The Role of Social Media in Community Development in Nigeria: The Owe Unity Forum (Oaf) Model.

Chidi Ukomadu,

Lecturer, Department of Public Administration, Dorben Polytechnic, Garam, Niger State State, P.M.B 590, Abuja Nigeria
Corresponding Author: Chidi Ukomadu

Abstract: The social media which is a relatively new phenomenon in Nigeria, is basically for communication and maintenance of relationships. But this paper tries to explore its potentialities in mobilizing community members for community development in Nigeria, borrowing the Ogwa Unity Model as an example that could be adopted by communities desirous of engendering development through self-help. The paper employs observation method as the methodology for this research work. The paper concluded that one cannot talk of effective community mobilization and development in modern times, without the use of social media and that communities desirous of development in Nigeria should embark on self-help efforts, as it is an impossible task for the government to develop every community simultaneously, due to paucity of funds. Finally, the success of the Ogwa Unity Forum Model is an indicator that Watsapp is the most effective app for community development in developing countries like Nigeria.

Key Words: Social media, Watsapp, Ogwa Unity Forum, Community Development

I.   INTRODUCTION

Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. A social networking site/App is a web site or an application that provides a virtual community for people to share their daily activities with family and friends, or to share their interest in a particular topic, or to increase their circle of acquaintances.

Boyd and Ellison (2007), defined social networking sites as tools that allow users to create a personal profile of themselves containing information such as their age, location and interest. These personal profiles can then be connected with family, friends and colleagues, where information can be shared among one another. These connections create a network of users where anyone connected to the network can view everyone else's profile and, therefore interact with them (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).

These sites and applications serve as community based websites, online discussions forums, chat rooms and other social spaces online. There are dating sites, friendships sites, and sites with a business purpose and hybrids that offer a combination of these. Globally, hundreds of millions of people especially youth, have signed up to one social networking site or another to develop their interpersonal relationships, as well as maintain existing ones.

But lately communities desirous of developing their communities and making it more conducive for human habitation have deployed the use of social networking sites to community development. This became imperative in Nigeria because of the dwindling fortunes of both the federal and state governments, which resulted in heavy infrastructural deficits and in order to make life more comfortable and meaningful, some communities like the Ogwa Community in Mbaitoli Local Government Area of Imo State deployed the use of Watsapp, a social networking app to the development of the community and this resulted in tremendous community mobilization and impact in the development of the community without waiting for government's intervention.

The term 'Community Development is made up of two root words- Community and development. According to Osborne and Meyer in Olewe (1998), community is a group of people living in a contiguous geographical area, having common centres of interests and activities and functioning together in the chief concerns of life, while on the other hand, Sutherland and Maxwell defines community as a local area, over which people are using the same language, conforming to the same norms, feeling more or less the same

sentiments and acting upon the same attitudes. From the above definition by Sunderland and Maxwell, it is obvious that a community is marked by the sentiments of common living which includes:

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

The United Nations defined the term 'Community Development' as, 'connoting the process by which the efforts of people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of the communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress'. This definition connotes the members of a community taking initiative to engender development in their environment, with or without governmental agencies.

Omale and Ebiloma (2005) identified four critical aspects of community development which include:

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

The above definitions and observations all point to the fact that community development is all about a community trying to improve the living conditions of community members by themselves, it is a response to perceived or felt need by the community themselves.

In Nigeria, there are seven hundred and seventy-four local government areas and more than one million communities in the thirty states of the federation; therefore developing the whole communities simultaneously will be a near impossible task for any government, especially the South-Eastern states, given their history.

Ogwa community in Mbaitoli local government area of Imo state realized early in time that for the community to have the basic social amenities that will make life more meaningful and enjoyable, she will have to embark on community development. According to Ukomadu (2012), it was this desire for development that led to the formation of Ogwa Improvement Union in 1937 by Ogwa indigenes living in Port-Harcourt and this served as a vehicle for the socio-economic transformation of Ogwaland and placed it ahead of others in terms of socio-infrastructural development. Due to fact that majority of the members of the community were living at home during this period, it was easy to mobilize the people for self- development. But since after the Nigerian civil war, between 1967 and 1970, the settlement pattern has really changed, majority of Ogwa indigenes are scattered across the country and an equally sizeable number in diaspora, mobilizing the community members for development became a herculean task. This is largely attributed to the poor telecommunication system prevalent in the country for a very long time. With very low tele-density and very poor postal service, communicating with people outside the community was a very tall order, leading to great difficulty in mobilizing community members for development. This inability to mobilize and its attendant negative impact on infrastructural facilities and general socio-economic development persisted until the advent of sociol media networks and applications recently.

II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The concept of Social Media

Although people have been using the internet to connect with other since the early 1980s, it was only in the last decade that social networking services have become so common and their use have become wide spread – particularly amongst young people (Horizon, 2013).

A social networking site is a web site or application that provides a virtual community for people to share their daily activities with family and friends, or to share their interest in a particular topic, or to increase their circle of acquaintances.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) saw social networking sites as tools that allow users to create a personal profile of them containing information such as their age, location and interest. These personal profiles can then be connected with family, friends and colleagues, where information can be shared among one another. These connections create a network of users where anyone connected to the network can view everyone else's profile and, therefore interact with them (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).

These sites serve as community based websites, online discussions forums, chat rooms and other social spaces online. There are dating sites, friendships sites, and sites with a business purpose and hybrids that offer a combination of these. Globally, hundreds of millions of people especially, youth have signed up to one social networking site and or another to develop their interpersonal relationships as well as maintain existing ones.

Although social networking is possible in person, especially in the workplace, universities, polytechnics, and high schools, it is most popular online. This is because unlike most high schools, colleges, or workplaces, the internet is filled with millions of individuals who are looking forward to meeting other people,

to gather and share first-hand information and experiences about cooking, golfing, gardening, developing friendships, professional alliances, finding employment and even groups sharing information also in most cases, quest for more knowledge. When it comes to online social networking, websites and applications are commonly used. These websites are known as social sites. Social networking websites function like an online community of internet itself. Depending on the websites in questions, many of these online community members share common interest in hobbies religion, politics and alternative lifestyles. Once accesses if granted to social networking websites, one being to socialize. This socialization may include reading the profile pages of other members and possibly even contacting them.

The friends made are just one of the many benefits of social networking online. Another one of those benefits include, diversity because the internet gives individuals from all round the world access to social networking sites. This mean that although, one may be in America or any part of the world, one could develop an online friendship with someone in another part of the world including Nigeria. Not only will one make new friends, but one might just learn a thing or two about new cultures or new languages and learning is a continuous process in life.

While there are a number of social networking websites that focus on particular interests, there are others that do not. The websites without a main focus are often referred to as "Traditional" social networking websites and usually have open membership. This mean that anyone can become a member, no matter what their hobbies, beliefs, or views are. However, once you are inside this online community, you can begin to create your own network of friends and eliminate members that do not share common interest or goals.

There are dangers associated with social networking including data theft and viruses, which are on the rise. The most prevalent danger though, often involves online predators or individuals who claim to be someone that they are not. This does not apply to online alone, even in the real world people still claim to be somebody else. Therefore, there is need to be cautious when meeting strangers at clubs and bars, school and even work place, same should be applicable when meeting someone online.

Members create their own online "profile" with biographical data, pictures and any other information they chose to post. They communicate with each other by making their latest thoughts public in a blog-like format or via e-mail, instant messaging, voice or video conferencing to selected members. The services let members find and invite other members into their personal network (to "friend" them), as well as invite friends. A photo sharing capability may also be provided.

This then means that social networking websites are a collection of WebPages that are user generated using a form. The information put into the form is then published on a generated page. From that point on, the users can customize the page, adding pictures, video, MP3s and other media that are all the choice of the user. But these sites are just for regular people looking to make friends.

Like other web-based services, there is a mass conglomeration of social networking websites springing upon the internet. Social networking sites only allow for users to stay connected more frequently. They also provide a more personal user experience in a generation founded upon technology. Wikipedia, a free online-encyclopedia utilizing open-sources, users have compiled a list of over 120-active, "well-known" SNSs on the worldwide web [en-wikipedia.org), of these popular suites, three are among the top 20 most trafficked sites globally on a daily basis according to Alex (www.alexa.com). Facebook, for example seem to be the fastest-growing social networking site, boasting more than 500 million active users (Facebook Statistics, 2010).

Commenting on the subject matter, Milanovic (2015), said 'The concepts behind "social networking" aren't anything new - ever since there have been humans, we have been looking for ways to connect, network, and promote with one another - but they've taken on an entirely new meaning (and momentum) in the digital age. Where we used to have handshakes, word-of-mouth referrals, and stamped letters, today's relationships are often begun and developed on LinkedIn, Google + and Facebook.

Some of the most important channels social media tools and applications include:
1. Twitter. This could perhaps be regarded as the simplest of all social media platforms, it also just happens to be one of the most interesting. Messages are limited to 140 characters or less, but that's more than enough to post a link, share an image, or even exchange thoughts with your favorite celebrity or influencer. Twitter's interface is easy to learn and use, and setting up a new profile only takes minutes.
2. Facebook. Considered as the most common of all "social media" by many, Facebook is the one site where one will likely find friends, colleagues, and relatives all floating around. Although Facebook is mainly centered around sharing photos, links, and quick thoughts of a personal nature, individuals can also show their support to brands or organizations by becoming fans.
3. Linkedin. This is the most common mainstream social media site that is actually geared towards business, LinkedIn is to cyberspace what networking groups once were to local business communities. It's great for meeting customers, getting in touch with vendors, employing new employees, and keeping up with the latest in business or industry news.
4. Xing. Though not so popular, Xing is another professional networking and recruitment site, it has the global presence and focus that LinkedIn lacks. Although it can be mistaken for a job search portal, the site actually has

a number of features and communities that make it easy to develop relationships with suppliers, colleagues and even thought leaders within industry.

5. Renren. Literally translating into "everyone's website," Renren is China's largest social platform. Hugely popular with the younger crowd, it works in a way similar to Facebook, allowing users to share quick thoughts, update their moods, connect with others, and add posts or ideas to a blog-like stream.

6. Google+. Social media's big up-and-comer has really arrived over the past few years. By combining the best of Facebook and Twitter into one site - and backing it by the power of the world's largest search engine, Google has given users a social site that has a little something for everyone. You can add new content, highlight topics with hashtags, and even separate contacts into circles. And, a G+ profile only takes a few minutes to get set up.

7. Linkedin Pulse. Even though Pulse is technically a part of LinkedIn, it's big and important enough to deserve its own entry. Serving as something between a blog and "best of" outlet, it's the perfect medium sharing new ideas and keeping up on the thought leaders in your industry.

8. Snapchat. This surprisingly-addictive app gives you the ability to take a picture, add art and text if you'd like, and then send it to recipients for a set amount of time (after which the photo will delete itself and be removed from the company's servers). Lots of fun and potentially a good way to stay in touch with friends.

9. Tumblr. This platform is different from many others in that it essentially hosts microblogs for its users. Individuals and companies, in turn, can fill their blogs with multimedia (like images and short video clips). The fast-paced nature of Tumblr makes it ideal for memes, GIF's, and other forms of fun or viral content.

10. Pinterest. Serving as a giant virtual idea and inspiration board, Pinterest has made a huge impact on social media in the last few years. Especially popular with women and the do-it-yourself crowd, it lets you share pictures, creative thoughts, or (especially) before-and-after pictures of projects that others can pin, save, or duplicate.

11. Twoo. This Belgian social network site is geared for the 25 and under crowd all over the world. Alongside normal social features like posts, updates, and photo sharing, it also boasts online games and chat features that make it popular with younger users who want to stay entertained while connecting with each other.

12. MyMFB. Created as a Muslim alternative to Facebook (it was previously called MillatFacebook), this site aims to connect the faith's 1.5+ billion followers into a single social platform. While that might sound ambitious, it's growing quickly and offers many of the same post, update, and sharing features as the original Facebook, and is already immensely popular in some parts of the world.

13. YouTube. As a video sharing service, YouTube has become so popular that its catalog of billions and billions of videos has become known as "the world's second-largest search engine" in some circles. The site has everything from first-person product reviews to promotional clips and "how-two" instruction on virtually any topic or discipline. Users have the ability to share, rate, and comment on what they see.

14. Instagram. If you're looking for a quick, convenient connection between the camera feature on your smart phone and all your social profiles, then Instagram is the answer. Not only will allow you to share via Twitter, Facebook, and the Instagram website, you can choose from a variety of photo filters and invite friends to comment on your photos or ideas.

15. Vine. This site (also available as an app) offers users the chance to share and view brief video clips. While that theoretically offers a virtually endless range of uses, most of Vine's content is entertainment-focused, with a heavy preference towards "viral" and "meme" clips that are easy to share.

16. WhatsApp. The WhatsApp concept is simple: send text-style messages to anyone else using the platform, but without paying data charges. That straightforward idea has already gathered more than 700 million fans, making the app the world's most popular messaging platform.

17. vk.com. Promoting itself as Europe's largest social media site, **vk.com** is essentially the Russian version of Facebook, with the same kinds of profiles, messaging, and games you would expect. Like Facebook, **vk.com** allows users to enter both personal and professional information about themselves, and to follow or show support for organizations and businesses.

18. Meetup. Meetup is a perfectly-named platform, because it's perfect for organizing local groups around specific interests. There are meetups centered on just about everything, from music to hobbies, and get-togethers are almost always open to newcomers. That makes it perfect for exploring an interest and making new friends at the same time.

19. Medium. If you've ever wished that social engagement could come with an ongoing, up-to-date "how to" manual written by the experts, Medium might be just what you're looking for. With lots of helpful advice, tips, and articles, it can give you everything you need to start connecting like a pro.

Community Development

The term Community Development, has been defined by many authors and in many ways, depending on one's educational qualification, environment and profession. According to the United Nations as earlier sited, Community development is the process by which the efforts of people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of the communities, to

integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress'. According to Oni and Bello (1987), two important elements of this definition are people's efforts and governmental or non-governmental assistance. People here include their participation in initiating, planning and execution of projects with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative and resources. Governmental assistance here means provision of technical, financial and other services in ways that encourage self-help.

Murray Ross on his own defined Community Development as: the utilization under one single programme of approaches and techniques which rely upon local communities as units of action which attempt to combine outside assistance with organized local self-determination and effort and which correspondingly seek to stimulate local initiative and leadership as the primary instrument of change.

This definition attempts to emphasize the importance of participation by the people of a community in improving their living conditions and physical environment.

A more comprehensive definition was the one by Arthur Hilman. According to Hilman (1960), Community development is a method of helping local communities to become aware of their needs, to assess their resources more realistically, to organize themselves and their resources in such a way as to satisfy some of their needs and in so doing, acquire the attitudes, experiences and cooperative skills for repeating their process again and again on their own initiative. This implies that community development is a process, in the sense that it is a dynamic sequence which when set in motion, supplies its own motive power so that people in the community through their own efforts are enabled to move steadily towards the goal of self-imprisonment.

Empirical Literature Review

The use of social media and social networking has become a significant force in political organizing, social interaction, and economic development. A growing body of literature now describes the use of social media as a tool in areas such as political action, democracy promotion, business marketing, and public relations management (Brown, 2009; Coleman & Blumler, 2009; Hais & Morley, 2009; Qualman, 2009; Davis, 2005).

The use of social media specifically in the field of community and economic development has also recently begun to receive scholarly attention (see for example, Fernback, 2005; Laudeman, 2005; Pigg & Crank, 2005; Stillman, 2005; Stern & Dillman, 2006; Huber, 1987).

There is strong evidence to suggest that social networks can improve the socio-economic well-being of communities. For example, Eagle, Macy, & Claxton (2010) found the structure of social networks and related diversity of individuals" relationships is strongly correlated with the economic development of communities. However, with the dramatic changes currently taking place regarding information technology, there is need to continually reexamine and analyze the use of social media and social networking in the field of community development.

Social media involves the use of various technological tools and methods for sharing and discussing information. Social media is a way to transmit or distribute information to a broad audience where users have an opportunity to create and distribute content. By comparison, social networking is the use of these tools specifically to connect and interact with others. Social networking is the act of engagement where groups of people with common interests are associated and build relationships through a shared community of interest (Stelzner, 2009; Hartshorn, 2010).

For example, the online website YouTube, the video-sharing portal where users can upload, share, and view videos, is considered a social media site. In comparison, Facebook was created on the premise of linking individuals and organizations into various networks of common interests or associations. In community development, one can use social media to facilitate social networking and conversely, one can network, form partnerships, and build relationships by leveraging social media.

There has been a dramatic transformation in the way information is created, disseminated and distributed using various social media in recent years. One significant transformation is the establishment of Web 2.0, a term referring to myriad web applications that provide for interactive information sharing and collaboration via the internet using a variety of means such as text, images, audio, and video (Addison, 2006).

In contrast to passive viewing of web content, a Web 2.0 site allows users to create content, interact, and collaborate in a user-generated virtual – type community. Users actively participate and network with a potential to pool the collective intelligence of the users and create opportunities for free and unrestricted input for better decisions. In this sense, the whole is greater than some of its virtual and often widely disseminated parts.

The emergence of Web 2.0 has transformed not only the quality and content of social media, it has allowed for greater connectivity and interaction for social networking. The quality and quantity of social media and social networking sites are becoming countless, but below is an attempt to outline and describe some examples of these tools for communication.

Social networking sites allow users to share ideas and user generated content (including images and video) while building connections and associations, both personal and professional. There are three fundamental uses for social networking: (1) As a means of personal communication, (2) To link groups, and (3) To promote an idea.

There are myriad examples but some of the more popular social networking sites include Facebook (facebook.com), Myspace (myspace.com), Ning (ning.com), and LinkedIn (linkedin.com). Facebook dominates this market with reports of more than 2 billion active users as of January 2018.

Another important tool for community development professionals is the use of open-source soft-ware in which the source code for the application is developed in a public and often highly collaborative manner. While the editing of private, commercial software is reserved for copyright holders and protected by a software license, open source soft-ware permits and encourages users to study, change, and improve the software. This allows for free software that is continually being updated and revised. Open source programs exist for nearly every conceivable application and are being developed rapidly.

There are many other significant tools and applications available to community developers including video conferencing applications such as Skype (skype.com), video and image sharing sites including YouTube (youtube.com) and Flickr (flickr.com), virtual world applications including Second Life (secondlife.com) and on-line mapping resources such as Google Earth (earth.google.com) and Google Maps (maps.google.com). Each of these applications can assist practitioners in community development in myriad ways, depending on the needs and abilities of the users. Social Networking & CD Principles of Good Practice The potential for Web 2.0 to transform the field of community development is enormous, limited only by the imagination of users. In the field of community development, Addison (2006, 623) refers to this transformation as "Dev 2.0." Indeed, the use of social media and social networking as a community development tool or practice has great potential to revolutionize the field, both from an applied and theoretical point of reference.

The use of social media and networking is significant as a community development tool in terms of building relationships, improving communications, documenting development efforts, sharing information in real-time, and informing and reaching a wider audience than was possible at any time in history.

Perhaps more importantly, social media can empower those who have the skills and abilities to use new technologies by helping them, as Bryant (2006, 559) notes, to "break away from traditional" command and control models of management."

THE OUF MODEL

Though Ogwa community migrated to its present area in the 17th century from Amaigbo, it was not till 1937 that conscious efforts were made at modern community development with the formation of Ogwa Improvement Union (Ukomadu, 2012). It was under the aegis of this union that effective community mobilization was embarked upon which led to the provision of social amenities by the community members themselves.

For example, in 1959, the Eastern Nigerian Regional government inorder to tackle the perennial water shortage in the region, initiated a water programme to be financed through counterpart funding between the government and any community that wishes to have clean and potable water pipe-borne water. The total cost was twenty-thousand pound sterling and each community that desired to have pipe-borne water was expected to pay one-eighth of the total sum as its counterpart fund and the commencement of the programme was on a first come, first served basis. Ogwa community beat every other community in the region to raise the counterpart fund; Ogwa community therefore became the one of the first communities in the whole Eastern Region of Nigeria through community effort (Ukomadu, 2012).

Again, in 1963, during the synod of the Anglican Church in Owerri, they made known their plans to build well-equipped hospitals in their communities. The Ogwa Improvement Union equally mobilized the community members and funds were raised for the Ogwa General Hospital with the assistance of the Eastern Nigeria Ministry of Health to the tune of Fifteen thousand pounds, which still serves the community till today.

Similarly, the union mobilized community members to finance Umueze Girls Secondary School in 1964, Ogwa Postal Agency in 1970 and Ogwa Comprehensive Secondary School in 1979. Somewhere along the line due to succession problem, the union went moribund. Some well meaning of the community came together and built on the ashes of the defunct union, this time round, it was christened Ogwa Federated Union. The single most important development project carried out by this renascent union was the Ogwa electrification project, which spanned between 1983 and 2002, a period of twenty one years, till electricity was extended to all parts of Ogwaland. (Ukomadu, 2012).

In 2002, under the administration of Achike Udenwa as Executive governor, something significant happened in Imo State. The government decided to split the existing communities in the state into smaller autonomous communities, the existing zones in Ogwa community were therefore balkanized into four, later five and eventually six different autonomous communities with different traditional rulers, town unions and town union executives.

This rearrangement to a large extent, stalled cooperation among the different autonomous communities, what was obtainable was bitter rivalry, which more or less brought community development projects to a standstill in the newly created autonomous communities.

The balkanization notwithstanding, other factors combined contributed in mobilizing community members for development a herculean task. Firstly, most of the educated and able bodied young men are women were no longer in the communities, most of them had left for the urban centres across the nation and another sizeable number, travelled outside the country. Secondly, the post office that could have been used in communicating with community members, most of whom dwell outside the community was inefficient. It was either letters got lost on transit or takes months to get to its destinations, making it a most inappropriate way of effectively mobilizing the community for development.

This led to a huge infrastructure deficit- no good and motorable roads, the educational institutions became dilapidated, no pipe-borne water (except borehole by some wealthy individuals), no functional hospital leading to unnecessary deaths, no constant power supply, no employment. Even the cultural celebrations started to atrophy because of low attendance, the youths and the diasporas avoided the community due to insecurity of lives and property, occasioned by unemployment among the youth, who took to drug abuse, crime and criminality as a pass time. This ugly situation persisted for many years.

In December 2005, some diasporas who came home to celebrate the Christmas holidays, noticed the huge deficit of infrastructural facilities and the decay of the few existing ones, picked the gauntlet to make a difference. This resulted in a meeting on the 6th of January 2016, where like minds were brought together to discuss ways of re-starting community development in Ogwaland, as was the case in the past. After due much deliberation, it was agreed that since most the youth, the educated and the elites are outside the community, the best way of mobilizing them for community development, was through social media. Several social media platforms were considered but eventually, Watsapp was eventually adopted as the most accepted social medial platform.

This choice was as a result of several advantages of the application over other application and sites. Whatsapp is one of the best and most popular apps all over a world. Anyone who has a smartphone will definitely have WhatsApp installed, this app got famous because of its simplicity and user-friendly apps. But everything has its advantages and disadvantages so Whatsapp has too. According to Abbas (2017), some of the advantages and disadvantages include:

Advantages:
1. Available in iPhone, Android and Windows Phone.
2. Send unlimited messages across the world using Whatsapp.
3. It gives the status of the message easily using grey and blue ticks (single tick for sent and double tick for delivered, grey is for delivered and blue is to show that the message is read by the person).
4. Send contacts very easily and can be saved as well as with just two steps
5. Send audio and video messages up to size up to (approximately) 16Mb
6. Send document files up to 100Mb (like PDFs, documents, spreadsheets, slideshows and more)
7. Send your location accurately and can be used instantly for starting the trip using google maps or your phones default map.
8. It provides Group chat with a limit of about 256 Whatsapp Members
9. It has broadcast list for broadcasting single messages to multiple persons at a time using a single click.
10. It provides security by giving End -To-End Encryption (*So that your messages are safe and not displayed to others but only by the person you sent*) and Easy Blocking Option)
11. It has an option for Email Conversation instead of private messaging.
12. It provides unlimited voice and video calls for free
13. It provides emoji's to make the conversation fun and interesting
14. It has extended its services for web and Desktop (Windows 8 and MAC OS X 10.9)
15. Saves your money and time by reducing normal Text and Multimedia messages
16. It can also work without your sim card data but your account should have already been registered (try switching on flight mode and connect to a wifi network still you can access Whatsapp)
17. It provides an easy way to change your number to another number without losing your existing Whatsapp account.
18. All these services are provided for free of cost

Disadvantages:
1. A Unknown/Known Message once sent cannot be deleted (No way to stop the message)
2. In a group, the size limit of the group is <= 256 persons currently (may be changed in future)
3. In a group only the Group-Admin can add the persons / give admin title to other persons in the group and all the 256 can be the group admins.
4. Storing/Retrieving the Chat - Backup may be messy and takes time.
5. While changing to a new device using the same number, the existing chat stored in the old device cannot be retrieved in this new device (incase of not having chat backup).

6. Constant/Unwanted Messages like images and videos may eat all the space in the device. (can be rectified by changing way of downloading images/videos/documents automatically or manually using the download preference option)
7. It uses data as its fuel and will not work without data (offline) like MMS and Text Messaging system.

The platform was aptly named, Ogwa Unity Forum and it became acceptable by the youth, the educated and the elites of Ogwaland instantly. The Admin directed the foundation members to send the phone numbers of Ogwa people in their contacts for addition to the forum, through this a large number of people were brought into the forum and discussions started. After some months of mobilization, it was agreed that there is a need for an administrative structure for the forum and two different structures- The Executives and Coordinators were inaugurated by voting in the platform. The Executive members include:

i. The Administrator
ii. The Secretary
iii. The Publicity Secretary and
iv. The Chief Whip (Maintains decorum and discipline in the forum).

The second level of administration was the Coordinators, this comprised of three representatives from the six autonomous communities that made up the Clan. But while members of the executive are residing in several cities across the globe, it is mandatory that the Coordinators must be residence in the state or adjoining states for effective coordination.The Coordinators meet on monthly basis to deliberate on the suggestions of members in the forum, take decisions and send to the Executive council for ratification and approval. After this, the Executive Council through the Administrator of Secretary goes to the forum to solicit for funds and members usually responded.

Through this, within its short life span, the Forum has left a lasting impression and is the rave of the moment in the clan. So far, the Forum has raised about twenty million naira and expended it on community development projects and programmes.

Some of the projects and programmes undertaken by the Forum include:

Road Rehabilitation
Sand-filling and grading of over thirty kilometers of roads within the community during the dry season, to make the road motorable during the Yuletide. This was undertaken in December 2016 and 2017.

Health
Construction of three bedroom Doctor's residence at Ogwa General Hospital. This made doctors posted to the hospital to live in the compound instead of commuting from the state capital. With this, there was an increased patronage of the hospital and several needless deaths were avoided.

The Forum instituted a health insurance scheme in collaboration with the Management of the Hospital, were five indigent members from each autonomous community were selected for free medical insurance, covered by the Forum. So far, more than two hundred and fifty thousand naira has been expended on the insurance

Security
Between December 2016 and June 2017, there were six cases of kidnap in Ogwa community, where prominent community member's parents and relatives were kidnapped for ransom. This brought fear across the land and people were afraid to visit home again for fear of being kidnapped for ransom. Ogwa Unity Forum rose to the occasion and intervened in a pragmatic manner that stemmed the tide permanently.

The Forum identified the major roads that led outside the community and fixed iron bars with padlock on them all. Next , a local vigilante was formed armed and affiliated to the state vigilante organization for effective supervision. Motorcycles were provided in each of the six autonomous communities for the coordinators of the vigilante groups in the autonomous communities; a member of the forum resident in the US sent twelve pieces of high frequency walkie-talkies to the vigilante members. With these in place, under five minutes, the entire community could be under a lock down, since then, no case of kidnap has been recorded.

Again, the Forum and some other well placed members of the community outside the forum, made frantic efforts and as at now, a Divisional Police station has been approved for Ogwaland and is currently under construction.

Youth Empowerment
Some of the accomplices of the kidnappers who were apprehended and other robbers and drug peddlers and addicts apprehended in the community confessed that they took to crime because of unemployment, to stem this tide, the Forum in June 2017, organized a Skill Acquisition Workshop thirty youths of the community (five from each autonomous community). At the end of the day, they learnt one life skill or the other like tailoring, fish farming, welding, bead-making, baking etc. This has provided many with self employment instead of

waiting for non-existing white collar jobs, through this, some have been pulled out of the streets, from crime and drug addiction.

Cultural Renaissance

The Ogwa Unity Forum owing to the clamour of members especially, those in the diaspora in December 2017 organised a cultural carnival where various aspect of our cultural heritage were showcased. This comprised of display of masquerades and other dance troupes to the admiration and entertainment of both community members and visitors. This reinforced the unity and consanguinity of the various communities that made up the Ogwa clan.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research work employed observation as its methodology. The researcher being the Secretary General of the Forum is privy to the day to day running of the forum, decisions and implementations of its programmes and projects and therefore, observed on a first hand basis, the role social media has played in developing rural communities through community self-help efforts.

Findings and Conclusions

Social media applications in this modern era is a sine qua non for community mobilization and development and is one of the greatest things to have happened to community development. Due to its instant messaging and ability to send pictures, it has further shrunken the world to a hamlet, to the extent that some people residing outside the country hears and sees certain things, even before those in the village.

Watsapp for example has provision for just two hundred and fifty-six people on the platform, this is a far cry compared to the population of most rural communities. This therefore prevents a lot of people from coming on board and making their own contributions to community development. But findings from this research shows that you don't need plenty people to engender community development, all that is needed are people of like minds, people with the heart of philanthropy and community service. This is always ensured by substitution by elimination, any member who is inactive does not make monetary contribute to the programmes and projects and projects of the Forum over a period of time is regarded as dormant and deleted. Funnily, ever since the formation of this forum, it has not reached its maximum cap for membership, yet it has intervened tremendously in the development of Ogwa Community.

Another finding of this research work is that community development through social media appp is elitist in nature. It takes some measure of financial comfort for one to remain active on some apps like watsapp, First, the person must have and android or iPhone and these do not come easy. Again, the cost of data in Nigeria and most other developing countries is costly, in country where most of the rural dwellers live below the poverty line, having data on ones phone always is a tall order. Finally, constant use of applications on a phone device runs the batteries down quick, therefore, to stay connected always, one will need a generating set for electricity as electricity supply in the rural areas are as erratic as it is epileptic, they can stay for many days running without power supply, anyone therefore without an alternative source of generating power will be cut off and inactive. Another big impediment is the supply of petrol needed to power the generating sets. Regrettably and shamefully, this commodity is usually scarce in a supposed oil producing country; where it is available in the rural areas, it is very costly as it is only sold through black markets, since main retail outlets are usually not available in the rural areas.

Finally, the whole community is not needed to develop the community, all the community need is few dedicated and committed people of like minds and wherewithal to engender development. Where this is made compulsory for all community members, some people may scuttle some of the good plans, not because they don't like the plans or projects to be embarked on but due to poverty and extra burden on them financially.

Recommendations.

Based on the findings and conclusions above, the researcher proffered these recommendations which when implemented, will help other communities in igniting the fire of development through community self-help, other than waiting endlessly for the intervention of the government which is a mirage in Nigeria, especially in the South-eastern part of the country.

The recommendations include:

Communities desirous of development in Nigeria should embark on self-help efforts. There are more than one million different communities in Nigeria and there is no how the government alone could develop all the communities simultaneously. The way out of this huge deficit is community self-help.

Again, the settlement pattern of people in the 21st century in Nigeria, like most other countries has greatly changed, people are no longer living together in their communities but dispersed far and near, in search of greener pastures and better opportunities. Some do not even come home regularly while some others may not

even come home at all but most Nigerians are attached to their ancestral homes till death. The best way to mobilize them for community development is through social media networks and applications.

Though, there are many social media networks and applications but due to the peculiarity of our environment which is developing, with electricity power challenges and rural poverty, the most effective app for community development is the Watsapp. The huge success recorded in community development in Ogwaland since the inception of Ogwa Unity Forum, a Watsapp based forum is a pointer to the fact that the app has a lot of advantages over other, especially in developing countries.

REFERENCES

[1]. Addison, C, (2006), Web 2.0: A New Chapter in Development Practice? Development in Practice.
[2]. Boyd, D. & Ellison, N. [2007], "Social Network sites: Definition, History and Scholarship".Journal of Compute Mediated Communication, Electronic edition.
[3]. Brown, R (2009), Public Relations and the Social Web: How to Use Social Media and Web 2.0 in Communication, Philadelphia: Kogan Page
[4]. Coleman, S and Blumler, (2009), The Internet and Democratic Citizenship: Theory, Practice and Policy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
[5]. Eagle, N, Macy M and Claxton, R, (2010), Network Diversity and Economic Development, Science 328.
[6]. Hais, w, and Morley, M, (2009), Millenial Makeover: My Space, YouTube and theFuture of American Politics, Piscataway NJ, Rutgers University Press
[7]. Hartup, W. & Stevens, N. [1999], Friendships & adaptation across the life span. In current direction in Psychological Science 8[3]. Pp 76-79.
[8]. Hilman, A, (1960), Community Organisation and Planning, New York: Macmillan.
[9]. Lauderman, G, (2005), Information Technology and Community Level Socio-Economic Development, Journal of the Community Development Society.
[10]. Murray, R, (1966), Case Histories in Community Organisation, New York: Harper and Bros
[11]. Olewe, B.N, (1995), Development Administration, Aba: Grace Books
[12]. Omale, I, Ebiloma, J.A (2005), Principles and Practice of Community Development in Nigeria, Makurdi: Aboki Publishers. Qualman, E, (2009), Socialnomics: How Social Media Transforms the Way We Live and Do Business, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley
[13]. Stern, M.J, and Dilma, D.A (2006), Community Participation, Social Ties and Use of the Internet, City and Community
[14]. Stillman, L, (2005) Participatory Action Research for Electronic Community Development Society Journal of the Community Development Society.
[15]. Ukomadu, S.C, (2012), Ogwa Anunu Mgbe: The History and Cultue of a Great Clan, Abuja: Lighthouse Publishers
[16]. United Nations, (1983), Community Development and National Development, Report by Ad-hoc Group of Experts.