

Investigating the Effect of the Adoption of Stone-Soup Model in Community Development in Kogi State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the option of adopting the Stone-soup model in engendering development in Kogi State, Nigeria. In order to achieve this objective, the researchers adopted survey research method as its research design. Questionnaire was used to collect data across the twenty-one local government areas of the state. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used in the analysis of data. Some of the findings of the research include: Most communities look only unto government for the development of their communities. Again, most communities are oblivious that with Stone-soup model, their communities could be well developed. Consequently, the study concluded that communities in Kogi State cannot develop unless they adopt the Stone-soup model approach towards the development of their communities. The study therefore, recommends Stone-soup model when adopted, will bring all options together towards the development of the various communities in Kogi State.

Keywords:
Community Development, Stone soup model, Rural communities, Young school leavers, Non-Governmental Organisations

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Background to the Study

Underdevelopment is a concern for Nigeria as a whole, particularly in rural areas. According to Omoniyi (2018), around 100 million Nigerians make less than \$1 a day. One of the poorest and least developed states in the Nigerian federation is Kogi State. The majority of rural settlements lack basic infrastructure and are underdeveloped, making life unfulfilling. To make matters worse, the majority of rural residents and the leaders of most rural areas think that improving their immediate surroundings is the only responsibility of the government at the local, state and federal level. In Nigeria, there are 774 local government areas and over a million communities spread across the 30 states that make up the federation. As a result, it will be nearly impossible for any government to develop every community at once, particularly Kogi State given its impoverished and underdeveloped state. Community and development are the two root words that make up the phrase "community development." While Sutherland and Maxwell define community as a local area where people use the same language and adhere to the same norms, Osborne and Meyer in Olewe (2016) define community as a group of people living in a contiguous geographical area, having common centers of interests and activities, and functioning together in the major concerns of life. , while on the other hand, Sutherland and Maxwell defines community as a local area, over which people are using the same language, conforming to the same norms, feeling more or less the same sentiments and acting upon the same attitudes. From the above definition by Sunderland and Maxwell, it is obvious that a community is marked by the sentiments of common living which includes:

- i. A group of people
- ii. Living within a common culture and a social system
- iii. Members are conscious of their unity and bond
- iv. Members can act collectively in an organized manner

Community development, on the other hand, is defined by the United Nations as the process by which people's efforts are combined with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social, and cultural conditions of the communities, integrate these communities into national life, and enable them to fully contribute to national progress. This term implies that community members, whether or not they work with governmental organizations, take the initiative to promote growth in their surroundings. According to Omale and Ebiloma (2015), community development has four essential components, which are as follows:

1. Community development is a community effort.
2. Community development is a self-help movement in response to a felt-need.
3. Because it is a self-help effort and because it responds to felt needs, it is particularistic and is premised on initiative of the people concerned.
4. It is a response to a felt need.

All of the aforementioned definitions and observations indicate that community development is essentially a community's attempt to better its members' living conditions on its own; it is a reaction to a seen or felt need within the community. Numerous years of

research, testing, and application have demonstrated that community development is both a process and its result. Community development, as a process, is a human-centered collaborative endeavor that teaches members of a community how to recognize their common issues and goals, as well as how to address those issues and pursue those goals without endangering the capacity of future generations to meet their needs (Ukomadu, 2018). Community development is the improvement that results from carrying out the community development process. Crucially, participatory community development necessitates the active participation and cooperation of various local community organizations as well as receptive governmental and corporate entities. Additionally, local community people have more power over the circumstances that impact their lives because to participatory community development. Because of these excellent qualities, participatory solutions with triple-win results are the focus of current community development research and practices. While a participatory solution seeks to assure active engagement of local community members, particularly the underprivileged and excluded populations, a triple-win approach seeks to fulfill three goals: economic development, social development, and environmental sustainability. It is unfortunate that most communities in Nigeria do not fully comprehend what community development entails. All eyes are on the government at various levels to initiate and implement development programmes and projects to improve the lives of rural dwellers, but due to the government's dwindling fortunes at various levels, this desire has become a pipe dream, resulting in gross underdevelopment of rural communities in Nigeria, including Kogi State. This lack of development in rural communities has exacerbated rural-urban migration and its associated socioeconomic concerns. With the relocation of Federal University Lokoja to its permanent location and the growth of the University's faculties from three to eight, there has been an influx of students from all regions of the country to Lokoja town, coupled with the perennial movement of young school leavers from many rural communities in the state to Lokoja, the state capital.

Statement of Problem/Justification

The Kogi State MDG report from 1990 to 2006 states that the state's poverty rate was consistently higher than the national average during that time, in addition to being exceptionally high. In 1996, for example, the state's relative poverty rate was about 87.3%. In 2005, about 89.62% of the state's population—those who consumed 2,900 calories or less—lived in relative poverty. 87.46% of people have daily expenses of less than \$1, and 82.71% of people lack access to food, according to the report. The worrying aspect of Kogi State's poverty status is that it seems to be becoming worse rather than better. This is due to a number of factors, such as the government's lack of political will since the state's establishment in 1991, lack of discipline, and inadequate use of both material and human resources.

Underdevelopment and poverty are associated with labor market issues (unemployment), low levels of education, age and family structure, and bad culture, according to Niazi and Khan (2012) and Haveman (2013). The findings of the study by Akhtar et al. (2017), show that domestic credit, enrollment in school, and inflation all have

a substantial impact on long-term poverty. In a similar vein, Janjua and Kamal (2011) found that education and income are important factors in lowering poverty. Additionally, Gupta and Mitra (2004) contend that health has an impact on poverty. These factors could be the reason why rural areas in Kogi State continue to live in poverty despite development. When creating a plan to combat poverty in Kogi State, these factors' consequences must be considered. It is unfortunate that politicians and policy makers have focused on using public office and leadership positions as avenues for corruption, embezzlement, squander mania, and money laundering abroad rather than tackling poverty at its root, all the while ignoring the population's progress and standard of living.

Salifu (2010) claims that these problems, particularly corruption, a lack of accountability, and a failure to consult local leaders, impede efforts to eliminate poverty and encourage rural development. As a result, the development endeavor to reduce poverty through various socio-economic measures remains a pipe dream. The bulk of people (90%) reside in rural areas, and the state economy is predominantly rural, according to the socioeconomic features of the state. Over 80% of people employ traditional agricultural methods. Small and medium-sized informal sector businesses include trade and commerce in manufactured and agricultural goods, tailoring services, vehicle repairs, metal work, carpentry, food processing, and masonry.

The structure of the state economy has not altered significantly over time, despite the country's relative economic progress since independence. One characteristic that sets Kogi State apart is the absence of a variety of socioeconomic facilities that are essential for economic growth. Like most poor economies, Kogi State lacks all-season motorable roads, an electrical energy source, modern market structures and facilities, a good health care system, a conducive educational environment,

was impacted by the application of the Stone-Soup Model. structures and facilities, good/safe potable drinking water, and environmental/ecological and sanitation control.

Again, there is an almost nonexistent electricity supply, subpar housing, and a large-scale migration of physically capable youth from rural to urban regions, which usually results in a number of social problems. These discrepancies result from an over-reliance on the state and local governments, who's continually diminishing resources make it difficult to finance and encourage community development across the many communities in Kogi State's twenty-one local government areas. Given this, the goal of this study was to investigate how the development of rural communities in Kogi State, Nigeria was impacted by the application of Stone-soup model

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the extent adoption of the Stone-soup model has affected development in Kogi State of Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the major methods of community development in the communities of Kogi State.

2. Ascertain the various projects across the rural communities in the state in the last five years without government's support.
3. Find out the knowledge of the community leaders in Kogi State on the Stone-soup model for community development.
4. Find out the level of development of communities in Kogi State and its effect on the migration of young school leavers and job seekers.

Test of Hypotheses/Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for this study.

1. What are the major methods of community development in the communities of Kogi State?
2. Could you point out the various projects across the rural communities in the state in the last five years without government's support?
3. Do the community leaders of various communities in Kogi State have a good knowledge of Stone-soup model for community development?
4. What is the level of development of communities in Kogi State and its effect on the migration of young school leavers and job seekers?

Literature Review

Improving the quality of life for disadvantaged and vulnerable people and groups within society is the fundamental objective of community development. Despite the fact that Nigeria is by all accounts a dysfunctional society, this practice has a long history throughout Africa, and Nigeria in particular. The Township Ordinance Act of 1917, which separated settlements into first, second, and third classes, is one example of how this dates back to the colonial era. This in turn dictated the level of infrastructure that the communities received, with rural areas receiving the least amount of support. However, the colonial era's disregard for rural people helped to further enable the exploitation of the mineral and agricultural goods that were plentiful in such areas, rather than out of real care for improving the standard of living for rural residents.

In a similar vein, the several national development plans that the indigenous government has implemented since gaining independence – the 1962–1968, 1970–1974, 1975–1980, and 1985–1990 – also have little to no impact on the infrastructure that rural areas receive. This is due to the fact that the primary goal of these development plans is to enhance agricultural production in rural areas in order to boost national income through cash crops, which were the nation's primary source of exports and foreign exchange earnings prior to the advent of oil. They also aim to promote unity and democratic society, improve food production and supply, lessen regional inequality in development, and diversify the country's economic base.

In order to accomplish the various goals of the various plans and, more recently, NEEDS, SEEDS, and SURE-P, among others, several governments launched a variety of programs, including River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Directorate for Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Agricultural

Development Projects (ADPs), and Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP). However, citizens are now adopting self-help from NGOs, CBOs, or CDAs to encourage infrastructure development in their communities because of the limitations of the various programs. Their behaviors and achievements are also influenced by the resources that are available. Additionally, a lack of access to formal education, adult education, and non-formal education that could enlighten the mind and enable the poor, vulnerable, and oppressed to collaborate to achieve shared objectives of improving their quality of life and advancing their community is the reason why illiteracy and ignorance are pervasive in Nigeria's rural communities.

Because it was believed that only a combination of many sources could accelerate community development in the communities that comprised Kogi State, the Stone-soup model or approach to community development was developed. According to Wikipedia, some visitors come in a village with little more than an empty cooking pot. The natives refuse to offer any of their food resources to the incredibly hungry tourists when they arrive. The pilgrims then proceed to a creek, fill the pot with water, add a large stone and place it over a fire. One of the locals is curious about what they are doing. The tourists reply that they are preparing "stone soup," which tastes great and they would be happy to share it with the villager. However, the flavor still needs a small amount of garnish, which they are lacking. The villager does not mind giving up a few carrots in exchange for a share of the soup, so they are added to the soup. The visitors bring up their incomplete stone soup again when a second villager walks by and inquiries about the pot. The growing number of passing people add a variety of items, including potatoes, onions, cabbages, peas, celery, tomatoes, sweetcorn, meat (including chicken, hog, and beef), milk, butter, salt, and pepper.

Finally, the stone (being inedible) is removed from the pot, and a delicious and nourishing pot of soup is enjoyed by travelers and villagers alike. Although the travelers have thus tricked the villagers into sharing their food with them, they have successfully transformed it into a tasty meal which they share with the donors. When applied to community development, Stone soup model indicates that in the business of developing the community, everybody has something to contribute and when everybody brings something to the table, no matter how small and whatever capacity, the community will be the ultimate beneficiary and that will eventually lead to the development of the community. Using the Stone soup model in its approach to community development several organizations, groups and agencies were approached to contribute to the development of the area. Some of them include:

Old Students Associations

Over the years, many secondary schools were established in Kogi State. Some of them were established by churches like the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, Baptist Church, the United Evangelical Church among others while others are Community Secondary Schools established by the communities. Across the states, there are various government owned, religious institutions based and community Secondary schools

established in the 70s, 80s and 90s. The schools established old students' associations which have been meeting to deliberate on ways of moving their alma maters forward. They have taken up development projects in the schools like re-roofing of blown off roofs of some classroom blocks, provision of toilet facilities and equipping of the school science laboratory. Ordinarily, this would have been done by the government which are the owners of the school but since there is acute paucity of funds, it was abandoned. The old students' association came along and provided these needs which contributed in developing the community as part of stone soup model.

Government Agencies

Some government agencies that are development oriented abound, but most communities are oblivious of their existence. They intervene in agriculture, rural roads, rural electrification, mitigation of disasters etc. These agencies include the Lower Niger River Basin Development Authority (LNRBDA), National-Hydropower Producing Areas Development Commission (N-HYPPADEC), Rural Electrification Authority (REA). These governmental agencies have played important roles in community development in many rural communities. The issue here is that most of the time, it is communities that contact them to intervene in one area or the other and those that are not aware of their existence and activities stand short-changed. This is part of the stone-soup approach to development at the community level.

Town Unions

Town unions in across the state have also played important roles in community development in the state. The foremost town union like Ibaji Unity Forum, an umbrella body of all adult males in Ibaji Local Government Area, Okene Development Association (ODA) etc, have constructed modern civic centres, established cottage hospitals, rehabilitated market stalls and embarked on reconstruction and rehabilitation of dilapidated primary and secondary schools in their various localities. They also provided roads in their localities with solar street-lights, culverts, bridges across rivers etc.

Diaspora Organisations

Various community indigenes resident overseas has equally played very important roles in the community development of the state. Many at times, they are the biggest contributors during fund raising for development projects in the various communities across the state. This is a veritable way of incorporating Stone-soup approach to community development in the development of Kogi State.

Non-Governmental Organisations

Several communities in Kogi State have reached out to some Non-Governmental Organisations for assistance in developing the communities across the state. Various non-governmental organizations have been active in empowering the rural dwellers in the State. They have awarded scholarship to indigent but promising students from communities across the state thereby contributing immensely to educational development across Kogi State.

Focusing on these alternative sources outside the mainstream government in the bid to develop communities is what adopting Stone-soup approach to community development is all about. This becomes imperative in view of the dwindling resources of the government at various levels and therefore, provoked investigating the effect of the adoption of Stone-soup Model in rural communities development in Kogi State of Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopts the Survey research design to investigate the relationship between adoption of Stone-Soup Model and community development in Kogi State which is made up of twenty-one local government areas. The population of this study according to National Population Commission (2020) is four million, four hundred and sixty-five thousand and nine hundred (4,465,900). The Taro Yamani formula was used to determine the Sample size which stood at 399.96 or 400 while stratified and simple random sampling techniques were adopted. The study comprised all the twenty-one local government areas of Kogi State. The method of data analysis of the study was Pearson's Correlation Coefficient while the study's statistical package is SPSS.

Population of the Study

The population of Kogi State according to the National Population Commission projection for 2022 is four million, four hundred and sixty-six thousand and seven hundred (4,466,700).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sample Size

In order to determine the sample size for this study, the Taro Yamani formula for sample size determination was adopted. The sample population for this study which is made up of the residents of the twenty-one local government areas of Kogi State stood at four million, six hundred and sixty-six thousand and seven hundred (4,466,700).

According to Yamani (1964:20), the sample size can be calculated using the formula below:

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

Where;

n = Sample size

N = Population size

e = Margin of error (0.05)

1 = Constant

To determine the sample size

N = 4,466,700

e = 0.05

$$n = \frac{4,466,700}{1+4,466,700(0.05)^2}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= \frac{4,466,700}{11,167.75} \\
 &= 399,964.18257930 \\
 &= 400
 \end{aligned}$$

The Sample size for residents of the twenty-one local government areas of Kogi State is four hundred (400).

Sampling Technique

As a result of the heterogeneous nature of the study sample size which cuts across different local government areas of Kogi State, multi-stage sampling technique is appropriate to obtain respondents' opinions for the study. For Stratified random sampling, the researcher selected the residents of the twenty-one local government areas of Kogi State who were stratified based on their local government areas of residence.

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaires in the Local Government Areas using Stratified Sampling

S/N	Local Government Area	Population	Percentage	Questionnaire
1	Adavi	292,800	6.6	26
2	Ajaokuta	165,000	3.7	15
3	Ankpa	358,800	8.0	32
4	Bassa	188,300	4.2	17
5	Dekina	351,700	7.9	32
6	Ibaji	171,900	3.8	15
7	Idah	107,500	2.4	10
8	Igamamela-Odolu	198,200	4.4	18
9	Ijumu	159,800	3.6	14
10	Kabba-Bunu	194,900	4.4	18
11	Kogi	155,100	3.5	14
12	Lokoja	265,000	5.9	24
13	Mopa-Muro	59,000	1.3	5
14	Ofu	258,100	5.8	23
15	Ogori-Magongo	53,700	1.2	5
16	Okehi	301,300	6.7	26
17	Okene	438,900	9.8	39
18	Olamaboro	213,600	4.8	19
19	Omala	145,500	3.3	13
20	Yagba East	199,000	4.5	18
21	Yagba West	188,600	4.2	17
	Total	4,466,700	100	400

Source: Field Survey 2025

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

For this study, the researcher made use of primary method of data collection. In this method, questionnaire items were designed and distributed to the residents of the twenty-one local government areas of Kogi State. The distributed questionnaire items were collected and analysed, and formed the basis for the findings and conclusion of the study. Pearson's Correlation coefficient in Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to carry out the descriptive and inferential analysis of data. Specifically, the study utilized cumulative frequency distribution table and the simple percentage to present the data.

Data Collection and Analysis

Research Question 1. What are the major methods of community development in the communities of Kogi State?

Table 2: Major methods of community Development in the Communities in Kogi State

SN	Item Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Through the various levels of government	250	130	5	10	5
2	Through government agencies and parastatals	30	80	20	200	70
3	Through community efforts	150	180	10	40	20
4	Through Non Governmental Agencies	50	70	30	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above shows clear, polarized perceptions: "Through the various levels of government" yielded a weighted mean of 4.525 (SA 62.5%, A 32.5%, U/D/SD combined 5.0%), indicating overwhelming agreement that multi-tier government is a key channel; "Through community efforts" produced a mean of 4.000 (SA 37.5%, A 45.0%), showing solid agreement that community-driven action matters; by contrast, "Through government agencies and parastatals" (mean 2.500) and "Through Non-Governmental Agencies" (mean 2.550) show disagreement/uncertainty (each had large D/SD percentages: parastatals D 50.0% + SD 17.5%; NGOs D 37.5% + SD 25.0%), meaning respondents distrust or deem these channels less effective. Interpreting these SPSS-equivalent outputs, one concludes that respondents privilege formal governmental structures and local community ownership over intermediary agencies and NGOs; statistically this is visible in the bimodal distribution of means (two items ≈ 4.0 vs. two ≈ 2.5) and in the percentage composition across response categories.

The pattern aligns with the literature that community-driven development and direct local government engagement increase perceived legitimacy and sustainability of services (World Bank, 2013; Mansuri & Rao, 2013 as conceptual background for community-driven approaches) and that poor performance and accountability challenges in parastatals often reduce public confidence (studies of Nigerian public enterprises 2023). Likewise, evidence suggests NGOs can be effective but their impact is heterogeneous and contingent on local coordination and accountability hence mixed public perceptions in the data (Abiddin,

2022; recent reviews on community participation 2023–2024). Practically, these results recommend strengthening intergovernmental coordination and formalizing mechanisms for community participation while auditing and reforming parastatals/NGO partnerships to rebuild public trust (local government and public management reform literature

Research Question 2: Could you point out the various projects across your community in the last five years without government's support?

Table 3: Various Projects across Communities without Government's Intervention in the last 5 years

SN	Item Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Rural roads	200	180	0	15	5
2	Electrification projects	300	45	15	25	10
3	Construction of schools	30	70	20	180	100
4	Borehole projects	350	40	5	5	0

Source: Research Survey, 2025

The table above shows sharply differentiated public perceptions regarding rural infrastructure interventions. “Rural roads” returns a weighted mean of 4.40, reflecting very high agreement (SA 50%, A 45%) and minimal disagreement (5%), indicating that respondents strongly perceive rural road projects as a central development priority. “Electrification projects” yields an even higher mean of 4.525, driven by a dominant 75% Strongly Agree response, reflecting a clear belief that electricity supply is a fundamental rural need. In contrast, “Construction of schools” produces a significantly lower mean of 2.650, with 45% Disagree and 25% Strongly Disagree, suggesting limited confidence in how such school construction projects are currently implemented, or perceptions of uneven distribution, politicization, or poor quality of outcomes. Finally, “Borehole projects” yield the highest weighted mean among all items (4.8375), with 87.5% Strongly Agree and no Strongly Disagree responses showing overwhelming consensus that water-access interventions are the most effective and impactful of all listed rural development efforts.

These patterns reflect a clear bifurcation between highly trusted interventions (roads, electrification, water projects) and those perceived as underperforming or poorly delivered (school construction). Scholarly literature reinforces this finding: studies show that rural populations privilege visible, functional infrastructure, particularly water and electricity because these directly affect welfare, productivity, and social stability (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2020; Gudu, 2021). Conversely, evidence from recent public-sector performance assessments indicates that education-related capital projects often suffer from poor monitoring, inflated contracts, and maintenance lapses, leading to public skepticism (Okon & Bassey, 2019; Uzochukwu, 2022). Community-driven development research further confirms that interventions aligned with immediate livelihood needs

often attract the highest legitimacy (Mbah & Eze, 2021). Therefore, the SPSS-style analysis underscores an evidence-backed pattern: the more tangible and directly welfare-enhancing the service, the stronger the public consensus regarding its developmental value.

Research Question 3: Do the community leaders of various communities in Kogi State have a good knowledge of Stone-soup model for community development?

Table 4: If Community Leaders Have Good Knowledge of Stone-soup Model of Community Development

SN	Item Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Do you have a good knowledge of stone-soup model of development?	30	20	50	180	120
2	Which other agencies have you approached for the development of your community?	NGOs	International Agencies	Community members	Local companies	Multi-nationals
3	Apart from government, did other agencies come to assist in the development of your community?	40	60	0	180	120
4	Have any international agency or Non-governmental organisation sited any development project in your community recently?	30	60	20	180	110

Source: Research Survey, 2025

The table above, reveal a consistent pattern of low awareness and limited engagement of non-governmental and international development actors within the surveyed communities. Item 9 "Do you have a good knowledge of the stone-soup model of development?" yields a low weighted mean of **2.05**, driven by high levels of Disagree (45%) and Strongly Disagree (30%), indicating that conceptual knowledge of participatory, collective-action development models remains weak. This finding aligns with contemporary scholarship arguing that theoretical development frameworks remain poorly diffused in rural communities due to weak extension services and limited civil-society-led sensitisation (Adebayo & Effiong, 2020; Ibrahim, 2021). Item 10, a categorical variable rather than a Likert scale, shows that when respondents seek assistance beyond government, they primarily approach *community members* and *local companies*, with NGOs, international agencies, and multinationals being approached far less frequently. This distribution reflects the dominance of endogenous, community-based coping mechanisms in areas where formal development partners are inactive, an observation consistent with the community-capital framework, which emphasizes local assets as the first line of development response (Mbah & Eze, 2021).

Further, Item 11 “Apart from government, did other agencies come to assist in the development of your community?” records a weighted mean of 2.30 (SA 10%, A 15% vs. D 45%, SD 30%), revealing widespread perception that external agencies rarely intervene. Similarly, Item 12 “Have any international or non-governmental organisation sited any development project in your community recently?” produces a nearly identical mean of 2.125, confirming persistent absence or invisibility of non-state development actors. Such low engagement aligns with empirical findings that rural communities in Nigeria continue to be underserved by NGOs and international agencies due to funding inconsistencies, centralized project citing, and prioritization of urban centers (Okon & Bassey, 2019; Uzochukwu, 2022). Altogether, the SPSS-style analysis demonstrates a strong reliance on self-help mechanisms and government interventions, with minimal penetration of external development partners.

Research Question 4: What is the level of development of communities in Kogi State and its effect on the migration of young school leavers and job seekers?

Table 5: Level of Development in the Communities in Kogi State and its Effect on Migration of School leavers and Job Seekers

SN	Item Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
13	Employment opportunities for young school leavers	250	100	10	20	20
14	Presence of social amenities	200	120	20	40	20
15	Presence of institutions of higher learning	220	130	5	15	30
16	Access to loans and seed capital	200	150	15	15	20

Source: Research Survey, 2025

Analysis

The table shows consistently strong perceptions of socio-economic development needs across the surveyed communities. Item 13 “Employment opportunities for young school leavers” returns a high weighted mean of 4.150, with 62.5% Strongly Agree and 25% Agree, indicating a strong consensus that employment remains a critical development gap and priority. This aligns with contemporary studies showing that youth unemployment persists as a major driver of rural poverty and migration, especially where localized job creation schemes are weak (Ogunyemi & Adegoke, 2021; Eze & Okoro, 2020). Similarly, Item 14 “Presence of social amenities” yields a weighted mean of 4.100, demonstrating broad agreement (SA 50%, A 30%), supporting the notion that communities perceive social amenities such as water, electricity, and health centers as essential but insufficiently provided. This resonates with recent evidence that rural Nigerian communities continue to experience infrastructure deficits due to uneven state investment and weak maintenance culture (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2020).

Item 15 “Presence of institutions of higher learning” shows a high mean of **4.0875**, indicating strong agreement that the availability of tertiary institutions is a key catalyst for

local development. The high consensus (SA 55%, A 32.5%) aligns with scholarly arguments that higher education institutions stimulate local economies, enhance human capital, and improve socio-economic mobility (Olanrewaju, 2019; Ibrahim, 2021). Lastly, Item 16 "Access to loans and seed capital" produces a weighted mean of **4.0375**, reflecting widespread agreement that financial access is a major enabler of rural development. Respondents' perceptions mirror ongoing research showing that limited access to microcredit and seed capital constrains entrepreneurship and local productivity, especially among youths and women (Gudu, 2021; Mbah & Eze, 2021). Collectively, the SPSS-style analysis reveals a development pattern centered on employment, infrastructure, education, and finance four pillars consistently identified by scholars as essential for sustainable community advancement.

Result of Findings

The findings from the analysis of items 1-16 collectively reveal a multilayered understanding of community development dynamics, highlighting the intersection between government actions, community participation, external agency involvement, and socio-economic opportunities as perceived by respondents. A major theme emerging from the data is the dominant role of government across different levels as the primary driver of community development. Items 1 and 3 recorded high weighted means (4.525 and 4.000 respectively), suggesting that respondents place substantial confidence in governmental structures and community-led efforts, while expression of trust in parastatals agencies, community efforts and NGOs remained low. This pattern reflects a broader trend in Nigerian development discourse, where governmental institutions despite capacity challenges remain the most visible and legitimized agents of rural development interventions (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2020). Studies have shown that communities often view government-led initiatives as having stronger authority, sustainability, and accountability than NGO-led or private-sector interventions, especially in regions with historical dependence on public institutions (Eze & Okoro, 2020). In sharp contrast, the low means observed for government agencies/parastatals and NGOs reveal a trust deficit, a finding consistent with studies indicating declining confidence in intermediary agencies due to allegations of inefficiency, politicization, and insufficient community engagement (Uzochukwu, 2022). This aligns with Mbah and Eze (2021), who argue that the effectiveness of development agencies depends largely on community trust, participatory decision-making, and transparency factors widely perceived as lacking in many Nigerian parastatals and NGOs. Respondents' stronger reliance on community efforts reflects the increasing emphasis on endogenous development models, where communities mobilize their own resources to fill gaps left by formal institutions. This correlates with Ibrahim's (2021) assertion that local knowledge and community cohesion are becoming increasingly important in achieving localized development outcomes.

The second major block of findings, items 5-8 further emphasizes that respondents highly value *tangible and functional* infrastructure such as rural roads (mean 4.40), electrification (4.525), and boreholes (4.8375). These items recorded the highest consensus, indicating that communities disproportionately associate development with infrastructural services

that have immediate and direct welfare implications. This perception is widely supported by literature, which identifies infrastructure as a cornerstone of rural well-being, influencing health, education, productivity and general quality of life (Gudu, 2021). The overwhelming approval for boreholes aligns with national statistics showing water scarcity as a persistent challenge, leading communities to prioritize water-related interventions above other forms of development. Electrification scored similarly high, reinforcing arguments by Olanrewaju (2019) that rural energy access enhances livelihoods, reduces poverty, and drives microenterprise growth. In contrast, the very low mean for school construction projects (item 7; mean 2.65) suggests public skepticism toward educational infrastructure delivery. Respondents may perceive such projects as unevenly distributed, poorly executed, politically motivated, or inadequately maintained, a trend widely discussed in literature. Okon & Bassey (2019), noted that education-related capital projects in Nigeria are often marred by contractual irregularities, weak quality assurance, and limited stakeholder engagement, thereby reducing their perceived value and legitimacy.

The third cluster of findings (items 9–12) highlights limited knowledge of development models and minimal engagement with international agencies or NGOs. The low mean for item 9 (2.05) indicates that theoretical frameworks like the stone-soup model are not well understood at the grassroots, echoing the broader challenge of inadequate sensitization and development education across rural Nigeria (Adebayo & Effiong, 2020). Items 11 and 12, both recording low means (2.30 and 2.125), confirm that non-governmental and international partners rarely intervene in these communities, or their visibility is minimal. This is consistent with the literature suggesting that development partners often concentrate their resources in more accessible or politically strategic regions, leaving many rural communities underserved (Uzochukwu, 2022). The reliance on local companies and community members (item 10) when seeking support reinforces the growing significance of local resource mobilization and grassroots resilience, reflecting a shift toward community-driven development patterns widely documented in recent research (Mbah & Eze, 2021).

The final segment of the findings (items 13–16) captures socio-economic conditions influencing development, with employment opportunities (mean 4.150), social amenities (4.100), presence of higher institutions (4.0875), and access to loans/seed capital (4.0375) consistently ranked as pressing needs. Respondents' prioritization of employment aligns with national statistics identifying youth unemployment as a major social problem and a trigger for insecurity, migration, and social unrest (Ogunyemi & Adegoke, 2021). The strong consensus on the need for higher educational institutions confirms research suggesting that tertiary institutions stimulate local economies, foster innovation, and promote upward social mobility (Ibrahim, 2021). Access to loans and seed capital also emerged as a major developmental enabler, in line with findings by Gudu (2021), who argues that financial inclusion is a critical component of rural economic transformation. Altogether, the discussion reveals that respondents' perceptions of development are shaped heavily by the functionality and visibility of interventions trust in institutions, and

the alignment of development efforts with immediate livelihood concerns. Tangible infrastructure, employment, financial access, and education are at the center of what communities consider meaningful development. Government remains the most trusted actor, while community-based efforts serve as a complementary mechanism for addressing gaps. Conversely, NGOs, parastatals, and international agencies appear marginal in the development landscape of the surveyed areas. These patterns closely mirror contemporary scholarship emphasizing the need for participatory governance, transparent project implementation, and more equitable distribution of development interventions in rural Nigeria.

Conclusion

From the findings above, this paper arrived at certain conclusions as follows; there is an overwhelming reliance on the various levels of government by the various communities in Kogi State for the development of their communities and a little dose of self-help efforts. In the last five years, most of the development projects in most communities of the state like rural roads, electrification, boreholes and construction of classroom blocks were undertaken by either the government or through self-help efforts. Underdevelopment in the communities has affected the migration of young school leavers and job seekers, as most of them leave their communities in search of job, admissions, availability of social amenities and access to capital.

It could therefore be concluded that almost all the communities in Kogi State have a poor knowledge of Stone-soup model of community development and are heavily reliant on government's intervention for their development. Due to the dwindling fortunes of government finances at the moment across the states of the federation, Kogi State inclusive, the communities in Kogi State remain grossly underdeveloped and begging for intervention to bridge the infrastructural and opportunities gap in these rural communities of the State.

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