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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ACCELERATED NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA. A STUDY OF SAKI WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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ABSTRACT

The quest for a wide spread development in the country and economic emancipation laid basis for the federal government to create this tier of government which is seen as the closest government to the people. Local government as a unit of government established by act of law to administer the functions of government and see to the welfare and interest of the local dwellers under the local government system. Based on the fact that the Federal government sees to the affairs of the entire nation and has many institutions under it which it needs to coordinate and maintain for national growth, it sees the welfare of the local people as paramount and this prompted the need for the creation of local government as the third tier government in the country and charged with the responsibility of uplifting the lives of the rural dwellers. What are the roles of Local Government in National Development?

Keywords: Democracy, Election, Local government, Politics, Women

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INTRODUCTION

The Local Government in Nigeria is an indispensable tier of government in the Nigerian federal system. It is deeply rooted in the law of the land and derives its powers from the constitution. Section 7(1) of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, states that the system of Local government by a democratically elected local government council is under this constitution guaranteed. From the above, it is clear that the local government is backed by law and administratively should have a democratically elected representative of the people who are charged with the responsibility of moving the government towards attaining sustainable growth for national development. Local government can be defined as a political authority which is purposefully created by law or constitution for local communities by which they manage their local public affairs within the law/constitution (Ogunna: 1996). The quest for a wide spread development in the country and economic emancipation laid basis for the federal government to create this tier of government which is seen as the closest government to the people. Okoli (2005:) defines local government as a unit of government established by act of law to administer the functions of government and see to the welfare and interest of the local dwellers under the local government system. Based on the fact that the Federal government sees to the affairs of the entire nation and has many institutions under it which it needs to coordinate and maintain for national growth, it sees the welfare of the local people as paramount and this prompted the need for the

creation of local government as the third tier government in the country and charged with the responsibility of uplifting the lives of the rural dwellers. It is important to observe that the basic amenities which are so dear to the people are left in the hands of the local government such as primary health care, rural electrification, pipe borne water, primary education etc.

Local government is an extension of Government from the centre or an extension of Government to the local Communities aimed at ensuring efficiency of Governance. According to Anikeze (2014), it is a Government operating at the base level or rudimentary level of society. While Abba (2007), puts it as work at the grass root level that is impacting on everyday life of the people. Nworji (2004) sees local government as an organ of the state put in place to paddle the developmental activities of a particular place or district, with a view of making the impact of governance felt at the grass root level. According to Okoli (2000), he defined it as a system of government at the local level exercised through locally elected representative council enjoying substantial autonomy in the exercise of specific power over a given locality in the performance of a range of functions and responsibilities allotted to it by law.

The United Nations Division of Public Administration cited in Nnaa and Abeki (2017) defines local government as a political subdivision of a nation (or in a federal system or state)

which is constituted by law and has substantial control over local affairs, including the powers

to impose taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purpose. Nnaa and Abeki (2017) however contend that the definitional problem should not give room to faulty reasoning that there are no consensus opinion from the myriads of definitions by authors. To them, the plethora of definitions only portray semantic or ideological differences thus, it is being referred to as government at the grass-root localized administration, the lowest tier of government. In a simpler context, Ibieta (2012) conceives local government in the communal sense to mean people's political instrument to participate in resource allocation, distribution, and power acquisition. Similarly, Prof. Eme Awa cited in Ibodje (1999) conceives local government as a political authority for the purpose of dispersing or decentralizing political power. From the above definitions, we can broadly say that local government in spite of being a political and administrative unit established by law with functional responsibility, involves the participation in decision-making by the elected representatives of the people for the purpose of bringing development to them at the grassroots. In this vein and for the purpose of this project, local government can be viewed as machinery for sustainable national development engineering at the local level of the state. Local Government Administration

On the other hand local government administration is that aspect of public administration that takes place in a particular

sector of the government that deals with the role of government in managing the affairs of the local people of a particular locality. Local Government administration has to do with planning, organizing, staffing, controlling, coordinating, reporting and budgeting in local Government affairs. It entails making use of the available human, material and financial resources available to the local Government to attend to and achieve the stated needs, aspirations, goals and objectives of the individuals in the local community. According to Nwatu (2000), the formalization of local Government administration in Nigeria was interlaced with the economic history of Nigeria which involved the activities and actions taken by the officials of the local Government aimed at mobilizing the resources of a given local community in order to achieve the goals, needs and aspirations of the people which in turn contributes to National growth and development. This indicates that local Government administration has

a vital role in rural transformation and National development.

National Development is conceived as a process of economic, political and social changes with the aim of achieving better life. Cockcroft (1970) opined that National Development involves changes in the basic institutions and structures of society. Rodney (1972) took development to imply the increase of skill, capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing of the people. Some of these indicators are fully discussed as some of

the challenges in local government administration in Nigeria in this paper

Local government plays critical role in rural development because it is the closest to the rural communities. This accounts for the allocation of certain legislative functions that places it in vantage position to provide social services and promote rural development to the grassroots. Local government councils in Nigeria have been constrained in providing rural infrastructure due to continual starving them of funds by state governments. Ikelegbe (2005) sees local government as a component of a state or region of a country. Adamolekun (1983) affirms that local government was established for the purpose of providing efficient service delivery vis-à-vis rural development. Agagu (1997) views local government as a government at the grassroots level of administration with the purpose of achieving the need of people at the grassroot. He sees the local government as an instrument of achieving development at the grassroot. Describing the local government in terms of its functions, Appadorai (1975) portrays local government as government by popularly elected bodies mandated with administrative and executive roles in matters affecting dwellers of a specific location. Also, Lawal (2000) describes local government as the closest tier of government to the people and designated with responsibilities to administer authority over the affairs of people in its domain. Providing an in-depth analysis in terms of political and socio-economic development, Erero et al. (2004) describes the local government as a tier of government,

which is closest to the rural citizens and assigned with functions of ensuring political, social and economic development of its area and people.

It is important to note that despite various reforms in local government administration in Nigeria, much has not been seen in terms of provision of essential services in the local governments that will translate to sustainable development at the grassroots' level. Ordinarily, local government administration encapsulates adapting appropriate technology in agriculture; establishment of skills acquisition and development centres; increasing literacy levels; creating awareness of rural possibilities; political education and mobilization; providing information on rural resources, deploying technical assistance; sensitizing potential volunteers and donors as well as focus on peoples' felt needs and basic amenities such as provision of good roads, electricity, health centres, markets, schools, and farm settlements among others. Unfortunately, the reverse is the case in Nigerian local governments. Given the crucial role local government administration plays in development at all local levels, it is imperative to interrogate how to mitigate this catalogue of challenges facing local government administration in Nigeria.

From this background, this study is interested in finding out the roles of local government in accelerating national development in Nigeria, a study of Saki West Local Government, Oyo state Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study will sought answers to the following research Questions:

1. What are the roles of Local Government in National Development?
2. What are the roles of Local Government in accelerating Development at the State Level?
3. What are the roles of Local Government in rural development in Saki West Local Government?

Scope of Study

The study will be delimited to local government administration and cover the entire Saki West Local Government area of Oyo State.

Concept of Local Government

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range of functions and responsibilities allotted to it by law. On the other hand local government administration is that aspect of public administration that takes place in a particular sector of the government that deals with the role of government in managing the affairs of the local people of a particular locality. Local Government administration has to do with planning, organizing, staffing, controlling, coordinating, reporting and budgeting in local Government affairs. It entails making use of the available human, material and financial resources available to the local Government to attend to and achieve the stated needs, aspirations, goals and objectives of the individuals in the local community. According to Nwatu (2000), the formalization of local Government administration in Nigeria was interlaced with the economic history of Nigeria which involved the activities and actions taken by the officials of the local Government aimed at mobilizing the resources of a given local community in order to achieve the goals, needs and aspirations of the people which in turn contributes to National growth and development. This indicates that local Government administration has a vital role in rural transformation and National development. Corroborating the United Nation definition, the National Guidelines for Reform of Local Government (1976) defines local government as Government at (the) local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. These powers should give the councils substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff

and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal governments in their areas and to ensure through active participation of the people and their traditional institutions that local initiatives and responses to local needs and conditions are maximized. Local Government as a concept of study and as institution or process of governance has divergent views in its conceptualization as there are many authors. Ibodje (1999) acknowledging this puts it that local government can hardly be given a one-formal type of definition; as it is also not easy to define it in exact verbal terms by all writers or authors. The United Nations Division of Public Administration cited in Nnaa and Abeki (2017) defines local government as a political sub-division of a nation (or in a federal system or state) which is constituted by law and has substantial control over local affairs, including the powers to impose taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purpose. Nnaa and Abeki (2017) however contend that the definitional problem should not give room to faulty reasoning that there are no consensus opinion from the myriads of definitions by authors. To them, the plethora of definitions only portray semantic or ideological differences thus, it is being referred to as government at the grass-root localized administration, the lowest tier of government. In a simpler context, Ibieta (2012) conceives local government in the communal sense to mean people's political instrument to participate in resource allocation, distribution,

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Theoretical Perspective

Local government in Nigeria as an agent of transformation in nation building and local government as an institution has elicited many write up by many scholars. According to the

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powers within defined areas while Ogunna (1996) sees it as a political authority which isnpurposefully created by law or constitution for local communities by which the manage their

local public affairs within the limits of the law/constitution. As a political authority, the local

government is manned by personnel or representatives charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the welfare and affairs of the people are attained. It is the responsibility of these

representatives to ensure that the concerns of the people are adequately cared for and administered to ensure bottom to top development in the country. In its drive for nation building,

the local government has done well in trying to institutionalise development in their localities

through adequate participation towards national issues, policies and programmes. According to

Wikipedia, nation building refers to the process of constructing or structuring a national identity

using the power of a state. This process aims at the unification of the people within the state so

that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run.

In analysing this work, the collective action theory would be administered to examine the two variables-Local government and national development. Collective action theory is traditionally defined as any action aiming to improve the group's condition (such as status or power) which is enacted by a representative of the group (Wright 1990). According to this theory, it describes the situation which multiple individuals would all benefit from a certain action. Applying this theory to our study, provision of basic amenities such as good roads, electricity, pipe borne water, primary health care and education etc are the actions executed by the representatives of the group (such as chairmen and councillors) elected at the local government to see to the smooth running of the locality. At the end of the day, the situation where the entire or multiple people would benefit would be an action engineered by a few (representatives).

The economic theory of collective action is concerned with the provision public goods through the collaboration of two or more individuals, and the impact of externalities on group behaviour. it is commonly referred as public choice. Mancur Olson's 1965 book, *the logic of collective action: Public Goods and the theory of groups*, gives an in-depth analysis of this theory.

Local Government Reforms

The Nigerian government has done a lot to ensure that the Local government is accorded responsibility and respect in the committee of institution in the country through so many reforms

which were properly outlined. The 1976 Local government reform which is generally seen as the

reform that gave teeth to the institution and gave rural dwellers a sense of belonging was packaged by the Murtala/Obasanjo administration. The reform for the first time recommended

that the Local government be seen as a tier of government and equally provided for statutory

allocation for the Local government from the federation account. According to Ogunna (1996),

this reform marked a turning point in the history of Local government in Nigeria for so many

reasons, namely

I. It was the first reform in the land which took all the Local government in the country into consideration.

II. A uniform system of Local government was for the first time introduced for all states of the federation.

III. The federal government started for the first time to give statutory allocations to the local government.

IV. The Local government were declared as and started to be recognised as "third tier government" with attendant implications.

The reform shows that the local government was granted financial autonomy which made them receive their allocation from share of federal revenue and gave it a status as third tier government thereby

granting it autonomy with representatives who are elected by the local dwellers. The reform also brought uniformity of government which allowed all the Local governments in the country to practise the presidential system of government. Regrettably, this reform was short lived and was never implemented to the fullest despite the fact that it was enshrined in the 1979 constitution. The Shehu Shagari administration tried to execute the reform in part but did not give more strength towards its enforcement before it was ousted by Gen. Buhari who did not do more towards the uplifting the Local government and has no reform to its credit. The Babangida military administration reviewed the 1976 reform and brought out his own which he implemented and positioned the Local government as centres of socio-economic development ground through out the country. The various Local government headquarters attracted increased and diversified economic, social and political activities. Thus, the Local government is designed to lay a solid political and economic foundation for grassroots socio-economic and political development (Ogunna: 1996).

According to Ogunna (2007), he posited that at the time Babangida left the political scene, he left the Local government with adequate autonomy, sound financial base, educated body of chairmen and councillors, improved executive capacity, appropriate functions and suitable structure. Since after Babangida left office, the subsequent military and civilian administrations have thwarted and stiffened

development at the Local governments. The State governments through their state houses of Assembly have made laws that have ridiculed the existence of the Local governments. They control the use of funds at this level through the State/Local Joint Account commissions which was purposefully meant to add value and resources to the Local government by getting some percentage of the state internal generated revenue and add to that of the Local government instead, the State governments and their governors use it as a medium to hijack the Local governments of share of the federation account. In terms of personnel, the State governors have manipulated the Local government to the extent that they appoint their cronies as Care-taker chairman or Transitional committee members as Chief executives at the Local governments without regard to the constitutional provision for a democratically elected Chairman at the Local governments in the country. An example is Anambra state where since 1999, there has not been any Local government election to elect Chairmen and Councillors while in Imo state, the Governor, Owelle Rochas Okorocha sacked elected Local government Chairmen and Councillors whose tenure has not elapsed, although they Chairmen won him at the Appeal court sitting in Owerri, he stood his ground and since then has being using the Directors of administration and general services to oversee to the finance of the Local Governments.

Roles of Local Government in National Development

According to President Ibrahim Babangida who rightly puts it that *Growth points must emerge from local government areas and provide the much needed push to activate and energise productive activities in rural Nigeria and to reverse the phenomenon for rural-urban drift.*

The local government ensures that the local areas must be seen as a point where development

should emerge and spread to the entire nation. To ensure that the Local is adequately funded for

economic growth, many forms of revenue has been adopted and implemented but were all dropped

because of their inherent deformities like favouritism, non compliance, inequalities etc but with

the 1976 reform gave room for statutory allocation from federation account which makes it

criminal to withhold their funds which are giving to ensure that the welfare of the local people

are administered. By so doing, it places itself as the best institution and tier of government that

encourages even development in the country.

These are some of the areas the Local government use to drive national development.

(a) **Agriculture:** Before the discovery of oil in Nigeria in commercial quantity, Agriculture

was the main stay of the economy. With agricultural advancement a nation launches itself

into one of the leading economies in the world. According to Okonko (1995), any country that is unable to feed itself should not regard itself as developed. The importation of even the staple food for the citizens should be seen as a national disgrace. The interesting thing about agriculture is that it is an end to end profit making venture which engineers rapid development from the grassroots. The distribution of farm implement like fertilizer through this level of government encourages farmers and makes it accessible by them. Researchers believe that 70% of Nigerian labour force is employed in agriculture and they live in the rural areas. In fact, the Local government is a sound base through which food sufficiency could be attained with the aid of the Federal government and this would create employment and curtail rural-urban migration which leads to prostitution, armed robbery, kidnapping and other vices.

(b) **Sensitisation and mobilization:** The Local government as the closest government to every citizen avails the Federal government the opportunity to tap into for sensitising and mobilizing the people. Nnamani (2012:110) believes that political participation serves the following functions in a political system:

- 1 Exposes the political issues and situation to both the rulers and the ruled.
- 2 Affords the people the opportunity to express their opinion
- 3 Exposes the greatest opportunity for majority.
- 4 Creates order and stability on the system.

In Nigeria today, there is a disconnect between the people and government because the

Federal government has not only crippled the Local government system but has allowed the State governments to make experiments with it thereby misinforming the people on the objectives of the local government. The Local government serves as a centre where the local people come and get informed about the policies of government and their own input towards government programmes. Any nation that does not accord respect to the rural people through adequate information of governments' vision has done well to deform the largest number of its citizens.

(c) **Infrastructural development:** According to Bhatia (2011), an adequate and efficient infrastructure is a pre-condition for a suitable and rapid economic growth and is a major source of external economies. The local government in the country receives the least allocation in the federation and this has not given them the needed resources to erect structures that could stand the test of time. Infrastructure could equally be seen as a barometer to measure development. The local governments in the country afford the federal government an institution where funds could be utilised to fund housing estates and construction of roads etc.

(d) **Health:** Today in Nigeria, Local government is recognized as a stand point for promoting good health in the country most especially in the area of primary health care. Health workers at the Local government throughout the nation have been used in the immunization campaign to fight polio and other childhood killer diseases thereby safe

guarding the lives of the younger ones who are told that they are the leaders of tomorrow.

The constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria in the Fourth schedule, Section 7(2)

further gave more responsibilities to the Local government on health matters when it stated that the functions of a local government council shall include participation of such council in the government of a state as respects the following matters... (c) provision and maintenance of health services and (d) other of such functions as may be conferred on a Local government council by the house of Assembly of the state. From the above, it implies that Local government is legally an institution responsible for health services and care for the citizens. This government is in a pole position to know when any epidemic occurs in their areas, get information, diagnose patients and give them the necessary health attention they require and through the health workers vaccinate the people of the area to stop the spread.

Problems of Local Government towards National Development

The local government as the tier and grass root government in Nigeria have really suffered in the hands of the upper governments and in the hands of its officials who are representative of the local people. The problems this government encounters include,

(i) **Paucity of fund:** The constitution empowers the local government to source fund through tax, rates, fees etc around its jurisdiction and on its people but the state governments have taken over some these major

sources of revenue and leased to their cronies at little or no price. Further more, the constitution mandates the state government to pay in 10% of their internal generated revenue to the State Joint local Government Accounts purse for disbursement by the local governments in the state instead the use this avenue to siphon local government funds that come into the same account thereby rendering it helpless and lacking in fund to execute their duties such as construction and maintenance of roads, streets, street lights, pipe borne water etc.

(ii) **Peace and Stability:** Peace is the plume value in contemporary Nigeria, the most valuable public good, but yet the most elusive, Uche (2011). Development and growth in the local government was drawn backwards due to lack of peace and stability in government. Some of the military administrations we had in this country lacked focus and vision: looked at the local government as an institution to settle some powerful elites who nominate their loyalists as sole administrators and this normal caused crisis in the area because the people they nominate are not always the wish to people and they also encounter public rejection. Today, the Governors of many states have done worst than the military administrators, changing the chief executives whom the hand pick at will without recourse to the law.

(iii) **State over bearing influence:** The state governments in our present democracy has ridiculed this system and makes bold to say it is an off shoot of the state and has no autonomy. They now stand down on the laws

establishing the local government, controls their funds, use the state house of Assembly to make laws that deducts local government fund etc.

(iv) **Flagrant abuse of rule of law:** Section 1(1) of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states, this Constitution is supreme and its provisions shall have binding forces on all authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is rather unfortunate that some State governors has against section 7 (i) of the same constitution which states that a local government by democratically elected local government council is under this constitution guaranteed. Today the local government is no longer a place where the masses elect their representatives who know their problems and attend to them but a place where the Governors exercise their powers thereby disconnecting the people from activities of government and reducing the flow of growth and economic development.

(v) **Corruption:** This one major canker that has ravaged the Nigerian system. The Local government officials has adversely undermined development in their areas and reduced the faith the Federal government has on it. The staff of the Local government has seen this institution as avenue to enrich themselves as it brings the “national cake” closer to them. They have equally neglected the ethics of service and compromised standards thereby making themselves agents of destruction and conduit pipe to siphon public fund. Indiscipline, truancy and kickback has not only taken over the activities

of the government but has is now regarded as a culture. Projects which are of benefit to the people are poorly executed because a large chunk of the money

has been taken as kickback by government officials and the Contractor is left with little fund to execute the contract. Recruitment exercise is no longer advertised rather applicants are hand picked, favour dispensed to acolytes with thoughtless abandon, settle party loyalist, girl friends and make money through it thus sacrificing merit and competence on the alter of mediocrity.

Features/Characteristics of Local Government Administration

Local Government is a geographical area/territorial location administered by people which possesses the legal right and the necessary organization to regulate its own affairs. This in turn presupposes that existence of a local authority with powers to act independently as well as participation of local community in administration of its own affairs becomes imperative that there are certain attributes associated with local body of a state. As a result, the following characteristics are therefore associated with local government administration in Nigeria.

Elected Representatives:

There must be in existence elected representatives in the local council that see that the administration of the council is accountable to the people. This is an important attribute that makes for effective performance of the officials in governance since they are selected among the local people by the people. This people will run the

administration effectively as they bear in mind the wishes and aspirations of the people who elected them.

Local Autonomy:

Autonomy refers to the ability to manage one's own affairs without undue interference from outside. This refers to its limited discretionary powers to make and execute bye laws within its geographical jurisdiction. The autonomy at the local level of administration has to do with the degree of discretionary powers assigned to it by a tier of government in terms of functions, finance, administration and political matters.

Geographical Location

There should be a definite geographical location with boundaries for every local government area within the state. This is why it is seen as subjects of a state or political subdivision of a state. Its exercise of power and functions are restricted within a specified geographical area of jurisdiction which must be well defined by the law establishing it.

Population /Clientele

Local government administration is people oriented and as such has to do with those services specifically aimed at improving the conditions of the rural dwellers. It is therefore obvious that population is a necessary factor in the determination of local government administration.

Revenue Generation

It is an established fact that local government by power conferred on it can raise funds by imposing taxes and rate. It should also be appreciated that it raises funds not just because it needs money to manage its

own affairs but also for the fact that it cannot depend solely on the central/state government for grants and subventions. That is why Ogunna (1996), pointed out that local government in Nigeria cannot operate as a tier of government without adequate funds and skilled personnel.

Challenges of Local Government Administration in Nigeria.

Challenge, according to oxford advanced dictionary, is a difficult task before somebody. Something that can make a person prove himself, either skills, ability etc. Challenges of local government administration therefore are things that put local government to the task of demonstrating its skills and ability towards justifying its establishment. Local Governments are created or established basically to provide government closer the grass root people, thereby providing the needs of those people without necessarily waiting for central government. The challenges of local government Administration in Nigeria therefore revolves round fundamental problems and obstacles for achieving those goals. It is the primary concern of this paper to explain the multidimensional challenges of local government administration in Nigeria in details. These problems / challenges include:

Autonomy

Autonomy simply refers to freedom, independence, free from external and remote control. The 1976 reforms, provided for a third tier of government, making local government a tier of government that is a unit of government independent from other units. The 1976 constitution of the federal Republic

of Nigeria recognized local government as the third tier of government. Section 7 (1) of 1979 constitution. The autonomy of local Government as clearly established by 1976 reform guidelines and the 1979 constitution over the years continued to be a mirage because of the extent to which other tiers of government intrude in local government affairs. There are situations where Governors of state, unconstitutionally dissolve the entire elected council officers and replace them with caretaker committee. This development has made local government an appendage of state or an object of control by state .It is a major challenge of local government Administration, because local governments wait to take directives from state instead of carrying out self initiatives for the development of local government areas. Again,

the practice of local government funds or allocation passing through state joint account is a serious impediment to local government and poses a challenge to its task of providing social and economic amenities for its populace or people. The ungodly joint account paves way for the state government to dictate to local government and again divert huge sums of funds meant for local government to other things entirely. Again, the practice of approval of bye laws made by the local government legislative council by state legislature renders the concept of autonomy of local government futile, since there is no element of independence and freedom of legislation.

Financial Challenges

Local government source of finance is either through federation account or statutory allocation and internally generated revenue. Statutory allocation comes from federal government and the state government is supposed to augment the efforts of federal government by giving 10% of their internally generated revenue to local government. The problem faced by local government is that, the statutory allocation by federal government is delayed, not given on time. When it is released, it passes through state joint account and problems are compounded. Even the 10% that the state is supposed to give to local government is not given. This poses a serious challenge to local government administration, because no administration can achieve its goals without funds and local government funds are delayed and hijacked

Repositioning the Local Government as Catalyst for Nation Building in Nigeria

The Local government is a veritable institution in the Nigerian polity, well positioned and backed up by the constitution. Many successive administrations have given a touch to the Local government through various reforms most notably is the 1976 reform instituted by the Murtala/Obasanjo administration but all have come out to be paper work without implementation. This paper has tried to highlight some spots if solved would help in solving some inadequacies prevalent at this level of government. The Constitution which created the Local government is the worst enemy of this government. The Constitution which

made it clear that the Local government is the third tier government in the country, as such independent of other tiers unfortunately through its fourth schedule empowers the State Houses of Assembly to make laws for the Local government. This is indirectly placing the activities of the Local government in the hands of State government and runs foul to the autonomy granted them. The Fourth Schedule should be amended and those powers be placed in the Council who are elected representatives of the people at the Local governments.

The same Constitution empowers the State governments to organise Local government elections This is the crux of the matter. It is evident that since the local government election is organized by the State governments through the State Independent Electoral Commission, they will manipulate them and ensure that their party wins all the elections. President Goodluck Jonathan gave strength to this when he openly declared,

...the way the Governors are handling elections in their states with the State Independent Electoral Commissions, where opposition parties hardly win even councillorship elections...(Nnochiri: 2012).

From the Presidents comment, it is clear that what goes on as election can only be described as selection. In some cases, the State governments decides not to hold Local government election so that the will manipulate those they would appoint. The issue of Local government election should be left in the hands of the Independent National

Electoral Commission (INEC) charged with the responsibility of conducting elections as at when due.

Local governments as agents of transformation and Nation building must be allowed to make use

of its scarce resources to develop their areas and not being siphoned through the State Joint

/Local government Accounts by State governments which have crippled its activities. It is

advised that the various Local governments in the Country should open accounts with the Revenue Mobilisation and Fiscal Commission where their own share from federation account

would come to without diversion and their own percentage of State internal generated revenue

added to it. The signatories to this account should be the democratically elected Chief executive

of the Council and the Director of Administration and General services of the Local government.

The revenue base of the Local governments should be widened: provide legislation that would

help them tax companies, banks and institutions located in their areas. Political culture and participation should be strengthened where every citizen should learn and know how a government runs its activities and be able to contribute towards nation building.

The Local government should be allowed to recruit its entire staff from the

lower cadre to the higher cadre and put a stop to incidences where State governments send their acolytes as

Treasurers or Directors of Administration and General Services to them just to have an eye on

the Local government purse. The Local government Council should be stocked with educated and enlightened Representatives who would make laws that are capable of strengthening and creating avenues for economic and social development of their areas and not citizens who are elected based on sentiments which have murdered professionalism and promoted inefficiency at the grass roots.

Conclusion

The study examined the roles of local government administration in accelerating national development. From the findings of the study, it was concluded that local government administration play active roles in national development, local government administration play significant roles in accelerating development at state level, local government ensure rural development.

Recommendation

From the findings of the study, it is therefore recommended that:

1. The government should strengthen the necessary institutional and legal framework

that will empower local government chairman to periodically articulate, document,

and transmit to higher (federal or state) government for implementation; the needs,

concerns and input of Nigerian citizens towards sustainable national development.

2. Federal and State Government should embark on employment-generation programme aimed at reduction of poverty level in all the local government areas.

Indeed, eradication of hunger from the local government areas should be a priority

programme of the federal and state governments to Nigerian citizens in rural areas.

- 3 Local government should be given a reasonable degree of political and fiscal

autonomy with restricted central government interference. Federal government should play down on excessive control and undue interference on local communities

programme and projects

3. Government should build confidence in the rural citizens at the grassroot that local government is not a political enclave or estate of some ruling elites but a tier of government established or

created to provide and deliver the basic necessities of life

which when adequately provided constitutes a springboard for sustainable national

Development.

Suggestions for further studies

The researcher suggested that further study should be carried out in the following areas not covered by this study as follows:

1. Further research studies should be carried in Saki east and Atisbo local government
2. Similar studies should also be carried out in other states of Nigeria

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