AN ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE DELIVERY IN KEFFI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study is aimed at assessing service delivery in Keffi Local Government Area, of Nasarawa State with the view to providing solutions to the challenges of effective. The problem of the study is that experience in Nasarawa state has shown that people at the grassroots have suffered age-long neglect from the Local Government administration and also the inability of Local Government Authorities to deliver services in areas of provision of socio-economic facilities and Agricultural extension service.. The effects are that the people wallow in extreme poverty, hunger and disease. The paper adopts quantitative-descriptive method of data collection and analysis from the various scholars. Also the paper adopts service delivery theory as theoretical framework. It is against this problem that the paper attempts to x-ray the role of Local Government in Providing Service Delivery in Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State and recommends: that Concerted efforts should be made by Nasarawa State Government and Keffi Local Government authorities in the provision of basic socio-economic facilities to members of their community in order to ease their suffering and improve their standard of living. Agriculture is a very important sector of the economy that cannot be neglected by any responsible government. The local authorities in Nasarawa state and Keffi L.G.A should focus more in the delivery of service in the Agriculture extension service. Service delivery at the local government level is for the people at the grassroots, there is in need to involve them in government programmes and actions always.

Keywords: Assessment, Local Government, Service Delivery, & Nasarawa State.

Introduction

Successive governments in Nigeria have tried to grapple with the problem of making local governments effective, efficient, development-oriented, people-focused, and result oriented. This was actualized via local government reforms of 1976 coupled with other administrative reforms. Under the reforms, local governments are constitutionally recognized as the third tier of government in Nigeria as well as official beneficiaries from the Federation Accounts. The effect of the reforms was that it led to the increase in local government powers, enhanced status, financial resources, potential for self-sustenance at grassroots levels and a new approach to local government activity involving local participation in decision-making and effective service delivery (Ekpe, 2006)

Governance at the local level plays a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness and provision of public goods to the vast rural population. Available facts show that more than seventy percent of the population in Nigeria lives in rural areas; where local government is constitutionally empowered to provide social and public services such as roads, water supply, schools, electricity, health clinics etc (Ibok, 2014). One major challenge of local government administration in Nigeria is poor leadership. Selected or elected leaders at the local level have not been responsive to the basic needs of the people due to bad leadership, lack of accountability and transparency. This may account for poor service delivery at the grassroots level. Lack of funds occasioned by low budgetary allocation, restricted revenue sources available to local government and inability to effectively utilize its internal sources of revenue generation had also impacted negatively on the provision of public goods at local level.

Within the context of Local Government Administration in Nigeria, the term decentralization emerged in response to the centralization of power at the centre that neither promoted development at the grassroots nor enhance national integration. Instead, it facilitated the emergence of corrupt regimes and resulted in ethnic and regional inequalities. By decentralization this study means the transfer of power and authority from the Government at the centre to the local authority (Local Government).

The definition of decentralization is provided by Laxmikanth (2014:77) thus:

> In a decentralization system of administration the field office can act on their own in specific matters. They are given authority to take decision without reference to the headquarters. Thus the essence of centralization is the vesting of decision making power in the field offices

From this definition, decentralization denotes a reversal of centralization where power is concentrated in the centre. More specifically, Decentralization entails the relocation of power and responsibility from the centre to sub-national units of government or agencies.

With regards to Local Government and Service Delivery, these definitions and classification of decentralization underscores the strategic importance of decentralization to government's developmental programmes at the grassroots levels. This brings to light the objectives of local

government administration. Adeyemo (2005) itemized the following objectives of local government administration:

a) To make appropriate services and development activities responsive to local wishes and initiatives by devolving or delegating them to local representatives body;
b) To facilitate the exercise of democratic self-government close to the local government levels of our society, and to encourage initiatives and leadership potential;
c) To mobilize human and material resources through the involvement of members of the public in their local development;
d) To provide a two way channel of communication between local communities and government (both State and Federal) (Local Government Reform, 1976).

Decentralization programmes across rich and poor countries are centrally motivated by a quest to improve governance. In Nigeria, Local governments have huge responsibilities to accomplish, ranging from the mobilization of local resources, promoting social and economic progress and development projects among others. Coker and Adams (2012:5) provided the following functions of Local government administration.

- Collection of rates, radio and television licenses
- Establishment and maintenance of cemeteries
- Licensing of bicycles, trucks (other than mechanically propelled trucks), canoes, wheel barrows and carts
- Construction and maintenance of roads, streets, street lights, drains and other public highways
- Naming of roads and streets and numbering of houses;
- Provision and maintenance of public conveniences, sewages and refuse disposal;
- Registration of all births, deaths and marriages;
- The provision and maintenance of primary, adult and vocational education
- The provision and maintenance of health services amongst others;
- Formulation of economic planning and development schemes for the local government area
- Establishment, maintenance and regulation of slaughter houses, slaughter slabs, markets, motor parks and public conveniences;
- Assessment of privately owned houses or tenements for the purpose of levying such rates as may be prescribes by the Houses of Assembly of a state;

Control and regulation of:

- outdoor advertising and hoarding
- movement and keeping of pets of all descriptions; oshops and kiosks; ocooked food sold to the public; olaundries
- licensing, regulation and control of the sale of liquor;

Participation in:

- Provision and maintenance of health services
- Any other functions that may be conferred by the state House of assembly.

According to Ojo (2009):

> The above-itemized functions of local government are broad, demanding, critical and crucial for ensuring the overall growth and development of various local areas. These developmental imperatives further reinforce the case for viable and efficient financial management for local governments (Ojo, 2009: 39).

It is no doubt that services are delivered via a structure put in place by countries, in Nigeria, the main structure for service delivery at the grassroots is the local government. Larger percentage of citizens in Nigeria live in the rural areas, where most of the local foods are produced, and bulk of votes also reside. According to Udoh (2005):

> Over 100 million Nigerians still lack access to electricity, and less than 40% of the population has access to safe drinking water. Infrastructures are mostly concentrated in urban areas. Access to infrastructure such as; safe water supply, electricity and roads are necessary to reduce vulnerability and poverty in rural areas of Nigeria.

Thus, service delivery to the citizens at the grassroots requires good structures and political will. In our current democratic dispensation, the political actor (elected chairman of local government), members of his management team (portfolio councilors), sectional heads of various departments and with the support of legislative arm of government form part of the processes that facilitates the delivery of service. The basic requirement of local government for service delivery is the transfer of statutory powers from the central authority (state government) to the local government authority. Service delivery at the grassroots level is nothing to write home about, it look as if there is no presence of government. There is little or no presence of social amenities in most rural communities in Nasarawa state, the roads are in bad shape, poor electricity supply, lack of support of famers by the local government authority. These have culminated to massive poverty and lack of developmental projects.

This paper is motivated by recent controversies surrounding the granting of autonomy to local governments in Nigeria and the need to examine advantages of local governments as dependable vehicles for service deliver at the grassroots. Good quality and affordable servi delivery is also a condition for the good image of government.

Conceptual Clarification: Local Government and Service Delivery.

Local Government: There are different theories or models of local government that underpin the existence of local government or that serve as explanatory frameworks for the establishment, purpose, function and philosophy of local government that have been developed by scholars in the field of public administration and local government studies. Such models include: Democratic participatory model, efficiency-services model and developmental model (Boris, 2015).The three models or schools of thought are relevant to performance, function and existence of local government. Theoretically speaking, Local Government is expected to enhance achievement of democratic ideals, political participation, protective services and infrastructural

services like provision and maintenance of health facilities and institutions (Achimugu, Stephen and Agboni, 2013). However, in this study, attempt will be made to examine efficiency- service delivery model which states that the principal focus of local government should be the provision of services, and it must be judged by its success in providing services up to a standard measured by national inspectorate (Mackenzie, 1954 cited in Ola and Tonwe, 2009).

The central point of the efficiency-service model is that the primary purpose of the local government systems is to provide social services such as law and order, local roads, primary education, sanitation and others efficiently (Chukwuemeka, 2014). Kafle and Karkee (2003) stated that "the core argument of the efficient-service delivery school is that local government exists to help to ensure efficient-service delivery. The leading advocate of the efficiency service school William Machenzie (1954), quoted in Boris, (2015) notes that service delivery to the local people is expected to pre-occupy the resources, power and time of the local government. The proponents of the efficient service school argue that all is well even if there is less democratic participation in the governance process as long as the local or grassroots people get efficient services from the local government. This implies that local government, because of its closeness to an area, can provide certain service far more efficiently than the state or central government (Chukwuemeka, Kafle and Karkee 2014).

In general terms, according to Eboh and Diejomaoh (2010), local governments universally are considered as strategic institutions for the provision of basic socio-economic, environment and other services. The proximity of the Local government to the grassroots makes it especially suited to provide certain functions far more efficiently and in a more cost effective manner than the much more remote government at the higher level. Such functions should be allocated to the local governments with powers, resources and the necessary autonomy to handle them (Abutudu, 2011). In actual sense, the national government will not be able to provide all the essential social services needed at the grassroots, thus it is the function of local government to effectively and efficiently provide social services at the local level.

In the Nigerian context, such functions of local government include: Collection of rates, radio and television license; establishment and maintenance of cemeteries, burial grounds and homes for the destitute or infirm; Licensing of bicycles, trucks (other than mechanically propelled trucks), canoes, wheel barrows and carts; establishment, maintenance of and regulation of slaughter houses, slaughter slabs, markets, motor parks and public conveniences; construction and maintenance of roads, streets, street lightings, drains and other public highways, parks, gardens, open spaces etc., (Bolatito, 2014). In respect to the above:

> It is, to a large extent, the zeal and need to reposition the local government for greater and more effective service delivery that perhaps provides the impetus and imperative for the various local government reforms in most political systems. In Nigeria, for instance, there have been various local government reforms to strengthen the capacity of the local governments to deliver services effectively and efficiently to the local and grassroots people. This is why the local governments usually takes the blame where local roads are bad, where there are no market stalls, no functional motor

park, no health centres, no portable water, no drugs in local dispensaries and where refuse is littered around the places.Chukwuemeka, (2014:22)

From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that local governments are established to provide appropriate and efficient services to the local community. In other words, local governments were created in Nigeria as a third tier of government to ensure responsive, efficient and effective social service delivery to the local communities.

Service Delivery

The concept of Service delivery refers to the provision of social or public goods that will promote socio-economic wellbeing of the citizens. Public services offered by government are numerous and may include the provision of public utilities, security, economic development projects, and the enforcement of the law and so on. The delivery of public goods and services at the local government level or the grassroots is aimed at moving the standard of living of the populace to the next level (Angahar, 2013). Service delivery refers to the provision of social services, such as potable water supply, good roads, healthcare delivery and electricity, intended to alleviate human suffering and by extension, enhance the quality of life of the citizens (Abe, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

Service delivery theory will be adopted as the theoretical framework. According to the proponents of this theory such as Mackenzie (1954) and Sharpe (1970), the existing of Local government is justified on the ground that, it is an efficient agent for providing services that are Local in character. Mackenzie (1954) one of the notable proponents was of the belief that Local government exist to provide social services to the people at the grassroots level. Another scholar of the school Sharpe (1970) argued that, if the Local government did not exist, something else would demonstrate the indispensable role that Local government is expected to play at the grassroots level. He Sharpe (1970:168), thus further stated that the value of Local government as a bulwark of liberty or at least as a hand maiden of democracy has been recognized its roles as an agency of providing services has evoked on comparable enthusiasm. More often than not it has been attached for it deficiencies in this sphere. This theory is of great relevance to this paper, because the school believes that, the vital function of Local government is to provide services and its effectiveness and efficiency are appraised based on how successful it provided the services.

Review of Related Studies

There are several studies carried out in relation to Local Government and Service Delivery. The following studies suffice:

Nook (2014) examined Local Governance and Service Delivery in Nigeria. The study assessed the impact/effectiveness of local government on the provision of public goods in Nigeria. The study adopted a historical and descriptive approach in data collection as well as basic needs approach as its theoretical foundation. The study revealed that elected leaders at the local level have not been responsive to the basic needs of the people due to bad leadership, lack of

accountability and transparency. The study also revealed that, lack of funds occasioned by low budgetary allocation, restricted revenue sources available to local government and inability to effectively utilize its internal sources of revenue generation had impacted negatively on the provision of public goods at local level. The study recommended that leadership at the local level should be committed to the course of good governance and such leaders must be elected by the people and not imposed by the higher authority. Also, the financial grip of local government by state governments should be severed to enable government at local level meet her basic need provisions.

Joseph (2014) investigated Decentralization, Local Governance and Public Goods Delivery in Nigeria. The study examined local governance operation in some selected areas-security, water supply; healthcare etc. and thus argues that local governance offers a potential solution to this endemic problem of development failure at the local level. Identifying patron-clientelism, corruption and political unaccountability as militating factors against efficient local government administration, the paper concludes that local government autonomy will guarantee the success of local governance in service delivery.

Nangoli, Ngoma, Kimbugwe, and Kituyi, (2015) carried out a study entitled: Towards Enhancing Service Delivery in Uganda's Local Government Units: Is Fiscal Decentralization Still a Feasible Strategy? The study examines the extent to which fiscal decentralization explains improvements in service delivery in Uganda's local government units. A quantitative survey research design was used for the study. Data were collected using a pretested questionnaire and analyzed using quantitative methods. Sampling was purposively done in three districts of Uganda and the respondents included Local Council members elected by local residents and the technical staff of the participating local governments. Correlation results revealed a positive and significant relationship between fiscal decentralization and service delivery, while regression results indicated that Fiscal Decentralization can predict Service delivery in local governments. The study recommended that despite the inefficiencies in fiscal decentralization, it still stands out as a feasible strategy through which the quality of services provided by local governments can be enhanced.

Service Delivery by Local Government

Service delivery to a large extent at the local communities or the grassroots can significantly improve the standard of living of the local populace. According to Bolatito(2014)the efficient and effective provisions of basic amenities and social infrastructures for the people at the grass root are key factors to the existence of any government. The Nigerian constitution assigns service delivery responsibilities to the three tiers of government with states and local government playing the most significant role in the delivery of basic services.

Some of the services expected from local government authority include education, health, housing, water, rural electricity, waste disposal services, roads, transport, and so on (Adeyemi, 2013; Agba, 2013). Thus local government councils are required to serve the public interest in areas of constructing roads, public markets, healthcare centres, drainages, transportation, motor parks, building primary schools, among others (Bolatito, 2014). Collaborating the view of Bolatito, (2014), Adeyemo, 1995 cited in Boris, (2015); Lawal and Oladunjoye, (2010) contends

that "as agents of rural development, local governments are to use funds made available to them by both federal and state governments and their internally generated revenue to improve on the lives of the people within their areas of operations through initiating and attracting developmental projects to the local government such as provision of access roads, water and rural electricity.

Apart from being a viable political and administrative organ for the transformation of rural communities, local governments also act as the training ground for the breeding of the grassroots democracy fundamental in national development". Agba, (2006) stated that "The provision of basic social services such as education and health, as well as maintenance of roads and public utilities within the jurisdictions of local government is now both a myth and mirage". The failure of local governments in service delivery was expressed by former president of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo in 2003. He lamented that:

> What we have witnessed is the abysmal failure of the local government system. It is on record that at no time in the history of the country has there been the current level of funding accruing to the local governments from the federation account, yet the hope for rapid and sustained development has been a mirage as successive councils have grossly under-performed in (their assigned responsibilities). Almost all the areas of their mandate..., yet the clamour for the creation of more local government areas have not abated (Obasanjo, 2003).

The above observations apparently show that local government has not really facilitated rapid development at the grassroots, which is the essence of their creation (Amaechi, 2012). The experience of Nasarawa state in term of service delivery at the local government level since the return of democratic government in 1999 has shown that there is literally the absence of governance, because there are challenges of poor environmental state, deteriorating public school building, poor market facilities and lack of health centers this is in addition to insecurity as a result of perennial incidence of communal conflict. To be fair to the current administration of Alhaji Tanko Almakura, the government in the last four years have been making efforts in road construction, rehabilitation and building of new primary schools, and construction of modern markets in some selected local government in the state in the state, but the question is this, 'is it the responsibility of state to take-over the functions of the local government? What could be the factor or factors responsible for the failure of local governments in efficient and effective social service delivery at the grassroots? The answers to this question will be explored below.

Service Delivery in Keffi Local Government

In Keffi Local Government, service delivery at the grassroots level is not encouraging. The services delivered include the following: Construction of Gate House and fencing of youth center Keffi LGC, Construction of the secretarial road, Construction of Boreholes, Upgrading and renovation of PHC central store. Rehabilitation of bridge near prison service yard, the furnishing of Algon Clinic, Construction of small bridge, the reconstruction of culvert Slab, repair of culvert embankment construction and filling, construction of drainage. Other includes

Construction of 8 toilet and soak-away, Renovation of legislative chamber, Renovation/Service of Transformer, Electrification of Angwan Sakwatawa and Tilla Communities, Repair and Furnishing of four (4) Supervisor Councilors Adviser's Offices, and drilling of boreholes in each of the 10 ward of Keffi LGC. See table below for detailed information.

Table 1: KEFFI LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL
LIST OF PROJECTS EXECUTED/ON-GOING 2010/2011

No. of Contract	Date	Project	Location	Amount	%	Date	Amount	Remark	%	Date	Amount	Remark
KLG/WKS/CONT/001	5/10/09 & 3/9/12	Construction of Gate House and fencing of youth center Keffi LGC	Low-Cost Keffi LGC	5,793,705.00	50 %	6/9/12	5,790,000.00	On-going				
KLG/WKS/CONT/002	3/9/12	Construction of the secretarial road	Keffi LGC Secretarial	11,580,000.00	50 %	6/9/12	1,400,000.00	On-going	50 %	20/9/12		
KLG/WKS/CONT/003	3/9/2012	Construction of two Boreholes	Angwan Jaba Clinic and Algon Clinic along prison service	2,800,000.00	50 %	6/9/12	1,400,000.00	On-going	50 %	20/9/12	1.400,000	Complete
KLG/WKS/CONT/004	3/9/12	Upgrading and renovation of PHC central store	Angwan Waje Clinic, Keffi	924,350.00	50 %	6/9/12	462,175.00	On-going		24/9/12	462175	Complete

Source: Works Department Keffi Local Government

Table 2: KEFFI LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

LIST OF PROJECTS EXECUTED/ON-GOING 2011/2012

No. of Contract	Date	Project	Location	Amount	%	Date	Amount	Remark	%	Date	Amount	Remark
KLG/WKS/CONT/005	3/9/12	The furnishing	Angwan Jabain Keffi LGC	859,000.00	50%	6/9/12	425,000.00	On-going	50%	24/912	425,000	Complete
KLG/WKS/CONT/006	3/9/12	Rehabilitation of bridge near prison service yard	Near prison service yard, Keffi	832,247.50	50%	6/9/12	416,123.95	On-going	50%	3/19/12	416,123.75	Complete
KLG/WKS/CONT/007	3/9/12	The furnishing of Algon Clinic	Along prison service road, Keffi	924,650.00	50%	6/9/12	462,325.00	On-going	50%	27/9/12	462,325.50	Complete
KLG/WKS/CONT/008	3/9/12	Construction of small bridge	Million quarters, Keffi	688,607.00	50%	6/9/12	344,303.00	On-going	100%	4/10/12	291,012.45	Complete
KLG/WKS/CONT/009	3/9/12	The reconstruction of culvert Slab	Yelwa ward, Keffi	326,607.50	50%	6/9/12	16,389.00	On-going	50%	20/9/12	163,389.00	Complete
KLG/WKS/CONT/010	3/9/12	Repair of culvert embankment construction and filling	Yelwa ward, Keffi	455,382.00	50%	6/9/12	227,671.00	On-going	50%	27/9/12	227,691.00	Complete

	KLG/WKS/CONT/011	3/9/12	The repair of side embankment	Yelwa ward, Keffi	481,854.00	50%	6/9/12	240,927.00	On-going	30/70% of bal			

Source: Works Department Keffi Local Government

Table 3 KEFFI LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

LIST OF PROJECTS EXECUTED/ON-GOING 2012/2013

S/N	No. of Contract	Date	Project	Location	Amount	%	Date	Amount	Remark	%	Date	Amount	Remark
	KLG/WKS/CONT/012	3/9/12	Construction of damage	Hassan Lawal Avernuegra, Keffi	789,000.00	50%	6/9/12	399,000.00	On-going	50%	28/9/12	399,000.00	Complete
	KLG/WKS/CONT/013	28/9/12	Construction of 8 toilet and soak-away	Yakubu D.Y.	582,000.00								
	KLG/WKS/CONT/0	2/5/14	Renovation of legislative chamber	Keffi LGC Secretarial	500,000.00								
	KLG/WKS/CONT/V.I/02/014	6/6/14	Renovation /Service of Transformer	At Kaibo Madain Jigwada Ward, Keffi LGC	350,000.00								

Source: Works Department Keffi Local Government

Table 4: KEFFI LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

LIST OF PROJECTS EXECUTED/ON-GOING 2013/2014

S/N	No. of Contract	Date	Project	Location	Amount	%	Date	Amount	Remark	%	Date	Amount	Remark
	KLG/WKS/CONT/V.I/03/014	6/6/14	Installation of electricity	At Kaibo Madain Jigwada Ward, Keffi LGC	1,500,000.00								
	KLG/WKS/CONT/V.I/04/014	6/6/14	Electrification of Angwan Sakwatawa and Tilla Communities	In Jigwada Ward of Keffi	4,500,000.00								
	KLG/WKS/CONT/V.I/198/014	7/5/14	Repair and Furnishing of four (4) Supervisor Councilors Adviser's Offices	In Keffi LGC Secretarial	2,600,000.00								

Source: Works Department Keffi Local Government

Table 5: KEFFI LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL
LIST OF PROJECTS EXECUTED/ON-GOING 2014/2015

S/N	No. of Contract	Date	Project	Location	Amount	%	Date	Amount	Remark	%	Date	Amount	Remark	S/N
	KLG/WKS/CONT/V.I/05/014	18/5/14	Renovation of two flat (10 & 12) at 8 Man's Quarters	Ang. Wajein G/Tudu Ward of Keffi LGC	1,600,000.00									
	KLG/WKS/CONT/V.I/06/014	20/5/014	Drilling of boreholes in each of the 10 ward of Keffi LGC	Electoral Wards in Keffi	20,500.000.00									

Source: Works Department Keffi Local Government

Table 6: KEFFI LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL
LIST OF PROJECTS EXECUTED/ON-GOING 2014/2015

S/N	No. of Contract	Date	Project	Location	Amount	%	Date	Amount	Remark	%	Date	Amount	Remark
	KLG/WKS/CONT/V.I/07/014		Maitenace of General										

Source: Keffi Local Government Council

Factors Affecting Service Delivery at the Local Government

A thorough examination of local government performance in Nigeria will reveals that loca governments have failed in effective service delivery due to constrains. Some of thes challenges underlying the ineffectiveness of local government in their service deliver

responsibilities were identified in a study conducted by (Bello-Imam and Roberts, 2001). These factors include: (a) revenue inadequacy (b) the erosion of local functions particularly in the revenue yielding areas by state governments and their agencies (c) political-administrative problems such as inadequacy of skilled and technical manpower, lackadaisical attitude of existing local government staff, official corruption, variable structures/sizes of local government among others, and (d) lack of integration of the relevant communities in the execution of local services. Similarly, some researchers in the field of public administration and local government studies identified the following factors affecting service delivery at local government administration in Nigeria as; thus, (Eboh and Diejomaoh, 2010; Adeyemi, 2013; Agba, 2013; Ibok, 2014; Bolatito, 2014; Chukwuemeka, (2014).

a. Financial constraints

For local government to effectively provide essential services at the grassroots, enabling environment most especially funds must be available to carry out its assigned responsibilities. In Nigeria, aside from other common problems, non-provision of enough funds to local government has hindered effective performance by the local council (Ibok, 2014). Similarly, Ibok (2014) averred that: Aside from the fact that statutory allocations and grants from the federal and state governments to councils are inadequate, the problem is exacerbated by the low revenue generation capacity of the council. Associated with this problem is also exacerbated by frequent sundry deductions by the federal and state governments from their monthly allocations. Worst still is failure of most state governments to fulfill their monthly statutory obligations to local government by outright refusal to remit 10% internally generated revenue accrued to the state monthly. In some situations, it has become so bad that many locals of council cannot pay staff salaries not to talk about basic need provisions''. These financial constraints account for the inadequacy of fund in the local government administration in Nigeria and they hinder the efforts of local council to provide better, efficient and effective social services to the grassroots.

b. Corruption

In Nigeria, corruption has become something else, such that it has presented Nigeria in bad light before the international community; it is the bane of Nigeria's developmental efforts. Corruption has been identified as one of the problems confronting effective local government administration in Nigeria. (Bolatito, 2014) pointed out that: At the grassroots level, corruption has been accommodated, entertained, and celebrated within the system.

The inability of local governments to provide services to the people at the grassroots has been linked to high levels of corruption among local governments' officials (Agba, 2013). There have been glaring cases of embezzlement and misappropriation of the councils' funds by the official of the council (Ibok, 2014). As an illustration, in February 2010, the chairman of Ijebu East Local Government Council in Ogun State was suspended from office on account of various financial misdeeds. Similarly, in April 2010, the House of Assembly in Benue State suspended 12 council chairmen in the state and directed that the chairmen should refund a total of 150 million naira being financial misdeeds associated with the excess crude funds received by local governments in the state (*National Mail* cited in Agba, 2013). The consequence of the foregoing is that apart

from financial constraints, corruption constitutes a major obstacle on the effectiveness of local government service delivery.

c. Undue Political Interference – Lack of Autonomy

One of the reasons for the failure of local government in the area of services delivery is the role of the state governors in the affairs of local government (Adeyemi, 2013). Eboh (2010) stated that there is high degree of external influence and interference in local government affairs by the higher levels of government, particularly the state governments. The governors are fund of taking over their financial allocation, taxes, counterpart funding and refuse to conduct Local Government elections, but instead running local governments with appointed administrators, most of whom are party loyalist and their friends and relations turning the entire process of local governments into irrelevant scheme of things (Ukonga 2012). There have been instances where state governors unconstitutionally dissolve the entire elected council's officers without proper recourse and due process (Eboh, 2010). As soon as a new governor comes into office, one of the first actions is to dissolve the existing local councils, whether elected or care taker (Abutudu, 2011). This, as the recent case of Rivers State demonstrates where the newly elected Governor Wike dissolved the duly elected chairmen of local government councils in the state in May, 2015, this act can degenerate into anarchy, with claims of legitimacy between rival appointees or elected officials.

In many cases, caretaker-ship is perpetuated through promises of elections which are invariably postponed. This has been the case in Edo, Delta and others (Abutudu, 2011). As such most state governors never bothered to conduct local government elections. For instance, as at 2009, Anambra state had not held any local council elections since the return to civil rule in 1999 (Nkwocha, 2009). The high level of interference by state governors on local government affairs was also expressed by Khaleel quoted in John (2012:13) when he observed that:

> There is no state of the federation of Nigeria where one form of illegality or the other is not committed with funds of local government, through over deduction of primary school teacher's salary, spurious state/local government joint account project, sponsoring of elections, taking over the statutory functions of local government and handling them over to cronies and consultants, non-payments of pensioners and non-utilization of training fund despite the mandatory deduction of stipulated percentages for these purposes... nine states out of the 36 states of the federation have elected representatives running the affairs of their local governments. This is central to the whole problem because it is by planting stooges called caretaker committee, who neither have the mandate of the people nor the moral strength to resist the excruciating control of the state government that perpetuates the rot.

This undue interference has incapacitated the local government from effective functioning on one hand, and alienated grassroots people from enjoying social service delivery expected of local governments in Nigeria (Agba, 2013). Consequently, local governments now function mostly as extension or appendages of state governments (Ajibulu, 2012). The inherent nature of

this problem, according to Adeyemi (2013) has caused subservience, a situation where local government waits for the next directives from states government before embarking on any developmental projects. This has made local government an object of control and directives.

The implication of the above is that there are different dimensions of interference by state governors on local government administration in Nigeria. The first is the fiscal interference by the state governors. This problem stems from the fact that the Nigerian constitution did not totally grant financial autonomy to the local governments. For instance, the 1999 constitution of Nigeria did not adequately provide for the financial autonomy of the local governments as it subordinates them to the states through the provision, in section 162, paragraph 6, for the establishment and operation of State Local Government Joint Account (Chukwuemeka, 2014). This provision does not allow for the direct funding of the local government from the federation account and various research findings have shown that state governments manipulate this constitutional provision to keep the local governments as their appendages (Ezeani, 2012).

The second dimension is the political interference. The constitution did not provide adequately for the political autonomy of the local governments in Nigeria. The resultant effects of these lapses or inadequacies are that the state governments have the discretion to determine the nature, content and direction of local government elections and political activities. In the exercise of this discretion, the state government decide when elections would be held, who wins in elections, when to dissolve elected council, and the alternative framework to administer the affairs of the local governments (Chukwuemeka, 2014).

Summary

This section presents the summary of the paper from part one to the end of the paper. Part one of this paper dwelled on the introductory part of the study with emphasis on local government system in Nigeria, decentralization power and service delivery. Part two focused on conceptual clarification, while part three presented theoretical framework that guided the study, also part four focuses on review of related study, whereas part five presented the profile of service delivery in Keffi L.G. part six presented the summary conclusion, and recommendations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is true that our Local governments are faced with, myriad of problems and efforts have been made to proffer the solution for the way forward, thus: The following suggestions in form of recommendations are hereby put forward that will improve local government and service delivery in Keffi L.G. and Nasarawa state:

a). Agriculture is a very important sector of the economy that cannot be neglected by any responsible government. The local authorities in Nasarawa state should focus more in the delivery of service in the Agriculture extension service.

b). Concerted efforts should be made by Nasarawa State Government and Local Government authorities in the provision of basic socio-economic facilities to members of the community in order to ease their suffering and improve their standard of living.

c). Service delivery at the local government level is for the people at the grassroots, there is in need to involve them in government programmes and actions at all times.

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