

Community-Based Organization and Community Development in Ebonyi State: A Case Study of Onicha Local Government

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Abstract

This research investigates the role of the Community-Based Organization as an agent of community development in Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, highlighting its importance as a mechanism for fostering accelerated national development within the state. The study employed a sample size of three hundred and eighty-four (384) respondents, determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table method, selected from the total population. Data collection was conducted through the utilization of a meticulously designed questionnaire and oral interviews, serving as the primary data collection instruments. Subsequently, the collected data were organized into tables and subjected to analysis utilizing statistical techniques such as simple percentages and mean calculations. Furthermore, thematic analysis method adding Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were utilized to examine and test the research hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that the community development endeavors spearheaded by the community-based organization in Ebonyi State are not significantly lacking. It became apparent that with sufficient resources and support, these Community-based Organization could effectively serve as conduits for community development within Ebonyi State. This could be accomplished through a variety of means, including but not limited to infrastructure enhancement within the community, advocacy efforts aimed at garnering governmental attention to community needs, generation of employment opportunities for the youth demographic, establishment and upkeep of educational facilities such as schools along with provision of scholarships, construction of essential infrastructure like roads, markets, and shops, facilitation of clean water supply, distribution of enhanced agricultural tools and seedlings to farmers, promotion of mining activities, and maintenance of peace and security within the community. Based on the outcomes of the study, it is recommended that the Community-Based Organization, when adequately equipped and empowered as community-based Organization possesses the potential to make substantial contributions to community development initiatives in Ebonyi State. Through the implementation of diverse projects aimed at enhancing infrastructure, socio-economic prospects, and overall well-being of community members, the Community-Based Organization can play a pivotal role in steering sustainable development and nurturing progress within the region. Since the third tier of government the local government could not meet up with developmental challenges.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The importance of community development in contemporary Nigerian society cannot be overemphasized, as its significance stems from its recognized role in improving the economic, social, political, and cultural conditions of the nation. As a strategy, community development ensures rapid national development as it serves as a major plank upon which national developmental policies and their implementation are hinged (Ugwu, 2009). Like every other country in the world, the federal government of Nigeria, in a bid to enhance community development, has encouraged state and local governments to establish community-based development agents or organizations to foster development at the rural level, with town unions being inclusive. Unlike other community development unions and organizations, town unions aim at developing the immediate communities in Onicha LGA where government absence is felt.

According to Nya (2002), in 1959, the United Nations defined community development as the process by which the efforts of people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve the economic, social, and cultural conditions of communities and to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, enabling them to contribute fully to national progress. The involvement of people through their participation in the process of improving the community by the execution of specific projects is crucial. Ering et al. (2006) added that there could be outside assistance. Community-based development programs and community-driven development or community-assisted programs are among the fastest growing mechanisms for channeling development measures and assistance. Mansuri (2004) contended that community-based development is an umbrella term for projects that actively include the community beneficiaries in their design and management.

Nigeria operates a federal system of government with three tiers: federal, state, and local governments. However, it has been observed that these tiers of government have not performed creditably well in development at the community level, leaving the communities with no option but to come together under the umbrella of community-based development for the development and welfare of their communities. Unlike other developmental approaches, community development is recognized internationally, and these methods have been acknowledged as significant for local, social, cultural, environmental, and political development by organizations such as the United Nations, WHO, OECD, and World Bank among others (Nwobashi & Iturno, 2017). These approaches can be organic and inorganic. The organic model of community development is natural and community-driven. It is an innate process through which the people provide themselves with the needed modern facilities such as roads, water, schools, hospitals, electricity, bridges, markets, and town halls through communal sponsorship (Tom & Amadu, 2014).

On the other hand, the mechanistic model of community development depends solely on the values and principles of external support towards community development. This can be sponsored by state actors through their authorized agencies, private individuals, unions, corporate bodies, and philanthropists pooling their resources together to enhance community infrastructural and economic development within a specific community. The reasons behind community-driven developmental efforts are often due to the poor performance of government in providing developmental programs to meet the socio-economic needs of the citizens (Humphrey & Anthony, 2017).

In a bid to ensure socio-economic and infrastructural development of communities in Ebonyi State, the Onicha Local Government Council has drafted and implemented by-laws encouraging the establishment of town unions such as Progressive Union, Progressive Association, and Development Union among others. The primary aim is to play a supportive and developmental role in areas of infrastructural and human capital development. To ensure the legitimacy of the union leadership, the law also allows the unions to conduct elections to select their leaders through the approval of the local government council and the state government (Humphrey & Anthony, 2017). This practice is reminiscent of the primordial communalism that existed in Igbo society before the advent of colonialism. Today, the Igbos in southeastern Nigeria have sustained town unions in their region as agents of community development and as voices for the grassroots, seeking and attracting government/NGO presence to the community to address human needs. It is against this background that the study seeks to investigate community developmental roles embarked on by community-based organizations in Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The ultimate goal of development strategies is to provide solutions to societal problems and improve the living standards and human needs of the entire society. This has prompted most communities to establish community development unions and organizations aimed at improving the general well-being of the people, and the people of Onicha Local Government Area are no exception. The call for the formation of community-based organizations in Onicha Local Government Area was timely due to the government's inability to provide adequate amenities needed for the sustainability of humankind within the locality.

For decades, it has been argued that in Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, the problem of community development is compounded by leadership challenges surrounding the structure and formation of town union organizations. Regrettably, many leaders of these associations, after being elected, fall below expectations and engage in corrupt practices, diverting funds meant for community development projects and programs for their selfish interests. The few leaders who claim to be hardworking often struggle to deliver results, evidenced by poor performance and accountability in leadership.

Furthermore, political squabbles that determine community-based organization executives have turned many villages in Onicha LGA into battlegrounds, despite high expectations from these organizations, endangering rural development. Consequently, while town union administrations are present, many rural roads, marketplaces, and shops are left unattended. Many communities in Onicha LGA lack potable water supplies despite the existence of various community-based organizations. Despite government intervention in development initiatives like rural roads and water supply, it has been observed that these projects are hardly maintained by town union executives.

1.3 Objective of the Study

General Objective

The main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between community-based organizations and community development in Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the relationship between community-based organizations and the provision of rural electrification in Onicha Local Government Area.
2. Investigate the role played by community-based organizations in constructing rural markets in Onicha Local Government Area.
3. Assess the level of engagement of community-based organizations in the provision of piped water in rural areas of Onicha Local Government Area.

1.4 **Research Questions**

Based on the identified problems, the following research questions will guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between community-based organizations and rural electricity provision in Onicha Local Government Area?
2. Have community-based organizations played a strategic role in constructing rural markets in Onicha Local Government Area?
3. What is the level of engagement of community-based organizations in the provision of piped water in rural areas of Onicha Local Government Area?

1.5 **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses will guide the study:

1. Community-based organizations tend to provide rural electricity in Onicha Local Government Area.
2. Community-based organizations are likely to play a strategic role in the construction of rural markets in Onicha Local Government Area.
3. Community-based organizations tend to engage in the provision of piped water in rural areas of Onicha Local Government Area.

1.6 **Significance of the Study**

The study provides a structural appraisal of the state and role of community-based organizations in community development, aiming to enhance policy development for the recognition and growth of community-based activities in the nation. The significance of this study is divided into two main phases: theoretical and empirical. Empirically, the study will extensively discuss the community development challenges facing Onicha community in Ebonyi State, providing a platform for scholars and intellectuals to propose solutions to these challenges. Theoretically, the study will add value to the academic community and contribute significantly to the existing literature on the subject.

1.7 **Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on the appraisal of community-based organizations as agents of community development in Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

1.8 **Clarifications of Terms**

- **Accountability:** Being responsible for your actions and answerable to others.
- **Community-Based Organization:** Groups that operate at the local level to address immediate needs and improve quality of life, typically non-profit and relying on volunteers, donations, and grants.
- **Community participation:** Involvement of the community in decision-making processes that affect them.

- **Community development:** A process aimed at improving the quality of life and well-being of individuals within a specific community.
- **Development:** Qualitative improvement in the living standard of people, exemplified by industrialization, food production, labor force size and distribution, and basic amenities.
- **Equitable resource allocation:** Fair and just distribution of resources to meet everyone's needs.
- **Financial Management:** Concerned with raising funds economically, using these funds profitably, planning future operations, and controlling current performance through financial accounting, cost accounting, budgeting, and statistical analysis.
- **Financial Mismanagement:** Inefficient management of funds that hampers goal achievement.
- **Integrity:** Honesty and strong moral principles.
- **Local Government:** Government at the grassroots level, established by law to bring governance closer to the people.
- **Sustainability:** Meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs.
- **Transparency:** Openness and clarity, especially in communication and decision-making.

CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Literature Review

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) play significant roles in political systems by addressing the basic social needs of their communities. These organizations facilitate interest articulation and aggregation within the community, while their executives make and implement decisions for the welfare of the community members, enhancing the overall stability of the system through effective communication.

According to Dongier et al. (2003), the objectives of CBOs align with widely accepted principles of community and rural development, emphasizing participatory approaches. These organizations mobilize social networks and extended families to foster rural development. Putnam, as cited by Chidume and Nmaju (2019), explains that social capital helps communities advance by allowing equal participation opportunities for residents. Town unions, as gatekeepers of CBOs, collaborate with the government to promote rural areas through awareness and education, often led by financially well-off elites in the post-independence era. Eme (2012) discusses the origin of town unions, highlighting their role in supporting members living away from home and contributing to community development. African immigrants in metropolitan areas-maintained connections to their rural homes, aspiring to bring urban amenities back to their villages. This nostalgia has been a driving force for some communities to view town unions as effective tools for fostering rural development and self-sufficiency, as noted by Ugwu (2013).

Boagu (2011) describes CBOs as ethnic, social, economic, or gender-based components of larger civil organizations, essential for rural development. These organizations connect communities, plan, implement, and monitor social and economic projects by mobilizing community resources (Mwaura and Ngugi, 2014). Clark (1999) views CBOs as spontaneous

groups aimed at improving livelihoods, particularly effective in addressing poverty, nature conservation, and basic social safety nets.

Nyang (1999) highlights the diverse nature of community organizations, which include both positive and negative elements. He points out the importance of recognizing horizontal conflicts within civil societies for democratic development. Mbote (2000) defines CBOs as membership organizations with broad-based, grassroots membership, serving their members and founded by community members.

Houston (1958) defines a CBO as a voluntary organization formed by community members to address common needs and objectives. These organizations develop cooperative and collaborative practices to address community issues. Biddle and Biddel (1968) and Agbola (1998) note that CBOs, also known as local organizations, have various names in different places and are formed through collective efforts of people with shared attributes living or working in the same environment. These organizations broaden the base of self-governance and power diffusion (Adeyemo, 2002).

Abegunde (2004) describes CBOs as voluntary, non-profit, non-governmental, and localized institutions aimed at improving the social and economic well-being of their members. These organizations respond to environmental degradation, emerging diseases, job shortages, and inadequate social services and infrastructure, often marginalized groups like women (Mbote, 2000). Claudia (2003) emphasizes that CBOs are localized and non-profit, with members contributing economically to fulfill their responsibilities without relying on government support.

Fakoya (1984) and Mbiti (1974) argue that community development involves organizing people to plan actions, identify needs and problems, and execute plans using community resources, supplemented by government and non-governmental agencies. CBOs enable grassroots participation, involving local people in identifying needs and implementing projects to develop self-reliance and confidence.

Makanjuola (2000) defines rural development as a planned change process aimed at improving the productive capacity and standard of living of rural populations. Olagiwola (2004) and Olawuyi (2004) emphasize the economic betterment and social transformation of rural people through decentralized planning, land reforms, and better access to credit and inputs, leading to sustainable development and improved social services.

Olyiwola and Adeleye (2003) note that rural areas, inhabited by the majority of Nigeria's population, serve as the base for food and fibre production, capital formation, and markets for domestic manufacturers. These areas engage in primary activities crucial for economic development.

Eme (2015) views town unions as groups with common goals to develop human capital and provide basic amenities. Nweke (2017) adds that these unions aim to build stronger local communities. However, development efforts have often favored urban areas, leaving rural communities deprived of modern amenities and unattractive to live in.

2.1.1 Concept of Community Development

Before defining community development, it's crucial to understand what constitutes a community. A community is a group of people sharing a common purpose, who are interdependent for fulfilling certain needs, live in close proximity, and interact regularly (Maimunah, 2009). Similarly, Shunu (2004), as cited in Okoroba (2020), describes it as a group of people sharing common purposes, interdependent for fulfilling needs, living in close proximity, and interacting regularly. These needs include access to healthcare, improved

economic activities, and employment generation, among others. Each community has leaders responsible for the success of community events, depending on the community's needs.

Human communities vary in size, social life patterns, geographical structure, and living standards due to different levels of development. Each community, situated in a specific geographical area or virtual space through communication platforms, shares characteristics and feelings such as oneness, cooperation, and a commitment to group welfare. The interaction of people creates several needs that are collectively achieved through collective efforts, which provide each community's uniqueness in development.

Community development has been a long-standing social activity. Before colonial administration, people organized themselves into groups and used community resources for physical improvements and functional facilities. For instance, communal labor was used for constructing homesteads, clearing farmlands, and building public utilities like the king's palace, market stalls, and town halls. Today, community development has evolved. In tropical Africa, it was first conceived by the British colonial office in the 1920s as a special development model for rural areas of its dependent territories.

Community development involves uniting people's efforts with government authorities to improve economic, social, and cultural conditions, integrating communities into national life, and enabling full contribution to national progress. It requires full participation in decision-making and implementation from all community members, from the village head to women's organizations (Onuoha, 1999).

Ottong and Bassey (2009) describe community development as the overall development of rural areas, improving the quality of life of rural people. It is an integrated process, including social, economic, political, and spiritual development of poorer sections, setting priorities through effective democratic bodies, providing local capacity, investing in basic infrastructure, social services, justice, equity, and security, and ensuring the safety and security of rural populations, especially women. It involves activities undertaken by both government and unofficial bodies.

Ake (1996) states that community development is a process enabling communities to realize their potential, build self-confidence, and live lives of dignity and fulfillment, evidenced by improved quality of life and living standards. Batten (1975) defines it as a social change process where community members organize for planning and action, define problems, and execute solutions with maximum reliance on community resources. Onuoha (1999) adds that it leads to higher civilization levels, control over productive forces, poverty reduction, inequality, unemployment reduction, access to social amenities, advanced infrastructure, enhanced education, and improved productivity.

Halo (2015) adds that community development refers to the overall development of rural areas, improving rural people's lifestyles. It implies the interaction between physical, environmental, technological, economic, socio-cultural, and institutional factors in rural areas. As a strategy, it is an approach to bring positive change in the socio-economic and cultural life of rural people. Maimunah (2009) sees it as initiatives by communities with external support to empower individuals and groups by providing skills for change. External organizations include governments, inter-governmental organizations, and business firms that initiate beneficial community ideas and programs, often using local resources and building political power through large social groups working for common agendas.

Akinola (2007) describes community development as transforming rural areas such that each component of rural life changes and transforms in the desired direction with other components as planned. It encompasses structural changes in socio-economic situations to

bring about human welfare. The overall objective is to increase human development, enlarging people's choices for greater knowledge access, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods, security against crime and violence, political and cultural freedoms, and participation in community activities (Khalid, Ahmed, and Muffi, 2015).

Goel and Goswami (2010) see community development as improving living standards of low-income rural people and making their development self-sustaining. Namdar and Sadighi (2013) emphasize non-farm activities, eco-tourism, handicrafts, off-farm activities, and extended social and physical infrastructure. Local economic interactions are crucial for sustainable development, indicating the strength of local economies.

The Federation of Community Development Learning (2009) defines community development as developing active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect, influencing power structures to remove participation barriers. The United Nations defines it as organized efforts to solve community problems with minimal external help, involving government and non-governmental organizations and corporations. Omale and Ebiloma (2005) describe it as a process where small community members define goals, plan, and act together to satisfy needs, involving collaboration between rural communities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

Ekongson (2007) notes that development starts when people control and manage their environment to increase productivity for a better life. Community development involves transforming backward habitats with modern structures like buildings, town halls, schools, hospitals, roads, electricity, and water. It aims to develop individual and community initiatives for promoting welfare.

Nwogwugwu (2007) describes it as a grassroots movement where individuals voluntarily engage in enhancing community facets, targeting economic prosperity, physical infrastructure, and social cohesion. It relies on local resources, fostering self-reliance and mutual aid. The United Nations sees it as a collaborative process uniting government, non-governmental entities, and the populace to address economic, social, and cultural needs, integrating communities into national life.

Community members' active involvement is the hallmark of community development, participating in planning, execution, and evaluation of projects, becoming catalysts for positive change. External assistance from governmental bodies and organizations provides valuable resources, expertise, and support, but the ultimate success depends on local engagement and commitment.

Community development is not just project execution but fostering ownership, agency, and pride among community members. Empowering individuals to shape their communities fosters resilience, innovation, and collaboration essential for sustainable development. External assistance acts as a catalyst for community-driven progress, providing capacity-building, technical assistance, and financial support to realize full potential and transformative change from within.

Scholarly conceptualization shows community development as a multidimensional endeavor, encompassing economic, social, and environmental spheres. This perspective highlights addressing diverse community needs and challenges, particularly in the Niger Delta region, where oil production impacts are significant. Comprehensive strategies are essential for infrastructure, human capital development, and social well-being, fostering sustainable progress for all residents (Jenking and Obara, 2008).

Multinational corporations in Nigeria recognize their responsibility to contribute positively to host community development through corporate social responsibility initiatives.

They address pressing needs and improve living conditions through projects like roads, electrification, schools, markets, hospitals, scholarships, and educational resources. These efforts aim to enhance the quality of life, empower individuals, and foster human capital development, cultivating goodwill and creating a conducive environment for operations (Jenking and Obara, 2008).

Government support and facilitation are crucial for community development. Governments provide financial assistance through matching grants for rural development projects, supplementing local resources to address specific needs and priorities. Community development officers, trained in various fields, act as intermediaries between communities and government agencies, providing expertise and guidance. Despite efforts, challenges persist, and some argue government intervention impact is limited (Ojo, 2012).

Chukwuemeka (2000) sees community development as a process involving people and local governments, encompassing economic and political development and improving socio-economic status. It is multi-dimensional, touching all aspects of individual and societal life. Programs should include education, literacy, healthcare, potable water, road construction, and maintenance, as Nnoli (1981) emphasizes development as actualizing inherent human capacity for greater achievements.

Williams (1978) asserts that community development involves people improving their economic, social, and cultural conditions through self-help, identifying needs, and embarking on projects with or without external assistance. It is a total transformational process from individual to community, promoting rightful living, good attitudes, tolerance, patriotism, and leading by example.

Nwobi (2007) argues that local people must act as managers and entrepreneurs of development, utilizing land, capital, and labor to enhance development. Lele (1979) sees it as improving rural people's standards and making development self-generating and self-sustaining. The World Bank (1975) defined it as improving the economic and social life of rural poor, extending objectives to include productivity, employment, food, shelter, education, and health in 1996, arguing that better health, water supply, diet, and education improve welfare and contribute to economic growth.

Okoli (1985) notes that the British colonial office saw community development as promoting better living through active participation and stimulating local initiative. The United Nations (1971) views it as utilizing local communities as action units, combining outside assistance with local self-determination and effort, stimulating local initiative and leadership. Cavaye (2000) describes it as a process where local people create more jobs, income, and infrastructure, improving their ability to manage change, rethink problems, expand contacts, and use community assets innovatively.

Sanders (1958) saw it as a process moving from stage to stage, a method of working towards goals, a program of procedures, and a movement. Community development builds physical, financial, human, social, and environmental capital. Participatory rural development involves increasing productive capacity and changing attitudes, replacing dependence on the natural environment with the desire and ability to manipulate it.

Community development is gradual and progressive towards perfection, including strategies, interventions, and activities at the community level for social and economic development. It improves conditions, enhances community interactions, strengthens infrastructure, supports environmental sustainability, and promotes social cohesion and inclusion. Participation is crucial for positive changes in economic, social, political, and environmental well-being. Sustainable development goals aim to end poverty, hunger, improve

health, education, reduce inequality, address climate change, and promote sustainable communities, peace, and justice.

2.1.3 Characteristics of Community Development

Community development has several fundamental characteristics, including:

- i. **Respect for Individual Worth and Dignity:** Community development centers on recognizing the intrinsic value and dignity of each person in a democratic society. It upholds principles of equality and human rights, prioritizing the well-being and empowerment of every individual.
- ii. **Contribution to Community Life:** It acknowledges that every individual has valuable contributions to offer the community, through skills, talents, or experiences, enriching the community's fabric.
- iii. **Capacity for Learning and Growth:** Believing in human potential, community development recognizes individuals' innate ability to learn, adapt, and grow. Education, training, and exposure to new ideas help community members continuously develop their skills and knowledge.
- iv. **Conscious Cooperative Efforts:** Community growth and progress are achieved through deliberate and cooperative efforts involving thoughtful planning and action. Collaborative decision-making and collective action help communities address challenges and pursue shared goals.
- v. **Opportunity for Self-Expression and Learning:** Community development provides platforms for individuals to express themselves, contribute meaningfully, and engage in continuous learning. Active participation in community initiatives helps individuals discover their potential, showcase talents, and acquire new skills, fostering personal and collective growth.

Ojo (2012) further outlines the following characteristics of community development:

- i. **Involvement of Technical Assistance:** Technical support, including personnel, supplies, funding, or consultation, often from governmental or non-governmental entities, is necessary for community development.
- ii. **Concern for the Entire Community:** It is inherently inclusive, focusing on the well-being and interests of all community members rather than privileging specific groups.
- iii. **Holistic Approach:** Addressing comprehensive community needs across various life aspects, including agriculture, health, education, infrastructure, and social services.
- iv. **Promotion of Social Change:** It seeks to instigate positive social transformations within the community, sparking ongoing development and improvement processes.
- v. **Emphasis on Self-Help:** Self-help fosters widespread participation among community members, empowering individuals and groups to take ownership of their development initiatives, enhancing community resilience and capacity.
- vi. **Democratic Participation:** Operating on democratic principles, community members exercise control and decision-making authority individually and collectively. Participation is encouraged at all levels of community engagement.
- vii. **Goal-Oriented:** Community development initiatives are purpose-driven with clearly defined tasks, processes, and objectives, emphasizing self-directed participation and collective action.
- viii. **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Integrating expertise and services from various professionals, such as health practitioners, social workers, and adult literacy educators, for a comprehensive approach to addressing community needs.

Umoh's (1985) elucidation, referenced in Tom and Amadu (2014), includes:

- i. **Strategic Planning for Transformation:** Meticulous planning and execution of programs to instigate positive change within the community.
- ii. **Needs-Driven Approach:** Driven by a deep understanding of the community's specific needs and challenges, ensuring relevant and impactful initiatives.
- iii. **Active Community Participation:** Meaningful development hinges on active engagement and involvement of community members.
- iv. **Empowerment through Self-Initiatives:** Emphasizes empowering communities to take ownership of their development journey through self-reliance, self-help, and grassroots initiatives.
- v. **Harnessing Local Resources:** Leveraging diverse community resources, including human capital, local knowledge, and material assets, to maximize development impact and sustainability.
- vi. **External Support for Capacity Building:** External support in technical expertise, financial aid, and service provision can bolster community development efforts.
- vii. **Alignment with National Development Agenda:** Integrating local efforts with broader national development frameworks ensures alignment with overarching national priorities.
- viii. **Collaborative Synergy Among Specialists:** Involves collaboration among specialists from various fields to guide and facilitate effective community development processes.

2.1.4 Models of Community Development

Strauss (1970), referenced in Tom and Amadi (2014), distinguishes between two fundamental approaches in the Community Development Model:

- i. **Organic Development Model:** Characterized by innate, self-sustaining, and natural progression, where community development emerges organically from within the communities themselves. Historical roots of community-driven efforts, both rural and urban, demonstrate remarkable resilience and self-reliance. Communities undertake development endeavors independent of external influences, relying on communal solidarity and resourcefulness.
- ii. **Inorganic or Mechanistic Model:** Sparked externally, often by forces outside the community. This approach includes public mechanistic development, orchestrated and funded by government bodies, and private mechanistic development, driven by individuals, social clubs, unions, or corporate entities. In Nigeria, particularly in Akwa Ibom State, examples include the establishment of schools, hospitals, industries, and agricultural initiatives.

2.2 Review of Theoretical Literature

Town unions as agents of community-based organizations (CBOs) have become vital in spearheading rural development efforts across South East Nigeria and other developing regions. CBOs help mobilize local resources and participation towards improved service access and welfare. Evidence from empirical studies assesses CBO contributions to rural service delivery and poverty alleviation.

CBO Roles in Decentralizing Service Delivery

CBOs are recognized as intermediaries supporting decentralized service delivery in contexts of limited local government capacity. Studies from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nigeria show CBOs filling gaps through community-managed interventions. Examples include

healthcare provision, education, health, water, roads, and tree planting where government provision remains inadequate. Quality and sustainability are concerns, but CBOs better incorporate local needs and resources.

Participation, Social Capital, and Accountability Outcomes

CBOs enable participation, harness social capital, and enhance local accountability, shaping responsive service delivery. Evidence indicates mixed outcomes depending on power relations. CBO presence positively predicts perceptions of information flows, leaders' responsiveness, financial transparency, and reduced corruption, especially around local infrastructure projects. However, elite control risks and limited citizen participation can undermine these benefits.

Service Access, Availability, and Quality

CBOs enhance availability, access, and efficiency of diverse services like water, healthcare, roads, forests, agriculture, and credit. Notable contributions include community-managed water schemes, agricultural cooperatives, and healthcare interventions. However, systemic deficits in skills, infrastructure, and coordination affect complex service domains, diminishing net benefits.

Organizational Capacity and Sustainability Issues

Inadequate organizational managerial abilities, financial resources, and supportive policy frameworks constrain CBOs from fully realizing their potential. Dependence on limited project-based donor funding incentivizes short-term fixes over long-term institution building. Deficits in leadership, accounting, monitoring, and evaluation proficiencies can breed mismanagement and undermine progress.

2.3 Review of Empirical Literature

Smith (2016): Community Development Initiatives in Rural Areas

Smith's study on Onicha Local Government Area, Ebonyi State, highlights the significant role of town unions in addressing infrastructural gaps, resulting in tangible improvements in residents' quality of life. Recommendations include continued support and empowerment of town unions to sustain and expand development initiatives.

Bassey and Bubu (2019), Duke et al. (2019)

Participatory research engaging community stakeholders provides valuable insights into community-based development perceptions, impact, unfulfilled needs, and challenges. This research has implications for government policies and strategies to enhance rural development outcomes in Nigeria.

Historical Perspective

African communities have a tradition of cooperation to improve living conditions, drawing from communal values. This spirit of collective action is embodied in contemporary community-based associations (CBAs) focused on mobilizing local resources to address developmental challenges.

Nwoba and Udoikah (2016): Community Development and Corporate Social Responsibility

Nwoba and Udoikah recommend effective partnerships between managers of mining corporations and community leaders to solve problems between mining corporations and host communities in Ebonyi State.

Idemudia (2007): Community Perceptions and Expectations

Idemudia's study highlights the high expectations of host communities in the Niger Delta Region from oil multinationals regarding development. Recommendations include aligning community expectations with corporate expectations to sustain the psychological contract between communities and oil companies.

Abang (2001): Community Involvement and Social Responsibility

Abang's study asserts that company social responsibility can be sustained through effective partnerships where local people participate in developmental project decisions. Recommendations include considering community interests and taking responsibility for the impact of activities on stakeholders and the environment to ensure smooth operations between companies and host communities.

Review of General Literature

Community development is characterized by the active involvement of people in improving their communities through specific projects. Ering et al. (2006) highlight the importance of local participation and the potential for outside assistance from various entities such as government agencies, organizations, and town unions. This assistance can help educate, motivate, and support the community's efforts. Community development involves consciously accelerating economic, technological, and social changes in localities like villages, towns, or cities through locally significant projects initiated and carried out by the residents.

Bonsu (1983) emphasizes that the participation of town unions in community development has been a long-standing approach in rural Africa, leading to significant improvements in many towns and villages. Nwobi (2007) further argues that community development is a collaborative effort between the community and local government authorities aimed at enhancing rural resource productivity to improve the overall quality of life in rural areas.

Scholars have extensively documented the role of community-based organizations (CBOs) in infrastructural development, especially in water supply, electricity provision, and market construction within Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Town unions play a pivotal role in addressing basic community needs through these initiatives.

In the domain of water supply, town unions have been proactive in facilitating access to potable water in underserved communities. Anyanwu (2017) notes that town unions in Onicha LGA have mobilized resources to construct boreholes and communal water points, significantly improving access to clean water and enhancing public health and sanitation.

Regarding electricity provision, town unions have collaborated with government agencies and electricity providers to extend the power grid to rural areas. Okoye (2019) observes that these efforts have resulted in reliable electricity access for many communities, enabling economic activities and improving the quality of life.

Town unions also contribute to market construction, fostering economic development by building markets and trading centers. Nwadike (2018) documents the role of town unions in creating markets, which stimulate commerce, provide employment opportunities, and enhance the socio-economic fabric of communities.

Beyond these specific projects, town unions have been involved in road construction, building schools, and providing healthcare facilities, as highlighted by Uzoma (2020). These initiatives have led to improved transportation networks, educational opportunities, and healthcare services in various communities.

Eze (2021) emphasizes the role of town unions in promoting community cohesion and fostering grassroots development through participatory approaches. By involving residents in

decision-making processes and encouraging collective action, town unions strengthen social capital and empower communities to address their development needs effectively.

Overall, the literature underscores the significant role of Community-Based Organization in infrastructural development within Onicha LGA. Through collaborative efforts, resource mobilization, and participatory approaches, Community-Based Organization have addressed critical infrastructure gaps and improved the quality of life for residents. Continued support and, empowerment of Community-Based Organization (Town unions, Progressive unions, Development Associations etc.) are essential for sustaining these development initiatives and promoting inclusive growth in the region.

In many Igbo societies like Ohafia and Abriba, age grades have accomplished important community development tasks. Eme et al. (2012) highlight the Okpatemba age grade's construction of an ultra-modern school hall for Isiama Secondary School in OkagweOhafia. Town unions have historically played a crucial role in the developmental process of Igbo towns, as noted by Honey et al. (1998), citing Chinua Achebe's depiction of Umuofia progressive union's assistance in his novels.

Eje (1988) cited in Nwosu (1990), emphasizes the significant role of town unions in the massive reconstruction of facilities and infrastructure in Eastern Nigeria following the civil war. They undertook various projects, including building and equipping new schools, constructing health institutions, roads, bridges, and markets.

The literature consistently highlights the failure of the Nigerian government to effectively bring development to rural communities, often leaving town unions to initiate and execute self-help projects. This study aims to fill the gap in literature by focusing on the Oshiri town union in Onicha LGA of Ebonyi State.

Community-Based Organization and Maintenance/Rehabilitation of Rural Road Network in Onicha LGA

Road networks are vital for the movement of goods, services, and people, facilitating economic activity, social interaction, and access to essential services. Archibong (2017) emphasizes the importance of ongoing expansion and maintenance of road networks to ensure their functionality and effectiveness. Local governance, particularly through community-based organizations like town unions, plays a crucial role in managing and maintaining road infrastructure.

Town unions are responsible for the regular upkeep of roads, addressing transportation needs of rural communities, and initiating the restoration of rural roads. Efficient transport corridors support agricultural productivity, poverty alleviation, and food security by enabling farmers to bring produce to market more efficiently.

The proactive management and enhancement of road networks by local authorities are essential for sustainable development and inclusive growth. By investing in infrastructure and collaborating with stakeholders, governments can leverage road networks as catalysts for economic prosperity, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability.

Community-Based Organization and Market/Stores Building in Onicha Local Government

The Community-Based Organization in Onicha LGA plays a central role in market construction and development, recognizing the importance of markets as centers of economic activity, social interaction, and cultural exchange. Ikechukwu (2021) highlights the Community-Based Organization's responsibility in identifying suitable locations for market development projects through feasibility studies, community consultations, and collaboration with stakeholders.

Once a suitable location is identified, the Community-Based Organization mobilizes resources from government allocations, community contributions, and potential partnerships with the private sector to construct market infrastructure. Ogu (2018) notes the importance of collaborative efforts in expediting market projects.

The Community-Based Organization is also involved in planning and designing market layouts, ensuring the inclusion of essential amenities such as stalls, parking, sanitation facilities, and security measures. Oji (2020) emphasizes the importance of detailed planning to enhance market functionality and safety.

Stakeholder engagement is crucial throughout the market development process. The Community-Based Organization fosters dialogue with market traders, community leaders, governmental authorities, and other stakeholders to ensure that market development efforts are inclusive and transparent.

Once markets are operational, the Community-Based Organization oversees their management and maintenance, ensuring regulatory standards, dispute mediation, and facility upkeep. Through vigilant market management practices, the Community-Based Organization sustains market vibrancy and functionality, fostering economic prosperity and community cohesion.

Community-Based Organization and Portable Water Projects in Onicha Local Government Area

Access to clean and safe drinking water is fundamental to public health and overall well-being. The Community-Based Organization in Onicha LGA takes proactive measures to address the critical need for potable water by identifying and prioritizing areas lacking reliable water sources. Comprehensive assessments of water supply and sanitation needs ensure effective targeting of resources and interventions.

Once areas in need are identified, the Community-Based Organization engages in strategic planning and resource mobilization to facilitate the construction and maintenance of water supply systems. Funding from government grants, non-governmental organizations, and community contributions supports these initiatives. Communities such as Umuezeoka, Agbaja, and Umuezoka have benefited from these water projects.

Educational campaigns on hygiene and sanitation practices are conducted to foster behavior change and promote proper water use. Okoye (2019) highlights the importance of raising awareness to enhance public health outcomes.

The Community-Based Organization oversees the operation and maintenance of water supply systems, ensuring their continued functionality and reliability. Collaboration with

government agencies, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders expands the capacity to address complex water supply challenges and deliver sustainable solutions.

Through strategic planning, resource mobilization, awareness-raising, and collaboration, the Community-Based Organization addresses critical water supply needs, promoting public health and enhancing community well-being.

Community-Based Organization and Rural Electrification in Onicha LGA

The Community-Based Organization in Onicha LGA plays an essential role in providing rural electricity infrastructure, improving the quality of life and fostering economic development. Access to reliable electricity is crucial for education, healthcare, and business activities.

The Community-Based Organization conducts comprehensive assessments to identify areas lacking electricity access and collaborates with stakeholders to develop electrification plans. Funding from government grants, community contributions, and private sector partnerships supports these projects. Communities such as Umuezeoka, Agbaja, Umuezoka, Isu, Onicha Igboeze, Umuokpu, Amuzu, Isu Nibo, and Abakaliki have benefited from these initiatives.

Educational campaigns on energy conservation and safety practices empower residents to use electricity responsibly. The Community-Based Organization also oversees the installation, operation, and maintenance of electrification infrastructure, ensuring long-term functionality and reliability. By enhancing electricity access, the Community-Based Organization improves the quality of life and stimulates economic development in rural areas.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the participatory development theory, which emphasizes the engagement of local people in shaping initiatives to improve their lives. Citizen participation, rooted in democratic decision-making, allows individuals to influence public decisions.

Participatory development theory highlights the central role of engaging local people in initiatives geared toward improving their condition. Despite challenges such as cost and time constraints, citizen participation offers significant benefits, including providing information, garnering public support, avoiding conflicts, building goodwill, and fostering cooperation and trust.

Effective citizen participation programs should align with the unique needs of each project, be designed within available resources, and be responsive to citizen participants. Successful programs should meet legal requirements, articulate clear goals, command political support, integrate with decision-making structures, secure adequate resources, identify stakeholders, and delineate roles and responsibilities.

Public consultation is crucial in natural resource management to address conflicts and generate consensus. Properly designed consultation programs represent diverse views, identify concerns, aim for consensus, inform stakeholders, improve decisions, and enhance democratic practices.

Citizen participation enhances public policy decisions, and effective public involvement processes benefit both planners and participants. Community-based organizations (CBOs) in Nigeria, particularly in the southeast, have become vital actors in rural development. By incorporating diverse perspectives and fostering consensus, decision-making becomes more inclusive and successful.

CBOs harness social capital to enable participatory self-help actions, expanding livelihood assets and capabilities. This study will explore the impact of the Oshiri Development Union (ODU) on rural development in Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, assessing its significance and challenges.

Decision-Making Structures

In exploring public participation, two broad decision-making structures are discussed: technocratic and democratic approaches. The technocratic approach relies on technical expertise for decision-making, while the democratic approach emphasizes citizen involvement in decision-making. The integration of these approaches is essential for successful decision-making, especially in natural resource management, where social goals often conflict with technical decisions. An interactive approach to planning is recommended to balance stakeholder interests and achieve consensus.

Principles of Citizen Participation

Effective citizen participation programs should align with the unique needs of each project, be designed within available resources, and be responsive to citizen participants. Key elements of successful programs include meeting legal requirements, articulating clear goals, commanding political support, integrating with decision-making structures, securing adequate resources, identifying stakeholders, and delineating roles and responsibilities. Techniques such as public education, input, interaction, and partnership can be employed along a continuum from passive to active involvement to solicit public input effectively. Public Involvement In Natural Resource Management Public consultation is increasingly important in natural resource management to address conflicts and generate consensus. Properly designed consultation programs should represent diverse views, identify concerns and values, aim for consensus, inform all stakeholders, improve decisions, and enhance democratic practices. By involving interested publics in decision-making processes, better outcomes and reduced tensions can be achieved.

Application of the Theory

Citizen participation is a valuable tool for enhancing public policy decisions, and effective public involvement processes can benefit both planners and participants. The community-based organization (CBOs) have been become increasingly vital actors spearheading rural development in the country mostly in the south-east Nigeria where Town unions are seen as the agent who derives the process of development in the region. By incorporating diverse perspectives and fostering consensus, decision-making can be more inclusive and successfully. The workings of CBOs as entities harnessing social capital to enable participatory self-help actions that expand livelihood assets and capabilities. This provides a valuable framework for examining CBO formations, functions, grassroots impacts and sustainability in the rural or community development. The theories orient analysis to the localized, contextual and participatory nature of CBOs as organic actors embedded in rural communities and networks.

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study will use a mixed methods design combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews.

3.2 Research Area

The study was conducted in Oshiri Autonomous community, one of the communities in Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Oshiri comprises sixteen villages divided into two blocs: the Ebia and the Ugwu bloc. The area postal code is 491, and the headquarters is located at Isu. There are five villages in the area which are; Isu district, Oshiri district, Onicha district, Ukawu district, and Abaomege district, along with eight autonomous communities.

Oshiri Autonomous Community, situated in the verdant landscapes of Onicha in Ebonyi State, Nigeria, has a rich historical tapestry intricately woven with the region's diverse topography and cultural heritage. Oshiri's geographical setting features rolling hills, fertile plains, and meandering rivers, which not only provide picturesque scenery but also serve as vital resources for the community's livelihood. According to historical accounts by local elders (Okoro, 2015), Oshiri's landscape has significantly influenced the lives and traditions of its inhabitants over the centuries.

Dating back to pre-colonial times, Oshiri has been inhabited by indigenous Igbo peoples who relied predominantly on agriculture for sustenance. The fertile soil of the region supported the cultivation of staple crops such as yam, cassava, and various vegetables (Iwuagwu, 2018), laying the foundation for a thriving agrarian economy. As trade networks expanded, Oshiri emerged as a hub for commercial activities, facilitating exchanges with neighboring communities and distant trade routes traversing the region (Okonkwo, 2019). This interaction with external influences contributed to the cultural richness and diversity of the community. Culturally, Oshiri is renowned for its vibrant traditions and customs deeply rooted in Igbo heritage. Festivals such as the New Yam Festival (Iri Ji Ohu), which marks the beginning of the harvest season, are celebrated with great fervor, featuring colorful displays of dance, music, and traditional attire (Ezeani, 2017). These festivities serve not only as occasions for merriment but also as platforms for reinforcing communal bonds and preserving cultural identity.

Social life in Oshiri revolves around communal values of mutual support and solidarity, as evidenced by the tradition of communal labor known as "ikpo-oshi" (Iroegbu, 2016). According Izunna O. C. (2024) indicate full manhood in the community of Oshiri where a young boy undergoes a process called 'Igba-egbe la Afia' (traditional gunfire in the market), where he consults his mother-in-law and traditionalist consultant for guidelines. 'Crossing the chicks' (Iji wooku) in Oshiri culture is vital because any man caught committing adultery or sleeping with another man's wife is regarded as desecration of marriage. A ritual is performed to permanently tie a wife to her husband during the formalization of marriage, where the man and the lady sit on the floor, stretching three legs—the lady's two and the man's one leg together—while the man's other leg is kept apart so that only one of his legs is bound in the process of the rituals. During agricultural activities or community projects, residents come together to work collectively, exemplifying the spirit of cooperation that permeates Oshiri society. Additionally, communal gatherings such as village meetings and cultural ceremonies provide opportunities for dialogue and decision-making, ensuring the active participation of all community members in matters of governance and social affairs, which normally take place in AKPATAEZE. AkpataEze is also seen as the supreme justice of the land (Izunna O. C. 2024).

Language serves as a cornerstone of cultural identity in Oshiri, with the Igbo language being the primary means of communication among residents. This linguistic heritage is not only a tool for everyday discourse but also a repository of traditional knowledge, oral history, and cultural expressions passed down through generations (Nwosu, 2020). Furthermore, the linguistic landscape of Oshiri reflects the dynamic nature of language contact, with influences from neighboring ethnic groups and colonial legacies shaping its linguistic repertoire.

Religious beliefs in Oshiri encompass a blend of indigenous practices 'Ogbu-enyanwu' the marine world and Christianity, reflecting the syncretic nature of spirituality in Igbo culture. Ancestor veneration, reverence for natural forces, and rituals honoring traditional deities coexist alongside Christian faith, which was introduced to the region through missionary activities (Obi, 2018). This religious pluralism underscores the adaptability and resilience of Oshiri's cultural heritage in the face of external influences.

In recent years, Oshiri has experienced rapid modernization and development, with infrastructural improvements and increased access to education and healthcare transforming the community (Ugwu, 2021). However, amidst these changes, efforts to preserve and promote Oshiri's cultural heritage remain paramount. Initiatives such as cultural festivals, heritage conservation projects, and youth empowerment programs aim to safeguard the legacy of the past while embracing the opportunities of the future (Okafor, 2022).

3.3 Population of the Study

The population from which inferences will be drawn and generalizations made will be the entire citizens of Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State from 18 years and above. According to the Nation Bureau of Statistics (2006) census, it has a surface area of 476 km² and a population of 236,328. The area postal code is 491, and the headquarters is located at Isu. Five villages comprise Isu district, Oshiri district, Onicha district, Ukawu district, and Abaomege district, along with eight autonomous communities.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 384 respondents will be drawn from the population size of 236, allowing for a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level. Multi-stage random sampling will ensure representation across communities in the Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The research will also adopt a random method, whereby citizens will be randomly selected and issued questionnaires for response by the research assistant.

3.5 Data Collection Technique

The study will analyze data using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data will be obtained from a structured questionnaire surveying the 384 respondents, while qualitative data will come from key informant interviews with three villages under Onicha Local Government Area.

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

Data collection will be carried out using a meticulously designed questionnaire and oral interviews as the primary data collection instruments. The collected data will be organized into tables and analyzed using statistical techniques such as simple percentages and mean calculations. Furthermore, Pearson Correlation and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) will be used to examine and test the research hypotheses.

3.7 Instrumentation

The research instrument adopted will be a multiple-choice answer questionnaire aimed at obtaining information for the study.

3.8 Validation of the Instrument

The instrument will be appraised and validated by academic professionals.

3.9 Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument will be administered to 384 members of community-based organizations.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

The study will employ both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. The quantitative method will establish the relationship between two or more variables amendable to numerical measurement. The Chi-square (X^2) statistical procedure will be used to test all hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Chi-square is used to test the significance of the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is development, while the independent variable for this study is social network. Analytical, theoretical, and logical analyses will also be drawn from extant literature, mainly from journals, magazines, textbooks, internet materials, etc.

The formula for the Chi-square test is presented thus: $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$ Where:

- χ^2 = Chi-square
- f_o = Observed frequency
- f_e = Expected frequency

3.11 Limitation of the Study

Due to logistic and geographical constraints, the study was restricted to a few sample surveys.

3.12 Ethical Issues

The ethical issues surrounding Community-Based Organization and community development in Ebonyi State, particularly in Onicha Local Government Area, are significant. Key ethical considerations include voluntary participation, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, and obtaining approval from authorities. The mixed method design with 384 respondents above 18 years and three community interviews will provide robust insight into the roles of community-based organizations in focus rural communities.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Data Presentation

The statistical data would be represented on a frequency distribution table to show the number of times which particular variable appear in the distribution.

Table 4.1: Distributed Questionnaire

S/N LGA	Communities Sample for the study	No. of questionnaire circulated	No. of questionnaires returned
Onicha	Oshiri	64	63 16.58
	Onicha-Igboeze	64	63 16.58
	Abaomege	64	64 16.84
	Ukawu	64	63 16.58
	Isu	64	63 16.58
	Isinkwo	64	64 16.84
	Total		384

Table 4.2: Percentage of useful copies of questionnaire

S/N	Communities Sample for the study	No. of questionnaire retrieved	% of questionnaire used
Onicha	Oshiri	63	63 16.58
	Onicha-Igboeze	63	63 16.58
	Abaomege	64	64 16.84
	Ukawu	63	63 16.58
	Isu	63	63 16.58
	Isinkwo	64	64 16.84
	Total		380

Table 4.3: Distribution of respondents by sex (N=380)

Sex	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	212	55.79
Female	168	44.21
Total	380	100

Source: (Field Survey 2024)

Table 4.4: Distribution of respondents by age bracket (N=380)

Age bracket	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
18-27	78	20.53
28-37	91	23.95
38-47	108	28.42
48 and above	103	27.11
Total	380	100

Source: (Field Survey 2024)

Table 4.5: Distribution of respondents by Occupation (N= 380)

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Fishing	75	19.74
Civil servant	66	17.37
Farming	77	20.26
Student	66	17.37
Company staff	10	2.63
Self Employed	86	22.63

Total	380	100
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Source: (Field Survey 2024)

Table 4.6: Categories of respondents by their status (N= 380)

Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Youth Leaders	46	12.11
Community leaders	75	19.74
Women leaders	28	7.37
Opinion leaders	65	17.11
Company staff	10	2.63
Others	156	40.94
Total	380	100

Source: (Field Survey 2024)

Table 4.7: Distribution of respondents by marital status

	Frequency (N=310)	Percentage (%)
Single	145	38.16
Married	117	30.79
Widowed	87	22.89
Divorced	31	8.16
Total	380	100

Source: (Field Survey 2024)

Table 4.8: Distribution of respondents by educational qualifications

Option	Frequency (N=310)	Percentage (%)
F.S.L.C	98	25.79
SSCE	167	43.95
NCE/OND	70	18.42
B.Sc./HND	35	9.21
M.Sc./Ph.D	10	2.63
Total	380	100

Source: (Field Survey 2024)

Table 4.1 shows that 212 respondents representing 55.79% were males, while 168 respondents representing 44.21 percent were females. The table also shows the age distribution of the respondents in the following order: 18-27 78 respondents representing 23.53%, 28-37 91 respondents representing 23.93%, 38-47 108 respondents representing 28.42%, 48 and above 103 respondents representing 27.11 percent. Significantly, the occupation characteristics of the respondents show that 75 respondents representing 19.74% were fishing, 66 respondents representing 17.37% were into civil service, 77 respondents representing 20.26% were farmers, 66 respondents representing 17.37% were students, 10 respondents representing 2.63% were company Staff while 86 respondents represent 22.63% were self-employed. Also, the table revealed the Categories of FGD respondents according to their status. The table shows that 46 respondents representing 12.11 percent were youths' leaders, 75 respondents representing 19.74 percent were community leaders, 28 respondents representing 7.37 percent were women leaders, 65 respondents represent 17.11 percent were opinion leaders, 10 respondents representing 2.63 percent were company staffs, while 156 respondent representing 40.94

percent represent fall among others. Accordingly, the table also reveals the marital status of the respondent which shows that 145 respondents representing 38.16% of the sample population were single, 117 respondents representing 30.79% were married, and 87 respondents representing 22.89% of the sample populations were widowed while 31 respondents represent 8.16% were divorced. The Educational qualification distribution of the respondents reveals that 98 respondents representing 25.79% had FSLC, 167 respondents representing 43.95% had SSCE, 70 respondents representing 18.42% had NCE and OND, 35 respondents representing 9.21% had HND and B.Sc. while 10 respondents representing 2.63% had M.sc and Ph.D.

Table 4.9: Analysis of respondents from the question I: What is the relationship between Community-based organization and rural electricity provision in Onicha Local Government Area?

S/N	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	Total
1	Do you think that Community-Based Organization has done enough in the area of electricity by initiated electricity intervention project in Onicha Local Government Area?	190	160	14	16	380
2	In the area of power, do you think that the Community-Based Organization electricity projects through donation transformers added value and a boost to electricity supply within locality in Onicha LGA	200	149	16	15	380
3	As part of their responsibilities .in your opinion, do you think that the rehabilitation and reconstruction of electricity polls by Community-Based Organization has help in improving electricity facilities in your area?	190	159	17	14	380
4	Do you think that electricity intervention program like donation of cables and sponsoring of electricity services by the town union have improved power condition of the inhabitants in Onicha LGA	17	20	182	161	380

Key: SA = Strongly Agreed, A = Agree, SD = Strongly Disagreed, D = Disagreed.

Table 4.9 shows the responses of respondents on the research question raised above. For item one, 190 respondents representing 50% strongly agreed that Community-Based Organization has done enough in the area of electricity by initiated electricity intervention project in Onicha Local Government Area. It was also observed that 160 respondents representing 42.11% agreed, 14 respondents representing 3.68% strongly disagreed while 16 respondents representing 4.21% disagreed. For question two, 200 respondents representing 52.63% strongly agreed that in the area of power, the Community-Based Organization electricity projects through donation transformers have added value and a boost to electricity supply within locality in Onicha LGA. It was also observed that 149 respondents representing 39.21% agreed, 16 respondents representing 4.21% strongly disagreed while 15 respondents represent 3.95% disagreed. For item three, 190 respondents representing 50% strongly agreed

that as part of their responsibilities the rehabilitation and reconstruction of electricity polls by Community-Based Organization has help in improving electricity facilities in your area. It was also observed that 159 respondents representing 41.84% disagreed, 17 respondents representing 4.47% strongly agreed while 14 respondents representing 3.68% disagreed. For items four, 17 respondent representing 4.47% strongly agreed that electricity intervention program like donation of cables and sponsoring of electricity services by the Community-Based Organization have improved power condition of the inhabitants in Onicha Local Government Area. It was also observed that 20 respondents representing 5.26% Agreed, 182 respondents representing 42.89% strongly disagreed while 161 respondents representing 4.47% disagreed.

Table 4.10: Analysis of respondents from the question II: Has Community-based organization play a strategic role in constructing rural markets in Onicha Local Government Area

S/N	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	Total
5	Do you think that town union has contributes to human capital development in your area through market construction and rehabilitation projects	215	152	6	7	380
6	Has renovation of mini markets and shops in Onicha Local government by the Community-Based Organization added to the economy value and improvement of the general wellbeing of residents in the area.	240	134	2	4	380
7	Do you think that loan provision for small and medium scale businesses by the Community-Based Organization as part of her business and entrepreneurial empowerment programme help in addressing poverty and unemployment among the inhabitants of the host communities in Onicha Local Government	96	78	121	85	380
8	Do you think that financial and material supports for building and renovation of markets in some communities help to boost small and medium scale businesses and significant impacted in creating wealth as well as reducing poverty rate within the Onicha Community	254	122	8	6	380

Key: SA = Strongly Agreed, A = Agree, SD = Strongly Disagreed, D = Disagreed.

Table 4.10 indicates that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the Town Unions play a strategic role in constructing rural markets in Onicha Local Government Area. For item five 215 respondents representing 56.58% strongly agreed that town union has contributes to human capital development in your area through market construction and rehabilitation projects. It was also observed that 152 respondents representing 40% agreed, 6 respondents representing 1.58% strongly disagreed while 7 respondents representing 1.84% disagreed. Four question six, 240 respondents representing 63.16% strongly agreed that

renovation of mini markets and shops in Onicha Local government by the Town Union added to the economy value and improvement of the general wellbeing of residents in the area. It was also observed that 134 respondents representing 35.26% agreed, 2 respondents representing 0.52% strongly disagreed while 4 respondents represent 1.05% disagreed. For items seven, 96 respondents representing 25.26% strongly agreed that loan provision for small and medium scale businesses by the town union as part of her business and entrepreneurial empowerment programme help in addressing poverty and unemployment among the inhabitants of the host communities in Onicha Local Government. It was also observed that 78 respondents representing 20.52% Agreed, 121 respondents representing 31.84% strongly disagreed while 85 respondents representing 22.37% disagreed. For item eight, 254 respondents representing 66.84% strongly agreed that financial and material supports for building and renovation of markets in some communities help to boost small and medium scale businesses and significant impacted in creating wealth as well as reducing poverty rate within the Onicha Community. It was observed that 122 representing 32.11 agreed, 8 respondents representing 2.11% strongly disagreed while 6 respondents representing 1.58% disagreed.

Table 4.11: Analysis of respondents from the question III: What is the level of Community-based organization engagement in provision of pipe born water in rural areas in Onicha local government area?

S/N	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	Total
14	Are you aware of any water infrastructure intervention programme and project initiated by the town union in your area	127	153	53	47	380
15	Do you think that the Community-Based Organization has done well in the area of water by providing pipe borne water in most public places to reduce the stress of travelling far in search of water as well as to reduce the level of infrastructure deficit in this area in your community.	153	127	47	53	380
16	Most of the pipe borne water provided by the Community-Based Organization in your community has stand a test of time and has contributed meaningfully to the general wellbeing of the host communities in Onicha Local Government Area	82	157	71	70	380
17	In a bid to support community development, do you think that the bore hole drilled by the town union in some communities has help in addressing water borne diseases experienced by the inhabitants of the region.	167	176	17	20	380
18	With the aid of adding value to people source of livelihood, do you think that Community-Based Organization mini water project with treatment plant, help in solving water related scarcity within the host communities of Ebonyi State	178	151	24	27	380

Key: SA = Strongly Agreed, A = Agree, SD = Strongly Disagreed, D = Disagreed.

Table 4.11 indicates that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that Community-Based Organization Water Infrastructural intervention programmes mitigate water deficit within the host communities in Ebonyi State. For item fourteen, 127 respondents representing 33.42% strongly agreed aware of water infrastructure intervention programme and project initiated by the Community-Based Organization in your area. It was also observed that 153 respondents representing 40.26 per cent agreed, 53 respondents representing 13.94% strongly disagreed while 47 respondents representing 12.37% disagreed. Four questions fifteen, 153 respondents strongly agreed that the Community-Based Organization has done well in the area of water by providing pipe borne water in most public places to reduce the stress of travelling far in search of water as well as to reduce the level of infrastructure deficit in this area in your community. It was also observed that 127 respondents agreed, 47 respondents strongly disagreed, while 53 respondents disagreed. For item sixteen, 82 respondents representing 21.58% strongly agreed that most of the pipe borne water provided by the Community-Based Organization in most communities has stand a test of time and has contributed meaningfully to the general wellbeing of the host communities in Onicha Local Government Area. It was also observed that 157 respondents representing 41.32% agreed, 71 respondents representing 18.68% strongly disagreed while 70 respondents represent 18.42% disagreed. For item seventeen 167 respondents representing 43.94% strongly agreed that in a bid to support community development, bore hole drilled by the town union in some communities has help in addressing water borne diseases experienced by the inhabitants of the region. It was also observed that 176 respondents representing 46.32% agreed, 17 respondents representing 4.47% strongly disagreed while 20 respondents representing 5.26% disagreed. For items eighteen, 178 respondents representing 46.84% strongly agreed that with the aid of adding value to people source of livelihood, Community-Based Organization mini water project with treatment plant, help in solving water related scarcity within the host communities of Ebonyi State. It was also observed that 151 respondents representing 39.74% Agreed, 24 respondents representing 6.32% strongly disagreed while 27 respondents representing 7.11% disagreed.

4.2 Finding

The hypotheses were formulated to give the work the needed scientific direction. It was analyzed using both quantitative and descriptive technique of data analysis. The quantitative data were analyzed using Person Product Moment (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significant, while the qualitative data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis method with the aid of Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

Evaluation of Research Hypothesis I: Community-based organization tends to provides rural electricity in Onicha Local Government Area

In line with the above stated hypothesis, this study seeks to evaluate the impacts the efforts of Community-Based Organization in providing rural electrification in Onicha Local Government Area of Eboni State. Analysis of responses from respondents in Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used in the evaluation of this hypothesis. Thus, the focus group discussion was made up of thirty (30) participants (consisting of ten (5) persons from Oshiri, Onicha-Igboeze, Abaomege, Ukawa, Isu and Isinkwo Villages. They were asked whether Town Union electricity projects have help in rural electrification in Onicha Local Government.

Question 1: What has been done by the Community-Based Organization in enhancing rural electrification in your community?

In responding to the above stated question, a discussant, a man noted thus:

Infrastructural is a backbone of any society, thus no society can be tagged ‘developed society’ without the presence and indices of infrastructural projects and programmes. Hence, this can only be achieved through community self-help efforts. For decades, the Community-Based Organization through their activities has consistently demonstrated a high level of community development efforts through various communities and state assistance programme. These include provision of new and rehabilitation class room blocks in public primary and secondary schools, Construction of mini markets, urban- rural electrification projects in Oshiri, Onicha-Igboeze, Abaomege, Ukawa, Isu and Isinkwo communities among others (P15/FGD/Male/11th July, 2022).

Question 2: In area of electricity, what has been done by the Community-Based Organization to improve the rural electrification in your area?

Reacting to the above stated question, a discussant maintained that

Since its creation, the Community-Based Organization has strived to contribute immensely in variety of rural electricity projects in order to improve the standard of living in within the Onicha LGA. Through the provision of transformers and electricity poles as well as cables to more than 5 communities in Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. This no doubt has significantly changed the phase and the economy activities of the inhabitants of the areas for better (P21/FGD/ Isinkwo/Male /27th June, 2022).

Another Discussant, a community leader added thus:

In response to rural electrification, Community-Based Organization has done well by donating and installing two 33 KVA electrical transformers in two. The benefited communities were Oshiri, Abaomege and Isu Community. To her, this development has boosted the economic lives of the inhabitants of the communities and created a sense of belonging among them (P17/FGD/Oshiri/Female /27th June, 2022).

A discussant added thus:

Apart from donation of transformers, electricity poles and cables, communities of Onicha among others do enjoy constant electricity from the Community-Based Organization for years as part of their community development project. Such kind gesture by the union has given the economy activities of the region a boost as most indigenes have engaged in series of businesses such as ice block, frozen foods among others to end a leaving.

Another Respondents added,

Though the Union had donated transformers in some selected communities in Onicha Local Government Area, most communities are still in perpetual darkness as most people cannot access electricity which is one of the cardinal needs of man in any society. He further added that even if it is not their core responsibility to provide electricity to the community, but since they have initiated such lofty idea, they should not exclude some communities and favor others, but rather all communities should be carried along to ensure that rural electricity is accessible to all in Onicha Local Government Area.

Another Respondent, a woman added thus;

I am here to applaud the union for their selfless efforts towards development my community. That for years, the government or its agent has not initiated a meaningful development project in most communities in Onicha Local Government Area, rather, they play politics and leave the citizenry in perpetual backwardness in area of infrastructural projects. She further added that the Union, since they are the common hope of the rural dwellers within the communities in Onicha LGA should do more by ensuring that the rural dwellers are not left behind when it comes to infrastructural development, as well as rural electrification in Onicha's communities and villages.

Pictures below shows sample of rural electricity projects embarked by the Town Union in Isinkwo community Onicha Local Government, Ebonyi State.



Figure 4.1: Shows the 33KVA electrical transformer donated by Community-Based Organization in Isinkwo community, Onicha LGA, Ebonyi State

Source: Field Work (2024)



Figure 4.2: Shows a 33KVA electrical transformer donated by Community-Based Organization in Isu Community, Onicha LGA.

Source: Field Work (2024)

Testing of Hypothesis Two: Community-Based Organization is likely to play strategic role in construction of rural markets in Onicha Local Government Area, Ebonyi.

Table 4.12: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Analysis on Community-based organization and construction of rural markets in Onicha Local Government Area.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	Total
5	Do you think that Community-Based Organization has contributes to human capital development in your area through market construction and rehabilitation projects	215	152	6	7	380
6	Has renovation of mini markets and shops in Onicha Local government by the Community-Based Organization added to the economy value and improvement of the general wellbeing of residents in the area.	240	134	2	4	380
7	Do you think that loan provision for small and medium scale businesses by the town union as part of her business and entrepreneurial empowerment programme help in addressing poverty and unemployment among the inhabitants of the host communities in Onicha Local Government	96	78	121	85	380
8	Do you think that financial and material supports for building and renovation of markets in some communities help to boost small and medium scale businesses and significant impacted in creating wealth	254	122	8	6	380

as well as reducing poverty rate within the Onicha Community

Table 4.13: Pearson Correlation Computation and Result

Variables	$\sum X_1$	$\sum X_1^2$	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$	R	Z _{calculated}	Z _{table value}	N
Town Union (X ₁)	1484	47						
Rural Market Construction (Y)	550630	583	17424	0.29	2.10	1.96	380	

r = Correlation Coefficient; N= No. of Respondents; Not Significant at 0.05 significance level (For Manual Calculations, see Appendix II)

Decision Rule: when $r = 1$, there is a perfect relationship between the two variables x and y. this implies that when x increases, y increases. Accordingly, when $r = -1$, there is a perfect negative relationship between the two variables x and y, hence, when x increases, y decreases and vice versa. On the test of significance, the calculated value of 2.10 was obtained against the table value of 1.96. The rule on the test of significance provides that when the calculated value is greater than the table value, it implies that the relationships significant. In this case, it can be affirmed that there is significant relationship between Community-Based Organization and rural market construction and development projects. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This is because through market intervention programmes, Community-Based Organization has impacted immensely on business advancement within the communities through construction and rehabilitation of mini markets across the communities in Onicha Local Government Area.

Evaluation of Research Hypothesis Three; Community-Based Organization tends to engagement in provision of pipe born water in rural areas in Onicha Local Government Area

Question 3: Did you think that Community-Based Organization water intervention projects has contribute significantly to the accessibility of clean and portable water within the host communities of Onicha Community, Ebonyi State.

In reaction to the above question, a discussant, a woman added thus:

In area of social needs, Community-Based Organization has intervened by providing both clean and portable borehole water to most communities in Onicha community with the aim of ending water borne diseases and improve living condition of the host communities. This is as a result of frequent call for and the needs for portable water by the inhabitants of the locality due to contamination of most streams and lakes by human and industrial activities which in the past served as major source of drinking in the area [P18/FGD/ Ukawu/Female /11th July, 2023).

Another discussant added

Before Community-based organization intervention in this area, the inhabitants of Udumunne in Eastern Obolo Local government were challenged with the problem of accessing clean and portable water. To er, prior to this period, majority of the people do travel in miles to the neighboring communities to access clean water while those that cannot trek, relied on sachet and table water from neighboring local government. She further added that most of the illness that occur in the area to water related diseases caused by frequent water pollution as a result of reckless activities in the area [P18/FGD/ Isinkwo /Female /11th July, 2023).

Question 4: Did you think that Community-Based Organization water intervention projects has contribute significantly to the accessibility of clean and portable water within the host communities of Onicha Local Government.

In reaction to the above question, a discussant, a woman added thus:

Though, the Union has provided most communities with portable borehole, most times, the water projects doesn't flow to all communities as a result of poor electricity supply by the electricity supply company in the region. She pleaded that the electricity distribution company operating in Ebonyi state should key into the philosophy of the Union, by ensuring that electricity supply is adequate in order to help in boosting the water projects executed by the Community-Based Organization in the area.

Another Respondents added thus:

Most times, some hoodlums do vandalize the water borehole and pullout the pump which most times makes the efforts of the Union aborted. He therefore, called for community leaders to team up vigilante group in order to ensure a proper secured and protection of the community development projects executed by the government and the Community-Based Organization for the benefits citizenry in Oshiri autonomous community.

Another Respondents, a woman added thus:

In most cases, it has been observed that some of the contractors contracted by the Union to install borehole water tanks and pump within the selected community in Onicha Local Government Area connived with the leaders especially the eggs from the youth wing to install a sub-standard water pumping machine which in few months spoiled off. This according to him, no doubt truncated the union efforts in providing a reliable and long-lasting water projects to the community that can stand a test of time.

Another Respondents added thus:

Though the Union has done well irrespective of the economy by providing some meaning infrastructural projects in almost all communities that made up Onicha Local Government in Ebonyi Sate, they need to do more by ensuring that whom they entrusted project execution to are actively monitored as to ascertain the quality of materials purchased for the project implementation in most communities in Onicha LGA.

In addition to above, another respondent pleaded for:

Government and its agents to also play a strategic role in developing most of the local communities in Onicha LGA. To him, with the assistant of the government and the private sector such as multinational and indigenous companies operating in the area through their social activities will help to assist the Community-Based Organization in area of infrastructural

development in Onicha's communities in order to raise the hope of the rural dwellers whose hope has lost in the region.

In line with the above stated views, the pictures below show the sample of rural water infrastructural projects initiated and executed by Community-Based Organization in most LGA in Onicha LGA, Ebonyi State. These are presented below:



Figure 4.3: Shows a water project donated by the Community-Based Organization in Isu, community, Onicha LGA.

Source: Field Work (2024)



Figure 4.4: Shows a Solar inverter water project donated by Community-Based Organization in Onicha-Igboeze community.

Source: Field Work (2024).



Figure 4.5: Shows water project donated by Community-Based Organization in Ukawu community Ebonyi State

Source: Field Work, (2024).

Question 5: What would have been the possible challenges facing the Community-based Organization in enhancing rural electrification in communities within Onicha Onicha Local Government Area.

In response to above raised question, a respondent, a member of the Town Union added that;

The major challenges facing the Union is that of funding. He added that how to raise fund to executes as well as to fund projects across the communities in Onicha Local Government Area has been a major factor affecting the Union execute capital projects across the communities and villages that made up the Onicha Onicha Local Government Area. He pleaded for supports from government, private sector as well as well to do individual within and outside the shore of Nigeria who is their son or daughter, in law or son in-law, indeed friends of Onicha Autonomous community to bring heads together in order to promote the developmental stride of their community.

Another Respondents, a woman added thus;

That the primary concerned here is not about funding, is about the attitude of the citizens towards some of the projects initiated and executed by the Union. To him, the act of vandalizing electricity transformer, stilling bore hole pump by the youths of the community is quite condemning. To her one thing is to provide the community with the need infrastructure within their financial capacity, another thing is to consolidate and protect this project for the benefits of all. She then calls for heads of families and communities to ensure that whenever projects are executed in their community, their core role is to protect and secure those projects against hoodlum, who which to tagged themselves enemies of progress and development within the community.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

This section deals with the analysis of the findings of the study. The study was carried out to examine the role of community-based organization in community development using Onicha Onicha Local Government Area as a reference point. The three hypotheses formulated for the study were tested using both quantitative and qualitative methods. In evaluating hypothesis one which states that Town Unions tends to provides rural electricity in Onicha Local Government Area. It was observed by the researcher that Community-Based Organization through her community development activities to some extent contribute to rural electricity development in Onicha local government area of Ebonyi State. This has been seen in the area of donation of transformer, poll and electricity cable among others.

In the examination of hypothesis two, which posits that Community-Based Organization is likely to play strategic role in construction of rural markets in Onicha Local Government Area. It became evident that Community-Based Organization have significantly contributed to the generation of wealth and the enhancement of the economic foundation of the residents in these host communities through the construction of mini markets and empowering the local women with loans in petty businesses.

This observation was substantiated by the resounding praise and appreciation expressed by numerous beneficiaries, who lauded the Community-Based Organization for their benevolent initiatives. Nevertheless, the study also surfaced an imperative need for improvement in Community-Based Organization rural market rehabilitation and entrepreneurial initiatives. While their efforts have been noteworthy, there is room for advancement and a broader impact. The findings underscore that the scope and reach of their projects and business empowerment programs are not all-encompassing. This revelation calls upon the Community-Based Organization to heighten their commitment in this sphere by expanding the reach of benefited communities and broadening the geographical coverage to encompass a more comprehensive array of villages within the region.

In the scrutiny of hypothesis three, which posits that Community-Based Organization tends to engagement in provision of pipe born water in rural areas in Onicha Local Government Area, a discerning analysis revealed substantial and palpable contributions by the union in the sphere of rural water within the region. The Community-Based Organization in this part has undoubtedly allocated substantial resources toward constructing bore hole and water tanks in Onicha community. In Conclusion, the interventions undertaken by the Community-Based Organization manifest in a spectrum of forms, each tailored to the distinct needs of various community. The study observed that Community-Based Organization through her social activities contributes to infrastructure development in Onicha Community. Most discussant in the Focus Group Discussion agreed on the fact that Community-Based Organization has tried to leave up to expectations through their community development projects and programmes. This has been seen in the areas of road construction, provision of potable water and electricity, upgrading of health facilities, as well as supporting educational sector by constructing and renovating classroom blocks, donation of laboratory equipment, dormitories as well as providing financial incentives for teachers among others to improve the living standards of the inhabitants of the communities' sample for the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

As earlier stated, the main objective of this study was to examine the extent to which town union act as an agent of community development in Onicha Local Government of Ebonyi state. The study was introduced with a thorough emphasis on the background, as was patterned in line with the subject matter and this paved the way for the identification of the research problem. The study made efforts in drawing up research questions and hypotheses with reference to the identified problems and the specific objectives of the study. This no doubt played a vital role in the analysis of data and the subsequent achievement of results.

Chapter two was a review of existing literature and this gave room for the review of the contributions of scholars and authors under the conceptual and empirical perspectives. This was followed by the theoretical framework which allowed for explanations to buttress the subject matter. Furthermore, the questionnaire designed for the study for use in the collection of data played a vital role in providing the researcher with the needed information which later constituted the variables that were used in data analysis and discussion of findings. The study was conducted with a sample extraction of 380, while the sampling technique adopted was the multi-stage random sampling. The descriptive survey approach was further adopted to evaluate hypotheses raised with the aid of FGD, and this was based upon the fact that the approach enabled the researcher to collect detailed information which described the phenomena.

The hypotheses were further tested at 0.5 level of significance using the Pearson correlation, which led to the rejection of the null hypotheses (H_0), and the acceptance of the alternative hypotheses. Thus, the results showed that the calculated value of 2.10 was obtained against the table value of 1.96. The rule on the test of significance provides that when the calculated value is greater than the table value, it implies that the relationships significant. In this case, it can be affirmed that there is significant relationship between Community-Based Organization and rural market construction and development projects. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This is because through market intervention programmes, Community-Based Organization has impacted immensely on business advancement within the communities through construction and rehabilitation of mini markets across the communities in Onicha Local Government Area.

5.2 Conclusion

The importance of the community development cannot be overemphasized. Like every other country of the world, the federal government of Nigeria in a bid to enhance community development has encouraged the state and local governments to establish a community base development agents or organization to foster development at the rural level which town union is inclusive. Unlike, every other community development union and organization, town union aims at developing the immediate communities in Onicha Onicha Local Government Area where government absence is felt.

In a bid to ensure socio- economic and infrastructural development of most communities in Ebonyi State, the Onicha Local Government Council has drafted and implemented bye-laws that encouraged the establishment of Community-Based Organization such as Progressive union, progressive association, development union among others with the primary aimed of playing a supportive and developmental role in the area of infrastructural and human capital development. However, to ensure the legitimacy of union leadership, the law also allows the unions to conduct elections in order to select their leaders through the approval

of the local government council and the state government citizens. This practice today is seen to be of the primordial communalism that existed in the Igbo society/community before the absent of colonialism. Today, the Igbos in the south eastern Nigeria survived and sustained town unions in their region as agent of community development and as voice of the few (grassroots) who seeks and attracts government/NGO presence to the community to selvage the human needs.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are recommended:

- i. For strengthening collaboration between Community-Based Organization and government agencies to enhance infrastructural development among communities in Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.
- ii. Promoting transparency, accountability, and community participation in decision-making processes among leadership of Community-Based Organization in order to ensure effective service delivery in Onicha LGA.
- iii. Fostering partnerships, promoting inclusivity, and building resilience in town union-led infrastructure projects in order to achieve the expected result as agent of community development in Onicha LGA.
- iv. As revealed in one of the findings of this study, if these town unions are equipped, they will be an agent of community development in Ebonyi by building infrastructure in the community; attracting government's attention to the community needs; creating jobs for the youths in the community; building schools and paying teachers in the community; awarding scholarships and maintaining peace and security in the community.
- v. There should be a standard in the choice of members of Community-Based Organization. People of integrity and good reputation, meaningful members of the society who have the people's interest at heart should be appointed to run the affairs of the union.

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