



## Community Government System and Rural Development in Imo State: a Study of Ezi-Mgbidi Autonomous Community

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### Abstract

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To deal with the problem of rural development in Imo state, the state government established what it terms the Community Government System (CGS) - a bottom-up approach to rural transformation via rural capacity maximization. The objective of this paper is to undertake an assessment of the CGS with focus on Ezi-Mgbidi autonomous community of Imo state: to ascertain the suitability of the policy framework in addressing rural developmental needs; to determine the impact of the CGS in improving the socio-economic wellbeing of the people; Identify the problems hindering its operations and, finally provide useful strategies for effectively tackling the challenge of rural development in Imo state. The tool of analysis is the Standard Mean (SM) approach based on Likert Scale method of structured questions. The Chi-square statistic was utilized in testing the hypothesis. From the analysis of data, findings reveal that the CGS is a potentially suitable policy tool for rural development, however beyond the impressive policy framework; there is no convincing evidence of policy implementation targeted at development in Ezi-Mgbidi autonomous community, and no visible impact on their socio-economic life. The paper concludes and recommends that the Community Government system though a potentially viable initiative will require proper funding, strong political will, adequate community participation, requisite infrastructure, and policy consistency to make it work.

**Keywords:** *Community Government System, Rural development, Political will, Policy Consistency.*

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## **Background to the Study**

Communities and rural communal existence absolutely captures the evolving nature of man in quest for survival within a mundane and harsh environmental condition emerging from, what is regarded the Stone Age to contemporary realities. With every sense of abandonment in the contemporary era, communities have unrelentingly continued to struggle with organizing themselves into a harmonized systemic unit for the purpose working out their common destiny and meeting up daily challenges, especially the challenge of sustainability in their rural enclaves.

South eastern Nigeria according to Ukpong son et al. (2011) have long been reputed for their community development efforts. It is stated that during the colonial days and after independence, through constituted voluntary organizations like development unions, town unions, and age-grades communities themselves financed and constructed development projects like road and bridges, health centers, as well as primary and secondary schools. They also organize and award scholarships in training their sons and daughters in institutions of higher learning. Notably, these projects were undertaken without any form of statutory backing by government, until state governments felt the need to give statutory backing to these organizations leading to the enactment of the Development Administration Edict of 1971 (Eze, 1971). The vision of the new system under government is that communities become the fundamental units of administration, as succinctly captured by Eze(1971);

*...councils are to be created at levels where democratic processes are traditionally established, where rivalries and tensions are reduced to a minimum, where local resources and patriotism can be fully utilized, and where local people can effectively control their affairs. In this system indigenous ideas are expected to dominate. Thus, councilors are to be selected by traditional methods and most revenue is to be raised by direct local contribution and donation.*

It is therefore not surprising that in the south east; community rule is well consolidated by way of town unions, development unions, as well as village and kindred groups. Thus the community government system in Imo state is therefore a way of building on or re-organizing what already existed.

Delivering on its developmental expectations impresses on government to put up policies, design frameworks, and initiate measures that are consistent with the imperative of equitable and effective service delivery. However, since the emergence of the sub-political entity called Imo state, no evidence of deliberate or sustained effort have been directed towards rural community development and sustainability. This detached disposition of government has placed rural communities in perpetual precariousness visibly characterized by neglect, illiteracy, poverty and disease, and as an enclave of unsustainable resources exploitation, especially agriculture. This situation is not however exclusive to Imo state; it is a scenario that characterizes barely all parts of the Nigerian state. According to Obasi (2013) most of the rural areas in Nigeria suffers from inadequate provision of social services; from social infrastructures and employment opportunities, to high birth and death rate, low life expectancy, malnutrition and diseases, poor socio-economic development and low quality

of life. The gap between the urban and rural communities in Nigeria is very noticeable and expansive.

At the inception of current government known as the “Rescue Mission” regime in Imo state, the government created what it termed the Community Government; this is in view of the obvious weaknesses of the subsisting local government system and unwillingness to reinvigorate it. The Community government was formed with a sound judgment of how the traditional community and institutions operated and the fiats accomplished through self-efforts by them. The idea of the community government is therefore to provide essential services to the rural communities and create an environment necessary for rural transformation and economic empowerment. It aims to bring development and governance across all sectors and levels, as well as bringing planning back to the rural dwellers ([www.nggovernorsforum.org](http://www.nggovernorsforum.org), 2012).

The community government model involves the creation of socially inclusive projects across the various sectors. This strategy was adopted to engineer sustainable reforms and have the people take ownership of the projects in their communities. In this case, community projects undertaken by the state emanate from the community governments so as to address the specific needs of communities. This aim is to foster a bottom-up approach as opposed to the top-down method previously employed. This involves partnering with the members of the community to achieve projects, to enable them take ownership of the projects in their different Local Governments ([www.nggovernorsforum.org](http://www.nggovernorsforum.org), 2012).

### **Objectives of the Study**

Generally the study seeks to examine the community government system as a development policy framework and, its impact on the socio-economic lives of rural dwellers in Imo state. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following;

1. Determine the suitability of the community government policy framework in addressing rural development challenges in Ezi-mgbidi autonomous community.
2. Investigate the implementation level of the community government in carrying out stated policy objectives.
3. Examine the impact of implemented policies and programmes of the community government on the socio-economic well being of the people.
4. Identify the major problems hindering the effective operations of the community government.
5. Provide strategies for effectively tackling the challenge of rural development in Imo state.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study will benefit the government in enabling it identify setbacks in achieving the community government goals and to adopt more effective approach. Also, the study will help policy makers in developing and adopting effective rural development strategies to improve the economic conditions of rural dwellers. Finally, the study will help communities to better understanding their roles in government effort towards rural development, and how they can contribute in sustaining policies and programmes.

### **Research Questions**

The study will be guided by specific research questions to guide the empirical investigations. These are;

1. How suitable is the community government policy framework in addressing rural development challenges in Ezi-mgbidi autonomous community?
2. What is the implementation level of the community government system in carrying out stated policy objectives?
3. What are the impacts of implemented policies and programmes of the community government on the socio-economic wellbeing of the people?
4. What are the major problems hindering the effective operations of the community government system?
5. What useful strategies can be adopted to effectively tackle the challenge of rural development in Imo state?

### **Research Hypothesis**

The study will be guided by three (3) basic assumptions. These are;

1. The implementation of agricultural programs of the community government has improved food sufficiency in Ezi-Mgbidi autonomous community.
2. The implementation of economic empowerment programmes of the community government has reduced the poverty level in Ezi-Mgbidi autonomous community.
3. The implementation of security initiatives of the community government has improved the security situation in Ezi-mgbidi autonomous community.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Several approaches exist which shed light in the methods and processes of grappling the challenges of rural development to varying extents in giving explanation concerning the failure and success of rural development policies. This study examined three (3) of these approaches, namely; the Structural model, Endogenous development mode and the Participatory approach.

#### **The Structural Model**

According to Claessens and Davis (1993), proponent of the structural approach of rural development, opines that development of rural economy is anchored on the development of requisite structural and institutional framework. That for rural development to be actualized the imperative lies in the institutionalization, reconstruction or the re-engineering of already existing or new institutions. This view lays the basis for institutional development, structural change and transformation agenda whereby developmental policies and programmes are initiated.

The structural notion was inspired by the transformational developmental changes recorded through institutional development in western countries. The view holds that if developmental structures are created or existing structures transformed in line with western or modern democratic ideals, the society will develop. Suffice to say that when institutions are created or improved upon and are made to function objectively on the basis of set standards in rural communities, especially in the areas of education, in the economy, social

and other critical areas, the socio-economic lives of the people will improve.

Anam (2011) corroborates this view in stating that improving the infrastructure of rural education sub-sector is significant in improving the lives of rural dwellers. He draws evidence from developed nations, that developing educational structure can be effective in improving the overall performance of other sub-sector of the rural economy. For instance improving the infrastructure of rural education sub-sector is significant in improving the lives of rural dwellers. Evidence lies in developed nations, that developing educational structure can be effective in improving the overall performance of other sub-sector of the rural economy.

This statement is further supported by (Nussbaum 2003) that the impact developing educational institutions in rural societies has remarkable impact in transforming lives in rural communities, especially among women. This is because rapid socio-economic development of nation has been observed to depend on the caliber of women and their education in that country. Education bestows on women a disposition for a lifelong acquisition of knowledge, values, attitudes, competence and skills. The structural model is limited in the sense that establishment of institutions or structural change alone cannot bring about transformational development in isolation from other variables. Poor political will and primordial attachments in policies and policy implementation can make institutions ineffective.

### **Endogenous Development Model**

Also relevant to this study is the endogenous development model, which emanated in opposition to the modernist notion of development championed by Bass and (1986). This model argues that improvements in the socio-economic wellbeing of disadvantaged areas can best be brought about by maximizing the resources domiciled in that rural enclave (Ray 2000). The search for endogenous development alternatives is based on taking advantage of *local* actors, resources and capacities. According to (OECD 1996/2) the emphasis is very much upon what the rural areas can do for themselves with support and assistance geared towards the enablement of local economic growth. This approach to rural development was created as an alternative to the practice of central authorities in designing interventions which deal with sectors of social and economic life in isolation from each other, and assume that socio-economic problems can be solved by standard measures, regardless of location or culture.

According to Lowe, Ray, Ward, Wood and Woodward (1998) the basic characteristics of endogenous model of rural development are as follows;

1. Key principle - the specific resources of an area (natural, human and cultural) hold the key to its sustainable development;
2. Dynamic force - local initiative and enterprise;
3. Function of rural areas - diverse service economies;
4. Major rural development problems - the limited capacity of areas and social groups to participate in economic and development activity;
5. Focus of rural development - capacity building (skills, institutions and infrastructure) and overcoming social exclusion.

According to Short and Shucksmith (1998:75), “development is not just about increasing goods and services provided and consumed by society. That development also involves enabling communities to have greater control over their relationship with the environment and other communities.” According to this approach empowerment, capacity building, carefully designed social animation and, the provision of suitable training and development institutions through central policies are key variables to the system.

### **Participatory Approach**

Participatory and Endogenous model are sometimes used interchangeably by some researchers. It will be correct to state that the participatory approach is an upshot of the endogenous approach in the sense that it focuses on the active involvement, engagement or utilization of basically human resources in the rural community to achieve rural development goals.

The ineffectiveness of the “top-down” development approach to rural development necessitates the participatory model of socio-economic development, which is regarded as a “bottom-up” approach. It is a model that emphasizes the participation of beneficiary and the role of communities as major actor. The approach aims at transforming the poverty status of rural community to a higher quality of life; and attempts to put people first as primary focus rather than concentrating on materials/funds; its disbursement or allocation as key to development (Ering, 2000).

Emphasizing further, Chambers (1983), states that the participatory model is based on the assumption that the promotion of the development of human and physical resources in rural areas requires recognizing the fact that local people themselves are the main implementers of development projects. If the people whom the project is meant do not participate actively they become inactive and will depend on external inputs which might be inhibitive or run contrary to the project or programmes in such community. For instance is some communities especially in the South-south part of Nigeria – youths and community heads are often at loggerhead with project implementation officers and contractors, and even sabotaging development efforts. In order to avoid this situation, local decision-making in project planning and implementation is important. In other words, a project that the local people themselves plan and implement is given priority as local materials and human resources are utilized effectively by the local people's initiative and responsibility.

The endogenous and participatory development approach share a similar criticism as it relates to human resource and local resources mobilization. As stated by Lowe et al (1995), the endogenous approach can relegate whole areas into low growth trajectories, particularly if it has been their experience in the past. Therefore sustained training in areas of need, education, and motivation is critical.

### **Community Government System in Imo State: Policy Framework and Organizational Structure**

According to the Economic Adviser/Honourable Commissioner for Planning and Economic Development presenting the governance model pioneered by the Okorocho administration

of Imo State titled: *Community government*. He explained that the Community government is a the fourth tier model of government, formed to provide essential services to the rural communities and create the environment necessary for rural transformation and economic empowerment. He stated that the community government architecture is a 'ground-breaking' innovation which intends to bring development and governance across all sectors (agriculture, health, etc.) as well as to bring planning back to the rural dwellers ([www.nggovernorsforum.org](http://www.nggovernorsforum.org), 2012). Specifically the goals of the Community government are as follows;

1. Enhance rural transformation by supporting community based local authorities in achieving sustainable increase in services and making services available to communities
2. Address challenges of poverty alleviation and economic empowerment by empowering communities to plan/implement projects that have a direct effect on the people to improve community life and engender community partnership with human development
3. Land reform – ensure that local land owners in various communities formalize their titles to land or a single/recognized land registry that will enable them to use land as collateral.
4. Security – empowering communities to establish their own security systems, and improve intelligence gathering and general information gathering within the state
5. Food self-sufficiency: ensure that every community in Imo state within a 12 month period own farm and also challenge communities in terms of agriculture
6. Unleash strong competitive spirit of rural communities by encouraging communities to engage in activities and initiatives that are productive
7. Promote transparency through community participation in implementation, monitoring and evaluation to improve sustainability of the project and to mitigate the effects of inadequate use of funds in development.
8. Accountability–develop a system whereby resources (monthly/quarterly allocations, and other incentives) are applied in a more accountable manner via direct disbursement to communities, and ensuring the formal structure of accountability is maintained ([www.nggovernorsforum.org](http://www.nggovernorsforum.org), 2012).

### **Qualifying Criteria of the Community Government**

Some basic criteria must be fulfilled for a community to qualify for the community government

1. Must have a population of at least 5,000
2. Should have a primary school, a secondary school, a health Centre, a church and a market.

### **Structure of the Community Government**

Two basic administrative units:

- A. The Community Government Council (CGC) –policy-making arm of the government, made up of;
  - I. The Traditional Ruler who is Chairman of the Council and head of the community

- ii. President General who is Secretary of the Council
- iii. Woman Leader (elected by the community)
- iv. Youth Leader (elected by the community)
- v. Community Speaker (appointed by the Governor)
- vi. Executive/Legislative Secretary (Senior Civil Servant – GL 10-12). Local Government staffs are moved to the community government to assist in education, health, infrastructure, etc.

B. The Community Government Administration (CGA)

- i. Executive Secretary
- ii. H.O.D. – Works, Town Planning and Infrastructure
- iii. H.O.D. – Agriculture
- iv. H.O.D. – Health
- v. H.O.D. – Education
- vi. H.O.D. – Finance and Administration
- vii. H.O.D. – Security
- viii. H.O.D. – Youth and Talent Development
- ix. H.O.D. – Culture and Tourism.

([www.nggovernorsforum.org](http://www.nggovernorsforum.org), 2012)

### Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in Ezi-Mgbidi autonomous community, a community in Mgbidi town in Oru west LGA of Imo State. Its vegetation is typically rain forest. The inhabitants are land resource dependent; they are mainly traders and farmers. The farmers' produce crops like cassava, maize, yam, plantain and rear animals like goat, pigs, fish, and birds. It has geographic coordinate of latitude 5.37°N and longitude 6.57°E. Mgbidi, is located in the far north of Imo state and happens to be one of the oldest town in Oru West LGA. The population studied is comprised of eight (8) villages which are; Umuabiahu, Umuorji, Umuodinma, Umuchukwu, Umuokpara, Umuoma, Umuduru, Umuehi with a total population of 12,500 (Oru West L.G.A). Mgbidi has an average temperature of about 27°C (80°F) (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mgbidi>).

The research instrument used was a semi-structured questionnaire which was constructed based on the research topic and objectives. Likert scale structure was employed. The respondents answered each statement based on scales that most described the current situation in the community. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools; Standard Mean (SM) approach, using Group Arithmetic Mean (GAM) and Mean Weight Values (MWV). Chi-square test for significance is used. Qualitative data is based on content analysis. Specifically objectives 1-5 were analyzed with mean. The formula used was  $x = \frac{\sum X}{N}$ . The likert type scale of agreement had their weights added together and divided by the number of scales.  $A=4, SA=3, D=2, SD=1. (4+3+2+1)/4 = 2.5$  (discriminating index for acceptance and rejection). This means that all mean value of 2.5 and above were accepted as important. A sample of 5% was taken of 3 communities randomly selected from the eight communities for the purpose of sampling; there are Umuoma, Umuoduru and Umuehi with a total population of 2,500, and a sample size of 125. Of the one hundred and twenty-five (125)



questionnaires distributed, 120 were collected and analyzed.

### **Decisions and Interpretation of Results**

To obtain primary data for the study, a structured research questionnaire was developed and administered to 125 respondents in Ezi-Mgbidi autonomous. Data obtained were analyzed using the Standard Mean (SM) tested, to accept or reject relationships. The hypotheses were also tested using Chi-square statistical analysis.

From the statistics of the tabulated response in question 1; on the suitability of the community government policy framework in addressing rural development challenges in Ezi-mgbidi autonomous community in Ezi-mgbidi autonomous community, the mean value from the cumulative mean of weighted scores is 3.4, indicating a significant level acceptance that the community government policy framework and operational structure is suitable for addressing rural sustainability challenges in Ezi-mgbidi autonomous community. The implication is that the overall essence and policy framework of the community government is a step in the right direction and very viable, that is, having great potential for rural transformation if effectively implemented.

From the table below, responses in question 2; regarding the implementation level of the community government system in carrying out stated policy objectives in ezi-mgbidi autonomous community, the mean value from the cumulative mean of weighted scores is 2, indicating a rejection concerning policies implementation efforts of the community government in ezi-mgbidi autonomous community. The implication is that despite the viable policy blueprint of the community government towards rural sustainable development, attempts at implementation in concrete terms has been very unimpressive. The claim is that there is nothing tangible to show for the more than four (4) years existence of the community government.

Furthermore, in the question 3; which concerns the impacts of implemented policies and programmes on the socio-economic wellbeing of the people, the mean value from the cumulative mean of weighted scores is 1.4, indicating a rejection concerning the impact of the policies and programmes of the community government on the people's socio-economic wellbeing. The implication of this is that the people of ezi-mgbidi autonomous community are yet to feel the impact of the community government in their socio-economic life; poverty, lack, illiteracy, zero economic or social infrastructure, and very weak and subsistent agricultural practice which does not provide for food sufficiency remain prominent. This findings strongly corroborate the finding in question 2, to the fact that there is no concrete evidence that the community government policies blue prints are being implemented. Thus no impact is felt.

And on question 4; which deals with the major problems hindering the effective operations of the community government system, the mean value from the cumulative mean of weighted scores is 3.3, indicating a strong acceptance level concerning the perceived challenges hindering the performance of the community government in ezi-mgbidi autonomous community. It is generally agreed from the findings that inadequate budget

provision/funding, low participatory level of host community, as well as civil servants who have refused to relocate to assist in rural areas as demanded by the policy framework. More so, politicization and poor commitment level by the state government in sustaining and enhancing the community government initiative is a significant impediment to the functional effectiveness of the community government system.

**Table 1: Statistical Representation of Responses**

	<b>Question 1:</b> How suitable is the community government policy framework in addressing rural development challenges in Ezi-mgbidi autonomous community?	<b>SA WS</b>	<b>A WS</b>	<b>D WS</b>	<b>SD WS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Resp .</b>	<b>– X</b>	<b>Remark</b>
	<b>Items</b>								
<b>a.</b>	The agricultural programmes of the community government is suitable for addressing the poor state of agriculture	75 300	39 117	4 12	2 2	<b>120</b> <b>431</b>	120	3.5	Accept
<b>b.</b>	The poverty alleviation framework of the community government is suitable in tackling the poverty level	87 348	30 90	2 4	1 2	<b>120</b> <b>444</b>	120	3.7	Accept
<b>c.</b>	The structural arrangement of the community government is suitable for effective implementation of the community government programs.	44 176	36 108	24 48	16 16	<b>120</b> <b>348</b>		2.9	Accept
<b>d.</b>	The operational structure of the community government is suitable in safeguarding accountability and transparency in governance.	92 368	12 36	8 16	8 8	<b>120</b> <b>428</b>		3.5	Accept

	Question 2: What is the implementation level of the community government system in carrying out stated policy objectives?	SA WS	A WS	D WS	SD WS	Total	Resp .	$\bar{X}$	Remark
	Items								
a.	The community government system provides agricultural incentives, improved seedlings etc to enhanced productivities among farmers	17 51	24 96	69 138	10 10	120 295	120	2.4	Reject
b.	Economic empowerment programs are developed to tackle the challenge poverty	5 20	9 27	47 94	59 59	120 200	120	1.6	Reject
c.	The community government system provides security initiatives to ensure the protection of lives and properties	5 20	10 30	86 172	19 19	120 241	120	2,0	Reject
d.	Efforts are geared at providing basic social facilities and rural infrastructural needs	2 8	2 6	8 8	108 216	120 238	120	1.9	Reject

	Question 3: What are the impacts of implemented policies and programmes on the socio-economic wellbeing of the people?	SA WS	A WS	D WS	SD WS	Total	Resp .	$\bar{X}$	Remark
	Items								
a.	The community government have brought about food sufficiency through enhanced agricultural development in ezi-mgbidi autonomous community	2 8	5 15	22 44	91 91	120 158	120	1.3	Reject
b.	Poverty level has drastically dropped through the initiation of economic empowerment programmes	2 8	4 12	18 36	96 96	120 152	120	1.3	Reject
c.	There is greater securities of lives and properties since the commencement of the community government system	7 28	9 27	70 140	34 34	120 229	120	1.9	Reject
d.	There is greater accountability and transparency in governance of the community government system	1 4	2 8	104 208	13 13	120 233	120	1.9	Reject

	Question 4:What are the major problems hindering the effective operations of the community government system?	SA WS	A WS	D WS	SD WS	Total	Resp	$\bar{X}$	Remark
	Items								
a.	Inadequate budget provision/funding is an impediment to the functional effectiveness of the community government system	88 352	20 60	12 24	- -	120 436		3.6	Accept
b.	Low participatory level of community members in identifying their areas of need is a major hindrance	56 224	41 123	12 24	11 11	120 382	120	3.2	Accept
c.	Unwillingness of teachers and other civil servants to play expected roles.g relocation to rural arrears.	50 200	11 33	36 72	23 23	120 328	120	2.7	Accept
d.	Poor commitment level of government in sustaining and enhancing the community government initiative	92 368	22 66	5 10	1 1	120 445	120	3.7	Accept

### Test of Hypotheses

**Table 2:The implementation of agricultural programs of the community government has improved food sufficiency in Ezi-Mgbidi autonomous community.**

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Implementation of agricultural programs of the community government	17 (9.5)	24(14.5)	69(45.5)	10(5.05)	120
The community government have brought about food sufficiency through enhanced agricultural development	2 (9.5)	5 (14.5)	22(45.5)	91(50.5)	120
Total	37	29	91	101	

Calculated  $X^2$  113.3; Table value of chi 7.815; level of significance 05; Degree of freedom 3.

### Key and Decision Rule:

In each column, there are two levels of responses; the one outside the bracket is the Observed Frequencies, while the Expected Frequencies are bracketed. Reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, when the calculated value of Chi-square is greater than the table value of Chi square Decision and interpretation of results.

Since the calculated value of  $X^2$  which is 113.3 is greater than the critical table value of 7.815 at 0.05 confidence level with degree of freedom at 3, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative that the implementation of agricultural programs of the community government has not improved food sufficiency in Ezi-Mgbidi autonomous community.

**Table 3: The implementation of Economic Empowerment programmes of the Community Government has reduced the poverty level in Ezi-Mgbidi Autonomous Community**

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Implementation of economic empowerment programmes of the community government	5 (3.5)	9 (6.5)	47 (32.5)	59 (77.5)	120
Poverty level has drastically dropped through the initiation of economic empowerment programmes	2 (3.5)	4 (6.5)	18(32.5)	96 (77.5)	120
Total	7	13	65	105	

Calculated  $X^2$  24.94; Table value of chi 7.82; level of significance 05; Degree of freedom 3

**Key and Decision Rule:**

In each column, there are two levels of responses; the one outside the bracket is the Observed Frequencies, while the Expected Frequencies are bracketed. Reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, when the calculated value of Chi-square is greater than the table value of Chi square Decision and interpretation of results.

Since the calculated value of  $X^2$  which is 24.94 is greater than the critical table value of 7.82 at 0.05 confidence level with degree of freedom at 3, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative that **the implementation of economic empowerment programmes of the community government has not reduced the poverty level in Ezi-Mgbidi autonomous community.**

**Table 4: The implementation of security initiatives of the community government has improved the security situation in Ezi-mgbidi autonomous community.**

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total
The implementation of security initiatives of the community government system.	5 (6)	10(9.5)	86(78)	19(26.5)	120
There is greater securities of lives and properties through the community government system	7 (6)	9(9.5)	70(78)	34(26.5)	120
Total	12	19	156	53	

Calculated  $X^2$  6.24; Table value of chi 7.82; level of significance 05; Degree of freedom 3.

### **Key and Decision Rule**

In each column, there are two levels of responses; the one outside the bracket is the Observed Frequencies, while the Expected Frequencies are bracketed. Reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, when the calculated value of Chi-square is greater than the table value of Chi square Decision and interpretation of results. Since the calculated value of  $X^2$  which is 6.24 is lesser than the critical table value of 7.82 at 0.05 confidence level with degree of freedom at 3, we therefore accept the null hypothesis that the implementation of security initiatives of the community government has improved the security situation in Ezi-mgbidi autonomous community.

### **Conclusion**

This paper concludes that the community government system is a bold policy effort aimed at causing transformational change in the rural areas of Imo state. It is a policy considered as viable and timely in addressing socio-economic needs of rural communities and bringing government closer to the people through a bottom-up approach. It is a policy with potential of causing drastic changes in the agricultural sector, reducing the level of rural poverty, provision of basic rural amenities and infrastructure, economic empowerment, and mitigating the rate of urban-rural migration. However like every other policy initiative and programme in Nigeria where the idea and blueprint are usually very persuasive on paper, but actual implementation remains scandalous. The community government as the findings revealed faces similar challenge; there exist a very low level of commitment by the government for a policy itself initiated.

Civil servants have complained of the challenges of relocating to rural areas from township, leaving their families behind. It would there appear that the necessary incentive and infrastructure were not considered by government before mandating civil servant on compulsory transfers. There is also the challenge of inclusiveness; the people to whom the policies are directed do not have information on how the affairs of the government is run, and the role they are expected to play especially in communicating their areas of need requiring priority attention, and how they can contribute, this poses a serious challenge to community government system. Very importantly is the issue of funding; the community government only exists on paper as, the policy is barely funded by the government. Just like many other policies and programmes of government in dire need of finance, necessary resources and adequate supervision is clearly lacking in the case of the community government system.

### **Recommendations**

Recommendations on the basis of this study if adopted could be very helpful in re-positioning the community government system in Imo state to a result oriented initiative in address in rural developmental needs of communities in the state. The recommendations are discussed as follows;

1. Finance is the livewire for any plan therefore there is need for a sustainable funding plan and proper consideration of sources of funding to ensure sustainability of the Community government system.

2. There is the need for constant consultation, communication and avenue for active involvement of the people to give them a sense of belonging and ownership of the projects.
3. Necessary infrastructure should be put in place to ensure the comfort of civil servants who are requested to relocate from urban to rural communities to play specific roles in the community government system. In this regards there should be provision of housing to resolve accommodation challenge and other vital incentives.
4. There is need for a concrete legal framework that will ensure the continuity and sustainability of initiative from one administration to another. There is also the need for proper documentation of policies, programmes and accomplishments of progress and shortcomings, so that successive administrations will be able to sustain the projects and build on it.
5. Finally, there is need for a reassessment and re-engineering of the initiative to include strategies and approaches that can facilitate the adoption of best practices in running of the community governments. In this regards there is need for performance management system in the community government as a way of ensuring accountability, transparency and efficiency. There is also the need to draw a strategic framework/ situation analysis of where the initiative is and where it ought to be going. This is because a strategic plan gives vision, mission, goals, targets expected, outputs and outcomes by which performance can be measure. Above all government's sincere commitment and strong political will is needed.

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