



ROLES OF TOWN UNIONS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF MBAITOLI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the roles of town unions in community development using Mbaitoli L.G.A of Imo State as the focal point. In line with the above, the researchers formulated and used three research questions and three research hypotheses. The researchers employed survey research design and questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. The data collected were presented in tables and analyzed using simple percentage and chi-square was used to test the hypotheses. Based on the data analysis, it was discovered that town unions have contributed positively to primary health care, educational development, and job creation in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State. The study concludes that the achievement of rural development depends on the effectiveness of different town unions in the study area. The study recommends that government should provide periodic subvention to town unions to enable them have adequate fund for provision of primary health care services, and educational empowerment for rural dwellers, especially in Mbaitoli LGA. Furthermore, town unions should contribute more meaningfully for the human empowerment as it concerns skill training and job creation for rural people, especially in Mbaitoli LGA.

Key Words: Town union, Community development, Primary health care, Educational development, Job creation.

Introduction

There is a growing concern among development scholars and policy makers on understanding rural development as a key to overall socio-economic development. This philosophy is a paradigm shift from that of the 1960s and 1970s when economic theorists and development actors centred on growth resulting from national economic development plans and their multiplier effects on massive capital investment. The logic then was that once the national economy was made to flourish, the development of rural economy automatically follow suit. As time goes on, it becomes obvious that government cannot do everything. Of a truth, governments in African nations have evolved top-down and bottom-up approaches to achieve sustainable development of their people (Nwobashi & Itumo, 2017). 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, 2013).

This and other reasons led to the emphasis on the contributions of town union. 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 know are very needful in their immediate communities. From late 1980s to the late 1990s town unions took a centre stage as critical keys in rural development. Unarguably, much work on government, and poor performance of government development in meeting the socioeconomic needs of the citizens was the reasons behind the proliferation of town in Nigeria during these periods. Wahab (2000) observed that people in developing nations have until recently looked up to their governments to meet their basic socio-economic demands.

The indigenous organizations are associated with self-help (Ogundipe, 2003). The town union is therefore known for its development efforts. In Mbaitoli L.G.A of Imo State there is numerous town unions in different communities, but our emphasis in this study is on the general unbothered union in the L.G.A called "Mbaitoli Development Front". The town union has contributed significantly in human capital and infrastructural development of rural communities in Mbaitoli L.G.A. The organization has contributed in building numerous town hall, market square, recreation center, maternity centers, and skill acquisition center for youths and women in the study area. This means that the role of town union in community development cannot be overemphasized. That is why Lewi (2017) stated that town union have helped in filling the gap where there is government negligence. For Ajaero (2013) the focus of numerous town unions is community development in human capital and infrastructure.

The town unions do many things to achieve the development of their community (Anayo, 2019). To him, 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 develop 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, 2018; Akinola, 2000; Akinbode, 1974; Onibokun & Faniran, 1995).

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, even though about 70% of the country's population lives in the rural areas, the rural areas are yet to witness significant level of development. This is evident in the apparent lack of basic infrastructural facilities. Abah (2010) observed that the most evident display of Nigeria underdevelopment condition is the rural areas. The rural dwellers in Nigeria still lack access to basic facilities water, road, sanitation, hospitals and good education despite all efforts made by both government and non-governmental organizations. The failure of rural development programmes at the period was blamed on the failure of Nigerian state. Following this assertion, there have been expectations among academics and government officials that the realization of democratic governance in 1999 would invigorate and spur more participation of the town unions in the provision of basic facilities. The above thinking logically becomes justifiable when weighed against the backdrop of the assertion that democratic governance is key to increased popular participation of town unions in community development (Kiyaga-Nsubuga, 2015). There is therefore the need to empirically test the assertion in Mbaitoli LGA of Imo state.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the roles of town unions in community development using Mbaitoli L.G.A of Imo State. The specific objectives are:

1. To identify the extent town unions has contributed to primary health care in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State.
2. To find out the extent town unions has contributed to educational development in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State.
3. To determine the impact of town unions on job creation for the youth in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be answered to obtain the findings or results of the study:

1. To what extent has town unions contributed to primary health care in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State?
2. To what extent has town unions contributed to educational development in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State?
3. What are the impacts of town unions on job creation for the youth in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State?

Statement of Hypothesis

Based on our objective of the study and research questions, the following research hypotheses guided the study.

Ho₁: Town unions have not contributed to primary health care in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State.

Ho₂: Town unions have not contributed to educational development in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State.

Ho₃: Town unions have not significantly contributed to job creation for the youth in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State.

Literature Review

Concept of Town Unions

According to Eme Ukah, and Eluwa (2012) town unions represent an association formed by the people of the same town, local government or even district as the case may be. To Anayo (2019), town union can also be seen as an agency of community through which innovations and development purposes are achieved for the community. Society and cultures are dynamic therefore social institutions grow with the society. The Town Union has continued to grow with the Igbo society and has acquired new names like central unions, group unions, progressive association, development union and Town Union. Thus, in developing Igbo society the Town Union has assumed the status of civil society organization with improved administrative structures. Apart from undertaking several development and infrastructural projects, it has continued to serve as the organ for local administration in Igbo land.

In view of Emeh, Ukah, and Eluwa (2012) the town unions represent an association formed by the people of the same town, local government or even district as the case may be. The modern face of town union emerged during colonial rule especially after people have migrated to the colonial cities. Town union is an organization formed and owned by the members of the community that formed it (Nwankwo, 2014). The union usually derives its name from the name of village or town that formed it. For instance, a town union formed by Mbaitoli natives living in

any of the towns /cities could be known as Mbaitoli Development Union; etc. Town unions are the most pronounced Community Based Organization (CBO) in Nigeria today, while others include age grades and cooperative societies.

The Concept of Development and Community Development

Isong (2010) opined that true development must mean the development of man. He further said it is also clear that development does not start with goods and things, it starts with people and the development regards man as the beneficiary of development efforts. Akin in Dudley Seers (2008) conceived development as involving not only economic growth but also conditions in which people in a country have adequate food, jobs, and the income inequality among them is greatly reduced. Pearce, et al (2016) held that development is a value word, implying change that is desirable. They added that what constitutes development depends on what social goals are being advocated by the development agency, government, analyst or advisers. We take development to be a vector or desirable society seeks to achieve or maximize. The elements of this vector might include: improvements in health and nutritional status, educational achievement, access to resources a “fairer” distribution of income and increase in basic freedoms. Correlation between these elements, or an agreed system of weights to be applied to them might permit development to be represented by a single ‘proxy’ indicators.

Toyobo (2008) viewed development as ‘a multi-dimensional process involving the re-organization and reorientation of the entire economic and social system. This involves in addition to improvement of income and output, radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes, customs and beliefs’. Ibeh (2019) in his class lecture defined development according to the Nigerian Town Planning, Lavery (2005) as any building or building operation and any use of land or any building there on for purpose which are different from their original purpose or the purpose which they were being used as the last count shall be classified as development. By implication, one can see that the aim of development is ultimately to achieve an improvement on the original status of a place.

Ajagbe (2009) defined community development as a social action process in which people of community organize themselves for planning and action. They identify their common and individual needs and problems, make group and individual plans to meet these needs, execute these plans with a maximum reliance upon community resources. Ibe (2019) aptly states that “there is no precise and generally accepted definition” of community development. He rather opines that community development is “any action taken by any agency and primarily designed to benefit the community”. Emeh, Ukah, and Eluwa (2012) in line with this view, sees community development as “a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community or town with the active participation on the initiative of the community”.

The United Nation’s Economic and Social Council defined community development generally as a process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve the economic social and cultural conditions of communities into the life of the nation and enable them contribute fully in national progress. However, a more comprehensive definition of community development has been expressed in the “community development” of the International Cooperation Administration of the United States. Community development is further defined as the process of helping a community strengthen itself and develop towards its full potential (Nwobashi and Itumo, 2017).

Town Union's Strategies for Community Development

These are the strategies used by the town unions in community development.

- 1. Brotherhood strategy:** To Emeh, Ukah, and Eluwa (2012), the colonial government had no well-designed welfare for the teeming migrants that were flocking to the city and the city proved a difficult sphere of survival and a place of strangeness. The idea of having a union to look after the welfare of their members far from home was not new, as could be deduced from the Igbo axiom "Nwanne di na Mba", which denotes the significance of town unionism especially in a foreign land. In the spirit of the above stated axiom, many African migrants carried the various forms of social relations in their traditional societies into new area in which they moved to. They also had attachment to their home and felt that they will come back to it.
Further, the various social amenities and services they enjoyed in the city, they would want to have and enjoy in their home towns (Emeh, Ukah, and Eluwa, 2012). This nostalgic feeling may be regarded as the magic wand that rural and community development have utilized in making Town Union a veritable tool of self-help approach of rural and community development in Nigeria since inception.
- 2. Social clubs strategy:** Social clubs were quite popular even before the Civil war in Nigeria (Onyekwelu, 2018). In the Igbo area of Nigeria, the civil war, among other things caused various forms of dislocation in terms of losing political, economic and social positions in the Nigerian societies. The people were desirous to improve their lots, personally and collectively after the civil war. Various associations of common interests were formed for one form of goal or the other. Some of these associations metamorphosed into social clubs (Ibe, 2019). Some of these social clubs draw their members from a particular town or local government areas while others draw their members from various sections of Nigerian society. These social clubs protect the interest of their members and also serve as forms of social security for its members. The social clubs especially those from the local government or town try to improve the area. They could contribute towards erecting certain social amenities in the host communities. They also award scholarships to some of the vulnerable and less privilege and disadvantage, yet deserving individuals of the communities (Nwobashi and Itumo, 2017). In Igbo land for instance, many of the social clubs built bus tops, motor parks, Markets etc. Even though of late, social clubs in Nigeria are no longer as viable as they were in the 1970s, however, they are still veritable instrument of self-help approach of rural and community development.
- 3. Town women associations' strategy:** In Igboland, the women have various forms of associations that aid community development. One of the popular women associations is the General Assembly of Married Women in a town (Uhegbu, 2017). The women association contributes to various development projects in their home communities. They organise meeting periodically such as the annual August meeting, when they discuss various self-help-based rural community developmental projects. They use their association to assist the men in their various development projects. It is worthy of note that towns Women association have initiated and completed various community developmental projects such as town halls, school blocks, markets, post offices, etc.
- 4. Individual efforts strategy:** Community development, in the words of Chukwuezi (2000), has always been described as a group activity organised by the people or the people in co-operation of government. The essence of group action is always emphasized. One could

equally and aptly also argue that some individuals, singularly contributes to community development (Lewi, 2017). They may be solely responsible for the resources; however, their activities benefit the community. In this light, it might be logical to hypothesize that even though, individuals singularly provide the resources, but since their activities are towards the development of the group, it is seen as community development. Some wealthy individuals make enormous contributions towards the development of their communities by way of providing resources both human and resources for certain development projects. Some of them singularly sponsor a number of scholarships to their kits and kin to ensure their academic development. Some of them have donated the stated amount of money for which a launching was slated.

Town Unions and Construction of Rural Roads

One of the challenges of development in Nigeria today is poor infrastructure, especially road (John-Geb, 2016). Any country that wants to achieve development, especially at the neglected rural areas must always improve its road network. Here, road infrastructure entails maintenance of existing road network, construction of new roads (Bakare, 2018). Here, good road infrastructure is likely to achieve rural development viability at the community level and beyond because there is constant and easy movement of people and products (Ubah, 2019). Road are provided for movement of people or products through vehicle and other conveyance instrument. A road is thoroughfare, route or way on land between two places that has been paved or otherwise improved to allow travel/ movement by foot or some form conveyance including a motor vehicle, cart, bicycle, motorcycle, horse or tricycle (Ubah, 2019).

Rural transportation forms an intrinsic part of rural development strategies, serving as a mechanism and catalyst for rural transportation through the reinforcement of rural development and contributes to poverty reduction by enhancing equity and efficiency outcomes (Adedeji, Olafaji, Omole, Olanibi & Yusuf, 2014). Maintenance of rural roads goes a long way to ease the challenges of road transportation which contributes immensely to rural development. As it is known, agriculture is the major occupation of the rural communities. Over 90% of rural dwellers have agriculture as their major occupation. From these agricultural activities come huge agricultural produce. These agricultural produce are majorly sent by road transport to the urban areas where they are sold to urban dwellers. Such agricultural produce are used as food for people, feed for animals and raw materials for industries. Some of these produce are also exported to foreign countries which serve as a source of revenue for the government through export taxes on the products. Since agriculture occupies this lofty position in the rural communities and the national economy, it is important to provide adequate road infrastructure for rural people not only to convey their agricultural produce to the cities, but to also have access to other areas of interest to carry out their day-to-day activities.

Town Unions and Provision of Basic Education

Many town unions are committed in providing basic education to the communities. According to Ozoemenem (2018), they do this by sponsoring some students in education, helping to pay staff of primary schools in their communities, organizing adult education for their people etc. This stream of studies explored the contributions of town unions to the provision of development projects especially in the educational sector. Specifically, most of these studies focused on the examination of how towns union contribute to the funding of school building projects, class room

desks, furnishing of teachers' offices among others. Contributing to this strand of literature, Waldman (2012) took a critical study of democratic governance and its effects on the educational development policy in United States of America. He synthesized the theories of Madison and Rousseau to demonstrate a broad theoretical understanding of how democratic institutions govern as well as how educational inequalities are resolved in democratic system.

More so, he analysed Dewey's theoretical background for comparing American education with the democratic governance theories of Madison and Rousseau coupled with Bertalanffy general system theory to demonstrate how the new governance theory of centripetalism and Dewey's philosophy of education, can be synthesized to become a theoretical foundation for an education development policy. The study concludes that learning objective will construct broad spectrum on how developing nations may model a blend of the best ideas of Madison's and Rousseau's democratic governance that promotes sustainable educational development opportunities (John-Geb, 2018). The problem with this study is that it is too general and lacks focus as it examined both rural and urban communities in United States rather focusing specifically on how democracy could spur town unions to fund educational development in rural communities which is the trust of this study. Again, the study aims at establishing how different new democratic governance theories could be synthesized to produce a theoretical foundation for an educational development policy in United States rather than understanding how democracy could enhance town unions funding of educational development.

Town Unions and Provision of Primary Health Care in Rural Communities

The provision of adequate primary health care is paramount to the overall development of rural communities in Imo State. However, it remains scary how primary health care is poorly and scantily provided in Nigeria communities (Ibe, 2019). Adequate rural health care was not accessible to the people in terms of availability or access to doctors, provision of drugs, adequate maternal health care. Most rural dwellers sought for medical treatment in the cities because of lack of adequate medical provisions in the rural communities. Many doctors who work in the rural areas live in cities and could not answer emergencies calls in the night due to insecurity. Onwujiariri, Nwachi & Nkwocha (2017) strongly assert that the goal of the National Health Policy (1987) was to provide a comprehensive health care system based on primary health care that is promotive, protective, restorative and rehabilitative to all citizens, within available resources so that individuals and communities can be assured of productivity, social well-being and enjoyment of living. Sanni (2010 cited in Onwujiariri, 2017; 13) write that the essence of health care to the local government is to make the management of primary health care serious, more effective, affordable and closer to the grassroots.

Through the effort of different town unions, there is now improve health care system. Primary Health Care according to the World Health Organization (1978) is defined as essential health care based on practical, scientifically sound, and socially acceptable methods and technology made accessible to individuals and families in the community through their full participation and at a cost that the community and country can afford to maintain in the spirit of self-reliance and self-determination (Emeh, Ukah, and Eluwa, 2012). This leads to primary health care services which refer to the provision of primary health care, which includes preventive health services and education. Primary health care entails free, affordable and acceptable healthcare for everyone in the rural community with the aim to provide and make adequate health care available for all the

people. This is to make sure all rural dwellers have quality health care to carry out their day-to-day activities for the development of their rural communities (Obi, 2019).

Empirical Review

There are existing related literatures on this subject matter. The researcher therefore summarizes some of them in this empirical review.

To start with, Onyekwelu (2018) studied community development Okigwe LGA: The Community Government Council (CGC) option. The work was a survey study. The population of study covers the entire 120 persons, which are the autonomous communities' representatives in the Community Government Council (CGC). The same 120 were used as sample. The Questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and hypotheses tested using chi-square. It was discovered that Community development is a coordinated approach whereby the community members undertake programs and projects in order to better the living condition of the people residing in that community. It is a self-directional effort of the people by the people and for the people aimed at improving the physical and material wellbeing of people in a community. It also discovered that community development is an indigenous and veritable approach to solving our own problems as it emphasizes on what we can use our local resources to do; that too much interference of the government in community development to a reasonable extent has not helped, as it has generated crises in most places and gradually killed the enterprising spirit of the people. Drawing on these, the Government should re-establish the think home philosophy-the very essence of community development through the use of Community Government Council (CGC).

In a study by Nwobashi and Itumo (2017), they examined how democratic governance stimulates the contributions of town unions to provide and maintain rural roads in Nigeria. The study was provoked by the need to empirically test the assumption of some scholars that democracy is key to stimulating town unions to develop rural communities. The study was carried out in twelve selected rural communities chosen across the three senatorial zones of Ebonyi state. The data for the study were gathered with questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), observation and documentary methods. The study adopted community action theory as its framework of analysis. The population covered 1468 people selected across the twelve selected rural communities in Ebonyi state. The data were analyzed using simple percentage, contingency tables, and histogram while chi square was used for the test of hypotheses. The findings revealed that democratic governance has enhanced contributions of town unions in the construction and regular maintenance of rural roads in Ebonyi State. The study equally revealed that lack of enlightenment, illiteracy, and poverty among the rural dwellers poses challenge to town unions' contributions to development of rural roads. The study recommended that government should provide periodic subventions to town unions to enable them mobilize adequate funds for the construction and maintenance of rural roads. Besides, leadership trainings should be organized on regular basis to educate and enlighten town union executives on the best global practices on rural development. More so, Uhegbu (2017) focused on the impact of rural information on town union contributions to community development programmes in the Imo State of Nigeria. It used a combination of a questionnaire and an oral interview schedule. For the population of study, a total of 378 respondents were chosen from 63 autonomous communities drawn randomly from the 27 local government areas of the state. Data were analysed using simple percentage. The results show that

town union has contributed for grassroot poor language development through self-help. It recommends for improved activities of town union.

Also, Ajaero (2013) examined the effects of town union on rural-urban migration in Southeastern Nigeria. Data were obtained using mixed methods approach comprising questionnaire surveys and key informant interviews. Six rural local government areas (LGAs) were selected based on population size and spatial equity from two states of Southeastern Nigeria. To get the population from each of the rural LGAs, fifty migrant-sending households were sampled for the study. Multiple regression and hierarchical cluster analyses were used to estimate and categorize the effects of rural-urban migration due to remittances and community projects executed by the rural-urban migrants, respectively. In addition, the Chi-square and Kruskal-Wallis tests were utilized. The regression analysis shows that town union in the south east encourages rural-urban migration.

Onyeozu (2010) carried out a study that focused on analysis of contributions of town unions to the development of social amenities such as rural roads in Rivers State, Nigeria. The population of study covers the 960 people from registered town unions. The data for study were collected with the aid of structured questionnaire from 960 randomly selected respondents in the study area and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that town unions in Rivers State contributed significantly to the building and renovation of community roads. The weakness of this study lies in the fact that the study is too general as it fails to segregate the study area into urban and rural areas which would show how town unions contributed to the development of these areas respectively.

In separate study, Ugwu (2013) investigated the contributions of town unions to the development of rural roads in some communities in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu state of Nigeria. The study utilized survey method through self report technique of data collection which deals mostly with sourcing information from the primary sources and analytical induction sourcing information from secondary sources. Data collected were analyzed using quantitative methods. The study revealed that town unions in Nsukka LGA embarked on road rehabilitation covering a total 46.5 kilometers of roads at an estimated cost of N23,550,000 and expenditure of N25,050,000 on roads constructions as of 2010. The survey also indicated that majority (81%) of the respondents agreed that Town unions contributed positively to rehabilitation of roads in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu. Despite the beauty of the work in segregating the contributions of town unions to this sector, it failed to explain how democratic governance could enhance contributions of town unions to construction of rural roads.

Literature Gap

Past studies have been done in related work on community development, town unions and many others. However, most of the past studies covered community development, without specific focus on town union. More so, some of the studies covered only town union issues without any connection to community development. None of the above studies used Mbaitoli as the focal point. Furthermore, some of the past studies were carried out using other countries of world and neglecting Mbaitoli, Imo State of Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The relevance of theory in development studies cannot be overemphasized. In this study, we used structural functional theory. Gabriel Almond and his associate in 1954 developed the structural

functional theory. Almond focused on identification of functions of the polity in modern western system and how these functions are performed in non-western systems in the process of modernization (Unanka, 2004). This Theory holds that all the system in a society has structures or institutions and these structures or institutions have functions to perform for the survival of the society. Therefore, all political systems have structures which they must perform certain task in order to achieve equilibrium.

According to Ekwonna (2014) “the objective concern of structural functionalism is to identify which structures constitute which system, which structures perform which functions, and which functions impact on the system as a result of the relationship it creates with the structure and the rest of the structures in the system.” According to Varma (1975), structural functional analysis revolves around certain concepts more important of which are: functions and structures. In using structural functional analysis, three basic questions are usually asked, namely: (a) What basic functions are fulfilled in any given system, (b) By what structures and (c) Under what conditions? The basic assumptions of this theory include:

1. All system has structures which can be identified and these structures have certain functions to perform.
2. The broad aims and principles underlying a social structure can be identified
3. There is an interconnection between the parts of the society and tensions are resolved by the parts working together.
4. The society serves as a single interconnected system where each structure performs certain functions and interacts with each other to achieve maintenance of equilibrium (Sharma 1984 and Johari 1983 cited in Ekwonna, 2014).

The relevance of this theory to this work is to guide us to explain the activities of town union as a structure towards the development and maintenance of survival of the communities in Imo State. The use of structural functional theory as the framework of analysis is based on its suitability for this study. The town union is seen as a sub structure in Imo State political system with the aim to achieve development, ensure community participation and preservation of cultural values. And the failure of town union to perform its function will automatically undermine the survival of the Imo State political system.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey research design.

Population of the Study

The population of the study is made up of the entire 400 past and current town union executives in different communities in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State.

Sample Size

Since the population is not large, census method was used so as to study the entire 400.

Method of Data Collection

In this study, the instrument for data collection is questionnaire.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed and tested by simple percentage and chi-square respectively

Data Analysis and results

Question 1: Has your town unions attracted any primary health care such as cottage hospitals and primary health care unit.

Table 1: Responses on if your town unions attracted any primary health care such as cottage hospitals and primary health care unit.

Option	No of respondents	% of responses
Strongly agree	230	65.7
Agree	70	20.1
Disagree	30	8.6
Strongly disagree	2	5.7
Total	350	100

Source: field survey (2023)

The above analysis has shown that 65.7% of the respondents strongly agree, 20.1% of the respondents agree, 8.9% of the respondent disagree and the remaining 5.7% respondents strongly disagree.

Question 2: Your town union has attracted more primary health care personnel from the government of the state.

Table 2: Response on if your town union has attracted more primary health care personnel from the government of the state.

Option	No of respondents	% of responses
Strongly agree	124	35.2
Agree	190	54.3
Disagree	19	5.4
Strongly disagree	17	4.9
Total	350	100

Source: field survey (2023)

The above analysis has shown that 35.2% of the respondents strongly agree, 54.3% of the respondents agree, 5.4% disagree and 4.9% of the remaining respondents strongly disagree.

Item 3: Mbaitoli development front has attracted science laboratory equipment to the schools in the local government.

Table 3: Responses on if Mbaitoli development front has attracted science laboratory equipment to the schools in the local government.

Option	No of respondents	% of responses
Strongly agree	175	50.0
Agree	98	28.0
Disagree	67	19.1
Strongly disagree	10	2.9
Total	350	100

Source: field survey (2023)

The above analysis has shown that 50.0% of the respondents strongly agree, 28.0% of the respondents agree, 19.1% disagree and 2.9% of the remaining respondents strongly disagree.

Item 4: Mbaitoli development front has attracted scholarship for the indigent pupils and students.

Table 4: Responses on if Mbaitoli development front has attracted scholarship for the indigent pupils and students

Option	No of respondents	% of responses
Strongly agree	77	22.0
Agree	255	72.9
Disagree	11	3.1
Strongly disagree	7	2.0
Total	350	100

Source: field survey (2023)

The above analysis has shown that 22.0% of the respondents strongly agree, 72.9% of the respondents agree, 3.1% disagree and 2.0% of the remaining respondents strongly disagree.

Item 5: Mbaitoli development front has contributed in women empowerment by providing loan to some women in the LGA.

Table 5: Response on if Mbaitoli development front has contributed in women empowerment by providing loan to some women in the LGA

Option	No of respondents	% of responses
Strongly agree	230	65.7
Agree	70	20.1
Disagree	30	8.6
Strongly disagree	2	5.7
Total	350	100

Source: field survey (2023)

The above analysis has shown that 65.7% of the respondents strongly agree, 20.1% of the respondents agree, 8.9% of the respondent disagree and the remaining 5.7% respondents strongly disagree.

Item 6: Mbaitoli development front has contributed in training of youths in skill acquisition like tailoring, mechanic and catering.

Table 6: Response on if Mbaitoli development front has contributed in training of youths in skill acquisition like tailoring, mechanic and catering.

Option	No of respondents	% of responses
Strongly agree	124	35.4
Agree	190	54.3
Disagree	19	5.4
Strongly disagree	17	4.9
Total	350	100

Source: field survey (2023)

The above analysis has shown that 35.4% of the respondents strongly agree, 54.3% of the respondents agree, 5.4% disagree and 4.9% of the remaining respondents strongly disagree.

Analysis of Research Hypotheses

Re-statement of Hypothesis One

Ho1: Town unions have not contributed to primary health care in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State.

To test this hypothesis, the data in table 1 and 2 were employed

$$Fe = \frac{Rt \times Ct}{N}$$

- Where Fe = Frequency expected
- Rt = Row total
- Ct = Column total
- N = Grand total

Level of significance = 5% 0.05

Degree of freedom = (r-1) (c-1)

$$= (5-1) (2-1)$$

$$= (4) (1)$$

$$= 4$$

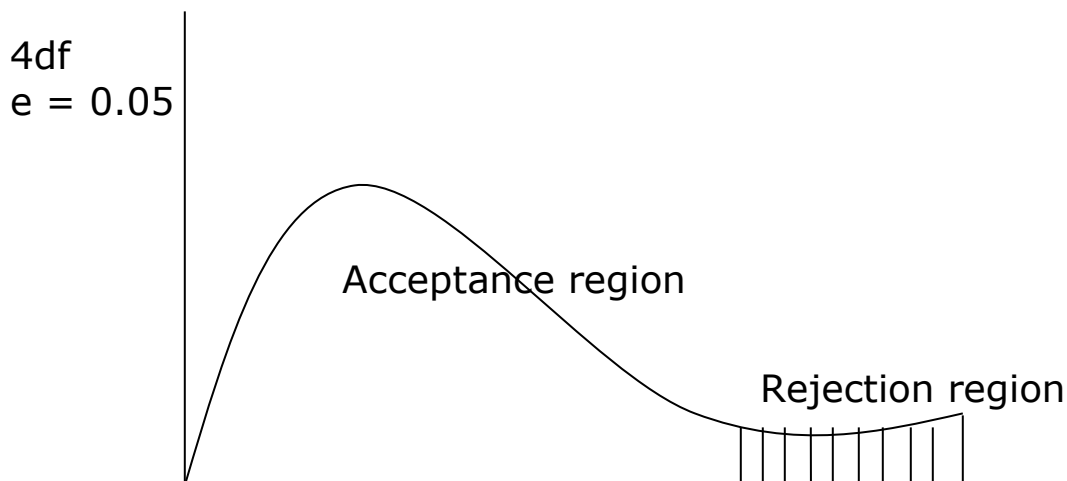
X² tab for 2df at 0.05 level of significance = 3.84

R1c1 Fe	=	249 x 350/682 =	127.8
R1c2, Fe	=	249 x 350/682 =	127.8
R2c1, Fe	=	260 x 350/682 =	133.4
R2c2, Fe	=	260 x 350/682 =	133.4
R3c1, Fe	=	105 x 350/682 =	53.9
R3c2, Fe	=	105 x 350/682 =	53.9
R4c1, Fe	=	49 x 350/682 =	25.1
R4c2, Fe	=	49 x 350/682 =	25.1
R5c1, Fe	=	19 x 350/682 =	9.8
R5c2, Fe	=	19 x 350/682 =	9.8

Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	(Fo-Fe) ² /Fe
150	127.8	22.2	492.84	3.856
99	127.8	-22.2	492.84	3.856
70	133.4	-63.4	4019.56	30.132
190	133.4	63.4	4019.56	30.132
80	53.9	26.1	681.21	12.638
25	53.9	-26.1	681.21	12.638
30	25.1	4.9	24.01	0.956
19	25.1	-4.9	24.01	0.956
2	9.8	-7.8	60.84	6.336
17	9.8	7.8	60.84	6.336
				107.836

Decision Rule

Since the calculated value of chi-square, 107.836 is more than the tabulated value, 9.488, the alternative hypothesis is hereby accepted and the null hypothesis rejected, hence we conclude here that town unions have contributed to primary health care in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State.



Re-statement of Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: Town unions have not contributed to educational development in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State. To test this hypothesis, the data in table 3 and 4 were employed

$$Fe = Rt \times Ct / N$$

- Where Fe = frequency expected
- Rt = row total
- Ct = column total
- N = grand total

Level of significance = 5% 0.05

Degree of freedom = (r-1) (c-1)

$$= (5-1) (2-1)$$

$$= (4) (1)$$

$$= 4$$

X² tab for 2df at 0.05 level of significance = 9.488

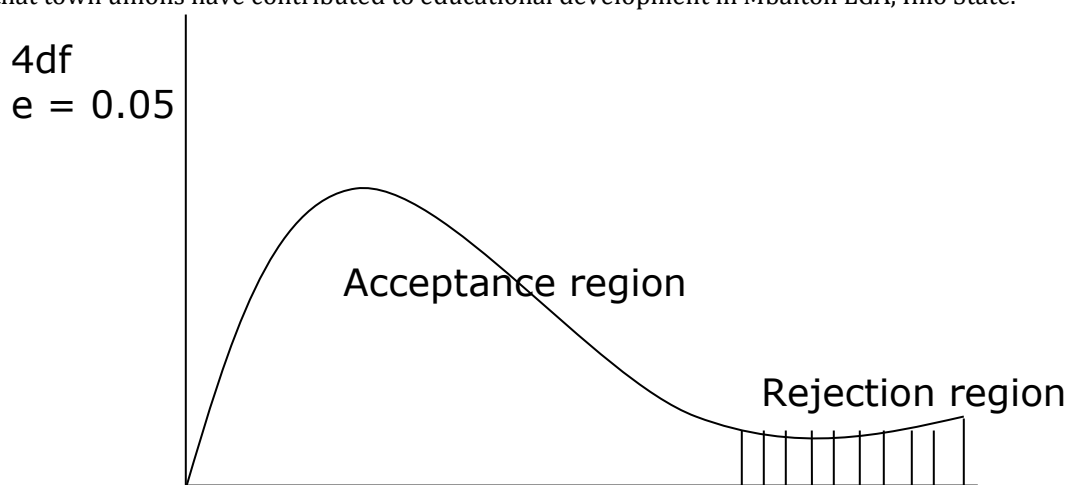
R1c1 Fe	=	207 x 350/700 =	103.5
R1c2, Fe	=	207 x 350/700 =	103.5
R2c1, Fe	=	353 x 350/700 =	176.5
R2c2, Fe	=	353 x 350/700 =	176.5
R3c1, Fe	=	45 x 350/700 =	22.5
R3c2, Fe	=	45 x 350/700 =	22.5
R4c1, Fe	=	78 x 350/700 =	39
R4c2, Fe	=	78 x 350/700 =	39
R5c1, Fe	=	17 x 350/700 =	8.5
R5c2, Fe	=	17 x 350/700 =	8.5

Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	(Fo-Fe) ² /Fe
140	103.5	-36.5	1332.25	12.872
67	103.5	36.5	1332.25	12.872
98	176.5	-78.5	61612.25	349.078
255	176.5	78.5	61612.25	349.078

35	22.5	12.5	156.25	6.944
10	22.5	-12.5	156.25	6.944
67	39	28	784	20.103
11	39	-28	784	20.103
10	8.5	1.5	2.25	0.265
7	8.5	-1.5	2.25	0.265
				778.524

Decision Rule

Since the calculated value of chi-square, 778.524 is more than the tabulated value, 9.488, the alternative hypothesis is hereby accepted, and the null hypothesis rejected; hence we conclude that town unions have contributed to educational development in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State.



Re-statement of Hypothesis Three

Ho3: Town unions have not significantly contributed to job creation for the youth in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State.

To test the above hypothesis three, the data in table 5 and 6 were used.

$$Fe = Rt \times Ct / N$$

- Where
- Fe = Frequency expected
- Rt = Row total
- Ct = Column total
- N = Grand total

Level of significance = 5% 0.05

Degree of freedom = (r-1) (c-1)

$$= (5-1) (2-1)$$

$$= (4) (1)$$

$$= 4$$

X² tab for 2df at 0.05 level of significance = 3.84

$$R1c1 Fe = 249 \times 350 / 682 = 127.8$$

$$R1c2, Fe = 249 \times 350 / 682 = 127.8$$

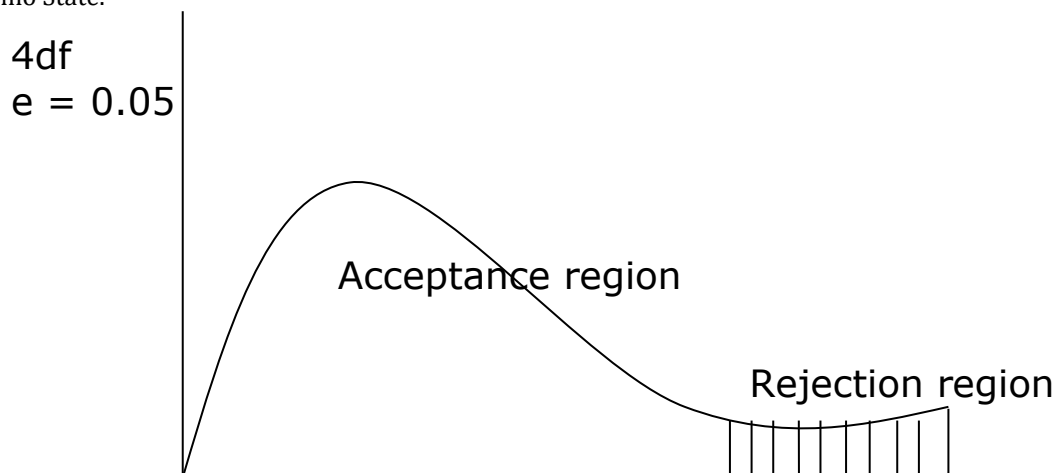
$$R2c1, Fe = 260 \times 350 / 682 = 133.4$$

R2c2, Fe	=	260 x 350/682	=	133.4
R3c1, Fe	=	105 x 350/682	=	53.9
R3c2, Fe	=	105 x 350/682	=	53.9
R4c1, Fe	=	49 x 350/682	=	25.1
R4c2, Fe	=	49 x 350/682	=	25.1
R5c1, Fe	=	19 x 350/682	=	9.8
R5c2, Fe	=	19 x 350/682	=	9.8

Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	(Fo-Fe) ² /Fe
150	127.8	22.2	492.84	3.856
99	127.8	-22.2	492.84	3.856
70	133.4	-63.4	4019.56	30.132
190	133.4	63.4	4019.56	30.132
80	53.9	26.1	681.21	12.638
25	53.9	-26.1	681.21	12.638
30	25.1	4.9	24.01	0.956
19	25.1	-4.9	24.01	0.956
2	9.8	-7.8	60.84	6.336
17	9.8	7.8	60.84	6.336
				107.836

Decision Rule

Since the calculated value of chi-square, 227384 is more than the tabulated value, 9.488, the alternative hypothesis is hereby accepted and the null hypothesis rejected, hence we conclude here that town unions have significantly contributed to job creation for the youth in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State.



Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one which stated that Town unions have not contributed to primary health care in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State.; it was tested by chi-square at 5% level of significant. The null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted; because the X² calculated value was greater than X² tabulate value. This implies that Town union has contributed to primary health care in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State. Nwobashi and Itumo (2017) stated that town union has contributed in sector growth in rural areas.

Hypothesis two stated that Town unions have not contributed to educational development in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State was tested by chi-square, at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This is because the X^2 calculated was higher than X^2 tabulated. Thus, Town union has contributed to educational development in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State. Agbola (2018) was of the view that many stakeholders play good roles in enhancing the effectiveness of educational sector, and town union is one of them.

Hypothesis three which stated that town unions have not significantly contributed to job creation for the youth in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State was tested by chi-square, at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The reason being that x^2 calculated was higher than x^2 critical/tabulated value. Thus, town union has significantly contributed to job creation for the youth in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State. To Ekwonna (2014), the role of town union in human capital development for cannot be over-emphasized.

Conclusion

The town union approach for development covers both infrastructure and human capital. It involves the movement of the people designed to promote better living for the whole community within the active participation of, and for the benefit of the community concerned. The contribution of town union to development activities in rural community depends largely on the existence of committed leaders in the town union concerned as well as the extent to which they attract government policies and programmes. This implies that in those areas where there are no effective leadership for town union, community development activities have not made much impact on the social welfare of the rural population.

Town unions should be aware that developmental projects embarked upon by themselves through self-help projects are meant for their overall well being and as such should protect and ensure that they are maintained hence they should pay attention to primary health care services, educational development and human resources development. This study concludes that the government and civil society organizations should institute annual merit awards to best performing town unions in rural development to serve as moral booster and further encourage healthy competition among the town unions.

Recommendations

We recommend the following:

1. Government should provide periodic subvention to town unions to enable them have adequate fund for provision of primary health care services for of rural dwellers, especially in Mbaitoli LGA.
2. Town unions should contribute more meaningfully for the human empowerment as it concerns skill training and job creation for rural people, especially in Mbaitoli LGA. Such will help the rural people in order to reduce the high incidence of poverty and improve the economy of rural communities.
3. The government (at all levels) through town unions should encourage communities to partake fully in all issues concerning their development, educationally, morally, and otherwise conventionally.
4. Despite the laudable and generally accepted values of town union in rural community development, it is instructive to state that it should not be used to replace the role of government and other stakeholders in rural community development in Mbaitoli in particular and Nigeria in general.

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