

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS' CONTRIBUTIONS IN SELF HELP PROJECTS IN LAGOS STATE OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the personal characteristics of 50 selected Community Development Association (CDA) members from five communities in Lagos State of Nigeria. Types of projects executed, level of participation by members were investigated.

Results from the study showed that most members fell within the age range of 30-59 years, mostly males and married, and they were engaged in both primary and secondary occupations. The results further showed that most members had little or no education and they relied mostly on their self-efforts for project execution without any external financial assistance from other sources. Finally, most members rated CDA activities as low, but these ratings were not significantly related to their age, gender or educational qualification. The findings suggested that CDAs should work closely together with community development officers in their area, channel their requests and problems through them to both the Local and State governments.

Key words: Community Development Association, Participation, Local Government Area, Self-help Projects.

INTRODUCTION

Community development is an age long social activity in our society. Even before the advent of the colonial administration, people had at different times in history, organized themselves into groups and had employed communal resources to provide physical improvement and functional facilities in their respective localities. For example, communal labour was employed in constructing homesteads, clearing farmlands, roads, and even some public utility buildings, such as "Obas" palace, market stalls and town halls.

Some past attempts to achieve rural development in Nigeria failed due to the oil boom in the 1970s which gave people the erroneous impression that government should provide all their needs. Consequently, the spirit of self-help was relegated to the background [5]. However, the present economic reality in the country has made the people find a lasting solution to the social and economic problems of their communities, through Community Development Associations (CDAs). The CDAs exist under different names and varying sizes and are scattered all over the study areas. Members can be solely males or females, and sometimes mixed, depending on their predominant activities. The CDAs develop their rules and regulations themselves, plan and execute their programmes with very little or no interference from external bodies. Specifically, their activities involve holding meetings to discuss their programmes and projects, identification of their felt needs, participation in their community development project activities through supplying of labour, contribution of money and planting materials. They also accept donations to aid their project execution. It was discovered that women's association in selected local government areas of Osun state, Nigeria are very virile, and active at the grassroot level, with their popular goals being :financial assistance to members, supporting members during ceremonies, donating money and materials to the needy in the community[4]. Similarly, Volunteers Around the World(VAW), a non-governmental organization, had shown to be devoted to improving the standard of living for those that live in some of the most poverty stricken communities of Guatemala[8]. Their focus was to enhance community infrastructure through improved education, access to more advanced medical treatment, increased economic opportunities and myriads of small community development initiatives. Again, A self Assistance Programme(ASAP)-AFRICA is another non- profit charitable organization committed to working in partnership with rural communities in Zimbabwe, assisting people in the efforts to improve their own lives[3]. Specially, ASAP Africa's staff collaborates with the programme participants to create community-

driven projects that empower the beneficiaries to break the cycle of poverty, strengthen local education and improve nutrition and health. The source stated further that the interaction resulted into thousands of self reliant individuals in Zimbabwe that experienced profound improvements in their daily lives. Also, the United States Agency International Development (USAID) organized a special self -help programme in Africa for Guinea through the US embassy [7]. The special self help projects approved for funding in 2004 include : construction of school latrines, classrooms, health posts, and training centres. The overall purpose of the special self-help programmes was to show that US cares for the welfare of the African people and is interested in the self help endeavours of local communities.

The activities of CDAs in Nigeria are important because there seems to be a breakdown of the public institutions that formally catered for the people's welfare in rural communities. This might have been due to increased responsibility at the public-institutions. Many CDAs, where they exist, have decided to have some social and economic development of the various communities as their major objectives. For instance, in the field of education, many CDAs are involved in building classrooms for primary and secondary schools which are eventually handed over to the government [1]. All these activities are important components of the overall rural development programmes of any government.

The use of CDAs for development is characterized as a process of social action in which the people of a community organize themselves for planning action, making groups and individual plans to meet their needs and solve their problems. They execute these plans, with a maximum reliance upon community resources and supplement these resources, when necessary with services and materials from the government [2]. However, CDAs' approach to self-help involves the fullest participation of all the members in the decision making process. Participation of local people in CDA activities is an act of involving residents in a project which requires a democratic approach .

The belief is that, all members make their contributions to those decisions which affect them. It was pointed out that people are more likely to be committed to a rural project, if they are involved in its planning and implementation because they are more likely to identify themselves with its use and regard it as their project[6]. It is therefore usually observed that projects undertaken by CDAs are always successful especially as most members would not like to be associated with failure. From the foregoing the activities and achievements of CDAs appear to be impressive. However, their efforts

at developing the rural communities through self-help projects are still facing some considerable setbacks. For example, despite their self-commitment attitude towards project implementation, quite a lot of these projects had been abandoned due to lack of funding or other relevant resources. Some projects turned out to be rather useless to the community as a result of improper planning. Finally, it is a common knowledge that some self-help efforts are more effective in meeting the needs of certain communities than others. Therefore, this study was designed to assess the contribution of CDAs in self-help projects in the study area.

The general objective of the study was to determine Community Development Associations' contribution to self-help projects in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- (1) identify the selected personal characteristics (age, marital status, gender, educational level, cash contribution, time contribution) of CDA members,
- (2) identify the occupations of the CDA members,

- (3) assess the projects participation in projects by CDA members,
- (4) examine the types of project participation by CDA members,
- (5) determine the sources of assistance for CDA projects.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in selected CDA communities of Lagos State (Figure1). The sampling of the CDA members for the study was in three stages. Firstly, five local governments, that are predominantly rural, were purposively selected out of the 22 LGAs in Lagos State. Secondly, the following five communities with prominent CDA activities were also purposively selected, one from each selected LGA, by knowledgeable personnel (community development workers): Igbogbo, Ijede, Ipakodo, Odogiyan, and Imota (Figure2). Finally, from these five communities, 50 CDA members were selected using simple random sampling techniques from all the 68 registered members (that is, 74%) in the five communities as shown in Table 1



FIGURE 1; MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING THE 36 STATES, INCLUDING LAGOS

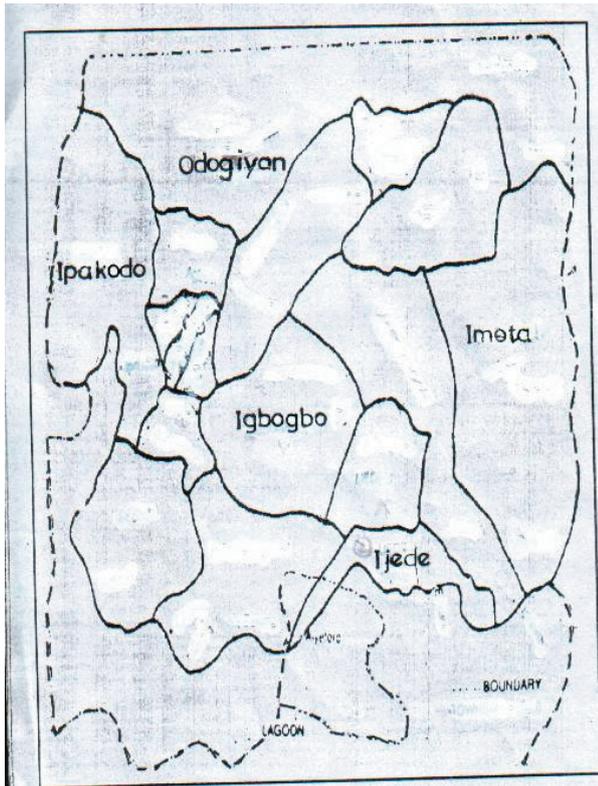


Fig. 2: MAP OF IKORODU LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHOWING STUDY AREAS

Measurement of Variables

Variables for the study were measured in the following way:

Age: CDA members were requested to indicate their ages choosing the appropriate interval from the following list:(1) less than 30, (2) 30-39, (3) 40-49, (4) 50-59, (5)

over 59 years.

Marital Status: CDA members were requested to indicate the group they belong from the following alternatives: Single, married, divorced, widowed.

Gender CDA members were asked to indicate whether they are Male or Female

Educational Level: Four options given to CDA members to choose one:

- (1) no formal education,
- (2) adult education only,
- (3) attended Primary School,
- (4) attended Secondary School, or higher education

Cash donation: CDA members were asked to indicate the amount of cash contributed to CDA projects from the following alternatives: less than ₦201, 201-500, 501-1000 and over ₦1000 in the last one year. (1USD=₦140)

Time Contribution: CDA members were asked to indicate their time contributed to CDA projects in the last one year.

- (a) Once in a week
- (b) Once in a month
- (c) Once in two months
- (d) Once in three months or more

Finally, using a Likert-type five point rating scale of “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” (with scores 5-1 for positively worded statements and 1-5 for negatively worded statements respectively), respondents were requested to indicate their opinion on each of the 18 selected statements (nine positive, and nine negative) about CDAs activities in the study area.

Simple descriptive statistics such as means and percentages were used to describe the data obtained while chi-square statistics was used to determine if age, gender and educational level of the questioned members

Table 1: Selection of Respondents from Research Locations.

Locations	Selected CDAs members	
Igbogbo	18	13
Ijede	16	12
Ipakodo	10	7
Odogiyan	13	10
Imota	11	8
Total	68	50

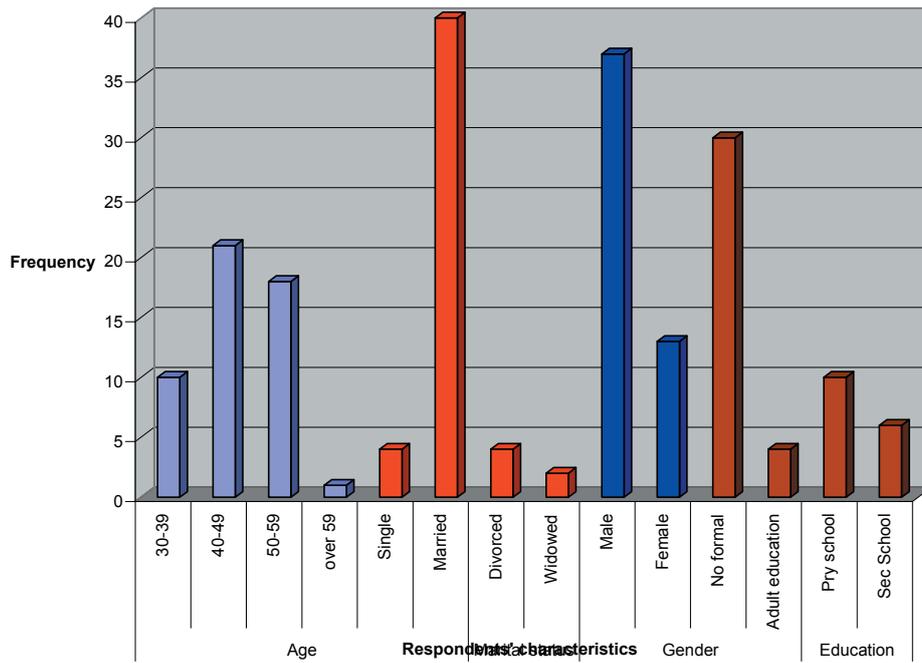


Figure 3: Age, Marital status, gender and Educational level of respondents

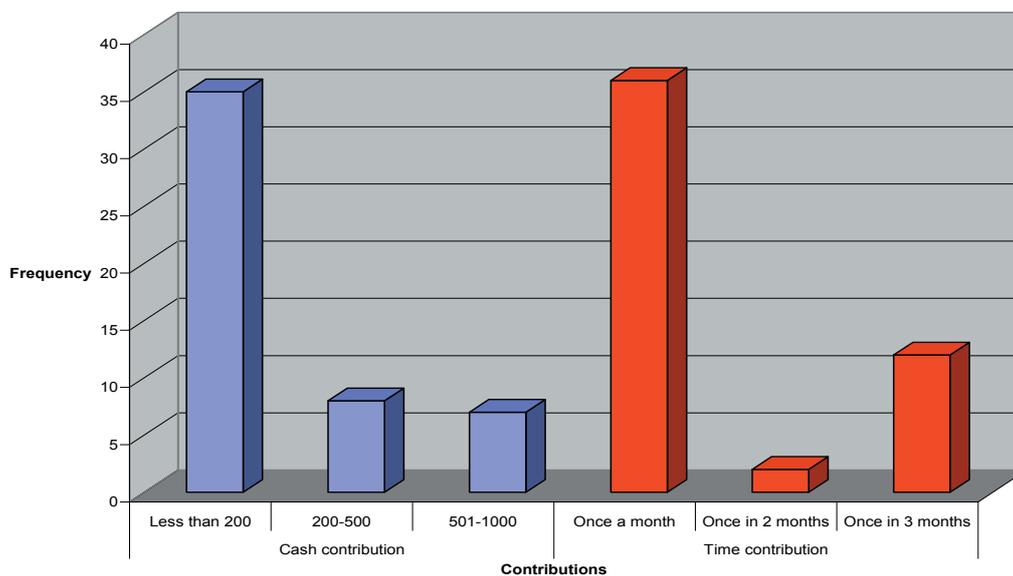


Figure 4: Cash and Time contribution among respondents

has any significant relationship with their opinion on the activities of CDAs at 0.05 probability level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Characteristics

Data in Figures 3 and 4 showed the demographic characteristics of CDA members questioned within the framework of the study.

Forty two percent of CDA members were between ages 40 and 49 years, while 36.0 percent were between 50 and 59 years. This result indicates that most members (78.0%) were very mature and are in the active stage of life. Therefore, they have potentials to develop themselves through self-help projects.

On marital status, 80.0 percent were married, 4.0 and 8.0 percent were single and divorced respectively, while 4.0 percent were widowed. This result supports the above maturity trend observed.

Gender wise, most CDA members (74.0%) were males while only 26.0 percent were females. There were male and female activities in most CDA projects in every community. This gender distribution result, although not evenly distributed should suffice for their need.

The educational level of members was also investigated. The results showed that 60.0 percent had no formal education, 20.0 and 12.0 percent attended primary and secondary schools and above respectively, while 8.0 percent had adult education qualification. These results showed most CDA members in the study area were not educated and the few educated members (40.0%) had very low educational qualifications.

CDA members were requested to indicate their contribution in terms of cash and members' time devoted towards project execution. Their response (Figure 4) indicated that 70.0 percent of members could only contribute less than ₦200.0 per month, 16.0 and 14.0 percent contributed between ₦201-500 and ₦501 - 1000 respectively. (1USD=₦140) This low rate cash contribution might have been due to the poverty level of the people in the study area.

With regards to time made available for CDA activities, no member could make himself or herself available once a week, but almost three-quarters of the members (72.0%) were able to devote their time once in a month, while over a quarter (28.0%) could only be available once in two or more months (Figure 4). The poverty level of the people might have been responsible for this relatively low turn out, too.

Occupation of CDA members

All the members of the CDA interviewed have

some kind of secondary occupation along with their primary occupation. In this study, 70 percent of members took farming as their primary occupation, while 36 percent took it as secondary (Table 2).

The next notable occupation is trading. Only 20 percent indicated trading as their primary occupation, while 24 percent regarded it as secondary. The proportion of members taking to other occupations such as bricklaying, weaving, dyeing and carpentry were very negligible. These results showed that they were all very busy because farming and trading take a lot of time. Therefore, they could only afford a very little time for communal work of the association.

Project Participation by CDA members

The projects in which CDA members can participate are many. Participation refers to construction and maintenance of the projects in reference. They include among others, health facilities (health center, maternity, and dispensary), market stalls, roads, schools, post office, wells, boreholes, pipe-borne water and electricity. Data in Table 3 showed that 22.0 percent participated in health care facility projects, 20.0 percent in market-stall constructions, and 18 percent in roads, 12 percent in rehabilitation of schools, 10 percent in drinking water, the same percentage in electricity supply projects and 8 percent in post office construction.

One interesting observation in the result is that at least, roughly one tenth of CDA members participated in some of the listed projects. Participation is one of the prerequisites of sustainability in CDA programmes.

Types of Project Participation by CDA members

After identifying the projects in which the CDA members participated, the next important question is the form of the participation. Data in Table 4 showed that 52 percent participated by contributing money, time, materials and labour, while 14.0 percent participated by contributing money only, 4.0 percent by material resources only, 26.0 percent by serving on implementation committees only (Table 4). Only 4.0 percent did not participate in any form of activity. This result showed that almost all of them (96.0%) were involved in at least one type of activity. This involvement is likely to lead to commitment which should eventually lead to successful implementation of their objectives.

Sources of Assistance for CDA Projects

CDA members were requested to indicate the sources of assistance for three projects in their community. Data in Table 5 showed that 62.0 percent indicated no form of assistance from anywhere for the first project mentioned, while 72.0 percent and 36.0 percent also indicated no external assistance for the second and third

Table 2: Occupation of CDA Members

Occupation	Primary		Secondary	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Farming	35	70.0	18	36.0
Trading	10	20.0	12	24.0
Bricklaying	1	2.0	4	8.0
Weaving	1	2.0	-	-
Carpentry	-	-	5	10.0
Others (dyeing)	3	6.0	11	22.0
	50	100.0	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2003.

Table 3: Project Participation by CDA Members

Projects (both construction and maintenance)	Frequency	Percentage
Health Facilities (Maternity, Dispensary, Health Centre)	11	22.0
Market stall construction	10	20.0
Roads	9	18.0
School Rehabilitation	6	12.0
Well, Boreholes, Pipe borne water	5	10.0
Electricity Supply	5	10.0
Post Office	4	8.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2003.

Table 4: Project Participation by CDA Members

Form of Participation	Frequency	Percentage
Contributed money, time, materials and labour	26	52.0
Contributed money only	7	14.0
Contributed material resources only	2	4.0
Served on implementation committee only	13	26.0
No participation at all	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2003.

Table 5: Distribution of Sampled Members of CDAs according to the types of Government Assistance

Types of Government Assistance	1 st Project		2 nd Project		3 rd Project	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
No assistance	31	62.0	36	72.0	18	36.0
Grants	18	36.0	14	28.0	-	-
Gifts	1	2.0	-	-	-	-
Loan	-	-	-	-	-	-
No response	-	-	-	-	32	64.0
Total	50	100.0	50	100.0	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2003.

Table 6: Chi-square Analysis of some Independent Variables and Members' rating of CDA Activities

Selected Variables of Members	X ²	Df	P	Decision
Age	2.7	1	>0.05	NS*
Gender	1.3	1	>0.05	NS
Educational Level	1.2	1	>.05	NS

*NS = Not Significant

project, respectively.

However, about one third (36%) indicated some assistance through grants and 2.0 percent through gifts in the first projects. In the second project, 28.0 percent of members indicated some assistance only in the form of grants, but no assistance in the form of grants or gifts was indicated in the third project. No single member indicated any assistance in the form of loan in any of the three projects, although 64.0 percent of members did not respond to this question for the third project. In essence, the results showed that CDAs predominantly rely upon their own self-efforts and affordable resources to execute their projects. It could also be inferred that government, at any level, has not given CDAs adequate support for their local development projects. The inability of the government to do this could be either due to the social, political and economic problems that have engulfed the country for some time, or to the fact that the CDAs did not make any appreciable request towards the government. This has also made the rural people realize that they could achieve their basic felt needs through self-help efforts.

Rating of CPA's Activities by Members

Using the five-point rating scales described under the methodology section, scores obtained from the ratings of the activities of CDAs by members ranged from 57 to 80. These scores were categorized into two (Low and High) groups, that is, 57 – 70 and 71- 80 respectively. Similarly, age of members were categorized into two groups of less than 40 and above 40 years respectively. Gender naturally meant two categories, while education was also divided in two categories, (that is, no formal education and some forms of education).

Table 6 presents the results or Chi-square analysis showing the relationship between ratings of the activities of CDAs by members and their age, gender and educational level. Incidentally, none of the three variables significantly affected the ratings of CDA activities by members (p>0.05). The reason might be that since all of them were committed and were involved in the projects, they could all rate these activities in the

same way, regardless of age, gender and education.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Most CDA members in the sample were between the ages of 30 and 59 years and most of them were married. No gender restriction was set for membership and most members have both primary and secondary occupations. CDA members in the study area appeared to be living at very low subsistence level, as 70.0 percent could not even contribute ₦ 200 per month for developmental projects. No single member could afford to spare any time for communal work at least once in the week, while 76.0 percent can only afford time once or twice in a month. Most of them (60.0%) had no formal education and this is likely to affect their project identification, planning, execution and monitoring capabilities. The study further showed that CDA members rely solely on their own efforts to provide some basic amenities for the community because 62.0 percent and 72.0 percent indicated that no external assistance was obtained for projects 1 and 2 executed in the community, respectively.

Virtually no assistance was confirmed for the third project (36.0%) and the other 64.0 percent of the respondents were unable to answer the question. Most members (62.0%) rated CDA activities as low, while 38.0 percent rated it high. Incidentally, age, gender and educational level had no significant relationships with members' ratings.

Based on these findings, CDAs should work closely with the community development staff in their community for channeling their problems and request to both the local and state governments. These two tiers of government, particularly the local government that supposed to be grassroots-based, should identify these CDAs, streamline their activities and provide adequate supervision, coordination, motivation, monitoring, and evaluation of their projects through appropriate government personnel. This is because Non-Governmental Organisations of which CDAs are good examples, had been shown to be very beneficial both to

the government and the community in supplementing government efforts in the rural areas.

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