

CONTRIBUTIONS OF TOWN UNIONS ADMINISTRATION ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST, NIGERIA

AMADI, Sandra Chinyere
Prof. B.N. Olewe

*Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences,
Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu.*

ABSTRACT

The study examined the contribution of town unions administration in rural development in Southeast Nigeria. The specific objectives were to: determine the level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads, ascertain the extent to which town unions are involved in the construction of markets and shops in rural communities and find out the contribution's town unions in the provision of portable water supply in Southeast Nigeria. This research utilized survey research design. The population of the study was 1,744,408 Freund and Williams formula was used to determine the sample size of 576. The collected data were analysed through the use of mean scores. The chi-square analysis was applied in testing the hypotheses. The findings revealed that: the level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads in Southeast Nigeria was significantly high, the extent to which town unions were involved in the construction of market and shop in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria was significantly high and that town unions had contributed to the provision of portable water supply to the rural communities. The study concluded that the town unions in Southeast Nigeria had influenced significantly the rural development. The study recommended that Since town unions have made significant contribution in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads, it recommended that Southeast governors should encourage the establishment of town unions and economically support the goals and objectives of towns through their town unions, this will help to take development down to the people where they are needed.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Town Union Administration,
Rehabilitation, Rural Road,
Portable Water Supply

Article History:

Received: 11 Dec 2022

Accepted: 21 Jan 2023

Available Online: 04 Feb 2023

© 2023 The authors. Published by ZARSMI UAE. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons AttributionNonCommercial 4.0

1. INTRODUCTION

The town union government has been seen to be a major player in rural community development efforts in Igboland (Ezeibe, 2018). As a major or principal agent or element of positive change in the Socio-Political organization of the people, introduced by colonialism, town union government should be a very important and unavoidable instrument of self-help approach to community development in the post-colonial period, and by the end of the Nigeria Biafra War, its effect became very visible. Town union administration has been seen to mean the coordination of human, financial and material resources to actualize the town union aims and goals (Nwobashi, 2016). Town union governments are powerful agents of development through promoting peace, economic and environmental protection activities at the village/community level. As agents of social change, they have to demonstrate that, through collective action, they can improve on their material conditions of existence, mobilise against the out-group, and defend a common cause. Although Town Unions are locally initiated, their influence and cultural appeal transcends local confines. Their members believe that, through collective action, they can modify national policies to suit local realities, needs and challenges (Onwuka, 2018).

Today, town Unions are social organizations that exist in numerous Nigerian communities. In Southeast Nigeria, town union administrations play a significant role in fostering environmental, economic, and peace-related activities at the village level. To conduct development initiatives in their towns and villages, Igbo communities join town unions as home-grown self-help community development organisations free from governmental interference (Emejulu & Okafor, 2018). Town unions, along with the Council of Chiefs, are now being acknowledged by Igbo State governments as a key tier of their administrations. Rural areas and new towns served as the foundation for the different town unions that were

established in Nigeria between the 1960s and the present (Nwobashi and Itumo, 2019). They developed as a result of the dynamic interaction between the market and the state. It is noteworthy that these municipal unions were established along different ethnic, clan, and cultural lines in order to mobilize the populace. ensuring harmony and peace. both rural development and protection. These unions primarily defend specific interests, such as the provision of safety, good roads, bridges, post offices, low-interest credit facilities, effective health care facilities, clean drinking water, and educational opportunities for their individual towns and people in rural areas (Ogunleye-Adetona and Oladeinde, 2013). Significantly, the Southeast of Nigeria developed a stronger town union approach to rural development than the other parts of the country, especially following the 30-month civil war.

Again, in the post-independence era of Nigeria, the lack of basic amenities, goods, and services provided by the government in rural regions encouraged the development of these organizations (town unions) (Nwobashi, 2016). Notably, throughout the period of nationalist mobilization for independence and/or the war for freedom, the postcolonial governments in Nigeria also fell short of delivering the benefits that the nationalists promised to Nigerians (Ake, 1990 and Sawyer, 1993). Therefore, arguing that suffices "Town unions were created to replace the government, which had failed to effectively promote rural development at the local level. Town unions work with rural residents in accordance with their immediate needs and interests, which frequently involved raising the standard of living " (Enwelu and Ajayi, 2010, p.23). This is due to the fact that the majority of people living in rural areas are undeveloped, underprivileged, ill, and ignorant. Town unions work to modify the self-sustaining socioeconomic structures of these rural peoples' productive capacities in an effort to raise their standard of living. An organization called Town Union was created and is owned by the people who live in the community that created it (Nwankwo, and Okonkwo, 2009). Rural development is a process of social action in which residents of rural areas organize themselves to identify their needs, plan, and take action to address those needs with the greatest amount of self-reliance and reliance on their own resources, augmented by assistance of any kind from government and non-governmental organizations (Ebisi, 2016).

The public's trust in the central authority has been eroded by the failure of governments' top-down strategy and the absence of participation from the general public in the bottom-up method. Therefore, communities turn to indigenous institutions for comfort, which pressure the government to address development issues in their areas and/or implement development initiatives and programs that they regard as being urgently needed in their immediate communities. Native American groups are involved in self-help (Ogundipe, 2013). They serve as the conduit through which resources are mobilized to address regional problems. Town union administration is here to stay in light of the populace's ongoing demand for a country-wide restructuring that places a strong focus on the transfer of authority and responsibility from the federal government to her federating unit. From colonial times to the present, Town Unions have made an effort to support their members by addressing their survival needs, particularly the difficulties of urban life, rural development, political mobilization against the out-group, scholarship program, and interacting with the state on issues relating to community development. TUs serve as avenues for local needs and preferences to be discovered, voiced, and met as community development agents (Chidume & Nmaju, 2019). To do this, they create an environment that encourages members to work together voluntarily and to support one another. It is understandable why the majority of governors in the Southeast have chosen or are preparing to embrace town union administration as a fourth layer of government.

Despite the contributions of town union administration to rural development, it is surprises many that no much studies have conducted on town union administration and rural development. Against this background, the study interrogates the Town Unions Administration and Rural Development in Southeast Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Town union administration is understood to mean the coordination of human, financial and material resources to actualize the communities' aims and goals. In Southeast Nigeria, town union administrations play a significant role in fostering environmental, economic, and peace-related activities at the village and community levels. To conduct development initiatives in their towns and villages, Igbo communities join town unions as indigenous self-help community development organisations free from governmental interference. Town unions, together with the Council of Chiefs, are now being recognized as a major level of government by state governments in the Southeast.

Today's town union administration is dealing with internal crises brought on by the inability of man to give up control, a rift in politics, and other unimportant problems. Some government initiatives in the communities have mainly failed because the administration did not consult community residents to determine whether they perceived a need for such initiatives. The failure of the community to take ownership of these projects results in the squandering of limited government funds. The administration of the town union is also anticipated to be a group established by the populace for the goal of promoting their welfare by recognizing and resolving the fundamental issues that may impede the growth of the neighborhood. Unfortunately, the situation is reversed. It is astonishing to learn that most town union leaders start looking for connections with individuals in the corridor of political power as soon as they are either elected or appointed by the community members for one or more personal gains (Nwobashi and Itumo, 2017). Most of them have struggled to provide poor results in the field of community development, which should be their primary duty.

The town unions' continued abject failure to spur greater development in rural areas is evident. The political squabble that determines the town union executives has turned many villages in Southeast Nigeria into battlegrounds, despite the high expectations from town union governments, endangering rural development. While town union administrations are present, many rural roads, marketplaces, and shops are left unattended. Many towns in the Southeast still lack portable water supplies despite the existence of various town union administrations. Even current government-funded development initiatives like rural roads and water supply projects are hardly ever maintained by town union executives. As a result, the people they represent are treated with the worst indifference, while town union executives take an opposite stance. The struggle for town union executive seats in various states in Southeast Nigeria has had the unintended consequence of keeping rural communities there from experiencing the much-needed development. Rural poverty has prevailed rather than rural development in terms of the upkeep of the roads, markets, and shops, as well as the provision of a portable water supply.

There have been conflicting findings on the contributions of town union administration on rural development. Onyeozu (2010) in Nwobashi and Iturmo (2017) 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. Agboola, Ifesanya and Akanmu (2012) found that the town unions in Kajola Local Government carried more of roads rehabilitation project between 1996 and 2011. A study of the contributions of town to community development in Lagos State was carried out by Akinsorotan and Olujide (2006). They discovered that town unions supplied labour and contributed money to execute their felt-needs projects with little or no interference from external bodies. From the empirical perspective, there have not been an inconclusive result on the contribution of town union on rural development. From the aforementioned issues, the study sought to determine the Town Union Administration and Rural Development of Southeast Nigeria.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the study was to ascertain the Town Unions Administration and Rural Development of Southeast Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Determine the level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads in Southeast Nigeria.
- ii. Ascertain the extent to which town unions are involved in the constructions of markets and shops in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria.
- iii. Assess the extent to which town unions contributed in the provision of portable water supply in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria.

1.3 Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

- i. What is the level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads in Southeast Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent were town unions involved in the constructions of markets and shops in rural communities in Southeast Nigeria?
- iii. To what extent has the town unions contributed in the provision of portable water supply in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria.

1.4 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study.

- i. The level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads in Southeast Nigeria is not significantly high.
- ii. The extent to which town unions are involved in the constructions of markets and shops in rural communities in Southeast Nigeria is not significantly high.
- iii. Town unions has not contributed significantly in the provision of portable water supply in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria.

1.5 Scope of the study

The study's main objective was to evaluate the Town Unions Administration and Rural Development of Southeast Nigeria. Anambra, Ebonyi, and Enugu were chosen as the three South-eastern States. Finding out how much each town union participates in rural development was the main goal of the study. The emphasis was on the degree to which town unions in the Southeast Zone had contributed to the upkeep and rehabilitation of rural roads, the degree to which town unions had been involved in the development of markets and shops in rural communities, and the extent to which town unions had contributed to the provision of portable water supply in rural communities in Southeast Nigeria between 2010 and 2020.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 *Town Union*

An organization called Town Union was created and is owned by the people who live in the community that created it (Nwankwo and Okonkwo, 2009). It entails the mobilization of unofficial networks, associations, and extended families intended for the development of rural communities. This explains how people use their social capital to get by in order to advance, according to Putnam (Chidume & Nmaju, 2019). He stated that the procedure would give residents of the community a more compelling opportunity to participate on an equal basis. Town unions assemble its members into a powerful force to work with the government to promote rural areas by raising awareness among and educating the populace. As gatekeepers of town unions, the elites "are more inclined to nominate themselves as representatives.". Hence "leaders of these town unions in the immediate post- independence years were financially well- off".

Eme (2012), argues that the concept of town unions originated as a way to look after the wellbeing of their members who were living away from home. Many Africans who immigrated to metropolitan regions engaged in social interactions that served as the traditional society in opposition to this mindset. Additionally, they felt a strong connection to their homes, leading them to assume they would eventually return there. Additionally, they believed that the various infrastructure facilities and services that these unions enjoyed in metropolitan centers would be desirable for them to have in their home villages. This sense of nostalgia could be seen as the magic wand that some communities have used to convince others that town unions are an effective tool for fostering development and self-sufficiency in Nigeria's rural areas (Ugwu, 2013).

2.2 Rural Development

Rural development is a process of social action in which people in rural areas band together to identify their needs, plan solutions, and carry them out with the maximum amount of self-reliance and reliance on their own resources, augmented by any assistance from governmental and non-governmental organizations (Bello, 2018). According to the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN, 2017), rural development is a program of assisted self-help that the villagers themselves should plan and carry out, with the government just providing technical advice. Rural development could be defined as a process that involves the efforts of individuals, self-help groups, non-governmental and governmental organizations, collective thinking, collective action, and participation. The identified felt-needs of the public must be prioritized initiatives in order for these organizations' efforts to be effective and accepted. Each of these groups sees itself as playing a different part in advancing the social and economic well-being of the populace and the development of the country (Dube, 2016).

According to Akin (2018), rural development is a group of activities that addresses fundamental social and economic requirements. This suggests that in order to actualize its vision of the future, a community must decide its own future together. No external entity, no matter how kind and giving, can do this for the community. It has nothing to do with money or splitting a national cake. It is a leadership responsibility to encourage the correct mindset, strong work ethics, and the social virtues of hard effort, dedication, and perseverance in order to improve one's situations in life. According to him, providing a man with fish is not as important as teaching him how to fish. Jose (2016), sees rural development is a social action process in which members of rural communities' band together for planning and action, set personal and shared objectives to address needs and problems, and supplement local resources as needed with assistance from governmental and non-governmental organizations from outside the community.

2.3 Maintenance and Rehabilitation Rural Road Network

The term "road network" refers to a system of connected roads intended to carry both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Every nation's economic development depends in large part on its road networks. To ensure high-quality connections between the various areas of a geographical territory, it is crucial to foresee a deliberate, ongoing extension and adequate maintenance of these networks (Archibong, 2017). The Town Union Administration has a responsibility to maintain the condition of the current roads through regular upkeep and to also start the restoration of rural roads for the community's best usage.

2.3.1 *Market and Stores*

In a market, buyers and sellers come together to exchange goods and services. Almost every settlement in Southeast Nigeria has a market. Rain and windstorms deteriorate or, more frequently, completely destroy the majority of these markets and shops. The Town Union Administration is attempting to assume responsibility for building and reconstructing these markets and stores for community usage.

2.3.2 *Portable Water Supply*

"Potable water is water that can be safely consumed, yet it is getting harder to find worldwide.

Freshwater resources are under pressure due to rising demand, and a seemingly never-ending list of impurities can turn previously potable water into a health risk or just render it unattractive (United Nations World Water Assessment

Programme) (2015). The three tiers of government in Nigeria—federal, state, and local—share responsibility for water provision (Egbinola, 2017). Any town union has a responsibility to either create portable water supplies for the community's residents or to maintain the one that already exists for the benefit of everyone.

2.3.3 The Importance of Town Unions in Igbo Society

Over time, various Igbo communities have engaged in economic pursuits that significantly influence their sociocultural and political existences. Governments in the Southeast and town unions have a partnership since 2010. For instance, the government of Sullivan Chime in Enugu State partnered with the state and town unions to support projects where the town unions selected a project of preference in their region. They provide roughly 5% of the funds required for the project, with the rest coming from the government. This has persisted under Ugwuanyi's administration. They can all be discovered and used in our current literature and are all fully documented. Other state governments in the Southeast share the same characteristics. The Association of Southeast Town Unions (ASETU), which serves as the governing organization for all Presidents General (PG) of town unions in Igboland, is deserving of attention. The Community Council Government Law of 2012, passed by the government in 2012, created the 4th tier of government in Imo State in southeast Nigeria. The main goal of this arrangement is to bring community government and development to rural communities. The Nigerian constitution originally established local governments to bring development to rural areas, but due to a lack of autonomy, it appears that this system failed to fulfill its purpose. Communities have the ability, through their unions, to rank projects in accordance with local needs rather than necessarily what the state government wants for them. Similar arrangements exist between the government and town groups in the neighbouring Anambra state.

Town unions benefit greatly from strong government support thanks to the state's federated town unions. The Anambra State Association of Town Unions (ASATU), which has a peer review mechanism among its member unions, has proved crucial to rural development. Town unions participate in ambitious initiatives that foster growth in their communities through the N20 million Naira Community Choose Your Project Initiative as the government has finished the first and second phases and is preparing for the third phase (Onwuka 2018). The Abia State Town Unions Association (ASTUA), which has 739 town unions as members, is located in the state of Abia. Similar to their colleagues in Imo and Anambra, ASTUA is having trouble getting government funding, although they have made substantial headway in their operations.

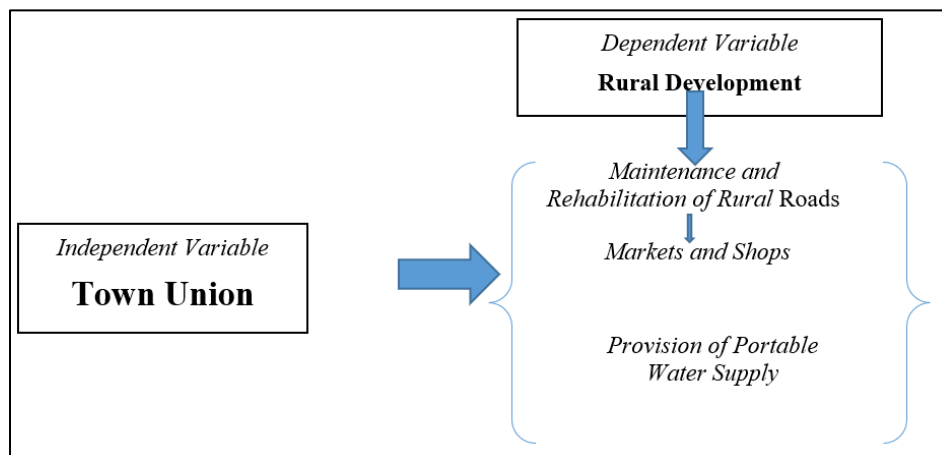


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
 Source: Author's Conceptualization, 2022.

2.4 Theoretical framework

The community action theoretical model is used by the researcher as its analytical framework. Freire introduced the community action theoretical paradigm in 1973. The theory places a strong emphasis on how communities can increase each other's ability for growth through educating their citizens (Kulig, 2000). This theory assumes that members of underprivileged communities can work together for socioeconomic development (Boreham, 2004) through education. This indicates that the community action model is asset-based and utilizes participatory action tactics. To put it another way, it capitalizes on a community's advantages to bring about internal reforms (Racher, 2007). Building community capacity, collaborating with communities, and giving locals a framework to obtain the knowledge and tools required for evaluating their socioeconomic conditions are all part of its plan to effect change (Lavery, 2005). After doing so, they can then develop, carry out, and assess actions intended to enhance those conditions. This indicates that the model's goal is to help communities and organizations better address the socioeconomic factors that affect how their rural communities develop

(Anderson & McFarlane, 2004). In this study, we define town unions as groups established by particular communities to promote the social and economic growth of those towns via teamwork and collaboration with both state and local governments. This concept is sufficient in this context because it is impossible to ignore the importance of town unions in Nigeria's bottom-up or rural-national development.

2.5 Empirical Review

Ezeibe (2018) surveyed the Political Economy of Town Unions and Rural Development in Nigeria: A Focus on the South-East. We distributed 500 copies of questionnaire purposely, that is, 500 copies of questionnaire in each of the five states in the Southeast geopolitical zone. The study established that constantly, the dynamic interaction and parallel interdependence between money and votes; state and market or politics and economy, determines town unions' involvement in rural development in Southeast Nigeria. In a study by Agboola, Ifesanya and Akanmu (2012) examined the contributions of town unions to funding of rural roads projects in rural communities in Akinyele and Kajola Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The study made use of descriptive survey and applied the instrumentality of questionnaire in the generation of data while chi square analytical technique was used for data analysis. The findings revealed that the town unions in Kajola Local Government Area of Oyo State carried more of roads rehabilitation project between 1996 and 2011. Onyeozu (2010) carried out a study that focused on analysis of contributions town unions to the development of social amenities such as rural roads in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data for study were collected with the aid of structured questionnaire from 960 randomly selected respondents in the study area and analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that town unions in Rivers State contributed significantly to the building and renovation of community roads.

Nwobashi and Itumo (2019) carried out a study on Town Unions and Provision of Electricity in Rural Communities in Ebonyi State: A Focus on Selected Communities. The data were analyzed using simple percent, contingency tables, and histogram while chi square was used for the test of hypotheses. The findings revealed that the town unions have not contributed significantly to the provision of electricity in rural communities in Ebonyi State. Emejulu and Okafor (2018) focused their study on Town Union and Community Development: Contributions of Nzuko-Arochukwu to the Socio-Economic Growth of Arochukwu, 1981-2017. The study used the qualitative method based on critical analysis of events from facts available to the researchers emphasizing the combination of primary and secondary sources which include the use of books and journals. The evidence from these sources indicates that Nzuko-Arochukwu has contributed to the socio-economic growth of Arochukwu through construction of roads, provision of potable water, engaged in peace and conflict resolutions in Arochukwu and Aro settlements, educational projects, construction of health centres, completion of the age long Arochukwu civic centre, etc.

In related study, Bashir (2015) evaluated the contribution of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) to the development of communities in Nigeria with a focus on Offa Local Government Area of Kwara State. The study mostly used secondary data, and supplemented by primary data. Simple percentages were used to analyze data collected. The study reveals that CBOs provide socio-economic facilities for the common benefit of the community. It discovers that in the past, CBOs have contributed immensely to the socio-economic development of Offa LGA by the provision of schools, community health centres, feeder roads, market stalls, motor parks etc but of recent it notices a decline in the performance of these organizations. 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. 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.

Obi, Nwobi & Chukwurah (2021) focused on Escape of Town Union Administration and Community Development in Anambra State: A study of Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State (2010-2017). The study utilized a survey research design with population of 120,166 and sample size of 399 persons. Data collected were analyzed with simple percentage formula, hypotheses were tested with chi-square (χ^2), test of degree of freedom of (16) were used with significance level of 5% (0.05). The major findings revealed that town union administration does embark on developmental projects in their communities, raise fund for the development of their communities and does encounter some challenges in the cause of development of their communities. Oke (2021) examined the Town Union Governments and Community Development in Igboland: A Study of Nrobo Community. The study employed thematic and content analytical method. The study found that the town union government has been seen to be a major player in rural community development efforts in Igboland. As a major or principal agent or element of positive change in the Socio-Political organization of the people, introduced by colonialism, town union government turns out to be a very important and unavoidable instrument of self-help approach to community development in the post-colonial period, and by the end of the Nigeria Biafra War, its effect became very visible. In 1991, the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) was formed. Its formation and foundation moved quickly, development in Nrobo community.

Nwobashi and Itumo (2017) focused on Democracy and Contributions of Town Union to Educational Development in Ebonyi State: The data were analyzed using simple percent, contingency tables, and histogram while chi square was used for the test of hypotheses. The findings revealed that democratic governance has increased contributions of town unions in the provision of basic education in rural communities in Ebonyi State. The study equally revealed that lack of enlightenment, illiteracy, and poverty among the rural dwellers poses challenge to the contributions of town unions in the provision of basic education.

2.6 Gap in Literature

Based on the literature reviewed, a gap has been identified that need to be filled. Although, most of the studies are vital for our understanding of Town Unions contributions to the development of rural communities in Nigeria, they fall far short of explaining the level of town unions' contributions to rural development more especially in Southeast. As such, there is need for specific study for the purpose of finding out the contributions of town unions administration on rural development in Southeast Nigeria.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design for the study was survey-based. A study design is a strategy that directs the investigator while they gather, analyze, and interpret observational data. The reason for adopting this design is that it focuses on vital facts about people for which only primary data is possible. The descriptive approach will be chosen for the study because it will allow for the quick and inexpensive collection of a lot of data. Because the study needs detailed responses from the respondents on the topics under investigation, a survey was chosen. The data for the study were sourced from primary and secondary sources. The primary data consisted of data generated by the researcher herself. They came through the research questions. The secondary data were sourced through the use textbooks, journal/articles as well as newspapers and magazines. In Southeast Nigeria, the study was carried out. One of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones is Southeast Nigeria. There are five states that make up this region: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. The South-eastern States of Nigeria are the ancestral home of the Igbo people. Each of the 36 states that make up Nigeria has been classified into six geopolitical zones. Igboland is a region in Southeast Nigeria with a total land area of approximately 15,800 square miles (41,000 square kilometers) (Nwala, 1985). Anambra, Ebonyi, and Enugu States were the three states in Southeast Nigeria where the study was carried out. In each senatorial district of the State, one local government area was chosen. The population of the study is 1,764,408. The population was made up relevant groups (community leaders, age grade association, youth leaders, etc) and institutions in the administration of town union. The population of the study was according to National Population Commission (2006) were as shown in table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Population Distribution Table

State	Senatorial District	LGA	Population	Percentage
Anambra	Anambra Central	Awka North	112,192	6
	Anambra North	Anambra East	152,149	9
	Anambra South	Aguata	369,972	20
Ebonyi	Ebonyi South	Ohaozara	148,317	8
	Ebonyi Central	Ishielu	152,581	9
	Ebonyi North	Ohaukwu	195,555	12
Enugu	Enugu West	Ezeagu	170,603	10
	Enugu North	Nsukka	309,448	18
	Enugu East	Nkanu West	153,591	9
		Total	1,764,408	100

Source: NPC population projection for 2016.

Freund and Williams (1986) statistical sampling formula was used to obtain a sample size from a finite population of employees and management. The sample size was 576

3.2 Sampling Technique

The study employed multistage sampling procedure. In statistics, multistage sampling is the taking of samples in stages using smaller and smaller sampling units at each stage. Multistage sampling can be a complex form of cluster sampling because it is a type of sampling which involves dividing the population into groups (or clusters). In the study, there were three stages of sampling. The first stage was selection of three states out of five states in Southeast Nigeria. The second stage was selection of one local governments in each of the three senatorial zones of Anambra, Ebonyi and Enugu States. Awka North, Anambra East and Aguata LGAs were selected in Anambra, Ohaozara, Ishielu and Ohaukwu LGAs were selected in Ebonyi State while Ezeagu, Nsukka and Nkanu West were selected in Enugu State. The third stage was the selection of five communities in each local government areas. For the list of communities see Appendix 1: The

participants were selected from religious leaders, women leaders, public office holders/civil servants, youths/students, community/town union leaders past and present from the selected communities.

3.3 Method of data collection

Oral interviews, focus groups (which was made up of community leaders, religious groups, age grade associations), and questionnaires were the instruments utilized to collect the data. These town unions operate from both towns and villages, thus both urban and rural communities would be affected by them, albeit the impact in rural areas would be greater. Additionally, we gave out copies of questionnaire to a group of villagers (farmers, artisans, and traders) in the three states that make up Nigeria's Southeast geopolitical zone. The researcher used on-the-spot questionnaire gathering. For the interview phase, the researcher created a total of fifteen (15) interview items. The questionnaire instrument was in a 5-point Likert scale structured form (Strongly agree =5, Agree = 4, undecided = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1). The questionnaire items and the interview guide were drawn from the objectives, research questions and hypotheses developed for the study. The contents of the questionnaire were validated by experts in the field of measurement and evaluation through face and content validation. The researcher therefore claimed the validity of the instrument. For the purpose of the study, the researcher employed test-retest method reliability test. By this method, the researcher administered two different tests on a group at the same time and consistent result was obtained, indicating reliability of the instrument. The response that was obtained from the pre-study was subjected to Cronbach Alpha's internal consistency test by using SPSS (statistical package for social sciences). That indicated that the items on the questionnaire were internally consistent and reliable. The reliability result of 0.78 was obtained.

3.4 Method of data analysis

The collected data for the study was analysed through the use of Tables and Mean Score. The chi-square test technique was applied in testing the hypotheses. The Chi-square formula is stated as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where O = observed frequency

E = Expected frequency

Assumptions: Level of significance = 0.05

Decision rule: Reject Ho if the calculated value of χ^2 is greater than the critical value of χ^2 otherwise accept Ho.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

This section deals with the analysis and presentation of the sampled respondents' views on the major theme of the subject under study. The data were generated in line with the research questions and results presented. A total of 576 copies of questionnaire were distributed while 510 were retrieved.

Research question One: What is the level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads in Southeast, Nigeria?

Table 4.1: The level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads in Southeast, Nigeria

s/n	Items	SA	A	U	DA	SD	FRE	Mean	Decision
1	Town unions helps in mobilizing community members towards clearing of grasses in the rural roads	200	140	20	70	70	510	3.6	Accepted
2	They help to construct drainage channels on the road for free flow of water	180	150	20	90	70	510	3.5	Accepted
3	They help to rehabilitate existing road network in the community	210	160	10	110	20	510	3.8	Accepted
4	Rural roads in m community is always in good shape as a result of the effort of town unions executives who mobilize resource to repair failed or damaged portion of the road	190	150	15	105	50	510	3.6	Accepted
5	Mu town union have executed many road project previously abandoned	180	150	20	90	70	510	3.5	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 4.1 shows the respondents' responses on the level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads in Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020. However, the result of the analysis indicates that majority of the respondent agreed that the level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads in Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020. All the five items under this variable show a very strong mean (i.e. 3.6, 3.5, 3.8, 3.6 and 3.5) who high degree of acceptance of the question asked.

Research question two: To what extent have town unions been involved in the constructions of market and shop in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria?

Table 4.2: The extent to which town unions were involved in the constructions of market and shop in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria

s/n	Item	VHE	HE	U	LE	VHE	FREQ	Mean	Decision
1	Town union have facilitated the construction of market and shops in my community	180	170	10	60	90	510	3.6	Accepted
2	They are involved in the regular maintenance of my community market	150	190	20	100	50	510	3.6	Accepted
3	Our market are always in good shape as a result of regular maintenance by the town union	180	120	20	120	70	510	3.4	Accepted
4	The town unions mobilize resources to expand the existing structures in the market.	170	160	10	125	45	510	3.6	Accepted
5	Town union are always there to add more shops to existing ones in our market and shops	150	190	20	100	50	510	3.6	Accepted

Source: Field Survey 2022.

The table 4.2 shows the respondents' responses on extent to which town unions were involved in the constructions of market and shop in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria, as a result of the previously proposed research question two in this study. However, the result of the analysis indicates that majority of the respondent agreed that town unions to a reasonable extent were involved in the constructions of market and shop in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria. All the five items under this variable shows a very strong mean (i.e. 3.6, 3.6, 3.4, 3.6 and 3.6) respectively.

Research question Three: To what extent has the town unions contributed in the provision of portable water supply in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria.

Table 4.3: Town unions contributed in the provision of portable water supply in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria

s/n	Items	SA	A	U	DA	SD	FREQ	Mean	Remark
1	Town union help in the provision of portable water supply in my community	130	190	20	80	90	510	3.3	Accepted
2	Town union helps to maintain existing water project in the community	140	170	15	105	90	510	3.3	Accepted
3	They help to attract water project in my community	150	160	10	140	60	510	3.4	Accepted
4	Town union help to extend water project to all the nooks and crannies in my village	180	190	10	80	50	510	3.6	Accepted
5	The town union helps to repair any damaged water supply project in the community	150	160	10	140	60	510	3.4	Accepted

Source: Field Survey 2022.

The table 4.3 review the respondents' responses on Town unions contributed in the provision of portable water supply in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria, as a result of the previously proposed research question three in this study. However, the result of the analysis indicates that majority of the respondent agreed that town union administration plays a major role water supply services in Southeast Nigeria. All the four items under this variable show a very strong mean (i.e. 3.3, 3.4 3.4, 3.6 and 3.4) respectively. The assertion showed that the respondents affirmed that there is a close relationship between the variables in question.

4.1 Test of hypotheses

Data generated from the study were used to test the hypotheses using the chi-square test tool with formular as:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where O = observed frequency, E = Expected frequency

Assumptions: Level of significance = 0.05

Decision rule: Reject Ho it the calculated value of χ^2 is greater than the critical value of χ^2 otherwise accept Ho.

Test of hypotheses one

Restatement of hypothesis one

- Ho: The level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads in Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020 is not significantly high.
 Hi: The level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads in Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020 is significantly high.

Table 4.4: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	103.403(a)	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	90.626	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.602	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	510		

a 13 cells (52.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .24.

SOURCE: SPSS Output version 23

D.F = Degree of freedom, *D.F* = 16, $\chi^2_{cal} = 103.403$, *p* = 0.05, *d.f* = 16, $\chi^2 = 9.95$

Decision Rule: The decisions rule for χ^2 is that if the calculated value of χ^2 is less than the table value, then we accept the “null hypothesis” but if the calculated value is greater than table value we reject the null hypothesis. **Decision:** Since the calculated value of $\chi^2 = 103.403$ is greater than the table value of $\chi^2 = 9.95$, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. The statistical significance indicated that the level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads in Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020 is significantly high

Test of hypotheses Two

Statement of hypothesis Two

- Ho: The extent to which town unions are involved in the constructions of market and shop in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020 is not significantly high.
 Hi: The extent to which town unions are involved in the constructions of market and shop in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020 is significantly high.

Table 4.5: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	190.310(a)	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	125.398	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	40.659	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	510		

a 8 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .47.

SOURCE: SPSS Output version 23

D.F = Degree of freedom, *D.F* = 12, $\chi^2_{cal} = 190.310$, *p* = 0.05, *d.f* = 12, $\chi^2 = 9.95$.

Decision: Since the calculated value of $\chi^2 = 190.310$ is greater than the table value of $\chi^2 = 9.95$, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. The statistical significance indicated that the extent to which town unions are involved in the constructions of market and shop in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020 is significantly high.

Test of hypotheses Three

Statement of hypothesis Three

- Ho: To what extent has the town unions contributed in the provision of portable water supply in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020
 Hi: To what extent has the town unions contributed in the provision of portable water supply in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020

Table 4.6: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	208.236(a)	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	152.495	16	.000

Linear-by-Linear Association	76.788	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	510		

a 9 cells (45.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .34.

SOURCE: SPSS Output version 23

D.F = Degree of freedom, *D.F* = 12, $\chi^2_{cal} = 208.236$, $p = 0.05$, *d.f* = 12, $\chi^2 = 9.95$

Decision: Since the calculated value of $\chi^2 = 208.236$ is greater than the table value of $\chi^2 = 9.95$, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. The statistical significance indicated that the town unions contributed in the provision of portable water supply in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Chi-square test for hypothesis one revealed that the level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads in Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020 is significantly high. This is based on the calculated value of $\chi^2 = 103.403$ is greater than the table value of $\chi^2 = 9.95$. According to the respondents, the town union exists to mobilize resources for local development. These findings are consistent with Ugwu (2013), who discovered that town unions in the Nsukka LGA started road restoration projects that involved a total of 46.5 kilometers of roads, at an estimated cost of N23,550,000, and that as of 2010, they had spent N25,050,000 on new road construction. The majority of respondents to the study (81%) felt that town unions in Enugu's Nsukka Local Government Area had positively impacted road rehabilitation. The result of hypothesis two revealed that the extent to which town unions are involved in the constructions of market and shop in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020 is significantly high. This is based on the calculated value of $\chi^2 = 190.310$ is greater than the table value of $\chi^2 = 9.9$. Based on a calculation, the value $2 = 190.310$ is more than the number $2 = 9.9$ in the table. These results are consistent with Emejulu and Okafor's (2018) conclusion that Nzuko-Arochukwu has contributed to the socioeconomic development of Arochukwu through the construction of roads, the provision of potable water, involvement in peacekeeping operations and conflict resolution in the Arochukwu and Aro settlements, the completion of the long-awaited civic center in Arochukwu, among other activities. Lastly, the results revealed that the extent has the town unions contributed in the provision of portable water supply in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020. This result is consistent with that of Toyobo & Muili (2008), who discovered that town unions genuinely funded and carried out rural road improvements based on the town unions' financial capacities. The majority of the work performed by town unions was in the fields of building feeder roads, rehabilitating roads, and building culverts and bridges.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The following were the findings of the study:

- i. That the level of contribution of town unions in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads in Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020 was significantly high.
- ii. That the extent to which town unions were involved in the constructions of market and shop in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020 is significantly high.
- iii. Town unions contributed in the provision of portable water supply in rural communities of Southeast Nigeria between 2010-2020

5.2 Conclusion

This study revealed that the town unions in Southeast Nigeria had contributed significantly in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads, construction of market and shops which had brought about development in different communities in Southeast Nigeria. It was evident from the study that town unions hold a great promise for providing the much-needed socio-economic infrastructure in the developing countries. They are increasingly making up for the shortcomings of the state, particularly in developing countries where the state was weak and conspicuously absent in the development of communities, hence their recognitions in some states in South-eastern Nigeria. The essence of town unions was to mobilize the problem to tackle the challenges of the community. The recognition and mobilization of the potentials of all stakeholders and the people themselves could make a significant contribution to achieving effective community participation and development

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. Since town unions have made significant contribution in the maintenance and rehabilitation of rural roads, it recommended that Southeast governors should encourage the establishment of town unions and economically support

the goals and objectives of towns through their town unions, this will help to take development down to the people where they are needed.

2. The involvement of town union in the constructions of market and shop promote rural development, the town union administrators in Southeast, Nigeria should do their best in mobilizing their people towards rehabilitating major dilapidated markets so as to increase business development and improve on marketability of produce by the rural communities.
3. Lastly, projects town union administration should embark upon have to be among community felt need such as the provision of portable water supply in rural communities so that the community members can be actively involved to ensure its completion and proper utilization. Therefore, town union should focus more attention in the provision of water supply to rural community since most of them are formers, it will not be wise that after the people have returned from the farm they now walk a long distance to fetch water for themselves.

6. REFERENCES

- Agboola, L., Ifesanya, K. and Akanmu, A. (2012). Partnership between the Community- Based Organizations and the Local Government for Sustainable Development of the Rural Areas in Oyo State. *Generalities, A Multi-Disciplinary Journal*, 1(2): 67-75.
- Ake, C. (1996). *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum,
- Anderson, E. and McFarlane, J. (2004). *Community as Partner*. Lippincott: Williams and Wilkins Philadelphia.
- Bonsu, S. (1983). *Rural Development and Bureaucracy in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Longman.
- Boreham, N. (2004). A theory of collective competence: challenging the neoliberal individualization of performance at work. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 52(1): 5-17.
- Chidume, C.G. and Nmaju, U.U. (2019). The Aro hegemony: dissecting the myth and reality. *Journal of tourism and heritage studies*, 8(1), 76 – 87
- Ebisi, N. (2016). The challenge of peace and conflict resolution: A clue from Igbo cultural group of Nigerian. *International Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Science*, 1(4), 2 – 62.
- Emejulu, I. & Okafor, H. I. (2018). Town union and community development: contributions of Nzuko-Arochukwu to the socio-economic growth of Arochukwu, 1981-2017. *International Journal of Development and Management Review (INJODEMAR)*, 15(1), 63-82.
- Enwelu I. A. & Ayayi, A (2010). "An Appraisal of the Community Development Coordinating Council Programme of Enugu State, Nigeria", in E.I. Otagburuagu, I.E. Ibenekwu and E Iwundu (eds.) *Governance at the Grassroots*. Enugu: Benak Ventures.
- Erne O.I. (2009). "Rural Development in Africa" in E.A. Egbo, M. Obi, M. Okeke and O. Erne (eds) *Rural and Community Development Critical Issues and Challenges*. Onitsha: Austino Publishing Company.
- Ezeibe, C.C. (2018). The political economy of town unions and rural development in Nigeria: A focus on the South-East. *Nigerian Journal of Social Sciences (NJSS)*, 7(1), 31-46.
- Ibem, E.O. (2009). Community-led infrastructure provision in low-income urban communities in developing countries: A study on Ohafia, Nigeria. 26: 125–132.
- Kiyaga-Nsubuga, J. (2015). National consultations on the post 2015 international development framework – ‘The future we want’. Final Report. Available online at http://www.unug.org/sites/default/files/reports/National%20Post%202015%20Consultations_1st%20round.pdf
- Kulig, J. (2000). Community resiliency: The potential for community health nursing theory development. *Public Health Nursing*, 17(5): 374-385.
- Lavery, S. (2005). The Community action model: A Community-driven model designed to address disparities in health. *American Journal of Public Health*, 5(4): 611-616.
- Mabogunje A. (1980). *The developing press: A Spatial Perspective*. London: Hutchinson University Library.
- Nwankwo, B. C. & Okonkwo, S.I (2009) "Enhancing accelerated and sustainable rural development through community participation: The community based organization (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations and the Private Sector", in E.A Egbo, M A Obi, M Okeke and I Erne (eds.) *Rural and Community Development: Critical Issues and Challenges*. Onitsha: Austino Publishing Company.
- Nwankwo, B.c. & Okonkwo, S.I (2009) "Enhancing accelerated and sustainable rural development through community participation: The community based organization (CBOs) and Non Governmental Organizations and the Private Sector", in E.A Egbo, M A Obi, M Okeke and I Erne (eds.) *Rural and Community Development: Critical Issues and Challenges*. Onitsha: Austino Publishing Company.
- Nwankwo, B.C. (2014). *Town Unions Grow Communities*. Available online at <http://www.thenationline.ng.net/new/up.content/uploads2012/08/logo2.png>. Accessed on 25/04/2016.
- Nwobashi, H.N & Itumo, A. (2019). Town Unions and provision of electricity in rural communities in Ebonyi State: A focus on selected communities. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 24(3), 63-73.

- Nwobashi, H.N. (2016). Democracy, town unions and rural development in selected rural communities of Ebonyi State, Nigeria, 1999-2015. Unpublished PhD Thesis submitted to the Department of Political Science, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.
- Ogundipe, A.O. (2013). The challenge of community development in Ijebu, Ogun State, Nigeria. *Ogun Journal of Community Development*, 16: 5-8.
- Ogunleye-Adetona, C. I. & C. Oladeinde (2013). The role of community self-help projects in rural development of Kwara state, Nigeria. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability Online*, 2(1), 28-45.
- Onyeozu, A.M. (2010). Analysis of the influence of community based organizations on community development in Rivers State, Nigeria. *Academia Arena*, 2(10): 49-53.
- Racher, F. (2007). *Running Head: The Community Health Action Model: Health Promotion by the Community*. Lancaster: Brandon University Press,
- Sawyer A. (1993). "The Putu Development Association: A Missed Opportunity" in V. Ostrom, D. Feeny and H Picht (eds) *Rethinking Institutional Analysis and Development*. San Francisco: ICS Press.
- Ugwu, L.C. (2013). Town Unions and Community Development in Nigeria: A Study of Nsukka LGA in Enugu State (1995-2010). An MSc Dissertation, Submitted to the Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.