

**IMPLICATIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTONOMY ON RURAL
DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF ILORIN SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA
OF KWARA STATE**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work has been read and approved by the undersigned on behalf of the Department of Public Administration, Institute of Finance and Management (IFMS), Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin as meeting the requirement for the award of Higher National Diploma in Public Administration.

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

This work titled, “implications of local government autonomy on rural development: A study of Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State” was aimed at ascertaining the extent to which state interference in the management of local government revenue constituted the bane to rural development in Kwara State, examining the extent to which poor financial management practice in the local government hinders rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area among others. “Fiscal Federation Theory” by Kenneth Arrow in the 1954 was adopted. Survey research design was adopted to study a population of 532 which was reduced to a sample

size of 220 using Taro Yameni's formula. Simple random sampling technique and stratified sampling technique were used. Data for this study were gathered from primary and secondary sources. Questionnaire instrument for data collection was used. For the purpose of analyzing data collected from the field survey, frequency distribution tables and simple percentage techniques were applied while in testing the hypotheses that guided the study, the chi-square (χ^2) statistical tool was used. This study revealed that State interference in the management of local government revenue has constituted the bane of rural development in Kwara State; the financial autonomy of the local governments is being severely interfered with by the state governments principally through the instrumentality of the State Joint Local Government Account. State governments make local government appendages of the state through State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA) mechanism, among others. The implication being that if the menace persists in the local government system rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area will be jeopardized; hence, this study recommends that State interference in the management of local government revenue menace should be tackled to enhance effective and efficient service delivery in the rural setting, Local government council management should orient its staffers for proper financial management to enhance rural development in Ilorin South local government area among others.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction of the Study

Since time immemorial, local government autonomy has been a discussing issue among academic scholars cum researchers. Local government in Nigeria is a product of decentralization and is established by law. As a federal state, Nigeria has three tiers of government (federal, state and local) whose intergovernmental relations (which include political, financial, judicial and administrative) are mainly established by the constitution. Each tier is required to operate within its area of jurisdiction, and any action to the contrary is null and void to the extent of its inconsistency with the law. This is meant to guarantee the autonomy of each tier.

Generally, local government is a form of public administration which, in a majority of contexts, exists as the lowest tier of administration within a country. In a federal system like Nigeria, local government usually occupies the third-tier government. Specifically, local government is a unit of government below the central, regional or state levels established by law to exercise political authority through a representative council within a defined geographical area (Carr 2005)). Local government is also conceived as a system of local administration instituted to maintain law and order, provide limited range of

social amenities and encourage co-operation and participation of inhabitants towards improvement of their conditions of living (Diamond, 2001). From the foregoing definitions, it is deducible to note a core variable like socio-economic development which is clearly stated in the definitions. Through local administration, the living condition of the inhabitants will be improved. The role of the local governments as vital tool for rapid socio-economic development of rural, and urban centers have taken a central stage albeit without a corresponding access to prerequisite financial resources to meet this expectation.

Socio-economic development means pure and adequate provision of basic infrastructure such as roads, clinics, schools, potable water and other communal initiatives that benefit the people. Local government is the focus of government efforts at promoting development through purposeful combination of the local (peoples) effort/energies with that of government with the objective of improving socio-economic conditions and encouraging political participation is a key factor in rural development. It represents the objective expression of the energies of mobilized rural communities in concrete and tangible projects as mentioned above. In order to enthrone better local administration, local government has been going through various reforms aimed at strengthening its capacity to effectively operate and play significant developmental roles in national

development process (Fatile & Adejuwon 2009). However, the current platform for local government administration in Nigeria started with the 1976 Guidelines for Local Government Reforms. The Guideline gave the present local government system its basic structure and functions as a third tier of government within the Nigerian federal government arrangement (Abada, 2007; Ade, 2012). Unlike the previous local government reforms, the 1976 reform conceptualized local government as operating within a common institutional framework with defined functions and responsibilities in line with national development objectives (Saalah and Stanley, 2011). Indeed, before the reform, local government was merely local administration without formal recognition as tier of government (Andrews, 2012). Very importantly too, the 1976 reform initiated, particularly, the financial and political autonomy of the local government that was further strengthened by the civil service reform of 1988. As well, the provisions of the 1999 constitution as contained in section 7(1) and section 162 (paragraphs, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) are intended to also guarantee the local government autonomy. The provisions for the autonomy, as they were, are essentially and ostensibly aimed at protecting the local government from unnecessary interference from other tiers of government and to enable it play significant roles in the national development process. However, findings from researches by scholars and observations by practitioners, overtime, point to the fact that

the autonomy of the local government is becoming increasingly difficult to realize following particularly, the propensity of the state governments to interfere in the political/administrative and financial affairs of the local governments.

Over decades today, various strategies and methods have been adopted by the successful government of both developed and developing countries for the purpose of good governance and effort at distributing the state resources and implement them at the local level. The federal structure of Nigeria inhibits local government's ability to mobilize and use revenue to meet their obligation in sustainable manner (Adeyemo 2005). He further acknowledges that, one of the recurrent obstacles of the third-tier system in the country is the dwindling revenue generation as characterized by annual deficits and insufficient funds for meaningful growth and viable project development. The level of these relationships between and within the nation federating units (i.e federal, State and local government) particularly as it relates to revenue sharing has continually remained issues in the front burner of the nation's polity. The encroachment of local finance by the state government has negatively affected the performance of local government in terms of its constitutional responsibilities. The setting up of state and local government joint account committee, local government service commission, ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs and other allied agencies at the state level have made local

government financial autonomy a mirage in Nigeria (Wada & Aminu, 2014). Meanwhile, Finance and prudent management are the bedrock of effective functioning of local government administration. It is against this backdrop that Asiwaju (2010) argues the local government requires finance to perform their statutory functions; the ability of the local government to do this is largely dependent on availability of fund, coupled with efficient management which constitutes the required catalyst necessary for timely execution and completion of their development projects. Awotokun & Adeyemo (1999), however expresses some reservations that; in recent time, lack of funds has often been attributed as the major handicap which had hindered effective and successful execution and completion of many projects at the local government level. However, experience has shown the contrary that low finance and allocation by the federal and delay release for local government funds by the state government is the bane of local governments' inability to achieve substantial development in their jurisdiction (Okoli, 2013).

The above analysis in summary, gears towards lending credence to the fact that the encroachment of local finance by the state government has negatively affected the performance of local government in terms of its constitutional responsibilities as noted earlier by (Wada & Aminu, 2014) thereby hindering rural development in Nigeria local government system including Ilorin South local government area of Kwara State.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The quest for local government financial autonomy is aimed at reversing State government encroachment into local government administration to enable local government to carry out their saddled responsibility effectively and efficiently. The level at which state government controls local council's financial allocation through appointed committees who are loyalist to the State Governors is a challenge to local government administration towards rural development. The local government reforms have been articulated in a bid to correct excessive state encroachment, abuse of powers and the use of undemocratic leaders and care-taker committee to run the local governments by the state governments in Nigeria. Of all local government reforms deliberately executed to address these anomalies, the 1976 local government reform which recognized local government as a third tier, accords autonomous powers to the local councils and reduced excessive politicking of state over local government in Nigeria's political system. Irrespective of the nature and extent of flaws that may characterize local government financial autonomy in principle and practice in Nigeria, it has, for fairly some time, become an important issue for considerations at the National Assembly as recently done; it has been subjected to various critical discourses. The foregoing nevertheless, not much intellectual efforts have been deployed in examining the local government financial

autonomy as a vehicle for redressing inordinate usurpation of power and adequate finance of local governments by state governments at grassroots politics in the country. Local government autonomy has to do with the area of finance. The issue of State Local government Joint Account has been a thorny issue in Local government State relationship in the Fourth Republic.

1.3. Research Question

In view of this; the researcher formulated the following questions to guide the study:

- i. To what extent has state interference in the management of local government revenue constituted the bane to rural development in Kwara State?
- ii. To what extent has poor financial management practice in the local government hinders rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area?
- iii. To what extent will corruption-free and local government autonomy enhance rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area?

1.4. Research Hypothesis

The following hypotheses is being formulated to guide the study:

Ha1: State interference in the management of local government revenue has constituted the bane to rural development in Kwara State.

Ha2: Poor financial management practice in the local government hinders rural

development in Kwara Local Government Area.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the implications of local government autonomy on rural development in Kwara State particularly in Ilorin South Local Government Area. The specific objectives of this study include:

- i. To ascertain the extent to which state interference in the management of local government revenue constituted the bane to rural development in Kwara State.
- ii. To examine the extent to which poor financial management practice in the local government hinders rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area.
- iii. To suggest ways in which corruption free and local government autonomy will enhance rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study will be highly significant, given the enormous role local government autonomy plays in the local government administration towards promoting rural development in Nigeria and Kwara State in particular. In view of this, this study will be significant to the government in making adequate policy efforts that will accommodate grants of autonomy to the local government which will enhance effective and efficient performance through good governance.

Similarly, this research will be of immense benefit to the public especially the local government officials in understanding the objectives and role of local government in promoting rural development. Consequently, it will expose the need to be prudent in management because it is bedrock of effective functioning of local government administration that enhances rural development.

Also, this study will be immensely significant in the field of academics since it will serve as a good reference material to future researchers given the dearth of well researched materials on the implications of local government autonomy on rural development in Kwara State.

Finally, this study will be highly beneficial to the researcher in understanding the reasons behind the poor rural development recorded in the local government system in the country.

1.7. Scope/Limitation of the Study

This study will be highly significant, given the enormous role local government autonomy plays in the local government administration towards promoting rural development in Nigeria and Kwara State in particular. In view of this, this study will be significant to the government in making adequate policy efforts that will accommodate grants of autonomy to the local government which will enhance effective and efficient

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Finally, this study will be highly beneficial to the researcher in understanding the reasons behind the poor rural development recorded in the local government system in the country.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

Local Government: Is a system of local administration instituted to maintain law and order, provide limited range of social amenities and encourage co-operation and participation of inhabitants towards improvement of their conditions of living.

Autonomy: In this context means a situation in which each government enjoys a separate

existence and independence from the control of the other governments.

Rural Development: Rural development refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being in rural areas. It involves implementing strategies and initiatives to enhance agriculture, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and other essential services in rural communities. The goal is to create sustainable and thriving rural areas.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

Our focus in this chapter is to critically examine relevant literature and also the theoretical framework that would assist in explaining the research problem and furthermore recognize the efforts of scholars who had previously contributed immensely to similar research. The chapter intends to deepen the understanding of the study and close the perceived gaps.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.2 Concept of Local government

Local Government The concept of local government involves a philosophical commitment to democratic participation in the governing process at the grassroots level. This implies legal and administrative decentralization of authority, power and personnel by a higher level of government to a community with a will of its own, performing specific functions as within the wider national framework. A local government is a government at the grassroots level of administration meant for meeting peculiar grassroots need of the people (Agagu, 1997). It is defined as “government by the popularly elected bodies charged with administrative and executive duties in matters

concerning the inhabitants of a particular district or place (Appadorai, 1975). Local government can also be defined as that tier of government closest to the people, “which is vested with certain powers to exercise control over the affairs of people in its domain” (Lawal, 2000:60). ‘

Akpan (1982) defined local government as “the breaking down of a country into smaller units or localities for the purpose of administration in which the inhabitants of the different units or localities concerned play a direct and full role through their elected representatives who exercise power and undertake functions under the general authority of the national or state government”. Barber (1969) defined Local government as authority to determine and execute matters within a restricted area. It becomes clear from the above that the purpose of establishing a local government is to ensure appropriate services and development activities responsible to local wishes and initiatives. Local government operates at the lowest level of society. Bandhu (1967) defined local government as: representative of local inhabitants, more or less autonomous in character instituted under state legislation, in a village, a district, a city or in urban areas to administer services as distinguished from state and central services The jurisdiction of a local government is limited to a specific area, a village or a city, and its functions relate to the provision of civic amenities to the population living within that area.

Clarke (1948) maintains that a “local government appears to be that part of the government of a nation or state which deals mainly with such matters as concern the inhabitants of particular district or place”. According to Rao (1965), Local government is “that part of the government which deals mainly with local affairs, administered by authorities subordinate to the state government, but elected independently of the state authority by the qualified residents. Robson (1949), in a lengthy definition, says that “Local government may be said to involve the conception of territorial, non-sovereign community possessing the legal right and the necessary organization to regulate its own affairs. This in turn pre-supposes the existence of a local authority with power to act independently of external control as well as the participation of the local community in the administration of its own affairs.

Gokhale (1972) definition of local government is very simple. He says that “Local self-government is the government of a specified locality by the local people through the representatives elected by them. Venkatarangaiya and Pattabhiram (1969) defined local government as the administration of a locality, a village, a town, a city or any other area smaller than the state by a body representing local inhabitants, possessing a fairly large amount of authority, raising at least a part of its revenue through local taxation and spending its income on services which are regarded as local and, therefore, as distinct

from state and central services.

2.2.1 Historical Background of Local Government System in Nigeria

The study of the development of local government as a tier of government in Nigeria will not be meaningful, if it is not preceded by an examination of the philosophical consideration underlying the local government system (Alex, 1987). The structure, composition and functions of local government are influenced by the political beliefs of those who have the authority and responsibility for determining the main features of the local government system. This relationship between values or political beliefs and structure for the distribution of powers in society has been argued by Stanley Hoffmann (1959:113) as he wrote: any preference for a certain scheme of area division of powers presupposes a decision on the ends for which power is to be exercised – a decision on the values power should serve and on the ways in which these values will be served.

Regardless of nomenclature, local government is a creation of British colonial rule in Nigeria. It has overtime experienced change in name, structure and composition; Between 1930s and 1940s, for instance, local government was known as chief-in-council and chief-and-council, where traditional rulers were given pride of place in the scheme of things. In the 1950s, election was introduced according to the British model in the western and eastern parts of the country with some measure of autonomy in personnel,

financial and general administration (Nwabueze, 1982). It was on this premise that the rising tide of progress, growth and development experienced in the local governments in these areas was based. During this period, heterogeneity was the hallmark of local government as there was no uniformity in the system and the level of development was also remarkably different. The introduction of 1976 reforms by military administration of General Obasanjo brought about uniformity in the administrative structure of the system. The reforms introduced a multi-purpose single tier local government system (Ajayi, 2000).

The reforms also introduced population criterion under which a local government could be created. Consequently, a population of within 150,000 to 800,000 was considered feasible for a local government. This was done to avoid the creation of non-viable local council and for easy accessibility. There was provision for elective positions having the chairman as executive head of local government with supervisory councilors constituting the cabinet. This was complemented by the bureaucrats and professionals, such as Doctors, Engineers etc who were charged with the responsibility of implementing policies (1976 Guidelines). In 1991, a major landmark reform was introduced as the system had legislative arm. In addition, the Babangida administration increased the number of local governments from 301 in 1976 to 453 in 1989 and 589 in 1991, the

Abacha regime also increased the number to 774 local councils that we have today and the administrative structure also underwent some changes (Ajayi, 2000). In summary, it can be said that no public institution in Nigeria has been so subjected to frequent reforms than local government.

2.2.2 Overview of Local Government Administration in Nigeria

The 1999 Constitution has amendment process by National Assembly vexing issue of local government financial autonomy to the attention of Nigeria's political arena. Reforms of local government administration have been emerged since independence. The first and second military interventions of 1966 and 1976 respectively, and the subsequent restructuring of the country from four regions to twelve states, has witnessed several other restructurings, which have culminated into 36 states and 774 local governments. The states and local governments differ markedly in size, resources and ethnic compositions (Akpan&Ekaneu, 2013). However, these marked differences did not stop the military from introducing a unified local government system in 1976, and officially declaring local government as the third tier of government with specific functions and responsibilities. The decree that declared local government as the third tier of government was included in the 1979 constitution and 1999 constitution. The local government reforms initiated from 1986 to 1992 Babangida military administration which is the most

remarkable of all the reforms of local government we ever had. The reforms were remarkable for repositioning local government administration in Nigeria. The reform signified and amplified the issue of local government financial autonomy by ensuring that local government got their financial allocation directly from the federation account. The reform also abrogated the Ministry of Local Government and introduced the legislative and executive arms of government to the local government system in Nigeria. The reform went ahead to tacitly freed the local governments financially from the apron string of the state governments. Unfortunately, rather than maintaining the gains of the military administration, successive administrations after the regime further emasculated both the administrative and financial autonomies of the local government. This is one consequence of political instability. Consequently, just like the local governments were seriously abused financially and administratively.

2.2.3 Concept of Rural Development

The concept of rural development in Nigeria lacks a unified definition as different scholars tend to view it from varying perspective. Some scholars look at rural development from the aspect of educational training like Haddad (1990), and Hinzen (2000). Obinne (1991) perceived rural development to involve creating and widening opportunities for individuals to realize full potential through education and share in

decision and action which affect their lives. Others like Olayide, Ogunfowora, Essang and Idachaba (1981) view rural development as means for the provision of basic amenities, infrastructure, improved agriculture productivity and extension services and employment generation for rural dwellers. Olatunbosun (1976), Williams (1978), Lele (1979), Idachaba (1980) and Ogunfiditimi (2000) viewed rural development from various perspectives. However, there is a consensus among them about the need for improvement in rural living conditions and standard of living of the rural populace. Olatunbosun (1976) stated that rural development is based on the need to balance the pattern and direction of government for the benefit of both the urban and rural sectors and provide technical requirements for speeding up economic growth in the development. Sartaj, A.(1978). viewed rural development from various perspectives. However, there is a consensus among them about the need for improvement in rural living condition and standard of living of the rural populace. Olatunbosun (1976) stated that rural development is based on the need to balance the pattern and direction of government for the benefit of both the urban and rural sectors and provide technical requirements for speeding up economic growth in the development. Adelemo (1987) sees the concept of rural development to include resettling displaced communities or adopting new types of housing unit. He continues that rural development should include alongside land-use development,

economic factors such as land carrying capacity for each area of farmland, irrigation improved farming method and finance. The objective of the National Policy on

Rural development as outlined by Ogbazi (1992) encapsulates an ideal situation of an acceptable level of development in the rural area. These objectives can be paraphrased to include: · Promotion of the social, cultural, educational and economic wellbeing of the rural population, promotion of sustained and orderly development of the vast resources in the rural area for the benefit of the rural people. · Increase in and diversification of job opportunities and improvement of income in the rural areas · Mobilization of the rural population for self-help and self-sustaining programme of development, and · Up-lifting of the technological based industries in the rural area.

Rural development is a concept that is used to describe a strategy that is designed to improve the economic and social life of the people in the rural areas. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sees rural development as a process of socio-economic change, involving the transformation of agrarian society, in order to reach a common set of development goals, based on the capacities and the needs of the people (Owo, in Nwosu, 2007, p. 305). To Anibueze, in Nwosu, Aliede and Nsude (2005, p. 36), rural development is a strategy that is designed to improve the economic and social conditions of a specific group of people, that is, the rural people. It involves

extending the benefits of development to the poorest, among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. Rural development in general, is used to denote the actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in non-urban neighbourhoods, countryside and remote villages. These communities can be exemplified with a low ratio of inhabitants to open space. As earlier noted, rural areas are such areas in a country that lack necessary social amenities and infrastructures which are necessary for good living. Thus, there is the need for advancement and growth in these rural areas. The process of bringing about this advancement and growth in the rural areas is what is referred to as rural development. Anaeto and Anaeto (2008, p. 1) observe thus: Rural development is a subset and an important part of national development. The idea and concern for rural development stems from the fact that majority of the people in the developing countries reside in rural areas. And the fact that development of the nation cannot be achieved without the development of the rural areas. Even the developing countries have recently come to realise that unless the rural areas are well-developed, hardly would any meaningful development occur in these countries. The above assertion implies that rural development is part of national development, because when rural communities are not fully developed, the objectives of national development cannot be achieved. No country can boast of development when its rural communities have not been positively affected.

This perhaps explains why Moemeka (1985, p. 9) explains that rural community education entails all activities like social, economic, educational, political and cultural, which touch on the lives of rural communities, knowledge of which is essential to purposeful living and progress. Onabajo, cited in Anaeto and Anaeto (2010) say that rural development entails interventions aimed at improved productivity, increased employment/ incomes for the target groups, as well as, minimum acceptable levels of food, shelter, education, health and housing. Rural development according to Anaeto and Anaeto (2010) is a subset and an important part of national development. The idea and concern for rural development stems from the fact that majority of the people in the countries reside in the rural areas. Rural development efforts attempt to bring about self-reliance in the rural communities in a country. New practices, ideas, innovations and methods, are introduced and when the rural dwellers accept these practices, it leads to economic gains.

2.2.4 Role of Local Government in Rural Development

Local government is the focus of government efforts at promoting development. It becomes obvious overtime that to effectively develop, the people must be adequately mobilized. A purposeful combination of the local (peoples) effort/energies with that of government with the objective of improving socio-economic conditions and encouraging

political participation is a key factor in rural development. It represents the objective expression of the energies of mobilized rural communities in concrete and tangible projects such as roads, clinics, schools, potable water and other communal initiatives that benefit the people. This chapter seeks to examine the role local government plays in rural development.

In Nigeria, past centralized development efforts embarked upon had resulted into failure to benefit the rural people yet, these people cannot be neglected for its enormity. For instance, in Nigeria, the population of people residing in rural areas in few selected states is : Rivers 86.16%, Anambra 80:85%, Bauchi 76:8%, Oyo 37:84% , Ondo 25.8%, Kano 89:6%, Sokoto 38:7% Kwara 52.0%, Plateau 69:0%, Ogun 68:3% and Gongola 71:5% (Olojede,1991). It has therefore been realized that rural development must constitute a major part of a development strategy if a large segment of those in greatest need are to benefit since most programmes embarked upon by the central and state governments. have failed in these areas; then local government becomes the next agent to fall on for development.

The roles of local government in rural development are:

Education: Local governments through their local education districts have been responsible for the construction, maintenance and staffing of primary schools in their

respective areas. Also, it is responsible for the payment of salaries for teaching and non – teaching staff in primary schools.

Transportation: The provision of transportation has gone a long way to enhance the status of Nigerian local governments. These local governments have set up diverse mass urban transit scheme to help to transport their staff and also act as a source of revenue generation for local governments.

Public Toilet: Local governments are not left out in the maintenance of good hygienic culture. They embark on the construction of public toilet for their people.

Water Supply: Local governments embark on digging of bore holes in the rural areas, this has greatly improved the hygiene nature of the people in these rural communities.

Medical and Health: These include the provision, maintenance and administration of dispensaries, maternity and health centres. The increase in the revenue allocation to local governments has been helping in the maintenance of these medical and health services.

Law Enforcement: Customary courts of Grades A, B and C and setup in different local government areas. These courts deal with Civil cases such as divorce, defaulters and issuing of certificate of marriage. Nehru (1996) emphasized the role of local government as the basis of any true system of democracy. According to him, the role of local government includes the following;

Grass-root democracy: Local government provides scope for democracy at the grass – root level. If direct democracy can still be practicable, it is only at this level, otherwise democracy at the state or national level has become only indirect type.

Serves as a training School: Local government is an excellent ground for creating and training future leaders. The participation of people at the local level in the management of their own affairs, gives them necessary experience to handle bigger affairs later at the state or national level.

Encourages participation of the people in public affairs: Local government affords opportunity to the people to participate in public affairs. It has become impracticable for common people to participate in public affairs at the state or national level.

Reduces the burden of the central government: Local government in a way acts supplementary to the central government. No doubt historically the local government is prior to the state or national government, but with the passage of time many important functions got transferred to the central government.

Serves as a channel of communication: The local government serves as two-way channel of communication between itself and the central government. Desires and aspirations of the local community are articulated and carried upward to the state government, and plans and programmes of the state and the central governments flow in the reverse

direction.

Vital for national progress: Local government promotes diversity of experience and creative activity through democratic action. Thus, it contributes to national progress through resilience, strength and richness of democracy.

2.2.5 Concept of Autonomy

Autonomy in generic term implies freedom, independent, free from external and remote control. In the context of Local Government in Nigeria, there is a great deal of confusion and misinterpretation as to what the term ‘autonomy’ connotes. This is because, government reforms that is intended to preserve or extend Local Government autonomy ends up short of their objectives because the full meaning of the term ‘autonomy’ has not been fully explained (Odunfa, 1991). The focus of this chapter is to examine the concept of local government autonomy, the problems associated thereof and the implication of these problems of primary educations.

2.2.6 Local Government Autonomy

In the view of polemical interpretations, the term Local Government autonomy is perceived as local self-government or grassroots democracy. This grassroots democracy is primarily aimed at giving the vast majority of the people the fullest opportunity to participate in determining their own destiny. But it is obvious that we cannot have

complete autonomy or complete local self-government within sovereign states. If Local Governments were completely autonomous they would be sovereign states.

Within a federal system of government, Nwabueze (1983) defines autonomy to mean that “each government enjoys a separate existence and independence from the control of the other governments”. It is an autonomy which requires not just the legal and physical existence of an apparatus of government like a legislative assembly, Governor, Local Government departments, etc. But that each government must exist not as an appendage of another government but as autonomous entity in the sense of being able to exercise its own will in the conduct of its affairs free from direction of another government. Nwabueze, therefore, concluded that autonomy would only be meaningful in a situation whereby each level of government is not constitutionally bound to accept dictation or directive from another.

In the view of the defunct Centre for Democratic Studies, Local Government autonomy refers to “the relative discretion which Local Governments enjoy in regulating their own affairs”. That is, the extent to which Local Government are free from the control of the State and Federal Governments in the management of local affairs. In his contribution on the literature of autonomy, Davey (1991) opines that “Local autonomy is primarily concerned with the question of responsibilities, resources and discretion conferred on the

local authorities. As such discretion and responsibility are at the core of Local Government”. It presumes that Local Government must possess the power to take decisions independent of external control within the limits laid down by the law. It must garner efficient resources particularly of finance to meet their responsibilities. Put differently, local autonomy is the freedom of independence in clearly defined issue, areas, as well as separate legal identity from other levels of government.

In the light of the above, the 1976 Local Government Reforms emerged by introducing a unified system, autonomy, and officially declaring Local Government as the third tier of government with specific functions. The decree that declared Local Government as the third tier of government was included in the 1979 constitution (and much later the 1999 constitution), and can be found in the fourth schedule of the 1999 constitution. Hence, several Local Government reforms have been initiated by successive governments to ensure that they are achieved (Olowu, 1984).

It should be noted that, the debate on Local Government autonomy focuses on what powers and functions the central or state government should grant to the local units within the political system (Clark, 1984). Pertinent is the, earlier stated, 1976 Local Government Reforms which gave us not only the definition of Local Government, but also the basic rudiments of Local Government autonomy.

Unfortunately, rather than build on the gains of the administration, successive administrations after the Babangida regime further emasculated both the administrative and financial autonomies of the Local Government. Consequently, just like the Local Governments were seriously abused financially and administratively during the military era before and after the Babangida administration, Local Governments have suffered similar fate, from 1999 when the country returned to civil governance to date (Felix & Okonette, 2013).

These abnormalities were subtly addressed by the 1999 Constitution in a phony manner. Section 162, Subsection (6) of 1999 constitution states that "each state shall maintain a special account to be called "State Joint Local Government Account" into which shall be paid such allocations to the Local Government councils of the State from the Federation Account and from the Government of the State." It went further under the same Section 162, Subsection (7) that "each state shall pay to the Local Governments in its area of jurisdiction such proportion of its revenue on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly." (Federal Republic Constitution, 1999). While Section 7 of the 1999 Constitution empowers the state legislature to make laws for the administrative operation of Local Government areas. However, these provisions have become the ammunition used by some state governors to incapacitate Local Governments

within their states. It was rightly corroborated that the failure of Local Government in area of service delivery is the role of the state governors in the affairs of Local Government (Adeyemi, 2013). It is doubtful if proposed amendment to section 7 and 162 of the 1999 Constitution will succeed, since it requires 2/3 majority votes of members of the National Assembly and 1/3 majority votes of members of the 36 Houses of Assembly (state legislatures) in the country.

The measures on Local Government make it impossible for Local Government to operate independent of both federal and state governments. The policies include the institution of Ministry of Local Government (but abolished in Babaginda's reform of 1986-1992), Local Government Service Commission, Caretaker Committee and appointment of a Sole Administrator to oversee the activities of Local Government. Others include Office of the Special Adviser to the Governor on Local Government and Community Affairs, the Senate and House of Representative Committees on Local Government matters, the State Houses of Assembly Committee on Local Government matters (Federal Republic Constitution: 1999).

2.2.7 State Government interference in Local Government Administration

The degree of interference on the activities of Local Government remains alarming. The governors are fond of taking over their financial allocation, taxes, counterpart funding

and refuse to conduct Local Government elections, instead ruling Local Governments with appointed administrators, most of whom are party loyalist, friends and relations, thereby turning the entire process of Local Government into an ineffective institution (Ukonga, 2012). There have been instances where state governors unconstitutionally dissolve the entire elected council officers without proper recourse and due process (Eboh and Diejomaoh, 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 caretaker (Abutudu, 2011).

This is pertinent to the case of River State which started on July 21, 2015. Immediately the Governor, Ezebunwo Nyesome Wike, assumed office, he dissolved 22 out of the 23 Local Government councils in the state based on the verdict obtained from Justice Lambo Akanbi of the Federal High Court, Port Harcourt (The Leadership, 2016). Thereafter, the governor has been changing Local Government caretaker committees like a chameleon institution. For example, 17 Local Government caretaker committees that were inaugurated by Governor Nyesom Wike on May 9, 2016 were dissolved by himself on September 1, 2016. Subsequently, 20 new Local Government caretaker chairmen that were appointed by the state governor were screened by the Rivers Assembly on October 6, 2016 (Vanguard Newspaper, 2016).

In many cases, caretaker-ship is perpetuated through promises of elections which are invariably postponed. This has been the case in Lagos, Oyo, Benue, and others (Premium, 2016; Daily, 2016; Queen, 2016). The outright denial of democratically elected local councils through caretaker committees demonstrates the increasing authoritarian holds of the councils by state governors. 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 until January 11, 2014 when the first Local Government elections, under the fourth republic, was conducted (Daily, 2014; Nkwocha, 2009). The high level of interference by state governors on Local Government affairs was also expressed by Khaleel quoted in Adeyemi (2013) when he observed thus: 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 Local Government from effective functioning and alienated grassroots people from enjoying social service delivery expected of Local Governments in Nigeria (Agba, Akwara, & Idu, 2013). Consequently, Local Governments now functions mostly as extension of state governments (Eboh & Diejomaoh, 2010; Ajibulu, 2012). The inherent consequence of this problem, according to Adeyemi (2013) is that Local Government has to wait for the next directives from state government before embarking on any developmental project. This has made Local Government an object of control and directives of a higher level of government.

The import 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 does not totally grant financial autonomy to the Local Government. The second dimension is the political interference. The constitution does not provide adequately for the political autonomy of the Local Governments in Nigeria. For instance, it does not provide specifically for the constitution of the Local Government council to be

solely through democratic elections, for the specific tenure of the Local Government political office holders, for the Local Governments to derive their full existence directly from the constitution of the Federal Republic and for the specific powers and functions of the Local Government (Azelama, 2008; Ezeani, 2012; Chukwuemeka et al., 2014).

2.2.8 The Implication of the Joint Account System on Local Government Fiscal Autonomy and service delivery

The research reveals the following;

- a. The laws made by the State houses of Assembly to bring the State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA) into force are usually tilted to favour ends thereby compounding the already distressed financial positions of the councils.
- b. The key officers of the Joint Account Committee set up by the State governor are state government representatives who function on the directive of the State Chief Executives with little or no control from the Council Chairmen who are the statutory owners of the fund as the chief accounting officers of their Local Governments.
- c. Most of the Local Government councils were not even represented in the Joint Account Allocation Committee (JAAC).
- d. The Council who are the chief accounting officers of their respective Local Governments were never briefed as to how much accrued to their councils monthly from

the Federation Account before sharing.

e. Substantial amounts of the allocations from FAAC to each of the Local Government Councils were deducted at source in the name of Joint projects or any other contrived reasons. F

f. The council chairmen who picked up the courage to protest over the unwarranted deductions from their councils' statutory allocation were threatened and some were even sacked from their positions for daring to query the activities of the joint Account Allocation Committee (JAAC) by the State Governors.

g. State governments that are constitutionally required to fund local government councils have instead used the SJLGA provisions to hold local governments hostage and make them mere appendages of the stat thereby practically denying the local government councils their financial autonomy (Okafor, 2010). This study shows that the Revenue Allocations that accrued to Local Government Councils in the States were not only deducted at source but that they were in some occasions totally withheld by the State Government through the Joint Account Committee.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study will adopt the fiscal federation theory as the basis for this work. The basic foundations for the initial theory of Fiscal Federalism were laid by Kenneth Arrow,

Richard Musgrave and Paul Sadweh Samuelson's two important papers (1954, 1955) on the theory of public goods, Arrow's discourse (1970) on the roles of the public and private sectors and Musgrave's book (1959) on public finance provided the framework for what became accepted as the proper role of the state in the economy. Within this framework, three roles were identified for the government sector. These were the roles of government in correcting various forms of market failure, ensuring an equitable distribution of income and seeking to maintain stability in the macro-economy at full employment and stable prices.

The theoretical framework in question was basically a Keynesian one which canvassed for an activist role of the state in economic affairs. Thus, the government was expected to step in where the market mechanism failed due to various types of public goods characteristics. Economics teaches us that public goods will be underprovided if left to private market mechanisms since the private provider would under invest in their provision because the benefits accruable to her or him would be far lower than the total benefit to society. Governments and their officials were seen as the custodians of public interest who would seek to maximize social welfare based on their benevolence or the need to ensure electoral success in democracies. Once we allow for a multi-level government setting, this role of the state in maximizing social welfare then provides the

basic ingredients for the theory of fiscal federalism. Each tier of government is then seen as seeking to maximize the social welfare of the citizens within its jurisdiction. This multi-layered quest becomes very important where public goods exist, the consumption of which is not national in character, but localized. In such circumstances, local outputs targeted at local demands by respective local jurisdictions clearly provide higher social welfare than central provision. This principle, which Oats (1972) has formalized into the "Decentralization Theorem" constitutes the basic foundation for what may be referred to as the first-generation theory of fiscal decentralization (Oats, 2004). The theory focused on situations where different levels of government provided efficient levels of outputs of public goods "for those goods whose special patterns of benefits were encompassed by the geographical scope of their jurisdictions" (Oats, 2004). Such situation came to be known as "perfect mapping" or "fiscal equivalence" (Olson 1969).

Nevertheless, it was also recognized that, given the multiplicity of local public goods with varying geographical patterns of consumption, there was hardly any level of government that could produce a perfect mapping for all public goods. Thus, it was recognized that there would be local public goods with inter-jurisdictional spill-overs. For example, a road may confer public goods characteristics, the benefits of which are enjoyed beyond the local jurisdiction. The local authority may then under-provide for

such a good. To avoid this, the theory then resorts to traditional Pigouvian subsidies, requiring the central government to provide matching grants to the lower-level government so that it can internalize the full benefits.

Based on the following, the role of government in maximizing social welfare through public goods provision came to be assigned to the lower tiers of government. The other two roles of income distribution and stabilization were, however, regarded as suitable for the central government. To understand the rationale for the assignment of the redistribution function to the central government, we need to examine what the implications of assigning this responsibility to the lower tier would imply. Given that citizens are freely mobile across local or regional jurisdictions, a lower-level jurisdiction that embarks on a programme of redistribution from the rich to the poor would be faced with the out-migration of the rich to non-redistributing jurisdictions and in-migration of the poor from such jurisdictions to the redistributing one. If on the other hand, the powers to redistribute were vested in the central government, a redistribution policy would apply equally to citizens resident in all jurisdictions. There would therefore be no induced migration. The central government is expected to ensure equitable distribution of income, maintain macroeconomic stability and provide public goods that are national in character. Decentralized levels of government on the other hand are expected to concentrate on the

provision of local public goods with the central government providing targeted grants in cases where there are jurisdictional spill-overs associated with local public goods.

The next step in the theoretical framework was to determine the appropriate taxing framework. In addressing this tax assignment problem, attention was paid to the need to avoid distortions resulting from decentralized taxation of mobile tax bases. Gordon (1983) emphasized that the extensive application of non-benefit taxes on mobile factors at decentralized levels of government could result in distortions in the location of economic activity.

Justification of the Fiscal Federalism Theory:

The relevance of the theory to this study to note is the need for true fiscal federalism that will enhance all levels of government including local government without interrupted in any form that will hinder them from rendering their constitutional responsibilities. This is also in the form of lump sum transfers from the central government to decentralized governments. The arguments for equalization were mainly two. The first which is on efficiency grounds saw equalization as a way of correcting for distorted migration patterns. The second is to provide assistance to poorer regions or jurisdictions. Equalization has been important in a number of federations. For example, Canada has an elaborate equalization scheme built into her inter-governmental fiscal arrangements. It

should be pointed out however, that recent literature emphasizes the importance of reliance on own revenues for financing local budgets. A number of authors (Weingast, 1995; McKinnon, 1997) have drawn attention to the dangers of decentralized levels of government relying too heavily on intergovernmental transfers for financing their budgets.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we described the research procedure for this study. A research methodology is a research process adopted or employed to systematically and scientifically present the results of a study to the research audience viz. a vis, the study beneficiaries.

3.2 Research Design

Research designs are perceived to be an overall strategy adopted by the researcher whereby different components of the study are integrated in a logical manner to effectively address a research problem. In this study, the researcher employed the survey research design. This is due to the nature of the study whereby the opinion and views of people are sampled. According to Singleton & Straits, (2009), Survey research can use quantitative research strategies (e.g., using questionnaires with numerically rated items), qualitative research strategies (e.g., using open-ended questions), or both strategies (i.e., mixed methods). As it is often used to describe and explore human behaviour, surveys are therefore frequently used in social and psychological research.

3.3 Population of the Study

According to Udoyen (2019), a study population is a group of elements or individuals as the case may be, who share similar characteristics. These similar features can include location, gender, age, sex or specific interest. The emphasis on study population is that it constitutes of individuals or elements that are homogeneous in description. From an estimated population of 53,200. 532 was adopted using Taro Yamani formula, which was later reduced to 220.

3.4 Sample Size Selection Technique and Procedure

According to Nwana (2005), sampling techniques are procedures adopted to systematically select the chosen sample in a specified away under controls. This research work adopted the simple random sampling technique and stratified sampling technique were used. in selecting the respondents from the total population of 209,251 (CENSUS, 2006),

ILORIN SOUTH WARDS

1	Akanbi-I
2	Akanbi-II
3	Akanbi-III
4	Akanbi-IV
5	Akanbi-V
6	Balogun-Fulani I

7	Balogun-Fulani II
8	Balogun-Fulani III
9	Okaka I
10	Okaka II
11	Oke-Ogun

From the above, 20 Respondents were selected from each Wards, to arrive at the population size of 220.

3.5 Research Instrument and Administration

The research instrument used in this study is the questionnaire. A survey containing series of questions were administered to the enrolled participants. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, the first section inquired about the response's demographic or personal data while the second sections were in line with the study objectives, aimed at providing answers to the research questions. Participants were required to respond by placing a tick at the appropriate column. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

Two methods of data collection which are primary source and secondary source was used to collect data. The primary sources will be the use of questionnaires, while the secondary sources include textbooks, internet, journals, published and unpublished articles and government publications.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The responses will be analyzed using the frequency tables, which will provide answers to the research questions. The hypothesis test will be conducted using the Chi-Square statistical tool, SPSS v.23.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATAANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data derived through the questionnaire and key informant interview administered on the respondents in the study area. The analysis and interpretation were derived from the findings of the study. The data analysis depicts the simple frequency and percentage of the respondents as well as interpretation of the information gathered. A total of two hundred and twenty (220) questionnaires were administered to respondents of which two-hundred (200) were returned and validated. This was due to irregular, incomplete and inappropriate responses to some questionnaire. For this study a total of 200 was validated for the analysis.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Variables

Table 4.1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic information	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male		
	119	59.5%
Female	81	40.5%
Age		
20-25	87	43.5%
26-30	54	27%

31-35	33	16.5%
36+	26	13%
Marital Status		
Single	85	42.5%
Married	110	55%
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	05	2.5%
Qualification		
SSCE/NCE/OND	85	42.5%
BSC/HND	103	51.5%
MSC/PGDE	12	6%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

Question 1: To what extent has state interference in the management of local government revenue constituted the bane to rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Table 4.2: Respondent to question 1

Options	Frequency	Percentage
High Extent	93	46.5%
Average	68	34%
Low Extent	39	19.5%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the responses derived as described in the table 4.2, 46.5% of the respondents said High Extent, 34% of the respondent said Average while 19.5% of the respondent said Low extent.

Question 2: To what extent has poor financial management practice in the local government hinders rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area?

Table 4.3: Respondent to question 2

Options	Frequency	Percentage
High Extent	103	51.5%
Average	85	42.5%
Low Extent	12	6%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the responses derived as described in the table 4.3, 51.5% of the respondents said High Extent, 42.5% of the respondent said Average while 6% of the respondent said Low extent.

Question 3: To what extent will corruption free and local government autonomy enhance rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area?

Table 4.4: Respondent to question 3

Options	Frequency	Percentage
High Extent	100	50%
Average	90	45%
Low Extent	10	5%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the responses derived as described in the table 4.3, 50% of the respondents said High Extent, 45% of the respondent said Average while 5% of the respondent said Low extent.

4.4 Testing Hypothesis

HO1: State interference in the management of local government revenue has not constituted the bane to rural development in Kwara State.

HO2: Poor financial management practice in the local government does not hinder rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area.

HO3: Corruption free and local government autonomy will not enhance rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area.

HYPOTHESIS ONE

Table 4.5: State interference in the management of local government revenue has not constituted the bane to rural development in Kwara State.

Options	Fo	Fe	Fo – Fe	(Fo - Fe) ²	(Fo--Fe) ² /Fe
Yes	93	66.7	26.3	691.7	10.4
No	68	66.7	1.3	1.7	0.2
Undecided	39	66.7	27.7	767.2	11.5
Total	200	200			22.1

Source: Extract from Contingency Table

Degree of freedom = (r-1) (c-1)

(3-1) (2-1)

(2) (1)

= 2

At 0.05 significant level and at a calculated degree of freedom, the critical table value is 5.991.

Findings

The calculated $X^2 = 22.1$ and is greater than the table value of X^2 at 0.05 significant level which is 5.991.

Decision

Since the X^2 calculated value is greater than the critical table value that is 22.1 is greater than 5.991, the Null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that State interference in the management of local government revenue has constituted the bane to rural development in Kwara State.

HYPOTHESIS TWO

Table 4.5: Poor financial management practice in the local government does not hinders rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area.

Options	Fo	Fe	Fo – Fe	(Fo - Fe) ²	(Fo--Fe) ² /Fe
Yes	83	66.7	16.3	265.7	4.0
No	72	66.7	5.3	28.1	0.4
Undecided	45	66.7	21.7	470.9	7.1
Total	200	200			11.5

Source: Extract from Contingency Table

Degree of freedom = (r-1) (c-1)

(3-1) (2-1)

(2) (1)

= 2

At 0.05 significant level and at a calculated degree of freedom, the critical table value is 5.991.

Findings

The calculated $X^2 = 11.5$ and is greater than the table value of X^2 at 0.05 significant level which is 5.991.

Decision

Since the X^2 calculated value is greater than the critical table value that is 11.5 is greater than 5.991, the Null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that poor financial management practice in the local government hinders rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area.

HYPOTHESIS THREE

Table 4.6: Corruption free and local government autonomy will not enhance rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area.

Options	Fo	Fe	Fo – Fe	(Fo - Fe)²	(Fo--Fe)²/Fe
Yes	83	66.7	16.3	265.7	4.0
No	62	66.7	-4.7	22.1	0.3
Undecided	55	66.7	-11.7	136.9	2.1
Total	200	200			6.4

Source: Extract from Contingency Table

Degree of freedom = $(r-1) (c-1)$

$(3-1) (2-1)$

$(2) (1)$

$= 2$

At 0.05 significant level and at a calculated degree of freedom, the critical table value is 5.991.

Findings

The calculated $X^2 = 6.4$ and is greater than the table value of X^2 at 0.05 significant level which is 5.991.

Decision

Since the X^2 calculated value is greater than the critical table value that is 6.4 is greater than 5.991, the Null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that Corruption free and local government autonomy will not enhance rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The broad objective of this study is to examine the implications of local government autonomy on rural development in Kwara State particularly in Ilorin South Local Government Area. The study ascertained the extent to which state interference in the management of local government revenue constituted the bane to rural development in Kwara State. To examine the extent to which poor financial management practice in the local government hinders rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area and suggested ways in which corruption free and local government autonomy will enhance rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area.

The study adopted the survey descriptive research design and with the aid of convenience sampling method, the researcher conveniently selected two hundred and twenty-eight (228) participants from who are resident of Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. Self- structure questionnaire was issued to the respondent of which 200 was retrieved and validated for the study. Data was analyzed using simple percentage in frequencies and tables. Hypothesis test was conducted using Chi-Square Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v.23).

5.2 Conclusion

The creation of Local Government anywhere in the world stems from the need to facilitate developments at the grassroots. This attests to the fact that Local Government exist primarily for the provision of public services that will make life worth living for the local residents. Local Government is the focus of government efforts at promoting development. To effectively develop, the people's efforts must be adequately mobilized. A Purposeful combination of local (peoples) efforts and energies with that of government with the objective of improving socioeconomic conditions and encouraging political participation are key factors in rural development. However, local governments are faced with such challenges like inadequate finance, corruption, poor implementation of projects, lack of competent manpower, high level of illiteracy, lack of due consultation and non-involvement of local dwellers in policy decisions and hijack of local government allocation by the state government. Whereby fiscal power is not decentralized but centralized and there is no fiscal autonomy enjoyed by local governments, the pattern of inter-governmental relations in Nigeria is not in tune with true federalism. The lacks of administrative independence and fiscal autonomy by local governments have made them handicapped in effective service delivery hence has hindered rural development.

Base on the result of the study, it can be concluded that:

- ❖ State interference in the management of local government revenue has constituted the bane to rural development in Kwara State.
- ❖ Poor financial management practice in the local government hinders rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area.
- ❖ Corruption free and local government autonomy will enhance rural development in Ilorin South Local Government Area.

5.3 Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- ❖ The quest for autonomy therefore should be related to financial viability. However, local government financial autonomy should not be seen as making local government a sovereign entity, or the chairmen a local government, thus comparing himself with state governors. But local government financial autonomy should be enjoyed by the citizens at the grassroots.
- ❖ The constitutional status of local government as contained in Section 7 must be clearly spelt out. This will allow local government to perform the functions for which it was set up. Bye laws can be used to regulate the affairs of the local government.

Also, the issue of joint-state-local government account should be modified in order to allow proper monitoring of the activities of local government.

❖ The concept of true federalism should be revisited and practicalized not just in

papers. A true federalism is a system of government whereby each level of government is independent of another but interact with another in a co-ordinate form. Most importantly, fiscal federalism. The state should stop tampering with local government fund. The state should also remit 10% of internally generated revenue to the local government purse. The state should allow the principle of federalism to be implemented at the local government level. The relationship between the state and local governments should not be that of superior and sub-ordinate but that of co-operative governance.

❖ Credible Elections should be conducted at the local government level whereby the governing body should be accountable to the rural citizens. The method of using 'Transition Committee Chairmen, Caretaker Committee and Sole Administrators' to run the affairs of local governments do not allow for Local government Autonomy. Overall elections should be conducted on the same date and the specified tenure as stated by the constitution should be served. Strong democratic structures in the local governments will improve the inter-governmental relations in Kwara State.

❖ Proper implementation of the Rule of Law. The rule of law must prevail. The law should be supreme to all levels of government. Moreover, the judiciary should be made to be independent as undue interference in the local government affairs by the state or federal government should be properly addressed. This will allow for good inter-governmental relations and the performance of local governments will improve. There should be proper checks and balances between the two levels of government between the two levels of government (state and local governments). Clear-cut definitions of functions, duties and responsibilities between the state and the local governments.

❖ More so, the legal framework and guidelines should be handed to the local government, adequate funding and state government support should be optimal in order to enhance effective local government administration in Ilorin South Local Government and other local government in Kwara State.

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