An Assessment of the Strategies for Sustaining Self Help Group Projects in Paikoro Area Niger State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Self-help groups (SHGs) have been seriously viewed in recent times as one of the potent instruments for socio-economic development in rural communities having realized that governments cannot provide all the necessities of life for the teeming population in the country. It is in this regard that rural people evolved this strategy as a means to overcome deprivation and neglect. The study aimed at assessing various projects executed by self help groups in Paikoro local government area of Niger State, Nigeria. This study used field survey, and focus group discussion. It adopted a systematic sampling to select 35 self help groups and purposive sampling technique to select 4 group leaders to make 140 samples on the one hand, 316 samples were generated among the members of the communities through cluster sampling within the neighbourhoods to select key informants in wards where self-help group projects have been executed. The study adopted descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, averages and percentages to analyse the data. The study identified 105 self-help groups within five districts Paiko having 37(35.2%) as the highest and Ishau has the lowest with 13(12.3%). Projects include roads, clinic, boreholes, electrification, skill acquisition centres, schools, and community toilets. With resource mobilization, some 52(37.2%) are donated by members, 34(24.3%) from stakeholders, 38(27.1) through launching of funds, and 13(9.3%) from various levies. Regarding sustainability of group projects, majority 118(84.3%) opined that involvement of community members would help to maintain the projects and some 9(6.4) admitted that provision of adequate security was necessary. It is recommended that active community participation in self help projects should be encouraged since the people treat such projects as their own. Also, distributive justice should be paramount to location of projects such that there should be no discrimination either by tribe, religion or political affiliation. Moreover, government should give grants and technical assistance to communities that embark upon laudable self-help projects.

Keywords: District Self Help Group Project Sustenance

1. Introduction

The notion of self-help groups (SHG) has been seriously viewed as a means of developing local communities in view of the incapacitation of the government to provide all the necessities of life for the increasing population. Ghadoliya (2008) remarked that self help group is an instrument for economic empowerment. It is essentially a small voluntary association of poor people, preferably from the same socio-economic background that comes together for the purpose of solving their common problems through self-help. Malhar (2009) viewed it as small groups of people facing similar problems, helping each other to solve their problems with a reasonable level of education but helping local persons by taking the lead in mobilizing them. Paul (2011) described SHGs as groups of rural poor comprising of marginalized farmers, landless agricultural labourers, rural artisans, women folk and other micro-entrepreneurs who organize themselves for socio-economic development by raising initial capital supplemented in some cases by funds from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as seed money for issuing small emergency loans either for consumption, production purposes, or linking up with banks usually with the help of NGOs. Lawal (2000) viewed SHGs as farmers and entrepreneurs who voluntarily organized themselves and who utilized their own resources to undertake social and economic activities in order to address their common needs.

The understanding that government does not have the resources to provide for all their needs is the driving force towards this move which has been successful and has led to the growth of such communities (Ali, 2006; Ayuba, 2006; Paul, 2011). Therefore, SHGs exist for development purpose, particularly in the rural areas not only in Nigeria but also in the developing countries. There are socio-economic benefits attached to such groups in that they enable rural people to accumulate savings and access credit which banks are increasingly willing to lend (Wilson, 2002). Moreover, it has been discovered that such groups through their activities assist in boosting liquidity positions of the banks, which are participating in the programme through mobilization. Self help groups have made a lasting impact on the lives of people particularly in the rural areas and has improved the quality of lives of many and there is an increase in their consumption expenditure (Lawal (2000). Besides, it has

been observed that the self-help groups have created better understanding between the members of different religious groups as the members belong to different religions (Gaonkar, 2004). Further still, (Khatibi and Indira, 2011) observed that SHGs today played a vital role in poverty alleviation through empowerment. Most communities in Nigeria including Paikoro local government area, Niger State have awakened to seek ways to satisfy their own needs by embarking upon self help projects.

2. Recent Studies in Self-Help Development

Nigeria is one of the developing countries that involved in community development through self-help groups (SHGs). The quest for better life has led man seeking for ways to satisfy his needs in the society. The National Development Plan (Nigeria, 1975-1980) stated that until recently, community development activities fell exclusively within the purview of the local authorities. But the state governments have taken active interest in these activities in the realization that community development provides a practical means of grass-root participation in the development process.

Ariyo (1991) asserted that rural development has been placed on top of the agenda in Nigeria's national development drive. The upsurge of interest in rural development can be attributed to a number of events which had their origin in the colonial heritage and the unanticipated oil boom of the seventies. It shows that the government is willing to back up community development in Nigeria. The period between 1973 and 2007 marked a watershed in rural development efforts in Nigeria. It witnessed deliberate government efforts at mobilizing the people for rural development. A number of task forces and bodies were set up to oversee, organize and to direct partnership with the people on self-help activities and it includes: Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural infrastructure (DFRRI), Rural Electrification Schemes; Credit Schemes to small holders through various specialized institutions such as People's Bank, Agricultural and Cooperative Development Bank, Community Micro-finance Banks, Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) and National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). Akpomuvie, (2010) remarked that the various state governments had also articulated blueprints on rural development by adopting the integrated rural development strategy as a strategic option to carry development to the people at the grassroot.

Ekong (2003) viewed community participation as taking part in community meetings and decision making for the planning and implementations of programs, and making financial contributions towards community development projects. Tango (2009) remarked that every community has a traditional structure to ensure the participation of inhabitants in projects and programmes that have positive effects on the life of the majority. The projects are identified, planned, executed and managed by the community themselves outlive those imposed by a benefactor with little or no community participation. Furthermore, some development programmes often include participatory measures in project design. An example of successful community participation is in community projects in India which were selected based on community priorities and implemented with significant local contributions of labour, materials and sometimes capital. This effort strengthens, empowers the members and ensures the maintenance of projects.

Reid (2000) highlighted three forms of participation. First, the beneficiary should be involved in the planning and implementation of externally initiated projects. Second, the external help that will strengthens or creates local organizations but without reference to a particular project. Third, the existence of spontaneous activities of local organizations that has not gained assistance from outside assistance. Reid (2000) identified some strategies that can be used to bring community members into a project and in a meaningful way so that they will continue to be involved in it. For instance, sharing project cost that entails participants to raise funds or labour in the process of project implementation. Also, beneficiary can hold consultation during project planning and management of project implementation and operation. Moreover, the strategy can take the form of building beneficiary capacity: either through ensuring that participants are actively involved in project planning and implementation or through formal or informal training and consciousness-raising activities.

Harrison (2000) noted that community participation is an important component of community development and reflects a bottom-up approach to problem solving and that through citizen participation, a broad cross-section of the community is encouraged to identify and articulate their own goals, design their own methods of change, and pool their resources in the problem-solving process. The involvement of appropriate stakeholders in development projects is important as well as planning, and implementation of public programmes that can impact positively on the life of rural communities. It is through participation of the local people in decision making and implementation activities, they help project officials identify needs, strategies to meet those needs, and necessary resources required to implement the various strategies. Moreover, information dissemination is critical in that the promoter should provide sufficient relevant information about the project such as the benefits of the projects, the costs of implementation, the potential for financing and implementation, and possible risk involved in such projects. There should be a two-way flow of information between the promoters and the public.

Idode (2004) observed that the scope of operation of self help groups should include the building of

schools and market stalls. Projects such as pipe-borne water, road construction, dispensaries, cottage and hospitals were usually exempted. Furthermore, equipment used were simple tools such as hoes, cutlasses, diggers and shovels. The construction of buildings did not follow any standard measurements as the people used their imagination to plan and construct such projects. At this stage, there was little or no government involvement as the planning and execution of these self-help projects was the sole responsibility of the people. Akpomuvie (2010) noted that where the government was involved at all, was for the purposes of taking over completed projects for operation or maintenance. But where neither the state government nor the local government councils were interested in such project, the missionaries used to take charge.

Ogundipe (2003) had remarked that the idea of co-operation towards community development is a very common and age long phenomenon. Government in developing nations are aware of this but gave attention to it later than expected. Available data revealed that 9 of the 12 States in Nigeria in 1976 expended N2, 571,269 on community development programmes in the second national development plan. Another 9 States allocated N16, 691,000 on similar projects during the third national development plan. In 2000, Oyo State government alone devoted N16, 162,000 for community development programmes. Available data from Sokoto State revealed that between 1991 and 1996, the government designed 8 programmes for community development activities and increased budgetary allocation for such from N450, 000 in 1991 to N2.5 million in 1996. Also, the federal government designed different programmes that focused on rural and community development in the past few decades which include Operation Feed the Nation (1978), Community Banks (1990), and Better Life for Rural Women (1991). The Federal Government expended a total sum of #46.486 million on community development within 1990–2000. Out of this, money expended to construct multi-purpose centers in various communities all over the country had the largest share of #30.069 million. The federal allocation to community development was as low as #200,000 in 1990, but rose to #23.0 million in 2000 (Ogundipe, 2003). This implies that government recognized the significance of rural development through communal efforts.

3. Methodology

3.1 Reconnaissance Survey

A reconnaissance survey was carried out in the study area. The idea of the visit was to familiarize with the activities of the self help groups. Also, discussions were held with individuals in the groups such as the leaders and community members. Self-help projects such as roads, culverts, schools, hospitals, markets, dispensaries, cinema viewing centres, graveyards, mosque, farms, poultry, and orphanage homes were seen on ground.

3.2 Data Selection

The types of data that are required to achieve the set objectives are:-

i. Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents e.g. gender, age-group, marital status, educational level, occupation

ii. Types of self help group projects executed, where they are located, and their goals and present condition (functionality)

iii. Resources used, their sources and how they were mobilized

iv. Project management styles for operation, maintenance, repairs, sourcing of operational and maintenance fund

v. Strategies for the continued survival of the projects

3.3 Sources of Data

The primary sources were questionnaire survey, in-depth oral interviews, focus group discussion, and field observation. The questionnaire survey was in two parts. The first part concerned the leaders of the self-help groups and the following issues were addressed: (a) main duties of the groups, (b) how they supervise projects, (c) number of projects they have handled, (d) how they mobilize group members, (e) sources of finance, (f) their strategies to improve the performance of the self help groups and sustain the projects. The second part of the questionnaire survey assessed the opinion of the community: (a) their contributions to the project and (b) sought to determine their assessment of the effectiveness of the project in developing the area. The secondary sources consulted were official gazettes from the local government, books, journals, conference papers, magazines, newspapers, thesis, documents and materials from websites.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Paikoro Local Government Area consists of five districts, namely, Paiko, Kaffin-koro, Kwakuti, Adunu, and Ishau. A reconnaissance survey revealed that there are 105 self-help groups (SHGs) in the study area. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted in order to select the respondents for the questionnaire survey. First, a systematic sampling technique was used where the selection of every third SHG from the provisional list of the total SHG was done. This amounted to 35 SHGs. This sample was distributed proportionately among the districts. In the second stage, four key executive leaders of each group, namely, the President, Secretary, Financial secretary and the Treasurer were purposively selected to collect information on how the projects executed, sources of funds, management and maintenance and the sustainability of the self-help group projects

can only be gotten from the self-help group leaders .This yielded a total of 140 leaders of the 35 SHGs sampled for questionnaire survey.

For the second set of respondents, that is, the members of the community, the Kreijcie and Morgan's (1970) technique was adopted. This method stated that a population size of between 75,000 and 999,999 will be adequately represented by a sample of 382. Therefore, for the population of the districts which is 188,230 a total of 382 respondents were selected for the questionnaire survey but 316 samples were available for the study. A cluster sampling method was used to select key informants. This involved identifying neighborhoods where SHG projects have been executed and selecting key informants within each neighborhood for questionnaire administration. The number of key informants selected for interview in the neighborhood varied according to the number of different projects already executed in each area.

3.5 Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed by coding and entering the data from the completed questionnaire into computer. Descriptive statistical techniques of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer programme were then used to summarize all data collected using the mean, percentages, frequencies and tables.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the traits of the respondents in the study area. It shows that (55.1%) members of the community were males and only (38.9%) were females with only (6.0%) no response. The low percentage of females might be attributed to the fact that men are more sensitive to developmental issues than women and so were ready to provide information needed, though the key informants where the target, in which most of them are male. Regarding the leaders it shows that (67.1%) participated in the study were males and only (32.1%) were females with only (0.7%) no response. This indicates that a large proportion of the leadership of the self-help groups are more of males than females who happened to be the leaders of each group. It is obvious that men are more concerned and involved in the development of their community than the women. Though the people's culture also affects the women's participation in project execution as in connection with their religion, women are mostly indoors except when situation necessitates them to come out.

The age distribution of respondents varied. Table 1 shows that while (9.5%) of the community members were below the age of 20 years, over (75.0%) of them were 20-29 (54.7%) years. Some of the respondents were within age-group of 30-39 (20.6%). Only (15.2%) respondents were over 40 years. This means that the key informants are of young and mature adults who should be familiar with self-help projects in the study area. The self-help group officials sampled also varies in age. Majority of the leaders sampled are within the young and mature adult age categories. This implies that they are energetic and active individuals. On marital status, there are fewer people who have never married amongst the SHG leaders sampled (15.7%) than amongst the community members in general (18.0%). Fewer married people are to be found among the sampled community members in general (63.9%) than among the SHG leaders sampled (80.7%). Also, there are more divorced persons among the community members sampled (7.0%) than among the SHG leaders sampled (1.4%). No widow among the SHG leaders sampled, but (10.1%) among the community members sampled. The general picture here is that people marry very early in the study area. This may not be unconnected with the fact that farming is their main work and they hardly further their school education, which could lead to delayed marriage.

Table 1 presented level of education of the respondents and about (39.9%) attended secondary school and (24.1%) possessed primary education. This analysis helps to explain the low level of education of most of the respondents in the community. It is observed that the general level of education of the people has profound influence on their perception of self-help group activities in the study area.

Regarding occupation of the members of the community, majority (65.2%) of the respondents are farmers which explain the high number of respondents that had only primary education and secondary only. About (30.7%) are civil servants while some (4.1%) are traders. Also, It shows that about (44.3%) of the leaders are farmers which explain the high number of respondents that had only primary education and secondary only. About (27.9%) are civil servants while (26.4%) who happened to traders.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Characteristics	Community Members		Self Help Group Leaders	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Gender:-				
Male	174	55.1	94	67.1
Female	123	38.9	45	32.1
No Response	19	6.0	1	0.7
Age-Group:-				
0-20	30	9.5	13	9.3
20-29	173	54.7	50	35.7
30-39	65	20.6	75	53.6
40 and above	48	15.2	2	1.4
Marital Status:-				
Never married	57	18.0	22	15.7
Widow/widower	32	10.1	0	0
Married	202	63.9	113	80.7
Divorced	22	7.0	2	1.4
No response	3	0.9	3	2.1
Level of Education:-				
Primary	76	34	24.1	24.3
Secondary	126	47	39.9	33.6
Tertiary	58	10	18.4	7.1
None	44	45	13.9	32.1
No response	12	4	3.8	2.9
Occupation:-				
Farming	206	65.2	62	44.3
Civil servant	97	30.7	39	27.9
Trading	13	4.1	37	26.4
No response	0	0	2	1.4

Source: Authors

4.2 Selected Self-Help Group Projects in the Study Area
Table 2 shows selected self help groups based on their different activities, and projects they have executed in the districts. The projects include general maintenance of roads, clinics, market, and toilets, furniture making, counseling forums, and fencing of schools, animal fields, fish ponds and transformers. The study revealed that the self help groups in the study area have been able to execute a number of projects over the years.

Table 2: Self Help Group Projects Executed in the Study Area

S/No	Selected SHGs	Years of Existence	Projects Executed	Year of Execution
1	Kwagan Multi-purpose Society	18 years	Society office; clinic; road Nomadic education Classroom Fencing Schools Fish ponds, Transformers	2010 2012 2007 2007
2	Kwarami multi-purpose Society	14 years	Renovated clinic Dug well Roads	Progress 2010 2010
3	Kudami/Gbodogu society	16 years	Borehole Clinic Grinding machine house Society store	2009 2011 2009 2009
4	Kudna Multi-purpose	12 years	Society store	2009
5	Nagbadogun society	10 years	Clinic Purchase of motorcycles Electricity	2012 2010 2008
6	Kama multipurpose society	5 years	Clinic Society office Primary school	2009 2012 2010
7	Anguwan Kadara Society	15 years	Primary school Skill center	2008 2008
8	Zakolo multipurpose Society	9 years	Clinic Grinding center	2010 2007
9	Anguwan Sarki Society	15 years	Clinic; fish pond; society store Fish pond Society store Cow rearing field Nomadic classrooms Fencing schools and animals	2008 2010 2003 2007 2006 2010
10	Tungan Barau society	10 years	Built block of 2 classroom Culvert Clinic toilet Furniture Society shops Electricity	2008 2009 2010 2011 2009 2007
11	Kushiri society	10 years	Town clinic Road Boreholes	2009 2010 2008
12	Kakuri Association	9 years	Culvert Repair roads	2009 2010
13	Barakwai Association	11 years	Culvert Clinic	2008 2010
14	Yanki society	15 years	Primary school Clinic Dug well	2006 2008 2003
15	Ammale society	10 years	Skill acquisition center Cow rearing house Public toilet Shop(for showcasing handwork)	2008 2008 2009 2008
16	Goto-rishi society	10 years	Road Society office Renovation of Public toilet Clinic	2008 2005 2009 2009

			Primary school	2010
17	Ishau society	10 years	Society office	2009
			Culvert	2012
			Fish pond	2007
			Grinding house	2007
			Road	2011
18	Gwallo kansu society	8 years	Clinic	2009
			Electricity	2003
			Primary school	2011
19	Shudna society	7 years	Dug well	2008
			Society office	2007
			Primary school	2011
			Renovate clinic	2009

Source: Authors

4.3 Condition of the Major Projects

Table 3 shows that critical projects like electricity, water (borehole), roads, schools, might be initiated by self-help groups, but funding is supported by either Federal, State, Local governments, and Non-governmental Organization (NGOs) or from other self-help groups. This means that self help groups come together and play a great role in the initiation and execution of projects in the study area. Abandoned projects are mostly picked up by SHGs and got them completed. SHG helps in the management and security of projects executed. Heavy projects like electricity are mostly completed by the government due to huge capital that is not accessible to SHGs, therefore government assist SHGs.

Table 3: Present Condition of Self-help Group Projects and Their Providers

S/No.	Project Executed	Condition	Provider
1	Roads/Market	Functional, but some have few potholes	Self-help groups, and State government,
2	Borehole/Digging of wells	Functional	Self-help groups, and Local government
3	Health centers	Partially functioning. Lack enough materials	Self-help groups, and World Health Organization (WHO) United nations international children`s Emergency Fund (UNICEF); local government
4	Society offices and stores	Functional	Self-help groups (SHGs)
5	Schools (primary, secondary, nomadic)	Few are functional, other classes are in bad condition	Self-help groups, Parent Teachers Association, Local government
6	Grinding Machine house	Functional	Self-help groups (SHGs)
7	purchase of motor cycles	Functional, few need minor repairs	Self-help groups (SHGs) Local and State government
8	Skill centers (youth and women)	Not functioning as expected. Poor attendance by women and need equipping.	Self-help-groups (SHGs) Local and State governments
9	Animal rearing house, Fish ponds	Functional	Self-help groups (SHGs)
10	culverts, drainages, toilets	Not functioning as expected	Self-help groups, UNICEF
11	Refuse dumping site	Functional	Self-help groups, State government
12	Electricity	Functional	Self-help groups, State government

Source: Field work, 2012

4.4 Process of Resource Mobilization

The process of procuring funds for various projects is presented in Table 4. Information gathered from the respondents shows that generally, resources in terms of personnel is more readily available as the community members willingly or voluntarily involve themselves in project execution.

Table 4: Sources of Funds by Group Leaders

Sources	Freq.	%
Donations by stakeholders	52	37.2
Contributions by members	34	24.3
Fund raising ceremonies	38	27.1
Levy of SHG members	13	9.3
No Response	3	2.1
Total	140	100

Source: Authors

In terms of equipment, contributions are gotten from members or donation from community members, government. Some modern equipment like tractors are made available from Upper Niger River Basin Development Authority (UNRBDA), Minna. Some outsiders use to support the project. It means that funds come in diverse sources. Table 4 shows the various sources from which self-help groups mobilize funds. Donations from the stakeholders (37.2%) make up the major source of funds. This is followed by organized fund raising (27.1%). Other sources of funds for project execution and maintenance are contributions from members of the community (24.3%) and imposition of levies on members to be paid on a monthly basis accounts for (9.3%).

4.5 Regularity of Project Monitoring and Maintenance

The study investigated the regularity of monitoring and maintenance on the self help group projects in the study area. The result is presented in Table 5

Table 5: Project Maintenance as indicated by Community Members

Period	Freq.	%
Quarterly	2	0.6
As the need arises	288	91.1
Others	26	8.2
Total	316	100

Source: Authors

It is obvious that the maintenance take place as the need for their maintenance arises as (91.1%) supported that view. About (0.6%) are of the view that this is been done quarterly while (8.2%) are of the opinion that went for other processes that is, when funds are available.

4.6 Measures of Sustaining the Projects

One attempts to examine the various measures put in place to ensure sustainability of the self help projects in the study area. The result is presented in Table 6

Table 6: Ways of Ensuring Sustainability of Projects Identified by SHG Leaders

Types	Freq.	%
Providing security like fencing	9	6.4
Constant monitoring and repairs	12	8.6
Involvement of the community members	118	84.3
None response	1	0.7
Total	140	100

Source: Authors

More than (84.0%) are of the opinion that community involvement is necessary to sustain the various projects while about (8.6%) of the respondents believed that constant monitoring and repairs of these projects will ensure sustainability. Some (6.4%) are agitating for provision of effective security measures for securing projects and prevent them from vandalism. However, other measure mentioned during the focus group discussion was participatory strategy of need identification which ensures local people involvement in project execution and benefit maximally from the project.

5. Recommendation

Community participation is a weapon to be used for sustainability of projects since the citizens often treat such projects as their own. Project maintenance should be perceived as important as its implementation. This will help in the sustainability of executed projects. Leaders should encourage projects execution in the study area by increasing level of awareness of people. Joint project execution by self-help groups should be encouraged as this will increase their capacity, strength and bring about a greater level of sustainable development as resources are pulled together thus, helping to eliminate some constraints such as finance to some extent.

There is the need for groups to encourage people to join them or for them to form groups to contribute their quota towards socio-economic development of the area. It forms the bedrock of project sustainability strategy among the self-help groups. Other project sustainability strategies that can be adopted include project operation

and maintenance, participatory strategy of need identification, regular fund sourcing, location of projects at points that are central to all beneficiaries; and carrying along traditional rulers at the village level as well as political leaders at the local and state government levels.

On the location of projects, this should be done without discrimination either by culture, religion, tribe and political affiliation. It should ensure equal accessibility and by so doing distributive justice is maintained. The concern for equity should be paramount to the group leaders. Location of project has been seen as an important aspect to involve citizens such that project will satisfy the beneficiaries. The SHG executives can be selected to meet with ward heads to discuss issues on the pressing needs of the people. The citizens being the main concern of the group are given the avenue to state the needs and possible location of the projects which are mostly identified through interaction with members of the community. This will help to prevent unnecessary clashes and avoid one-man claim of ownership problem.

It is important to carry along traditional rulers at the village level as well as political leaders at the local and state government levels. The idea is to gather institutional support for the projects: Involvement of the traditional leaders starts from the conception of the plan. They can help to disseminate information to the community members. Local and state governments can help to support the projects especially those requiring heavy capital. It is crucial for any project to be successful. Fund sourcing is geared towards ensuring that projects are always functioning and maintained regularly. Funds often generated by stakeholders and organized lunching may not be enough for the execution of capital projects. It is important that the government should be able to give grants and technical support for communities that embarked upon laudable projects such as road construction, building of schools and colleges, dispensaries, clinics, water projects and electrification in their various communities.

6. Conclusion

The study has revealed that there are self-help groups and their projects are seen on ground ranging from community health centres, schools, roads, skill acquisition centres, bore holes, wells, grinding houses, culverts, and markets. The process of identifying needs was through meetings, consultations and constant dialogue by self-help groups, ward heads and the citizens. This supports Hailu's (1995) work that given an appropriate forum for expression of felt need, local communities demonstrate the capacity to tackle their problems effectively and satisfy their needs. Resource in terms of personnel are available, sources of funds include donations by stakeholders and contributions by members of the community. The effectiveness of the projects has been felt by the citizens with the simplicity of most of the projects in terms of usage. Project sustainability practiced here recognizes the role of community participation as a process in sustainable development. The bedrock of the project sustainability framework is the community or voluntary group dimension as it is through the active participation of community members in self help projects that other sustainability dimensions can be effective. Abandoned projects are mostly imposed projects by government or foreigners who did not put the community interest first as argued by Akpomuvie (2010) that in self help strategy, intrinsic value is accorded to participation as people`s involvement tend to reduce when some development projects are imposed on them by outsiders who may be ignorant of the real needs of the local communities.

Community participation has been recognized by the self help groups to be instrumental to bringing about effective development as their involvement gives a sense of belonging thereby bringing about a sustainable development. If the involvement of the community members continues to exist as time goes on, then there is a fairly good sustainability prospect for projects being executed by the self help groups in their respective communities.

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