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## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: A PRAGMATIC SOLUTION TO NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON HOUSEHOLDS' SOCIOECONOMIC LIVES

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**Abstract.** The worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 and its impacts have become an academic concern. The concern has generated a plethora of studies and reports that have identified a number of negative impacts of COVID-19 on household socioeconomic lives in Nigeria. Therefore, Nigerian governments at different levels in conjunction with several international organisations have tried to deal with these impacts; however, the expected result is far below the reality. Advocacy of adopting bottom-top approaches to solving various community problems and the grand relevance of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), as a form of community participation, prompted this study. The specific objective of the study was to investigate the roles of CBOs in complementing the governments' efforts to alleviate the negative impacts on household socioeconomic lives. The location of the study was Ife-East Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria where there existed a number of various CBOs as in other part of the country. The study was cross-sectional and exploratory in nature while a qualitative method, in-depth face-to-face interview, was employed to collect the primary data for this study. The study covered all the 10 electoral wards that exist in the study location. Via purposive sampling method, 5 CBOs were selected in each of the 10 wards, making a total size of 50 CBOs. To obtain the primary data, 2 CBO leaders (a man and a woman) and 4 CBO members (2 men and 2 women) among the 5 selected CBOs in each of the wards were purposively selected, making a total sample size of 60 from all the electoral wards for the in-depths face-to-face interview. Both thematic and contents analyses were utilized to analyze the collected data. The study found that the CBOs rendered economic support in forms of pooling resources together for fund provision, purchasing goods in large quantities at lower prices, creating platforms to attract loans, assistance and to invite experts for empowerment programmes for their members. The study further found that the CBO members benefited social support in form of provision of platforms to share their experiences, to boost members' morale to avert psychological challenges that tended to generate committing suicide and to invite medical experts on sensitization programmes about COVID-19 and its effects. As this study solely focused on ways that several aspects of households' socioeconomic lives were shielded from the negative impacts of the pandemic through community participation via various CBOs, this study solicited future studies that shall focus mainly on the challenges that the CBOs encounter in realizing this goal and the means of coping with the highlighted challenges.

**Keywords** community participation; community-based organisations; negative impacts of COVID-19; socioeconomic lives

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**JEL Classifications:** R23

**Additional disciplines:** community participation, sociology, psychology

## **1. Introduction**

The worldwide outbreak of Corona virus, also known as COVID-19, and the danger the virus poses to humanity has swayed various international organisations via their agencies, government at different levels and varieties of non-governmental organizations into various actions to curtail the spread of the deadly virus and the menace the virus possesses. For instance, the danger and the rate at which the virus spreads throughout the world within a short period of time between 2019 and 2020 have prompted the World Health Organization (2020) to declare that the virus is pandemic. Moreover, the World Bank, as the financial institution of the United Nations, has earmarked a large sum of money to finance research to discover ways and medications to curtail the menace of the disease and the negative economic impact of the virus (UNDP, 2020; Yuri, 2020). In the same vein, the concern about the healthy condition of Nigerians has prompted the government of the country to take a range of actions to contain the spread of the disease, this include the declarations of border closure to prevent movement of people in and out of the country, total lockdown to restrict movement of people in the country and introduction of different phases of the lockdown removal (Adegboye, Adekunle and Gayawan, 2020; Adnan, 2020; Umerie and Nnamok, 2020). All these series of actions were adopted in most of the countries that the disease ravages.

These actions, as a means of containing the spread of the virus, constituted a hindrance to normal daily activities of people around the globe. Within few months, the pandemic that started a health issue metamorphosed into socio-economic challenges, hence, both foreign and indigenous studies have indicated an academic concern on the negative effects of these activities on livelihood of people in the world (Mofijur, Fattah, Alam, Islam, Ong, Rahman, Najafi, Ahmed, Uddin, Mahlia, 2021; Jacob, Abigeal, Lydia, 2020; Inegbedion, 2021; Leslie, Fadaak, Davies, Davies, Blaak, Forest, Green and Conly, 2020; Singh and Singh, 2020; Umerie and Nnamok, 2020). The concern has generated a plethora of studies that have identified several negative socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 among households in Nigeria as in the other countries as well (Ajibo, 2020; Akanni and Gabriel, 2020; Ashraf, 2020; Kazeem, 2020; Nicola, 2020; Olu and Irabor, 2020; Orhero and Oghuvbu, 2020).

Moreover, Nigerian governments at different levels have tried to deal with these impacts by provision and distribution of food stuff as well as rendering financial assistance to people in Nigeria as a way to support their purchasing power as short-term palliatives during the lockdown. However, the expected result is far below the reality. In complementing the efforts of Nigerian government to promote development at the grassroots level and to solve varieties of community problems, a plethora of studies have advocated adopting bottom-top approaches and this advocacy further emphasizes the grand relevance of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) as a platform for community participation (Ajani and Fakunle, 2021; Blandon and Jaramillo, 2020; Brunton, James, Alison, Farah, Sandy, Josephine, 2017; Okinono, Salleh and Badariah, 2015). Therefore, from the vantage point of health, illness and behavioural studies as well as change and development, this current study set out with the sole and specific objective of investigating the roles of CBOs, as a platform for community participation, in complementing government's efforts to manage or alleviate the negative impacts of COVID-19 on household socioeconomic lives.

### *1.1 Research aim*

The sole aim of the study was to explore the roles of CBOs in alleviating the negative impacts of COVID-19 on household socioeconomic lives of the members of these CBOs

### *1.2 Research question*

What were the roles of CBOs in supporting members on alleviation of negative impacts of COVID-19 on household socioeconomic lives?

## 2. Review of Relevant Literature

In physical sciences, extensive empirical studies have been carried out on the adverse effect of corona virus in the body of the infected persons. Also, at the global level, the World Health Organisation (2020) has embarked on sensitization programmes and published a series of articles on the spread, effects, containment of corona virus, while at the national level, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) as the government agency in the country has continued to enlighten the general public on the state of the disease, the precautionary measures to take to avoid being infected and ways to manage the disease being contacted (Kazeem, 2020; Umerie and Nnamok, 2020). Moreover, this agency has continued to publish the number of the infected people in the country according to the States of residents of the infected.

An astronomical increase in the number of the infected people in Nigeria published by NCDC swayed Nigeria government into imposition of movement restriction into and within the country as well as a ban on all kinds of social activities that involves the gathering of people. As these activities constituted a means of taking precautions to curtail the spread of the virus, on the other hand, they also denotes the origin of additional socio-economic challenges for the households in the country as this is also the situation in some other countries (Akanni and Gabriel, 2020; Nicola, 2020; Singh and Singh, 2020). Studies have asserted that the global outbreak of COVID-19 and different measures which government has taken to curb the widespread of the disease have generated both positive and negative impacts while reports further established that the negative impact of the disease manifested mainly in social and economic lives among the households in Nigeria (Ajibo, 2020; Olu and Irabor, 2020; Orhero and Oghuvbu, 2020). For instance, according to Adnan (2020) and Jacob, *et al.* (2020), curtailing the spread of corona virus across the countries threatened a lager proportion of social life of the masses as there was postponement or total cancellation of social engagements, festivals and ceremonies, while recreation centres, both privately and publicly owned institutions of learning, super markets and religion places or worship centres were closed.

Moreover, the economic implication of the cancellation and closure tended to manifest in reduction in household income level of the people whose sources of income were in these centres. However, the introduction of social/physical distancing and quarantine, as among the measures to contain the spread of the virus, has prompted people to devise means of working from home as a way to survive the lockdown. Hence, this suggestion assumed that people still maintained their sources of income during the lockdown. Contrary to this suggestion, a number of indigenous studies in Nigeria have found that the lockdown has adversely affected the sources of income of the larger proportion of the masses and this further has negative implications on the livelihood of the households in the country (Inegbedion, 2021; Akanni and Gabriel, 2020). Also, reports have indicated that the pandemic generated disruptions in economic sectors, in particular informal job market, as a larger proportion of people that are self-employed and solely rely on daily source of income become totally unemployed (Olu and Irabor, 2020; UNDP, 2020). Studies have further highlighted depression, anxiety about survival, loneliness, as several negative impacts of the lockdown in the life people as social beings (Umerie and Nnamok, 2020; Stickley and Koyanagi, 2016; WHO, 2020)

In addition, Singh and Singh (2020) indicated that the propensity for the survival of human beings, as social animals, in a long-time lockdown is in doubt; hence, ensuring the survival necessitates devising means of supporting households in the lockdown. Moreover, UNDP (2020) asserted that the lockdown generated a significant reduction the number of new investors while many people that were employed in various private economic sectors were faced with “no work, no salary” in the country and this added to the complexities involved in surviving the lockdown and beyond. Also, reports on monitoring the social impacts of the pandemic have established that the impacts, felt by the people, are in various degrees depending on different social classes that people belong to (WHO, 2020). In other words, various classes of people are invariably vulnerable to the impact

of the disease in different degrees. For instance, UNDP (2020) reported that minority ethnic groups and people that are physically challenged belong to the social classes are more negatively affected by the disease.

In addition to global incidents of untimely death of people, the pandemic has exposed a number of people to abject poverty in particular in sub-Saharan Africa that has been ravaged by poor standard of living coupled with high cost of living (Akanni and Gabriel, 2020; Ashraf, B. N. 2020). Reports have further indicated that a large number of small-medium enterprise and privately owned organisations are faced with the threat of extinction as another result of the pandemic (Akanni and Gabriel, 2020; UNDP, 2020; Adeniran and Sidiq, 2018). These reports further added that larger percentage of these private enterprise and millions of cottage industries are not indemnified at all, let alone against the incidents of natural disaster such as the pandemic. In Nigeria context, Orhero and Oghuvbu (2020) added that the households of the people living below the poverty line are the most vulnerable group that the pandemic affects. In the same vein, as one of the indirect resultant calamities of corona virus, reports indicated a downturn in the business and investment of a number of people, while bouncing back to might take a long period of time with a rare chance without making provision for intervention programmes for them (Olu and Irabor, 2020).

As a result of this, Nigerian government, in line with the recommendation of the UNDP (2020), reduced tax rate, in particular, on goods that are essential for the survival of the masses during the pandemic while the salary of public workers was duly paid, food stuff as a palliative was distributed and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) announced a large amount of money earmarked to empower the economy of the country to withstand the pandemic. Moreover, governments in Nigeria, via the CBN announced setting up a special fund as the package for the households and small-medium enterprises to alleviate the negative socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. Also, the thinking faculty and behaviour of people during the pandemic and in the post pandemic period are among the major concerns of the social scientists. Even before the pandemic, there have been reports that express concerns for an increase in the incidence of suicide as one of the results of the measures taken to curtail the ubiquitous spread of the disease in the world (Akanni and Gabriel, 2020; UNDP, 2020; Adeniran and Sidiq, 2018; Gunnell and Chang, 2016; Stickley and Koyanagi, 2016). These reports further cited maintaining social distancing, restriction in movement of people, self-isolation, frequent hand-washing and mouth covering as the activities that tend to encourage suicide, in particular among people that find or consider these acts inconvenient.

Literature has however indicated that the expected outcome of all these efforts of government to alleviate the unwanted effects of the pandemic, in particular, on the households among the masses has not been realized (Inegbedion, 2021; Umerie and Nnamok, 2020; UNDP, 2020). The discrepancy between the expectation and the reality further strengthens the idea of applying bottom-top approach in alleviating the negative effects of the pandemic in the country. Studies have emphasized the significance of the CBOs in enhancing development and realizing the betterment of people's livelihood in their communities (Ajani and Fakunle, 2021; Abegunde, 2017). These studies further asserted that realizing the purpose of government's efforts at the grassroots largely is deeply rooted in the cooperation and involvement of the community. Ajani and Fakunle (2021) noted that the relevance of the CBOs in communities in Nigeria has been felt by their members and other people concerned from the pre-colonial period where socio-economic lives was contingent upon the support of their CBOs.

Also, Abegunde (2017) added that the CBOs provide the platforms for people to get social and economic support and to extend their potentials via self-help projects. The summary of the roles of the CBOs, according to the previous studies, manifests in the different kinds of support they render to their members and the whole community as well as the influence they have on the policies that the government formulates. These roles suggest that the relevance of the CBOs in both the pandemic and the post pandemic is imperative, in particular among the masses. A plethora of indigenous studies have highlighted the negative impacts of COVID-19 on household socioeconomic lives in Nigeria while other studies and reports have focused on government and international

bodies' efforts to alleviate the negative impacts. The notable gap that was found in these studies and reports manifested in the sole and specific objective of this current study, which is to investigate the roles of CBOs, as a platform for community participation, in complementing government's efforts to manage or alleviate the negative impacts of COVID-19 on household socioeconomic lives. This, therefore, constitutes the novelty value of this empirical study.

### **3. Theoretical framework**

In the current study, social innovation theory was employed. The main focus of the theory is on adoption of a new way to achieve a particular goal in society. The theory, contrary to how it sounds, is not concerned with technology. The theory emphasizes innovations that include novel ideas, directions and practices that for people that seek to achieve a common goal (Ajani and Fakunle, 2021; Logue, 2019). This study, from the vantage point of social innovation theory, assumed that exploration and utilization of CBOs' potency in complementing government's efforts to manage or alleviate the negative impacts of COVID-19 on household socioeconomic lives denotes a new dimension. Therefore, the theory serves as the cornerstone for the assumption of this study that the CBOs have significant roles they play in the in complementing government's efforts to manage or alleviate the negative impacts of COVID-19 on household socioeconomic lives, contrary to the old perception of sole reliance on government for every need of people

### **4. Methodology**

#### *4.1 Study location*

The location of the study was Ife-East Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. The study location is situated in the South-West Zone, mainly a Yoruba speaking area, of the country. Low-income residential areas constitute the larger part of the study location while the majority of the residents worked in informal sectors. The study location, also, accommodates cottage industries, farming, commercial and entertainment activities while social engagements and ceremonies such as marriage, burial and a series of traditional and religious festivals, all of which conventionally require the gathering of people, are embedded their lifestyles. Moreover, there are various CBOs that the adult residents belong to while the presence and impacts of these CBOs are felt whenever there is any ceremony in the study location. Therefore, this study considered that CBOs are also capable of complementing government's efforts to man or alleviate the negative impacts of COVID-19 on household socioeconomic lives.

#### *4.2 The sampling techniques, sample size, methods of data collection and analysis*

The study was cross-sectional and exploratory in nature while a qualitative method, in-depth face-to-face interview, was employed to collect the primary data for this study. Also, multi-stage non-probability sampling method was employed in the study. There were 10 electoral wards in Ife-East Local Government Area. The study covered all the 10 electoral wards. Via purposive sampling method, 5 CBOs were selected in each of the 10 wards, making a total size of 50 CBOs. To obtain the primary data, 2 CBO leaders (a man and a woman) and 4 CBO members (2 men and 2 women) among the 5 selected CBOs in each of the wards were purposively selected, making a total sample size of 60 from all the electoral wards for the in-depths face-to-face interview. Both thematic and contents analyses were utilized to analyze the collected data. This study was conducted between December 2020 and March 2021 in Ife East Local Government Area, Nigeria.

**5. Findings and discussion**

*5.1 Socioeconomic characteristics of the key-informants*

This study purposely maintained gender balance; however, investigating any gender issue was not included in the study, only to maintain the reliability of the information provided by the key informants. Therefore, half of the key informants for this study were composed of men and women respectively. The middle age people constituted most (47.1 per cent) of the key informants as 30 per cent and 20 per cent of the key informants were within the age groups of 30-39 and 50 years and above respectively, while about 8 per cent of the informants were within the age group 20-29. Data on socio-economic characteristics of the key informants is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** presenting age and gender distribution of the key informants

Socio-economic status	Frequency	Percentages
<b>Gender distribution</b>		
Male	30	50.0
Female	30	50.0
Total	60	100
<b>Age-group distribution</b>		
20-29	5	8.3
30-39 years	18	30.0
40-49 years	25	41.7
50 years and above	12	20.0
Total	60	100
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	14	23.3
Married	32	53.3
Divorced	12	20.0
Widow	2	3.4
Total	60	100
<b>Highest level of educational status</b>		
No schooling	6	10.0
Primary school education	15	25.0
Secondary school education	25	41.7
Tertiary institution	14	23.3
Total	60	100
<b>Employer</b>		
Public sector	14	23.3
Private sector	20	33.4
Self-employed	26	43.3
Total	100	100

Source: Authors' field survey (December 2020-March 2021)

Data on the marital status of the key informants indicated that the majority (53.3 per cent) of them were married and still maintained marital relationship with their spouses, as about 23 per cent of the informants were yet to get married while 20 per cent of the informants were married but no longer living with their spouses. About 3 per cent of the informants were widower or widow. According to the marital composition, the majority of the informants (the married people) belonged to households that contained at least two people and this tended to indicate that their standard of living is greater influenced than other marital categories during the pandemic where, in particular a reduction in income level sets in. On various levels of formal education of the key informants, the collected data revealed that most (41.7 per cent) of the informants had secondary education, one quarters of them had primary

education while about 23 per cent of the people had tertiary education. However, one tenth of the informants had no formal education. On various occupations of the key informants, the study found that most (43.3 per cent) of the people were self-employed and this presented the true picture of the occupational distribution of the people in the study location. However, about 33 per cent and 23 per cent of the people worked in private sectors and public sectors respectively. The table 1 above also presents this information.

### *5.2 Roles of CBOs in supporting members on alleviation of negative impacts of COVID-19 on household socioeconomic lives in the study location*

The current study, via the qualitative data collected, found that the members of the CBOs have enjoyed financial and social supports from their respective CBOs, during and after the pandemic, via the several activities among the functions of their CBOs. These benefits were discussed below.

#### *5.2.1 Financial/economic support*

##### *5.2.1.1 Pooling resources together and provision of fund for members*

The majority (96 per cent) of the CBOs involved in this study have incorporated the act of receiving regular contributions of a certain amount of money respectively from their members into their functions. Therefore, the current study found that these CBOs have provided a viable platform for saving as this function has encouraged the CBO members to imbibe the act of keeping a certain amount of money for the time of need in the future. Therefore, in 2020 when total lockdown was declared in Nigeria, the concerned members of the CBOs were able to access the fund for the survival of their respective household as this reflected in extracts presented below:

#### *Extract 1: IDI/48-year-old/Woman/January 2021*

*“The association I belong to exists in the street I live. The main purpose of the association is to discuss the issues affecting our street, in particular the safety of lives and property. However, in case there might be a need for things that would require money, or importantly, execution of any self-developed project, the members of the association have agreed to be paying a sum of one thousand Nigerian Naira each time we come for our normal regular meeting, and this meeting takes places once a month. With the advent of corona virus, when the lockdown was declared, all of us (the association members) decided to embark on the money we have contributed to be shared for our survival. However, this was not our initial or original plan on the money; we accept that survival should come first. Therefore, this association has immensely contributed to the survival of my household both during and after the lockdown. Meanwhile the pandemic is yet to be over, therefore, I believe the association is still capable of helping us (the members).”*

Also the situation was also confirmed by another adult male resident of the community as below:

#### *Extract 2: IDI/53-year-old/Man/December 2020*

*“I am not an indigene of this Local Government Area (i.e. the study location); however, I resided here. We, people from my home town formed an association here to keep in touch with one another and to maintain our cordial relationship all because of the same cultural background we have. We meet first Sunday of every month. In our meetings, we mainly discuss the welfare all of us as a collective group and an individual member respectively. Every member saves a certain amount of money with main purpose of embarking on it when the need arrives. I must be candid; the money we regularly save is to be given to any member that we observe has a challenge that is beyond such a member’s capability. Also, when anyone among us has an occasion such as child naming, marriage or burial, we take from that savings and give it to the member in form of a gift or aid. But things change a bit when the incident of corona virus erupted; we had to embark on the money we contributed to ensure our survival because majority of us are self-employed, and our occupations were greatly affected by the outbreak of the disease.”*

### 5.2.1.2 Purchase of goods in large quantities

The current study found that the CBOs' members have benefited from the platforms that their respective CBO has provided to purchase goods in large quantities directly from the producers and redistributed the goods to the members in wholesale price as one of the ways to shield the concerned members from exploitation of retailers. This has constituted another aspect of the CBOs' functions that the current study found that has assisted the households of the CBOs' members to cope with the pandemic as this was expressed in the extracts below:

Extract 3: IDI/39-year-old/Woman/February 2021

*"I am very happy that I belong to my association. This is because it has helped me a lot in terms to buying goods at cheaper price compared to the shop (retailed) price I should have bought these items. Anyway, this act is not new, because even before the outbreak of the coronas virus, at the end of every year, the resources we pooled together were used to purchase items in a large quantity then these items were shared accordingly among us (the members), this has helped a lot to reduce the amount of money spent to acquire these items and meanwhile the quality of these items are reliable because they are directly obtained from the producers. Also, when the incidents of the global outbreak of the disease (COVID-19) occurred and the shop (retail) price of goods became exorbitant, I felt more impact of the large quantity of items I acquired at lower price in particular in my household."*

In addition, the current study found that before the pandemic, there were several CBOs, among those involved in this study, whose aim was not to purchase goods in large quantities for their members; however, the outbreak of COVID-19 has prompted them to adopt this idea as one of the means to cope the pandemic. The extract below reflected the example of this situation.

Extract 4: IDI/47-year-old/Man/March 2021

*"I belong to two different local associations in my community. We (the members of the two associations) made contribution only for the progress of our associations respectively. For instance, the contribution we made in most of the time is for developing self-help project in our community and to ensure the safety of lives and properties in our street. But with the incident of corona virus outbreak, in these two associations, we (the members) sat down to reconsider few things and among them was inclusion of pooling resources together to purchase household goods in large quantities because of the current hike price of these items. At least, this act adds to one of the ways to survive not only in the lockdown or pandemic but also after the lockdown or pandemic."*

### 5.2.1.3 Provision of platforms to attract financial institutions' loans and local authority's assistance

This study discovered that the involved CBOs have provided platforms for their members to attract loans financial institutions such as micro finance banks which might be impossible for an individual member to acquire. Moreover, the data indicated that the majority of these CBOs have provided platforms for their members to express their need to the government in their locality and this has helped in attracting the attention of the local authority to their needs even before the pandemic. The extracts below reflected the examples of these situations.

Extract 5: IDI/29-year-old/Small scale business Man/March 2021

*"In the local association I belong to, because the association is registered at the Local Government, there has been several occasions we are in need of money, and there is a certain micro finance institution called LAPO the we summon their financial assistance where we obtain loans with a low rate of interest. I personally might not be able to obtain any loan from this financial institution because the small scale business I have, and I personally do not possess any property that is worth presenting as the collateral for a loan. But my association has enabled me to gain access to obtain a loan to sustain my business and myself."*

Extract 6: IDI/67-year-old/Man/Retiree/February 2021

*“I belong to an association we formed in the community I reside. We meet every third Saturday of every month in the morning; the main purpose of the association is to seek the welfare of the whole community via regular meeting with local government officials and agencies. But when the outbreak of COVID-19 occurred, in particular during the lockdown, we (the members) went to the local authority and the politicians we know to solicit their financial assistance to cope and they granted us our requests in their capacities. This, I believe would not have happened without the influence of the association I belong to, nobody would even listen to me as a person, an ordinary old retiree (smiles).”*

#### 5.2.1.4 Provision of platforms to invite experts for empowerment programmes

Also, the current study found that via the CBOs, there have been platforms for the members to invite experts to enlighten them on genuine economic empowerment. The majority of the key-informants interviewed indicated that they have benefited economically through a series of empowerment programme that their associations have provided the platform for. For instance, some of the informants cited the knowledge they gained on legitimate ways to use mobile phone to generate additional income such as recharge card selling, subscribing data for customers, while several others cited the knowledge they attained on fowl and snail keeping and production of household utilities such as bar soap, candle, antiseptic for sterilization, among others. The study discovered that these empowerment programmes have been in place before the outbreak of corona virus in 2019, the interested members seized the opportunity of the lockdown to practise these activities they have learnt. The extracts below reflected the examples of these situations.

Extract 7: IDI/25-year-old/Woman/January 2021

*“The association I belong was mainly founded to give the members regular updates on the goods we sell. We that sell peppers, tomatoes, onions, and the likes, are the members. When the issue of lockdown set in, it became cumbersome for us to travel to far places where we buy goods, therefore, our association thought about empowering the members by finding other things that can be done with our primary assignment (i.e. selling peppers). For instance, I opted for learning basic knowledge on buying and selling recharge cards with the peppers normally I sell, and this in conjunction with the little my husband provided further helped in keeping the body and soul of our household together.”*

Extract 8: IDI/43-year-old/Man/December 2020

*“I am a teacher. I teach in one of these private colleges in my community. We the youths in my street formed as association with the main purpose of making regular contributions in form of (money) savings and this has been in place before the worldwide outbreak of corona virus. When Nigerian government observed that the virus was in ravaging the country, lockdown was introduced and implemented. Therefore, almost all businesses and schools were shutdown. This significantly affected me and my household because teaching has been my only source of income. I have to embark on the savings I made in our association. Moreover, we invited experts in various fields such agricultural practices and others to come and teach us crop production and animal rearing as a way to survive during the lockdown. At least, more food could be supply through that process and it really worked. I now own fowls and snails I rear; in addition, I learnt home utilities such as candle, bar soap, detergent, antiseptic and even sanitizer making and I'm really grateful I did as up till now after the lockdown, I still earn gains from them.”*

### 5.3 The social support

#### 5.3.1 Provision of platforms to share experience

Among the social support that the current study found that the CBOs provided for their member is the provision of platform to share their individual experiences in the lockdown, in particular, and the pandemic, in general. This study discovered that these members gathered together and related their experiences about how they were coping

with the given measures such as social distancing and the lockdown, to curb the spread of the disease and ways to deal with these experiences were discussed while all the members learned via this process. The extract below reflected the example of this situation.

Extract 9: IDI/67-year-old/Woman/March 2021

*“I am fond of going for the meetings of a particular association I joined when I was young. Most of us in that association are now becoming old however we still enjoy keeping the company of one another. When the virus was discovered and lockdown was declared in Nigeria, I was afraid. That mere fear alone nearly took my life. Because the association is in my street, we managed to maintain our meetings during the lockdown, even though we knew this might be against the recommendation of the government as a measure against the spread of the disease. In our meetings during the lockdown, each of us narrated how we felt and discussed it thoroughly. In the course of our discussion I discovered I have nothing to fear about the virus, only to be cautious and strictly follow the instructions such frequent hand washing, mouth covering and maintenance of rules about social distancing. Since then I have been living fine with peace of mind.”*

### 5.3.2 Provision of platforms to boost members' morale to avert psychological challenges (such as suicide)

The current study explored the influence of the regular meetings of the CBOs' members on their thoughts and the behavioural psychology. The study findings indicated that via the discussions of these members during their regular meetings, they derived a great deal of pleasure, where pleasantries were exchanged and humorous remarks were made, even about the experiences of an individual during the lockdown and the pandemic. This has been one of the ways to manage the psychological effects that the lockdown tended to have on these members. In the same vein, the findings indicated that none of the members of the CBOs involved in this study attempted to committed suicide. The extract below reflected the examples of these situations.

Extract 10: IDI/40-year-old/Man/February 2020

*“I belong to one of the associations that consist of only the youth. I am a commercial driver; I used to travel most of the time as this is my profession. When I first heard about corona virus sometime in January 2020, then it was yet to be discovered in Nigeria, I was just praying that it should not enter our country (Nigeria) but to my surprise sometime around February or March 2020, cases began to be discovered in the country, then I know I am in trouble. This is because we had heard about the lockdown case in foreign land and I just imagined what that could mean on my profession. Eventually, lockdown was pronounced in Nigeria and I was like how would my family survive. I was devastated and dejected, I thought about the survival of my household. But I am really grateful that I belong to this association because via our regular meetings which did not stop even during the lockdown, as most of the members are residing in the same street, we joked, played and related our experiences and talked about the way forward. Perhaps, without the significant impact of my association, the thought of suicide might have come into my mind, to be candid.”*

### 5.3.3 Platform to invite medical experts on sensitization programmes about COVID-19 and its effects

Moreover, the study findings revealed that several CBOs have summoned medical experts to further sensitize their members on the spread of COVID-19, measures to avoid being contracted, the symptoms of the disease, its effects and how to manage it. The findings further indicated that not only the members gained from these sensitization programmes but also their individual household as these member further sensitize their respective family members accordingly. The extract below reflected the examples of these situations.

Extract 11: IDI/66-year-old/Man/December 2020

*“There was a time; a rumour that the combination of salt and warm water is able to kill corona virus was circulated in my community. But since we had already summoned a medical expert for a sensitization programme in our association, I decided to wait to seek advice for the medical expert. I was highly surprised when this rumour was debunked. And the announcement as later made on the radio that using the combination of salt and*

*warm water disproportionately is dangerous to our health, I was like wow! Thanks to our association that provided the platform to have conversations with the medical expert; otherwise, who knows what could have happened. I also ensured that my whole household and people that are close to me know about this rumour”*

All these findings further portray the importance of the local associations that people form to the members and the communities in Ife-East Local Government Area in complementing government’s efforts to ensure the well being of people in the pandemic. Moreover, these findings are indications that CBOs have significant roles to play to ensure the success of the majority of the projects that government embarks in particular at the grassroots level.

## 6. Conclusion and prospects for future research

This study concluded that the CBOs in the study location have immensely contributed to the survival of their members as well as their households during the lockdown in the current pandemic of COVID-19. The functions of these CBOs manifested in their various activities to ensure that the negative impacts of the disease on socioeconomic lives of their members are alleviated and these functions indicated that the CBOs are capable of complementing the governments’ efforts in promoting development at the grassroots level. This study focused solely on the capability of the CBOs while the challenges they faced were not included in this study; therefore, this empirical study solicited future studies that shall focus mainly on the challenges that the CBOs encounter and the means of coping with any highlighted challenges.

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