Effect of Rural Community Self-Help Projects on Community Development in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract
The study analysed the effects of self-help projects on community development in Oyo State, Nigeria. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select 195 respondents for collection of primary data for the study. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages and Weighted Mean Scores (WMS) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression were used for data analysis. The findings revealed the types of self-help projects in the rural communities were provision of borehole/water supply (97.9%), maintenance of school buildings (94.4%), and road and bridge construction (93.3%). The contribution of money/materials to the self-help projects ranked highest among the respondents (WMS = 3.82). The major effects of the self-help projects include reduced migrations from the communities (WMS = 2.74), improved sanitation and hygiene practices (WMS = 2.63) and increased income generating opportunities for residents (WMS = 2.60). Major constraints to self-help projects were inadequate funding (WMS = 3.70) and vandalism/theft of project components (WMS = 3.05). The contribution of labour significantly (β = 0.881, p = 0.021) enhanced the effectiveness of self-help projects. The study concluded that self-help projects play vital roles in rural livelihoods through reduced migrations from rural communities, and increased income generating opportunities for the residents. The study recommends more community participation through regular levies, and donations. The communities should strengthen sense of community ownership of the projects to enhance protection of their components.

Keywords: *Effect, Rural Community, Self-help Projects, Community Development*

Introduction

The root causes of most underdevelopment in rural communities of Nigeria stem from the colonial period when the colonial administration was primarily preoccupied with the amassing of wealth and economic exploitation. This was through their sourcing of raw materials for their home industries, which the industrial revolution had churned out back home. The well-being of the rural dwellers was not pursued deliberately as a result, but for the selfish interests of the colonial masters. Recent literature indicates that rural economic development has historically received limited attention in mainstream policy discussions and public agendas. For instance, Bowen (2024) observes that temporary regional development policies tend to priorities urban center often leading to the marginalization and of rural areas within development framework.

These conditions have contributed to the perception of rural areas as spaces largely occupied by poor and ageing populations, as younger and economically active individuals migrate to urban centres in search of better livelihood, (Evwierhurhoma, 2024). As such, rural communities in Nigeria have historically experienced inadequate government attention and limited access essential public services. This situation is reflected in the persistent shortage and uneven distribution of government personnel between urban and rural areas (Udeuhele and Offor, 2023). This refusal has been orchestrated as a result of a lack of basic amenities and infrastructure, such as electricity, pipe-borne water, access road network, recreational facilities, and a lack of employment and other social services, as is the case in the cities. Worried by these trends of events, administrators were burdened by how these neglected areas in the rural communities can now be brought to the same level as their urban counterparts to improve the condition of living in their rural settings. As a result of the persistence neglect and underdeveloped or rural communities, increasing efforts have been directed by government, development practitioners, policy makers and other stakeholders towards addressing the long-standing challenges confronting rural areas (Aguene, 2022)

Self-help projects can be regarded as a community-based resource mobilization mechanism through which local people identify their felt needs, initiate development activities, mobilize available human and material resources, and assume responsibility for the implementation and sustainability of projects within their communities (Fadairo and Yahaya, 2010)

According to the Oxford Dictionary, self-help projects can also be defined as the theory that individuals provide for their needs and even support the improvement in society, or the act of providing for or improving oneself. Self-help projects, as the name implies, entails helping or assisting oneself with the bid to be better in life, achieve some specific goals, overcome unwanted situations/problems, and advance or improve from one stage to another. Therefore, self-help projects in community development is a conceived strategy for achieving community development goals set by the people and implemented by the people and for the people towards engendering collective social progress, emancipation, enhancement of the standard of living, and general well-being of the communities It could be related to an individual who alone has the resources to implement a project or projects to satisfy the basic needs of a community. It could also apply to coordinated efforts within a community to select and execute local, economic, and social program addressed to the development needs of a community (Onah, 2018). Self-help projects takes diverse forms and shapes depending on the peculiar needs, challenges, setbacks, problems, and prospects facing different communities. Hence, different communities engage in different self-help projects and programs towards the achievement of predetermined goals that will enhance the general welfare of the people.

Self-help initiatives in rural communities have increasingly emerged from the recognition that government alone cannot adequately meet diverse socio-economic needs of the populace, especially in developing regions. Contemporary studies affirm that limitations in public resources, weak institutional capacity, and uneven service delivery have created development gaps, particular in rural areas, thereby necessitating grassroots responses. As noted by Ndu and Onah (2026) community self-help initiatives arises as practical mechanism through which local populations mobilize internal resources to address infrastructural and social deficiencies where government intervention is insufficient. Similarly, recent research on rural development emphasizes that community-driven actions and civic engagement have become essential tools for collaborative advancement, enabling rural dwellers to take responsibility for improving their own welfare (Martinez-Gil, 2025). In addition, Christmann and Richter (2024) observes that in many rural regions facing persistent challenges, local residents increasingly initiate innovative, community-

based solutions to improve living conditions in the absence of adequate external support. These perspectives collectively reinforce the argument that the inability of government to be "everything to everyone" has led to the growing reliance on self-help and community-led development efforts. The idea of self-help was therefore a strategy aimed at complimenting the government's development efforts with the efforts of people it is widely discussed in community development as grassroots initiatives designed to improve the welfare of people through their own collective efforts. Their primary own purpose is to enable communities especially rural or marginalized groups to identify their needs, mobilize local resources, and implement development activities with minimal external dependence. Another key purpose of self-help is community development and participation, its initiatives encourage people to take part in decision-making, planning, and implementation processes. This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, which strengthens local capacity and sustainability of development efforts, also it helps communities build confidence and self-reliance rather than depending entirely on government intervention. The emphasis on self-help lies in what people can do for themselves and an attempt to reduce poverty and satisfying basic needs by involving locals through community work. Study shows that rural communities often initiate development projects themselves to bridge gaps left by government, emphasizing self-reliance and grassroots participation. The study highlights the expansion and increasing influence of self-help groups in achieving global development goals, showing their rapid spread and growing importance in rural economies, and despite the rapid growth their potentials remain untapped, in the sense that little is known about how helpful the groups are to their societies, however in the Nigerian context, since government took over the Provision of Basic Infrastructure and Amenities as its statutory responsibility, its inability to effectively and efficiently provide brought changes in innovation, approaches, techniques and strategies through which self-help projects groups learn to provide for themselves to better their chances of success (Anyanwu, 2004).

Self-help groups have experienced widespread expansion across the globe becoming one of the largest and most influential grassroots development models, self-help groups have continued to expand rapidly across the world, emerging as one of the most effective grassroots development strategies for poverty reduction and financial inclusion. Studies have shown that the self-help group has experienced considerable growth in both scale and geographical outreach, with self-help groups increasingly serving as important grassroots institutions for mobilizing savings, credit, livelihoods and community development (Ibeh, 2023).

The enduring and flourishing heritages of this indigenous mechanism and techniques in providing developmental projects and programs continued to flourish where groups, communities, and associations continued to pool resources together and provide both functional and physical facilities to their own societies, e.g., schools, town hall, worship centers, bridges, roads, wells, boreholes, etc. A self-help group is a self-governed, peer-controlled small and informal association of the poor, usually from socio-economically homogeneous backgrounds, organized to pull strings together (Bwala *et al.,* 2016). This brings about sets of benefits of collective perception, collective decision-making, and collective implementation of programs for their common benefit.

Self-help projects are widely recognized as modern adaptations of long-standing traditional systems of mutual aid defined as voluntary, communal-based cooperation for shared benefit-has historically existed as a fundamental organizing principle in human societies, forming the basis for contemporary self-help initiatives (Li and Yu 2025). According to Natung (2025), he stressed that the traditional arrangements, often rooted in reciprocity, kinship ties, and communal solidarity, have evolved into structured self-help groups that address social and economic challenges in

modern context. Oyalowo, (2021) in her review states that the idea of self-help projects, community initiatives and communal assistance as mechanisms for improving rural living conditions is historical rooted in African societies, particularly in Nigeria, where communities have traditionally mobilized local labour, resources and collective action to address their physical and social needs, community development in terms of Agriculture and economic growth but as the creation of fair sharing of social and economic benefits. Mela and Bello, (2023) on the other hand, sees community development as a systematic process of mobilizing and organizing rural people to participate in identifying and addressing their community needs, while strengthening their capacities to manage local development challenges and adapt to changing social and economic. In view of Frank and Smith (2013), in Kobani and Alozie (2015), community development is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. It ranges from small initiatives within a small group to large initiatives that involve the broader community. This is done through the provision of basic infrastructure to improve community accessibility and the participation and perception of the rural people in their own affairs. Self-help projects in the context of community development is therefore the carrying out of developmental and capital projects in the rural areas through community participation. It is a shift from the earlier community development policy, which was preoccupied with the generation of food and fiber surpluses, to the overall formulation of a national community development strategy with emphasis on the alleviation of rural poverty and enhancement of the quality of rural life. Self-help projects strategy is usually the last resort that communities embark on for development, following the glaring neglect of rural areas by the government in the center and states in the distribution of developmental infrastructure. According to UNDP (2025), beneficiaries of development interventions should be provided with appropriate opportunities to identify and define the problems affecting them and to express their views on the forms of assistance and solution they consider most appropriate. Such participatory approaches ensure that development interventions are responsive to local needs, priorities and experiences rather than being determined solely by external actors. Many times, state governments partner with communities to support them technically in the areas of providing professionals and finances to ensure that the self-help projects efforts of the various communities succeed with a view to achieving sustainable community development. In the same vein, the United Nations views self-help projects strategic efforts of communities as the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of the governmental authorities to improve the economic, social, and cultural conditions of the communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and enable them to contribute fully to national progress. Therefore, the study analysed the effects of self-help projects on community development in Oyo State. Specifically, the study described the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents, determined the effects of self-help projects on community development and investigate the challenges associated with the implementation and sustainability of self-help projects in the zones of the study area. It was hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between the socioeconomic characteristics of respondents and effect of community self-help projects.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Oyo State. Oyo State is commonly divided into five geographical zones**,** which reflect different socio-economic, historical, and cultural groupings rather than political boundaries (Oyo State Government Portal). These are often used in development planning, and cultural studies. The zones are Ibadan (largely urban/peri-urban, with the state

capital and major infrastructure), Ibarapa (semi-urban, strong in farming, especially arable crops), Ogbomoso (semi-urban, strong in farming, especially arable crops), Oyo (with historical/traditional institutions, mixed rural-urban profile), and Saki (Oke-Ogun) (mostly rural, agrarian, less infrastructural development). Each zone has different socio-economic, cultural, and developmental characteristics. Oyo state has a total of 33 Local Government Areas (LGAs), with a breakdown of Ibadan Zone (11), Ibarapa (3), Ogbomoso Zone (5), Oyo Zone (4), and Saki (Oke-Ogun) Zone (10). The 11 LGAs in Ibadan Zone are Ibadan North, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan North-West, Ibadan South-East, Ibadan South-West, Akinyele, and Egbeda. Others are Oluyole, Ido, Lagelu, and Ona Ara. Ibarapa Zone is made up of Ibarapa East, Ibarapa North, and Ibarapa Central. Ogbomoso Zone comprises Ogbomoso North, Ogbomoso South, Oriire, Surulere, and Ogo-Oluwa. Oyo Zone consists of Afijio, Atiba, Oyo East, and Oyo West. Oke-Ogun Zone has the following LGAs: Saki East, Saki West, Atisbo, Irepo, Olorunsogo, and Oorelope. Others are Kajola, Iwajowa, Itesiwaju, and Iseyin. A multistage sampling technique was employed for this study. The first stage involved stratification by zone (Ibadan, Ibarapa, Ogbomoso, Oyo, Oke-Ogun). At the second stage, Ibarapa, and Oke-Ogun Zones were selected being the most two rural zones in the state. The third stage involved the selection of 50% of the LGAs in each zone, making 2 LGAs in Ibarapa zone, and 5 LGAs in Oke-Ogun zone based on the number of rural LGAs in the zone. The fourth stage is the selection of 40% of the rural communities per LGA. Then sample of eight (8) households in each selected community. However, there were varying numbers of respondents who fully responded. Data were collected using a structured interview schedule administered while the data obtained were subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Descriptive statistical tools employed include frequency counts, percentages, mean and Weighted Mean Score (WMS) while the inferential tools, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression, were used to test the stated hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

Respondents' socioeconomic characteristics

The result in Table 4.1 revealed that 33.3% of the respondents in Oke-ogun zone were between the age of 41 and 50 years, 26.2% were between 31 and 40 years, 22.7% were between 51 and 60 years, 9.9% were less than 30 years, and 7.8% were more than 60 years. The mean age of the respondents in Oke-ogun was 45.67 ± 10.5 years. Meanwhile, 44.4% of the respondents in Ibarapa zone were between the age of 31 and 40 years, 31.5% were between 41 and 50 years, 9.3% were between 51 and 60 years, and 7.4% of the respondents were less than 30 and greater than 60 years. The mean age of the respondents in Ibarapa zone was 41.48 ± 9.7 years. This implies that that respondents in both zones were predominantly middle-aged, and economically active are more involved in community self-help projects. However, the slightly higher mean age in Oke-Ogun suggests a relatively older population compared to Ibarapa, which may influence experience, leadership roles, and decision-making in community development activities. Furthermore, the pooled result revealed that 32.8% of the respondents were between the age of 41 and 50 years, 31.3% were between 31 and 40 years, 18.9% were between 51 and 60 years, 9.2% were less than 30 years, and 7.7% were more than 60 years. The mean age of the respondents was 44.51 ± 10.7 years in the study area. This implies that majority of the respondents in the study area are active, productive, and capable of participating effectively in community self-help projects. This finding aligns with Adebayo and Yusuf (2021), who reported that middle-aged individuals dominate rural development activities due to their economic strength and social responsibility. The result revealed that 75.9% of the respondents in Oke-ogun zone were male, and 24.1% were female. Meanwhile,

72.2% of the respondents in Ibarapa zone were male, and 27.8% were female. This implies that males dominate participation in both zones and community self-help projects are largely male-driven, although there is still notable female participation. The pooled result revealed that 74.9% of the respondents were male, while 25.1% of the respondents were female. This suggests that community self-help projects are male-dominated in Oyo State. This agrees with Ajani and Igbokwe (2019), who observed that men dominate community development activities in rural Nigeria due to cultural norms.

The result in Table 4.1 revealed that 38.3% of the respondents each in Oke-ogun zone had secondary and tertiary education, 15.6% had primary education, 7.1% had no formal education, and 0.7% had adult education. Meanwhile, 37.0% of the respondents in Ibarapa zone had secondary education, 27.8% had tertiary education, 18.5% had primary education, 14.8% had no formal education, and 1.9% had adult education. The pooled result revealed that 37.9% of the respondents had secondary education, 35.4% had tertiary education, 16.4% had primary education, 9.2% had no formal education, and 1.0% had adult education in the study area. This implies the respondents were fairly educated in Oyo State. This is consistent with Obasi *et al.* (2020), who found that education significantly influences participation in rural development programmes.

The result in Table 4.1 revealed that 39.7% of the respondents in Oke-ogun spent between 13 and 17 years in school, 37.6% spent between 7 and 12 years, 21.3% spent less than 6 years, and 1.4% spent more than 18 years. The mean years spent in school in Oke-ogun was 11.11 ± 4.6 years. Meanwhile, 35.2% of the respondents in Ibarapa zone spent less than 6 years in school, 33.3% spent between 7 and 12 years, 25.9% spent between 13 and 17 years, and 5.6% spent more than 18 years. The mean years spent in school in Ibarapa zone was 9.85 ± 5.7 years. This result implies that the respondents in Oke-Ogun had a higher year of schooling compared to Ibarapa, indicating relatively higher educational exposure in Oke-Ogun. This supports the findings of Eboh (2009), who noted that years of education significantly influence participation in rural development initiatives. Similarly, Lakan et al (2026) found that educational exposure enhances individuals' leadership and organizational skills and increase their ability to participate effectively in community development projects. The pooled result revealed that 36.4% of the respondents spent between 7 and 12 years in school, 35.9% spent 13 - 17 years, 25.1% spent less than 6 years, and 2.6% spent more than 18 years in school. The mean years spent in school among the respondents was 10.76 ± 4.9 years. This reinforces the earlier finding that respondents possess adequate educational exposure in Oyo State. This supports findings by Ogunleye *et al*. (2021), who noted that years of schooling positively influence participation in rural development and adoption of innovations.

The result revealed that 34.8% of the respondents in Oke-ogun zone were involved in farming, 22.0% were involved in other occupations, 21.3% were into trading, 10.6% were civil servants, 8.5% were teachers, and 2.8% were artisans. Meanwhile, 62.9% of the respondents in Ibarapa zone were farmers, 11.1% were involved in trading, and other occupations, 9.3% were animals, 3.7% were civil servants, and 1.9% of the respondents were teachers. This result implies that respondents in Oke-Ogun communities may have more diversified income sources, which could enhance their ability to finance and sustain community projects than Ibarapa respondents are predominantly farmers. The pooled result revealed that 42.6% of the respondents were involved in farming, 19.5% were involved in other occupations, 18.5% were traders, 8.7% were civil servants, 6.2% were teachers, and 4.6% of the respondents were artisans in the study area. This indicates that Oyo State is largely agrarian.

The result revealed that 58.2% of the respondents in Oke-ogun had between 5 and 8 people living together, 36.2% had less than 4 people, and 5.6% had more than 8 people living together. The mean household size of the respondents in Oke-ogun was 5.40 ± 2.0 people living together. Similarly, 53.7% of the respondents in Ibarapa zone had between 5 and 8 people living together, 42.6% had less than 4 people, and 3.7% had more than 8 people. The mean household size of the respondents in Ibarapa zone was 5.13 ± 2.0 people living together. This implies that respondents in both zones had moderate household sizes which suggests availability of family labour, which is crucial for community self-help projects. This is in line with Ajani and Igbokwe (2013) found that larger households contribute more labour to community-based projects. The pooled result revealed that 56.9% of the respondents' household size was between 5 and 8 people, 37.9% had less than 4 people, and 5.1% of the respondents had more than 9 people living together. The mean household size of the respondents was 5.33 ± 1.9 people living together in the study area. This implies that the respondents in Oyo State have a moderate household size. This finding is consistent with Omonona *et al*. (2019), who observed that larger household sizes provide labour but may reduce disposable income for community investments.

Table 4.1 Distribution of Respondent Socioeconomic Characteristics in each Zone

	Oke-Ogun zone (n = 141)		**Ibadan/Ibarapa zone (n = 54)**		**Pooled (n = 195)**	
Socioeconomic variables	**F (%)**	**Mean**	**F (%)**	**Mean**	**F (%)**	**Mean**
Age (Years)						
≤ 30	14 (9.9)		4 (7.4)		18 (9.2)	
31 – 40	37 (26.2)		24 (44.4)		61 (31.3)	
41 – 50	47 (33.3)	45.67 ±10.5 years	17 (31.5)	41.48 ± 9.7 years	64 (32.8)	44.51 ± 10.7 years
51 – 60	32 (22.7)		5 (9.3)		37 (18.9)	
> 60	11 (7.8)		4 (7.4)		15 (7.7)	
Sex						
Male	107 (75.9)		39 (72.2)		146 (74.9)	
Female	34 (24.1)		15 (27.8)		49 (25.1)	
Level of education						
No formal education	10 (7.1)		8 (14.8)		18 (9.2)	
Primary education	22 (15.6)		10 (18.5)		32 (16.4)	
Secondary education	54 (38.3)		20 (37.0)		74 (37.9)	
Tertiary education	54 (38.3)		15 (27.8)		69 (35.4)	
Adult education	1 (0.7)		1 (1.9)		2 (1.0)	
Years spent in school						
≤ 6	30 (21.3)		19 (35.2)		49 (25.1)	
7 – 12	53 (37.6)	11.11 ± 4.6 years	18 (33.3)	9.85 ± 5.7 years	71 (36.4)	10.76 ± 4.9 years
13 – 18	56 (39.7)		14 (25.9)		70 (35.9)	

>18	2 (1.4)		3 (5.6)		5 (2.6)	
Occupation						
Farming	49 (34.8)		34 (62.9)		83 (42.6)	
Artisan	4 (2.8)		5 (9.3)		9 (4.6)	
Trading	30 (21.3)		6 (11.1)		36 (18.5)	
Civil service	15 (10.6)		2 (11.1)		17 (8.7)	
Teaching	12 (8.5)		1 (1.9)		12 (6.2)	
Other occupation	31 (22.0)		6 (11.1)		38 (19.5)	
Household Size						
< 5	51 (36.2)		23 (42.6)		54 (37.9)	
5 – 8	82 (58.2)	5.40 ± 2.0	29 (53.7)	5.13 ± 2.0	111 (56.9)	5.33 ± 1.9
>9	8 (5.6)		2 (3.7)		10 (5.1)	

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Types of Self-help Projects Available in the Communities

The result in Table 4.2 shows the distribution of the respondents on the types of self-help projects available in each zone. For Oke-Ogun zone it was revealed that 97.2% of the respondents indicated provision of boreholes or water supply, 95.7% indicated maintenance of school or class room buildings, 94.3% indicated road and bridge construction, 93.6% indicated health post or clinic construction, 85.8% indicated market infrastructure, 69.5% indicated microcredit or cooperative scheme, 63.1% indicated electricity installation, 31.9% indicated sanitation facilities, and 24.8% of the respondents indicated town halls. This indicates that the most prominent projects in Oke-Ogun zone include borehole or water supply, school buildings, road and bridge construction, and health facilities. Meanwhile, for Ibarapa zone, it was revealed that all (100.0%) the respondents indicated provision of boreholes or water supply, 90.7% each indicated road and bridge construction, and maintenance of school buildings, 88.9% indicated clinic construction, 79.6% indicated market infrastructure, 50.0% each indicated electricity installation, and microcredit or cooperative scheme, 29.6% indicated sanitation facilities, and 13.0% of the respondents indicated town halls. This also indicates that the most dominant projects in Ibarapa zone includes boreholes or water supply, school buildings and road construction, and health facilities. This result implies that respondents in both zones prioritize essential rural infrastructure, particularly water, education, health, and transportation. The findings also support World Bank (2004) on Community-Driven Development, which noted that communities tend to invest in projects that have immediate and visible impacts on welfare, such as roads, water, and schools.

Similarly, the pooled result revealed that 97.9% of the respondents indicated provision of borehole/water supply, followed by 94.4% who indicated maintenance of school buildings, 93.3% indicated road and bridge construction, 92.3% indicated clinic construction, 84.1% indicated provision of market infrastructure, 64.1% indicated cooperative scheme, 59.5% indicated electricity installation, 31.3% indicated sanitation/toilet facilities, and lastly, 21.5% indicated town hall among the respondents in the study area. This implies that water supply, school buildings, road construction and health facilities were the common self-help projects carried out in Oyo State. This finding agrees with OYCSDA (2024), indicate that rural communities in Southwest Nigeria tend to prioritize water supply, roads, and school facilities because these facilities address immediate household and community needs and improve access to essential social and economic opportunities.

Table 4.2 Distribution of the Respondents Types of Self-help Projects available in the Communities

		Oke – Ogun Zone	Ibarapa Zone	Pooled
S/N	**Types of projects**	**F (%)**	**F (%)**	**F (%)**
1	Boreholes/water supply	137 (97.2)	54 (100.0)	191 (97.9)
2	Road/bridge construction	133 (94.3)	49 (90.7)	182 (93.3)
3	School/classroom building	135 (95.7)	49 (90.7)	184 (94.4)
4	Health/clinic construction	132 (93.6)	48 (88.9)	180 (92.3)
5	Electricity/solar installation	89 (63.1)	27 (50.0)	116 (59.5)
6	Stalls/market infrastructure	121 (85.8)	43 (79.6)	164 (84.1)
7	Cooperative scheme	98 (69.5)	27 (50.0)	125 (64.1)
8	Sanitation/toilet facilities	45 (31.9)	16 (29.6)	61 (31.3)
9	Town hall	35 (24.8)	7 (13.0)	42 (21.5)

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Effect of Self-help Projects (Pooled)

The results in Table 4.3 shows the distribution of the effect of self-help projects among the respondents (Pooled) in the study area. Using the mean score to rank, it revealed that reduced migrations from the community ranked 1st with the mean score of 2.74, subsequently followed by improved sanitation and hygiene practices (mean = 2.63) ranked 2nd, increased income generating opportunities for residents (mean = 2.60) rank 3rd, benefits of self-help projects are sustained overtime (mean = 2.38) rank 4th, improved road access mobility in the community (mean = 2.19) ranked 5th. Also, projects have improved access to basic health services (mean = 2.17) ranked 6th, projects have improved school infrastructure and learning conditions (mean = 2.15) ranked 7th, strengthening community cohesion and cooperation (mean = 1.96) ranked 8th, projects have improved access to portable water (mean = 1.82) ranked 9th, and overall, self-help projects have positively impacted community development ranked 10th with the mean score of 1.56 among the respondents in the study area. This result implies that reduced migration, improved sanitation and hygiene, and increased income opportunities were the major effect of the self-help projects among the respondents in Oyo State. This finding agrees with Tacoli (2018), who noted that improved rural infrastructure reduces rural–urban migration by enhancing local opportunities. Also, this aligns with WHO (2022), which reported that community-based interventions significantly improve sanitation and hygiene outcomes in rural areas.

Table 4.3 Distribution of the Respondent on the Effect of Self-help Projects (Pooled)

S/N	Effect of self-help project	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Mean	Rank
1	The self-help projects have improved access to portable water	98 (50.3)	49 (25.1)	36 (18.5)	9 (4.6)	3 (1.5)	1.82	9th
2	It has improved road access mobility in the community	53 (27.2)	70 (35.9)	54 (27.7)	17 (8.7)	1 (0.5)	2.19	5th
3	The projects have improved access to basic health services	48 (24.6)	87 (44.6)	44 (22.6)	10 (5.1)	6 (3.1)	2.17	6th

4	The projects have improved school infrastructure and learning conditions	45 (23.1)	94 (48.2)	41 (21.0)	12 (6.2)	3 (1.5)	2.15	7th
5	The projects have increased income generating opportunities for residents	32 (16.4)	68 (34.9)	59 (30.3)	18 (9.2)	18 (9.2)	2.60	3rd
6	It has strengthened community cohesion and cooperation	74 (37.9)	73 (37.4)	34 (17.4)	9 (4.6)	5 (2.6)	1.96	8th
7	reduced migrations from the community	31 (15.9)	46 (23.6)	69 (35.4)	40 (20.5)	9 (4.6)	2.74	1st
8	The benefits of projects are sustained overtime	29 (14.9)	90 (46.2)	56 (28.7)	12 (6.2)	8 (4.1)	2.38	4th
9	It has improved sanitation and hygiene practices	26 (13.3)	70 (35.9)	58 (29.7)	32 (16.4)	9 (4.6)	2.63	2nd
10	Overall, self-help projects have positively impacted community development	130 (66.7)	36 (18.5)	18 (9.2)	7 (3.6)	4 (2.1)	1.56	10th

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Challenges of Implementation and Sustainability of Self-Help Projects (Pooled)

The results in Table 4.4 shows the distribution of the respondents (Pooled) on the challenges of the implementation and sustainability of self-help projects. Using the mean score to rank, it revealed that lack of government support ranked 1st with the mean score of 4.21, followed by inadequate funding (mean = 3.70) ranked 2nd, vandalism/theft of project components (mean = 3.05) ranked 3rd, poor technical skills during construction (mean = 2.88) ranked 4th, low community participation (mean = 2.49) ranked 5th, and leadership conflicts (mean = 2.17) ranked 6th among the respondents in the study area. This result implies that institutional failure that is government support, and financial limitations were the major challenges of implementation and sustainability of self-help project while security issues, technical deficiencies, and participational gaps were minor challenges among the respondents in Oyo State. This finding agrees with Oluwatayo and Ojo (2022), who reported that lack of government support is a major constraint to rural development projects in Nigeria.

Table 4.4 Distribution of the Challenges of Implementation and Sustainability of Self-Help Projects (Pooled)

S/N	Challenges	Very severe Challenge	Severe Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Minor Challenge	Not a Challenge	Mean	Rank
1	Inadequate funding	68 (34.9)	55 (28.2)	33 (16.9)	23 (11.8)	16 (8.2)	3.70	2nd
2	Poor technical skills during construction	18 (9.2)	28 (14.4)	75 (38.5)	60 (30.8)	14 (7.2)	2.88	4th
3	Low community participation	21 (10.8)	20 (10.3)	48 (24.6)	50 (25.6)	56 (28.7)	2.49	5th
4	Leadership conflicts	13 (6.7)	18 (9.2)	41 (21.0)	40 (20.5)	83 (42.6)	2.17	6th
5	Vandalism/theft of project components	29 (14.9)	19 (9.7)	90 (46.2)	46 (23.6)	11 (5.6)	3.05	3rd
6	Lack of government support	91 (46.7)	71 (36.4)	20 (10.3)	8 (4.1)	5 (2.6)	4.21	1st

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Tests of Hypotheses

There is no Significant Relationship Between the Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents and Effects of Self-Help Project (Pooled)

The results in Table 4.5 shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis between the selected socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents and effect of self-help projects. It revealed that socioeconomic variables such as age ($r = -0.165$, $p = 0.021$) was negatively significant which implies that as age increases, the perceived effect of self-help projects decreases, meaning that younger respondents tend to perceive higher benefits than older respondents. This finding agrees with Ogunleye *et al.* (2021), who found that older farmers are less responsive to development interventions compared to younger ones. Years spent in school ($r = 0.169$, $p = 0.018$) was positively significant suggested that more years of education leads to higher perceived effects of projects that is more educated respondents understand project benefit better. The positive relationship aligns with Obasi *et al.* (2020), who found that education significantly improves participation and benefits derived from rural development projects. Meanwhile, socioeconomic variable such as household size had no significant relationship.

Table 4.5 PPMC Analysis Between Selected Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents and Effects of Self-Help Project (Pooled)

S/N	Socioeconomic variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	P – value	Remark
1	Age	-0.165*	0.021	Significant
2	Years spent in school	0.169*	0.018	Significant
3	Household size	0.005	0.940	Not significant

Source: Data Analysis, 2026

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The Contribution of Community Participation and Effect of Self-help Project (Pooled)

The results in Table 4.6 shows the regression analysis between the level of community participation and effect of self-help projects. It revealed that community participation such as contribution of labour to the project (β = 0.881, p = 0.021) was significant, and contribution of money/materials to the project (β = - 3.163, p = -0.000) was negatively significant to the effect of self-help projects in the study area. Meanwhile, community participation such as involvement in identifying the need of the project, attendance of community meetings about the project, and participation by monitoring/maintenance activities were not significant to the effect of self-help projects in Oyo State.

Table 4.6: Regression Analysis of Community Participation and Effect of Self-help Projects (Pooled)

S/N	Level of community participation	Beta	T	Sig	Remark
1	Involvement in identifying the need of the project	0.643	1.507	0.133	Not significant
2	Contribution of labour to the project implementation	0.881	2.337	0.021	Significant
3	Contribution of money/materials to the project	-3.163	-7.137	0.000	Significant
4	Attendance of community meetings about the project	-0.367	-0.776	0.439	Not significant
5	Participation by monitoring/maintenance activities	0.499	1.222	0.223	Not Significant

Source: Data Analysis, 2026

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that self-help projects play vital roles in rural livelihoods through reduced migrations from rural communities, improved sanitation and hygiene practices and increased income generating opportunities for the residents. The study recommends more community participation through regular levies, and donations; financial support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donor agencies. The communities should strengthen sense of community ownership of the projects to enhance protection of their components.

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