

**THE IMPACT OF SELF-HELP PROJECT ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ILORIN
EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CASE STUDY OF OKE-OYI)**

By

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by WADA, Aminu Joel. It has been read and approved as meeting the requirements part of the Department of Urban and Regional, Institute of Environmental Studies (IES), Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin for the Award of National Diploma (OND) in Urban and Regional Planning.


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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Almighty Allah the foundation of all wisdom and knowledge and also to our wonderful parents.

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All praise due honor, glorification and adoration belong Almighty God who has always been our shield and shelter during the prevailing storm of life, and when charm of fear and menaces of frustration gather to frustrate our effort He turns our dream into reality and provide us with divine wisdom, knowledge and understanding during our course of study.

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ABSTRACT

Rural development in Nigeria has long been constrained by inadequate government intervention, limited infrastructural investment, and systemic neglect, particularly in remote communities. In response, local residents have initiated self-help projects as grassroots efforts to meet development needs, especially in areas where state presence is minimal. This study assesses the impact of self-help projects on the development of Oke-Oyi, a rural community in Kwara State, Nigeria. The research seeks to understand how these community-driven initiatives have contributed to infrastructural improvements, socio-economic upliftment, and enhanced quality of life. The study is anchored on participatory development theory, which emphasizes the importance of local involvement and ownership in the development process. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 393 residents, alongside key informant interviews and field observations. The analysis focused on socio-economic characteristics, awareness and participation in self-help initiatives, types of projects executed, and perceived outcomes in terms of education, healthcare, water supply, road infrastructure, and income generation. Descriptive statistics and frequency tables were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that self-help projects in Oke-Oyi have played a significant role in bridging service delivery gaps, particularly in the provision of potable water, classroom construction, drainage channels, and road maintenance. A majority of respondents attested to increased community cohesion, improved access to services, and enhanced livelihoods. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, poor technical expertise, lack of government support, and weak project monitoring were identified as constraints to sustainability. Suggestions for improvement included increased financial contributions, better community sensitization, capacity-building, and enhanced coordination. The study concludes that while self-help projects are not a substitute for state responsibility, they serve as vital stopgap measures in fostering grassroots development. Their success in Oke-Oyi underscores the potential of community-driven development when combined with strong local leadership and collective action. The study recommends stronger synergy between government agencies, NGOs, and local communities to institutionalize support for self-help efforts through co-funding, technical assistance, and policy integration. Ultimately, the findings contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable rural development and participatory planning in Nigeria, highlighting the relevance of localized initiatives in achieving inclusive growth and development. The study advocates for replication of such models in similar rural settings across Nigeria to enhance community resilience and autonomy in the face of developmental neglect.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

Community development is an essential aspect of national growth, especially in developing countries where the gap between governmental capacity and community needs is often wide. In this context, self-help projects have emerged as vital tools in bridging infrastructural and service delivery deficits, especially in rural areas (Adeleke& Adebayo, 2022). These projects are usually initiated, financed, and executed by community members with or without external support, aimed at improving the quality of life and enhancing socio-economic development.

Self-help efforts have existed for centuries, but their significance has gained renewed attention in recent decades due to rising population growth, inadequate government support, and the increasing desire of communities to control their developmental processes (Ojo&Lawal, 2021). In Nigeria, particularly in rural areas such as Oke-Oyi in Kwara State, community members often rely on self-help initiatives to construct schools, roads, health centers, water supply systems, and other vital infrastructure. These efforts underscore the resilience and resourcefulness of local populations in responding to development challenges (Eze&Uchenna, 2020).

However, while self-help projects are laudable, questions remain about their sustainability, quality, coverage, and actual impact on the long-term development of rural communities. Many projects may suffer from lack of technical expertise, inadequate funding, or poor maintenance culture. In some instances, duplication of efforts and absence of coordination with government agencies have resulted in wasted resources or non-functional projects (Umar &Salihu, 2022). Therefore, assessing the impact of self-help projects becomes crucial for understanding their effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement.

This research aims to assess the impact of self-help projects on the development of Oke-Oyi. It seeks to examine how these community-led efforts contribute to infrastructure development, improve access to services, and enhance socio-economic conditions of the residents. Additionally, the study will explore the challenges faced in implementing and sustaining such projects, and how these can be addressed to ensure optimal benefits for the community.

The role of local participation in development cannot be overemphasized. When communities take responsibility for their development, it promotes grassroots democracy, inclusiveness, and resilience. Moreover, community participation fosters the mobilization of local resources and ensures that projects are aligned with the real needs and priorities of the people. This bottom-up approach is essential for achieving sustainable rural development, especially in areas where top-down government interventions have not been fully effective (Adamu& Ibrahim, 2021).

In Oke-Oyi, evidence suggests that the community has mobilized efforts towards constructing classrooms, digging boreholes, repairing access roads, and supporting healthcare delivery. These efforts have implications not only for social development but also for economic productivity, education access, public health, and environmental sustainability. Understanding the extent of these contributions, as well as the processes and challenges involved, is key to formulating strategies that can strengthen the impact of self-help initiatives.

Furthermore, this study aligns with the broader global and national development agendas, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 11 which focuses on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable (United Nations, 2015). By analyzing local development actions through the lens of self-help initiatives, the

research contributes to discussions on sustainable rural development and community empowerment in Nigeria.

In sum, this study is both timely and relevant. It recognizes the limitations of government-led development and underscores the need to harness the collective capacity of communities like Oke-Oyi. It provides an evidence-based assessment of how self-help projects have shaped local development, while also identifying gaps that require policy attention and capacity support. The outcomes of this study will be valuable not only to scholars and policymakers but also to local government authorities, NGOs, and community leaders seeking to promote participatory and sustainable development in rural Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

In the study of community development within the Nigerian context, increasing scholarly attention has been given to the role of bottom-up approaches such as self-help projects. These initiatives, defined as locally-driven development efforts by community members using their own resources and manpower have been credited with addressing gaps in government service delivery, particularly in education, health, infrastructure, and sanitation (Afolabi&Oladipo, 2020). However, most of the available literature has focused either on the broader implications of community development or case studies in entirely rural or heavily urbanized settings, leaving peri-urban areas like Oke-Oyi relatively under-investigated.

Oke-Oyi, situated in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State, represents a transitional landscape between urban and rural Nigeria. With its growing population and semi-urban character, it faces a combination of challenges such as inadequate access to potable water, limited healthcare facilities, underdeveloped roads, and overcrowded schools (Ajayi& Bello, 2022). In response to

these deficiencies, community members have increasingly turned to self-help projects as a coping strategy. These initiatives ranging from school renovations to borehole construction—are often driven by town unions, youth associations, and religious groups. They reflect an active citizenry striving to fill the vacuum created by limited government intervention.

While these efforts are visible and widely acknowledged by residents, there is currently no empirical study that has systematically assessed the extent to which such projects have contributed to the socio-economic development of Oke-Oyi. This absence of research is concerning, given the need for evidence-based evaluation of grassroots interventions in local development. Specifically, questions remain unanswered: How impactful are these self-help projects in improving the living conditions of residents? To what extent are they sustainable? What institutional or social challenges limit their effectiveness? And how are different community stakeholders—women, youth, elders, and local authorities—involved in their planning and execution?

Furthermore, a major concern in the discourse on self-help initiatives is the issue of project sustainability and technical quality. In many Nigerian communities, projects implemented through self-help efforts suffer from poor design, lack of professional oversight, and eventual abandonment due to weak maintenance structures (Chukwuemeka&Eme, 2020). Oke-Oyi is not immune to these challenges. Preliminary observations suggest that some self-help projects deteriorate quickly, while others remain underutilized due to lack of integration with formal government planning systems. Without adequate monitoring and institutional support, these locally-driven initiatives risk becoming short-term solutions with minimal long-term benefits.

The inclusivity of self-help project processes is another grey area. Existing research shows that development outcomes tend to be more successful when community projects are participatory and

inclusive (Yusuf & Hassan, 2021). However, anecdotal evidence from Oke-Oyi points to a possible dominance of elite decision-makers and traditional leaders in project planning, with minimal consultation of women, youth, and other marginalized groups. This raises concerns about whose voices are represented in community development, and whether the self-help projects truly reflect the collective priorities of all residents.

Additionally, the relationship between self-help initiatives and local government structures remains poorly defined. While decentralization policies in Nigeria advocate for collaborative governance and community engagement, the practice often falls short of these ideals (Ibrahim & Ahmed, 2020). In many cases, self-help projects are undertaken in isolation, with little or no coordination with local government authorities. This disconnect undermines the potential for resource pooling, technical guidance, and policy alignment. In Oke-Oyi, which ironically houses the local government secretariat, the lack of structured synergy between community efforts and government intervention reveals a fundamental flaw in development planning.

It is also noteworthy that the development literature in Kwara State has not paid sufficient attention to the role of self-help initiatives as agents of local transformation. Although a few studies exist on community participation in general, there remains a clear gap in localized, evidence-based assessments that analyze both the outcomes and limitations of grassroots-driven development. The unique context of Oke-Oyi—with its socio-cultural diversity, institutional proximity to government, and history of community mobilization presents an ideal case for such a study. This research, therefore, seeks to fill this knowledge gap by undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the impact of self-help projects on the development of Oke-Oyi.

1.3 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What types of self-help projects have been implemented in Oke-Oyi, Kwara State?
2. To what extent have self-help projects contributed to the socio-economic development of Oke-Oyi?
3. What are the levels of community participation and inclusiveness in the planning and implementation of these self-help initiatives?
4. What challenges affect the sustainability and effectiveness of self-help projects in the study area?
5. How does the relationship between community self-help groups and local government authorities influence project outcomes?

1.4 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of self-help projects on the development of Oke-Oyi, Kwara State, with a view to understanding their contributions, challenges, and sustainability, and to recommend strategies for enhancing grassroots-driven development.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

To achieve the aim of the study, the following specific objectives are set to:

1. identify and categorize the types of self-help projects undertaken in Oke-Oyi.
2. examine the impact of these projects on the socio-economic development of the community.
3. assess the level of community involvement and inclusiveness in the execution of self-help initiatives.

4. investigate the challenges affecting the implementation and sustainability of the projects.

1.6 Justification for the Study

The concept of self-help as a means of local development has gained increasing recognition across the Global South, particularly in countries like Nigeria where public resources are often inadequate to meet local needs. In many underserved communities, residents have resorted to mobilizing their own resources to undertake development initiatives such as building schools, digging boreholes, constructing drainage systems, and maintaining rural roads. These locally initiated projects are referred to as self-help projects, and they represent a significant, albeit informal, component of rural and peri-urban development strategies (Afolayan&Omotayo, 2021).

Despite their growing prevalence and visibility, the role and effectiveness of self-help projects remain poorly documented, especially in peri-urban communities like Oke-Oyi, which exist at the margins of both rural neglect and urban policy attention. While the bulk of existing studies focus either on strictly rural or urban settings, there is a clear gap in empirical investigations that evaluate self-help development efforts in semi-urban or transitional communities. This oversight creates a significant knowledge vacuum that this study seeks to fill.

This study will contribute to the growing body of literature on grassroots development, particularly by focusing on the specific context of Oke-Oyi in Kwara State. While studies such as that by Eze and Eme (2020) have examined self-help development efforts in the South-East and parts of Northern Nigeria, there is limited academic work that investigates similar dynamics in the North Central region. Oke-Oyi presents a unique opportunity for inquiry due to its blend of rural and urban characteristics, coupled with the presence of both traditional leadership structures and formal

local governance institutions. By conducting a location-specific, empirical analysis, the study will generate new insights and data that could inform future comparative research.

This research also has strong policy implications. Nigeria's decentralization and local government reforms have emphasized community participation in development planning. Yet, implementation remains weak due to poor integration of informal community initiatives with official development frameworks (Ibrahim & Hassan, 2022). Findings from this study can guide policymakers at the local and state levels in Kwara State by highlighting the potential of community-driven development when adequately supported and integrated with formal governance mechanisms. Recommendations from the research can inform policy adjustments aimed at improving the coordination, monitoring, and sustainability of self-help projects.

Beyond theory and policy, the study is directly beneficial to the people of Oke-Oyi. Residents and community-based organizations will have access to research findings that critically assess their efforts and suggest ways to improve them. Through interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys, community voices will be captured and included in the narrative of development, thus reinforcing a sense of ownership. Additionally, the feedback from this study can help local leaders, town unions, and youth associations refine their project planning, prioritize inclusive participation, and build better relationships with governmental agencies for support and funding.

Moreover, documenting and showcasing successful self-help projects can motivate other communities facing similar challenges to adopt similar strategies while learning from both the achievements and limitations experienced in Oke-Oyi.

This research supports Nigeria's broader commitment to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Self-help projects, when successful, promote inclusive and sustainable infrastructure, improve basic service delivery, and strengthen local-level partnerships. However, for these efforts to align with global development standards, they must be systematically studied, evaluated, and supported with empirical evidence.

By assessing the impact of self-help initiatives in Oke-Oyi, the study will contribute to understanding how localized action can support national and international development goals. It also has the potential to identify ways in which government and non-governmental organizations can collaborate with community actors to scale up successful models across similar communities in Nigeria.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study is specifically focused on the town of Oke-Oyi, located in the Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria and does not extend to other communities within Ilorin East or Kwara State. The study covers three communities (Zango, Garage Lanwa, Ile Elemosho and Ekojo). The projects of interest include, but are not limited to, community-initiated efforts in the areas of education (e.g., classroom construction or renovation), health (e.g., establishment of primary health centers), water supply (e.g., boreholes and wells), road maintenance, and sanitation. The study also excludes formal government-led development projects unless they were co-executed or initiated by community actors. It does not cover projects executed by large international NGOs unless they were integrated with community-led planning and funding.

Overall, this focused scope ensures depth and clarity in analyzing the impact of self-help initiatives on the socio-economic development of Oke-Oyi.

1.8 Study Area

Oke-Oyi is a peri-urban town located in the Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. It serves as the administrative headquarters of the local government and lies approximately 10 kilometers east of Ilorin, the state capital. The town has evolved over the years from a primarily agrarian settlement into a growing semi-urban center with increasing socio-economic activities and infrastructural developments. Oke-Oyi represents a unique blend of traditional and modern lifestyles, making it a suitable case for studying grassroots development interventions like self-help projects.

1.8.1 Geographical and Physical Characteristics

Oke-Oyi is situated within the Guinea Savannah belt of Nigeria, characterized by deciduous woodland, scattered shrubs, and grasses. The town lies on gently undulating terrain with an average elevation of about 290 meters above sea level. The climate is tropical, with two distinct seasons: a wet season (April to October) and a dry season (November to March). The average annual rainfall ranges between 1,000 mm and 1,500 mm, and the temperature ranges from 21°C to 35°C throughout the year (NIMET, 2022). These environmental features favor both agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods.

1.8.2 Population and Demographics

According to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2006) and recent projections based on a 3% annual growth rate, Oke-Oyi is estimated to have a population of approximately 23,000 people as of 2024. The town is predominantly inhabited by the Yoruba ethnic group, although there are

growing populations of Nupe, Fulani, and Hausa settlers. The dominant religion is Islam, followed by Christianity and traditional worship.

The population is relatively youthful, with a high percentage of residents under the age of 35. This demographic profile has implications for community development, labor availability, and the nature of self-help initiatives, many of which are driven by youth and religious groups.

1.8.3 Economic Activities

Oke-Oyi's economy is predominantly agrarian, with a significant portion of the population engaged in subsistence and small-scale commercial farming. Common crops include maize, yam, cassava, and vegetables. In recent years, there has been a rise in non-farm activities such as trading, artisan work, transport services, and civil service employment—particularly due to the town's proximity to Ilorin.

The presence of the Kwara State Agricultural Development Project (KWADP) headquarters in Oke-Oyi has also contributed to agricultural modernization and training for local farmers. Small businesses, local markets, and cooperative societies play a vital role in the town's economy and in funding many self-help projects.

1.8.4 Infrastructure and Services

Basic infrastructure in Oke-Oyi includes public and private schools, primary healthcare centers, mosques and churches, electricity supply through the national grid, and pipe-borne water—though the latter remains inconsistent. Road networks linking the town to Ilorin and neighboring communities are mostly tarred, but many internal roads remain unpaved and poorly maintained.

Self-help initiatives have contributed significantly to the provision of essential infrastructure such as boreholes, school blocks, local bridges, and community halls. Town unions and religious bodies often spearhead these projects due to limited government intervention in non-urban areas (Ajayi&Olayemi, 2023).

1.8.5 Administrative and Institutional Structure

As the seat of the Ilorin East Local Government, Oke-Oyi benefits from the presence of administrative offices and local government personnel. It also has a well-established traditional leadership system headed by the Baale of Oke-Oyi, who works alongside community development associations to facilitate local projects.

Community participation is high, especially during communal workdays (locally known as "ojoişeilu"), where residents voluntarily contribute labor, materials, or funds for communal improvements. The synergy between traditional leadership, youth groups, and religious institutions fosters a conducive environment for self-help development.

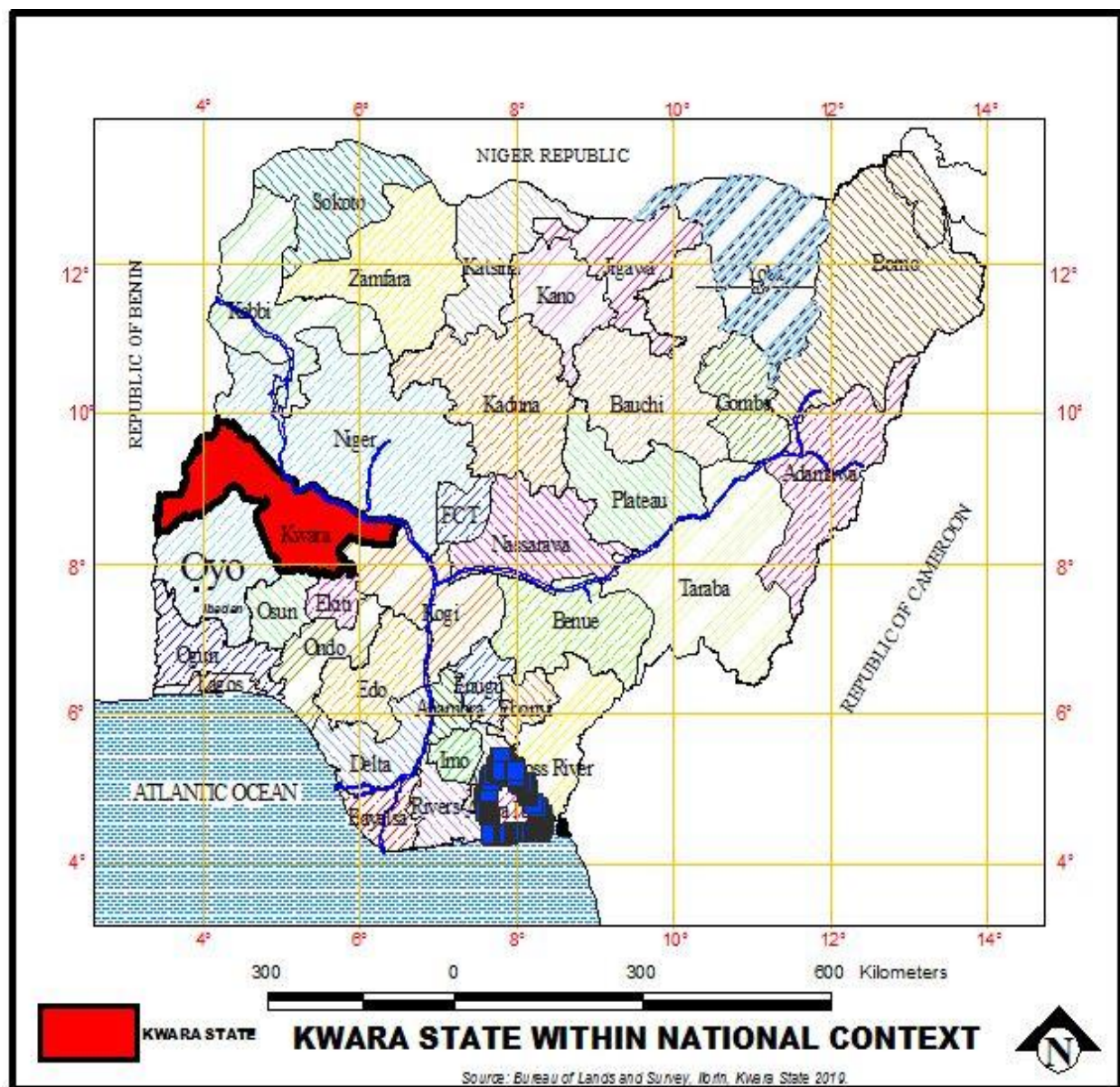


Figure 1.1: Kwara State within the National Context
Source: Kwara State Geographical Board, 2025

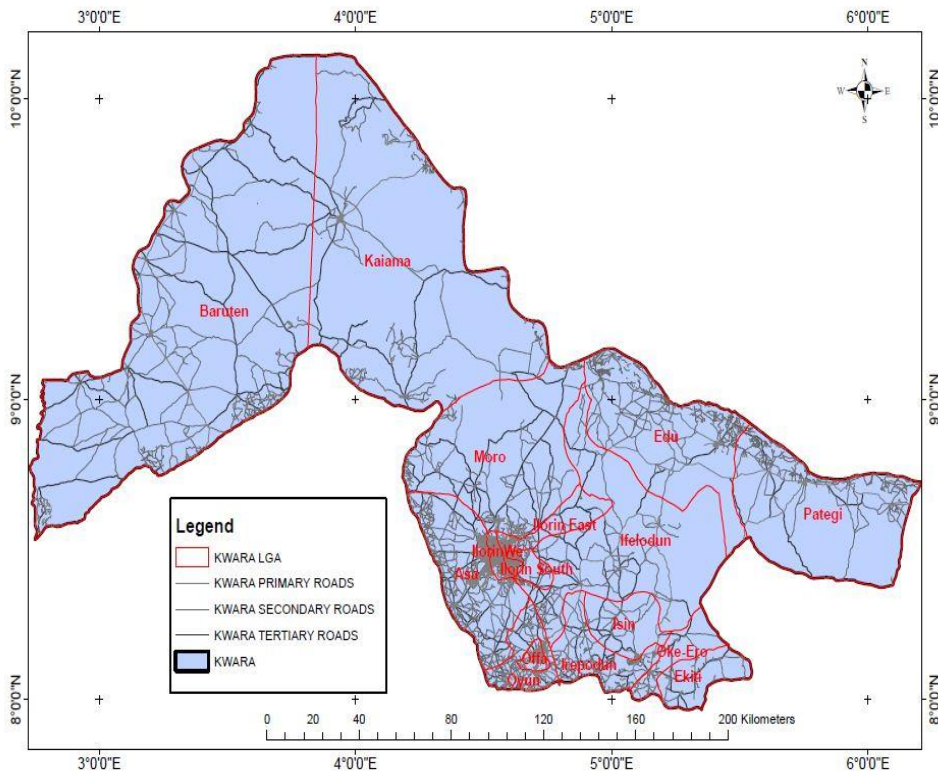
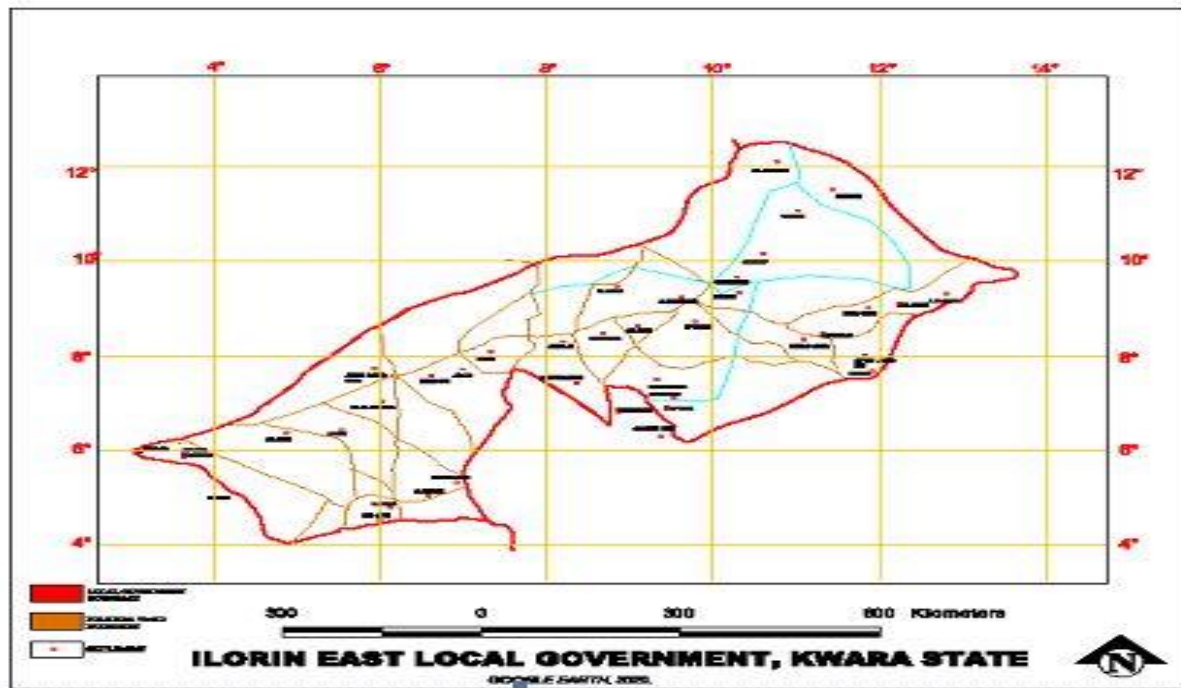


Figure 1.1: Local Government Areas in Kwara State
Source: Kwara State Geographical Board, 2025



Source: Kwara State Geographical Board, 2025



GOOGLE EARTH RANGE COVERED OKE-OYI TOWN SHAPE

Source: Kwara State Geographical Board, 2025

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of relevant literature that provides the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical foundation for the study. The aim is to explore existing knowledge on self-help development projects and their impacts, particularly in rural and peri-urban contexts like Oke-Oyi. The literature review critically engages with scholarly works, policy documents, and empirical studies to identify major themes, theoretical underpinnings, and research gaps.

The chapter is structured into several key sections. First, it examines core concepts such as community development, self-help, and rural transformation, highlighting their relevance in development discourse. This is followed by a review of the theoretical frameworks that guide the understanding of self-help initiatives, including participatory development theory and the bottom-up approach to development.

Next, attention is given to empirical studies on self-help projects, with a focus on their initiation, funding mechanisms, implementation processes, sustainability, and socio-economic impacts. Particular emphasis is placed on studies conducted in Nigeria and other Sub-Saharan African contexts to ensure relevance. Furthermore, the chapter evaluates the role of community actors—such as town unions, youth groups, and religious bodies—in driving self-help development.

The review concludes by identifying significant gaps in the literature, especially the limited focus on peri-urban areas such as Oke-Oyi, and the need for place-specific research that evaluates the effectiveness of self-help projects within such transitional environments.

By synthesizing and critiquing existing literature, this chapter lays the foundation for the study's methodology and empirical investigation, ensuring that the research is firmly rooted in established academic and practical frameworks.

2.2 Conceptual Clarification of Key Terms

2.2.1 Self-Help Projects

Self-help projects represent a critical grassroots approach to development where community members collectively take responsibility for addressing their socio-economic challenges through local initiatives. These projects are usually characterized by voluntary contributions of labor, materials, funds, or skills by residents, aimed at creating or improving communal infrastructure and services without relying extensively on formal government intervention or external donor funding.

The essence of self-help lies in community empowerment and ownership, whereby local people are not just passive recipients but active agents who identify their needs, mobilize resources, implement solutions, and sustain outcomes. This concept gained prominence during the 1970s and 1980s as development practitioners and scholars recognized the limitations of top-down approaches, which often failed to reach marginalized or rural populations effectively (Deneulin & Shahani, 2009).

Self-help projects can range from small-scale infrastructure developments like constructing boreholes for potable water, rehabilitating local roads, building classrooms or health centers, to social initiatives such as literacy programs and cooperative societies. A defining feature is their foundation on collective action and social capital—trust, cooperation, and networks within the community that enable pooling of resources and sustained engagement (Putnam, 2000).

In the Nigerian context, self-help projects have played an especially vital role in rural and peri-urban areas where government presence and service delivery remain weak or inconsistent. According to Adereti (2019), self-help initiatives have helped to fill critical gaps in infrastructure and social services in many Nigerian communities, promoting a form of development that is more aligned with local priorities and capabilities.

However, self-help projects also face challenges that can affect their success and sustainability. These include limited technical expertise, inadequate financial resources, potential conflicts within communities over leadership or resource allocation, and insufficient integration with formal planning systems (Okpala&Onwujekwe, 2020). Moreover, without adequate support mechanisms, some projects risk becoming fragmented or short-lived.

Despite these challenges, the importance of self-help projects in fostering participatory development, resilience, and social cohesion is well documented. They enhance community capacity to respond to their needs autonomously and provide a platform for democratic engagement at the local level (Cornwall, 2008). Furthermore, self-help projects can complement formal development efforts by leveraging local knowledge and ensuring that interventions are culturally appropriate and contextually relevant.

Contemporary development frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), acknowledge the critical role of community-driven initiatives in achieving inclusive and sustainable development (United Nations, 2015). Self-help projects embody the SDG principle of “leaving no one behind” by empowering marginalized communities to take charge of their development paths.

Self-help projects are community-led initiatives characterized by voluntary, collective action aimed at solving local development challenges. They represent a bottom-up approach that enhances empowerment, participation, and ownership, often serving as an effective complement to formal development efforts. Understanding the nature, processes, and impacts of self-help projects is therefore essential for designing policies and interventions that strengthen grassroots development in Nigeria and beyond.

According to Olayiwola and Adeleye (2005), self-help efforts are rooted in the traditional African philosophy of communalism, where members of a community pool resources—financial, physical, and intellectual—to tackle common problems.

Self-help projects may take various forms, including:

1. Construction of boreholes and community wells
2. Building of primary and secondary school classrooms
3. Establishment of community health centres or maternity homes
4. Grading and maintenance of feeder roads
5. Building of markets and civic centers
6. Electrification projects through community contributions

These initiatives often rely on voluntary labor (locally known as “esusu” or “owoara”), donations from wealthy indigenes, contributions from community development associations (CDAs), religious groups, and fundraising through levies or events.

2.2.2 Historical Context and Evolution in Nigeria

The history of self-help in Nigeria predates colonialism, embedded in the communal ethos of African societies where group labor was used for farming, building houses, and communal works. In the post-colonial era, especially during the 1970s and 1980s, self-help projects gained prominence as a response to the failure of centralized planning and government development programs to reach rural populations (Igbuzor, 2006). Many communities undertook their development projects as a form of survival and empowerment.

The Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) in the 1980s encouraged self-help by recognizing and sometimes supporting such initiatives with matching grants and technical assistance (Ekong, 2003). In contemporary Nigeria, community development associations and diaspora groups play vital roles in financing and implementing self-help projects, especially during festive homecomings when development challenges are jointly reviewed and addressed.

2.2.3 Role of Self-Help Projects in Community Development

Self-help projects contribute significantly to rural development in various ways:

1. **Bridging Service Gaps:** Self-help projects provide essential services such as water, roads, and education where government efforts are insufficient or absent (Akinola, 2008).
2. **Promoting Local Participation:** They foster a sense of ownership and involvement among residents, enhancing community solidarity and active citizenship.
3. **Cost-effectiveness and Relevance:** Projects are usually low-cost and tailored to the immediate needs of the community, increasing their relevance and sustainability.
4. **Capacity Building:** Through participation in planning and implementation, community members acquire skills in project management, leadership, and resource mobilization.

5. **Stimulating Local Economy:** Self-help projects, such as rural electrification and market construction, enhance economic activities by improving access and reducing transaction costs (Ogunleye-Adetona&Oladeinde, 2013).

2.2.2 Community Development

Community development is a multidimensional concept that has evolved over time as a key strategy for promoting sustainable social and economic progress at the grassroots level. At its core, community development involves collective efforts by members of a community to improve their living conditions, empower themselves, and influence decisions that affect their wellbeing (Ife &Tesoriero, 2016).

2.2.2.1 Historical Context and Evolution

The roots of community development can be traced back to post-World War II reconstruction and rural development programs that aimed to rebuild war-torn societies and address poverty in developing countries. Early efforts were often top-down, with governments or international agencies initiating projects with little input from local people. However, the failures of such approaches—marked by poor sustainability and lack of local ownership—led to a shift towards participatory, bottom-up models (Taylor, 2007).

By the 1970s and 1980s, community development became more associated with principles of participation, empowerment, and capacity building. The approach recognizes communities as agents of their own change rather than passive beneficiaries. It emphasizes social inclusion, equity, and democratic governance at the local level (Bhattacharyya, 2004).

2.2.2.2 Defining Features of Community Development

Community development is both a process and an outcome. As a process, it involves facilitating people's participation in identifying problems, mobilizing resources, planning, and implementing solutions. As an outcome, it seeks tangible improvements such as better infrastructure, increased employment, social cohesion, and enhanced quality of life.

A key characteristic of community development is its holistic perspective. It addresses not just economic needs but also social, cultural, environmental, and political dimensions, recognizing their interconnectedness. For example, improving education facilities (social) can enhance employment opportunities (economic) and foster civic engagement (political).

2.2.2.3 Participation and Empowerment

Central to community development is the concept of participation, which means involving community members actively at every stage of development interventions. This contrasts with traditional models where decisions were made externally without local input. Participation fosters a sense of ownership, ensuring that projects are relevant to local needs and more likely to be sustained (Pretty, 1995).

Empowerment is another critical aspect—it refers to enhancing the capacity of individuals and groups to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (World Bank, 2006). Through community development, marginalized groups gain access to resources, information, and decision-making power, thus addressing inequalities.

2.2.2.4 Community Development in Nigeria

In Nigeria, community development has been an integral part of rural and urban development policies. Since independence, various programs and agencies have been established to promote grassroots development, including the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). Despite these efforts, challenges such as corruption, poor coordination, and inadequate community participation have limited impact (Okoli&Onwujekwe, 2011).

As a result, self-help and community-driven initiatives have gained prominence as complementary approaches. Town unions, youth groups, women's associations, and religious bodies often take the lead in mobilizing resources and implementing projects tailored to local needs (Adereti, 2019). This underscores the importance of community development as an endogenous process supported but not dominated by external actors.

2.2.2.5 Challenges and Critiques

While community development has many benefits, it is not without criticisms. Some scholars argue that participation can be tokenistic, with real power remaining in the hands of elites or external agencies (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Others point to the risk of overburdening communities with responsibilities without adequate support, leading to volunteer fatigue and burnout.

Furthermore, the success of community development initiatives often depends on the socio-political context, availability of resources, and institutional support. In contexts with deep social divisions or weak governance, fostering inclusive and sustainable community development can be challenging (Mohan, 2008).

2.2.2.6 Relevance to the Study

Understanding the concept of community development is essential for this study as self-help projects are practical expressions of community development principles. Assessing the impact of such projects in Oke-Oyi requires examining how the community organizes, participates, and empowers itself to drive development. It also involves recognizing the interplay between local initiatives and broader structural factors.

By clarifying what community development entails, the study situates itself within a well-established theoretical and practical framework that values local agency, collective action, and sustainable outcomes. This conceptual grounding will guide the analysis of empirical data and interpretation of findings.

2.2.3 Development

Development is a multifaceted concept that has undergone significant evolution in its definition, scope, and measurement over time. Traditionally associated with economic growth and modernization, development today is understood in a broader sense encompassing social, political, cultural, and environmental dimensions. A comprehensive understanding of development is essential for assessing the impact of self-help projects on communities like Oke-Oyi, Kwara State.

2.2.3.1 Historical Evolution of the Concept

The earliest post-World War II development theories focused predominantly on economic growth, assuming that increases in gross domestic product (GDP) would trickle down to improve living standards. This growth-centric model was strongly influenced by modernization theory, which posited that developing countries should follow the industrialization path of Western countries to

achieve progress (Rostow, 1960). Development was thus equated with industrial output, urbanization, and capital accumulation.

However, empirical evidence soon revealed that economic growth alone did not guarantee equitable distribution of benefits or improved quality of life for all segments of society. This realization led to critiques of the narrow focus on GDP and the emergence of more holistic approaches.

2.2.3.2 Broader Perspectives on Development

From the 1980s onward, development scholars and practitioners emphasized human development, which prioritizes expanding people's capabilities and freedoms rather than solely increasing income (Sen, 1999). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced the Human Development Index (HDI), which combines indicators of health, education, and income to provide a multidimensional measure of development (UNDP, 2020).

Development is now often conceptualized as a process aimed at improving well-being in a sustainable and equitable manner. It involves not only economic progress but also social inclusion, political participation, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation (Todaro & Smith, 2020). The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** reflect this integrated vision, emphasizing poverty eradication, quality education, gender equality, clean water, and climate action, among others (United Nations, 2015).

2.2.3.3 Dimensions of Development

2.2.3.3.1 Economic Development: Refers to improvements in economic indicators such as income, employment, industrial production, and infrastructure. It often includes diversification of the economy and increased productivity (Todaro & Smith, 2020).

2.2.3.3.2 Social Development: Focuses on enhancing education, healthcare, housing, and social welfare. It aims to reduce inequalities and improve social cohesion (World Bank, 2018).

2.2.3.3.3 Political Development: Involves democratization, good governance, respect for human rights, and participatory decision-making (Fukuyama, 2014).

2.2.3.4.4 Environmental Sustainability: Ensures that development meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. It involves conservation of natural resources and reducing pollution (Meadows et al., 2004).

2.2.3.4 Development Challenges in Nigeria

Nigeria faces multiple development challenges despite being Africa's largest economy. These include high levels of poverty, inadequate infrastructure, corruption, poor governance, and regional inequalities (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Rural areas such as Oke-Oyi often experience limited access to electricity, potable water, quality education, and health services.

Government-led development interventions have sometimes been criticized for being fragmented, top-down, and poorly coordinated, resulting in limited impact on rural livelihoods (Omotola, 2010). This has led to increasing recognition of the importance of grassroots initiatives, such as self-help projects, as complementary pathways to achieving sustainable development.

2.2.3.5 Relevance of Development to Self-Help Projects

Self-help projects are a direct response to development challenges experienced at the community level. They represent an adaptive, bottom-up form of development that is rooted in local knowledge, priorities, and social structures. By mobilizing internal resources and fostering collective action, self-help projects contribute to multiple development dimensions: improving economic conditions through infrastructure, enhancing social services, strengthening community governance, and sometimes promoting environmental stewardship (Adereti, 2019).

Assessing the impact of these projects requires a broad developmental lens that goes beyond economic metrics to include social and institutional outcomes. For example, a community-built borehole improves access to clean water (social development), but it also enhances health outcomes and productivity (economic development) and may promote communal management structures (political development).

2.2.4 Rural Development

Rural development is a strategic and integrated approach to improving the quality of life and economic wellbeing of people living in rural areas. It encompasses a wide range of activities and policies aimed at addressing rural poverty, infrastructural deficits, low productivity, social exclusion, and environmental degradation. As the majority of Nigeria's population resides in rural communities like Oke-Oyi, understanding rural development is crucial for contextualizing the role and impact of self-help projects.

2.2.4.1 Conceptual Overview

Rural development is more than just agricultural improvement or infrastructural expansion; it is a holistic process that enhances all facets of rural life. According to Chambers (1983), rural development includes efforts to improve rural livelihoods through participatory planning, empowerment, diversification of economic activities, and provision of basic services. It integrates economic growth, social justice, environmental sustainability, and cultural sensitivity within the rural context. Historically, rural development in developing countries like Nigeria was treated mainly as agricultural modernization. This narrow focus ignored the multifaceted needs of rural communities such as health, education, housing, and governance (Ellis & Biggs, 2001). However, more recent perspectives emphasize the need for a multi-sectoral and community-driven approach that empowers rural people to define and pursue their development priorities.

2.2.4.2 Key Elements of Rural Development

1. **Infrastructure Provision:** This includes rural roads, electricity, water supply, healthcare centers, and schools. Lack of infrastructure is a major barrier to productivity and quality of life in rural areas (World Bank, 2021).
2. **Agricultural and Livelihood Enhancement:** Since agriculture is the dominant occupation in most rural areas, development strategies often target improved access to credit, modern farming techniques, extension services, and value chains (FAO, 2019).
3. **Social Services:** Education, health, and social welfare services are essential for empowering rural populations, reducing inequality, and enhancing human capital (UNDP, 2020).
4. **Community Participation and Governance:** Participatory approaches to planning and implementation ensure that rural development efforts reflect local realities and aspirations.

Strengthening local governance structures also enhances accountability and sustainability (Pretty, 1995).

5. **Environmental Sustainability:** Rural development must consider land use, deforestation, climate change, and natural resource management, which are integral to long-term rural prosperity (Meadows et al., 2004).

2.2.4.3 Rural Development in Nigeria

Nigeria has implemented several rural development programs since independence, such as the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), and the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). Despite huge investments, the results have been mixed due to poor coordination, corruption, weak institutional frameworks, and insufficient involvement of local communities (Akinbode, 2015).

Many rural areas, including those in Kwara State, still lack basic infrastructure and services. The high incidence of poverty, unemployment, and youth migration to urban centers reflects the inadequacy of past interventions. In response, communities have increasingly turned to self-help **projects** as grassroots solutions to development challenges (Adeyemo&Akinlabi, 2019).

2.2.4.4 Importance of Self-Help in Rural Development

Self-help projects play a vital role in rural development by mobilizing local human and material resources for community improvement. These projects may involve construction of boreholes, health centers, markets, classroom blocks, and feeder roads. Community-based organizations, town unions, and religious groups are often the drivers of such initiatives.

Such projects reflect key principles of rural development, including local ownership, sustainability, and relevance. By involving community members in problem identification, resource mobilization, and project execution, self-help efforts enhance empowerment and reduce dependence on external aid (Mikkelsen, 2005).

Furthermore, self-help initiatives often fill the gaps left by government or donor programs. In places like Oke-Oyi, they contribute significantly to improving access to essential services, promoting rural entrepreneurship, and strengthening social cohesion.

2.2.4.5 Challenges to Rural Development

Despite their potential, rural development efforts face several obstacles:

- **Limited Funding and Investment:** Both government and community-based projects often suffer from inadequate funding and poor financial management (NBS, 2022).
- **Weak Institutional Capacity:** Many rural areas lack the administrative structures and technical expertise to manage development initiatives effectively.
- **Gender and Social Inequalities:** Women and marginalized groups are often excluded from decision-making processes, reducing the inclusiveness and impact of development efforts (World Bank, 2021).
- **Environmental Degradation:** Deforestation, soil erosion, and poor waste management threaten the sustainability of rural development.
- **Migration and Brain Drain:** The out-migration of youth to urban areas results in loss of human capital and declining community participation.

2.2.5 Community Participation

Community participation is the active involvement of local people in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of development activities that affect their lives. It emphasizes grassroots involvement and is a foundational principle of sustainable development, particularly in rural areas where formal government presence and resources are often limited. Community participation is not just a development tool but a democratic process that empowers citizens, ensures inclusivity, and enhances the relevance and sustainability of projects (Mansuri&Rao, 2013).

2.2.5.1 Conceptual Overview of Community Participation

Community participation involves the contribution of local people to the development of their environment and the utilization of available local resources to address identified needs. It is rooted in the belief that when people are directly involved in the decisions that affect them, there is greater commitment to the outcomes and higher chances of success. The United Nations (1981) defines community participation as the creation of opportunities for people to actively influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them.

Participation can take different forms depending on the level of community involvement, ranging from passive consultation to full empowerment. Arnstein (1969) provides a classical typology in the form of the “Ladder of Citizen Participation,” which includes eight rungs—manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control—each reflecting increasing levels of community influence.

2.2.5.2 Types and Levels of Participation

1. **Passive Participation:** People are merely informed of what is happening. They do not contribute to decision-making.
2. **Participation by Consultation:** Local people are asked for their opinions, but decision-making remains with external actors.
3. **Participation for Material Incentives:** Community members contribute labor or materials in exchange for payment or benefits.
4. **Functional Participation:** Participation is seen as a means to achieve project goals, with some community input in decision-making.
5. **Interactive Participation:** People participate in joint analysis and development of action plans and have a say in decision-making.
6. **Self-Mobilization:** Communities take the initiative to plan and implement actions independently of external institutions (Pretty, 1995).

The goal of development should be to move towards the higher rungs of the ladder, where participation is transformative and empowering, rather than tokenistic.

2.2.5.3 Importance of Community Participation in Development

1. **Empowerment:** Participation builds the capacity of community members and gives them control over their development.
2. **Ownership and Sustainability:** Projects designed and implemented with community input are more likely to be maintained and sustained.
3. **Relevance and Efficiency:** Locals understand their needs better, and their insights lead to projects that are more culturally and contextually appropriate.

4. **Trust and Accountability:** Community involvement builds transparency and trust among stakeholders, enhancing accountability.
5. **Resource Mobilization:** Active participation enables communities to contribute labor, funds, and other resources, reducing dependence on external aid (Nwanegbo&Odigbo, 2013).

2.2.5.4 Challenges of Community Participation

Despite its benefits, several challenges can hinder effective community participation, especially in rural settings:

- **Low Literacy Levels:** Poor education can limit understanding of technical issues and reduce meaningful participation.
- **Elite Domination:** Local elites may hijack participatory processes, marginalizing the poor or women.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Some communities are not adequately informed about the benefits or avenues for participation.
- **Gender Inequality:** In many rural areas, women and youth are often excluded from decision-making processes.
- **Inadequate Facilitation:** Weak institutional support or lack of skilled facilitators can limit participation efforts (Agrawal& Gibson, 1999).

2.2.5.5 Community Participation in Nigeria

In Nigeria, community participation has long been part of traditional governance and development systems. Town unions, age grades, and religious institutions have historically played critical roles in mobilizing community efforts for public good. However, the formal integration of participatory

approaches in development planning is relatively recent, promoted through policies like the National Policy on Community and Social Development (2008), and programs like the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) funded by the World Bank (World Bank, 2015).

These programs aim to institutionalize community-driven development by giving communities direct control over resources and decisions. Yet, implementation is still challenged by bureaucracy, corruption, and limited capacity at the local level.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Introduction

Theoretical frameworks provide the lens through which a study is examined and interpreted. They guide researchers in conceptualizing and analyzing the relationships among key variables, ensuring the study is grounded in established academic thought. In the context of assessing the impact of self-help projects on rural development, particularly in Oke-Oyi, Kwara State, the theoretical framework serves to explain how community-driven initiatives influence developmental outcomes. It helps clarify the mechanisms through which local participation, resource mobilization, and social organization translate into tangible development benefits.

This section discusses relevant theories that provide foundational support for understanding the dynamics of self-help projects and community development. The selected theories not only offer insights into why and how communities engage in self-help efforts but also shed light on the socio-political and economic implications of such participation. The application of these theories will enhance the analysis of findings, aid in identifying patterns, and support conclusions on the effectiveness and sustainability of self-help initiatives.

In this study, emphasis is placed on the Theory of Participatory Development, the Human Capital Theory, and the Social Capital Theory, as they collectively address the multidimensional nature of community development through self-help.

2.3.2 Theory of Participatory Development

The Theory of Participatory Development emerged as a response to the shortcomings of top-down development models, which often excluded local voices and failed to address the specific needs of communities. This theory emphasizes the involvement of local people in the decision-making processes concerning their own development. It promotes the idea that development should not be something done to people but something done with them, ensuring that their needs, priorities, knowledge, and resources are integral to the planning and implementation of development projects (Chambers, 1994).

At the heart of participatory development is the recognition that communities possess valuable knowledge and capabilities which, if harnessed effectively, can significantly contribute to the success and sustainability of development initiatives. Participation is not merely about consultation or information sharing; it involves empowering community members to take control of their development processes through joint planning, implementation, and evaluation.

2.3.2.1 Core Principles of the Theory of Participatory Development:

1. **Inclusiveness:** All segments of the community—including women, youth, and marginalized groups—must be included in the development process.
2. **Empowerment:** Participation should lead to greater autonomy and capacity for the people to manage their development affairs.

3. **Ownership:** Development is more likely to be sustainable when beneficiaries have a sense of ownership over the process and outcomes.
4. **Bottom-up Planning:** Development plans should originate from the grassroots rather than being imposed from external agencies.

This theory has been influential in reshaping rural development strategies across the globe. It recognizes that external interventions are often less effective when they do not align with local realities, and it encourages the co-creation of development strategies with community input.

In Nigeria, participatory development has become central to many grassroots projects, particularly in rural areas where government presence is minimal. Programs such as the World Bank-funded Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) were designed using participatory approaches, empowering communities to identify their priorities and implement projects using local resources and support.

The Theory of Participatory Development is particularly relevant to this study, which focuses on self-help projects in Oke-Oyi, Kwara State. These initiatives typically arise from community consensus and mobilization, reflecting the principles of participation and local ownership. The theory provides a conceptual basis to evaluate how deeply involved the people of Oke-Oyi are in identifying their needs, organizing resources, and overseeing the development process.

By applying this theory, the study can assess the extent to which community participation influences the success of self-help projects and the degree to which these projects address local development needs. It also allows the researcher to explore issues of empowerment, inclusiveness, and sustainability—key tenets of participatory development.

2.3.3 Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory is a development theory that emphasizes the value of investing in people as a means to foster economic growth and improve societal well-being. Initially proposed by economists like Theodore Schultz (1961) and later developed by Gary Becker (1993), the theory posits that individuals and communities can enhance their productivity and development potential through education, health, skills training, and other forms of human capacity-building. It treats human abilities as assets or "capital" that can yield returns, much like investments in physical infrastructure or financial assets.

In the context of community development, Human Capital Theory suggests that for rural development to be successful, it must prioritize the development of the people themselves—equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and health necessary to actively participate in and drive change. Thus, the human element becomes central to any development effort, including self-help projects.

2.3.3.1 Core Assumptions of the Theory

1. **Investment in People Yields Economic Returns:** Just as physical capital investments (e.g., roads, machines) generate economic growth, so too do investments in people through education and health services.
2. **Knowledge and Skills Enhance Productivity:** Communities with a more educated and skilled population are better positioned to plan, implement, and sustain development projects.
3. **Empowered Individuals Drive Community Change:** Human capital enables individuals to become agents of change, contributing to collective problem-solving and innovation.

4. **Health and Well-being Are Foundational:** A healthy population is more capable of engaging in development activities and sustaining growth over time.

Human Capital Theory has been widely adopted in the fields of education, economics, and development planning. It underpins the rationale for government and donor investments in human resource development, particularly in developing countries.

2.3.3.2 Relevance to Self-Help and Rural Development

Self-help projects often rely heavily on the voluntary contributions and skills of community members. In rural areas like Oke-Oyi, the success of such projects is significantly influenced by the availability of human capital. For example, the ability to design, construct, and maintain a water supply system or a community school depends on whether the community possesses individuals with the requisite knowledge and technical skills. Furthermore, awareness of developmental needs and the capacity to organize and mobilize resources are linked to educational attainment and leadership training.

Where human capital is underdeveloped, communities may face difficulties in executing self-help initiatives, leading to dependency on external assistance or project failure. Conversely, strong human capital promotes self-reliance, innovation, and sustainability in rural development efforts.

This theory is highly applicable to the current study, which investigates the impact of self-help projects on the development of Oke-Oyi. The theory helps to examine the extent to which the human capacity within the community influences the initiation, execution, and sustainability of self-help projects. It also allows for the analysis of whether and how such projects contribute to

building human capital in return—through skill acquisition, leadership development, or increased access to health and education facilities.

For instance, a self-help initiative to build a community health center does not only reflect the community's capacity to plan and execute a project; it also contributes to improved health outcomes, which in turn increases productivity. Similarly, training workshops organized by community groups can equip youths and women with new skills, thereby enhancing their economic opportunities.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology refers to the systematic procedures and strategies used to collect, analyze, and interpret data in a research project. It provides a structured approach to addressing the research problem and achieving the set objectives. In this study, which seeks to assess the impact of self-help projects on the development of Oke-Oyi, Kwara State, the methodology outlines the design, population, sampling techniques, instruments, and procedures used in conducting the research.

This chapter explains the research design adopted and justifies its appropriateness for the study. It also provides details about the study population, the methods used to determine the sample size, and how the sample was selected. Moreover, it describes the types of data collected, the sources of data, the tools used for data collection, and the methods of analysis employed to interpret the results. Consideration is also given to the validity and reliability of the instruments, as well as the ethical issues observed in the conduct of the research.

3.2 Research Design

A research design refers to the overall strategy that a researcher adopts to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical manner, thereby ensuring that the research problem is effectively addressed. It serves as the blueprint for data collection, measurement, and analysis. For this study, a descriptive survey design was adopted.

The descriptive survey design is appropriate because it allows for the systematic collection and analysis of data related to the opinions, perceptions, and experiences of residents regarding self-

help projects and their impact on the development of Oke-Oyi. This design facilitates the examination of existing conditions and relationships without manipulating the study environment, making it suitable for studies involving people, communities, and social development processes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Using this design, the study was able to obtain detailed information on the types of self-help projects implemented in the area, the level of community involvement, and the perceived outcomes in terms of infrastructural, social, and economic development. The design also enabled the researcher to gather quantitative data through structured questionnaires, which provided a basis for statistical analysis and interpretation.

Furthermore, the descriptive survey design supports the triangulation of data, allowing for the incorporation of both primary and secondary data sources. This helped to ensure a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of the role of self-help initiatives in promoting rural development in Oke-Oyi.

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3.3 Sources of Data

Data for this study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of self-help projects on the development of Oke-Oyi.

3.3.1 Primary Data

Primary data were collected directly from respondents in the study area through the use of structured questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were designed to capture information on the respondents' perceptions, experiences, and involvement in self-help projects, as well as their views on the outcomes of these projects in terms of social, economic, and infrastructural

development. Additionally, key informant interviews were conducted with community leaders, local government officials, and project coordinators to gather in-depth qualitative insights.

3.3.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data were sourced from existing literature, official records, and reports relevant to self-help projects and rural development in Oke-Oyi and Kwara State at large. These included publications from government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community development associations, and academic research. The secondary data helped to contextualize the study, verify primary data findings, and enrich the analysis with background information on past and ongoing development efforts in the area.

Combining both data sources allowed for data triangulation, improving the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

3.4 Research Instruments

The primary instruments used for data collection in this study were structured questionnaires and interview guides.

3.4.1 Structured Questionnaires:

The questionnaire was designed to elicit quantitative data on the respondents' demographic characteristics, their involvement in self-help projects, perceptions of the projects' effectiveness, and the impact on community development. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and Likert scale items to measure attitudes and opinions on various aspects of the self-help initiatives. This instrument was preferred because it allows for the collection of standardized data from a large number of respondents, enabling easy comparison and statistical analysis.

3.4.2 Interview Guides:

Semi-structured interview guides were used to collect qualitative data from key informants such as community leaders, local government officials, and representatives of development associations. The interview guide contained open-ended questions that encouraged respondents to provide detailed descriptions and explanations regarding the implementation challenges, successes, and sustainability of self-help projects in Oke-Oyi. This approach enabled the researcher to gain deeper insights into the contextual factors influencing the projects and to supplement the quantitative data.

The combination of these instruments provided a comprehensive data set that captured both the breadth and depth of the research topic.

3.5 Sampling Frame

The population of a study refers to the total group of individuals or elements that possess one or more characteristics in common and to whom the findings of the research will be generalized. For this study, the sampling frame comprises all residents of Oke-Oyi, the administrative headquarters of Ilorin East Local Government Area in Kwara State, Nigeria. This includes men and women, youth, elders, community leaders, and stakeholders who have participated in or benefitted from self-help projects within the community.

Oke-Oyi is a semi-urban town with an estimated population of 12,658 people as of the 2006 national population census (NPC, 2006), with a projected increase to 23,173 in 2025. The community is composed of various households, religious groups, socio-cultural associations, and cooperative societies actively involved in local development initiatives. Self-help projects in the area span various sectors such as road construction, water supply, electrification, education, and

health services. These projects are typically initiated, funded, and executed by the residents through communal efforts or through the support of external stakeholders coordinated by community groups.

The study targets adult members of the population who are 18 years and above and who are considered capable of providing reliable and informed responses based on their participation or observation of self-help projects. This includes opinion leaders, local government officials, traditional rulers, and members of development associations.

3.6 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample is a subset of the population selected for study, which is expected to represent the entire population. Determining an appropriate sample size is crucial in ensuring the reliability, accuracy, and generalizability of research findings. For this study, a sample was drawn from the adult population of Oke-Oyi who have knowledge of or are involved in community-based self-help projects.

Given the projected population of 23,173 residents in Oke-Oyi and in line with survey research principles, the Yamane (1967) formula was used to determine a statistically valid sample size:

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

Where:

- n = sample size
- N = total population (assumed 23,193)
- e = level of precision or margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{23,173}{1 + 23,173 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{23,172}{58.93}$$

= 393

To ensure greater reliability and allow for subgroup analysis, the sample size was increased to 120 respondents. This allowed for proportional representation across different wards and community groups within Oke-Oyi.

3.7 Sampling Technique

A multistage sampling technique was adopted in selecting respondents: The community was stratified into residential zones or areas, ensuring that different parts of Oke-Oyi were fairly represented, including central areas, peripheral neighborhoods, and newly developing settlements. Key informants such as community leaders, members of town unions, heads of development associations, and project committee members were selected purposively due to their experience and involvement in self-help projects. From each stratum, individual respondents were selected using simple random sampling to ensure that every adult resident had an equal chance of being included in the study. This approach helped in minimizing sampling bias and enhanced the credibility and generalizability of the research findings.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were employed in this study. Quantitative data obtained from the structured questionnaires were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysis. The following statistical tools were used:

- **Descriptive Statistics:**

Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize and present respondents' demographic characteristics and their responses to closed-ended questions. This helped in identifying patterns and general trends in the data.

- **Inferential Statistics:**

Inferential statistical tools such as the Chi-square test **and** correlation analysis were employed to examine the relationships between community involvement in self-help projects and perceived impacts on local development. These tests helped determine whether observed relationships were statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance.

- **Likert Scale Analysis:**

Responses on the level of agreement with statements related to project impact were analyzed using mean score rankings. A 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) was used, with thresholds for interpretation clearly defined.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Data collected through key informant interviews were analyzed using thematic content analysis. The responses were transcribed, grouped into themes, and interpreted in line with the research objectives. This qualitative approach provided depth and context to the quantitative findings, offering explanations for trends and anomalies.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data collected from the field survey conducted in Oke-Oyi, Kwara State. The primary aim of this chapter is to provide empirical insights into the extent, nature, and impact of self-help projects on the development of the community. The data are systematically arranged in line with the study's objectives and research questions to ensure clarity and logical flow.

The chapter begins with an overview of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, which helps to contextualize their responses and perspectives. Subsequently, the responses to key research questions on the types, level of participation, and perceived impacts of self-help projects are analyzed. The chapter also examines the challenges confronting the implementation of such projects and the suggestions for improving their effectiveness and sustainability.

Statistical tools such as frequency tables, percentages, mean scores, and charts are used to present the findings clearly. In addition, inferential analysis is employed, where necessary, to test relationships and draw meaningful conclusions. Furthermore, insights from the qualitative interviews are integrated to enrich the interpretation of the data and provide deeper contextual understanding.

The findings in this chapter serve as the foundation for the discussion and interpretation in Chapter Five, where they will be linked with existing literature and theoretical frameworks.

4.2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the socio-demographic attributes of the respondents who participated in the survey. These characteristics include sex, age, marital status, educational qualification, occupation, monthly income, and length of residence in Oke-Oyi. Understanding these variables is essential for interpreting the respondents' perspectives on self-help projects and their impact on community development.

4.2.1 Sex of Respondents in the Study Area

The data in Table 4.1 reveals that out of the total 393 respondents surveyed in Oke-Oyi, 224 (57.0%) were male, while 169 (43.0%) were female. This indicates a slight predominance of male participants in the study, with males constituting just over half of the sample population.

The higher representation of males may reflect demographic or socio-cultural factors influencing participation in community development activities and surveys. In many rural Nigerian communities, men often assume leadership roles and are more actively involved in public affairs, including self-help projects. Conversely, women may have more restricted participation due to traditional gender roles, time constraints related to domestic responsibilities, or limited access to decision-making platforms (Oladipo&Adewale, 2020).

Table 4.1: Sex of Respondents in the Study Area

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	224	57.0
Female	169	43.0
Total	393	100.0

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2025

4.2.2 Age Distribution Data

The age distribution of respondents in the study area shows a fairly balanced representation across different age groups, with some concentration in the younger and middle-aged adult populations. Specifically, the 31–40 years age group constitutes the largest proportion at 31.3%, followed by the 41–50 years group at 26.7%. The youngest group, 18–30 years, accounts for 22.4%, while those aged 51 years and above make up 19.6%.

This distribution indicates that the majority of respondents are within the active working-age population (18–50 years), which is significant for community development initiatives such as self-help projects. These age groups typically possess the physical capacity, experience, and motivation to actively participate in communal activities and contribute labor, decision-making, and resources.

The relatively smaller proportion of respondents aged 51 and above may reflect demographic trends of aging populations or possibly less active participation of older individuals in community development activities, which could be due to health, mobility, or cultural reasons.

Similar age distribution patterns have been observed in studies focusing on rural community participation and development projects in Nigeria and other Sub-Saharan African contexts. For instance, Adebayo and Ojo (2021) reported that the majority of rural development project participants were in the 30–45 age range, highlighting the role of this demographic as key drivers of grassroots initiatives.

Likewise, a study by Nwankwo et al. (2019) on community-based water projects in Southwest Nigeria found that over 60% of participants were aged between 25 and 45 years, attributing this to

the active involvement of working-age adults who balance family responsibilities with communal work.

These findings align with the present study's data, emphasizing that the core age group engaged in self-help projects comprises economically active and socially responsible adults. Such a demographic profile is crucial because younger adults may lack sufficient experience or resources, while older adults might face physical constraints or have reduced involvement.

Table 4.2: Age Distribution of Respondents in the Study Area

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–30	88	22.4
31–40	123	31.3
41–50	105	26.7
51 and above	77	19.6
Total	393	100.0

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2025

4.2.3 Marital Status of Respondents in the Study Area

The data on marital status of respondents in Oke-Oyi revealed that the majority, 274 respondents (69.7%), are married, while 93 respondents (23.7%) are single, and 26 respondents (6.6%) are either widowed or divorced. This distribution indicates that a significant portion of the community comprises married individuals, which is typical for rural Nigerian settings where early marriage and family formation are common (Oladele, 2020).

The predominance of married respondents may influence the dynamics of participation in self-help projects. Married individuals often have greater stability and social responsibility, which can motivate active involvement in community development efforts. Moreover, family-based

decision-making systems in such communities can facilitate collective actions for communal benefits (Akinola&Adeboye, 2018).

Similar patterns have been observed in other rural communities in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa. For example, a study by Eze and Chukwu (2019) on community participation in rural development projects in Enugu State reported that over 70% of respondents were married, reflecting a comparable social structure. Likewise, Agbaje et al. (2021) found that married individuals in Kwara State exhibited higher participation levels in cooperative and self-help initiatives due to family obligations and social networks.

Conversely, the relatively lower percentage of single respondents aligns with the demographic trend of early marriage in rural areas, where marriage is often considered a social expectation (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2022). The small proportion of widowed or divorced individuals (6.6%) is consistent with similar rural contexts, where marital dissolution is less common but may affect social status and participation capacity.

Understanding the marital status distribution is essential because it shapes community engagement in development projects. Married individuals usually have greater social capital, which enhances their ability to mobilize resources and influence communal decisions (Onwuka, 2017). This demographic trend justifies focusing capacity-building and participatory strategies on married groups while ensuring that single and widowed/divorced individuals are not marginalized.

In conclusion, the marital status profile of Oke-Oyi residents reflects broader socio-cultural patterns in rural Nigeria, with implications for designing inclusive and effective self-help projects that consider the varying social roles and responsibilities of different marital groups.

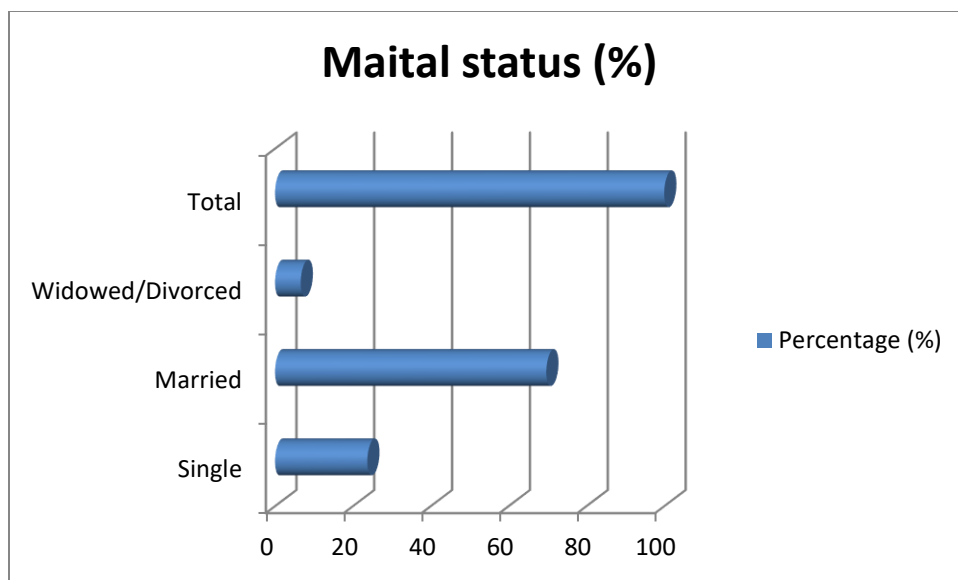


Figure 4.1: Marital Status of Respondents in the Study Area

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2025

4.2.4 Educational Qualification of Respondents in the Study Area

Table 4.4 presents the educational attainment levels of the 393 respondents involved in this study on the impact of self-help projects in Oke-Oyi, Kwara State. The data reveals that the highest proportion of respondents (37.7%) have completed secondary education, followed by those with tertiary education (30.8%). A smaller percentage had primary education (21.1%), while the least (10.4%) reported no formal education.

This distribution indicates a relatively literate population with a majority having at least secondary education. The significant portion of respondents with tertiary education (nearly one-third) suggests the presence of a knowledgeable subgroup capable of engaging with complex aspects of project planning and management. However, the 10.4% without formal education highlights the existence of segments that might face challenges in accessing information or technical details regarding community development efforts.

Similar patterns of educational attainment have been observed in other rural development studies across Nigeria. For example, Adekunle et al. (2019) found that in rural communities in Kwara State, a large percentage of residents possessed secondary education, with tertiary education figures increasing due to expanded access to higher education. Likewise, Olawale and Adesina (2020) reported in a study on community participation in development projects in southwestern Nigeria that about 35% of respondents had secondary education and 28% had tertiary education, underscoring a common trend in rural-urban transitional areas.

The presence of educated individuals in Oke-Oyi likely facilitates greater awareness of development issues and potential benefits of self-help projects, which is consistent with observations by Yusuf and Oloruntoba (2018), who argued that education correlates positively with community participation and effective project execution. The educational profile of Oke-Oyi respondents justifies a relatively high level of engagement in self-help projects and acceptance of modern development approaches. Higher education levels tend to increase community members' ability to organize, plan, and manage development initiatives, contributing to better outcomes. However, the sizeable proportion with only primary education or no formal education emphasizes the need for inclusive communication strategies. Development programs must be tailored to accommodate varying literacy levels to ensure all community members can participate meaningfully. This mix of education levels aligns with the broader national context, where Nigeria's literacy rates vary significantly between urban and rural areas but have generally improved due to government policies promoting universal basic education (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Consequently, the educational composition in Oke-Oyi suggests a community poised for sustainable development if appropriate capacity-building and participatory mechanisms are applied.

Table 4.4: Educational Qualification of Respondents in the Study Area

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Formal Education	41	10.4
Primary Education	83	21.1
Secondary Education	148	37.7
Tertiary Education	121	30.8
Total	393	100.0

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2025

4.2.5 Occupation of Respondents in the Study Area

The occupational distribution of the 393 respondents in Oke-Oyi shows that a significant portion (33.6%) are engaged in farming, making it the dominant livelihood activity in the community. This is followed by trading (26.5%), civil service (17.6%), and artisan work (13.5%). The smallest category includes students and unemployed individuals, accounting for 8.9% of the respondents.

This occupational pattern reflects the predominantly rural and semi-urban character of Oke-Oyi, where agriculture remains the mainstay of the local economy. Farming's dominance aligns with the wider rural Nigerian context, where about 70% of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2021). Trading as the second-largest occupation also mirrors the common economic diversification in rural communities, where small-scale commerce complements farming to enhance household incomes (Olaniyan&Alabi, 2019).

The presence of 17.6% civil servants indicates that a notable number of residents are employed in formal government roles, possibly reflecting the proximity of Oke-Oyi to administrative centers in Kwara State. Artisan activities, comprising 13.5%, include skilled trades such as carpentry, tailoring, and mechanics, which support local economies by providing essential services and products (Adeoti, 2018).

The category of “Others,” including students and the unemployed, at 8.9%, points to ongoing challenges of youth employment and the transitional nature of some community members, either preparing for formal employment or facing temporary joblessness.

The occupational distribution in Oke-Oyi is consistent with findings from similar studies in rural Nigeria. For instance, Akinola (2020) observed that farming remains the predominant occupation in rural Kwara communities, accounting for over 40% of livelihoods, followed by petty trading and artisanal work. Similarly, Ibe and Onwuka (2017) found that in rural communities in southwestern Nigeria, trading and artisan work play crucial roles in supplementing agricultural incomes and sustaining rural economies.

The presence of civil servants in rural settings has also been documented by Usman and Ajayi (2019), who noted that government employment often provides a stable income source, contributing to local development through remittances and increased purchasing power.

Understanding the occupational structure is critical for assessing the impact and relevance of self-help projects in Oke-Oyi. Since farming is the main occupation, projects targeting rural infrastructure such as irrigation systems, farm-to-market roads, and water supply are likely to yield significant benefits. Likewise, supporting trading and artisan activities through market development or skills training can enhance local economic resilience.

Moreover, the diversity in occupations suggests that self-help projects must be inclusive and tailored to meet varied community needs—addressing both agricultural development and alternative livelihoods. The inclusion of civil servants in the community also offers an opportunity to leverage their organizational skills and networks for project leadership and sustainability.

Table 4.5: Occupation of Respondents in the Study Area

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Farming	132	33.6
Trading	104	26.5
Artisan	53	13.5
Civil Servant	69	17.6
Others (students, unemployed)	35	8.9
Total	393	100.0

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2025

4.2.6 Monthly Income of Respondents in the Study Area

Table 4.6 presents the distribution of respondents based on their monthly income in Oke-Oyi community. The data shows that a significant portion of the population earns relatively low incomes, with 27.0% earning less than ₦20,000 monthly and 36.4% earning between ₦20,001 and ₦40,000. Combined, this accounts for 63.4% of respondents earning below ₦40,000, which highlights the generally low-income status prevalent within the study area.

Those earning between ₦40,001 and ₦60,000 represent 22.1%, while only 14.5% of respondents earn above ₦60,000 per month. This distribution suggests a majority of residents live with limited financial resources, which could affect their ability to contribute financially to community development projects and their overall economic well-being.

Similar findings were reported by Adewale and Oladipo (2020) in their study on rural livelihoods in Kwara State, where a large proportion of rural households earned below the national average income, constraining their capacity to engage in self-help or community development initiatives effectively. Likewise, Okeke et al. (2019) observed in their research on community development

in southwestern Nigeria that low-income levels among rural dwellers limit their access to credit and reduce their ability to participate in collective development efforts.

The income pattern in Oke-Oyi aligns with the broader socioeconomic challenges faced by many rural Nigerian communities, where poverty levels remain high, and opportunities for formal employment are limited. These findings underscore the financial vulnerability of the population, which is critical when assessing the sustainability and impact of self-help projects.

Understanding the income distribution of respondents is essential in assessing the feasibility and impact of self-help projects in Oke-Oyi. Low income implies limited disposable resources, which can constrain the ability of individuals to contribute financially to community projects, affecting both the scale and quality of development initiatives. It also suggests that many residents may prioritize immediate survival needs over long-term community investments.

Furthermore, limited income restricts access to external financial resources such as bank loans or microcredit, which are often necessary to supplement community efforts. This financial constraint may explain some of the challenges observed in project execution, including inadequate funding and reliance on voluntary contributions.

Therefore, the predominance of low-income earners justifies the need for alternative funding mechanisms, government support, and capacity-building initiatives to enhance community participation and project sustainability. It also highlights the importance of integrating economic empowerment components into self-help projects to improve residents' livelihoods alongside infrastructure development.

Table 4.6: Monthly Income of Respondents in the Study Area

Monthly Income (₦)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than ₦20,000	106	27.0
₦20,001 – ₦40,000	143	36.4
₦40,001 – ₦60,000	87	22.1
Above ₦60,000	57	14.5
Total	393	100.0

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2025

4.2.7 Length of Residence of Respondents in the Study Area

Figure 4.2 presents the distribution of respondents based on their length of residence in Oke-Oyi. The data indicate that the majority of the respondents have lived in the community for a considerable period, with 36.1% residing above 20 years and 28.3% residing between 11 to 20 years. Combined, nearly 64.4% of respondents have lived in the area for more than a decade. About 22.4% have stayed for 5 to 10 years, while the smallest group, 13.2%, have lived in Oke-Oyi for less than 5 years.

This pattern suggests a relatively stable population with deep-rooted ties to the community. Long-term residence often correlates with stronger community attachment, higher participation in local development projects, and a better understanding of community needs and challenges. This demographic stability is vital for the success of self-help projects, which typically depend on sustained local involvement and commitment.

The findings align with studies on rural community development where longer duration of residence is associated with increased social capital and greater involvement in collective action. For example, Okoye and Onwuanibe (2017) found that residents who have lived longer in their

communities tend to exhibit higher participation in community development initiatives due to their vested interest in local progress and stability.

Similarly, Aina and Omotoso (2019) reported that in rural Nigerian communities, extended residency was positively linked to community leadership roles and active engagement in self-help projects, as residents have a deeper understanding of local challenges and more established social networks.

Conversely, communities with a higher proportion of recent migrants often face difficulties in mobilizing collective efforts, due to weaker social ties and competing individual priorities (Adewale et al., 2021). Thus, the relatively small proportion (13.2%) of short-term residents in Oke-Oyi is advantageous for communal development.

The predominance of long-term residents in Oke-Oyi justifies the reliance on self-help projects as a development strategy in the area. Stable populations are more likely to sustain projects over time, facilitate knowledge transfer, and maintain communal assets. Moreover, their intimate knowledge of local history, customs, and needs enables better prioritization and implementation of development initiatives.

However, the presence of newer residents (about 35.6%) also calls for inclusive approaches that integrate these groups to prevent social exclusion and ensure that all voices contribute to community progress. Strategies such as orientation programs for new residents and inclusive decision-making bodies could enhance cohesion and collective responsibility.

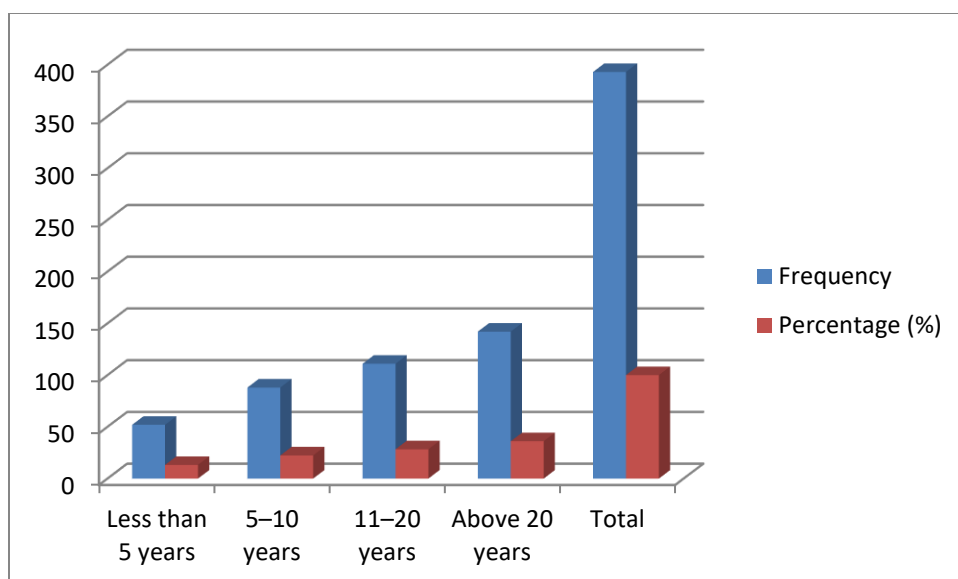


Figure 4.2: Length of Residence of Respondents in the Study Area
Source: Authors Field Survey, 2025

4.3 Types of Self-Help Projects in Oke-Oyi

This section presents findings on the various types of self-help projects that have been initiated and implemented by individuals, households, community associations, and interest groups in Oke-Oyi. These projects span critical development sectors such as education, health, water supply, roads, electricity, and social infrastructure. The data in Table 4.8 presents the various types of self-help projects undertaken by the residents of Oke-Oyi, Kwara State, as identified by 393 respondents. The most common project type reported is the construction of classroom blocks, accounting for 26.2% of responses. This suggests a strong community focus on improving educational infrastructure, reflecting a collective priority to enhance access to quality education and address the inadequacies of public school facilities in the area.

Following this, provision of boreholes and wells was identified by 21.6% of respondents as a significant self-help effort. Access to clean and reliable water supply remains a critical challenge

in many rural Nigerian communities, and the emphasis on water projects highlights the community's proactive approach to addressing health and sanitation concerns.

The grading of rural roads accounts for 18.1% of the projects, indicating the community's recognition of transportation infrastructure as essential for mobility, trade, and access to social services. Rural road maintenance is often neglected by formal government agencies, making community-driven road improvements vital for economic activities and connectivity.

Community electricity extension (14.5%) also features prominently, reflecting efforts to enhance access to power for households and public amenities. In many rural settings, electrification projects can transform social and economic life by enabling longer working hours, improving safety, and fostering small-scale businesses.

Less frequently reported projects include the construction of health centres (10.9%), which points to attempts to improve local healthcare delivery, albeit with challenges such as funding and technical expertise possibly limiting scale. The construction of market stalls (6.1%) and security posts/vigilante support (2.5%) indicate efforts to bolster economic activities and enhance community safety, respectively.

These findings align with similar research conducted in rural Nigerian communities where self-help initiatives commonly focus on education, water supply, and road infrastructure. For instance, Akinola (2017) found that community-driven development in rural Kwara State prioritized classroom construction and water projects due to the failure of government agencies to adequately provide these services. Similarly, Olawale and Afolabi (2019) highlighted the significance of rural

road maintenance and electrification projects as key components of grassroots development in Nigeria.

In contrast, some studies such as that by Nwankwo and Eze (2020) observed a stronger emphasis on health infrastructure in certain regions, reflecting localized health challenges. The lower frequency of health centre construction in Oke-Oyi could be attributed to the presence of existing basic health facilities or the high cost and technical demands associated with health projects.

The relatively low proportion of security-related projects is consistent with findings by Yusuf (2018), who noted that while security is a concern, rural communities often rely on informal security networks rather than formal infrastructure due to resource constraints.

The pattern of self-help projects identified in Oke-Oyi is justified by the community's immediate and practical needs. Education, water, and road access are foundational to socio-economic development and are areas where government provision is often inadequate. Self-help projects in these sectors represent pragmatic responses to everyday challenges, demonstrating the community's resilience and willingness to collaborate for mutual benefit.

Moreover, prioritizing classroom blocks and boreholes reflects an understanding of long-term human capital and health development, which are critical for breaking cycles of poverty. Road grading and electricity extension projects facilitate economic growth by improving market access and enabling productive activities.

Overall, the findings reveal that self-help projects in Oke-Oyi are strategically focused on essential infrastructure that directly impacts residents' quality of life, which is consistent with broader patterns observed in rural development literature across Nigeria.

Table 4.8: Types of Self-Help Projects Identified by Respondents

Type of Project	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Construction of classroom blocks	103	26.2
Provision of boreholes and wells	85	21.6
Grading of rural roads	71	18.1
Community electricity extension	57	14.5
Construction of health centres	43	10.9
Market stall construction	24	6.1
Security posts/vigilante support	10	2.5
Total	393	100.0

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2025

4.4 Community Participation in the Execution of Self-Help Projects

Community participation is a core principle of self-help development. This section explores the level and forms of participation by residents of Oke-Oyi in initiating, financing, implementing, and maintaining self-help projects. It also assesses the roles played by individuals, households, community-based organizations (CBOs), religious bodies, and youth groups in driving local development.

The analysis of community participation in self-help projects in Oke-Oyi reveals varying degrees and forms of involvement among residents. According to Table 4.9, the most common form of participation is financial contribution, with 137 respondents representing 34.9% of the sample. This indicates that monetary support remains a crucial avenue through which community members actively contribute to the realization of development projects. Financial contributions provide the necessary capital for purchasing materials and hiring labor, underscoring the community's willingness to invest in their development.

Following this, manual labour support accounts for 24.4% (96 respondents), highlighting the community's readiness to engage physically in project activities. Manual labor is essential, especially in contexts where financial resources are limited, allowing for cost savings and promoting ownership. This finding aligns with observations in similar rural settings, such as the study by Olowu and Aina (2017), which found that physical participation strengthens communal bonds and ensures more sustainable outcomes in community-driven projects.

Attendance at community meetings is the third most reported form of participation, involving 21.1% (83 respondents). This reflects the community's engagement in decision-making processes and collective discussions regarding project planning and monitoring. Active attendance at meetings is critical for fostering transparency, inclusiveness, and shared responsibility among residents. Comparable research by Adeyemo (2019) in southwestern Nigeria emphasized that regular community meetings increase awareness and trust, which are vital for the success of self-help initiatives.

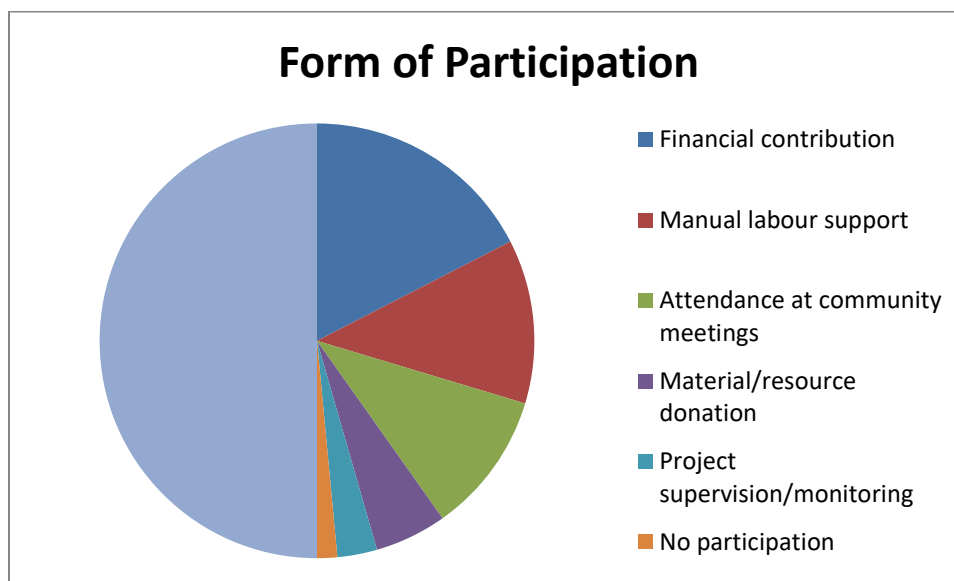
Conversely, material or resource donation constitutes 10.7% (42 respondents), indicating a smaller yet meaningful form of support where community members provide construction materials, tools, or equipment. This form of contribution is particularly valuable in contexts where cash flow is constrained but physical goods can supplement project needs. Similarly, studies such as that of Nwankwo et al. (2020) highlight that in-kind donations often supplement financial shortfalls, enhancing the feasibility of community projects.

Less common forms of participation include project supervision and monitoring, reported by only 5.9% (23 respondents). This low level may suggest a gap in active oversight roles among community members, which can affect project accountability and quality control. This echoes

findings by Oladele and Hassan (2018), who noted that limited community involvement in monitoring often results in project delays or reduced effectiveness.

Finally, 3.0% (12 respondents) reported no participation, reflecting a small but significant portion of the community that remains disengaged. Such non-participation could stem from factors like apathy, lack of awareness, or socio-economic barriers, as discussed in the work of Eze and Ibekwe (2016), which identified marginalization and low education levels as contributors to community disengagement in development efforts.

Overall, the findings from Oke-Oyi affirm that while financial and manual contributions dominate community participation, there is room to improve engagement in supervisory roles and to reduce non-participation. This diversity in forms of participation underscores the multifaceted nature of community involvement, which is critical for the success and sustainability of self-help projects.



4.2: Forms of Community Participation in Self-Help Projects
Source: Authors Field Survey, 2025

4.5 Perceived Impact of Self-Help Projects on Community Development

This section assesses how respondents perceive the effect of self-help projects on the development of Oke-Oyi. It covers key areas such as education, water supply, transportation, health, electricity, social unity, and economic empowerment. Understanding community perceptions helps evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of self-initiated interventions.

Table 4.10 presents data on how respondents in Oke-Oyi perceive the impact of self-help projects across several key development indicators. The majority of the respondents identified notable positive impacts, particularly in education, social unity, water access, and road connectivity.

The highest-rated positive outcome was improved access to education, with 82.7% (325 respondents) affirming that self-help projects have contributed positively in this area. This reflects the community's strong involvement in building and rehabilitating schools, providing furniture, and occasionally supporting teacher recruitment or incentives. Only 14.0% saw no impact, and a minimal 3.3% perceived negative outcomes—likely from uncompleted or poorly maintained education-related projects.

Closely following is social unity and cooperation, with 85.3% (335 respondents) indicating positive change. This suggests that collective efforts in planning, contributing to, and executing self-help projects have strengthened community bonds and a shared sense of ownership.

In terms of access to clean water, 76.1% (299 respondents) reported improvements, attributed to self-initiated construction of boreholes, wells, or repair of water infrastructure. However, 18.8% felt no improvement, which may point to areas still facing shortages or breakdown of facilities.

Better road connectivity also received a high rating, with 70.5% (277 respondents) reporting positive changes. This likely reflects communal road grading and repair efforts that improve access, though 6.4% (25 respondents) still viewed these efforts as inadequate or negatively impactful due to poor quality or seasonal deterioration.

On electricity access, 65.4% (257 respondents) acknowledged some improvement, possibly due to community-funded transformers or electrical poles. Still, 27.2% reported no impact—likely where electrical infrastructure is either nonexistent or unreliable.

Health services access had a more moderate positive response, with 58.3% (229 respondents) citing improvement, potentially due to community-built health centers or support for mobile clinics. However, a significant 34.4% saw no change, indicating gaps in medical staffing, equipment, or consistent service delivery.

The lowest positive impact was noted in poverty reduction and youth and women empowerment, at 52.6% and 47.3%, respectively. For poverty reduction, 37.1% of respondents saw no impact, while 10.3% perceived negative effects. This underscores that while infrastructure may improve, economic opportunities and income generation are not being directly addressed by most self-help projects. Similarly, the low empowerment impact suggests that women and youth may not be adequately represented or targeted in planning or benefit-sharing processes.

Table 4.10: Respondents' Perceived Impact of Self-Help Projects

Development Indicator	Positive Impact		No Impact		Negative Impact	
	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.
Improved access to education	82.7	325	14.0	55	3.3	13
Access to clean water	76.1	299	18.8	74	5.1	20
Better road connectivity	70.5	277	23.1	91	6.4	25
Access to electricity	65.4	257	27.2	107	7.4	29

Access to health services	58.3	229	34.4	135	7.3	29
Poverty reduction	52.6	207	37.1	146	10.3	40
Social unity and cooperation	85.3	335	11.2	44	3.5	14
Youth and women empowerment	47.3	186	41.0	161	11.7	46

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2025

4.6 Challenges Facing the Execution of Self-Help Projects in Oke-Oyi

Despite the successes recorded through self-help initiatives in Oke-Oyi, various challenges continue to affect their effective planning, execution, and sustainability. This section examines the major constraints encountered by individuals and groups involved in self-help projects.

The findings presented in Table 4.11 highlight the various obstacles encountered in the implementation of self-help projects in Oke-Oyi. The most frequently reported challenge was inadequate funding, identified by 148 respondents, accounting for 37.7% of the total. This underscores the fact that financial constraints are a major barrier to grassroots development. Community-driven projects often rely on voluntary contributions, levies, or limited donor support, which are insufficient to execute and sustain meaningful infrastructure or service-based initiatives. This finding aligns with the work of Adereti (2019), who found that inadequate financial resources significantly limit the scope and success rate of self-help projects in rural parts of Osun State, Nigeria.

Following closely is poor technical knowledge and skills, cited by 79 respondents (20.1%). This challenge reflects the general lack of specialized training and expertise among community members, which affects the planning, design, and implementation of projects. Without technical input, projects may suffer from substandard construction, safety issues, and poor maintenance. A

study by Nnadozie and Ugochukwu (2020) in Enugu State corroborated this result, reporting that community members often initiate projects without proper technical guidance, leading to structural inefficiencies and early deterioration.

Low participation by community members also emerged as a significant challenge, with 61 respondents (15.5%) citing it as a constraint. This suggests a lack of collective ownership or insufficient mobilization strategies within the community. Limited participation often results from poor awareness, trust issues, or lack of inclusiveness, especially regarding women and youth. According to Olujide (2015), sustainable rural development is heavily dependent on the level of community involvement, and low participation can undermine the continuity and impact of local initiatives.

Leadership and coordination issues were identified by 47 respondents (12.0%), pointing to the internal administrative weaknesses within community development associations. Poor leadership can manifest as mismanagement of funds, lack of accountability, or internal conflicts. These issues can demoralize participants and reduce confidence in the process. This finding is supported by Eze and Obiechina (2018), who noted that leadership effectiveness is a critical determinant in the success of self-help projects in Southeastern Nigeria.

Delayed project completion, as reported by 31 respondents (7.9%), and lack of government support (27 respondents or 6.8%) were less frequently mentioned but remain noteworthy. Delays in project execution can arise from inflation, shortage of materials, or labor challenges—ultimately leading to increased costs and loss of public interest. Similarly, minimal support from local government and development agencies limits access to co-funding, technical assistance, and policy alignment. Studies like that of Abegunde (2016) have emphasized the role of government collaboration in

scaling up self-help projects, noting that synergy between grassroots and formal institutions leads to greater developmental impact.

Justifying these findings, it is evident that while self-help projects hold immense potential for addressing local development needs, their implementation is often undermined by systemic and structural barriers. These include the lack of financial capital, absence of technical know-how, weak institutional frameworks, and inadequate policy support. As such, a holistic approach that combines community-driven efforts with institutional backing, capacity building, and inclusive governance is necessary to overcome these challenges and ensure sustainability.

Table 4.11: Challenges in Executing Self-Help Projects

Challenges Encountered	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate funding	148	37.7
Poor technical knowledge/skills	79	20.1
Low participation by community members	61	15.5
Leadership and coordination issues	47	12.0
Delayed project completion	31	7.9
Lack of government support	27	6.8
Total	393	100.0

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2025

4.7 Suggestions for Improving the Performance of Self-Help Projects

To ensure the sustainability and greater effectiveness of self-help projects in Oke-Oyi, respondents were asked to suggest practical strategies that could address the challenges identified earlier. Their responses reflect local insights on how to strengthen grassroots development and promote inclusive participation.

The data presented in Table 4.12 highlights respondents' insights on how to improve the performance and sustainability of self-help projects in Oke-Oyi, Kwara State. The most frequently suggested strategy was increased financial contributions and support, reported by 123 respondents, representing 31.3% of the total. This shows that inadequate funding is the most pressing challenge facing self-help initiatives in the study area. Many respondents noted that while the willingness to engage in community-driven development exists, limited financial capacity often leads to incomplete or poorly executed projects. This aligns with the findings of Nwachukwu and Ezech (2020), who emphasized that without adequate funding, even the most community-oriented initiatives tend to falter, especially in rural Nigerian settings where formal financing mechanisms are scarce.

Following this, 96 respondents (24.4%) emphasized the need to improve community awareness and participation. This suggestion underscores the importance of inclusive engagement in the planning, execution, and monitoring of community projects. Low awareness and insufficient participation often result in limited community ownership, which can undermine project success. Adebayo and Olaniyi (2019) similarly reported that projects with high levels of local involvement tend to be more successful and sustainable, as they are better tailored to community needs and benefit from voluntary contributions of labor and materials.

Another 71 respondents (18.1%) suggested the provision of technical training and skilled labour. This reflects a recognition that while the community may be motivated to act, a lack of technical expertise can compromise the quality and durability of projects. The findings echo the work of Ogunleye and Abodunrin (2018), who argued that capacity-building and technical training play a critical role in enhancing project implementation in rural areas. Providing vocational training and

partnering with local experts or NGOs can help bridge this gap and reduce reliance on external contractors.

About 13.7% (54 respondents) recommended strengthening leadership and project coordination. Leadership quality is vital in mobilizing resources, resolving conflicts, and ensuring transparency. Poor leadership can lead to project mismanagement and lack of accountability. This finding corresponds with Idowu (2017), who emphasized that strong, visionary local leadership is a core driver of successful community development projects.

A smaller number of respondents (33 or 8.4%) advocated for greater government and NGO support. While self-help projects are community-driven by nature, external support can play a complementary role by offering technical assistance, funding, or materials. This supports the recommendation by Uche and Agbo (2021), who found that collaborative efforts between communities and external development partners yield more sustainable results, especially in under-resourced rural environments.

Finally, (4.1%) highlighted the need for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms. Although this is the least cited suggestion, it is crucial for tracking progress, ensuring accountability, and learning from past experiences. As Afolabi (2016) pointed out, the absence of M&E structures often leads to poor documentation, waste of resources, and repetitive mistakes in grassroots development.

The responses reflect a comprehensive understanding by community members of both the operational and strategic challenges affecting self-help projects. The prioritization of funding, participation, and training indicates that residents are not only aware of the needs but also of the

practical steps required for improvement. The variety of suggestions also justifies a multi-pronged strategy that includes resource mobilization, capacity building, inclusive governance, and external collaboration.

Furthermore, the comparison with existing literature strengthens the validity of these findings, indicating that the developmental challenges and corresponding solutions identified in Oke-Oyi are not isolated but rather reflect broader patterns in rural development across Nigeria. Addressing these suggestions could enhance the effectiveness, sustainability, and replicability of self-help projects not only in Oke-Oyi but also in other similar rural communities.

Table 4.12: Suggestions for Improving Self-Help Projects

Suggested Improvements	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Increase financial contributions/support	123	31.3
Improve community awareness and participation	96	24.4
Provide technical training and skilled labour	71	18.1
Strengthen leadership and project coordination	54	13.7
Seek government and NGO support	33	8.4
Introduce monitoring and evaluation mechanisms	16	4.1
Total	393	100.0

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2025

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of findings

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents showed a diverse demographic composition, with a majority being male, within the active working-age group, and predominantly engaged in farming, trading, and artisan activities. Most respondents had a basic level of education and varied income levels, which influence their participation in community development initiatives.

The findings revealed that the majority of community members perceive self-help projects to have significantly improved access to basic services such as education, clean water, roads, and social cohesion. However, economic empowerment through poverty reduction and youth/women inclusion remains limited.

The study also identified critical challenges hindering project execution, including inadequate funding, poor technical skills, low community participation, and leadership issues. These constraints affect the quality, timeliness, and sustainability of self-help initiatives.

To address these challenges, respondents recommended increased financial support, enhanced community engagement, capacity building in technical skills, stronger leadership, and active collaboration with government and non-governmental organizations. They also highlighted the need for monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure accountability.

Overall, the findings suggest that while self-help projects have contributed positively to Oke-Oyi's development, their long-term success depends on addressing the identified gaps through more inclusive, well-coordinated, and adequately funded efforts.

5.2 Conclusion

This study assessed the impact of self-help projects on the development of Oke-Oyi, Kwara State. The findings demonstrated that self-help initiatives have played a significant role in improving the community's access to essential services such as education, water supply, road infrastructure, electricity, and social cohesion. These improvements have enhanced the overall quality of life for many residents and fostered a stronger sense of community unity.

However, the study also revealed important limitations, particularly regarding the extent of economic empowerment, poverty reduction, and inclusion of vulnerable groups such as youth and women. Challenges such as inadequate funding, limited technical expertise, poor leadership coordination, and low community participation have constrained the full realization of the potential benefits of self-help projects.

Therefore, while self-help projects remain a vital strategy for grassroots development in Oke-Oyi, their sustainability and impact depend largely on addressing these key challenges. This includes mobilizing greater financial and technical resources, fostering inclusive participation, strengthening leadership structures, and forging partnerships with government and non-governmental organizations.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of self-help projects in Oke-Oyi:

1. **Enhance Funding Mechanisms:** Community members and leaders should explore diverse funding sources, including local fundraising, microcredit schemes, government grants, and partnerships with NGOs to ensure adequate financial resources for project execution and maintenance.
2. **Capacity Building and Technical Training:** Training programs should be organized to equip community members with technical skills in project planning, management, and implementation. Collaborations with technical institutions and professionals can help improve project quality and sustainability.
3. **Strengthen Community Participation:** Awareness campaigns and inclusive engagement strategies must be implemented to increase the involvement of all community segments, especially women and youth. Transparent decision-making processes can foster ownership and reduce apathy.
4. **Improve Leadership and Coordination:** Establish well-structured community development committees with clear roles, accountability frameworks, and regular meetings to improve project oversight and coordination.
5. **Seek Government and NGO Support:** Local authorities and development partners should be encouraged to provide technical assistance, equipment, and funding support. Creating formal partnerships can enhance resource availability and expertise.

6. **Implement Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:** Regular monitoring and evaluation should be institutionalized to track project progress, identify challenges early, and ensure transparency and accountability.
7. **Promote Economic Empowerment Initiatives:** Self-help projects should integrate income-generating activities and skills training aimed at poverty alleviation and empowerment of marginalized groups, ensuring broader socio-economic benefits.



Plate 4.1: community dug well
Source: Author's Field Survey, 2025



Plate 4.2: community Bore Hole
Source: Author's Field Survey, 2025



Plate 4.3: Medical Equipment Provided through Communal Effort
Source: Author's Field Survey, 2025

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE ON SELF-HELP PROJECTS IN OKE-OYI COMMUNITY

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. **Age:** _____ years
2. **Gender:**
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
3. **Educational Level:**
 - ☐ No formal education
 - ☐ Primary education
 - ☐ Secondary education
 - ☐ Tertiary education
 - ☐ Others (specify): _____
4. **Occupation:** _____
5. **Length of residence in Oke-Oyi:**
 - ☐ Less than 5 years
 - ☐ 5-10 years
 - ☐ 11-20 years
 - ☐ Over 20 years
6. **Position in community (if any):** _____

SECTION B: TYPES OF SELF-HELP PROJECTS (Objective 1)

7. **Are you aware of self-help projects in Oke-Oyi community?**
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
8. **Which of the following self-help projects exist in your community? (Tick all that apply)**
 - ☐ Road construction/rehabilitation
 - ☐ Water supply projects (boreholes, wells)
 - ☐ School building/renovation
 - ☐ Health center/clinic construction
 - ☐ Market construction/renovation
 - ☐ Electricity/power projects

- ☐ Community hall/meeting center
 - ☐ Drainage/sewage systems
 - ☐ Youth/skill development centers
 - ☐ Religious centers (mosque, church)
 - ☐ Others (specify): _____
9. **How would you categorize most self-help projects in your community?**
- ☐ Infrastructure development
 - ☐ Social services
 - ☐ Economic development
 - ☐ Environmental projects
 - ☐ Educational projects
 - ☐ Health-related projects
10. **In the past 5 years, approximately how many self-help projects have been undertaken in your community?**
- ☐ 1-3 projects
 - ☐ 4-6 projects
 - ☐ 7-10 projects
 - ☐ More than 10 projects
 - ☐ Not sure

SECTION C: SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT (Objective 2)

11. **Have self-help projects improved the overall quality of life in your community?**

- ☐ Greatly improved
- ☐ Moderately improved
- ☐ Slightly improved
- ☐ No improvement
- ☐ Made it worse

12. **Rate the impact of self-help projects on the following aspects (1=No impact, 5=Very high impact):**

Aspect	1	2	3	4	5
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Employment opportunities	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
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Aspect	1	2	3	4	5
Income generation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Access to basic amenities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Educational opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Healthcare access	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Business development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social cohesion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community pride	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. Which specific benefits have you personally experienced from self-help projects?
(Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Better transportation
- ☐ Improved water supply
- ☐ Better education for children
- ☐ Improved healthcare services
- ☐ Increased business opportunities
- ☐ Better security
- ☐ Enhanced social interaction
- ☐ Others (specify): _____

14. Has your household income improved as a result of community self-help projects?

- ☐ Yes, significantly
- ☐ Yes, moderately
- ☐ Yes, slightly
- ☐ No change
- ☐ Decreased

SECTION D: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND INCLUSIVENESS (Objective 3)

15. Have you personally participated in any self-help project in your community?

- ☐ Yes, actively participated
- ☐ Yes, provided financial support
- ☐ Yes, provided material support
- ☐ Yes, provided labor
- ☐ No participation

16. If you participated, what was your level of involvement?

- ☐ Leadership/coordination role
- ☐ Active committee member
- ☐ Regular volunteer
- ☐ Occasional contributor
- ☐ One-time contributor

17. How inclusive are self-help projects in your community? Rate the inclusion of:

Group	Very Inclusive	Inclusive	Neutral	Exclusive	Very Exclusive
Women	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Youth	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Elderly	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Low-income households	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Different religious groups	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
People with disabilities	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

18. How are decisions made regarding self-help projects in your community?

- ☐ Community-wide meetings/consensus
- ☐ Committee of community leaders
- ☐ Traditional ruler decides
- ☐ Religious leaders decide

- ☐ Wealthy individuals decide
- ☐ External organizations decide

19. What percentage of community members typically participate in self-help projects?

- ☐ Less than 25%
- ☐ 25-50%
- ☐ 51-75%
- ☐ More than 75%
- ☐ Not sure

SECTION E: CHALLENGES AND IMPLEMENTATION (Objective 4)

20. What are the major challenges facing self-help projects in your community? (Rank 1-5, with 1 being the most challenging)

Challenge	Rank
Insufficient funding	[]
Lack of technical expertise	[]
Poor community participation	[]
Lack of government support	[]
Conflict among community members	[]
Inadequate planning	[]
Poor project management	[]
Corruption/mismanagement of funds	[]

21. How do you rate the sustainability of completed self-help projects in your community?

- ☐ Very sustainable (well-maintained, still functional)
- ☐ Moderately sustainable (some maintenance issues)

- ☐ Poorly sustainable (frequent breakdowns)
- ☐ Not sustainable (most projects abandoned)
- 22. What factors affect the sustainability of self-help projects? (Tick all that apply)**
 - ☐ Lack of maintenance funds
 - ☐ Poor quality of initial construction
 - ☐ Absence of maintenance committee
 - ☐ Lack of technical knowledge for maintenance
 - ☐ Community conflicts
 - ☐ Government interference
 - ☐ Others (specify): _____
- 23. Have any self-help projects in your community failed completely?**
 - ☐ Yes, many projects
 - ☐ Yes, few projects
 - ☐ No, all projects succeeded
 - ☐ Not sure
- 24. If yes, what were the main reasons for failure? _____**

SECTION F: RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Objective 5)

- 25. Does the local government support self-help projects in your community?**
 - ☐ Very supportive
 - ☐ Moderately supportive
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Not supportive
 - ☐ Actively discouraging
- 26. What type of support does the local government provide? (Tick all that apply)**
 - ☐ Financial support
 - ☐ Technical expertise
 - ☐ Equipment/materials
 - ☐ Permits and approvals
 - ☐ Planning assistance
 - ☐ Monitoring and evaluation
 - ☐ No support provided
 - ☐ Others (specify): _____

27. Are self-help projects integrated into local government development plans?

- ☐ Yes, fully integrated
- ☐ Yes, partially integrated
- ☐ No integration
- ☐ Not sure

28. How would you describe the relationship between your community and the local government regarding development projects?

- ☐ Very collaborative
- ☐ Collaborative
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Conflicting
- ☐ Very conflicting

29. Do you think local government should be more involved in self-help projects?

- ☐ Yes, much more involved
- ☐ Yes, slightly more involved
- ☐ Current level is appropriate
- ☐ No, less involvement needed
- ☐ No government involvement needed

30. How can the relationship between self-help projects and local government be improved?

SECTION G: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

31. What do you consider the most successful self-help project in your community and why?

32. What recommendations would you make to improve self-help projects in Oke-Oyi?

33. Any other comments or suggestions regarding self-help projects in your community:

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your responses will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes.

Date _____ **of** _____ **Interview:** _____
Interviewer: _____
Location: _____