

**COMMUNITY BASED ORGANISATIONS (CBOS) AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ENUGU STATE: A CASE
STUDY OF AGE GRADE SYSTEM IN NKANU EAST
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA.**

BY

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TITLE PAGE

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APPROVAL PAGE

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty who has foreseen my today and has helped me towards this course. I give him all the praise.

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ABSTRACT

There has been an increasing clamour for scraping of the Local Governments since they have failed in their duties as means of bringing development to the rural areas. As a result of negligence on the part of the local government in developing the community, the local people have resorted to self-help development. The study examined whether age-grades have fostered development in Nkanu East Local Government Area or whether lack of funds hinders them from contributing effectively to rural development. Moreover, the research adopted survey method using self-report technique like questionnaire while quantitative method of simple percentage system was used in analyzing the data. Structural Functional theory was used as our theoretical framework. Nevertheless, the work discovered the following: 1. that age-grades have fostered development in Nkanu East Local Government and 2. that lack of funds hindered the age-grades from contributing effectively to rural development. Based on the above findings, the work recommended that there should be adequate participation by the local people in community development.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Poor performance of government in meeting the socioeconomic needs of citizens has been identified as one of the reasons behind the proliferation of community based Organizations (CBOs) in the world today. Along this line, Wahab (2000) observed that people in developing nations have until recently looked up to their governments to meet their basic socio-economic demands. Of a truth, governments in African nations have evolved both top-down and bottom-up approaches to achieve sustainable development of their people. These include establishment of lead industries at key centres so as to create job opportunities, provide basic infrastructure and utilize regional natural and man-made resources to stimulate growth and economic development that would spread to lagging regions (Perroux, 1955; Abegunde, 2003). Besides, Agbola (2002) noted that successive Nigerian governments have responded to both rural and urban problems by evolving poverty alleviation programmes to help stir development simultaneously at the grassroots. These programmes include the national directorate of employment (NDE), community banks, directorate of foods and rural roads infrastructure, better life for rural women, national poverty alleviation programme (NAPEP) among others.

The failure of governments' top-down approach and lack of involvement of the people at the grassroots in the bottom-up strategy have weakened the confidence of the public in central authorities. The inadequacy of government to make provision in respect to the growing population has led to the adoption of self- help techniques by the

People through collective action known as Community based organization, which arises as a result of the needs of the people to be met. Here, people organize themselves based on appropriate institutional arrangement; mutual agreement and shared understanding to plan and execute public goods and services that directly touch their lives (Ostrom, 1990). Communities therefore seek solace in indigenous institutions, which pressurize government for attention to development problems in their communities and/or undertake development programmes and projects that they observe that are very needful in their immediate communities.

From the primitive stage of man's existence to the time of civilization, development has always stemmed from the coming together of people or groups for the common interest of members. Grouping for mutual help and improvement of lives of community members has been accepted as a strategy of community development. This goes to show that the involvement of the people in addressing the felt-needs of their community is not a recent phenomenon.

Ever before the advent of colonialism, the weo consciousness that existed among the people made it possible for them to come together and articulate their efforts towards action for meaningful development. There has been association of titled men, married women, hunters, age grades, secret societies etc. these groups willingly, without any form of payment and without compulsion and anticipation of one form of reward or the other, joined together for a particular purpose; usually for the improvement of their lives and community. They help tremendously in meeting the welfare needs of the people.

The communal lifestyle that existed among the community members also made it possible for them to assess their problems, plan and ensure successful execution of projects. Ekpeyong (1993) affirms that affiliation creates passion, shapes behaviour and induces action. We make effort to live but we need the support of others to improve. As infants born into the world cannot survive without the support and assistance of adults, in the same vein, some communities cannot improve on their living conditions without the effort and assistance of other people and corporate groups in the communities.

Thus the development of the communities through the mobilisation of the people and their resources has remained one of the greatest and oldest strategies of transformation in the African community. The most significant attribute of this strategy is that it is based on the philosophy of self-determination, self-reliance and self-help (Ejionye, 1995). They constitute the media for resources mobilization to confront local challenges. These include the finance and execution of projects, lobbying and nomination of representatives to government offices to air their views and press their needs and developing of human resources against future developmental needs of their immediate communities. Thus, their impacts have been felt in the areas of economic development, policy matters, health and infrastructure, environmental and physical development among others (Agbola, 1998; Akinola, 2000; Akinbode, 1974; Onibokun and Faniran, 1995).

Self-help projects undertaken through voluntary efforts and the active participation of individuals and corporate groups in communities constitute an important nucleus in grassroots development. This process involves organizing community members for identification of their needs, plan; and for action to meet these needs with maximum

reliance on their initiative and resources, with or without the assistance of government or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). According to Dike (1979) the growth and development of a town is mainly a reflection of the population growth, location of industries, specialization and organization of the inhabitants of the community.

In Nigeria most people believe that it is the responsibility of the government and its functionaries to provide for the needs of the communities. It was maintained that government could, and should develop communities, provide basic infrastructure, social and physical amenities.

Though the government is seen by some as a greater provider with unlimited resources, Sociologists and development experts see collective efforts and self-help as inevitable tool in community development. Okodudu (1998) argues that the failure of government in their traditional role of developing rural communities to enjoy developmental facilities gave rise to social institution and organization aimed at mobilizing local resources for the provision of the amenities with the cooperation of other agencies like the non-governmental agencies (NGOs). The collection of these social institution and organization is what is referred to as community-based organizations (CBOs).

The purpose of CBOs is to plan, implement, and monitor social and economic development programs and provide technical and financial help to the communities. CBOs positively affects the process of rural change i.e. increase in income, improvement in health, nutrition and literacy status of the populations. Various communities have been transformed through self-help, cooperation and mutual assistance.

The Federal republic of Nigeria (1970:38) in recognition of the vital role of self-help approach to community development outlined its objectives to include the sustenance of self-help community development; to foster development in the rural areas; and to coordinate what was described inarticulate self-help community development effort.

Adamu, Sodiya, Adeogun and Ogunbameru (2005) community based organizations provide mechanisms by which people relate with their environment. They also serve as forum where people come together to discuss their socio-economic problems and decide on strategies for bringing about desired changes.

Traditionally, community development was anchored on the voluntary effort from time immemorial. The Igbo age grade system is one of the social institutions that contribute immensely towards the coherent administration or governments of the people from time immemorial. It does this by bringing the people and their administrators together and sponsoring some basic developmental projects.

Age grades are traditional grass root gents of community development. It plays crucial role in virtually all aspects of community development. In traditional societies, the Age grades perform such tasks as the construction of market squares, village squares, clearing of farm paths that led to the stream, maintenance of roads and policing the community (Nsugbe, 1974). Various Age grade associations mobilize resources for physical infrastructure and basic social amenities. Udum (2007) observed that Age grades perform diverse functions in the society, apart from traditional attributes; it combines the

functions of political parties, administration, bureaucracy, judiciary, legislature, diplomatic services and defense.

Community development which is the basis of community based organisation is now recognized as an educational process in which groups of people, through the initiative and prompting of an internal or external leadership cadre, organize themselves, identify their development priorities and determine their strategies for meeting the needs identified. Whether internally or externally induced, the role of leadership is central to the overall success of the process. The manner in which the peoples' needs are identified and their priorities determined, all depend to a large extent on the types of leadership which their community has (Anyanwu, 1982).

It is worthy of note that if the accomplishment of objectives requires collective efforts, human beings try to form associations designed to coordinate the activities of many individuals backed up by incentives, so that the objectives for which the associations are formed are achieved. As a matter of fact, society will cease to exist if members do not interact. This means that they must come together to give meaning to certain social phenomenon, establish a 'commonness' with one another and develop a strong spirit or feeling of 'we together' which implies a transfer of meaning and some level of mutual understanding. The feeling that the programme or project is 'our work' adds advantage to the success of community-based organizations in community development.

In Nkanu East, community-based organizations include Age grades, town unions, women associations, social clubs, credit groups, committee of friends etc. Community-

based organizations are those organizations within the communities which come together for attainment of desired objectives in the interest of the group.

The Age grade group in Nkanu East usually have these categories of work at their jurisdiction: they embarked on the renovation of the hall in the village, the wrestling (play) ground, construction of linkage culverts and maintenance of road network within the town to link to other villages and neighbouring town; they also provide the community with Army they need for security against attacks from neighbouring communities. Though the activities of community- based organizations may not be very elaborate in size, their impact on the development of communities has far reaching effect. It challenges wealthy men and even other non-governmental agencies to embark on similar development projects. The truth remains that no matter how small a self-help project is, it has the capacity of provoking further development. It triggers group competitions within communities and among the stakeholders in community development.

According to Okodudu (1998), social clubs, cultural organization and cooperative societies (community-based organizations) are major actors in the community development scene. In most cases the work we do help others regardless of whether the work is paid for or not. Those who develop this selfless attitude to fellow men and to the nation do so under voluntary associations which the community- based organization share characteristics with. They are sometimes described as humanitarians or help agents; they render help to communities without seeking any rewards.

In various part of Nkanu East, the Age grades have directly or indirectly influenced development activities in their area of operation. They have not only encouraged development activities, but have also embarked on development projects. Recently the Age grade in Nkanu East has embraced modern standards of the society. They now embark on development projects such as building of bus stop stands in places where people stay in the sun or rain waiting for vehicles; market stalls, traffic control booths, classroom blocks and furniture for people in primary and secondary schools and so on. The age grade association remains a formidable force to reckon with in terms of community development.

Community based organization play prominent role in initiating programmes and project, mobilizing resources and educating the grass root populace. The influence of local indigenous actors in community development cannot be neglected. Local initiative stemming from the felt needs of the people remains very important in grass root development. This study therefore concerns itself with the influence of the activities of community based organization with focus on the age grade association; have on grassroots development in Nkanu East, Nigeria; to examine the activities of community based organization in grass root development in Nkanu East.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Community development has its root in self-help efforts hence the Age grades. This research work is concerned with the problem of ascertaining the role that CBOs (Age grade system) play in the process of development of the rural areas. The CBOs were

already playing dominant roles in various rural communities. It has been seen as agent of development under the local government. The need of the people to build a strong rural economy and development has been bypassed by the local government. This consequently implied the extent of neglect experienced in the rural areas by the local government that has necessitated the formation of the CBOs (age grade) to help foster development where the local government has failed. The people of Nkanu East just like most rural areas in Nigeria have suffered gross neglect and deprivation over the years.

The people have waited too long for the government to provide them with these basic infrastructures and thus have resorted to self-help efforts in form of the CBOs. With their collective efforts, many rural communities have built primary schools, market squares, bridges, culverts, bore-hole waters, health clinics and even rural electrification. The success recorded by age grade association in community development has not been made without some cost.

Ejionje, (1995) observed that competition between age grades and other voluntary association in communities has led, among other things to the duplication of efforts and some waste in the utilization of scarce resources, owing mainly to lack of co-ordination and central direction. Successive governments over the years have been unable to provide the appropriate encouragement to maximize the utilization of the dynamics of local resources in community development.

Poostchi, (1986) attributed the problem of self-help association such as age grades, to uncoordinated development projects. Granted that the CBOs are playing dominant roles in various rural communities, there is, however, there is huge deficit in basic

infrastructural services to the people; it is necessary to strengthen the coordination of management of community development.

Despite the seeming strengths the Age Grades in Nkanu East have projected, there is need for government intervention. This study therefore sets out to diagnose and ascertain the role of the CBOs (age grade) as a vehicle for rural development in Nkanu East local government their achievements, capacity building and the way forward.

With these issues in mind, the following questions were developed

1. Does the age grade system foster rural development in Nkanu East L.G.A.?
2. Does lack of fund hinder the age grades from contributing effectively to rural development?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective is to assess the effects of the activities of age grade system on rural development in Nkanu East local government area.

The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To examine if the age grade systems foster development in Nkanu East L.G.A.?
2. To examine if lack of fund hinders the age grades from contributing effectively to rural development?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study has both academic and practical significance. Academically, this study will promote a better understanding of the concept of CBO. Most Nigerians are unaware of the existence of Community Based Organizations and their roles in rural development; it is therefore expected to enlighten and/or educate persons who are ignorant of the

CBOs, its essence, its compositions (Age grades, town unions, women groups, social clubs etc.), its operations and organizations. The study will also contribute to the existing literature on CBO and stimulate further research on the concept of Rural Development.

Practically, this study will help us understand the immediate and remote causes of underdevelopment in the rural areas which has triggered the self help means hence the age grade system. It also helps in understanding the activities of the age grade in Nkanu east and ways by which they help in solving the problems paralysing the local communities through the joint effort of the age grades in every community which has helped in providing the much needed social amenities for the rural dwellers. It provides information on the influence of the activities of age grade system on rural development; it also provides the insight on the level of community participation in self-help projects as a means of supplementing the efforts of government. It will make us to be in a better position to formulate a strategy which will take care of those factors that had for long time block Nigeria's development and most especially the rural areas.

It also provides us with useful hints for further research on the activities of age grades in Nigeria and Nkanu East in particular. Finally, lessons derivable from the findings and recommendations of this study will be useful to patriotic individuals and organisations preoccupied with the present and future operations of the local people at the community level for total liberation of the nation from her underdeveloped status.

1.5 HYPOTHESES

1. The age grade system foster development in Nkanu East local government area.
2. Lack of fund hinders the age grade from contributing effectively to rural development.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been done on the definition of community development, sustainable community development and the role of CBOs in community development. Most of these studies are theoretical in nature; this is because the works are intellectually oriented. This study is therefore conducted under the following issues: the concept of CBOs and community development; Age grade system and community development

CBOs and Community development

Development is the basic reason for the creation of the local government as a third tier of government in Nigeria, but it is not news that the local government has failed on their duties to the rural community. Development comes in forms of infrastructure and basic amenities like good roads, health services; education and it is what makes a nation great.

Numerous studies have been conducted on CBOs and their importance in integrated rural development by many researchers. C. M. Wijayaratna (1992) in his paper "The Role of Local Communities and Institutions in Integrated Rural Development" has advocated the formation of institutions through which rural communities would satisfy their needs. Rural development is adversely affected by "top down approach". In other words, centralization of development efforts makes it more supply driven. But in order to achieve integrated rural development there is a need to consider needs, demands and potential of local people. CBOs are the means through which such decentralization can be

achieved through collaborative efforts. According to him the most important role of local communities is utilization of social capital.

The same is supported by Pashupati Nepal (1991) in his study of "local organizations: viable mechanism for ensuring participation in rural development". His study advocates the need for CBOs in developing economies. He states that generally development decisions are taken centrally and imposed locally in developing economies. But implementation of such decisions fails to consider spatial, socio-economic conditions and cultural values. To achieve total development, full participation of local people is a prerequisite. But such participation is not possible without *collective organizations* that are accountable and responsive to members' needs.

He further concludes that community participation minimizes the dependence on state policies. Therefore they act as alternatives to such policies, helping communities to be self-reliant and discover their potential through cooperation and resource mobilization. According to him by providing ownership to local people, these organizations provide a common voice which ensures fair share of benefits to them.

R. K. Tripathi (1990) in his paper talks about the "need for large scale mobilization of local communities, institutions and stakeholders who matter for growth in rural economy". He too supports active participation of local communities for inclusive growth.

Various other studies have substantiated the positive impact of CBOs on development. Study done by Hussain et al, concludes that CBOs have positive effects on rural development process through increase in income, improvement in health, nutrition

and literacy status of the population. Thus CBOs play positive role towards the socioeconomic development of the community. The main areas in which they played their role are education, health, trainings and construction according to this particular study.

The need to develop the rural area necessitated the adoption of the self- help government the CBOs to look at the problems peculiar to their community and find a solution to it. Community Based Organisations (CBOs) are voluntary, non-profit organizations independent of any government, and funded through individual and corporate donations, levy imposition on members, grants from international agencies and governments (Agbola, 1988), (Fowler, 1987).

Rural community development fundamentally involves a process - a series of actions and decisions ó that improves the situation of a community, not just economically, but also as a strong functioning community init. It is through action, participation and contact that the community becomes more vital, more able to manage change with stronger networks, organizational ability, skills, leadership and passion.

Community development began as a social movement and has been a growing industry since the mid-twentieth century (Vidal 1997). Definitions of community development vary between sources; however, it is overwhelmingly defined as a process aimed at bringing about change in local communities in a positive manner for the well-being of that community. Community development includes all strategies, interventions or coordinated activities at the community level aimed at bringing about social and economic development.

Battern (1969) in his work, communities and their development argued that the concept of community development is not new but an old idea. This could be supported

with the fact that communities have constructed roads, built their market squares, by the community efforts or the CBOs. They had their tradition, culture, custom and social relations which they maintained and protected by laws which they made by themselves. This implies that the rural populace has the opportunity to participate in programmes designed to raise their standard of living.

Frank and Smith (1999) view community development as 'the planned evolution of all aspects of community well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural). They go on to say that 'it is a process whereby community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems'.

The United Nations (1963) defined community development 'as the process by which efforts of the people they are united with those of the government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of the national progress'.

The Budapest Declaration defines community development in the following way:

Community development is a way of strengthening civil society by prioritising the actions of communities and their perspectives in the development of social, economic, and environmental policy. It seeks the empowerment of local communities, taken to mean both geographical communities, communities of interest or identity and communities organising around specific themes or policy initiatives. It strengthens the capacity of people as active citizens through their community groups, organisations and networks; and the capacity of institutions and agencies (public, private and non-governmental) to work in dialogue with citizens to shape and determine change in their communities. It plays a crucial role in supporting active democratic life by promoting the autonomous voice of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. It has a set of core values/social principles covering human rights, social inclusion, equality and respect for diversity; and specific skills and knowledge base. (Craig 2005).

Hillman (1960) however defined community development as the method of helping local communities to become aware of their resources in such a way as to satisfy some of their needs and in so doing, acquire the attitudes, experiences, and cooperative skills for repeating this process using their own initiatives.

In the same vein, Debent A. Swider states that rural development is a means by which provision of social services for the rural population should be combined with the promotion of economic growth.

According to Dunham (1970:172), community development is not concerned with anyone aspect of life such as agriculture, business, health or education: it is concerned with the total community life and needs. Ideally, it involves all the members of the community and requires their fullest participation in first making and then implementing decisions. The people work together to shape their future.

As Williams (1978:16) asserted, community development entails that the people themselves exert their own efforts alongside those of government authorities to improve their economic, social and cultural conditions.

Idike AA cited in (Olisa S O and Obiukwu 1992) note that:

Rural development constitutes a process of planned change for which one approach or the other is adopted for improvement and or transformation of the lot of the rural populace.

Swider 1975 cited in (Ndubuisi 1992) Rural development can be viewed as the development of the moral, social, political and economic potentialities of rural communities to enhance their economic self-reliance through the provision of appropriate infrastructure such as pipe borne water, electricity, good roads and small scale industries,

increase their political consciousness and participation and promote their moral and social well-being.

Aiyenigba (1992) and Okoye (1987) studies focused essentially on rural areas and rural development. Their studies indicated that there was complete absence of social service infrastructure in the development schemes of CBOs, which touch directly on the welfare of the rural dwellers. The reasons for this were as a result of the CBOs' conception of rural development as the provision of recreational services solely for comfort of rural based weekenders, the lack of guidance offered by the government to the organizations in the most rational use of their resources and the non-realization that the welfare of the permanent resident population of rural areas is central to the concept and process of rural development.

Similarly, Barbar Hanuss maintains that the main concern in rural development is supposed to be the modernization of their society through transition with the national economy for equitable and balanced development of the nation.

Ogunna (1980) in a paper "local government and community development" at a national conference on the new local government system in Nigeria, conceded to the fact that the rural communities has remained underdeveloped within the local government system and attributed this to the following factors: inadequate revenue, low executive capacity, poor and inadequate working tools, etc and he finally suggested review of the local government and supporting the rural self-support activities.

Agubuzu (1986) in his blue print for community development argued that for effective implementation of strategies for community development, the town unions, and

Age grades, should be linked with the government. This idea, he said is to involve the rural people fully through the unions, age grades and other similar organizations in planning and implementing policies that are designed to improve their economic, social, political and cultural development. He stated that this will also enable them to make positive contribution to both rural and national development.

The town unions and age grades in every community have usually served as point of articulation and are fully aware of the needs of the people. However, if they are fully integrated into the planning stage of development project, a lot will be achieved. This participatory politics has increased the level of political consciousness among the various cultural groups that constitute the society and has led not only to increased demand for creation of more constituent states but more local governments.

Idiote (1989) however asserted that three major approaches to community development in Nigeria have been identified ó the extension approach, the project approach and the service approach. The extension approach involves directly teaching the rural people improved methods and techniques of either farming, health care or how to read and write. The Ministries of Agriculture and Health use this approach. The project approach to community development is generally motivated by the government's desire to improve the economic conditions in the rural areas. It is, therefore, characterized by the establishment of economic ventures, such as government farms or rural industries. In the government circles in Nigeria, the project approach to community development is usually referred to as "rural development." The service approach to community development calls for the active participation and initiative of the local people. Used as

the main strategy for community development in Nigeria. The service approach concentrates on the provision of social amenities such as postal agencies, maternity centers, pipe-borne water, dispensaries, and electricity and so on, in the rural areas. These are provided at the initiative of the community itself. The service approach to community development is known as "self-help" in Nigeria. It is at this level that self-help programmes are most apparent.

In addition, Santory (1962) in his book, the organization of community development programme, paid particular attention to practical aspect of organizing a community development programmes and on some of the mechanisms of translating the principles into practice. He addressed such issues like community development and extension, education, audio-visual aid, self-help building personnel and training and result evaluation" what he was saying was that these areas being so vital to the local communities should be areas of complete concentration by the local council. This is because they will enhance the standard of living of the people.

Community development, according to Brophy and Shabecoff (2001), has three goals: to change the economy of the neighbourhood, to improve the physical nature of the neighbourhood, and to strengthen social bonds between people in the neighbourhood.

Though the various definition and descriptions seems to emphasis different issues, common threads run through all of them. These includes the primacy of community participation at every level of any initiative, the empowerment of the members of the community concerned, the central role of the diverse community formulations, underlying change process and the support of external actors where necessary. Thus

community development can be seen as a change process that encompasses both improvement and empowerment; improvement in the situation and life of the beneficiaries in all respects social, economic, physical and environmental, and empowerment of the beneficiaries to sustain, enhance and extend that improvement.

Honadle and Van Sant (1985) view local action as key to community development. Development initiatives will not be sustained unless beneficiaries make some form of resource commitment to support those initiatives. Development involves changes, the most important of which is the attitudes and actions of those people who become participants- individually or in groups in the process itself. Through participation in their own development, people have the opportunity to strengthen their capabilities and build their own channels for expression and accountability.

Age grade system and community development

Age grades are also voluntary organizations. They are voluntary because membership is dependent on individual choice; though a times membership may be compulsory as in the case of certain trades or professions such as the market women unions. Most age grades are formed to solve the most pressing problems facing man in the rural communities. Community members, residents, through their common problems come together, find a basis for common action and form an organization (Aina,1990). The contributions of these age grades to rural development is of great concern because, over the years governmental policies have inadequately and un-properly enhanced the development of the rural areas, primarily either because they are initiated and executed by outsiders who do not know the needs of the people and therefore cannot positively

serve them. The age grades are set up by collective efforts of indigenous people of homo or heterogeneous attributes but living or working within the same environment.

Their coming together creates conditions which broaden the base of self-governance and diffusion of power through a wider circle of the population (Adeyemo, 2002; Adejumobi, 1991).

In the words of Dongier et al, (2003) age grades are generally membership organizations consisting of group of individuals in a self-defined community who have joined together to further common interests. They often consist of people living in close proximity to each other. The common interest includes production, consumption, pooled resources or delivery of services. Organizations such as age grades, town unions, women groups, credit/saving groups, youth clubs, cooperative groups, religious groups, and local NGOs all of these are categorized as community based organizations or grassroots (Arrossi, 1994).

Anyanwu (1991) sees the age grade system as the end product of community development. He argues that the age grade does the following to their communities:

- (a) Enables people to exploit their advantage, the resources which would otherwise be dominant
- (b) Make use of under-utilised labour
- (c) Enables people to change the way they look at their responsibilities and help them to cultivate the sense of local initiative and effort.
- (d) Promote the idea of ultimate control by the people
- (e) Foster sustainable degree of freedom by individuals and groups

(f) Promotes wide spread citizenship participation.

In the words of Opare, (2007) age grades are increasingly recognized as important actors in development of rural communities. Studies suggest that the age grades play an important role in providing economic security and bargaining power to their members (R.Rindell, 1995). They are the catalytic organizations that promote community empowerment and are recognized as essential ingredients of rural community development (Opare, 2007).

Age grades are localized institutions in that their spheres of influence hardly extend beyond their immediate communities or neighbourhood. They are non-profit and non-governmental because all members contribute economically towards the fulfilment of their responsibilities to the immediate environment and not depend on government before fulfilling these (Claudia, 2003). Benefits accrued from members' contributions to the associations are shared accordingly with fairness. They are concerned with the development problems of and development programme projects in their various areas (Esman and Upholt, 1984; Bralton, 1990). They respond to community felt needs rather than market demand or pressure.

Similarly, Nuama (1993) believes that such community organisation like the age grades is really in touch with more people than any government organ can hope to reach. As development association, they are expected to capture the micro configuration of rural development, because they are micro societal organisations directly in touch with the rural populace.

Age grades are small informal associations created for the purpose of enabling members to reap economic benefit out of mutual help, solidarity, and joint responsibility. The benefits include mobilization of savings and credit facilities as a pursuit of group enterprise activities. The group-based approach not only enables the poor to accumulate capital by way of small savings, but it also helps them to get access to formal credit facilities. These groups by way of joint liability, enable the poor to overcome the problem of collateral security and thus frees them from the clutches of moneylenders (Shylendra, 1998).

Ijere (1992) noted that administratively, self-help associations such as age grade facilitate good and efficient government. The laws and regulations made in the council of elders are transmitted to individuals through their age grades. Thus, these bodies are used to appeal to larger groups of people and to elicit cooperative action by the group. He stated that in certain localities where age grade system operates, the "Government" of the town usually rotates among the age grade, each age grade "reigning" for 3-4 years. This means that the age grade "in Power" has the responsibility for law and order, promotion of community development projects and the display of cultural dances and show for entertainment. He further asserts that in times past, it was the age grade group that led the people to wars.

Ekpe (1995) posits that self-help group like the age grades emphasizes the involvement of the community members in programmes aimed at improving their quality of life. Involving the rural populace through the age grade association in rural development programmes would be a process through which their efforts are linked with

those of the government in order to improve their socio economic, political and cultural life, which is the aim of integrating them into the National scheme of rural development.

Onoibokun (1976) perceived the technique of the age grade in community ventures as strategy by which inhabitants of an area cooperatively undertake the building and or the rehabilitation of their neighbourhood or their own community using their own effort and their own resources.

Battern (1967) noted that for a community or group within the community such as the age grades to undertake to develop their neighbourhood without government assistance, such effort becomes the non-directive approach to community development. He maintained that the non-directive approach applied in the sense that efforts are made through some kind of self-efforts or collective action in various communities to promote their better living for the residents of those communities.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are various theories in political science but care must be taken in choosing a theory that can best explain the study. Since this study concerns itself with the impact of the CBOs in rural development, the researcher considers the structural functionalist theory as the theoretical frame work of analysis.

The foremost exponents of the Structural Functionalist theory are Gabriel Almond, David Apter and Williams C. Mitchel. This approach is part of the functionalist method in social analysis. Functionalism as generally used by scholars in political Science refers to the Contribution of an activity of patterns of behaviour to the maintenance of a

system in a given society. It also refers to the observable effects of an activity that are necessary to the substance of the system.

According to Igwe Obasi (2007), structural functionalism as a tool for analysis essentially consists in viewing society as a system made up of parts (Structures) which behave (Functions) in a coordinated and interdependent manner to achieve the objectives intended for them by the society. From this definition we find out that the structuralism argues that if there is a social system, it must be made up of structures and these structures perform some functions and these functions serve the purpose of maintaining the system.

Gabriel Almond's primary interest is to understand why and how a political system functions. A system suggests an object having interdependent parts interacting within a certain environment; the systems perform varying but interdependent functions working towards system stability.

Function means a positive contribution towards the maintenance of a system while dysfunction is used to refer to the negative contribution. The political system is a set of institutions and agencies concerned with formulating and implementing the collective goals of a society or groups within it.

Almond, G (1960) espoused seven (7) functional models. These are:

The four input models

1. Political socialisation and recruitment
2. Interest articulation
3. Interest aggregation

4. Political communication

The three output models

1. Rule making
2. Rule application
3. Rule of adjudication.

A political system exists in both domestic and international environment, moulding the environment and being moulded in the process. Government or state are the policy making parts of a political system, government perform many functions varying from maintenance of public order, providing the basic social amenities to the masses. In order to carry out these functions government have organs or special agencies, which perform specific functions which in turn enables the government to formulate, implement and enforce its policies.

The age grade system can also be seen as a political system with regards to their function as agents of development in Nkanu East Local government Area. The structuralism functionalist approach stresses the point that while a given institution such as the age grade may have special relationship to particular functions such as community development; it does not have the monopoly of this function. There is the existence of sub-groups in the system, the age grade system in Nkanu East has different groups which made up the system, and these groups have their specific functions which in totality get the general goal or intention of the system.

Using the input and output model of structural functionalist theory, to describe the general categorizing and functions of the age grade system in Nkanu East, we identified

three(3)categories which are the auxiliary groups comprising of the young men ages 20-30 the active group from ages 30-45 and the elders 45 and above.

The auxiliary groups are faced with induction into the system, giving them orientations with specific roles responsibilities which can only be done by them. The active group are those who have already socialised and are of reasonable age, they are already inculcated into the system and they are available which makes them viable tool for the age grade system. The elders are usually those involved in the rule making, rule application and rule adjudication. These men with the help of a few active men carry out these functions for the solidification of the already existing system.

With good or effective communication, functions will be transmitted from one structure to another and this makes for effective control and regulative task of the system.

A summary of the foregoing is that the political system like the age grade system receives inputs from the environment and attempts to shape them through the output using specific functions for the stability of the system and the provision of the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people in the community.

Analytically, the essence of using the structural functionalist approach of political analysis is to locate the various groups and functions of the age grade system in Nkanu East and how they work harmoniously to foster development in their community.

This approach helps to evaluate the roles expected of the age grades and their actual efforts towards meeting the demands of the people.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD OF RESEARCH

3.1 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The method adopted by the researcher for data generation for this study are from survey through self-report technique using interviews, questionnaires and field observations and analytical technique or logical induction using secondary sources such as books, journals and internet materials.

According to Obasi (1999:132) "survey research refers to a process of eliciting data from a target population through either questionnaire or interview instrument and subjecting such data to statistical analysis for the purpose of drawing conclusion".

Thus the data for this study were mainly elicited from the documents of the age grades in Nkanu East Local government

The Questionnaire

This research administered the questionnaire to get an authentic and accurate response from the respondents (the age grade group). The questionnaire was mainly structured (use of close-ended question-answer format) and was divided into three sections:

- i personal data of the respondent;
- ii specific issues deriving from my two hypotheses.

Information gathered from the questionnaire items helped in providing answers to the hypothesis formulated in the study.

Interview

This research also made use of personal interview. Selected officials of the age grade group in Nkanu East were interviewed to get in-depth information about the system. The data that were collected helped to augment that of the questionnaire.

Observation

This research used participant observation to collect information on non-verbal behaviour. Here, the researcher visited the local community and a careful observation was made on the various development projects in Nkanu East local government area that were accomplished through the age grade system in that community. This visit was ideal for the purpose of identification and clarity of ideas. This also helped in augmenting the questionnaire.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research adopted the descriptive survey design in order to study a large scattered population through asking questions on a representative sample to achieve the research objectives.

A design according to Nwana (1981) cited in Obasi (1999:49) is a term used to describe a number of decisions which need to be taken regarding the collection of data before ever the data are collected. The investigator for instance needs to find satisfactory answers to such questions like:

- a. Who or what constitutes the population to be studied?
- b. Will every member of the population be studied, or will a sample of the members be studied?

- c. For studies in which the researcher intends to find the relationship between two variables, will the subjects be studied in their natural setting or will they be studied under experimental condition? Our study is basically based on natural setting which is why we adopted the survey method.

Population

The study focused on all members of registered Age grade associations in Nkanu East L.G.A as at July 2013; with a membership 165,000 as obtained from the Nkanu East local government headquarters. The age grade members are basically farmers, civil servants and few business men.

Sample Size

The projected population of the age grades in Nkanu East local government area is 165,000. To obtain a representative sample size for this study, we used the Yaro Yamane (1968) specification given as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = The estimated sample size

N = The population size

1 = Constant

e = error margin (0.05 or 5% which is 95% confidence level).

Our sample size therefore is $n = \frac{165,000}{1 + 165,000 (0.05)^2}$

$$n = \frac{165,000}{1 + 165,000 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{165,000}{1 + 412.5}$$

$$n = \frac{165,000}{1 + 413.5}$$

$$n = 399.03265$$

From the above, we now have a sample size of approximately 400

A five-point Likert Type rating scale of Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly disagree (SD) was used to elicit information. These scales are arranged in this order: SA = 5, A = 4, U = 3, D = 2, SD = 1. These questionnaires were administered randomly to ensure maximum representation of all the age grade groups.

Sampling Technique

This method of analysis involves the division of the study population into mutually exclusive sub populations called strata and drawing a sample in a random manner. This helps to achieve a better representativeness of the population being studied.

According to Obasi (199:138) when certain characteristics of a target population are known to a researcher and he feels that such characteristics are likely not to be adequately taken care of by a chance factor, then the need for stratified sampling technique arises.

According to Kerlinger (1973:118) stratification is that method of drawing a portion (sample) of a population or universe, so that all the possible sample size has the same probability of being selected.

Bearing in mind that the size of each of the strata of the entire population is proportionally reflected in the sample size, and also knowing that the Age grades in Nkanu East are comprised of only men, the researcher therefore choose the age variable

for stratification. The stratification is therefore represented thus: the youth forum, the middle men and the aged. Using stratified sampling technique, 400 respondents were selected across the across the age lines of the entire population of the Age grades under study. The age grade is usually stratified into three grades or levels of hierarchy. The hierarchical levels signify the three stages of life namely: childhood, youthful, and old age. The childhood which is the lowest level consist of young men in their teens to about 25, the middle age level consists of mature men with the age range of 25-45. The highest level consists of older men from 45- till tired. This selection can be mathematically represented thus:

$$400 \times 0.40 = 160 \text{ elements}$$

$$400 \times 0.50 = 200 \text{ elements}$$

$$400 \times 0.10 = 40 \text{ elements}$$

Where 400 is our sample size

TABLE 1.1 SAMPLE SIZE FOR THE AGE GRADES IN NKANU EAST

	AGE			
	Sample size	Proportion	Total	TOTAL
Youth (18-25)	400	0.40	160	
Middle(25-45)	400	0.50	200	
Aged(45+)	400	0.10	40	400

The proportion was determined by the strength of the ages, where the middle class is the largest of the group followed by the youth and finally by the aged.

3.3 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative method of data analysis and descriptive statistical technique was used in analysing and interpreting our data. The statistical technique helps us to summarize and describe our data in such a way that we would understand better their characteristics, similarities, variation and trends. We also employed the use of frequency distribution table and simple percentage in the analysis of data generated through this quantitative method- questionnaire.

Research Question	Hypothesis	Major variables of X and Y	Indicators of the variables	Sources of data	Methods of data collection	Method of data analysis
Does the age grade foster community development in Nkanu East L. G. A.	The age grades foster community development in Nkanu East L.G. A.	X Age grades	X Agu-nabo Igwebuike Njikoka Nwaneamaka eziokwu	Primary and secondary sources	Survey- self report and analytical method i.e. logical induction	Quantitative method of analysis
		Y Foster Community development in Nkanu East L.G.A.	Y Good roads, maintenance of schools. Bole hole waters, enlightenment through educational workshops and seminars.			
Does lack of fund hinder the age grades from contributing effectively to rural development.	Lack of fund hinders the age grade from contributing effectively to rural development.	X Lack of funds	X Lack of payment of dues, levies, majority are poor, embezzlement.			
		Y Hinders age grades activities towards community development.	Y Abandoned projects, unfinished hospitals, schools and connecting roads			

CHAPTER FOUR

THE AGE GRADE SYSTEM AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NKANU EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA.

This chapter assesses the contributions of the age grades to community development in Nkanu East local government area. In analysing the relevant data, we shall reject or accept our first hypothesis.

We shall look into those activities of the age grades which are geared towards community development and improving the living standard of the local people in Nkanu East. These activities includes projects like building of water bore holes, construction of connecting roads within the community, construction of primary schools and regular maintenance.

4.1 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE AGE GRADES THROUGH WATER PROJECTS

Good water is a major problem that confronts many parts of our country. Some may have access to stream water but they are not drinkable. A lot of communities in Nkanu East suffer this. The Nigerian Government has embarked on so many water schemes in the country but the negligence of the rural area is so alarming. There are still so many communities who are yet to know what good water is all about.

In Nkanu East, the age grades are aware of this problem and the need to tackle it fast in other that the people will at least have access to good water and have a good life. The people of Nkanu East usually spend most of their valuable time in the streams which are not even close to their homes on daily bases. As we know, man cannot do without

water, it is one of the essential ingredients of life, water is needed not just for drinking but for executing so many activities of man- washing of cloths, environmental sanitation, particularly for sewage. With this in made, it becomes very essential that water projects most commence in all the communities starting from the most strategic area that connects the people together and this will also ease the trouble of laboring for water on daily basis.

This the water supply projects are aimed at providing an easier source of water than streams and rivers thereby giving the people a right to healthy life and reducing the risks of water-borne diseases which is associated with dirty water.

In the early 1900s, Nkanu East local government has spent considerable amount in water supply projects in the communities. The age grades on their own part are doing the same even presently in order to actualize their goal of providing better water to their rural communities.

They have been able to do this through organizing meetings where funds will be raised, sending letters to those in diaspora and imposing levies on their local members. Through these concrete efforts by the age grades, many rural communities in Nkanu East have been provided with good water.

TABLE 4.1 Bole Hole Water Projects in Nkanu East Local Government Area.

S/N	NAME OF THE RECEIVING COMMUNITY	CONSTRUCTED BY	STATE OF EXECUTION
1.	Onicha-agu	Agu-nabo	Completed
2.	IsienuAmagunze	Ojemba assisted by government	Completed
3.	AmechiIdodo	Uzodimma	Completed
4.	Enugu Nkerefı	Oganiru assisted by government	Completed
5	Oruku	Njikoka	Completed
6	Nomeh	Ezioku assisted by government	Completed
7	Ihuokpara	Ndi eze	Completed
8	Nara	Igwebuike	Completed

Source: Nkanu East local government development office.

The table above shows that most of the projects are solely executed through self-help means, only a few were assisted by the government.

It is important to state here also that there are still ongoing water projects, because their objective is to provide water in every community.

Having presented the data from Nkanu East local government area, on the water bole hole projects, the researcher also sought the opinion of the general public through research questionnaire in order to validate this point.

Out of the 400 questionnaire sent out, two (2) were incorrectly filled and was discarded, three (3) were lost on the field by the respondents who couldn't place where they have kept it after filling. Thus, we are left with 395 questionnaires to work with.

TABLE 4.2 Have Age Grades in Nkanu East Contributed to Community Development through Water Bole Hole Projects

POSITIVE		NEURAL	NEGATIVE		TOTAL
Agree	Strongly agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
200.45	99.75	39.5	38	17.3	395
Total	300.2	39.5	55.3		395
Percentage		10%	14%		100
76%					

Source: Research Data 2013.

From the above table shows the responds of the respondents on the activities of age grades towards water bole hole projects in Nkanu East local government area. Out of the 395 respondents, 300.2 or 76% confirmed that the age grades in Nkanu East have contributed to community development through water bole hole projects, 39.5 or 10% were undecided on the issue while the remaining 55.3 or 14% disagreed on this proposition.

It therefore still shows that a greater number of the respondents agree on the activities of the age grads towards community development in Nkanu East local government area.

4.2 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ROADS

The importance of good roads in our rural communities cannot be over emphasized, good roads hips for easy movement, brings about development in areas of commerce and industry it makes for development in general.

In view of this, Owuamalam (1981) purports that:

From the economic point of view road link food producing areas to places or towns where adequate markets would be found for them. From administrative point of view, they make the enforcement of law and order easier, because without roads linking village in local government, taxes and rates cannot be collected from the people, neither will crime and violence be easily checked.

Therefore construction of roads is very crucial and occupies a very important position in socio-economic activities particularly in the rural communities where majority are farmers and into one trade or the other.

A community with good road networks increases the transportation of goods and services and brings about civilization in that community; the people will have access to good things of life and a good living.

The age grades in Nkanu East are aware of what having a good road can bring to their community, therefore they set out to first rehabilitate the old ones and then construct new ones within their reach.

Provision of motorable roads will help both the farmers and traders alike in transporting their produce and importing of other essentials that the community cannot produce on their own. Lives becomes easier, movement becomes faster.

It is in line with these that the age grades through self help efforts are constructing motorable roads connecting the communities and those leading to the towns.

TABLE 4.3 Road Networks by the Age Grades in Nkanu East Local Government Area.

S/N	NAME OF COMMUNITY	TYPE OF PROJECT	NAMES	DATE STARTED	DURATION	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE	STATE OF EXECUTION
1.	Onicha-Agu	Bridge construction	Agu-nabo	2005	1 year	5 mil	5.5mil	completed
2.	Nara	Road maintenance	Igwebuike	2005	2 years	5mil	5mil	completed
3.	Oruku	Road maintenance	Njikoka	2006	2years	3 mil	3.6 mil	Completed
4.	Aniyi	Road maintenance	Nwanne amaka	2005	1 year	2 mil	2.3 mil	Completed
5.	Onicha-Agu	Covert	Agu-nabo	2012	6months	500,000	530,000	completed
6.	Nomeh	Road maintenance	Eziokwu	2005	1 year	2.5mil	2.9 mil	Completed
7.	Ihuokpara	Road maintenance	Ndi eze	2011	2 years	4 mil	4.3 mi;	Completed
8.	Mburubu	Road maintenance	Onye ozi	2012	1 year	2.9 mil	3 mil	Completed
9.	Amechi ó Idodo	Water channel	Uzodimma	2007	1 year	800,000	1 mil	Completed
10.	Isiogbo	Water channel	Ogadima	2007	1 year	500,000	750,000	Completed
11.	Nara	Covert	Igwebuike	2011	4 months	500,000	500,000	Completed
12.	Owo	Road maintenance	Otu oma	2006	2 years	2 mil	2.8 mil	Completed
13.	Isienu-Amagunze	Road maintenance	Ojemba	2012	2 years	4 mil	4.5 mil	completed
14.	Nkerefi	Road maintenance	Oganiru	2007	1 year	2 mil	2 mil	completed

Source: Report from the Annual Meetings of the Age Grades 2012.

There are 12 communities on the whole who has benefited from the ongoing rehabilitation of road networks by the age grades in Nkanu East; the table also showed that there are some communities that have more than one project executed; this is due to its necessity and urgency. The total kilometer, estimated cost and expenditure are 67.5, 34, 700, 000, 38, 680,000 respectively.

For more details, we sought the opinion of respondents through our questionnaire to elicit information from them on this issue.

Out of 400 questionnaires distributed, two (2) were incorrectly filled and therefore discarded, three (3) were totally lost, the respondents couldn't place where they kept it, we were therefore left with 395 questionnaires correctly filled.

TABLE 4.4 Have Age Grades in Nkanu East Contributed to Community Development Through Roads?

POSITIVE		NEUTRAL	NEGATIVE		TOTAL
Agree	Strongly agree		Disagree	Strongly disagree	
215.5	103.5	16	38.5	21.5	395
Total	319	16	60		395
Percentage	81%	4%	15%		100

SOURCE: Research Data 2013

The data from the above table shows that 319 or 81% out of the 395 respondents indicated that the age grades in Nkanu East contributes positively to community development, 60 or 15% of the respondents are of the view that the age grades do not contribute to rural development, the remaining 16 or 4% of the respondents were undecided on the issue.

4.3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TRAINING OF RURAL YOUTH FOR SELF EMPLOYMENT

Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment aims at providing basic technical and entrepreneurial skills to the rural youth from families below the poverty line to enable them to take up self-employment in the broad fields of agriculture and allied sectors, industries, services and business activities. The programme seeks to impart new skills and upgrade existing skills of beneficiaries who are by and large attuned only to stagnant levels of agricultural and artisan skills.

The rural youth in the age group of 18-30years from the families below the poverty line are enlisted for training under the scheme. A minimum of 50% of selected youths undergo the training for a period of six months. Training to the unemployed youth is imparted in the vocation of their choice.

Youths of Nkanu East, especially those at home have benefited from such programmes which are specifically meant for youths who are willing to learn and start up their own enterprise.

TABLE 4.5 Have Age grades in Nkanu East Contributed to Rural Development Through Empowerment of Youth?

POSITIVE		NEUTRAL	NEGATIVE		TOTAL
Agree	Strongly agree		Disagree	Strongly disagree	
159.5	180.5	1620	38.5	21.5	395
Total	340	20	35		395
Percentage	87.1%	4.6%	8.3%		100

Source: Research Data 2013.

The table above shows that 87% or 340 of the respondents believes that age grades in Nkanu East has contributed to rural development through youth empowerment, 4.6 % or 20 of the respondents are indifferent to this matter, while the remaining 8.3% or 35 are opposing this matter. In all the majority of the respondents still believes that the Age grades in Nkanu East has done so much on youth empowerment programmes

On a general note, the age grades are not only concerned with development of the people both also the development of their local communities, but it has to start with the people being sensitised and well harnessed for the task ahead.

Finally, the age grades have played a leading role in the provision of good roads, covert, markets, water bore hole, street lights, hospitals, among others in communities such as Amagunze, Ihuokpara, Akpawfu, Onicha-Agu, Nara, Ugbawka, Amechi to mention but a few.

This shows this analysis shows that majority of the people are positive about the activities of the age grades towards community development in Nkanu East, therefore, our hypothesis 1 has been confirmed that the age grades, contributed to community development in Nkanu East local government area.

CHAPTER FIVE

INADEQUATE FUNDING AS A CONSTRAINT TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AGE GRADES IN CONTRIBUTING TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN NKANU EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

In this chapter, we tried to assess the constraints facing the age grades towards effective community development programmes. We also found out that the issue of funding in its entirety is a fundamental constraint to the activities of the Age grades towards community development. In our analysis of the relevant data, we shall reject or accept our second hypotheses.

5.1 INADEQUATE FINANCE AS A CONSTRAINT TO EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AGE GRADES TOWARDS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Finance as we all know is the live wire of any organization. It is the oil that lubricates the engine to enable it to function. No organization can survive without the financial resources clearly put in place for work. In every organization, finance is usually on the top of the list of the activities and decision making exercises. In community based organizations like the age grades, it plays prime function because no meaningful project would be executed without money being put in place.

According to Ezeani (2004:187) "A major problem confronting local governments especially in developing countries, is inadequate finance" he further asserts that there is no doubt that the ability of the local government to perform their constitutionally assigned function depends on the funds available to them. Akpan (1965) cited in Ezeani (2004) also argued that the bottom line in judging the effectiveness of local bodies is the amount

of funds at their disposal. According to him, the success of a local authority is often measured in terms of its ability to provide services to the public. These services cost money which the local government does not have sufficiently.

According to Ndekwu (1992), the financing of development projects is often the principal constraint to a developer, whether public or private and whether individual or corporate. These three authors have successfully explained the position of inadequate finance not only in the local government but also in other organizations like the age grades.

The costs of executing the age Grades projects are borne by the members in form of contributions, membership dues, levy, fines and donations. None of the officials of the Age Grades interviewed receive subventions and donations from statutory bodies or funding agencies. The funds available to them are not enough to embark on capital projects. Having inadequate resources negatively impacts a rural community's ability to effectively influence and develop policy compared to other players in the policymaking process. For example, corporations and professional organizations often have access to large amounts of financial and human resources.

Also some projects have been abandoned because of lack of fund to continue and finish. This creates an inequity whereby community organizations that may be equally or even more affected by policy change do not have the same opportunity to participate in and influence the process.

In order for rural communities to play an active role in the policy-making process, it is necessary for their members to have access to resources. These resources include adequate funding, government training programs, education, leaders, and volunteers to support rural causes and initiatives. Many rural communities tend to lack one or more of these resources, a situation which interferes with their ability to effectively impact the policy-making process.

The age grades are located in the rural communities which are characterized by poverty and underdevelopment. It is therefore, very difficult to generate adequate fund from this group of individuals.

These groups of people are dependent on their local strength and communal resources or self-help effort, they do not receive monthly allocation from the government, and this becomes a major setback to them in actualizing their objectives. Ezeani (2004) in support of this opined that the inadequacies of operational and capital funds constitute a setback on local government implementation of regular services and investment programmes.

Most age grade members in Nkanu East are community dwellers who are largely traders and farmers, these set of people do not have capital at their disposal, and this therefore gives credence to the fact that inadequate finance is a major constraint to the activities of the age grades towards community development. Leaders of the age grades may have good objectives and propositions on how to move the community forward, but these plans are subject to the amount of money available to them.

This lack of adequate finance has made the accomplishment of the people's desired goals difficult if not impossible. This adverse effect ranges from abandoned projects, half done works, and non-implementation of policies.

Further information on the effects of inadequate finance on the activities of the age grades in Nkanu East will be elicited from the respondents and their responses will augment the data presented above.

Out of the 400 questionnaires sent out, the researcher was able to recover 395, this is because two (2) of the questionnaires was improperly filled and therefore no longer useful for this research, three (3) was lost on the field by the respondents.

TABLE 5.1 Does Inadequate Finance Hinder the Effectiveness of the Age Grades Towards Community Development in Nkanu East

Positive		Neutral	Negative		Total
Agree	Strongly Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
178.25	98.25	16	85	17.7	395
Total	276.5	16	102.5		395
Percentage	70%	4%	26%		100

Source: Research Data 2013.

The table above indicates that out of the 395 respondents, 276.5 or 70% are strongly on of the opinion that inadequate finance is a constraint to effective community development efforts of the age grades in Nkanu East. 102.5 Or 26 % opposed this proposition and the remaining 16 or 4% of the respondents are totally indecisive on this matter. This also

indicates that the majority of the respondents is of the opinion that inadequate finance is a major hindrance to the activities of the age grades towards community development and therefore have confirmed our hypothesis 2.

Because of the huge discuss on inadequate finance is a major constraint to age grades community development functions in Nkanu East, we therefore took time to question the executives on the sources of revenues generation by the age grades in Nkanu East local government area.

TABLE 5.2 Sources Of Revenue for the Age Grades in Nkanu East Local Government Area.

S/N	SOURCES OF REVENUE	DURATION	GROUPS INVOLVED
1	Monthly/ Annual dues	Once a month/years	Every member
2	Donations	Free will	Executives and business men
3	Levies	Compulsory	Every member
4	Fines	Immediately	Defaulters
5	Fund raising and launching	Every Easter and Christmas	The age grades and the communities

Source: Research Data 2013.

From the above table we were able to find out the major sources of revenue of the age grades these includes Annual/Monthly dues, free will Donations, levies, fines, and fund raising/ launching. We were also able to find out that this money comes in at intervals; they are not generated at once, the bulk money comes in only during the festive period when a proper fund raising is set up.

5.2 FINANCIAL MISMANAGEMENT AS A CONSTRAINT TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AGE GRADES TOWARDS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Financial management concerns the economic decisions and activities of an individual, families, households, or an organization in trying to minimize cost and maximize profit. This implies that financial management could be one person trying to manage the resources available to him, or an organization who are interested on how to utilize the available resources with overall objective of minimizing cost and maximizing profits.

Sheard cited in Ezeani (2006:346) defined financial management as part of management which concern itself mainly with raising funds in the most economic and suitable manner, using these funds as profitably, (for a given risk level) as possible; planning future operations, and controlling current performance and future development through financial accounting, cost accounting, budgeting, statistical analysis and other means.

Financial management needs in-depth care for it to be effectively utilized. Care must be taken on who handles the money and what the available resource could cover before it is put to work to avoid wastage. In support of this, Pandey (2005) cited in Ezeani (2006:345) asserts ÷

Among the most crucial decisions of any firm are those which relate to finance and an understanding of the theory of financial management provides them with conceptual and analytical insights to make these decisions skilfully.

According to Ezeani (2006:315) effective financial management is very important for effective and efficient performance of government functions. He went further to state that the subject of financial management has been of immense interest to both academicians and practicing managers.

Having understood what financial management is and what effective financial management it, it is important to understand what financial mismanagement is, and why it is a crucial matter in the activities of the age grades or any organization.

Financial mismanagement arises when the principles, facts dealing with the use of money by individual, corporate bodies and government are thwarted, distorted which leads to misappropriation of funds, embezzlement and outright fraud.

The 2003 Wikipedia encyclopedia describes financial mismanagement of money in such a way that it hampers the achievement of goals. This also implies that financial mismanagement is a careless attitude towards the use of money or channelling money to other purposes rather than for what it was originally meant for.

Financial mismanagement in the activities of the age grades in Nkanu East is a matter of lack of audit in the activities of the age grades in terms of checking how much was generated and how much was spent during a project. Raising funds for projects is usually not the problem because the people are always ready and available even for direct labour. But after the funds has been raised, the question is: was it used judiciously or was it passed on to the wrong hands?. This is a problem because of the absence of transparency in the entire processes of community development especially with regards to their executives.

It also involves the wrong use of funds, by the executives, incompetency on their part, carelessness, corruption, greed and lack of transparency. This can be easily traced by non-accountability. This is because there is a need for the executives of the gage grades to give financial account yearly, but if it is not done, then there is need to check what the problem is.

There are different measures put in place to check, where there is financial lapses in any organization. In Nigeria under president Olusegun Obasanjo's administration, the independence corrupt practices and other related offences commission (ICPC) was established. The main duty of this commission is to receive complaints, investigate and prosecute offenders. Also the economic and financial crime commission (EFCC) formed in 2003 deals with the investigation of all financial crime.

The age grades also have measure they take in order to resolve the issue of financial mismanagement in their locality. It ranges from, rejecting the executives and re-electing new ones or creating a neutral financial body that will be responsibly to every financial activities going on within the organization in some cases also they will be threaten by the general public and forced to pay back what they have stolen.

We shall gather data on this issue by carrying out a research through our questionnaire in order to check the evils associated to financial mismanagement in the age grades of Nkanu East.

TABLE 5.3 Does Financial Mismanagement Hinder the Age Grades From Providing Developmental Projects to the Community?

Positive		Neutral	Negative		Total
Agree	Strongly Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
78.5	190.1	35.55	57.15	33.7	395
Total	268.6	35.55	90.85		395
Percentage	68%	9%	23%		100

Source: Research Data 2013

The table above shows that 68% or 268.6 of the respondents believes that financial mismanagement is a hindrance to the activities of the age grades in Nkanu East, 9% or 35.55 of the respondents are indifferent to this matter, while the remaining 23% or 90.85 are opposing this matter. In all the majority of the respondents still believes that if funds are properly managed or channelled to the right places, more developmental projects than we have now would have been put in place.

Judging from this table therefore, we will conclusively say, that there has been huge financial mismanagement in the activities of the age grades which has made them to be stagnant at some point.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 SUMMARY

This study examined the role of the age grades in community development in Nkanu East local government area.

Age grades are important segment in the community system and they will continue to play crucial roles as the community strives to meet the challenges of social change and overall development, their involvement in community development will make the community self-reliant and self-determinant in the pursuit of community development goals. The study has the following specific objectives

- To examine if the Age Grade systems foster development in Nkanu East Local Government Area.
- To examine if lack of fund hinders the Age Grades from contributing effectively to rural development in Naknu East Local Government Area.

We adopted the Almond Gabrielø's structural functionalism theory as our theoretical framework of analysis. In adopting this theory, we emphasized that every **structure** has **functions**. Age grades as a system, has a structure and functions to play as agents of development in the rural communities.

The data for this study were mainly collected from using the primary source such as questionnaire questions, using descriptive statistical technique, we also employed frequency tables and simple percentages as tools for analysis.

The sampling technique used for this study is the stratified random sampling. A sample size of 400 served as a representative sample of the total population of the age grades in Nkanu East.

6.2 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we discovered that in all communities in Nkanu East, there are at least two or more age grades that are registered and recognized as agents of community development in their various communities. We also observed that age grades perform diverse function in their communities; it combines the functions of political parties, administration, bureaucracy, judiciary, legislature, diplomatic services, defense safety and development.

The age grade associations instill mutual responsibility and cooperative spirit in individuals and groups in the community towards action for participatory democracy, it plays crucial role in virtually all aspects of community development.

We discovered that the age grades have contributed to community development in Nkanu East through the following programmes, water bore hole projects, rehabilitation of road networks within the community, building of coverts and water drainages.

We also discovered that inadequate finance and financial mismanagement are the major constraints to the ability of the age grades in effectively actualizing their set objectives.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Communities should urge their sons and daughters resident in urban and rural areas to endeavour to join age grade associations so as to contribute their quota to the

development efforts of the community. Increase in membership could increase the financial status and this would in turn increase the community development projects.

Increased awareness at the community level on the formation of community based organizations. Such awareness campaigns should be carried out by the opinion leaders in the communities and the campaign should highlight the benefits open to individuals and members of associations and the communities both locally and internationally.

The members participate fully in project execution by giving their finance, labour and useful suggestions this will go a long way in solving the problem associated with inadequate finance.

Finally the executives of the age grades should be sincere and transparent in the use of funds giving to them for community projects.

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