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Article

Assessing the Impact and Sustainability of Community Development Initiatives in Awgbu, Anambra State (2015-2023)

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Abstract: This study assesses the impact and sustainability of community development initiatives in Awgbu, Anambra State, spanning from 2015 to 2023. Using qualitative research methods, including interviews with key informants from the Awgbu community and government personnel. The observatory method is also applied which helped the researcher to see activities executed in the community. The research investigates the specific contributions of the Awgbu community to the overall development of Anambra State, how the community has benefitted from state government initiatives, and the extent to which the community responds to government requests and initiatives. The study also explores challenges in the relationship between the state government and Awgbu in terms of community development initiatives and offers recommendations for enhancing this relationship. The findings reveal that the Awgbu community has made significant contributions to the development of Anambra State, particularly in areas such as security, education, and infrastructure. The community has actively responded to government calls, participating in initiatives like the Choose Your Project Initiative (CYPI) and vigilante groups, thus fostering a positive and mutually beneficial relationship with the state government. However, challenges such as leadership crises and communication gaps exist, hindering the community's progress. Recommendations include improving community leadership, enhancing communication, and promoting peace to ensure sustainable community development. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between communities and government in achieving sustainable development and highlights the importance of collaborative efforts for positive outcomes. The findings have managerial and policy implications for both local communities and governments seeking to enhance community development initiatives and foster mutually beneficial relationships.

Keywords: Awgbu; assessment; community; community development; government; sustainability

1. Background Information

The sustainability of community development initiatives is a global concern that transcends boundaries, affecting communities in developed, developing, and African nations, including Nigeria. In developed nations, issues often revolve around maintaining momentum and community engagement once basic needs are met, ensuring long-term relevance, and addressing changing demographics and economic challenges (Hawkins & Edwards, 2017).

Ogujiuba and Mngometulu (2022) contended that developing nations face a different set of challenges, including resource constraints, limited access to education and healthcare, and political instability, all of which can hinder the sustainability of community projects. In African nations like Nigeria, where the focus is often on overcoming poverty, health disparities, and infrastructure deficits, sustainability hinges on addressing issues like corruption, inadequate funding, and the capacity building needed to empower local communities (Franco & Tracey, 2019; Meyer, Zachmeyer, Paccione, Cardenas, Zernial & Smith, 2023). Orie (2023) argued that a comprehensive understanding of these prevalent issues across diverse contexts is crucial for designing effective strategies to ensure the sustainability of community development initiatives worldwide.

According to Teshome, Shita and Abebe (2021), community development initiatives play a vital role in the social and economic progress of regions and countries worldwide. In recent years, many local communities in Anambra State, Nigeria, have embarked on various development projects to address the pressing needs of their residents and improve their overall quality of life. Awgbu, a community in Anambra State, has been actively involved in such initiatives, spanning from 2015 to 2023. This background information provides insight into the context, objectives, and significance of assessing the impact and sustainability of these community development initiatives.

Awgbu, located in Orumba North Local Government Area of Anambra State, has a rich cultural heritage and a population primarily engaged in farming, trading, and other small-scale businesses. Like many rural communities in Nigeria, Awgbu has faced a myriad of challenges, including limited access to basic amenities, and inadequate infrastructure. Recognizing these challenges and the potential for positive change, the community leaders and members initiated a series of development projects and programs (road construction and maintenance, school building, security buildings, hospital renovations, buildings, and equipment).

The objectives of these community development initiatives in Awgbu were multifaceted. They aimed to improve infrastructure, such as road networks, schools, security, and healthcare facilities, to enhance the overall living conditions of the residents. Additionally, the initiatives sought to empower community members economically, promote education, and create employment opportunities for the youth. These goals were aligned with broader national and international development agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), number eleven (11), which emphasizes the importance of community-driven development to ensure sustainable cities and communities.

Assessing the impact and sustainability of these community development initiatives is of paramount importance for several reasons. Firstly, it allows for the identification of successful projects that can serve as models for other communities facing similar challenges. Secondly, it helps in evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies employed, providing valuable insights for future planning and resource allocation. Moreover, understanding the sustainability of these initiatives is crucial to ensure that the progress achieved is maintained over the long term, benefiting current and future generations of Awgbu residents.

The study also addresses the need to document and share the lessons learned from Awgbu's community development journey. By doing so, it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on community-driven development in Nigeria and can serve as a reference for policymakers, researchers, and development practitioners seeking effective strategies for rural development. In this context, the assessment of Awgbu's initiatives represents a significant step towards achieving sustainable and inclusive community development in Anambra State and beyond.

1.1. Problem Statement

Despite the commendable efforts of the Awgbu community in Anambra State, Nigeria, in implementing various community development initiatives from 2015 to 2023, there is a pressing need to comprehensively assess the impact and sustainability of these projects. Many rural communities in Nigeria, including Awgbu, grapple with multifaceted challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to basic social amenities and services. While the community-led initiatives have undoubtedly brought about positive changes, their long-term effectiveness and sustainability remain uncertain. Therefore, this research aims to evaluate the impact and sustainability of Awgbu's community development initiatives during this period, shedding light on the factors contributing to success and offering recommendations for future endeavors in community-driven development.

1.2. Research Questions

- i. What are the specific contributions of the Awgbu Community to the overall development of Anambra State?

- ii. In what ways has the Awgbu community benefitted from the initiatives and programs implemented by the Anambra State government?
- iii. To what extent does the Awgbu community actively respond to the requests and initiatives put forth by the state government?
- iv. What challenges, if any, exist in the relationship between the state government and the Awgbu community in terms of community development initiatives?
- v. What recommendations can be made to enhance and maintain a positive and mutually beneficial relationship between the Awgbu community and the state government in pursuit of sustainable community development?

2. Literature Review

These literature reviews provide a foundational understanding of the key concepts related to assessing the impact and sustainability of community development initiatives. Further research in Awgbu, Anambra State, can build upon these insights to evaluate the specific context and outcomes of community development efforts in the region.

2.1. Community Development Initiatives and Sustainable Development

Gohori and van der Merwe (2020) established that community development initiatives are essential drivers of sustainable development in both rural and urban areas. Demkova, et al. (2022) demonstrated that sustainable development aims to meet the present needs of a community without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Scholars like Raimi (2020) and Chan (2021) have emphasized the importance of participatory approaches in community development, where community members actively engage in planning and decision-making processes. Additionally, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have placed a strong emphasis on community engagement and partnerships as critical factors in achieving sustainable development. A study by Teshome, Shita, and Abebe (2021) in rural Ethiopia found that community-driven development initiatives, involving the active participation of community members, significantly contributed to sustainable improvements in livelihoods, healthcare, and education.

2.2. Impact Assessment in Community Development

Semenenko, Halhash and Ivchenko (2019) argued that assessing the impact of community development initiatives is crucial for understanding their effectiveness and making informed decisions for future projects. Zadawa and Omran (2020) added that impact assessments often consider multiple dimensions, including social, economic, and environmental aspects. Various methodologies, such as surveys, observation, and case studies, are used to measure and evaluate the outcomes of these initiatives. A study by Kvartiuk and Curtiss (2019) focused on impact assessment in community-led renewable energy projects in the Ukraine. In the same vein, the research by Semenko, Halhash and Ivchenko (2019) highlighted the importance of not only quantifying economic benefits but also considering social and environmental impacts to provide a comprehensive assessment.

2.3. Challenges and Barriers to Community Development Sustainability

The research by Ajor, Akintola, and Okpa (2023) indicated that despite the potential benefits of community development initiatives, there are challenges and barriers that can affect their sustainability. Zadawa and Omran (2020) argued that these challenges may include inadequate funding, lack of community participation, political instability, and environmental issues. Al-Mamun et al. (2021) and Demkova, et al. (2022) affirmed that understanding these challenges is essential for devising strategies to overcome them and ensure the long-term sustainability of community development projects. Research by Teshome, et al. (2021) examined the challenges of sustaining

community-based watershed management projects in Ethiopia. The study identified issues such as a lack of community ownership and limited access to resources as barriers to sustainability.

2.4. Theoretical Underpinnings

The study titled “Assessing the Impact and Sustainability of Community Development Initiatives in Awgbu, Anambra State (2015-2023)” is grounded in several key theoretical underpinnings that provide a conceptual framework for understanding and analyzing the impact and sustainability of community development initiatives. One of the central theoretical foundations for this study is the concept of community development itself.

Community development theory has been propounded by various scholars and theorists over the years. Some prominent contributors to community development theory include Robert Chambers, Paulo Freire, and John McKnight, among others. These theorists have made significant contributions to the field of community development, each offering unique perspectives and insights into the practice and theory of community development. Community development theory emphasizes the active involvement of community members in identifying their needs, setting goals, and implementing initiatives that lead to social, economic, and environmental improvements (Franco & Tracey, 2019; Abukari & Mwalyosi, 2020; Chan, 2021). This theory is relevant because it aligns with the primary focus of the study, which is to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of development initiatives within the Awgbu community.

Furthermore, the study draws upon the principles of sustainable development, a widely recognized theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Echendu, 2020; Raimi, 2020; Ajor, et al. 2023). Sustainable development theory guides the examination of whether the community development initiatives in Awgbu are designed and implemented in a manner that ensures long-term environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

The social capital theory also plays a significant role in this study. One of the most influential figures in the development of social capital theory is Robert D. Putnam. In 1993. According to Putnam (1993), social capital theory emphasizes the role of social networks, trust, and norms in fostering community and societal well-being. Social capital theory posits that the networks, relationships, and trust within a community contribute to its overall development and resilience (Uduji & Okolo-Obasi, 2019; Ogujiuba & Mngometulu, 2022). By examining the social capital within the Awgbu community and how it influences the success and sustainability of development initiatives, the study aims to provide insights into the role of social cohesion in community development. Additionally, the study is informed by the diffusion of innovations theory was propounded by Everett M. Rogers in 1962. According to Rogers (2003), the theory assumes that the adoption and diffusion of new ideas, products, or technologies follow a predictable pattern, with innovators and early adopters preceding the early majority, late majority, and laggards. It has been widely applied to various fields to understand and promote the acceptance and utilization of innovations. This suggests that the theory explores how new ideas, practices, and technologies are adopted and spread within a community. Meyer, et al. (2023) affirmed that this theory helps in understanding the factors that facilitate or hinder the adoption and continuity of innovative community development initiatives.

In summary, the study on the impact and sustainability of community development initiatives in Awgbu, Anambra State, draws on theoretical foundations such as community development theory, sustainable development theory, social capital theory, and the diffusion of innovations theory to provide a comprehensive framework for assessing the effectiveness and long-term viability of development efforts in the Awgbu community.

2.5. Research Gap

Despite the extensive literature on community development and sustainability, there exists a notable research gap in the specific context of Awgbu, Anambra State, Nigeria. While there have been studies examining community development initiatives and sustainability in various regions, there is a scarcity of research focused on Awgbu's unique socio-economic and cultural context. This research

gap is particularly significant because Awgbu, like many rural communities in Nigeria, faces distinct challenges and opportunities in its development journey. Additionally, existing studies often provide a broad overview of community development principles, but there is limited empirical research that delves deeply into the specific impact and sustainability of development initiatives in Awgbu. Therefore, this study aims to address this research gap by conducting a comprehensive assessment of the impact and sustainability of community development initiatives in Awgbu, providing valuable insights that can inform both local and broader development efforts in similar contexts.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Methods

This study centered on the Awgbu community in Anambra State, Nigeria, aiming to investigate the impact and sustainability of community development initiatives. To achieve this objective, and survey research design was employed, with the primary data collection tool being an in-depth interview and observation. The selection of Awgbu town as the focal point for this research was deliberate, considering its significance as a rural community in the region and its active involvement in various community development activities in their relationship with the state government.

The interview was conducted to capture the insights and experiences of individuals who directly participated in town union activities and personally benefited from the community development initiatives facilitated by the union. To ensure the selection of appropriate participants, the study specifically targeted Awgbu indigenes or non-indigenes with more than five years of tenure within the Awgbu community. This criterion was applied to ensure that participants had substantial exposure to and experience with the activities and community development projects, thus providing valuable insights into the influence and effectiveness of town unions in Awgbu's community development context.

The study also acknowledged the existence of clubs, Foundations, and organizations affiliated with the Awgbu Progress Union (APU) such as Awgbu Ambassadors, Golden 20, and Awgbu Amaka Association, Awgbu Growth and Development Initiatives (AGDI), Akwuabor Social Investment Forum (ASIF), Ekwuogo Educational Foundation (EEF), Igwe Michael Ezayom Foundation (IMEF), Awgbu Ambassadors Dynamic Club International (AADCI), and Agodi Egwuonwu Educational Foundation (AEEF) which often collaborate with the town union (Awgbu Progress Union- APU) to implement community development projects in education, healthcare, road construction, security building and youth development. The inclusion of these groups in the research is aimed at providing a comprehensive understanding of the community's collective efforts and their contributions to local community development initiatives.

Observation and in-depth interviews used by the author served as the primary data collection instrument for the research investigating the impacts and sustainability in community development activities within the Awgbu community in Anambra State, Nigeria.

4. Analysis

The choice of a qualitative approach for this study was guided by the need for in-depth insights and a rich contextual understanding of the impact and sustainability of community development initiatives in Awgbu, Anambra State. Qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews and observation allowed the researcher to explore complex and multifaceted issues from the perspective of those directly involved. In this case, the seven (7) purposively selected members of the Awgbu community were considered key informants due to their firsthand experience and active engagement in community development activities. The interview questions were carefully drafted to address the pertinent issues surrounding community development initiatives, enabling participants to share their unique perspectives and narratives. This qualitative approach aligns with the study's aim of gaining a nuanced understanding of the subject matter and generating qualitative data that can inform policy and practice related to community development in the Awgbu Community.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics

The selection of seven (7) individuals with diverse backgrounds and characteristics for interviews in this study was a deliberate choice made to ensure the comprehensive exploration of the impact and sustainability of community development initiatives in Awgbu, Anambra State. The purposively selected respondents were seven (7) in number; two of them were government officials, four were Awgbu indigenes (2 male and 2 females), One no-indigene that has spent more than five years in Awgbu

Each participant’s unique profile brings a distinct perspective to the research, enriching the depth and breadth of the data collected. The inclusion of government personnel, both male and experienced in age, is essential to gather insights from those who have been involved in the implementation and oversight of community development projects. Their professional knowledge and experience in government roles make them valuable sources of information regarding policies, funding, and the official perspective on community development in Awgbu.

On the other hand, the inclusion of Awgbu indigenes, and non-indigenes representing different age groups and genders, ensures that the study captures the local community’s perspectives and experiences. The variety in age among the Awgbu indigenes and non-indigens ranging from 40 to 60 years old, allows for insights across generations, potentially revealing changes and continuities in community development efforts over time. Additionally, the participation of non-indigenes living in Awgbu contributes to a more holistic understanding, as it considers the views and experiences of those who may not have ancestral ties to the community but are still actively involved in or affected by its development initiatives.

4.2. Analysis of Research Question One: What are the specific contributions of the Awgbu Community to the overall development of Anambra State?

The analysis of Research Question One, which aimed to explore the specific contributions of the Awgbu Community to the overall development of Anambra State, revealed several key themes from the interviews with purposively chosen informants. Government personnel emphasized the community’s cooperation with the state government, particularly in areas such as security, where Awgbu’s support has been instrumental. The indigenes of Awgbu highlighted the community’s hard work, support for government initiatives, and efforts to create employment opportunities for youth, contributing to the reduction of unemployment and insecurity. They also emphasized Awgbu’s commitment to education, with ongoing efforts to maintain school facilities and support schoolchildren. Additionally, the community’s peaceful nature and adherence to government rules were noted, particularly in sectors like health, education, security, and agriculture. The Awgbu community’s relationship with the state government facilitated through the Anambra State Association of Town Union (ASATU), was seen as a positive channel for collaboration and addressing community concerns. Even non-indigenous residents living in Awgbu recognized the community’s hospitable nature and its initiatives in road construction and maintenance. These findings collectively underscore the significance of Awgbu’s contributions to its own development and its partnership with the state government, emphasizing the mutual benefits derived from this collaboration [See Table 1].

Table 1. Specific contributions of the Awgbu Community to the overall development of Anambra State.

S/N of Respondents	Identity	Responses
1	Government Personnel (male, 47 years old)	Awgbu people have been very cooperative with the Anambra state government. They do many things to help their community and at the same time bring relief to the state government. Awgbu people have supported the government in areas such as

		security. You will understand that the state of security in the state has been very worrisome for the government.
2	Awgbu Indigene (male, 45yrs old)	Awgbu people are hardworking and good-spirited. We know the importance of giving our support to the government. It is all for our own good. Many groups and individuals of Awgbu have created employment for the youths. It is to help ourselves in the reduction of unemployment, insecurity, pressure on government and the world in general
3	Awgbu Indigene (Male, 60 years old)	Awgbu is a peaceful community in Anambra state. We help ourselves and equally help our community. All the community schools in Awgbu are never neglected in their needs. The people of Awgbu have assisted themselves and the government in great measures in the continuous maintenance of school facilities and supported and encouraged school children. All effort is for Awgbu's today and tomorrow.
4	Awgbu Indigene female, 48 years old)	Awgbu people do not joke about issues of their relationship with the government. Awgbu always obeys the rules of government. The people contribute largely to health, education, security, and agriculture. When our community is good, it is for our good. In doing all our parts, we also have plenty of expectations from the state government.
5	Government Personnel (male, 50 years old)	Awgbu people have been supportive of the Anambra government. Their participation in the state activities through the town union association is a good one. The Anambra State Association of Town Union (ASATU) is a channel through which the government has a close relationship with the community in the state. The government always gets the opinion of the people from the platform and gathers information on how they will intervene in different problems raised by different communities
6	Non-indigene in Awgbu (male 50 years)	I am not an Awgbu indigene, but I have lived in Awgbu with my family for twenty years. I have seen the hospitality of the Awgbu people in their dealings with others. They do everything to make the town moving. Awgbu people construct and maintain their roads even as they cry out to the government for the same responsibilities.
7	Awgbu Indigene (female, 40 years old)	Awgbu people have a good relationship with the state government. Awgbu has produced sons who have served and are still serving with the state government. It is a good thing for the community.

4.3. Analysis of Research Question Two: In what ways has the Awgbu community benefited from the initiatives and programs implemented by the Anambra State government?

The analysis of Research Question Two, which sought to understand the ways in which the Awgbu community has benefitted from the initiatives and programs implemented by the Anambra State government, revealed insights from the interviews with various informants. Government personnel emphasized the positive impact of government initiatives, particularly the Choose Your Project Initiative (CYPI), which has empowered Awgbu community to successfully complete numerous community projects each year, fostering both local development and state progress. Indigenous respondents recognized the state government's contributions to education and healthcare infrastructure in Awgbu community while acknowledging room for improvement, especially in terms of teacher staffing in secondary schools. They emphasized the collaborative approach between

Awgbu community and the state government. Non-indigenous residents living in Awgbu community also noted positive changes in the community over the years, attributing these improvements to both government efforts and the active involvement of the people. The need for enhanced road networks and increased job opportunities for youth were identified as areas of potential development. Overall, the findings highlighted the tangible benefits of the state government's initiatives for the Awgbu community and the importance of continued collaboration for mutual progress [See Table 2].

Table 2. How Awgbu community has benefitted from Anambra State government?

S/N of Respondents	Identity	Responses
1	Government Personnel (male, 47 years. old)	Awgbu is one of the communities in Anambra state that has benefitted from different government initiatives. Choose Your Project Initiative (CYPI) is a community project initiated to enable every community to choose and complete a project in a year. Since that project started, Awgbu can count the number of projects they have successfully completed. Every such effort is to support the people and at the same time develop the state.
2	Awgbu Indigene (male, 45 years old)	The state government has been doing a lot of things to make Awgbu a better place. Every year, Awgbu people achieve one project for their community with the help of the state government.
3	Awgbu Indigene (Male, 60 years old)	The government of Anambra state is doing many positive things for the development of Awgbu community. The government schools in Awgbu are taken care of by the government. The government's efforts may not be to our greatest satisfaction regarding the good number of teachers in our schools, especially the secondary schools, but they are trying their best.
4	Awgbu Indigene female, 48 years old)	Anambra State government oversees government schools in Awgbu. Our health centers are under government efforts too. Though Awgbu people contributed to health, education, and many other areas they mainly under the management of the state government
5	Government Personnel (male, 50 years old)	Anambra state government is never selective in dealing with the development of its communities, but some communities are more cooperative than others. Awgbu people have embraced all the government efforts and have always improved on them
6	Non-indigene in Awgbu (male 50 years)	Awgbu has benefited from the state government. Things have changed in the community unlike the year I came newly to the community. The government is contributing but the people do more things for themselves.
7	Awgbu Indigene (female, 40 years old)	Awgbu people need a good road network. The roads are good to the level of the people's efforts. Anambra state is trying in health and education, we want good roads as done in other towns around us. More job creation for our youths will add to the development of Anambra state.

4.4. Analysis of Research Question Three: To what extent does the Awgbu community actively respond to the requests and initiatives put forth by the state government?

The analysis of Research Question Three, which aimed to assess the extent of the Awgbu community's active response to the requests and initiatives put forth by the state government, provided valuable insights from the interviews conducted with various respondents. Government

personnel noted that Awgbu residents have consistently answered the state government's calls for support, particularly in areas related to security. Active participation in vigilante groups and community security measures demonstrated the community's commitment to contributing to a safer environment. In education, some groups created by the Town Union called education visit the government schools in the community to supervise and observe the activities of the teachers and students. They perform these activities to achieve sustainable quality assurance in the educational sector.

Indigenous respondents emphasized the intrinsic connection between Awgbu's responses to government initiatives and the well-being of the community. They highlighted the contributions made to healthcare, security, education, and job creation, showcasing a strong sense of community responsibility and cooperation. While expressing a desire for more government support, they underscored their unwavering commitment to responding to government requests. Non-indigenous residents residing in Awgbu also recognized the community's responsiveness to government calls, attributing it to the high level of cooperation and unity among residents. This cooperation was identified as a driving force behind the community's active engagement in education, healthcare, and economic development initiatives.

Table 3. Awgbu community is always responding positively to the call of the state government.

S/N of Respondents	Identity	Responses
1	Government Personnel (male, 47 years old)	Awgbu people have always responded to the calls of the state government. The state government has pleaded for support from all community leaders to support its efforts in securing the state and its environment. Awgbu people are part of Vigilante groups that guard communities. This is very important because the government believes that once different communities secure their environment, there will be no hiding plans for the criminals.
2	Awgbu Indigene (male, 45 years old)	Awgbu people do not waste time in responding to government calls because it is part of the way we help ourselves. The hospitals we contributed to in Awgbu are for us. Today, the healthcare services have improved. It will remain for us and our children.
3	Awgbu Indigene (Male, 60 years old)	It is true that we want more from the government, but we cannot stop responding to its calls. Awgbu came out to support healthcare. Awgbu people are with the government in securing the state. Individuals and groups have embarked on different road projects as they wait for the government. Awgbu cannot be doing good to themselves if they fail to respond to the calls of the government.
4	Awgbu Indigene female, 48 years old)	Awgbu people always want success, and they can achieve more by maintaining a good relationship with the government. All that makes the government develop, such as education, security, agriculture, and job creation are among the areas that Awgbu people have thrown their weight behind.
5	Government Personnel (male, 50 years old)	Awgbu people have not disappointed the state government. Even during the period of their community leadership crisis, they did not leave the government. They are made up of good people who want their good and the good of their state.
6	Non-indigene in Awgbu (male 50 years)	Awgbu people are very responsive to government calls. It is possible because of the level of cooperation they have among themselves. It has made them see the values in education, health, economic development, and other areas.

7	Awgbu Indigene (female, 40 years old)	Awgbu people have responded at all times to the government. Awgbu people are part of security building in the state. They are job creators for youths in Awgbu and its environs.
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Overall, the findings demonstrated that the Awgbu community actively responds to the requests and initiatives presented by the state government. This responsiveness reflects a strong sense of community identity and the collective effort to contribute to local development and the betterment of the state as a whole.

4.5. Analysis of Research Question Four: What challenges, if any, exist in the relationship between the state government and the Awgbu community in terms of community development initiatives?

The analysis of Research Question Four, focusing on the challenges in the relationship between the state government and the Awgbu community concerning community development initiatives, revealed several key points. Government personnel emphasized the constraints posed by limited funds, explaining that the government has good intentions for Awgbu but must prioritize and implement projects gradually due to resource limitations. Indigenous respondents raised concerns about communication gaps between the community and the government, with limited feedback on issues such as road construction. Leadership crises within the Awgbu community were identified as a significant challenge that affected the community's ability to engage effectively with the government. Additionally, some residents expressed a desire for more equitable development, especially in terms of road construction, comparing Awgbu's progress to that of other communities. Overall, the challenges highlighted underscored the importance of effective communication, community unity, and sustained efforts to strengthen the relationship between Awgbu and the state government in pursuit of community development goals [See Table 4].

Table 4. Specific Challenges in state government relationship with Awgbu community?

S/N of Respondents	Identity	Responses
1	Government Personnel (male, 47 years. old)	The Anambra state government has good intentions of achieving great things in all the communities of the state including Awgbu but there are limits to what it can do when limited funds are considered. Awgbu has been mapped out by the state government as among the areas where road construction will be flagged off. All these cannot be achieved at once. They are of gradual process.
2	Awgbu Indigene (male, 45 years old)	There are great challenges to the gap in communication between our people and the state government. As we clamour for Awgbu Road, we don't get information as feedback from the government.
3	Awgbu Indigene (Male, 60 years old)	The leadership crisis at the time became a big problem for Awgbu. I believe it is only when a house is in order that it can be able to achieve more success in its relationship with the government.
4	Awgbu Indigene female, 48 years old)	As it is now, many Awgbu indigenes are watching the rate of road construction going on in other communities. We want to experience the same road network development in our community.
5	Government Personnel (male, 50 years old)	Awgbu has had an internal crisis that denied them their benefits from the state government. It is important for communities to be at peace. The state of peace helps in achieving other great benefits. The time for making developmental progress should not be devoted to settling community disputes. Once there is no peace in

		a place, the attention of the government can be directed to other areas that also need attention.
6	Non-indigene in community, Awgbu (male 50 years)	These challenges can be similar in many places. Even in my own promises can be used for political campaigns, but I believe that Awgbu roads will be better soon because they have not failed in doing things for themselves.
7	Awgbu Indigene (female, 40 years old)	Awgbu people need to get closer to the government. Having our sons in government is not enough to bring down our heart desires for Awgbu. We will continue to present our case till the government answers us.

4.6. Analysis of Research Question Five: What recommendations can be made to enhance and maintain a positive and mutually beneficial relationship between the Awgbu community and the state government in pursuit of sustainable community development?

The analysis of Research Question Five, which focused on recommendations for enhancing and maintaining a positive and mutually beneficial relationship between the Awgbu community and the state government in pursuit of sustainable community development, yielded several noteworthy suggestions. Government personnel stressed the importance of resolving leadership crises within Awgbu and maintaining peace, as these factors significantly impact the community’s engagement with government initiatives. They also emphasized the need for accountability and meeting specific criteria for project benefits. Indigenous respondents highlighted the importance of continued community efforts in addition to government support and encouraged pressure on the government to address critical needs, such as road development and education. Building collaborative relationships with successful communities and seeking input from residents were also recommended to improve the community-government partnership. Overall, the recommendations underscored the significance of unity, collaboration, and effective communication in achieving sustainable community development in Awgbu, Anambra State.

Table 5. Recommendations to sustain a positive and mutually beneficial relationship between the Awgbu community and the state government.

S/N of Respondents	Identity	Responses
1	Government Personnel (male, 47 years old)	Awgbu community needs to put its house in order. Some communities in Anambra state that have no leadership crisis have benefited more, especially in the CYPI program. The success of the initiative needs a cordial relationship with the government and commitment on the side of the community leadership. Some criteria are also to be met before the benefits. It is not about dishing out millions of naira to communities without accountability. Peace is very vital in all dealings for assured sustainability.
2	Awgbu Indigene (male, 45years old)	We want our Awgbu community to be a better place tomorrow. I appreciate the efforts of our people who have never folded their hands to wait for the government to meet their needs. As we commit our resources to help ourselves, we will continue the pressure on our governments to come to our aid.
3	Awgbu Indigene (Male, 60 years old)	Awgbu people are committed to the progress of the Awgbu community and the state. The state government should listen to the cries of Awgbu people, especially on road network development. It will bring about more development in social and economic activities around the state and its environs

4	Awgbu Indigene female, 48 years old)	We need more development in Anambra state. Our children need a good education, we all need good roads, and job creation will reduce criminal activities among the youth.
5	Government Personnel (male, 50 years old)	It will not be possible for the government to satisfy all the needs of its people. Awgbu people are well known for their collaborative efforts in contributing to the progress of their community. As time goes on, I am sure that the government will do more for them to appreciate and encourage them.
6	Non-indigene in Awgbu (male 50 years)	Peace is the ultimate factor that can help every community to achieve success. Once there is less or zero community leadership problem, Awgbu will achieve more success.
7	Awgbu Indigene (female, 40 years old)	It is important that our people go out to consult with leaders of other communities in Anambra with records of success in order to see where Awgbu needs to improve in their relationship with the government. The state government should listen to the people, pay occasional visits to communities, and see what is going on and what the people need. It is not only during the election period that they need to go to the people in seek of votes..

4.7. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study highlight the active role of the Awgbu community in contributing to community development, benefiting from government initiatives, and actively responding to government calls. However, challenges exist in this relationship, and recommendations emphasize the importance of addressing these challenges through effective leadership and collaboration. In support of these findings, Chukwudi et al. (2019) posited that the leadership of any government determines its stability and success. These findings therefore have broader implications for community development and governance in Anambra State and provide valuable insights for enhancing sustainable development efforts.

The findings of this study reveal that the Awgbu community has made significant contributions to the overall development of Anambra State. Respondents, including government personnel and Awgbu indigenes, emphasized the community's active participation in various initiatives, such as security, employment generation, healthcare, and education. These contributions align with the notion that community development relies on the collaborative efforts of both residents, indigenous clubs, foundations, and government institutions (Ukhurebor, et al. 2021). The active involvement of Awgbu people in community development initiatives reflects a sense of community responsibility and a commitment to improving the well-being of its residents and the state at large.

The study findings also shed light on how the Awgbu community has benefitted from initiatives and programs implemented by the Anambra State government. These benefits include improved healthcare services, educational support, and infrastructure development. The positive impact of government interventions in Awgbu resonates with the concept of community development, where government initiatives aim to enhance the quality of life and socio-economic well-being of community members (Echendu, 2020; Raimi, 2020). The improvement in healthcare, education, and infrastructure has the potential to elevate the living standards of Awgbu residents and contribute to overall community development.

The findings indicate that the Awgbu community has been actively responsive to the calls and initiatives put forth by the state government. This responsiveness extends to areas like security, healthcare, education, and economic development. Such active community engagement aligns with the principles of participatory development, where communities are actively involved in decision-making and project implementation (Semenenko, Halhash & Ivchenko, 2019; Orie, 2023). The

willingness of Awgbu to collaborate with the government in addressing common challenges showcases their commitment to sustainable development.

The study identified several challenges in the relationship between the state government and the Awgbu community regarding community development initiatives. These challenges align with the submissions of Zadawa and Omran (2020) which include limited communication and information flow between the government and the community, leadership crises within the community, and expectations for more rapid infrastructure development. Such challenges are not unique to Awgbu but reflect common issues in community-government relationships (Ogujiuba *et al.*, 2022). Addressing these challenges is crucial to fostering a more effective partnership between the Awgbu community and the state government.

The study's recommendations emphasize the importance of community unity, effective leadership, and communication to sustain a positive and mutually beneficial relationship between the Awgbu community and the state government. These recommendations align with the principles of good governance and participatory development (Gohori & van der Merwe, 2020; Abukari & Mwalyosi, 2020).

All the recommendations have implications for improving community-government partnerships and promoting sustainable development in Awgbu and similar communities.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has provided valuable insights into the dynamics of community development and the relationship between the Awgbu community and the Anambra State government. The community development in Awgbu is guided by Community development theory which emphasizes the active involvement of community members in identifying what they need, drafting their objectives, and utilizing initiatives that can cause socio-economic, and environmental upgrades. Different social groups in Awgbu have built social networks as posited by social capital theory and this has greatly added to the sustainability of all efforts toward community development and relationship with the Anambra state government.

Through a comprehensive analysis of specific contributions, benefits, responsiveness, challenges, and recommendations, several key conclusions can be drawn: Firstly, the Awgbu community plays an active and significant role in contributing to the overall development of Anambra State. This includes their involvement in security initiatives, employment generation, healthcare, education, and infrastructure development. The community's commitment to its well-being and that of the state is evident through these contributions.

Secondly, the Awgbu community has benefitted from various initiatives and programs implemented by the Anambra State government. These benefits encompass improved healthcare services, educational support, and infrastructure development. The government's interventions have had a positive impact on the community's well-being and have contributed to its development.

Thirdly, the Awgbu community has demonstrated a high level of responsiveness to the calls and initiatives put forth by the state government. Active engagement in areas such as security, healthcare, education, and economic development reflects their commitment to sustainable development and partnership with the government.

However, challenges exist in the relationship between the state government and the Awgbu community, including limited communication, leadership crises, and infrastructure development expectations. These challenges need to be addressed to foster a more effective and mutually beneficial partnership.

In light of these findings, several recommendations have been proposed to enhance and maintain a positive and mutually beneficial relationship between the Awgbu community and the state government. These recommendations emphasize community unity, effective leadership, and improved communication as essential elements in sustaining the partnership.

Building strong leadership structures, maintaining peace within the community, and seeking collaboration with successful communities can further enhance the Awgbu community and government relationships. The different clubs that carry out independent development projects

should collaborate in executing bigger and cost-demanding projects such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

The government of Anambra State should engage in fact-finding to discover the communities, individuals, clubs, and organizations that contribute heavily to support their people and government and recognize them with awards to encourage the sustainability of all community development engagements.

Selected community contributors can be united at the state level to form associations through which they remain in constant communication to help their people and the state government.

Awgbu community should collaborate with neighbouring communities to execute development projects that can benefit the two communities such as education, healthcare, and security posts.

Interlinked roads will surely improve smooth human and goods thereby raising economic activities in the communities.

Communities should observe around them to see countries that have progressed and adopt them as a model as they strive to grow in all facets of development.

In summary, this study underscores the importance of community-government collaboration in achieving sustainable development. The Awgbu community's active participation, coupled with government initiatives, has the potential to bring about positive change and progress. Addressing challenges and implementing the recommended actions can lead to a stronger, more productive partnership, ultimately benefiting both the Awgbu community and Anambra State as a whole.

6. Contributions to Knowledge

This study contributes to the body of knowledge in several meaningful ways. Firstly, it provides a nuanced understanding of the role that a community, such as the Awgbu community, can play in the broader context of state-level development initiatives. By examining the specific contributions made by this community, ranging from security efforts to infrastructure development, this research sheds light on the potential impact of grassroots involvement in driving positive change at the state level.

Secondly, the study offers insights into the reciprocal relationship between a community and its state government. Through an analysis of the benefits that the Awgbu community has received from government programs, it highlights the importance of effective governance in improving the quality of life for citizens. This understanding can inform policy decisions aimed at fostering stronger community-government partnerships for sustainable development.

Additionally, the research explores the level of responsiveness within the Awgbu community to government calls and initiatives. This aspect contributes to our comprehension of community engagement and its implications for achieving development objectives. It underscores the idea that active and cooperative communities can amplify the impact of government interventions.

Furthermore, the study identifies challenges in community-government relationships, such as communication gaps and leadership crises, which are common in many regions. Recognizing these challenges and proposing recommendations for addressing them can serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, community leaders, and researchers working towards more effective development strategies. Overall, this study advances our understanding of community development dynamics, the interplay between communities and governments, and the factors that influence successful collaboration. Its findings can inform the design and implementation of development initiatives in similar contexts, ultimately contributing to more sustainable and equitable development outcomes.

7. Managerial Implications and Policy Implications

7.1. Managerial Implications:

The findings of this study have several important managerial implications for both community leaders and government officials. Firstly, community leaders, such as those in the Awgbu community, can use the insights gained from this research to better understand their role in driving community development.

They can recognize the significance of grassroots efforts in contributing to the overall development of their region and strategically plan and execute projects that align with both local needs and government priorities. Additionally, community leaders can focus on fostering unity and minimizing internal conflicts, as these challenges were identified as potential hindrances to successful community-government relationships.

On the other hand, government officials can use the findings to inform their approach to community development initiatives. Recognizing the active and positive response of communities like Awgbu to government calls, policymakers can prioritize open channels of communication with local leaders and residents. This can lead to more effective program implementation and increased citizen engagement. Furthermore, government programs can be tailored to address the specific needs and priorities identified by communities, ensuring that resources are allocated where they will have the most significant impact.

Policy Implications:

At the policy level, this study underscores the importance of fostering collaboration and partnership between governments and communities in pursuit of sustainable development goals. Policymakers can consider creating mechanisms for regular dialogue and consultation with community leaders to ensure that government initiatives are responsive to local needs.

Additionally, the study highlights the role of peace and stability in community development, suggesting that conflict resolution and mediation mechanisms should be in place to address leadership disputes that can hinder progress. Moreover, the recommendations provided in this research, such as seeking guidance from successful communities and promoting accountability in project implementation, can inform the design of policies aimed at enhancing community-government relationships.

Policymakers may also consider incorporating capacity-building programs to empower communities with the skills and knowledge needed to actively engage in development initiatives. In sum, this study offers valuable insights for policymakers seeking to strengthen the synergy between communities and governments, ultimately leading to more effective and sustainable community development outcomes.

8. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

8.1. Limitations

While this study contributes valuable insights into the dynamics of community development initiatives and the relationship between Awgbu community and the Anambra State government, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. Firstly, the research focused solely on one community, Awgbu, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other communities with varying characteristics and experiences.

Additionally, the study relied on a relatively small sample of respondents, which may not fully represent the diversity of perspectives within the community. Furthermore, the research primarily used qualitative methods, which, while providing in-depth insights, may not capture the quantitative nuances of the community's development efforts. Finally, the study was conducted within a specific timeframe (2015-2023), and the findings may not reflect more recent developments in the community or government policies. The observation method used may not be objective in findings and analysis because of the values attached.

8.2. Suggestions for Further Studies

To address these limitations and expand our understanding of community development initiatives, future research can adopt a broader, comparative approach, involving multiple communities across Anambra State. A larger and more diverse sample can provide a more comprehensive view of the challenges and successes experienced by various communities. Additionally, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods can offer a more holistic

perspective on community development dynamics. Researchers may also consider conducting longitudinal studies to track the evolution of community-government relationships and the impact of development initiatives over an extended period. Furthermore, investigations into the influence of external factors, such as regional or national policies, on community development can provide valuable context for understanding the dynamics observed in this study. Overall, these suggestions can contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of community development initiatives and their sustainability.

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