

# Analysis of the Activities of Community Development Associations in Rural Transformation in Emohua Town, Nigeria

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## **Objective:**

Little empirical attention has been given to the activities of community development associations in rural transformation. The main objective of the present study was to investigate and analyse the activities of community development associations in rural transformation. It is believed that an assessment of the activities will provide workable solutions that will encourage active participation in the formation of community development associations and bring about improved living conditions from whatever project community development associations embark upon.

## **Method:**

Data were collected from a convenience sample of 500 adults and adolescents from the villages of Emohua Town, that constitute the catchment zone of the study (N= 500). The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Relevance of Community Development Associations on Rural Transformation Questionnaire (RCDARTQ)". The questionnaire contained 25 structured items designed to measure the relationship between the independent and dependent variables under study.

## **Results:**

The results of the data are based on research questions and hypotheses generated for the study. The hypotheses tested show that the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient calculated in each case was higher than the critical table value. All means and standard deviations are listed in Tables 1 to 5. The analysis confirmed that there is a significant relationship between community development associations and the rural transformation of Emohua Town.

## **Conclusions:**

The important message from this study is that there is a direct positive relationship between the two variables examined, as significant relationships were established between community development associations' activities and rural transformation.

## **Implications:**

The implication for adult and community education in general and community development in particular is that voluntary associations are good instruments in the task of improving the socio-economic welfare of rural people. People are ready and willing to participate in the development of their communities whenever they are motivated to do so. Rural people prefer to organise themselves for development through the institution of community development associations. Community development projects are mostly initiated by the adults of the community. In the town they have some innate qualities which, when identified, encouraged and developed, evolve into a powerful and purposeful community.

## **Introduction**

From the earliest periods of human history, communities have sought to improve their lot through self-help efforts otherwise known as community development activities; as such community development constitutes a part of the overall development strategy. Hence, the theory of community development is derived from a general theory of development. Due to the secular character of rural African society, specific programmes and strategies are usually designed to address the problem of underdevelopment and poverty. One of the enduring and flourishing heritages of traditional African society is their involvement in community

development efforts. It has been an indigenous mechanism and technique employed by the people to identify their felt needs, choose what they want and take co-operative action to satisfy their needs. These community development efforts are today organised on a wider scale and are not limited to village level alone but have become part of people's lives at the village, local government, state and national levels. This explains why they are tied up with such ideals as ultimate control by the people, a substantial degree of freedom by individuals and groups, a considerable amount of government decentralization and widespread citizenship participation.

The main concept of community development is that a community should help itself by providing its felt needs. This is the reason why many communities in Emohua Town embarked on self-help development projects such as the construction of roads, markets, health centres, maternity homes, schools, bridges, water supply projects, town halls or civic centres and rural electricity projects. Indeed many communities in Emohua Town have, through various forms of informal education, sought to perpetuate training in self-help and self-reliant programmes. Right from a tender age, the spirit and purposes of mutual work get inculcated in the people through practical work experience, communal projects and tales extolling the virtues of self-help. Elders in the communities also teach the young through systematized apprenticeship and through the guilds and skills in agriculture, art and craft so that the community members are appropriately equipped to change and control their own environments for the better.

Human needs are insatiable and the government alone cannot meet them. Various efforts have been made by government, local communities, voluntary and international organisations to transform rural communities in recent times. One of the strategies being employed is best carried out under the umbrella of community development associations to provide the needs of communities in the areas of welfare service, environmental sanitation, health services and provision of other infrastructures to make life

meaningful for them. It is the coming together of people living within a given locality or community with the sole aim of identifying their felt needs and agreeing on the ways, means and moves towards the realisation of such identified needs.

Community development associations are a forum for people to articulate their views, aspirations and community needs. It is primarily aimed at helping people within a local community to identify their social needs, to consider the most effective ways of meeting these and to set about doing so, as far as their available resources permit. Hence it aims at building up and preserving society that pre-supposes and reinforces a common direction of interest and co-operation in order to achieve shared aims.

The specific aims of this study were to identify community development associations, assess their activities in rural transformation in Emohua Town and determine the effects of the activities of community development associations on rural transformation in Emohua Town. Five null hypotheses were raised. They include:

- i. There is no significant relationship between the community development associations' activities and the promotion of the health living standards in Emohua Town.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between the community development associations' activities and the promotion of road networks in Emohua Town.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between the community development associations' activities and their contribution to the educational development of Emohua Town.
- iv. There is no significant relationship between the community development associations' activities and the contribution to the socio-economic development of Emohua Town.

- v. There is no significant relationship between the community development associations' activities and the contribution to the cultural development of Emohua Town.

## Methods

The target population of this study consisted of 2273 adults and adolescents distributed over eight villages in Emohua Town, constituting the catchment zone of the study. Investigators using the multi-stage sampling technique selected 22% of them, which consisted of five hundred adult indigenes. This technique was used to get a fair and wider representation of the population on the basis of age, social status, education, profession and marital status.

### *Measures and procedures*

The in data used for the current analysis came from a questionnaire titled "Relevance of Community Development Associations on Rural Transformation Questionnaire (RCDARTQ)", which contained 25 structured items designed to measure the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Questions for the oral interview covered specific experiences of interviewees on the relevance of community development associations in rural transformation in Emohua Town. The response pattern was a 4-point Likert summated rating scale of agreement with assigned values of Strongly Disagree-1, Disagree-2, Agree-3, and Strongly Agree- 4. The design of the questionnaire was based on research questions and the hypotheses raised in this study. Ideas from previous research literature and the author's experiences also formed the basis for the design of the instruments.

The instruments were subjected to thorough screening in order to determine their validity. They have content validity and language appropriateness, confirming that the content of the test items measured favourably with the variables under study. The researchers used the test-re-test method to determine the reliability of the instruments. The scores were analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient formula. The instrument has a coefficient of 0.82. This

showed that the instrument was highly reliable and suitable for the collection of data.

The researchers then administered five hundred copies of the questionnaire to all the respondents. The investigators made use of research assistants to administer copies of the questionnaire in some of the institutions selected for the study. All 500 copies were retrieved, showing a 100% return rate.

### **Statistical analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions. The options of the respondents were scored based on their responses using the 4-point Likert type rating scale. A cut-off or decision point of 2.50 and above was regarded as a favourable decision and decision point below 2.50 as unfavourable. The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to analyse the data and test the validity of the five (5) hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels.

### **Results and Discussion**

The data were presented, analyzed and used in testing the hypotheses. The results are presented based on the research questions and hypotheses generated for the study.

**TEST OF HYPOTHESIS 1:** that there is no significant relationship between the community development associations' activities and the promotion of health living standards in Emohua Town.

The mean and standard deviation scores computed from the respondents' response scores about the activities carried out by their associations and their promotion of health living standards in Emohua Town are presented in Table 1. With N=500, df=498 and P= 0.05, the calculated r between the community development associations' activities and promotion of health living standards was 0.2847 and the critical value of r was  $\pm 0.1946$ . That being so therefore, the calculated r is statistically significant at  $\alpha=0.05$ , since it is greater than the critical value of r. Therefore the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) which stated that there is no significant relationship between the community

development associations' activities and the promotion of the health living standard in Emohua Town was not accepted and the conclusion is that there is a significant relationship between the activities carried out by community development associations and the promotion of health living standards in Emohua Town.

**TEST OF HYPOTHESIS 2:** that there is no significant relationship between the community development associations' activities and the promotion of road networks in Emohua Town.

The mean and standard deviation scores computed are presented in Table 2. With  $N=500$ ,  $df=498$  and  $P=0.05$ , the calculated  $r$  between the community development associations' activities and promotion of road network was 0.2333 and the critical value of  $r$  was  $\pm 0.1946$ . The calculated  $r$  is statistically significant at  $\alpha=0.05$ . Since it is higher than the critical value of  $r$ , the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ) is not accepted and the conclusion is that there is a significant relationship between the activities carried out by community development associations and the promotion of road network in Emohua Town.

**TEST OF HYPOTHESIS 3:** that there is no significant relationship between the community development associations' activities and their contribution to the educational development of Emohua Town. The findings are presented in Table 3. With  $N=500$ ,  $df=498$  and  $P=0.05$ , the calculated  $r$  between the community development associations' activities and contribution to the educational development was 0.2116 and the critical value of  $r$  was  $\pm 0.1946$ . The calculated  $r$  is statistically significant at  $\alpha=0.05$ , since it is greater than the critical value of  $r$ . The hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) is not accepted and the conclusion is that there is a significant relationship between the activities carried out by community development associations and the contribution to the educational development of Emohua Town.

**TEST OF HYPOTHESIS 4:** that there is no significant relationship between the community development associations' activities and the

contribution to the socio-economic development of Emohua Town.

The mean and standard deviation scores are presented in Table 4. With  $N=500$ ,  $df=498$  and  $P=0.05$ , the calculated  $r$  between the community development associations' activities and contribution to the socio-economic development was 0.2164 and the critical value of  $r$  was  $\pm 0.1946$ . The calculated  $r$  is statistically significant at  $\alpha=0.05$ , since it is greater than the critical value of  $r$ . The hypothesis ( $H_{04}$ ) is rejected. The revelation made by this study is that there is a significant relationship between the activities carried out by community development associations and the contribution of socio-economic development in Emohua Town.

**TEST OF HYPOTHESIS 5:** that there is no significant relationship between the community development associations' activities and the contribution to the cultural development of Emohua Town.

The mean and standard deviation scores are presented in Table 5. With  $N=500$ ,  $df=498$  and  $P=0.05$ , the calculated  $r$  between the community development associations' activities and their contribution to the cultural development was 0.3451 and the critical value of  $r$  was  $\pm 0.1946$ . The calculated  $r$  is statistically significant at  $\alpha=0.05$ , since it is greater than the critical value of  $r$ . The hypothesis ( $H_{05}$ ) is not accepted and the conclusion is that there is a significant relationship between the activities carried out by community development associations and their contribution to the cultural development of Emohua Town.

#### **Discussion of findings**

The hypotheses tested show that the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in each case was higher than the critical table value, which implied that there is a variety of significant relationships between the two variables under study (community development associations and the rural transformation of Emohua Town) as contained in Tables 1 to 5. The results show that community development associations are making meaningful contributions to the development of the town, that the community people are making use of the associations' programmes and that the

relevance of these community development programmes is being felt. The improvement of the living conditions of the people is one of the targets of the three tiers of government in Nigeria. The government alone cannot carry this out effectively without community or citizens' participation. The emergence of community development associations supplements such efforts. The findings of this study indicate that community development associations are taking giant strides in the task of contributing to community development in Emohua Town in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State of Nigeria. This finding supports Akinsorotan and Olujide (2006) that "community development associations' major objectives are the socio-economic and cultural development of various communities". The improvement of the health, transportation, educational, socio-economic and cultural conditions of Emohua Town is paramount in the objectives of the various community development associations in the town. They have contributed in providing social services like the construction of waiting sheds at bus stops, the building of community halls, security services in the form of vigilante groups and classrooms for primary and secondary schools. This finding is not different from that of Adebagba (2006:154) which indicates that "community development has come to act as an umbrella over a number of other activities affecting the community and is concerned with educational, social, economic and organisational aspect of community life".

As a matter, their efforts are geared towards making the community people live better with a modern life style through modern amenities. Indeed, they are very important as potential instruments for rural transformation (Onibokun and Faniran, 1995 and Fakoya, *et.al.* 2001).

In addition, community development associations allow community members to get involved in the joint management, execution, supervision and evaluation process which also upholds the assertion of Akinsorotan and Olujide (2006) that "community development associations' approach to self-help involves the fullest participation of all the members in the decision making process". The study conducted by Ugal (1992) lends credence to this finding. He discovered that "people are more likely to be

committed to a rural project, if they are involved in its planning and implementation". The findings also lend credence to Adebagba (2006:156) that "community development has come to act as an umbrella over a number of other activities affecting the community and is concerned with educational, social, economic and organisational aspect of community life."

### **Conclusions**

The findings of the study established that there is a direct positive relationship between the two variables examined, as significant relationships were established among community development associations' activities and rural transformation. All the null hypotheses were rejected with respect to the findings.

### **Recommendations**

In view of the findings and the conclusion reached, the researcher made the following recommendations:

That the three tiers of government in Nigeria have an indispensable role to play in motivating people for development activities. Federal, state and local governments should come to the aid of the town as an incentive or token to show that the government cherishes and acknowledges the contributions of community development associations in the area to development projects. The three tiers of government should not relent in awarding matching grants and nucleus administrative grants to community development associations to aid community development projects. This will go a long way in establishing working relationships between the community development associations and the various levels of government.

There is a need to encourage networking among community development associations and to consciously enhance their managerial capacity through training and exchange of ideas. In this respect, informal education organised for the leadership of the community development associations will be an advantage. They should be given orientation and regular citizenship and leadership training in the form of refresher courses or capacity building, with a view to strengthening their capacity to help themselves better and positioning them to be

true leaders in the struggle for sustained community revitalization.

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Table 1: Summary of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) Computation of the relationship between respondents' responses about community development associations' activities and the promotion of the health living standard in Emohua Town.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	$\sum XY$	Constant term	r-cal	r-crit
Community Development Associations' Activities	3.26	0.33	1885.62	1126.21	0.2847*	±0.1946
Promotion of the health living standard	2.58	0.25				

(N=500      df =498      P<0.05      \* Significant)

Table.2: Summary of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) Computation of the relationship between respondents' responses about community development associations' activities and the promotion of road network in Emohua Town.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	$\sum XY$	Constant term	r-cal	r-crit
Community Development Associations' Activities	3.26	0.33	1712.61	1013.18	0.2333*	±0.1946
Promotion of road network	2.28	0.23				

(N=500      df=498      P<0.05      \* Significant)

Table 3: Summary of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) Computation of the relationship between respondents' responses about community development associations' activities and the contribution to the educational development of Emohua Town.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	$\sum XY$	Constant term	r-cal	r-crit
Community Development Associations' Activities	3.26	0.33	1856.14	1038.641	0.2116*	±0.1946
Contribution to the educational development	2.61	0.27				

(N=500                      df =498                      P<0.05                      \* Significant)

Table 4: Summary of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) Computation of the relationship between respondents' responses about community development associations' activities and the contribution to the socio-economic development of Emohua Town.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	$\sum XY$	Constant term	r-cal	r-crit
Community Development Associations' Activities	3.26	0.33	1784.17	113.841		±0.1946
Contribution to the socio-economic development	2.82	0.28				

(N=500                      df=498                      P<0.05                      \* Significant)

Table 5: R-Computation of the relationship between respondents' responses about community development associations' activities and the contribution to the cultural development in Emohua Town.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	$\sum XY$	Constant term	r-cal	r-crit
Community Development Association's Activities	3.26	0.33	1843.19	1125.84	0.3451*	±0.1946
Contribution to Cultural Development	2.84	0.28				

(N=500                      df=498                      P<0.05                      \* Significant)