



The 1976 Local Government Reform and Effective Service Delivery in the Local Government System in Nigeria, 2000 – 2018: An Appraisal

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Accepted: February 9th, 2022

Published: February 28th, 2022

Citations - APA

Chitor, Ephraim C. and Odoziobodo Severus I. (2022). The 1976 Local Government Reform and Effective Service Delivery in the Local Government System in Nigeria, 2000 – 2018: An Appraisal. *Contemporary Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, 3(1), 1-11.

The local government system is no doubt the government nearest to the people at the grassroots level. As such, its' importance in impacting people's lives cannot be over-emphasized. There is therefore a continuous effort to make the system functional at all times to make the local government serve the purpose for which it was created. Several reforms have taken place in this respect, one of which is the 1976 reform. This study appraises the 1976 Local Government Reform with a view to ascertaining how it has impacted effective service delivery in the Nigeria Local Government System within the period, 2000 – 2018. Secondary data were employed in the investigation of the impact of the reform on the revenue base of Local Governments, personnel management, and democratic political participation in the Local Government system. Evolution theory was adopted as the framework of analysis. The outcome of the study indicates that as a result of the 1976 local government reform, the Local Government system in Nigeria experienced an enhanced revenue base, improved personnel management, and more democratic political participation. A major challenge observed, however, was the interference of some State Governments on the statutory rights of Local Governments as provided for in the reform as well as in the 1979 and 1999 constitutions, (as amended). This impacted negatively on effective Service delivery in the Local Government system. As a way out, the study recommends that Local Governments should be given financial and administrative autonomy to enable them to control their allocations from the Federation Account and also the 10% of the States' internally generated revenue for their developmental activities. Joint control of the Local Government staff by the States and Local Governments is advocated to avoid over-politicization of staff. Finally, more democratic political participation by the citizens at the grassroots level is recommended to enable the people to contribute their quotas in the service delivery of their localities.

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Local Government Reform, Constitutions, Service Delivery, Grassroots level

Introduction

In order to reposition the local government system in Nigeria for effective service delivery at the grassroots level, it had to undergo a lot of metamorphosis with several reforms taking place at different stages in its evolution. At its formative stages, the Nigerian local government system was just a kind of local administration placed under the Chiefs with Residents and District Officers supervising, Lawal (1976:50). Idike (1995:7) also substantiates this fact when she notes that:

Local Government administration in Nigeria is as old as colonial administration. During the period, Local Government was vested on officers appointed by the colonial administrators, the crown office, its later successors, and then the regional governors. These appointees were called the District Officers, "D.O", for short, who was vested with executive, legislative, and sometimes judicial functions. Each region had its own Local Government system quite different from the others. Expectedly, there were as many systems of Local Government administration as there were regions and later States, which were subject to the whims and caprices of the system, their legal existence, and operations.

When the Government of Nigeria decentralized into regions, Local Governments were regarded as mere extensions of the Regional Governments because they had no attribute of Local Government. Each region ran its pattern of Local Government at will. In the views of Chikendu, (1992), the history of Local Government in Nigeria portrays a sort of approach-avoidance attitude on the part of the Nigerian Government to the all-important means of governing or administering people at the grassroots level. Both the colonial and nationalists Government had at various times quibbled and equivocated on what should be the proper place and functions of Local Governments in Nigeria.

Commenting on the local government system within the colonial period, Olowu (1988:35), states that the basis of African Local Governments in both British and French colonies was the Indirect Rule system, a system whose ideas were borrowed from India by British colonial officers.

However, in 1950, the Eastern Region passed a Local Government Ordinance, which was a prototype of the British Local Government model, with a three-tier system, viz: the County, District, and Local Council... By 1955, Eastern Nigeria had taken a step further to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in her Local Government set up by appointing administrative officers in -charge of various divisions ... By 1959, the Local Governments in the West modernized just like in Eastern Nigeria (Obi, 1995).

Commenting on the Local Government reform of 1950-1966 Ugwu (2000:14) states that the nature of changes, their tempo, as well as the pattern of the reforms in the Local Government administration in Southern Nigeria was as a result of the criticisms of the educated elites in the administration under the colonial administration.

Local Governments were faced with a lot of challenges before 1976. Such challenges include the inability to have a proper revenue base and functions of their own, lack of qualified manpower, and adequate democracy, among others, in their localities. Consequently, effective service delivery at the grassroots level became difficult to achieve. At any rate, it is worthy of note that with a series of agitations and minor reforms at the regional and state levels, Local Governments gradually started enjoying some higher levels of recognition even before the nationwide Local Government reform of 1976, as stated earlier.

Adamolekun (1983:72 and 73), confirms this when he opines thus:

Prior to the 1976 Local Government reform in Nigeria, three States managed Local Government affairs within the institutional arrangement that can be correctly described as Local Government" ... over a shorter space of time, there were several systems of Local Government in different parts of Nigeria between 1914 and 1976.

In any case, the 1976 local government reform was a watershed in Nigerian local government evolution. It brought about a lot of changes in the system. In 1976, the military regime under General Olusegun Obasanjo, after considering the ordeal Local Government administration was passing through in the hands of State Governments, deemed it necessary to launch a nationwide Local Government reform in Nigeria. Since then, the Local Government system started witnessing gradual improvement in its development activities even though there have always been some impediments in its achievement of effective service delivery.

It was in recognition of the shortage of qualified human resources in the Local Government that the Federal Government, after the launching of the 1976 Local Government Reform introduced the training programme for some categories of human resources in the Local Government system. According to Adamolekun (1986:83),

Following the launching of the 1976 reform, the Federal Government assumed a leadership role in promoting short-term training programmes for the Local Government. This Federal Government initiative culminated in the designation of three universities – University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife – as national centers for the training of the middle and upper management personnel of Local Governments, effective from 1979/80 academic session.

Under this programmes, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Anambra State (1983:1), avers that Ordinary and Advanced Diploma was awarded to trainees mostly; administration and accounting personnel at the end of their training in those three Universities, later extended to Degree in Public Administration and Local Government with emphasis on the training of high-level manpower that can combine leadership with a creative response to the problems of fast-changing modern society.

It is in the light of these that the study is undertaken to investigate how the Local Government reform of 1976 impacted on effective service delivery of the Nigeria Local Government system, especially, in the areas of revenue generation/base and allocation of functions, personnel administration, and democratic political participation at the grassroots level.

Conceptualization

Certain keywords need to be briefly examined.

- 1. Local Government:** Local Government can be defined as the third-tier government in a federated State such as Nigeria. It is the government nearest to the people at the grassroots level.
- 2. Nigeria:** Nigeria is a sovereign country located in the West African sub-region. Presently, Nigeria runs a presidential democracy with three levels of government. It has 36 States and a Federal Capital territory as well as 774 Local Governments.
- 3. Reform:** Reform can be defined as a deliberate effort made by a person or a group of persons to effect a positive change on a concept or an object in order to enhance its effectiveness.
- 4. Service Delivery:** Service delivery is the act of performing a given task in the desired manner.
- 5. Appraisal:** Appraisal can be defined as an effort made by a person or persons to examine something or an issue with the aim of ascertaining its actual state.
- 6. Local Government Reform:** Local Government reform can be defined as a political/administrative change or effort made by the Federal Government, Regional or State Governments in the course of the evolution of the Local Government system in Nigeria in a bid to reposition it for more effective service delivery to the citizens at the grassroots level.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis of this study is anchored on the Evolution Theory. “Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion, during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation”, (Herbert Spencer, 1898). It is widely believed that the most important contribution to Sociology by Spencer, a sociological giant, is the theory of evolution. He used the principle of physical and biological evolution to expatiate his theory of social evolution. According to him, a movement in physical evolution is from an indefinite, incoherent situation to a definite and coherent situation. Besides, the underlying principles of physical evolution are a movement from simple to complex and homogeneity to heterogeneity. From the point of biological evolution, Spencer adopted his principle of biological evolution from the naturalist, Charles Darwin who developed the concept of evolution in his ‘Origin of Species’ in 1859. Spencer believed in the doctrine of the “Survival of the Fittest” as expounded by Darwin. He says that only strong creatures survive and evolve and only a strong one makes progress.

From the above analysis of physical evolution, Spencer was able to prove that the underlying principles of all evolution are two:

- (a) Movement from simple to complex
- (b) Movement from homogeneity to heterogeneity.

The main issue here, therefore, is progress.

In the same vein, the Nigeria Local Government system evolved gradually from the colonial era and progressed through the independence/democratic era, the military era; the then era of comprehensive reform in 1976. This theory is therefore chosen due to its relevance to the study because of its propensity to assist in the systematic analysis of data. The theory captures the evolutionary movement of the Local Government system in Nigeria. That is why Adeola (2008), opines that there were four major epochs in the development of the Local Government system in Nigeria, thus:

1. Colonial rule, which was based on the traditional administrative system, and existed from 1903 until the 1950s when the Native Authority system became obsolete.
2. The more liberal and participatory approach to local governance was introduced in the 1950s.
3. The advent of military rule, which replaced the model of grassroots participatory Democracy with military centralization and unity of command schemes and
4. The comprehensive reform of Local Government administration in 1976, restored liberal Participatory values.

The Local Government system in Nigeria had undergone a series of changes including 1950 reforms in the eastern region and 1952 in the western region. The 1976 reform was the most outstanding. Its salient points are contained in the 1979 and 1999 constitutions (as amended). Before the 1976 Local Government reform, there was no uniform Local Government administration in Nigeria; rather, the reforms were in piece-meal.

The 1976 Local Government Reform

In 1976, a nationwide Local Government reform was launched by the then Military Government of Nigeria. It was only at this time that Nigeria had what is known as a unified or a nationwide Local Government for the first time following the adoption of the 1976 Local Government reform and the inclusion of its major points in the 1979 presidential constitution.

These reforms formed the foundation of the present-day Local Government system and were attempts to restructure Local Government administration to a form-fitting for modern society. The fundamental result of the 1976 reforms was to introduce a uniform system of Local Government administration throughout the country. It was based on a conviction that a strong local authority with clearly defined roles and responsibilities in a power-sharing relationship with the States is an institutional imperative. Based on the 1976 reforms, Local Government became recognized as a tier of Government entitled to a share of national revenue consequent on its constitutionally allocated functions (Imuetinyan, 2003).

The 1976 guidelines for Local Government reform clearly stated reasons for the new unified structure. The reasons include:

- (a) Defaults in previous Local Government system which include whittling down of their powers by various State Governments over the years;
- (b) State Governments' encroachment on what would normally have been an exclusive preserve of Local Governments;
- (c) Lack of adequate funds and appropriate institutions which have made Local Government ineffective and ineffectual;
- (d) Inadequate staff in the Local Government system;
- (e) Excess politicking;
- (f) Divorce between the people and government institutions at the rural level (Ugwu, 2017).

Lack of adequate funds and appropriate institutions which have made local governments ineffective and ineffectual as reflected in No. (C) above appears to be one of the most critical areas where the local government system in Nigeria is the worst hit. Other issues addressed by the reform aimed at ensuring effective service delivery at the grassroots level also include:

- I. To make appropriate service and development activities responsive to local wishes and initiatives by devolving or delegating them to local representative bodies.
- II. To facilitate the exercise of democratic self-government close to the local levels of our society, and to encourage initiative and leadership potentials.
- III. To mobilize human and material resources through the involvement of members of the public in their local development.
- IV. To provide a two-way channel of communication between local communities and Government (both State and Federal), (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1976).

With the above arrangement, the citizens of Local Government areas were given the opportunity to contribute their quotas in the development of their localities.

Apart from other reforms in the Local Government system mentioned earlier which occurred prior to the 1976 nationwide Local Government reform, the 1979 constitution which gave the 1976 reform a serious backing by entrenching the salient points in the constitution, there were also some other reforms that took place. They include the following:

- I. Local government review of 1985, popularly known as “Dasuki Committee Report” (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1985). This reform ushered in the National Scheme of Service for Local Government Employees in Nigeria for the first time.
- II. Implementation guideline on the application of Civil Service Reforms in the local government service 1988, (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1988). The reform made chairmen of local governments Chief Executives and accounting officers of local governments while the secretaries who were career officers became Heads of Personnel Management (HPM).
- III. 1989 Constitution of Nigeria. (The Federal Republic of Nigeria 1989). This constitution made it possible for the chairmen with vice chairmen and councilors to be democratically elected in 1991.
- IV. Local Government Constitutional Transitional Provision (Amended) (No. 3) decree 1991. (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1991). This decree provided for the creation of the Executive Arm of Local Government headed by Executive Chairmen and the Legislative Arm of Local Governments headed by “Leaders” in their respective Local Governments.

It is worth noting that each of the above reforms was intended to provide a solution to one challenge of the local government or the other and they filled some gaps in the administration of the system.

Impacts of the 1976 Local Government Reforms on Service Delivery in the Grassroots

No doubt, the impact of the 1976 Local Government Reforms on service delivery in the local governments cannot be overemphasized. The reforms positively affected the local governments in many ways, especially in areas of the revenue base, human resources, and democratic political participation of the citizenry in determining who leads them as chairman and vice-chairman; who represents them as councilor, and how their affairs are managed. Let us at this juncture discuss each of these items.

1. The 1976 Local Government Reform and Revenue Base of Local Governments

There cannot be effective service delivery in any organization without adequate funding. Nigerian local governments were bereft of sources of funding prior to the 1976 reforms and their revenue base was in shambles as there was no statutory revenue allocation to them. However, the launching of the 1976 Local Government Reform with its attendant adoption of some of its important points in the 1979 Constitution of Nigeria, brought relief to the Local Governments which became entitled to statutory revenue allocation from the Federation Account and 10% from internally generated revenue of State Governments.

Suffice it to say that the major impact of the 1976 Local Government reform on service delivery of the Local Government system in Nigeria is very much felt in the area of finance. In its Sections 45 – 58, the 1976 Local Government reform made the recommendations that Local Governments should have access to finance in order to carry out their development projects and other obligations, (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1976). It stipulated the sources of finance apart from grants and loans to include:

- I. Allocation from the Federation Account;
- II. 10% of internally-generated revenue of States
- III. Local Governments internally-generated revenue.

Since 1976 when the first nationwide Local Government reform was launched in Nigeria, revenue allocation from the federation account to the Local Government system has been on the increase from 10%, 15%, 20%, and presently, slightly above 25%. That automatically started affecting the quantity and quality of service delivery of the Local Governments to their people. Such services were payment of workers' salaries and settlement of other financial obligations of the Local Government Areas arising from their development activities and other services which started witnessing some improvements. Some local governments were even able to asphalt roads within their localities and carry out other far-reaching infrastructural development activities.

However, the provision of the State Joint Local Government Account in the 1979 and 1999 Constitutions consequent on the recommendations of the 1976 Local Government reform is grossly abused by some State Governments. State governments interpret the provision to mean that they are in charge of local government allocations. Local government allocations are therefore not paid directly to the local governments but are rather paid into a joint account controlled by state governments who now determine what goes to each of the local governments within its territory. The aftereffect is that local government funds are misappropriated by state governments. Again, the 10% internally-generated revenue from State Governments is not forth-coming and the internally-generated revenue of Local Governments is being handled by Local Government Chairmen as their pocket money and therefore embezzled anyhow after the collectors - the revenue officials of Local Governments must have fed fat on the funds. All these are major challenges confronting Local Governments in their efforts to render effective services to their citizenry. That is also why a lot of people are today calling for Local Government autonomy to enable them to receive their statutory allocations directly from the federation account and also receive the 10% of States' internally-generated revenue to be in a position to render effective services to their citizens.

One should not lose sight, however, of corruption which is one of the major challenges bedeviling the Local Government system in its efforts for increased revenue base. This is because most of the Local Government chairmen after the State governments have taken a greater chunk of the funds often divert the remaining together with the local government internally-generated revenue to their private pockets likewise some revenue officials of the Local Government. All these weighs down heavily on effective service delivery in the Local Government system in Nigeria.

2. The 1976 Local Government Reform and Personnel Administration in the Local Government System

Effective service delivery is an act of rendering service that corresponds to the customers' desires, needs and expectations. This concept emanates from the public that requires government services like a private sector entrepreneur would treat his/her customers (Nash and Nash, 2004).

According to the office of the Governor, Enugu State SERICOM AND PIB, (2012: ii), one of the purposes of government is to improve the quality of life of the citizenry through the provision of timely and quality service. Service delivery is a key object and subject of governance and government. No reform effort by the government is meaningful or sustainable without improvement in public service delivery specifically. Services cannot be delivered without the right people with the requisite qualification being in the right place at the right time. Having well-qualified personnel to manage the administration of the local government system is, therefore, key to effective service delivery in the local government system.

It is important to note that the ultimate aim of each reform in the Nigeria Local Government system is to reposition the system for greater efficiency and effectiveness in its service delivery to the rural populace as a government. The Local Government reform of 1976 made a remarkable impact on the service delivery of the Local Government through effective personnel management.

First and foremost, prior to the Local government 1976 reforms, the local government system lacked the requisite human resources. They could not recruit their staff rather they borrowed from the State civil service. Secretaries to Local Governments, treasurers, and other professionals were being sent on secondment to Local Governments from the States as a result of a shortage of qualified personnel in the Local Government system. However, with the introduction of the 1976 Local Government Reform, Local Governments started employing capable hands as their staff and sending their staff on in-service training programmes organized for the existing personnel for capacity building. All these were as a result of the stipulations by the 1976 Local Government reform which recommended that all posts in the Local Government system should be graded the same as those at the States level in line with the Udoji Public Service Committee recommendations. It stated in Section 37 thus: "All posts in the Local Government should be graded using same criteria as used in Udoji to ensure that equivalent posts (in terms of responsibility and qualifications required) in the State Civil Service and Local Government are similarly graded", (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1976). This is to ensure that the machinery for the transformation of the rural area is in place.

Again, it was discovered that before the Local Government reform of 1976, Local Government Secretaries and other professionals were being borrowed from the State Ministries and agencies, and personnel management activities in the Local Governments were in shambles. However, with the introduction of the Local Government reform of 1976 which stipulated that staffing arrangement of States and Local Governments should be the same as stated above, personnel administration in the system was standardized and service delivery at the Local Government started recording a high degree of effectiveness and efficiency. It was as a result of the 1976 Local Government reform in Nigeria, as well, that the Federal Government went further in 1979 to introduce training programmes for the Local Government employees who would take over the administrative and accounting functions of Local Governments after their courses in three universities, namely, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. This programme is geared towards bringing about effective service delivery in the Local Government system.

One cannot talk of the impact of the 1976 Local Government Reform on Service delivery in the Local Government system without acknowledging the pivotal role of the Local Government Service Commission. This is because it is the Local Government Service Commission that handles the responsibility of senior local government staff mainly and plays a supervisory role on matters relating to junior staff while local governments take charge of the junior ones to ensure effective service delivery at the grassroots level. Its creation was recommended by the 1976 Local Government Reform in its Section 36 as a Local Government Service Board.

However, in a bid to grant local government administration in Nigeria full autonomy, the military President of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida's regime in 1992, proscribed the Local Government Service Commission throughout the country. That prescription order came up during the 1992 Presidential Budget Speech, thus:

In the context of Federal autonomy and democratic provision of our constitution, the existence of Local government Service Commissions at the state levels as I have said before has now become untenable. They are, therefore, hereby abolished. Local Governments, will henceforth, recruit, promote and discipline their staff.

With this proscription, it seemed as if Nigeria had thrown over-board all the gains recorded with the launching of the 1976 Local Government Reform and gone back to the era when local government staff was managed arbitrarily which called for urgent reform.

In any case, the prescription could not last long due to the perceived importance of the Local Government Service Commission. Following a Circular from the Office of the Vice President (circular No. VP/925, Vol. II of 1992), of 15th July 1992, Local Government Service Commissions were restored throughout the federation with more powers conferred on them than before. Aikhomu (1992:1) states thus:

This is in view of the felt need to protect career, Local Government officials, from the buffetings of partisan politics, ensure the maximum utilization of scarce high caliber manpower resources available to Local Government through the maintenance of the unified Local Government service, enhance the ability of Local Government service to attract and retain capable hands in the service and preserve the significant gains made in building the Local Government service, particularly within the recent past.

3. The 1976 Local Government Reform and Democratic Political Participation in the Local Government

At the early stages of Nigeria's evolution, there were no local governments rather the county council or local administration were controlled by the Chiefs, Obas and Emirs, and later Residents and District Officers. That is why Lawal (1976) states that at its formative stages, the Nigerian local government system was just a kind of local administration placed under the Chiefs with Residents and District Officers supervising. Idike (1995) also substantiates this fact when she notes that:

Local Government administration in Nigeria is as old as colonial administration. During the period, Local Government was vested on officers appointed by the colonial administrators, the crown office, its later successors, and then the regional governors. These appointees were called the District Officers, "D.O", for short, who was vested with executive, legislative, and sometimes judicial functions. Each region had its own Local Government system quite different from others. Expectedly, there were as many systems of Local Government administration as there were regions and later States, which were subject to the whims and caprices of the system, their legal existence, and operations.

Local Government administration was in the hands of the Chiefs and District Officers at different Regions or States before the introduction of the 1976 Local Government Reform and as such there was no democracy by then. It was only after the introduction of the 1976 Local Government Reform that one can say there was a "Government" at the local level. Democratic political participation at the grassroots level commenced following the stipulation by the 1976 reform that there would be elected Chairmen and Councilors in the unified Local Governments throughout Nigeria. From then, political activities started gathering momentum, and citizens of various Local Government Areas started participating in democratic political activities within their areas, some succeeded in the elections as Chairmen, Councilors while others were appointed Supervisory Councilors and some political assistants. This gave them the opportunity to contribute their quotas to the effective service delivery in their Local Government Areas through enhanced democratic political participation.

One of the major challenges here is that the tenure of office for both the executive and the legislature at the Local Government level is two years or three years, where the Governor is generous, as against four-year tenure for both the executives and legislature at the Federal and State levels thereby running contrary to the third-tier status assigned to Local Government by the 1976 Local Government Reform. With this situation, one can understand that there was no democratic political participation by then. It was only after the introduction of the **1976** Local Government reform in Nigeria, that the Local Government system started witnessing democratic political participation, such as the election of Chairmen, later, with the Vice-Chairmen and Councilors, the appointment of Secretaries, Supervisors, Special Assistants, and Personal Assistants, to contribute their quotas in the administration of their localities. That is to say that the 1976 Local Government Reform brought about effective service delivery in the Local Government system in Nigeria through enhanced democratic political participation.

Conclusion

This work appraised the 1976 Local Government Reform with a view to ascertaining how it impacted effective service delivery in the Nigeria Local Government System within the period, 2000 – 2018. Secondary data was employed in carrying out investigation and the area of focus was on the revenue base, personnel administration, and democratic political participation in the Local Government System. As stated earlier, reforms in the Local Government system in Nigeria came gradually at different stages with a bid to uplift the status of Local Governments and reposition them for effective service delivery at the grassroots level. Below are the outcomes of the appraisal:

1. Since 1976 when the first nationwide Local Government reform was launched in Nigeria, revenue allocation to the Local Government system has been on the increase from 10%, 15%, 20%, and presently in 2021, slightly above 25%. That automatically started affecting the quantity and quality of service delivery of the Local Governments to their people.
2. On the aspect of personnel administration, it was discovered that before the Local Government reform of 1976, Local Government Secretaries and other professionals were being borrowed from the State Ministries and agencies, and personnel administration in the Local Governments was in shambles, but with the introduction of the Local Government reform of 1976 which stipulated that staffing arrangement of States and Local Governments

should be the same, personnel administration in the system was standardized and service delivery at the Local Government started recording the high degree of effectiveness and efficiency. Also, as a result of the 1976 Local Government reform in Nigeria, the Federal Government went further in 1979 to introduce training programmes for the Local Government employees who would take over the administrative and accounting functions of Local Governments after their courses in three universities, namely, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. This programme was geared towards bringing about effective service delivery in the Local Government system.

3. With regard to democratic political participation, it was discovered that since the introduction of the **1976** Local Government reform in Nigeria, the Local Government system started witnessing a higher degree of democratic political participation, such as the election of Chairmen, later, with the Vice-Chairmen and Councilors, the appointment of Secretaries, Supervisors, Special Assistants, and Personal Assistants, to contribute their quotas in the effective service delivery in their Local Government Areas.

Recommendations

Having sufficiently appraised the 1976 Local Government reform and effective service delivery in the Nigeria Local Government system, the following recommendations that will assist in the field of policy-making, academia, and Administration, if amended in the Constitution and properly implemented, are hereby presented:

1. In order to ensure continuous or even higher effectiveness in service delivery to their citizens, Local Governments should be made autonomous so that they can be receiving their allocation from the Federation Account directly and not through the State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA), monitor their mode of collection and handling of internally generated revenue and compel the State Governments to remit the 10% from their internally generated revenue to Local Governments.
2. Even though Local Government Autonomy is being advocated, it should not be holistic in the aspect of human resource management so as to safeguard the career service at the grassroots level. Based on this, it is recommended that joint control of Local Government staff by the Local Governments and State Governments as contained in the 1976 Local Government reform, be strictly maintained. This will ensure that the principles of a unified Local Government system are upheld, as the control of senior staff from salary Grade Levels 07 and above will be left for the Local Government Service Commission, while that of Junior Staff from Grade Level 01-06, will be left for Local Governments with the Local Government Service Commission maintaining supervisory role. With this arrangement, Local Government Service will be devoid of partisan politics. Neutrality, impartiality, continuity, among other attributes for which civil service is known, will be institutionalized and effective service delivery guaranteed at the Local Government level. Again, State Government should allow Local Governments to perform those functions that statutorily belong to them since they have qualified personnel.
3. More democratic political participation is advocated for the citizens of every Local Government Area. The tenure of office of the Local Government Councilors and chairmen of Local Governments should be raised to 4 years to justify the status of their area as a third-tier Government, just like those of the State Houses of Assemblies and Governors as well as the National Assembly and the President, so that they can stay longer in office and be in a better position to render more effective services to the citizens of the Local Government Areas.

All these recommendations should be incorporated in subsequent Local Government reforms/constitutional amendments appropriately for the purpose of achieving effective service delivery in the Local Government system.

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