Role of Self–Help Groups a Needful Approach to Sustainable Community Development

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Abstract

The proliferation of self-help groups is an indication of effectives, because groups without value cease to exist overtime. That is why; this paper examined the role and approaches of these groups in Goni-Gora with a view to its sustenance's. The study is empirical research involved collection of data of both primary and secondary data. The primary data were the information obtained through administration of questionnaires', oral interview and photographs of the group's activities. this was done by identifying the means of interaction/participation in community development process, income generation for projects/programs, campaign organizers' for community projects and the perception of community members on the level of development, as well as impact of project executed and its cost estimates. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistic inform of tables frequency distribution and percentage. The study revealed sixteen different self-help groups, interacting and participating in community development process through community meetings and generates income from sons and daughters of the community through donations levy as well as government support for projects. The campaign organizer of projects is the association of the groups under the auspices of the local authority leadership. And the general perception of community members on executed projects indicated that they are all functional serving the purposes of the community. The impressive/encouraging contribution of these groups is an essential element in the process of community development or transformation. Therefore for the sustenance of these projects, it is recommended government must enlists and maintain the willing support of the groups in the planning, execution and management of these projects that affects them. This will bridge communication gaps.

Introduction

The emergence of self-help group from the global perspective is seen as a response to industrialization, the breakdown of kingship system, and decline of the community (Katz and Bender, 1976). While (Riessman, 1992), see it as reflection of an ineffective, inefficient and dehumanizing formal system of care.

In Nigeria, However, the evolution of the practice of self-help development activities has the following periodic dimension; the pre-colonial, the colonial up to 1939, the period from 1940 to the Nigerian civil war, the civil war years and the post-civil war years to the present democratic settings (Akpomuvie, 2010) with a view of employing communal efforts as a mechanism for mobilizing community resources to provide physical improvement and functional facilities in the social, political and economic aspects of their lives. Also, Idode, (1989) observed, the scope of operation of this groups, include building of schools, market stalls, pipe-born water, roads, dispensaries and so on.

The self-help groups continued growing at unprecedented speed worldwide (Ben-Ari and Azaiza, 1995) and in spite of the rapid growth their potentials remain untapped, in the sense that little is known about how helpful the groups are to their societies, however in the Nigerian context, since government took over the Provision of Basic Infrastructure and Amenities as its statutory responsibility, its inability to effectively and efficiently provide brought changes in innovation, approaches, techniques and strategies through which self-help groups learn to provide for themselves to better their chances of success. The enduring and flourishing heritages of this indigenous mechanism and techniques in providing developmental projects and programs continued to flourish where groups, communities and associations continued to pool resources together and provide both functional and physical facilities to their own societies, e.g. schools, town hall, worship centers etc.

Self- help group is a self-governed, peer-controlled small and informal association of the poor, usually from socio-economically homogeneous background organized to pull string together. This brings about sets of benefits of collective perception, collective decision making and collective implementation of programs for their common benefit.

Community Development is used as a synonym for growth, however Cook, (1994) argued that it is associated with improvement and it is a certain type of change in a positive direction. Though, he said the consequence of efforts to bring about development might not be positive are times, but the objective is always positive. He added that the distinguishing characteristic is that, it focuses on a unit called "community" and induced non-reversible structural change while Green and Haines, (2002), defines it as "asset Building".

The concept of community development Centered on the ability of people to work together, organize them and mobilize resources to solve problems of common interest often outside the reach of the formal system (Chandrakirana, 1999). He continued that, their voices are always heard and their demand met than communities with little or no organization. Williams, (1978) identified elements in the process of community development; (a)

it encourages analysis of local problems with a view to improving the level of living and as much as possible on the initiatives of those concerned (b) it encourages initiatives and cooperation. These elements are sure ways to speedy development (Okafor, 1984; Udoye, 1985; Muoghalu, 1986; Agboola, 1988).

Krishna et al, (1997) proofed and draw conclusion that a "critical success factor to community development, is creating organizational capabilities at local levels that can mobilize and manage resources effectively for benefit of many rather than just the few". This "self-help group's capacity" is a key for effectiveness of development. Thereby, this paper examined the role and the approach to their performance in Goni- Gora Kaduna, Nigeria towards sustainable development.

Method and Procedure

This is an empirical study carried out. It involved collection of data of both primary and secondary data on the self-help groups' activities and performance towards community project and programs.

The primary data are the information obtained on the field through oral interview, questionnaire administration, and photograph of the activities and performance of self-help groups in Goni Gora Kaduna, Nigeria. While the secondary information is data obtained through review of related literatures in journals, text books and magazines.

The study population is 5,771 households projected in five wards. Simple random sampling technique was used without replacement because of homogeneous characteristic of the settlement. And 2% sample frame was chosen giving maximum coverage to reduce magnitudes of sampling error with Questionnaire administration, Categorized into three: Self –help groups representatives, Ward heads and household heads with clear break down shown in the Table 1 below. And the data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Table1 Shows Category of Person(s) Interviewed

Category	Number	Number of Sample	%
Self – help group representatives	19	57	49.6
Ward Heads	6	6	5.2
Household Heads	52	52	45.2
Total	115	115	100%

Source: Author's 2014

Results and Discussion

The study's findings revealed that, there are sixteen (16) different Self-Help groups in Goni-gora, with each group having an average of ninety three (93) registered members. The Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) women group has the highest membership of 213 persons representing 14.3% and Alheri community group with lowest registered members of 1.3% as indicated in Table 1 below. Also revealed, there are numerous unregistered members but do attend the groups meetings with common objective as the registered members but are not bound by the groups by-laws and rules and regulation. However they also contribute to all development programs that come up from time to time.

Table 2 Self-Help Groups in Gori Gora

S/no	Wards	Names of self- help groups	Membership	%
1	Yikibedo	Kadara Community Group	113	7.1
		Daumunci Community Group	97	6.5
		Lakala Women Group	30	2.0
2	Ungwan Bije	Alheri community Group	20	1.3
		Guba Guba Mausa	118	7.8
		Jabba Community Group	102	6.8
		Adnata Community Group	116	7.8
		Bigin Warizir Club	114	7.6
3	Doma	ECWA Women Group	213	14.3
		Yankasuwa Community Group	78	5.2
		Kagotrro Community Group	61	4.1
		Kafar Community Group	115	7.7
4	Shaiwa	Igala Community Group	66	4.4
5	Buwaiya	Yayu Development Association	96	6.4
		Mataba Development Association	78	5.2
		Maigarka Football Club	77	5.1
6	Total	16	1,494	100%

Source: Field Survey 2014

Table 3 below revealed the medium to which members of self-help groups in Goni-gora gets to be

aware of development process and participate in every projects and programs. 66.9% of the respondents get to be aware through community meetings, 20.0% through group advocacy while 3.5% through media announcement and only 0.9% through other means. This indicated that majority of self-help group members attends community meeting and discuss issues related to the progress of the community and resolution reached are always being taken care of and this serves as the antidote of their progressive achievements.

Table 3 Means of Awareness for Interaction/ Participation in Community Development Process

Interaction means	Frequency	% of Respondent
Community meeting	77	66.9
Group Advocacy	23	20.0
Political rally	10	8.7
Media announcement	4	3.5
Others	1	0.9
Total	115	100%

Source: field survey 2014

Figure 1 below shows the means of income generation for projects implementation by self-help groups in Goni-gora. The study revealed majority of the groups 81% generates funds for implementing projects through levy and individual donations while government involvement revealed only 19% as indicated below.
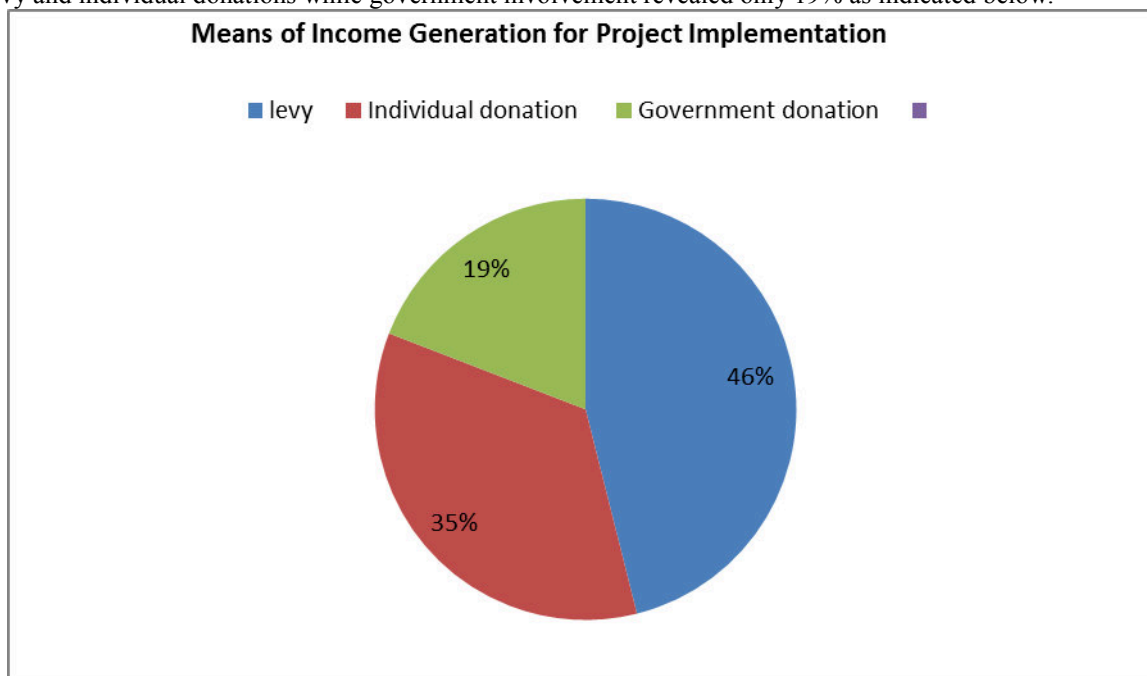

Figure1 means of Income Generations for projects implementation

Table 4 below shows campaign organizers' for community projects development. The study revealed 78.3% is done by the self-help groups under the leadership of the community. Possibly is because of this structured pattern of approach brought about successes in designing and implementation of numerous developmental projects thereby brings a lot of uniqueness from others method.

Table 4 Campaign Organizers' for Community Development Projects

Organizers	Frequency	% of Respondent
Self- help Groups	57	49.6
Local Authority	33	28.7
Government	15	13.0
Political Parties	10	8.7

Figure 2 below shows the perception of community members on projects implemented in the area. The study revealed, 95% of the three categories of respondents interviewed; self-help representatives, community representatives and community leaders admitted that despite other hitches, they are at home so far with projects executed and cut across all projects executed all are serving the community members very well therefore enjoined others to even learn out of what Goni-gora community have done.
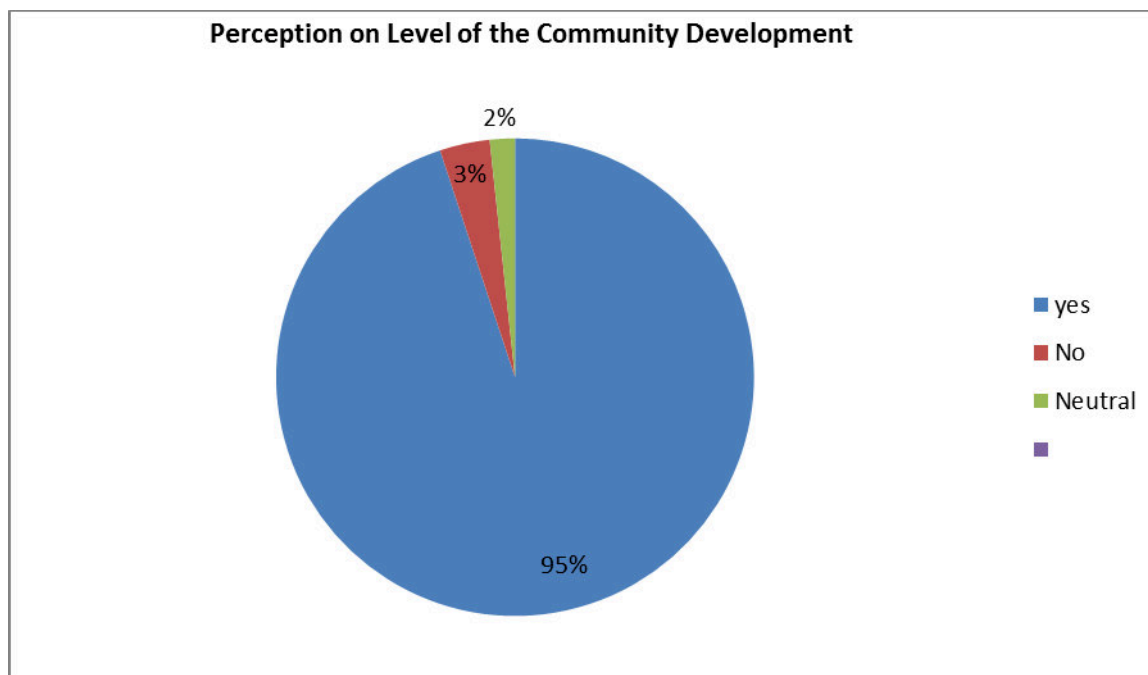
Figure2 Perception of Community Members on the Level of projects Development.

Table 6 projects executed, impacts and cost estimated.

Project	Contribution	Estimated cost
Road	A Bridge constructed between yikubedo and Doma ward in 2004 have eased movement of vehicles, people, goods and services freely. Also the expansion of local street within the township of Goni Gora has provides clear access to residence, business and a built properties with good parking spaces and ease pedestrian movement.	₦27,000
Electricity	The community self-help groups in collaboration with local authority serviced 1 and bought brand New 33KVA Transformer which provide light to business premises and houses since 2004 and is still functional.	₦1.3m
Education	In 2010 a blown roof of community school class room was rehabilitated as well as other classrooms were built.	₦3.2m
Water	One wash borehole rehabilitated by the community self-help groups.	₦35,000

Sources: field survey 2014

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, truly self-help groups under the auspices of good leadership is essential driving force in the process of community development and transformation. The revealed tactics and their approaches have proven to be an effective resource in their community. This has accorded good participation, it brought about the principle of collective perception, collective decision making and collective implementation of programs for their common benefits. This have supported cook, (1994) who asserted that "community development is associated with improvement and it is a certain change in a positive direction", although he also stated that, "the consequence of efforts to bring about developments might not be positive but the object is always positive". But in this case, the findings, has proven that the efforts in bringing the development are positive and the objective also positive.

Therefore, in conclusion it is certain; the role of self-help groups is a needful approach in community development that needs to be sustainable. And the sustainability process is based on the following recommendations.

- The designing, implementation and management of projects for community, its people should be made to participate willingly, this strategy is always adored by community members and it give them sense of belonging to keep on the maintenance.
- Good leadership is an asset to community involvement in developmental projects and programs and is capable of directing changes with clear objectives and getting people participating in carrying out any projects and programs planned for community.
- People mobilization and initiatives in capacity building brings community members close to each other

and make them take more active role in building small-scale infrastructure and in improving the quality of a range of social services.

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