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**Original article**

## **Role of cooperative-societies in community development in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto state, Nigeria**

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### ARTICLE INFO

### ABSTRACT

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This research was conducted in order assess the role of cooperatives in community development in Sokoto metropolis. The data for this research were obtained by sampling the opinion of 60 respondents all of which are members of different cooperatives in the study area using simple random sampling technique. The research instrument used was questionnaire administration and the data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages).The study showed that 50% of the respondents were between the ages of 20 and 30 years. 62% of them sourced their money through personal contributions. The research revealed that the contribution of cooperatives societies in community development through self help effort are more of schools rehabilitation, road construction and other community projects (mosques construction, rehabilitation, donation of books and medicine to schools and community clinic, financial and material assistance to disabled people). 70% of the respondents have stated that that they have not received any assistance from the government. Recommendations were made and an appeal to the government to intensify its effort in financing capacity building and provision of technical facilities.

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## 1. Introduction

A cooperative ("coop") or co-operative ("co-op") is an autonomous association of persons who voluntarily cooperate for their mutual social, economic, and cultural benefit. Cooperatives include non-profit community organizations and businesses that are owned and managed by the people who use its services (a consumer cooperative) and/or by the people who work there (a worker cooperative) or by the people who live there (a housing cooperative). Cooperatives are typically based on the cooperative values of "self-help, self-responsibility, democracy and equality, equity and solidarity" and the seven cooperative principles (International Cooperative Alliance, 2012):

- Voluntary and open membership
- Democratic member control
- Economic participation by members
- Autonomy and independence
- Education, training and information
- Cooperation among cooperatives
- Concern for community

Cooperatives are dedicated to the values of openness, social responsibility and caring for others. Such legal entities have a range of social characteristics. Membership is open, meaning that anyone who satisfies certain non-discriminatory conditions may join. Economic benefits are distributed proportionally to each member's level of participation in the cooperative, for instance, by a dividend on sales or purchases, rather than according to capital invested. Cooperatives may be classified as worker, consumer, and producer, purchasing or housing cooperatives (Andrew, 2006). Cooperative societies are organizations voluntarily owned and self controlled (non-governmental) aimed at solving the felt need of its members. Cooperatives are a development tool that promote both social and economic goals, offers a way for a group to pool their limited resource to achieve self development. The role of cooperatives involves increasing number of quality jobs so that the individual incomes expand. Cooperatives offer more to their communities than employment opportunities, they provide market access and essential service to the farmers and other community residents, it help to develop local leadership that can start and load other business ventures. Formations of a formal cooperative society enable its members to enjoy all the benefits conferred to it by cooperative and recognized as a business entity to transact business in its own names (Basheer, 2007). The United Nations has declared 2012 to be the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) (United Nations, 2012).

## 2. Materials and methods

An open-ended structured questionnaire was used to generate the survey data from the respondents. Several research questions were asked by the researchers. The questions were:

- a. What are the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents?
- b. What types of cooperative societies are found in the study area?
- c. What type of activities do the cooperative undertake in promoting community development in the study area?
- d. To what extent do the cooperative participate in promoting community development in the study area?
- e. What are the problems facing cooperative societies in the study area?

### 2.1. Study area

The study was conducted in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State. The area is located in the north-western part of Nigeria; it has a population of 607,379 people (Census, 2006). It lies between longitudes  $4^{\circ} 8'E$  and  $6^{\circ} 54'E$  and latitude  $12^{\circ} 0'N$  and  $13^{\circ} 56'N$  (Mamman *et al.*, 2000). Farming and crop production are the major occupations of the people living in the study area. Major crops grown include millet, sorghum, groundnut, cowpea and tobacco. Livestock reared include cattle, sheep, goat, donkey, camel, horses and poultry. It is characterized by 3-4 months annual rainfall from June to September and 7-8 months dry season from October to May (Garba *et al.*, 2012).

**2.2. Sampling techniques and sample size**

A purposive sampling was used in selecting 60 respondents all of whom were members of different cooperative societies. Three local governments were selected from Sokoto State namely Sokoto north, Sokoto south and Wammakko Local Government Areas. These local government areas formed the metropolis. Twenty respondents were randomly selected from each local government. Therefore a total of 60 respondents were used to generate the survey data.

**2.3. Data analysis**

Analytical technique: Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) was used to analyze the data generated from the respondents.

**3. Results and discussion**

Table 1 revealed that 50% of the respondents fall within the age range of 20-30 years. It also showed 82% of the respondents were male. This implied that males dominate the formation of cooperatives even though there was no barrier of entry that prevents females from participating in the cooperatives.

**Table 1**  
Bio-data of the respondents.

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Age		
20-25	7	12
26-30	23	38
31-35	16	27
Above 35	14	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
Sex		
Male	49	82
Female	11	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital status		
Single	17	28
Married	40	67
Divorced	2	3
Widow	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
Education		
Adult education	18	30
Primary education	6	10
Secondary education	20	33.3
Tertiary education	16	26.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
Occupation		
Farming	26	43
Trading	22	37
Civil servant	10	17
Others	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey,2010

It also revealed that 67% of the respondents were married. On the level of education, 60% of the respondents had education between secondary to tertiary level. This implied that majority of the respondents are literate. On type of occupation, 43% of the respondents were farmers. This in line with the findings of Kimberly, (2002), that cooperatives offer employment opportunities to their community.

Table 2 revealed that 42% of the respondents belonged to multi-purpose cooperatives. This implied that majority of them were engaged in different activities and it is in line with Bhuyan and Leistrizts (2000), who stated that cooperatives are development tools and should promote both social development and economic goals and offer way for a group to pool their limited resources to achieve self development. It also showed that 67% of the cooperatives were initiated by members of the community. This is in line with Basheer, (2007) who stated that, the formation of viable and successful cooperative society rest on the premise that members have a common felt needs and the will to do something collectively about it. 55% of the respondents were in the cooperatives so as to improve the standard of living of their members. On the source of revenue, 62% of the respondents sourced theirs through personal contributions.

**Table 2**

Type of cooperative, initiator of the cooperative, objectives and source of revenue of the cooperative.

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Cooperative type		
Farmer-producer	23	38
Farmer-consumer	10	17
Multi-purpose	25	42
Others	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
Initiators		
Community members	40	67
Local government	3	5
State government	9	15
Others	8	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
Objectives		
Community development	18	30
Improving standard of living	33	55
Unity among members	6	10
Others	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
Source of revenue		
Contribution	37	62
Appeal fund	12	20
Philanthropists	5	8
Others	6	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Table 3 revealed that 70% of the cooperatives do not get any assistance from the government. It also showed that 35% of the cooperatives had an intermediate state of finances. On the ways of identifying the felt needs of its members, 47% of the cooperatives identify it through general meetings. This in line with Basheer, (2007), who stated that, a viable and successful cooperative is for the prospective members to have a common felt need and the will to solve them collectively. On the type of self help work, 40% of the cooperatives were engaged in rehabilitation of schools. Table 4 revealed that 38% of the cooperatives rated their contributions to the community as good.

**Table 3**

Government assistance, financial state, felt-need and type of self help undertaken by the respondents.

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Type of assistance		
Financial	7	12
Technical	8	13
Material	3	5
Others	0	0
No assistance	42	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
Financial state		
Very adequate	3	5
Adequate	16	27
Intermediate	21	35
Inadequate	20	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
Ways of identifying felt-needs		
Media programme	3	5
General meeting	28	47
Personal contact	26	43
Other ways	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
Type of self help		
Construction of roads	7	12
Rehabilitation of schools	24	40
Construction of wells	9	15
Others	20	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

**Table 4**

Assessment of the cooperatives, problems encountered and solutions to the problems

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Assessment		
Excellent	4	7
Good	23	38
Average	21	35
Below average	12	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
Problems		
Inadequate finances	30	50
Poor motivation	12	20
Inadequate working materials	18	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
Solutions		
Government financial support	30	50
Provision of working materials	12	20
Public enlightenment	21	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2010

This implied that, the cooperatives have contributed immensely to the development of their communities. On the problems facing the cooperatives, 50% of the cooperatives had inadequate capital. This implied that, majority of the cooperatives were faced with financial problems. This is in line with Basheer, (2007), who stated that, inadequate funds at disposal are the perennial problems of Nigerian cooperative societies. On the solutions to the problems, 50% of the cooperatives suggested for government intervention on financial support.

#### 4. Conclusion

The study showed that cooperative societies play an important role in community development. They help in improving the standard of living of their members. The study also showed that the cooperatives were faced with a number of problems with includes inadequate funds and lack of government assistance.

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