ASSESSMENT OF THE PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study assesses the relevance of civil society in the process of implementing national intervention programs towards solving the various national problems confronting the citizens in Nigeria. To achieve this, the study employs survey instruments, to examine the extent of participation of the Community Development Associations (CDAs) in Ogun state, in the national management of the 1st and 2nd waves of Corona Virus 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic in Ogun State. The selection of the sample was through a Simple Random Technique, among the CDA executives within the three senatorial districts of the state, and descriptive statistical tools were used to determine the extent of their participation in the three action areas of COVID-19 management; the prevention, treatment, and monitoring and support activities. The results show that they significantly participated in both prevention, and monitoring and support activities, but they did not participate significantly in treatment activities. The study recommends legal recognition, special grants, and capacity building for CDA executives to address the implications of issues identified for new policy decisions.

Keywords: *Community Development Associations, Covid-19, Grassroots, National Development, Self-Help*

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Introduction

Contemporary public administration encompasses both state and non-state actors. The relevance of non-state actors, especially civil society, is becoming more prominent in developing nations where state institutions are weak and incapable of solving complex societal problems. Civil societies have been collaborating significantly in recent times, and also complementing the services of the public sector in all critical areas of service delivery; be it social, economic or democratic governance. According to Yagboyaju and Akinola (2019), Nigeria and some other developing countries underperformed due to a lack of the state capacity to deal with the contemporary complexities of governance. They further observe that the reasons for the failure of the African states are historical heritage, weak leadership, corruption, and violent conflicts. They conclude that the Nigerian state has failed in three major areas: security of lives and properties, promotion of the rule of law, and provision of visionary leadership because self-interest and other primordial considerations, rather than the interests and welfare of the public drive governance and political leadership. Therefore, ineffective public institutions in many countries are largely responsible for their poor socioeconomic conditions (Fagbemi et al, 2021).

The developmental challenges confronting Nigeria necessitate deliberate intervening policies and laws, that would not only recognize, but that will also empower civil societies to take an active role in national development activities. One such civil society group is Community Development Associations (CDAs) at the grassroots, which are collaborating with local government through self-help activities to provide services that can enhance the standard of living in their respective communities. Therefore, in examining the involvement of CDAs in national and grassroots development, the empirical study investigates the level of participation of CDAs in the management of the first and second waves of COVID-19 in Ogun State, as their contribution to the process of solving both the national and their constituencies' problem. Thus, the paper examines the concepts of local government, Community Development Associations (CDAs), and coronavirus pandemic, theoretical framework, CDAs' operation in Ogun State, the

management of first and second waves of COVID-19 in Ogun State by the stakeholders, discussion of findings, policy implications of the findings and recommendations to strengthen the CDAs' operations.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that is relevant in explaining the involvement of the community development association in public governance is the Resource Mobilisation Theory. It is a novel approach to the study of social movement, which originated in the 1970s (Morris, 1992). John McCarthy and Mayer Zald are the originators of the economic and entrepreneurial versions of the theory, and Charles Tilly and Doug McAdam are the proponents of the Political Opportunity Theory (Kendall, 2005). Although they are similar, the Resource Mobilisation Theory focuses on the ability of members of social movements to acquire resources and mobilize people towards attaining the objectives of the movement, while the political model of resource mobilisation focuses on the political struggle and opportunities.

The Resource Mobilization Theory challenges social breakdown and reviews relative deprivation theories that hold individual grievances as the primary stimulus for collective action. Resource Mobilisation theorists argue that grievances are insufficient to stimulate the rise and sustenance of social movements because grievances and conflicts are inherent in every society. Hence, the critical factors in movement mobilization are the formation of social movement organizations and the ability of the organization to mobilise resources (labour and money) from potential supporters (Golhasani & Hosseinirad, 2016). Resource Mobilisation theorists further argue that social movement organizations are not deviant and irrational as claimed by other traditional theories, rather, they are rational social institutions created and populated by social actors, intending to take political actions (Buechler, 1999).

CDAs can be regarded as a social movement and part of civil societies. Civil societies work hand in hand with the government to ensure effective service delivery, especially to the poor and undeserved. They defend citizens' rights and attempt to uphold or change social

norms and behaviour (Ingram, 2020). Busari-Akinbode and Temilola (2020) argue that the activities of CDAs such as holding regular meetings with members to discuss their programs and projects, identification of felt needs and participation in community development projects through the supply of labour, and the contribution of money and materials often yields positive results. This is evident in the provision of health facilities, market stalls, roads, schools, post offices, wells, boreholes, pipe-borne water and electricity, through self-help projects in their communities. Thus, Resource Mobilisation Theory encapsulates how social movements like CDA contribute positively towards nation-building.

Conceptual Explanation

Community Development Association (CDA)

Community development as described by the United Nations is a process by which members of a particular community through self-effort initiate actions to solve their common problems (Adelesi, 2014). The field report of leading United Kingdom organisations on the challenges of community development refers to it as a set of values and practices that can facilitate both economic and political empowerment at the grassroots (Gbesan & Badejo, 1991). Any activity that can engender a stronger community can be classified as community development (Mathy, 2014). Furthermore, community development associations (CDAs) are groups formed by the coming together of people living within a given locality or community, with the sole aim of identifying their felt- needs and agreeing on the ways and means for their realization. Also known as, Community Development Unions, the activities of these groups are important because, there seems to be a breakdown of public institutions meant to cater for the welfare of the people in rural areas (Okwakpam, 2010).

In Nigeria, CDAs have been in existence for ages, but the first attempt to integrate CDAs into the local governance structure was in the Third National Development Plan (1975-1980), to facilitate the provision of infrastructure, self-help, and democratic governance at the grassroots (Wahab, 1996). To strengthen the provision, the Federal

Government directs various communities to initiate CDAs and the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural and Social Development, becomes the supervisory agency (Muse & Narsiah, 2015). However, it became prominent through the enactment of the Community Development Associations Law of Lagos State, in the year 2008. It strengthens their ability to deliver their mandates by facilitating regular meetings with the local and state governments. The Law grants CDAs an opportunity for representation at the local and state levels. It granted certain rights and privileges to them, while the public refers to them as the informal fourth tier of government (Busari-Akinbode & Temilola, 2020).

Furthermore, Udensi et al (2012), stress that the success of CDAs depends on the dedication and participation of community leaders in community projects. In addition, it must be able to resolve organizational challenges like; lack of interest in community development projects by the leaders, disagreement between community leaders and members, non-inclusion of members in the planning and execution of projects, and discrimination against women in leadership positions. Moreover, some factors strengthen the recognition of CDAs as development agents and their ability to explore self-help strategy to their advantage; it is more democratic than other stakeholders in the local governance system (Awosika, 2014), and similarly, adopting participatory techniques in its processes greatly enhance partnerships (Huesca, 2003).

There are several findings from similar studies on the contribution of CDAs' collaboration to community and national development in Nigeria. Effective community development reduces crime rates and disparity (Straza, 2018). Also, Uko (2019) cites more than five secondary schools built through community efforts and handed to the government in Adamawa state, North-Eastern Nigeria, while finding in the study of Aliero (2008) shows their relevance in the creation of community banks in Kebbi and Sokoto States. In addition, Akinsorotan and Olujide (2006) acknowledge the CDA's role in road maintenance, street lighting, water provision and the construction of community halls in different parts of the country. From the submission of Ogu and Oreofeoluwa (2014), Omologede CDA highly helped in the

management and reduction of floods in the Ogolonto community of Lagos State. The study also reveals the involvement of CDAs in peace-keeping and conflict-resolution activities (Peace Insight, 2021). Local NGOs, including CDAs, contribute significantly to community development through community self-help efforts such as; training and re-training of community members on improving healthcare service delivery and increasing agricultural yields in Zamfara State (Hashim et al, 2020). Also, Olusa (2021) observed that collaborative community participation assists in the provision of infrastructure for grassroots development because government alone cannot provide all the needed infrastructure. Thus, the Ibule-Soro Community of Ondo State, Nigeria, adopted the World-Bank assisted project in the community by renovating a block of six classrooms in Jooro High School and extending 31 electric poles. Therefore, these findings point to the effectiveness of collaborations between the CDAs and the government.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19)

The Coronavirus disease 2019 indicated, as (COVID-19) is a communicable respiratory disease, caused by an outbreak of a new strain of Coronavirus; Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) that causes illness in humans. The origin is still controversial but scientists are working on the hypothesis that somehow, humans acquire the infection from animals and through interaction infect others. Although it was first reported in China, it spread gradually throughout the world (Africa CDC, n.d).

In most cases when a person is infected, it could take between 5–6 days on average or in extreme up to 14 days for symptoms to manifest. Symptoms of infection may be between mild to moderate illness. While some affected persons recover without hospitalisation, it is worse in some cases, thereby resulting in death. Common symptoms include; fever, cough, tiredness, and loss of taste or smell and the less common symptoms include; sore throat, headache, aches and pains, diarrhoea, a rash on the skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes, and red or irritated eyes. It spreads from an infected person's mouth or nose when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe in the form of small

liquid particles, which may range from larger respiratory droplets to smaller aerosols (WHO, 2022).

However, the report shows that, from 7th to 8th June 2022, 37 new confirmed cases and 1 death were recorded in Nigeria, while a total of 256,264 infected cases have been confirmed to date (NCDC, 2022). Presently, there is no cure except preventive vaccines, which are currently inadequate to cater for the world population. The available vaccines are; the BioNTech- Pfizer vaccine, Moderna vaccine, Johnson and Johnson vaccine, Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, and Sputnik V vaccine (NAFDAC, 2022).

Covid-19 is a novel virus and worldwide pandemic that requires collaboration both within and internationally. The process of managing its spread across the nation involves technical equipment, expertise, and huge funding that is either not available or inadequate. Thus, there is a need to examine the extent to which the civil societies, which include CDAs can collaborate with the government in managing this pandemic in Nigeria

Stakeholders' Participation In The Management Of Covid-19 Outbreak In Ogun State

The management of covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria started with the first index case of coronavirus infection involving an Italian immigrant, who was visiting a factory in Ewekoro, Ogun State, on February 27, 2020. Structurally, the management process involves both the public and the private stakeholders. The public sector includes the federal, state and local governments. However, local governments (LGs) collaborate with other non-state local civic organizations in the process of managing the effect, in their respective jurisdictions. The contributions of the stakeholders are as follows:

l. Federal Government's Roles: Federal government involvements in the management process are as follows:

The first is the coordination of responses. The following is the coordinating mechanism; the Federal Ministry of Health, relevant ministries and government parastatals, Nigeria Centre for Disease and

Control (NCDC) and the Presidential Task Force (PTF). They serve as a think-tank for the government and create a workable National Response Plan for managing COVID-19 (Ailemen, 2020).

The second is the provision of guidelines. NCDC provides guidelines and protocols to prevent the spread of Coronavirus and regular updates on the outbreak. In addition, there are regular announcements of helplines to contact for emergencies on both traditional and social media platforms (NCDC, 2020). These include lockdown orders, curfews, physical distancing, mandatory use of facemasks, good hand hygiene, closure of activities-centres such as schools, markets, clubs and religious centres, and quarantines of travellers from other countries.

Thirdly, it enforces regulations and protocols. The Federal Government deploys the services of security agencies under its jurisdiction including the Military, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigeria Police Force, Nigerian Immigration Service, Nigerian Customs, Port Authorities and other relevant law enforcement agencies, to ensure effective compliance (Enyiazu et al, 2021).

Fourthly, it provides resources: The Federal government provides both human and material resources to ease the management process. Thus, the government activated the three Mega Polymerase Chain Reactions (PCR) Laboratories for COVID-19 testing in Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), to increase testing from 2500 to 5000 per day (Dan-Nwafor et al, 2020). In addition, the Presidential Task Force (PTF) and the Ministry of Health provide training and personal protective equipment [PPE] for frontline health workers (Oyeranti & Sokeye, 2020). Measures to mitigate the economic hardships resulting from the lockdown order include; cash transfers and sharing of palliatives to the vulnerable. The beneficiaries initially received a payment of 20,000 Naira ($49) to cover January to April 2020, but later reverted to 10,000 Naira ($24) every two months (Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, 2021).

The fifth is quality data management. It assists the government in planning and resource management. Moreover, it provides information on the scope and scale of the pandemic, and the impacts of

interventions (Tijani et al, 2021). The National Centre for Disease Control enhances diagnostic and surveillance and manages data regarding number of confirmed new cases, deaths, mode of transmission, and the effects of each government's intervention on the management of the COVID-19 outbreak.

ll. Ogun State Government's Roles: The Ogun State Government adopted several measures to control and manage the transmission of the infection in the state. The classification of roles and responses are; preventive actions, treatment actions, and monitoring and support actions. The preventive actions to curb the widespread transmission of COVID-19 include; joining other states and countries affected by the deadly virus to ban social gatherings and enforcing physical distancing in the state. The state government banned social clubs, halls, cinemas, nightclubs, restaurants, cafes, sports arenas and other high-density gatherings of people. There was the prohibition of gatherings of more than 20 people in the state for 30 days, to ensure the safety and welfare of residents of the state (Olatunji, 2020). In addition, the government provides sanitisers nose masks, and other logistics.

Treatment action initiated by the state government as the first response to the public health crisis was to provide an 18-bed isolation centre, where covid-19 patients could be isolated and treated (Ihekweazu, 2021). Other measures include rapid training of health workers and other relevant personnel on how to manage COVID-19 patients. Also, it involves the launching of mobile testing booths to increase testing capacity in the state. Furthermore, the state policymakers observed the need to invest in the health sector, and this led to an increase in the budgetary allocation and funding of the health sector from 6% to 20.2%. In addition, there is a collaboration with the private sector, which aided the provision of more isolation centres, testing kits and PPEs.

Monitoring and support actions include close collaboration with the Nigeria Immigration Services and Port Health Services because the state shares an international border with Benin Republic, Niger, Chad and Cameroun. Also, collaboration exists with the Federal and the

surrounding States' governments in ensuring compliance with lockdown directives and physical distancing protocol, after the lockdown was eased (Ihekweazu, 2021). In addition, the State government provides food and facilitates the distribution of palliatives provided by the Federal government to cushion the effects of the lockdown on the residents.

Ill. Local Governments' Role: There is no concrete evidence of individual local government independent initiatives to manage the spread of COVID-19 in their respective jurisdictions, rather, they partner with the local civil societies to assist the state government in implementing programs designed to contain the pandemic.

iv. Community Development Associations' (CDAs) Participation

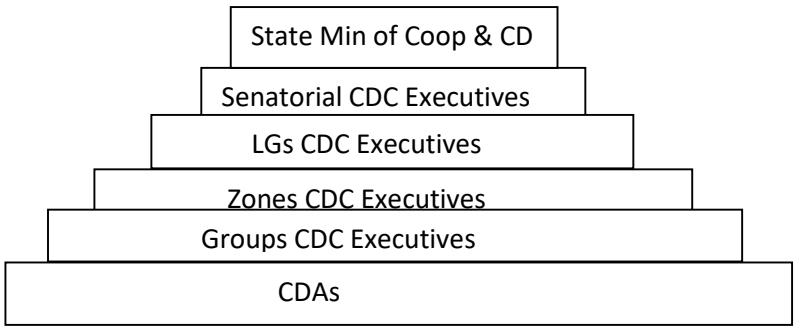
CDAs are part of local stakeholders and civil societies that collaborate in the management of COVID-19 in Ogun State, but there is no reliable data on the level of their involvement. Hence, the focus of this paper is to examine the extent of the involvement of CDAs in the management process of covid-19 pandemic in Ogun State. Community Development Association is one of the grassroots civil society organizations that usually complement local government for development activities. It is a voluntary association that started as a Landlord Association, however, at a point; it secured government recognition and assistance.

The first attempt at granting state recognition to CDAs in Ogun State was the introduction of CDA Law 2017, in the Ogun State House of Assembly, entitled "H.R.No.19/OG/2017: A Bill for a Law to Provide for Registration of Community Development Associations and other Matters Incidental Thereto or Connected Therewith". Later, it was repealed with another bill "H.B. No. 044/ OG/2020: A Bill for a Law to Provide for the Registration of Community Development Associations" and a legislative framework to regulate the operations of CDAs in Ogun State (Ogunradio, 2020). They are to achieve the following: strengthening self-help activities of CDAs in the state; guiding operations of CDAs; encouraging community participation in

governance; and complementing government development efforts (PM Parrot, 2018).

By the provisions of the law, a CDA comprises Landlords, Tenants, and other Residents of a particular area. To constitute a CDA, there must be, between twenty-five to thirty-five buildings, while a group comprises, between four to five CDAs, the same way an area Community Development Committee (CDC) comprises about 30 CDAs with different operational committees like security, infrastructure, and health. Groups of CDCs constitute Local Government CDCs. Sets of local governments within each senatorial district constitute the Senatorial CDC, while the three Senatorial districts form the State CDC. Executives at various levels are elected for three years tenure and renewable once. Generally, in Ogun State, CDAs and CDCs in the state are under the supervision of the State Ministry of Community Development and Cooperatives.

CDA plays an essential role in rural and national development because it enables a bottom-to-top approach to development. The Ogun State Commissioner of Community Development and Cooperatives, Hon. Ganiyu Hamza corroborates that about 9,000 Community Development Associations across the state commit around N10bn to various self-help projects in the area of school facilities, road construction and maintenance, hospital equipment, electric transformers and water boreholes (Amery, 2021). The Government capacity building initiatives to strengthen the CDAs include organisational and educational programmes such as Citizenship and Leadership Training (C&L) (African Newspapers, 2017). According to Fagbohun, (2016), while government recognition offers legitimacy and a sense of ownership to civil society groups, they in turn also assist the government in identifying local needs and appropriate responses. This significant stride raises poser on the need to examine the effectiveness of CDAs' collaboration with other stakeholders in addressing the effect of national challenges like COVID-19 on their communities, which justifies the basis for the CDAs in Ogun State as an active civil society population of study for this research.



Source: Field Study, 2022
Fig: 1, Structure of Ogun State CDAs

Research Methodology

The population of the research was the various CDA executives across the Ogun State, while the sample size was 180 respondents among the executive members who filled out and returned the questionnaires out of the 200 questionnaires that were distributed. Ogun State CDAs were considered as the population of the study because, aside from Lagos State which enacted the CDA law in 2008; Ogun State was the second state to initiate the process to officially recognise, coordinate and empower the CDAs to complement the services of the state government at the grassroots. The state house of assembly initiated a bill in 2018, and reintroduced another in 2020, which was enacted subsequently in 2021. In addition, the first incidence case in Nigeria occurred in Ogun State. The research instrument used was structured questionnaires that contain questions relating to the three aspects of the COVID-19 management activities. Some executive members volunteered to distribute and retrieve the questionnaires, during the local government and senatorial CDC executive meetings.

The sample responses were based on a Likert 4 scale rating, where, Strongly Participated = **SP**, Fairly Participated **= FP**, Rarely Participated =**RP**, and Not Participated =**NP.** The data analysis on the level of CDAs' participation involves using Percentages, while the interpretation of findings was classified based on CDAs participation as follows: Percentage of Significant Level of Participation (% SLP)

represented by, % of SP + FP; and Percentage of Insignificant Level of Participation (% ISLP) represented by, % of RP + NP. However, a Multiple Bar Chart was employed as a statistical tool to describe and illustrate the conclusions.

Findings and Discussion

Research Questions

The study examines the following research questions:

i. What is the extent of Ogun State CDA's participation in COVID-19 preventive actions?
ii. What is the extent of Ogun State CDA's participation in COVID-19 treatment actions?
iii. What is the extent of Ogun State CDA's participation in COVID-19 monitoring and support actions?
iv. How effective are the CDAs in collaborating with the government for developmental activities at the grassroots?

Data Analysis

Table 1: Rating of CDAs' Participation in Prevention Activities

Activities	SP	FP	RP	NP	TOTAL	
Sensitization	64	58	32	26	180	
Ensuring physical distancing		48	66	40	26	180
Ensuring nose mask compliance		38	68	44	30	180
Ensuring handwashing/sanitiser		36	58	48	38	180
Encouraging lockdown compliance		30	68	42	40	180
Total		216	318	206	160	900

Source: Study Survey, 2022

Table 2: Rating of CDAs' Participation in Treatment Activities

	SP	FP	RP	NP	TOTAL	
Testing	8	18	32	122	180	
Evacuation to isolation centres		6	15	28	131	180
Provision of facilities/equipment		0	0	0	180	180
Provision of personnel		0	0	0	180	180
Providing feeding/drugs to patients		0	0	0	180	180
Total		14	33	60	793	900

Source: Study Survey, 2022

Table 3: Rating of CDAs' Participation in Monitoring and Support Activities

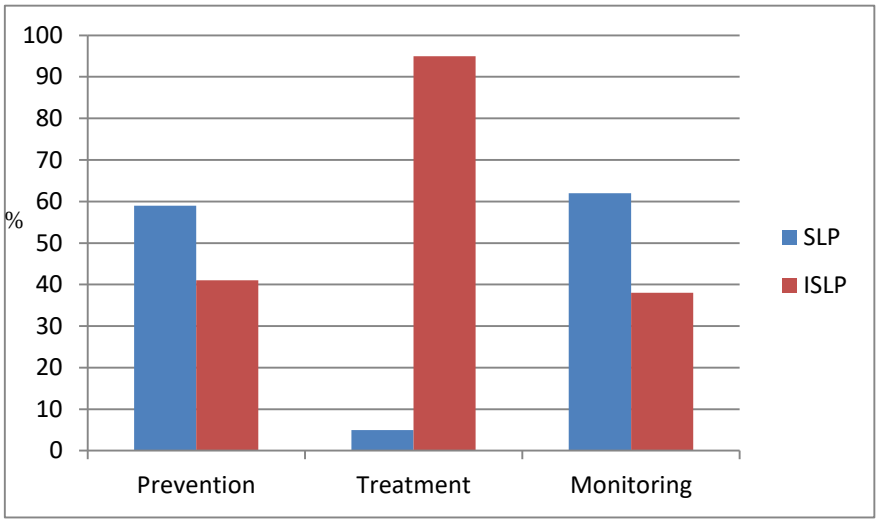
Activities	SP	FP	RP	NP	TOTAL
Palliatives provision	38	68	52	22	180
Palliatives distribution	52	76	42	10	180
Mobilizing for vaccination	30	68	42	40	180
Total	120	212	136	72	540

Source: Study Survey, 2022

Responses in Percentages and Bar Chart

The responses can be interpreted in percentages and bar charts as follows:

i) Prevention Activities: SLP = 59%, ISLP = 41%
ii) Treatment Activities: SLP = 5%, ISLP = 95%
iii) Monitoring & Support Activities: SLP = 62%, ISLP = 38%



Source: Study Survey, 2022

Fig: 2. Multiple Bar Chart Showing Responses (SLP & ISLP)

Discussion

The finding from the above Table 1, shows 59% SLP and 41% ISLP, therefore, we can conclude that there is a significant level of participation in the Covid-19 prevention activities by CDAs in Ogun State. Furthermore, the finding from the above Table 2, shows 5% SLP and 95% ISLP, therefore, we can conclude that there is an insignificant level of participation in the Covid-19 treatment activities by CDAs in Ogun State. Also, the finding from Table 3 above, shows 62% SLP and 38% ISLP, hence, we can conclude that there is a significant level of participation in the COVID-19 monitoring and support activities by CDAs in Ogun State. The above findings indicate that CDAs in Ogun State significantly participated in two of the three 1st and 2nd waves covid-19 management activities; prevention, monitoring and support, while it indicates that the level of participation in treatment activities was insignificant.

The findings reveal the inevitability of collaboration between government and civil societies. CDAs have 59% and 62% levels of participation in two of 3 sets of activities; prevention monitoring, and

support respectively. Including CDAs in the third national development plan and enactment of CDAs law in 2008 and 2021 by the Lagos and Ogun states governments respectively, confirms the gradual recognition of civil society as a partner in public administration. Civil society in diverse countries of the world has demonstrated that they are an indispensable partner to governments in resolving constrain to public service delivery and humanitarian assistance to victims of violent conflict (GPSA, 2022).

They are significant agents of development, and the effectiveness and efficiency of civil societies determine the transformation of any society or system, especially in developing societies. They contribute to the social, political, and economic development, and the enthronement and consolidation of democracy in society (Omede & Bakare, 2014). Civil society is the building block of national cohesion and usually fills the development vacuum created by both the government and the private sector in times of peace, while facilitating reconciliation and providing services that are neglected by the state, in times of crises (Ingram, 2020).

Furthermore, the inability of CDAs to contribute significantly to the activities concerning COVID-19 treatment, unlike in the prevention and support actions is attributable to the weakness and strength of their main strategy; self-help. The strength of self-help favours those projects and services that are not highly technical and cost-effective. Self-help projects are inevitable, especially in rural areas because the external or support help is usually inadequate and unhelpful. The locals embrace community self-help as a strategy for community projects to eradicate poverty and satisfy the basic needs of their people. It enhances the people's ability to assert their economic, social and cultural conditions, for accelerated development (Tyagi et al, 2020). It is gradually becoming a necessity for community survival in the modern world because it catalyses sustainable development projects in developing countries, to overcome rural poverty, unemployment and disease by harnessing the benefit of available local resources. Also, it is a reflection of the expanding needs of the people,

rather than the inducement of community agents, to address the problem of rural underdevelopment (Acha, 2014).

Ogunleye-Adetona and Oladeinde (2013) point out that community unions and associations have contributed immensely to the community execution of self-help projects. They are an essential tool for balanced socio-economic development in rural areas, especially in Nigeria, due to their efficient projects. In the same vein, Adelesi (2015) argues that an efficient CDA plays a tremendous role in a democratic government. CDAs are the avenue for the government to reach the people at the grassroots. They are involved in the process of empowering the people (in terms of financial, women, and youth empowerment), serve as the structure that enables strong interaction among community members, represent the people, aid the provision of basic amenities, increase collaboration with relevant security agencies, and engage the right politicians within their territory.

In addition, Folayan and Dokunmu (2019) assert that CDA serves as an opportunity for people to meet regularly to discuss the problems and needs of the community and generate resources internally and externally to solve these problems. Moreover, many of these CDAs initiate new projects and manage the facilities in their vicinities. Thus, CDAs are effective tools of political institutions, in achieving all-inclusive grassroots governance through participatory communication.

Furthermore, the weaknesses of the self-help strategy can be adduced for the insignificant participation of the CDAs in Ogun State, in the COVID-19 treatment activities, which requires huge finance and technicality that may not be available to many CDAs through self-help strategy as evident in findings of similar studies. Tyagi et al (2020) opine that resource mobilization is a major constraint to service delivery in self-help project execution. The rural communities possess a low capacity to mobilize existing resources for financial, social and productive support services, to complement the local government's financial capacity to improve the communities. Oyeleye et al (2017) add that location poses challenges to the performance of CDAs. Lack of support for associations in the rural areas hinders their performance,

because the CDAs in urban areas receive more assistance from big agencies, while the rural area dwellers have to bear their burden. A comparative study between two CDAs by Busari-Akinbode and Temilola (2020) shows that the high-performing CDA records some level of success in project execution. However, the efficiency of the low-performing CDA was low because of poor funding, low community participation, as well as lack of synergy among the CDAs. Another finding by Akinsorotan and Olujide (2006) reveals that CDAs cannot successfully embark on high-cost projects because they depend mostly on self–help in providing amenities to improve their communities. However, most CDA members in the study area appeared to be living at a very low subsistence level, thus, 70 per cent could not even contribute 200 Naira per month for developmental projects. No single member could afford to spare time for communal work at least once a week, while 76 per cent can only afford it once or twice a month.

Akpomuvie (2010) stresses further that the success of self-help projects in Nigeria is hindered in some cases by the corrupt attitude of both public development officials and community leaders. There are instances where the rural elite spearhead self-help projects as an avenue for self-enrichment and political gains. In addition, in the same way, that local governments' autonomy suffers from state governments, LGs also interfere and overbear on CDAs to prevent competition (Muse & Narsiah, 2015).

Furthermore, most CDAs in Ogun State are not in an urban area and high-level illiteracy hinders the growth and development of rural communities and the ability of CDAs to embark on bigger self-help projects that require technicality and expertise, like COVID-19 treatment. Oyekunle (2018) posits that rural communities in Nigeria are facing problems such as lack of access to basic education, and schools, inadequate social amenities and ignorance, which greatly affect the standard of living and the hope of survival in rural areas. Also, Liu (2021) observes that there are some literacy challenges in rural areas, which contributes to the gap between rural and urban areas. These factors include the wide income inequality between residents in rural and urban areas, which affects literacy, access to necessary textbooks,

quality teachers, and transportation; and gender inequality because of the traditional practice that conferring more privilege on males than females. Health challenges such as malnutrition, which hinders the cognitive development of children; and ineffective implementation of national policies in rural areas.

Policy Implications

The following are policy implications deduced from the above findings:

i. The inability of federal and state governments to impact significantly on rural communities in Nigeria justifies the indispensability of CDA initiatives; hence, there is a need for a national policy that would authorize the enactment of legislation to legalize the operations of CDAs across the country.
ii. There is a need for policy directives mandating state governments to set aside special grants, to aid CDAs in their self-help activities.
iii. Also, there is a need for state policies to integrate CDAs into political and democratic activities within their local governments' area, to participate in decision-making processes on issues affecting their communities.

Conclusion

The paper examines the relevance and the level of participation of CDAs in executing projects and programmes that can solve community and national problems, for community development in particular and national development in general. In the process, it focuses on covid-19 management as one of those programmes, and its management in Ogun State as a case. The study interrogates the CDAs' participation in the three action areas of COVID management: prevention, treatment, and monitoring and support, through a survey instrument administered to a sample of CDA executives across the state. While the findings show that, they significantly participated in the prevention, monitoring and support activities, they show insignificant participation in treatment actions. However, the discussion of findings in related studies shows that effective implementation of the recommendations by the public

policy managers and lawmakers, and taking into consideration the identified policy implications, can enhance the CDA contributions to community and national development.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations that can enhance the effectiveness of community development associations, in community development activities in particular and national development efforts in general:

i. State's supervisory agencies must monitor and interact continuously with CDAs for effective guidance, and tracking of their activities.
ii. There is a need for enlightenment and reorientation of residents across the states, on the need to cooperate and participate in CDA activities, to complement government efforts.
iii. There must be an enabling law recognising and regulating CDAs in other states, where it is currently not available, to enhance effectiveness.
iv. State governments should include dedicated grants to each CDA in their annual budget, to support high-impact projects that are beyond their financial capability.
v. CDAs should be more involved in political activities and local governance, to ensure that the programmes of the government accommodate their community interests.

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