

**THE POLITICS AND REALITIES OF INTER-GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS:
EFFECTIVE AND RESULT ORIENTED STATE-FEDERAL RELATIONS- NASARAWA
STATE AS A CASE STUDY**

BY

A.S. MODIBBO (Ph.D)

**Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences,
Nasarawa State University, Keffi.**

ABSTRACT

The relationship of components units and the central unit in most Federal states is characterized and typified by intrigues of politics, which tends to either affect the inter-governmental relations between them. In this work, we intend to use descriptive and analytical method of research to politics and realities of inter-governmental relationships, its effectiveness and other wise use Nasarawa State as a case study. Lastly, we will proffer some recommendations that will ensure a result oriented state-federal relations.

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that intergovernmental relations between levels of government contain elements of politics particularly as it affects policies and their implementation. The benefiting unit inevitably has to structure its relationships and use the bureaucrats to tailor their interactions to the extent the state can draw economic, social and political resources from the centre. As to which resources can be managed effectively and efficiently to produce outputs, largely depends on the capacity of the state- key holders to synergise with the federal institution.

The issue of intergovernmental relations is not limited alone to relationships in a federal state. This is because the level of intergovernmental relations also exists in unitary states. However, what is important is that the levels of IGR are more dominant in the federal states largely between Federal and State, Federal and Local and State and Local etc. As Ayoade (1982) has argued, that the nature of "intergovernmental relations is a function the heterogeneity within the national polity that necessitated a federal solution". This factor underlies the nature of the relationships that exists between the central government and the heterogeneous groups that have to accommodate the Nigerian peculiarities.

Nasarawa State is one of the units of the federation which is like other states tied to the aprons of the federal government. In the current situation, the federal government has immense and dominant control over the national resources (oil wealth) constitutionally and against this backdrop, the situation to a high degree determines the nature of the intergovernmental relations between the centre and the state.

However, given the current homogeneity of articulated political party in Nasarawa State with the central government, the State should be able to build its capacity, increase its productivity, develop its economic resources and transform the urban centres that are close to the Federal city of Abuja.

This work argues that given the concrete realities, the Nasarawa State government should use the political tools of intergovernmental relations to attract federal government attention towards the development of its human and physical resources.

Secondly, we argue that the Bureaucrats and public servants should harmonize their efforts and reorient their values in order to ensure that the relationships between the state and federal produce effective and efficient policy making machinery to ensure internal security rebuild the economy and create wealth in the state.

Thirdly, we posit that given the location of the state, the federal government in spite of constitutional constraints should structure special incentives to enhance the development of minerals potentials and other sectors in the state.

This work is organised into five sections. Section one is introductory while the second section deals with the conceptualization of IGR. The third hinges on the discussion of the politics and realities of IGR between the centre and the Nasarawa State, while the fourth concentrates on the nature and impact of the results so far produced as a result of this interrelationships. The final section is conclusion.

CONCEPTUALIZING INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS (IGR)

The evolution of IGR is a product of the existence of heterogeneous society requiring peculiar components of governmental activities. The essence of this interaction is to achieve sustainable national goals and achieve national integration and enhance development. Several definitions of IGR have been posited. Van der Waldt and Do Toit (1997) define intergovernmental relations as the “mutual relations and interaction between government institutions at horizontal and vertical levels”. These interactions in Thornhill’s (2002) opinion are made up of actions and activities of politicians and bureaucrats who interact to operationalize governance. This interaction often occurs among different officials within a particular polity. Similarly, Obi (2004) also perceives IGR as the complex pattern of interactions, and cooperation between many levels of government i.e. between federal, state and local governments.

This interactive network in Wrights (1988) opinion is important because it ensures and enhances synergy and sustain effective participation so that the public mandate can be effectively and efficiently implemented. In the process of delivering central government’s objectives, the executive must coordinate and cooperate with the legislative mechanisms and mutually interact across both vertically and horizontally. This interrelationship must in all respects align cohesively across all sections of government. It is against this backdrop that capacity delivery, productive performance, development and prudent management of resources can be enhanced at the state level.

The Constitution in the case of Nigeria has created a nation — centred federation, where states depend on the centre. But such a situation has implications for states particularly when economic resources of the federal and states dwindle. As Ayoade (1988) has mentioned since the national government becomes the surest sources of revenue for both federal and unit requirements, a gradual erosion of the powers of the units in favour of the centre is set in motion. This is an unfortunate situation for both constitutional and political reasons. Constitutionally it destabilizes the federation of changing the balance between central and state powers. And politically it is undesirable because it results in the political overburden of the centre. It kills state initiative or generating revenue or muddled.

The question of political imperatives is inescapable as far as intergovernmental relation is concerned in Nigeria given the constitutional arrangement, which allows changes to occur in terms of new boundaries. And as Elaigwu (2007) has argued “Federal Associations have been swinging between centrifugal and centripetal forces in the process of the adjustment of the federation”.

The current situation in the country has given room for concern because the oil sources from where the centre derive its income has dwindled. This has produced serious bandwagon effects on the

states including Nasarawa which is depended on the centre and marginally made effort to generate revenue internally.

Whichever circumstance both the Federal and State government find themselves, they must exhibit certain characteristics of intergovernmental relations. First all government agencies at all levels must interact to impact on policy making and implementation. Second the public behaviour of government officials involved in the process must underplay private interest in order to achieve transparency, accountability and good governance. Third, the officials must frequently interact vertically and horizontally to practically work out details of interactions. This is the bed rock of IGR. Fourth, official attitudes and actions must be transparent and accountable. Finally, financial relationship in terms of funding and revenue sharing should be considered strategic because it is through this end that rural people could easily access financial resources accruing to the state. This is why the movement of financial resources from the centre to the units remains the heartbeat of intergovernmental relations.

Within a federal framework IGR as a mechanism can operate successfully to manage conflicts, promote cooperation and enhance the delivery of services to the citizens and units. Even in a changing circumstance, inter relationships between units have to be adjusted to cope with change as currently being experienced between, the federal government and states including Nasarawa.

The basic trends in federal — state relations hinges on the increase of the administrative discretion of federal agencies as well as the rise of the presidency. Other trends include growing parliamentary or National assembly oversight agencies, citizens group challenges, role of media, State Assemblies, increase use of federal mandate as well as federal governments offer to states to have more flexibility with regards some tailoring the programmes. All these deals with political realities of inter- government relations. The flexibility offers the states the opportunity to create capacity to generate resources in order to cope with the political realities in the rural areas the articulation of the interest politicians; monitor pace of economic growth and generate internal revenue more effectively.

Another important issue requiring attention is the question of intergovernmental policy implementation. It has been argued severally that the issue of policy implementation is intergovernmental in nature particularly as it relates to how organization has to network to coordinate and cooperate to achieve the policy objective. Although the above is important as it is sometimes problematic. This is because the mechanisms required for coordinating agencies may present inter-organizational problems. Sometimes when dealing with inter unit cooperation, inducements becomes problematic.

POLITICS AND REALITIES OF IGR

The forces of inertia (centrifugal and centripetal) which are largely political have dominant influence on the operation of IGR. Since the federal government is the principal actor in the interrelationship, its political decisions could produce multiplier effects broadly on the states and local governments particularly at the implementation stage. For instance, the constitution has outlined clearly the functions and responsibilities at each level but the same constitution has been circumvented and abused in Lagos State when the federal governments relationship with the state was negative and statutory allocation was suspended. Similarly, during the last administration, the APC government in Nasarawa did not find it easy in its relationship with the PDP at the centre in terms of the facilitation of development process.

Given the current realities, Nasarawa State and Federal Government which are now controlled by APC are expected to interrelate harmoniously. The state should lobby to induce federal government" influence on the pace of development pattern, investment, and wealth creation, etc. There is no doubt that the manifestoes of APC in Nasarawa State is quite similar with that of the federal and therefore this political parameter should strongly cushion their interrelationship with the federal government.

The Nasarawa State should not fail to align with the federal government in this dispensation. Gage and Mandel (1990) talked about the "iron triangle" which links the interest groups that make up the powerful interest groups i.e. politicians and Bureaucrats who have prevailing political influence on the nature of intergovernmental relationships between the state and federal. The state power brokers must intervene to prevent a stalemate. This situation affected Nasarawa state in the last dispensation and this should not be repeated.

Other political issues involved include the intrusion of powerful outside groups into Agency affairs. This situation has affected the internal security of the state. The state has witnessed internal crises, ethnic crises, religious crises political and intercultural crisis which have produced political consequences in the state as well as the relationships between the state and the centre particularly between 2011 and 2015. This situation has immensely affected the ability of the state legislature to respond to the constituencies responsibility situation that has deprived the citizens access to deliverable goods.

In some respects, the increase use of federal mandates which are often politicized have been used in states. In some respects, obedience to direct order to comply with certain rules are often attached to conditions which must be fulfilled before federal aid is provided. The failure of the federal government to give room for flexibility to states to tailor programmes to meet their peculiarities in often based on political realities. Politics play an important role when state government asked for waivers for programmes that does not meet federal guidelines. The aforementioned political issues affected Nasarawa state between 2011 and 2015 which produced damaging consequences for the development of the state.

THE IMPACT OF STATE — FEDERAL RELATIONS ON THE NASARAWA STATE ECONOMY

There is no doubt that after twenty-two years of its creation, Nasarawa state given its resource potentials both human and physical still experience very slow growth and development. One wonders whether its relationships with the federal government have been cordial or cooperative. It is against this backdrop that we examine the kind of results that have been produced as a result of this interrelationship in the area economic, social, political and cultural sphere over the years.

With respect to the financial sector, the relationship has been fair in terms of capital allocation to the state on monthly basis as it is the situation in other states. Unfortunately, however, there has been ineffective management of the capital allocations to the various sectors of the economy. The interplay of centrifugal and centripetal forces for many years has led to the economic stagnation of the state. The industrial and infrastructural sectors of the states' economy have not experienced any significant investment. The various regimes since the creation the state have been unable to make significant investment in these sectors. Similarly, the small scale industrial sector that would have helped to transform the state has experienced little or no investment. This neglect has therefore left the economy unattended to in spite of the visible capital allocation for 19 years. This therefore implies that since performance in the economic sector has not led to higher productivity, the citizens in Nasarawa state have been unable to experience the dividend of democracy.

The intergovernmental relationship too has not led to improved orientation of the politicians, civil servants and policy stakeholders. One expects that the state — federal interaction should have affected the key player's value system, perceptions and attitudes to development. Because of this reason, the citizens in the state have missed the opportunities to benefit from this relationship. IGR deals with vertical and horizontal interaction but in Nasarawa, these have been marginally noticed because the stakeholders have been unable to harness any use of the contact with the federal might. The attitude of the citizens must change and adapt to the exigencies of the interrelationship so as to harvest the outputs from the government.

Nasarawa state is bequeathed with solid minerals in many locations. There are many development partners both public and private that have been prepared to make capital investment and provide the technology required. Evidence is also available from the federal government to provide collateral and facilitate such investment. Unfortunately, however, very little effort has been made by all administration in the state to embark on this project. This sector has the resource potential to generate revenue in collaboration with the federal government. If this sector has been boosted, the economy of the state would have assumed a new dimension. Against this backdrop, the state has not been able to harvest resources from its interaction with the federal government for many years. The reality of the situation is that unless the current APC government in the state realigns with the federal government and structure incentives to attract investment this resource potential will continue to be neglected.

In the area of capacity building, entrepreneurship and skill acquisition the development is low. It is because of this that the issue of wealth creation has been very marginal. The youth for instance have been underdeveloped because policies have not been adequately structured to provide them capacity, skills or entrepreneurial knowledge required to create wealth and ensure self-employment.

Fundamentally, the state — federal relations should have produced positive effects on the civil service which is the heart beat of the state. However, from what has been observed severally, the civil service has not only been overblotted but they are not even committed and development oriented in terms of aligning inputs with output. We are aware that the engine room of the state is the civil service and unless the machine is healthy, the engine cannot be mobilized. The opportunity still exists for the civil service to restart the machinery after the reduction of its number. This is required given the significant financial allocation to the payment of salaries and emolument, the quantum of funds allocated for salary payments to the large number of civil servants must be revisited.

Revenue generation sector is an integral part of intergovernmental relations. This is because given the shortfalls in the capital allocated by the government, the state is expected to generate some revenue internally. It is believed that the state has been generating revenue internally for the past twenty-two years but it has been difficult to quantify such fund: Those marginally generated has not been used to deliver facilities to the expectation of the citizens. This may not be unconnected to issue of corruption and divestment of public funds to areas unaccounted for. To combat corruption, the leadership must emphasize the issue of probity, discipline, transparency, due process and fairness. These virtues have not been dominant in the system.

Apart from the resources accruing from oil sector through allocation from the federation account agriculture remains the mainstay of Nasarawa economy both for domestic consumption and export. Unfortunately, the bulk of the production comes from the peasant farmers depending on the use of curdle implements. Mechanized farming is only marginally available in the state. A cursory look at the farming system, storage system and the marketing of products confirm that they are largely

executed crudely with very little or no modernization. This State — Federal relation in terms cognitive, psychomotor or affective domain of knowledge should have impacted on the farmers but these are only existing marginally. Mode of production depends on shifting cultivation expensive fertilizer and poor weed controlling facilities. The Agricultural sector is an important area where IGR should have produced immense impact but instead of narrowing the gaps between production and marketing, the gaps are being widened by ineffective and insensitive managers of the system. Apart from the foregoing, we expect to find the proximity of the state to the Federal Capital Territory to have triggered economic social, political and cultural transformation. Naturally, the closure of the state to FCT should have produced a bandwagon effect on the citizens. But a close look at the urban settlements of Masaka, Mararaba, one-man village etc, confirmed the features of the “third concentric cycle” in an urban environment. The characteristic features that are dominant in Nyanya has extended and quadrupled in those settlements that are adjacent to Nyanya. Surprising the state government has been unable to break from this stigma in replanning those settlements. Rather improving the existing urban situation these urban marginalities have been turned into ghettos with refuse dumped along the major roads and other fetid mounds located in the unplanned settlements. This is an area which the current government in the state must revisit and make copious and strategic policy.

Of significance is the tourism sector which is a money spinner. The state is blessed with a water fall at Wamba and tourist sides in Akwanga. There are other tourist locations in the state that can attract domestic and international visitors. Surprisingly, since the state was established, this sector has not been given attention. This sector could easily benefit from the Federal Governments Tourist Agency in terms of capacity and advice. The state as a matter of policy must redouble its effort to boost this sector in order to promote the state and raise more revenue.

CONCLUSION

We have discussed clearly the importance of state — federal relations as it affects Nasarawa state particularly with respect to the issues of economic, political and social developments. This was done within the framework of the impact of the interrelationship between the two levels of organization for the past nineteen years.

From the foregoing discussions, it is quite clear that gaps still exist between the resources provided and the projects executed since 1996. The performance of the various administration in the areas of human resource management, effective use of capital resources, attitudinal and value change, development of urban centres adjacent to FCC, solid mineral development and agricultural transformation are largely unimpressive. The current administration has an added advantage of having similar manifesto with the federal government and should therefore realign strategically to transform the state without delay.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Against the backdrop of the above, the following recommendations are advised.

1. Public servants, civil servants and policy stakeholders need to reorganize their attitudes and value reorientation in order to become more productive.
2. The issue of good governance in terms of transparency accountability, commitment, adoption of due process and pro-activeness should become the watchwords of the civil servants.
3. The political leadership of the state should realign specially and strategically with the APC government in the centre to derive maximum support in the development process. The use of the members of the “iron triangle” in the pursuit of this goal should be considered important.

4. The state should structure policies to strengthen capacity building, skill acquisition and entrepreneurship for the civil servants and youths in order to move the state forward. The state is backward in this area.
5. The state needs to re-strategies and embark on a rigorous revenue generation drive state wide in order to boost its cash flow. The continued dependence on federal sources cannot bail out the state and bring about development.
6. It is quite obvious that the agricultural sector has been neglected and therefore the state needs to refocus on the agricultural sector to assist peasant farmers in the area of loan, seeds, weed control, tractors, supply of fertilizer and marketing of the products.
7. The solid mineral development in the state require critical attention. The state need to align with the federal government, domestic partners and international, institutions in order to develop this sector.
8. The settlements adjacent to the FCT should be re-planned to exhibit the characteristics of modern urban conurbation. This should be done to reduce the current fetid situation in the area. This development should be done in association with the FCT administration.

REFERENCES

- Ayoade, J.A., (1982). *Inter-Governmental Relations in Nigeria*.
- Elaigwu I., (1980). "The Military and State Building; Federal — State Relations in Nigeria's Military Federation in Bello, M.L.
- (2014) *Intergovernmental Relations in Nigeria. An Assessment of its Practice at the local government level*, *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development. An open Access International Journal* Vol. 14.
- Obi V.O.A., (2001). *Modern Local Government in Nigeria*, Enugu Cecta Nig. Limited.
- Thornhill C., (2002). *An Overview of IGR in South Africa*, Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Pectoris SAFPUM Publishers.
- Van der Walddt and Du Toit DPF (1997) *Managing for Excellence in the Public Sector*, Cape Town.
- Wrights D.S. (1988): *Understanding Inter-Governmental Relations* California Books / Cole Publishing Company.