

Community Mobilization and Rural Development: (A Case Study of Mbara Ozioma Foundation, Ehime Mbano, Imo State, Nigeria)

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Abstract – This study, Community Mobilisation and Rural Development: A Case Study of Mbara Ozioma Foundation, Ehime Mbano, Imo State, sought to expand the knowledge of collective action and community-mobilisation as complementary effort – with government policies and programmes – towards rural development. It looked at rural development from two of three approaches to development; rural development and basic needs approaches, especially, and particularly, as facilitated by NGOs. Data were collected through primary sources using structured questionnaires from 177 respondents following the multi-stage, purposive random sampling techniques. Qualitative data were obtained using the 5 - point Likert scale which was used to weigh the degree of responses, and the weighted responses were converted to quantitative values by means of the Likert Summated Scale and the data analysed using Ordinary Least Square technique. The findings revealed that human resource mobilisation, land resource mobilisation, and non-material resource mobilisation had positive and significant relationship with rural development individually, but there was a negative or inverse relationship between credit and loan facilities, entrepreneurial mobilisation and rural development. From the joint test result, all the variables: human resource mobilisation, land resource mobilisation, non-material resource mobilisation, credit and loan facilities, and entrepreneurial capacity mobilisation were found to have joint impact on rural development. It was then recommended that state and local governments and NGOs should work in tandem with town unions, community and village heads, to facilitate collective action and community mobilisation and thus expedite rural development.

Keywords – Community Mobilization, Mbara-Ozioma Foundation, Non-Material Resource, Rural Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Community mobilisation entails the harnessing of available factors of production – land, capital, manpower, energy, technology and intellect, entrepreneurial capabilities and more – within a locality to assume developmental endeavours that result in sustainable development. Community mobilisation is inspired by collective action; co-ordinated actions by individuals or groups of individuals who seek to achieve common goals; and play a critical role in the developments of societies. Mobilisation of resources is a vital and basic procedure of any development programme. It is the essential ingredient in the conception and implementation of any programme

tailored to economic growth and development. The neoclassical economic growth models of Walt W. Rostow and Harrod-Domar agree that at the very foundation of economic growth and the transition to maturity is resource mobilisation (savings).

In striving to achieve rapid growth and development, successive governments in Nigeria, over time, have placed greater emphasis on economic growth alone rather than growth *with* development due to the greater revenue growth yields, and the costs development demands. This problem exists largely because the economies of African countries, Nigeria inclusive, have been, since colonial times, structured towards the exploitation and export of land-based resources – agricultural and extractive sectors – due to the greater revenue that accrue from those sectors of the economy thereby neglecting the development of other aspects of the entire economy. This, sadly, has been exacerbated in Nigeria's case with the discovery of petroleum resources in commercial quantities and the oil boom of the mid-1970s, and its attendant Dutch disease which has led to a dearth in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors of the economy. Despite this, Nigeria still remains largely an agrarian society in the sense that the sector employs roughly seventy per cent (70%) of her labour force and accounts for 36.3% of GDP (Gale, 2007). Majority of the agricultural activities take place in rural communities. Rural areas hold majority of the population yet it is beset with the quagmire of low-skill low-productivity labour force in the informal sector often of self-employed jobs in farming, petty sales and services. That is to say their productivity is low, not because they do not work, but because they are engaged in low productivity activities, with mode of production still archaic and tools and equipment far less developed. However, in Nigeria, the most common approach to rural development is the basic need approach, which involves, but is not limited to, the building of social amenities; roads, schools, health centres, dams, etc., and is usually facilitated by the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international agencies, corporate bodies, and inspired individuals (philanthropists). But while they have recorded some level of success, much is still left to be desired in the respect that often a time, such projects are ill managed, not maintained, sustained, and improved upon, leaving the tangible projects out to dilapidation, and creating more problems than expected to solve. As a result, rural areas still are

characterised by malnutrition and extreme hunger, abject poverty, diseases, unemployment, poor housing, poor social and economic infrastructure, increasing crime rates, *et cetera*.

Community mobilisation, however, presents a unique approach to rural development. Collective action by way of community mobilisation, as shown in Abatena (1995), has a “significant role to play in promoting local and regional development, and in improving the living conditions of the people.

How then, in practice, does community mobilisation foster rural development? Community mobilisation, by way of self-help groups, has been used as a tool in advancing rural development in the Indian subcontinent since the mid-1980s. Non-governmental organisations (henceforth NGOs), as external actors or facilitators, in the said period, initiated self-help groups to provide financial services to the rural poor. Over time, the idea evolved to self-help affinity group movement which, among other things, proffers socio-economic empowerment for poor, rural dwellers, particularly women. The number of self-help groups linked to banks has increased from about 500 in the early 1990s to more than 1.6 million in 2006 (Fernandez, 2006). The success story of self-help groups has inspired similar set-ups in neighbouring countries of the sub region: Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, East Timor, Viet Nam, and Bangladesh. Governments at regional and local levels, in these countries, partner with NGOs and microfinance institutions to set up self-help groups (henceforth SHGs) among the extremely poor and vulnerable, particularly women, in rural communities. The SHGs are membership-based organisations i.e., “organisations whose members provide each other with mutual support while attempting to achieve collective objectives through community action” (Chen, Jhabvala *et al.* 2007 cited in Desai and Joshi, 2012). They provide a mechanism for poor people to cushion the effects of income shocks on consumption, find safe and affordable repositories for their savings, exploit profitable and viable investment opportunities that generate income and boost effective demand, facilitate the granting of loans, insure against risk, and even afford avenue for entrepreneurial capacity development. SHGs have become the most strategic vehicle of most NGOs engaged in community mobilisation in these countries in contributing to rural development. Many SHGs have initiated social, political, and economic changes.

The questions now are: can the above-mentioned be internalised with respect to the Nigerian context? How effectively and efficiently can it be done, in what ways? And will community mobilisation lead to rural development? The study was conducted in Umunumo, Nsu, Agbaja, and Nzerem villages of Ehime Mbanjo; the geographical coverage of the outreach of the Mbari-Ozioma Foundation, in Ehime Mbanjo, Imo State, Nigeria.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CASE STUDY (MBARI-OZIOMA FOUNDATION)

Mbari-Ozioma Foundation a Federal Government of Nigeria registered NGO situated in Ehime Mbanjo L.G.A. of Imo State, in collaboration with European partners, Tür

auf-movinavon in Switzerland, aims at facilitating and fast-tracking the development and improvement in the general living standards of the members of the communities of Umunumo, Nsu, Agbaja, and Nzerem, all in Ehime Mbanjo L.G.A. of Imo State through the engagement in and fostering of social, economic, and educational projects and programmes. The communities are remote, serviced by a local market in the area, Uriagu market that serves the entire area as main market, a 12 mile radius. The basic amenities available for the thriving of business include a tarred main road linking Añara (Isiala Mbanjo) to Umuahia, and a few untarred minor roads linking the communities. The communities’ main source of water are a few brooks and streams that oftentimes run dry or muddy in dry season, there is functional but epileptic electric power supply, health centre, a few primary schools, and the Mbari Ozioma Foundation Skill Development Centre for youth and women. The people of the area are predominantly subsistence farmers, artisans, petty traders.

The Foundation mobilises the communities through the heads of the communities, religious leaders, leaders of age grades and other interest groups. Its affairs are run by various boards and directorates, such as the management board, board of directors, and board of trustees, with the Founder, Rev. Fr. Ozioma Nwachukwu as President. These boards see to it that felt needs of the communities are addressed by way of providing off- and on-farm assistance such as the construction of water boreholes, provision of a food processing facility, grading of roads, a degree-awarding school of technology, and other avenues for marketing of products.

The community of Umuokparaku in the year 2000 donated a parcel of land measuring approximately 1.204 hectares to the Foundation, with which it has established its skills acquisition centre.

This paper, therefore, examines whether external actors/facilitators like NGOs, using Mbari-Ozioma Foundation (henceforth, the Foundation, or MOF) as case study, can effectively mobilise communities and in effect facilitate collective action, and if such actions can and has significantly impacted on or improved the living standards of the beneficiaries.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of the study is to find out how MOF has mobilised the communities for rural development.

The specific objectives are:

- To ascertain whether the mobilisation of human resources in the communities has led to the development of the study communities
- To find out whether the mobilisation of land resource has brought about the development of the communities
- To find out if the mobilisation of credit and loan facilities have brought about the development of the communities
- To ascertain if the mobilisation of entrepreneurial capacities has brought about the development of the communities

- To find out whether the mobilisation of non-material resources have brought about the development of the communities

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Community Mobilisation:

Community mobilisation, according to Women and Children Development Department, Government of Orissa (cited in Wikipedia), is “an attempt to bring both human and non-human resources together to undertake developmental activities in order to achieve sustainable development”. In the quest for sustained poverty alleviation, nay eradication, community mobilisation for rural development, as recent researches cited in Desai and Joshi (2013) suggest, can “strengthen property rights (Baland and Platteau 2003; von Braun and Meinzen-Dick 2009), increase the bargaining power of the rural poor in labour markets (Bardhan 2005), improve access to financial markets (Karlan 2007) and increase investments in public goods (Alesina, Baqiret *al.*, 1999; Banerjee and Somanathan 2007)”. Furthermore, Sinha, Tankha, *et al.* (2006) write that community mobilisation, by way of Self-help Groups (SHGs), confer many benefits, both economic and social; “they enable participants grow their savings and to access the credit which banks are increasingly willing to lend”. Participants of SHGs show greater interest and engagement in civic responsibilities than other non-participatory community members (Desai and Joshi, 2013); and Sinha, Tankha, *et al.* (*ibid.*) see SHGs as platforms that have proven to facilitate the participation of members in village affairs, stand for local elections, or take action to address social or community issues.

Community mobilisation involves the process of assembling resources both human and material, as well as psychological, physical and attitudinal features that can be marshalled for action to win a war or implement a community-based project or scheme (Akpama, 2002). Akpama (*ibid.*) goes further to assert that mobilisation as a process of change, has both maintenance and change dimensions. While the processes of change entail, more or less, permanent modification (s) of the boundaries of the system or its structure – its patterns of integration and organisation – maintenance process operate continually. Ikeji, (1991) sees mobilisation as a process by which latent energy from the view point of the acting unit is made available for collective action. It involves the capability of an organised group to harness and control assets to achieve a set objective. This implies that a better mobilised unit can produce better results or achieve greater levels of success than individualistic resources.

Community mobilisation brings to the fore the vast array of issues bedevilling a people and by way of collective action fashion means to solve them. To Mereni (1991), it entails the generation of a high degree of consciousness among the vast majority of the populace in order to make them participate actively and effectively in the political, social and economic spheres of national life. It means raising the consciousness of the people so that they see social reality. According to him, mobilisation requires first, the development of certain ideas about some current

disabilities of the people and some desired goals, and then the organisation of social formations which use these ideas to liberate the people from these disabilities and march them toward the desired goal. It therefore is the process of pulling together, harnessing, actualising and utilising potential human and natural endowments for the purpose of development. It is a process whereby human beings are made aware of their innate potentials, the resources at their disposal, motivated and energised to collectively utilise such resources and potentials for the improvement of their political, economic and socio-cultural conditions of living as well as tackle common challenges.

V. RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Often misconstrued to imply the building of physical and social infrastructure alone, rural development is the process of improving the quality of life and economic wellbeing of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas (Moseley and Malcolm, 2003; 5). It involves the introduction of new ideas into a socio-economic system in order to produce higher per capita income levels and better standard of living through modern production methods and improved social organisation (Oakley and Garforth, 1985).

Rural areas, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), are home to one-quarter of the population of OECD countries. They provide vital food, energy, and environmental resources that are crucial to the prosperity of urban and rural dwellers alike. However, in Nigeria as well as in other Third World economies of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, rural areas are characterised by poverty, malnutrition and hunger, diseases, unemployment, poor housing, poor social and economic infrastructure, increasing crime rates, etc. As contained in a UNDP International Poverty Centre report (2006), poverty is complex, multidimensional, cyclic and seasonal in some cases. Thus, the complex nature of poverty means that there can be no single-stranded solution for poverty alleviation, reduction, or eradication. Hence, a multi-faceted approach is necessary; combining complementary, sustainable and relevant interventions that are location-specific and carefully-targeted. For this reason, development experts have, severally, advocated for various approaches such as: economic growth approach, rural development approach, and basic needs approach. These approaches will form the basis of the theoretical review of this paper.

VI. COMMUNITY MOBILISATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Community mobilisation processes, as earlier established, can be stimulated by a community itself (through the offices of community heads, local chiefs, town unions, or other local government offices), or by community development ‘experts’ often in the mold of NGOs and international agencies, or facilitated by government agencies. However, for efficient and effective execution of target projects, there must be a synergy between the facilitators and the host community. Active

participation and engagement on the part of the community members is a necessity for relative success in the execution of the developmental objectives. Development thinkers posit that the beneficiaries of a development project influence the direction and execution of such projects rather than receiving merely a share of the project benefits. A successful community mobilisation campaign is one that mobilises people to effectively involve themselves in creating the structure and in designing policies and programmes that serve not only the interest of the people but their becoming part and parcel of the decision-making process at all levels, articulating goals of recovery and development, allocating resources, formulating policies and programmes, executing, utilizing projects and monitoring project performance while sharing equitably in the benefits of recovery and development as well as the enhancement of the effective accountability of the leadership and the masses for all its actions (Oduaran, 1994; Omoruyi, 2001).

VII. THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

THEORIES OF RESOURCE MOBILISATION

According to Jenkins (1983), traditional definitions of the resource mobilisation theory “have included any set of non-institutionalised collective actions consciously oriented towards social change (or resisting such changes) and possessing a minimum of organisation” (*sic*). The basic resource mobilisation model flows from ‘rational actions oriented towards clearly defined, fixed goals with centralised organisational control over resources and clearly demarcated outcomes that can be evaluated in terms of tangible gains’ (Jenkins, *ibid.*). The problem with the application of this model arises in execution of felt-needs. Goals tend to arise out of community interaction, but control, effectiveness and efficiency, and continuity is tied to a charismatic or weak leadership.

Community mobilisation and social movements have been found, by scholars, to be formed as a result of ‘structural strains’ of rapid social changes (Gusfield, (1968) cited in Jenkins *ibid.*), grievances deriving from structural conflicts of interests built into social institutions (Tilly (1978), Jenkins & Perrow (1977), and Oberschall (1978) all cited in Jenkins *ibid.*), and that movements form because of long-term changes in group resources, organisation, and opportunities for collective action.

While grievances form a constant factor, more often than not, in initiating mobilisation, other community mobilisation theorists cite grievances as secondary and as such are motivated by public interest (Berry (1977) cited in Jenkins (1983)), environmental movement (Schoefield *et al*, 1979 cited in Jenkins, *ibid.*), entrepreneurial interests, and civil rights movements as in the case of African Americans, which gave rise to the urbanisation of southern black population in the United States (Jenkins, 1983).

Community mobilisation thus becomes “*the process by which a group secures collective control over the resources needed for collective action. The major issues, therefore, are the resources controlled by the group prior to mobilisation efforts, the processes by which the group pools resources and directs these towards social change, and the*

extent to which outsiders increase the pool of resources” (Jenkins, 1983).

Hence, to Emeh, *et al.* (2012), “the traditional democratic theory’ [of rural community mobilisation], advocates rural populace active participation in the decision-making and implementation of policies that affect and shape their lives.” In other words, “[rural] people can, will, and should collaborate to solve community problems. In addition to the practical problem-solving utility of this perspective, self-help builds a strong sense of community and a foundation for future collaboration. It embodies the notion that a community can achieve greater self-determination within constraints imposed by the larger political economy in which it is imbedded” (Emeh *et al. ibid.*)

This theory of rural community development is significantly related to the traditional democratic theory of development and self-help approach of rural community development.

VIII. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Various researchers have investigated attempts at community mobilisation with the aim of rural development; the success levels (and failures too), the problems, bottlenecks, and impediments to the success of development programmes and projects, and thus have proffered solutions to said problems, bottlenecks, and impediments; and models and approaches to rural development by way of community mobilisation. As earlier established, facilitators of community mobilisation; governments, NGOs, community heads, religious organisations, corporate bodies, or even an alliance of one or more of the afore-mentioned groups have done so, often within the ambit of the three approaches to rural development stated earlier.

VOICE (2008) studying the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY), a programme launched in selected rural Indian communities with the objective of bringing every assisted family above the poverty line within three years, through the provision of micro enterprise, combined both quantitative and qualitative methods and the data collected both from primary and secondary sources. The Project Approach – SGSY adopts a project approach for each key activity. VOICE (2008) found that the installation of income-generating activities and micro enterprises in the rural areas, in a way, helps promote first-generation micro entrepreneurs with resource mobilization on their own through their SHGs.

Thomas (2013) in investigating the ‘*Challenges for participatory development in contemporary development practice*’ noted that as there was nothing in place for their NGO to measure outcomes against external expectations. Their methodology allowed communities and external partners to set the benchmarks.

Thomas (2013) argues that participatory action research is becoming more widely used and engages innovative research methods including peer review. However, Godden and Mull (cited in Thomas, 2013) consider that peer review is significantly under-utilised and provide a peer review model as a participatory action research tool. Their experience of using this tool when reviewing Oxfam’s

water, sanitation and health project found that through peer review, reviewers and hosts can objectively analyse critical areas of power imbalance, such as gender sensitivity, cultural awareness and community relations.

Lee, Árnason, Nightingale and Shucksmith (2005), on the other hand, paid more attention to social capital (network of relationships among people who live and work in a particular community, enabling the community to function effectively) rather than financial capital. In their work, ‘*Networking: Social Capital and Identities in European Rural Development*’, they examined the roles of social capital and identity in rural development in contemporary Western Europe, and the links between them by presenting an overview of the results of an EU 5th Framework Programme project. They drew attention to the position of identity in rural development, and then examined the locally contested dialectic of continuity and change in rural development. Deriving inspiration from Jonathan Murdoch (2000), they argued that development emerges from this dialectic of existing networking practices and networks that are instigated for the purposes of development.

IX. LITERATURE GAP

Most studies done on community mobilisation or on rural development focused on the limitations and constraints to mobilisation, or were mere reports to successful or failed attempts at mobilisation on rural development. Moreover, they utilised more of qualitative rather than quantitative methods to analyse their data. Also, most of the reviewed literatures are foreign with very limited or no similar study carried out in Nigeria.

This study intends to fill this particular research gap by employing quantitative data obtained by converting qualitative data from weighted responses and in turn regressed to elicit results, which, to the best of my knowledge, has not been done in this area of study. Furthermore, in Nigeria, adequate research has not been done to establish the impact of community mobilisation on rural development. Thus, this work aims at increasing the otherwise limited materials on the subject matter.

X. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a case study approach, utilising qualitative and quantitative data, and mixed methods consistent with descriptive research survey design. The case study approach was chosen because it is best suited to explore the research questions and the researcher used the information obtained from a sample of the study population to determine the extent to which MOF has succeeded in her community mobilisation efforts, and if her community development projects and programmes have had any significant impact on the beneficiaries of the Foundation.

The 5-point Likert scale was used to arrange responses from the questions in the questionnaire. Each respondent was requested to select by ticking only one response from among a scale that has five categories as follows: Strongly agreed, Agreed, Neutral, Disagreed, Strongly disagreed. A numerical value was assigned to each degree of response: 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 for the respective responses. The scores from all the statements were added up to obtain the total score of each respondent.

Table 1. Five-point Likert scale.

| Questions | Responses | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|--------|---------|-----------|--------------------|
| | Strongly Agreed | Agreed | Neutral | Disagreed | Strongly Disagreed |
| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

The questionnaires were broken into six components/categories – five for the independent *x*-variables and one for the dependent *y*-variable (Nworuh, 2004).

Population of the Study

The population of the study, which is the total number of the direct beneficiaries of the Foundation, according to records, as at the time of the study, is two thousand, five hundred and sixteen (2,516) direct beneficiaries, of which 1,027 are males and 1,489 females. However, it should be noted that many more people benefit from the Foundation’s public goods.

Sample Size

Due to the size of the population, a sample of the population, having the requisite characteristics of the entire population, was taken. The sampling technique employed was the disproportionate stratified random sampling given to the fact that the study group is made up of people of different age groups and gender, and as such have varying degrees of economic and social responsibilities such as number of dependents, etc. The sample size of two hundred (200) was obtained using Taro Yamane’s formula *viz.*:

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

Where: N is the population size, and e is the level of precision (7%)

Our population size is 2516 thus, our sample size, n, will be:

$$n = \frac{2516}{1+2516(0.07)^2} = \frac{2516}{13.3284} = 188.7 = 189$$

The questionnaires issued were One Hundred and Eighty Nine (189) based on the computations made above, but 12 questionnaires were void thus leaving us with a total of 177 questionnaires which formed the basis of our analysis.

Model Specification

The model examined the effect of the mobilisation of the available resources in the study area on the development of the area. Since this work is pioneering on this area of research, a linear regression model was specified as Rural Development created with the parameters of basic needs as dependent variable, while the independent variables were Mobilisation of Human Resource, Mobilisation of Land

Resource, Mobilisation of Credit and Loan Facilities, and Capital Formation, Mobilisation of Entrepreneurial Capacities, and Mobilisation of Non-material Resources; expressed in implicit form as:

$$Y = f(X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + X_4 + X_5) \dots (1)$$

$$Y = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5 + U \dots (2)$$

This can be expressed in econometrics as:

$$\text{RURAL_DEV} = b_0 + b_1*\text{HUMAN_RES} + b_2*\text{LAND_RES} + b_3*\text{CREDIT_LOAN} + b_4*\text{ENT_MOB} + b_5*\text{NON-MAT} + \varepsilon \dots (3)$$

Where the parameters of the model are as defined earlier and ε is the stochastic error term.

The method of data analysis follows the procedure adopted by Egbulonu (2005, pp. 96-120) which estimated the model parameters $b_0, b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4, b_5$ by obtaining the estimated regression equation: $\hat{Y} = \hat{b}_0 + \hat{b}_1X_1 + \hat{b}_2X_2 + \hat{b}_3X_3 + \hat{b}_4X_4 + \hat{b}_5X_5 \dots (4)$

How well the model fits the data is found examining the coefficient of determination (R^2), or more appropriately the adjusted coefficient of determination ($\text{Adj}R^2$ or \bar{R}^2). A high value of \bar{R}^2 implies that the model appropriately fits the

data, and hence a very good model. The Individual and Joint significance of the variables are also determined using the t-statistic and F-statistic values respectively.

A priori Expectation

The essence of improved community mobilisation is to harness local material and non-material resources to boost local economic activities and improve rural living conditions. With this objective in mind, it is expected that all forms of mobilisation would be directly related to rural development jointly so also should human resource, credit and loan facilities, and non-material resources individually, but entrepreneurial capacities should not have a direct impact given the poor entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. Therefore, it is expected that an increase in the level each of the community mobilisation variables jointly should lead to an improvement in the conditions of the local inhabitants.

Data Analyses and Interpretation

The result of the regression analyses as computed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) is summarised below:

Table 2. Ordinary Least Square Regression Result.

| Model | | Coefficients ^a | | | t | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
|-------|-------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 12.493 | 3.061 | | 4.081 | 0.000 | | |
| | HUMAN_RES | 0.304 | 0.087 | 0.232 | 3.485 | 0.001 | 0.875 | 1.143 |
| | LAND_RES | 0.275 | 0.090 | 0.197 | 3.045 | 0.003 | 0.931 | 1.074 |
| | CREDIT_LOAN | 0.104 | 0.094 | 0.073 | 1.114 | 0.267 | 0.895 | 1.118 |
| | ENT_MOB | 0.133 | 0.104 | 0.087 | 1.276 | 0.204 | 0.844 | 1.184 |
| | NON_MAT | 0.526 | 0.094 | 0.374 | 5.572 | 0.000 | 0.865 | 1.156 |

a. Dependent Variable: RURAL_DEV

Fitting in a regression equation from the table above, we have:

$$\text{Rur_dev} = 12.493 + .304*\text{Hum_res} + .275*\text{Land_res} + .104*\text{Cred_loan} + .133*\text{Ent_mob} + .526*\text{Non-mat}$$

XI. INTERPRETATION OF THE MODEL

The constant term has a coefficient of 12.493, which implies that holding all the explanatory or independent variables constant, Rural Development will increase by 12.493 units.

Human Resource Mobilisation: Human Resource Mobilisation has a coefficient of 0.304, which implies that a unit increase in the mobilisation of this resource would result in .304 unit increase in Rural Development. Also, Human Resource mobilization has a significant impact on rural development with t-statistic value of 3.485 (p-value = 0.001).

Land Resource Mobilisation: This has a coefficient of 0.275, implying that a unit increase in the mobilisation of this resource would yield 0.275 level of improvement in Rural Development. The t-statistic is 3.045 (p-value = 0.003) implying that Land Resource Mobilization individually impacts on Rural Development.

Credit and Loan Facilities Mobilisation: The coefficient of 0.104 for Credit and Loan Facilities Mobilisation implies that with a unit input of the variable, there is a 0.104 level of improvement in Rural Development. This positive coefficient, however, is not significant given a t-statistic value of 1.114 (p-value = 0.267).

Mobilisation of Entrepreneurial Capacities and Capabilities: Entrepreneurial capacities and capabilities mobilisation has a coefficient of 0.133, implying that a unit increase in that variable results in 0.133 increase in Rural Development. Entrepreneurial Mobilization, however, does not significantly affect Rural Development since the t-statistic value 1.276 lies in the acceptance region and the p-value is greater than 0.05 critical value.

Mobilisation of Non-material Resources: The Mobilisation of Non-material Resources has a coefficient of 0.526, which implies that a unit increase in the mobilisation of non-material resources would result in a 0.526 unit increase in Rural Development. Also, this variable was found to be a significant contributor to Rural Development with t-statistic 5.572 (p-value = 0.000).

The independent variables were also found to have joint impact on Rural Development. This is so given an F-statistic value 17.238 which is greater than the F-table value 2.21 hence the conclusion that the explanatory variables have joint impact on Rural Development.

Furthermore, from the regression results, the coefficient of determination, R^2 , is 0.602; that is 60%. This implies that Hum_res, Land_res, Cred_loan, Ent_mob, and Non-mat, jointly, accounted for 60% changes in the Rural Development of the target communities as a result of the Foundation's activities on the direct beneficiaries, while the

remaining 40% of the variation in Rural Development result is accounted for by the variables not captured in our model. This gives a good fit and therefore, is adequate for any meaningful policy analysis.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the mobilisation of resources, human and non-human, and rural development, using Mbara Ozioma Foundation's activities as a case study.

The findings of the various tests conducted revealed that of the five independent variables analysed *viz.*: Human Resource Mobilisation (Hum_res), Land Resource Mobilisation (Land_res), Mobilisation of Credit and Loan Facilities (Cred_loan), Mobilisation of Entrepreneurial Capacities and Capabilities (Ent_mob), and Mobilisation of Non-material Resources (Non-mat), only Human_res, Land_res and Non-mat impacted significantly on Rural Development. Entrepreneurial capacities and capabilities and credit and loan mobilisation had positive but insignificant impact on Rural Development. This implies that entrepreneurial development is still very low, a problem generally affecting the larger Nigerian populace. Also access to credit for the aid and development of SMEs which in turn boost rural development is still very poor.

Considering the joint effect of all the components of rural development studied, as revealed by the F-test, there is positive and statistically significant relationship between community mobilisation and rural development, using the activities of Mbara Ozioma Foundation (MOF) on the communities as case study. This, indeed, proves that there is a strong relationship between the mobilisation of resources and rural community development.

With a satisfactorily high coefficient of determination (R^2) of 60%, and adjusted R^2 of 59%, which compares reasonably with values of similar studies, we can conclude that about 60% of the variation in rural development is well explained by the independent (explanatory) variables, which are components of community mobilisation, included in the model. Therefore, it gives a good fit.

XII. CONCLUSION

The essence of this work is enormous because it verifies the theories of rural development and basic needs approaches. Theories, as ideas, are great but they need to be verified experimentally and it is the experimental verification of these theories that is the ground-breaking thing which means that the theories are true.

The issue of soaring poverty levels in Nigeria even in the midst of plenty (in a country reputed as the largest economy in Africa) is at best paradoxical compared to conventional economic beliefs. Whereas modern economists have seen the flaw in the economic growth theory with its top-to-bottom approach to development and the 'trickle-down' promise which never lifts the larger populace out of poverty, rural development and basic needs approach to development, on the contrary, seeks to develop from bottom-to-top, which will impact on majority of the populace, thus ensuring a better developed society.

Community mobilisation, from the research results, has proven to have a positive and significant impact on rural development. However, the positive effect observed in this

study is subject to the felt experiences of the benefactors of the mobilisation endeavour in Umunumo, Nsu, Agbaja, and Nzeremvillages of Ehime Mbano; the geographical coverage of the outreach of the Mbara Ozioma Foundation, in Ehime Mbano, Imo State, Nigeria, and thus, may differ from the results of other communities subjected to the same tests. Yet this study can serve as a benchmark for how community mobilisation can enhance rural development in Imo State and the South-east geopolitical zone in particular and Nigeria in general.

From the findings, the indices of rural development as established in the literature review, have been met/satisfied by community mobilisation, thus, it is a veritable approach to rural development.

There are no doubts then about the prospects of collective action and the lengths or possibilities that can be achieved with community mobilisation. Community mobilisation, in conclusion, ensures pragmatic steps beyond rhetoric to rural development based on the truism that 'foreigners will not develop your home (community), they can only assist'.

XIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Community mobilisation and collective action in collaboration with other developmental efforts from the government and private individuals is essential for sustainable development. Sound structures and democratic institutions responsive to the needs of the people, as seen with the positive results of the Mbara Ozioma Foundation should be instituted and encouraged for sustained socio-economic development of Nigeria.

Strong community leadership should be instituted to ease the initiation and facilitation of collective community action and sustainability of development projects and programmes.

As noted earlier, community heads, town unions, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), religious bodies, private individuals, corporate bodies and other people of means, including the government, should facilitate community mobilisation and collective action in rural communities; to encourage collective behaviour in other endeavours such as civic responsibilities; and reducing poverty rates by empowering rural dwellers, encouraging productivity in rural areas by improving value chain production in agriculture and other sectors of rural economy, hence improving effective demand, and thus expediting rural development.

There is urgent need for re-education and behavioural change on the perceived notion that jointly-owned business endeavours fail in Nigeria due to certain issues such as distrust. Strengthening of legal frameworks and the judicial system and institution would encourage people to pool resources together to tap into the opportunities of economies of scale, lower costs of production without the fear of unflattering ills such as cheating and distrust.

Because human capital is the most important factor of production, in mobilising human resources and entrepreneurial capacities, young members of the society should be exposed to various training programmes to provide them with the necessary knowledge, skills, mentorship, motivation, and competence. Hence, the

training programmes organised for the SHG members are of great significance in the poverty eradication programmes pursued, and also veritable channels to enable them express their skills and flourish should be established.

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