 2015). The means of production (capital) is in hands of a few who consolidated their position and exploited the deprived and the needy. The implication here points at the theory of political economy where the character of relations of distribution is a determinant of relations of production. This suggests that when the means of production are monopolized

by a class in the society, the very class will appropriate the lion's share of the national goods, while the powerless masses are denied even the minimum necessary for the reproduction of their labour power. As the theory also postulates, however, people are in dialectic relationship with their social world, implying that while the social world influences and perhaps oppresses them, they may also influence it when their potentials are harnessed and their capacity enhanced through empowerment. Marxist political economy thus makes these ideas available to social work (Radical Social Work) in understandable form and on power in particular, hence it draws into social work theory and perspectives which have relevance to classism.

## **Methodology**

### ***Study Design***

This is a case study design intended to investigate the roles and effectiveness of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) for community development in Enugu State and whose findings will be generalized across the other parts of Nigeria. In effect, the research is designed to determine the effectiveness of CBOs by comparing both their objectives with their achievements through scrutinizing their ends and means.

### **Population/Area of Study**

The population for the study consists of all registered Community Based Organization (CBOs) in four local Govt. Areas of Enugu State of Nigeria. Included also in the study population are selected respondents from the Local Government Areas. Enugu State is located in the southeast Nigeria. According to the pre-survey census conducted by the researchers, there are one thousand and thirteen (1013) registered CBOs identified for the study in the two urban and two rural local governments of Enugu State. Administratively, Enugu State is made up of seventeen (17) Local Govt. Areas (LGAs) of which six (6) are urban LGAs and eleven (11) rural LGAs. These two settings represent also high and low density areas.

Thus, Enugu North LGA and Nsukka LGAs were adopted as the two urban LGAs while Igbo-Eze South and Aminri LGAs represent the rural LGAs. Altogether, 525 CBOs were registered in the urban LGAs and 488 in rural LGAs are selected for the study.

## **Sample/Sampling Technique**

### **Sample Size**

Study samples of one thousand (1000) Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) were drawn. This number represents 99% of the total registered CBOs in each of the selected LGAs. This was made up of five hundred and sixty (560) selected from urban Local Government Areas, and another four hundred and forty (440) from the rural Local Government Areas. Another thirty-two (32) respondents who are non-members of CBOs were also selected. The rationale for that was to corroborate the responses of the representatives of CBOs. This brings the total sample size to one thousand and thirty-two (1032) respondents. This sample size is considered large enough to permit the needed statistical calculations and tabulations. It is also considered adequate in terms of the time and resources available to the present researchers.

### **Sampling Method**

A multi stage sample plan which involved stratified and simple random sampling as well as purposive sampling techniques were employed to select the local government areas that were sampled as well as respondent CBOs and designated representative personnel of each of the respondent CBOs. First, LGAs randomly selected from each using simple random sampling technique. Through the process, Nsukka LGA, Enugu North LGA, Igbo-Eze South and Aminri LGAs were selected. The essence of the above classification is to further contribute to our knowledge of the situation of things with respect to the roles of CBOs, in the two settings-urban and rural

**Instruments**

In the study, the instruments for data collection comprised the quantitative and qualitative instruments- questionnaire, and focus group discussion (FGD). The questionnaire consist both closed and open ended questions that are related to the theme of the study and which enabled the respondents to express themselves when necessary. The questions were made as simple as possible and uniform for all respondents. Such information sought from the respondents include characteristics of CBOs in terms of type, structure and functions, strengths and weakness, gender roles in CBOs, strategies for implementation and mobilization of resources, as well as projects accomplished and other challenges.

Two focus group discussion sessions were organized as follows: one each in urban and rural LGAs. Each session was made up of selected community members. In doing this, the researchers were careful as much as possible to ensure geographical balance. The researchers, based on the convenience and accessibility of the respondents did the selection of the group discussants purposefully. The essence of the focus group was to corroborate the information of respondents and to give the study more depth, so as to provide some qualitative data for the study.

**Procedure**

In order to facilitate the quick collection of the data, the local government areas were taken one after the other with the help of the recruited and trained research assistants. The questionnaires were then administered given the educational level of the respondents. The researchers pre-tested the instruments to ensure the reliability of the data collected with such instruments and to expunge or remove all ambiguities. Furthermore, two mock focus discussion sessions were organized to help in the pre-testing of the instrument.

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Sessions took place at the respective palaces of the traditional rulers. Each of the sessions was moderately and facilitated by the researchers themselves in each area with the help of the research assistants who acted as note takers. Tape recorder was also used to facilitate accurate recording of discussion sessions. The data were collected over a period of eight weeks.

The questionnaires were administered to either the chairman or the secretary who were purposively selected to represent each of the selected respondent CBOs.

**Results**

**Demographic characteristics of Respondents**

The table below examined the distribution of CBO members according to some socio economic variables and types of CBOs selected for study.

**Table1. Distribution of to Age structure of CBOs**

Age of CBOs	Frequency	Percentage %
0-1	126	12.6
2-3	226	22.6
4-6	648	64.8
Above six years	0	0
Total	1000	100

**Source:** Field Survey, 2019. The study reveals that majority of the CBOs (64.8%) fall within age structure of 4-6 years, (22.6%) are 2-3 years, while 12.6 were below one-year-old.

**Table 2: Distribution of CBO members by sex**

Sex of respondents	Number
All males	160(16%)
All females	485(48.6)
Mixed	354(35.4)
Total	1000(100%)

**Source:** Field Survey 2015.

The table above shows that of all the CBOs studied, a majority (48.6%) are all females, while all the least (16.0%). CBOs with mixed membership had the next highest number (35.7%). This high proportion of all females is no doubt, a reflection of the degree of women’s involvement, their active roles and appreciation of the benefits of group action in community development process.

**Table 3: Type of CBOs Identified**

Types of CBOs	Number (%)
Community Development Associations	296(29.6)
Cooperatives	181(18.1)
Social clubs	76(7.6)
Religious-Based Organizations	108(10.8)
Professional Associations	91(9.1)
Age Grades	58(5.8)
Trade Associations	104(10.4)
Youth Associations	85(8.5)
Total	1000.(100%)

**Source:** Field Survey 2015.

The study reveals that quite a number of CBO types are actively operating in the study areas. However, the most popular of them are the Community Development Association 29.6% and cooperatives (18.1%). It is reasonable therefore to note that both of these most popular of the CBOs and the rest of the CBOs identified and studied have all contributed positively to the development of their communities by playing significant roles in major development activities.

**Table 4: Cross Tabulation of the Distribution of CBO types in the setting Setting Frequency**

CBO Types	Urban	%	Rural	%	Total	%
C.D.A	148	26.3	174	39.7	269	29.6
Cooperatives	106	18.9	50	11.0	181	18.1
Social Clubs	45	8.0	32	7.3	76	7.6
Religious Organizations	90	16.0	16	3.7	108	10.8
Professional Association	71	12.6	21	4.8	91	9.1
Age Grades	14	2.5	44	10.0	58	5.8
Trade Associations	65	11.6	39	8.9	104	10.4
Youth Association	23	4.1	62	14.2	85	8.5
Total	561	100	439	100	1000	100

**Source:** Field Survey 2015.

The above table reveals that with the exception of the most popular of the CBOs, Community Development Associations, which tend their major roots in the rural setting, 39.7% as against 26.3% in the urban setting, the rest are almost balanced in their distributions within the two settings.

**Table 5: Predominant Educational Qualification by sex**

Educational Qualification	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Higher Degree	18	50	11	1.7	29	2.9
First Degree	28	7.9	12	1.8	40	4.0
OND/NCE/Equivalent	23	6.5	42	6.5	65	6.5
WASC/OL/Equivalent	41	11.6	24	3.7	65	6.5
Primary Education	157	44.4	321	49.6	540	54.8
No Formal education	87	24.6	226	37.0	261	26.1
Total	354	100	646	100	1000	100

**Source:** Field Survey, 2015

From the table above, it could be clearly seen that out of the total male members of CBOs studied, 69.0% were affected by the two low levels of education, while 86.0% of the total were females. The finding indicates that females are most affected by the low educational attainment.

### Major Issues of the Research

#### Goals and objectives of CBOs

In order to measure this, we focused on three variables. These were overall goals of CBOs, target participants of CBOs and specific programmes undertaken by CBOs. The responses on the above are shown below:

**Table 6: Overall Goals of CBOs by Settings**

Variables	Frequency	%	Urban	%	Rural	%
Empowerment of members	320	32.0	220	39.3	100	22.7
Development of entire community	262	26.2	165	29.5	85	19.3
Poverty eradication	222	22.2	125	22.3	96	21.8
Provision of Social Services	149	14.9	20	3.5	129	29.5
Liberation of comm. People	30	3.0	17	3.0	13	3.0
To secure full participation of comm. Members	17	2.3	15	2.3	14	3.6
Total	1000	100	562	100	438	100

**Source:** Field Survey 2015

A look at the table above reveals that the major goals pursued by the CBOs include social and economic empowerment of members (32.0%), development of the entire community (26.2%) and poverty reduction (22.2%). Provision of social services came fourth with 14.9%. The trend is also true both in the urban and rural settings, although there were slight variations among the settings.

**Table 7: Specific Programmes Undertaken by CBOs**

Variables	Frequency	%	Urban		Rural	%
Provision of credit facilities	261	26.1	160		101	23.0
Protection of special interest of members	207	20.7	130		77	17.5
Self-help and Comm. Dev. Efforts	179	17.9	90		89	20.2
Protection of Comm cultural values	50	5.0	15		35	8.0
Religious upliftment of comm. people	179	17.9	90		89	20.2
Provision of social amenities	85	8.5	46		39	8.8
Humanitarian services	34	3.4	26		8	2.3
Advocacy Services	5	5	5		—	—
Total	1000	100	562		448	100

**Source:** Field Survey 2015

In further pursuit of the overall goals of the CBOs, we sought from the CBOs, the specific programmes they pursued in respect of their stated goals. Looking at the patterns of responses in the above table, one can conclude that the individual interest of the membership still predominated. Hence, credit facilities (26.1%) and protection of special interest of members (20.7%) are the highest specific programmes pursued by the CBOs. These are against self-help (17.9%) and religious upliftment of community people (17.9%)

**Achievements of Community Based Organizations**

With this study, CBOs have their specific purposes of existence. As shown in the previous section, their objectives and goals vary. However, a common feature of either of them and their goals is the fact that their existence is predicated on the inability of the government to meet her expected responsibilities to the citizenry. Our interest here is to investigate or explore the achievement (Okadigbo, 1998) of the CBOs by examining their impact on the local communities and their contribution to the provision of services in the communities (World Bank, 2010). Accordingly, data here is with respect to the number of physical projects embarked upon as at the time of the study, total number of on-going and completed physical projects as well as their mode of selection of such projects. A look will also be taken on the overall financial implications of the projects. The data generated are presented below

**Table 8: Total Number of Projects CBOs Embarked**

No of projects	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Total Number of Projects
0 Project	139	13.9	-
1 Project	277	27.7	277
2 Project	280	28.0	280
3 Project	302	30.2	302
4 Projects and above	2	.2	2
Total	1000	100	1840

**Source:** Field survey 2015

It was observed that CBOs studied (84.1%) embarked on planned projects. Furthermore, table 11 shows that a greater number of the CBOs (30.3%) have three projects and two projects (28.0%) respectively. As could further be seen, from the table, a cumulative total of all the projects embarked upon by CBOs came up to two thousand, two hundred and two (2,202) projects. Out of this total number, as revealed by table 12, 2186 (99.2%) of the projects were altogether completed. It is interesting to note that CBOs who completed two projects (30.3%) have the greater number, followed by those that completed three projects (27.8%). We explored how the respondent CBOs assessed their achievement of their set objectives as well as determining some militating operational problems. Generally, the majority of the respondent CBOs (60.7%) expressed satisfactory achievement of their objectives while (39.3%) were not satisfied. Sequel to this finding it could be concluded that the CBOs have not only vigorously pursued their objectives but have recorded appreciable level of achievement and effectiveness for community development. However, a variety of problems were apparent despite the positive results. Respondents identified two variables, Mass illiteracy 28.0% and financial weak membership (24.0%) as the most militating operational problems of CBOs.

**Test of Hypotheses**

The present study was designed to examine and assess the roles and effectiveness of CBOs for community development. In this section of the study, three hypotheses were formulated for the study and tested separately using chi-square statistics; this was in order and to establish the significance of relationship between the dependent and independent variables in the study. The variables include, people’s participation, gender, study setting and satisfaction of CBOs objectives as the dependent variables.

Based on this, it was hypothesized that ‘Community-Based Organization with more active participation of community members in CBO activities are more likely to have positive achievement of CBO objectives’. To test the hypothesis two indices were felt: Total project completed by CBOs and action targets (Participants) in CBO activities were cross-tabulated and chi-squared test performed.



**Table 9: Community Participation and Achievement of CBO Objectives**  
**Total projects completed**  
**Action Target (Participants)**

	Entire comm members	CBO Members	Disadvantaged/ Oppressed group	Total
Count of within total projects completed	124 (89.2%)	2 (9.4%)	13 (9.4%)	139 100.0%
% within action target of CBO	30.6%	0.4%	17.0%	13.9%
Count % within total projects completed	48 38.4%	72 57.6%	5 4.0%	125 100.0%
% within action target CBO	11.9%	13.9%	6.4%	12.5%
Count % within total projects completed	55 18.2%	246 81.5%	1 3%	3.2 100.0%
% within action target of CBO	13.6%	47.6%	1.3%	12.5%
Count of within total projects completed	101 36.3%	120 43.2%	57 20.5%	278 100.0%
% within action	24.9%	23.2%	73.0%	29.8%
Count % within total projects completed	77 49.7%	77 49.7%	2 1.3%	156 100.0%
% with action target CBO	19.0%	49.7%	2.6%	15.6%
Total count	405 40.5 100.00	517 51.7% 100.0%	78 7.8% 100.0%	1000 100.0% 100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

$X^2 = 375.8, P < 0.001$

**Table 10: Sex of members of CBO and total projects completed**

Sex of members of CBO	0	1	2	3	4	Total
All males CBO Count	24 15.3% 17.3%	53 33.8% 42.4%	30 19.1% 9.9%	3 1.9% 1.1%	48 30.6% 31.6%	158 100% 15.8%
All females CBO count	5 1.0% 3.6%	69 14.1% 55.2%	200 41.0% 66.2%	180 36.9% 64.7%	34 7.0% 21.9%	488 100.0% 48.8%
Mixed sex CBO Count	110 31.1% 79.1%	3 .8% 2.4%	72 20.3% 23.8%	96 27.1% 34.5%	73 20.6% 47.1%	354 100.0% 35.4%
Total	139 13.9% 100.0%	125 12.5% 1000.0%	302 30.2% 100%	279 27.9% 100.00%	155 15.5% 100.0%	1000 100.0% 100%

Source: Field survey, 2015

$X^2 = 327.2, df8, P < 0.001$

### Discussion

This study is premised on the exposition of the World Bank (2009), ‘that investment in community-based organization development is among the most important determinant of both project performance and sustainability’. Consequently, several findings of this study need to be highlighted. First, the study found out that community development through empowerment and development of members of CBOs formed the bedrock of the overall goals and roles of CBOs. In other words, their goals and

programmes are community development oriented. As a matter of fact, up to 95.3 percent of the respondent CBOs showed that the major goals they pursued were social and economic empowerment of members, development of the entire community, poverty eradication and provision of services. Findings of the study indicate the crucial roles of the CBOs in providing the context for sustainable community development. Secondly, on their achievements, the study found out that CBOs played significant roles and have been associated with effectiveness as necessary agents of development. To this end, social services projects pursued by CBOs stood at 72.3 percent and indicate a serious commitment, on the part of the CBOs, to the provision of such services directly affecting the overall well-being of the people on how the on-going and completed projects of CBOs were selected, the study found out that the entire members (64.4%) and to some extent, the Executive committee (Exco) (23.5%) were responsible for the project selection. This further shows a healthy operational climate and a relative independence in project selection by the members of CBOs.

Focusing on the on-going and completed projects, we have crudely used that as a measure of level of activity and achievement of the CBOs. Based on that, we can then assert that CBOs studied have appreciably made modest achievements. In terms of the dominant activities and types of services promoted by the CBOs, participants of our focus group discussion unanimously indicated that their CBOs were seriously committed to the provision of social services, religious and community development activities. From these stand points, the thrust of CBOs span through those essential areas which directly affect the over-all wellbeing of the people. In effect, the CBOs are shown to be quite active in positively affecting the lives of the community people. This conclusion accords with the view of Francis (1996) that 'their documented CBOs had quite diverse and often multiple purposes, and varied considerably in their vision and dynamism'. They provide some degree of support for the indigent members of the society.

This study corroborated the above position during the focus group discussion session especially from the people who were the direct beneficiaries of the activities/programmes of the CBOs. Their assessment of the performance/achievements of CBOs in their various communities, the participants of the focus group discussion used a number of recurring positive words and phrases as commendable, quite satisfactory and remarkable achievement to reflect their feelings and reactions towards the achievements of the CBOs in their communities. The positive expressions of the beneficiaries not only reflected but confirmed that CBOs have to a large extent relatively lived up to expectations of their communities where they are domiciled and operate. Participants of the focus group discussion were unanimous also in the belief that the achievement of CBOs in their communities were quite commended and had mitigated to a large extent the negative impact of governments non-performance, inefficiency and is near total negligence of the needs, yearnings and aspirations of the community people.

It must be noted however, that it was not praises all through. A significant number (nearly 10%) of the participants of our focus group discussion also observed that CBOs in their areas have not achieved so much. Many of the participants, especially those of the rural settings, show that the achievement of CBOs in their areas had been minimal due to what they described as 'lack of government's sufficient motivation and encouragement of the CBOs as well as lack of effective leadership on the part of the CBO leadership, compelled with the very low purchasing powers of the naira'. It is important to note that although this view may be regarded as a minority view, yet it is significantly worthy of note.

Based on the foregoing, it is reasonable to note that CBOs played significant roles and had been associated with effectiveness as necessary agents of development. In spite of the observed positive results, the respondent CBOs and participants of our focus group discussion (FGD), identified a variety of problems that militated against their smooth translation of the objectives of the organization into practical reality. A major one is the issue of mass-illiteracy among the members. The problems posed by this cankerworm (illiteracy) is underscored by the views of Gana (1992) that 'development and education are first, about liberating people from all that shackle their capacity for full human life'. In effect, illiteracy has the opposite effect of shackling the CBOs capacity.

Another major problem indicated is that of financial weak membership (24.0%). This fact was also decried of by some respondents during focus group discussion. They stressed that financially weak members of CBOs experienced what they described as 'stunted' growth due to the domineering influence

of the financial strong members. Such domination often leads to lack of consensus and delays in programme and project execution by the CBOs. To that end, translation of the objectives of the CBOs into practical reality often becomes problematic.

In the further pursuit of the subject of this study, three hypotheses were formulated and tested using chi-square statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The aim is to establish the significance of relationship between the independent and dependent variables in the study.

A chi-square test showed a significant relationship between community people's active participation and positive achievements of CBO objectives. This was supported by the assertion of Rogers (1996) where he stated that 'participation in the local community's socio-economic, cultural and political activities are envisioned as goals of development which should be achieved through the process of empowerment. Empowerment in this case means people gaining an understanding of and control over social, economic and/or political forces around them in order to improve their wellbeing in the society.

The study finding also seems to be in accord with the views of Webster (1995) that 'participatory local democracy and participatory development projects are justified on the grounds that these will empower the people, improve planning and implementation and will make community development more effective and more accountable'.

Second hypothesis examined the postulation that sex of membership of CBOs and achievement of objectives involving women are more likely to have positive achievements of CBO objectives than that of men. A significant difference was noticed in the achievements of female and male CBOs in favour of female CBOs. In other words, CBOs involving females had more positive achievements of objectives as revealed by the chi-square and ANOVA tests. The finding confirms the earlier assertions of Bede and Ojokleta (2010) that women are better mobilized and hold the greatest potentials for active and more useful participation in development activities. This is also supported by the findings of Olowu et al, (1991:52) that "women have demonstrated their capabilities in running community development associations as well as other CBOs" more efficiently in the absence of men. The study also found that there is a significant difference between urban and rural CBOs in the achievement of objectives.

### **Implications for Community Development Practice and Research**

In the light of the findings and objectives of this study, several implications for community development practice and research become obvious. First is the crucial need of harnessing the potentials of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) for effective community development process. It has been sufficiently noted that past community development efforts in Nigeria had witnessed almost total lack of involvement of community people, their organizations and leadership in reaching decisions concerning them and the problems of their communities. These neglects have created a sense of apathy, on the part of the community people to government projects with the attendant low sustainability of such projects thereby negatively impacting on such projects. This problem could only be overcome by active involvement of the community people and their organizations who are the beneficiaries of the programmes and projects. It will also enable the end-users to identify their own needs, and ensure appropriate mobilization and monitoring of such projects for the optimum satisfaction of their own needs. The system will create an enabling environment for mobilization of needed resources and execution of the projects, as well as implementation and monitoring of such projects for the optimum satisfaction of the community's needs. Further implications of community development practice is clear evidence that in spite of the noted achievements of CBOs, inappropriate, unproductive and dysfunctional relationship between formal institutions of the government and the community people still exist. The handicap of the CBOs by lack of adequate financial assistance and technical/managerial skills to remedy their deficiencies needed to be addressed by the establishment of effective supporting links with the formal governmental structures. This demands a restructuring of the relationship between governments, communities and their local government organizations so as to promote a mutually beneficial relationship between them. The local capability building will no doubt, be more effective when built through direct financial support or training and technical assistance and other capacities to the leadership and membership of Community Based Organizations (CBOs).

This is akin to what had been attempted through some programmes such as ‘Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP)’ whose sustainability was not feasible due to the above mentioned reasons of non-involvement or unproductive and dysfunctional relationship between the communities and the relevant institutions of government. Further to that, it is obvious that financial support by governments and external agencies alone may not effectively review the situation. There is need for other relevant supports such as appropriate training in technical areas, organizational and managerial skills. In a country like Nigeria, where glaring cases of massive diversion of community project funds are in common place, financial supports and training functions would best be undertaken by intermediaries and trusted organizations, hence the crucial need to identify and/or build community organizations of such a scale and capacity is suitable to bridge the gap between the government and the community-based organisations.

As earlier stressed, it is generally known that one of the major drawbacks of past government sponsored projects and programmes had been the neglect and lack of consultation with community people and their organizations (CBOs) in developmental matters that affect their lives. This being the case, and given the mistrust inherent in the relationship between government officials and community people on account of accusations and counter accusations of corruption and insensitivity of the government officials, a compelling need exist for involvement of Community-Based Organizations in the decision process. This is accented by the fact that involvement of CBOs in decision-making related to the design and setting standards on cost of infrastructure and facilities of the development projects will most likely enable them to achieve positively and ensure sustainability. To do that, this study advocates for “a convergence of CBOs” to be able to exchange relevant and reliable information and ideas among themselves. Periodic meeting of CBOs and their interests groups will no doubt play a vital role in stimulating critical debates and information sharing, in promoting innovative approaches to community development practice and in driving advocacy campaign to raise the prospects of Community Based Organization for community development sector. In a country where the people and their organizations continue to be marginalized and under-resourced, there is the expediency of individuals and organizations (CBOs) coming together to identify the commonality of their interests and the need to work together towards a popular movement of the people’s organization. This will create a good atmosphere for them to join hands and put pressure on governments and institutions to meet their commitments as outlined in our constitution and other policy documents. This idea of convergence is conceived more appropriate and expedient for the CBOs involving woman who have been shown, in this study to possess the greatest potentials to play more effective roles in development activities. This will further enhance their effectiveness in the community development process. Their future roles and activities can better be appreciated as they document properly their activities in order to properly identify their operational problems. Funds should be set aside by government and other external agencies for in-depth research into CBOs in other rural and urban communities in other parts of Nigeria to expand the scope of the understanding of CBOs’ potentials in the development process. There is need to investigate further into the links between communities, their environments and sustainable development.

## **Conclusion**

The study is, of course, anchored on community-based organizations and their roles and effectiveness in the socio-economic development in both urban and rural communities in Nigeria. The provision of social services was the major emphasis. In the light of the findings of the study, one can conclude that the potentials of community-based organization, in the overall development and sustenance of development in the urban and rural communities, can best be harnessed only when the basic values of community development, namely: total community participation in development is appreciated and actualized. The era of total dependence of the people on the government for the provision of basic infrastructure is gone. It is timely now for communities and their organizations to pool their resources together with those of government and other external donor agencies for the development and upliftment of the lives of members of the communities. To actualize this warrants a compelling need for governments and international donor agencies to fund researches into the activities of the CBOs for purposes of further

establishing their roles and effectiveness. This is imperative in the light of current developmental challenges.

In general, the study emphasizes the need and calls for the use of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) as the most potent vehicle for proper and authentic mobilization of the community people, not only for their genuine and effective participation in community development process, but also to provide the context for sustainable community development. This is based on the findings that past development approaches of “top-down” and “trickling-down” had neither carried along the cultural uniqueness of the community people or channeled their human, material and cultural resources towards a participatory-based development process.

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