

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS AN INSTRUMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (A CASE STUDY OF MUNYA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF NIGER STATE, NIGERIA)

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### ABSTRACT

*The aim of every government is to provide services to its citizens and to improve their quality of lives. The main objective of the study is to examine the extent to which Munya Local Government as an instrument of rural development perform its functions. The study went further to determine the performance of Munya local government with regard to the development of rural areas from 2017-2022. It went further to identify the problems faced by Munya local government in the performance of its function as an instrument of rural development the study went further to proffer measures that need to be taken to incisively address the problem faced by Munya local government in its rural development strategy. The study David Easton's Systems theory. The mixed method of data collection was adopted with primary data collected from interview of purposively selected Key informants spread across Munya Local Government and inspection of projects executed from 2017-2022. The study also discovered that Munya Local Government have succeeded in execution of some projects across the Local Government Area though not evenly spread in some instances. The study also discovered that the developmental task of Munya Local Government is affected by some problems such as inadequacy of funds, corrupt practices at different levels, Joint State-Local Government Allocation (JSLGA) amongst others. The study recommended that the federal government should ensure that local governments are adequately funded and these funds should be transferred directly to the local governments' account to prevent the state government from having access to these funds. This will adequately improve the provision of social services in the rural areas. This will make the rural dwellers feel the impact of government. Projects committees should be set up in every local government with each ward represented so as to determine the evenness of executed projects; this will lead to even development. More Local Governments should be created so as to reduce the sizes of some of the existing ones, thereby bringing government closer to the people. The activities of the economic and financial crime commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences commission (ICPC) should be extended to both state and local government level in order to investigate the expenditure of the funds allocated to the local governments at the end of every financial year so as to bring sanity in the system.*

**Key words:** Development, Government, Munya, Local, Rural.

### Introduction

The concept, local government as the third tier, more especially under a devolved system is obligated to perform some certain functions as its contribution to the development process. In

the realization of this therefore, some many efforts are made with the view to making Nigerian local government system responsively to the much needed desire of enabling the local government towards developing in the rural areas (Galadima, 2000) notable with of such efforts are the formation and implementation of the guidelines of the 1976 local government reform, enshrining the provision of the 1976 local government reform in the 1979 constitution. The inclusion of local government programmers' and project in the national development plans, instituting the Dasuki committee in 1984 which works out many strategies for improving local government administration, Applying the 1988 civil service reforms to the local government and providing more funds for local government occasional by eventually increasing in the percentage of financial statutory allocation for the local government from 10% to 15% and from 15% to 20% in the 1989 to 1992 respectively (Bello, 2004). All together though the intent has been to enable local government partake actively in rural development.

However, despite this entire struggle, the performance of local government in providing service to the people is low, and hence their contribution to development process has been below expectation (Galadima, 2000). Then, what problems account for the low performance in the local governments in Nigeria, before answering this question, it is imperatives to bear the following questions in mind, been crucial in determining the extend of which local government have performed their functions in pursuance of the role as instrument of rural development; The level of financial resources available in the local government council vis-à-vis revenue generation which include:

- a. Federal/state government grants to the local government.
- b. Internal revenue, taking into the account its base, capacity and efforts.
  - I. The degree of autonomy granted to the local government to enable them operates.
  - II. The historical and socio economic background of the local government areas.
  - III. The relationship between the local government and their citizens.
  - IV. Availability of other resources is, the level of material resources available and utilization.

In fact, while statutory allocation can be seen as a means of facilitating local government efforts to develop a solid foundation for effective continuity of delivery of essential services to their communities, internally generated revenue is desirable as it is very essential for continuous existence local government is an effective provider of socio economic services to the people. Hence, the justification of a local government is to generate revenue internally, as one of its function. As such their contribution to development is still low. One may still be attempt to ask this question, what are the reasons responsible for low generation of local revenue by the local council. Indeed, there are certain issues which determine the effectiveness or otherwise of revenue generation, revenue capacity as well as effort to generate.

Base on the forgoing, one can appreciate that provision of funds is very essential to the survival of an organization, such as the means can be only useful when they are effective and prudently utilized and depends on the management strategies they employed to pursue the means. The effect, therefore but the availability of funds and the effective management should complement each other, if organization goals and objectives are being achieved.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

The National Bureau of Statistics observed that the poverty rate of Munya Local Government of Niger State as at 2013 stood at 49.6 percent (NBS,2014) and increased to 66.11percent in 2019 (NBS, 2019). This is coupled with lack of infrastructure and other social services. Rural dwellers who are predominantly complain of lack of social amenities like potable water, access

roads, electricity, health services amongst others. Most rural dwellers in Munya Local Government Area are living in abject poverty, characterized by the inability to participate in socio-economic activities coupled with complains on the execution of planned projects. These rural dwellers are living in thatched houses, prone to diseases due to lack of medical services and other social amenities. This study is to examine the extent to which Munya Local Government contributed in the area of rural development. In searching for answers to these questions, the level of performance of Munya Local Government will be exposed. It has become necessary to observe the level of its performance with the implication of satisfying the rural dwellers from 2017-2022 and if not what are the reasons or causes of the local governments inability to provide these services to the people.

### **3. Objectives of the Study:**

The objectives of this research is:

- I. To determine the performance of Munya local government with regard to the development of rural from 2017-2022.
- II. To identify the problems faced by Munya local government in the performance of its function as an instrument of rural development from 2017 -2022.
- III. To examine the measure that need to be taken to incisively address the problem faced by Munya local government as an instrument of rural development from 2017-2022.

### **4. Conceptual clarifications and theoretical framework.**

In the course of this research, existing literature on local government as an instrument of rural development were reviewed. Due to the expensive literatures review was focused on the arguments in line with the theoretical framework. In the course of doing that, literatures room books and monographs, journals and periodicals, articles, academic research projects, government reports, internet materials, unpublished materials (manuscripts) and so on were reviewed.

#### **The concept of local government**

Local government constitutes the most critical level of governmental which the moment ion to sustain a national development can be created. To some countries in the third world, it is the only semblance of authority known beyond the traditional institution. This is why like most concepts in popular political and administrative vocabulary; local government has been given a variety of definitions.

In an effort to define local government, Oluwatobi, (2019) states that it is a political development of a country or (in a framework) or state whivh comprises bye-laws and have considerable organizing power over related issues.

According to the United Nations Division of Public Administration cited in Anifowose and Enemuo, Local Government is a Political division of a nation (or in a federal system or state) which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the powers to impose taxes or exact labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected (Enemua, and Anifowose, 1999).

While in agreement with the above conception, Oyediran say: local government is government in which popular participation both in the choice of the decision makers and in the decision making process us conducted by local bodies which while recognizing the supremacy of the central government is able and willing to accept responsibilities for its decision (cited in Enemuo Anifowose 1999). Local government has also been defined by Whallen as: a given territory and population, an institutional structure, a separate legal entity, a range of powers and functions authorized by delegation from the appropriate central or intermediate to

legislative and lastly, within the ambit of such delegation, autonomy subject always to test of reasonableness (Whallen: cited in Wapmuk, 2005). In line with these definitions, local government can be view as that tiers of government, dose it to the people vested with certain powers to exercise control over the affairs of the people in the area of jurisdiction.

The federal military government of Nigeria in introducing the nationwide local government reforms view local government as government at the local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercised specific powers within defined areas. These powers should give the councils substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement the activities of the state and federal government in these areas, and ensure through devolution of function of these council and through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions through local initiative and response to local needs and conditions maximized (Guideline For Local Government Reforms, 1976). From the above, the federal military government view local government as a government at the local level which has substantial power and control over staff, institutions, financial and local affairs, through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, improve local initiative to provide needs of the people.

Local governments in Nigeria are pre-conditioned towards rural development, hence, the various reforms and constitutional provisions to attain such height. The importance of this to Munya Local Government is that it was created to bring or to increase rural development in the area.

Among the many reason for the creation of local governments in Nigeria is from the grassroots development. The grassroots developments which is also known as rural development has been given various interpretation based on different, ideological learning, it could be seen as a process embracing a host of economic, social, and political activities, whose ultimate objective is enhancement of human welfare and societal transformation. (Maikasuwa, 2002).

Abdullahi (2008) sees grassroots development as a self-generating process of the socio-economic and political improvement in which the masses are meaningfully participants as well as sharers in the costs and benefits. Because welfare and progress have several dimensions, the development process should serve a number of processes which include: Reduction of poverty, Raising people's standard of living, Expanding the range of choice open to the people so that they choose to themselves more satisfying lives. Enhancing the participation of people in meaningful political activities, as well as in policy making and execution.

Bello (2004), in his view narrow the reasons why local government exist into four basic ones. These are: To promote economic development from below. This includes infrastructural provisions, promote political integration and nation-building, promote local freedom of action/autonomy and Enhance grassroots democracy.

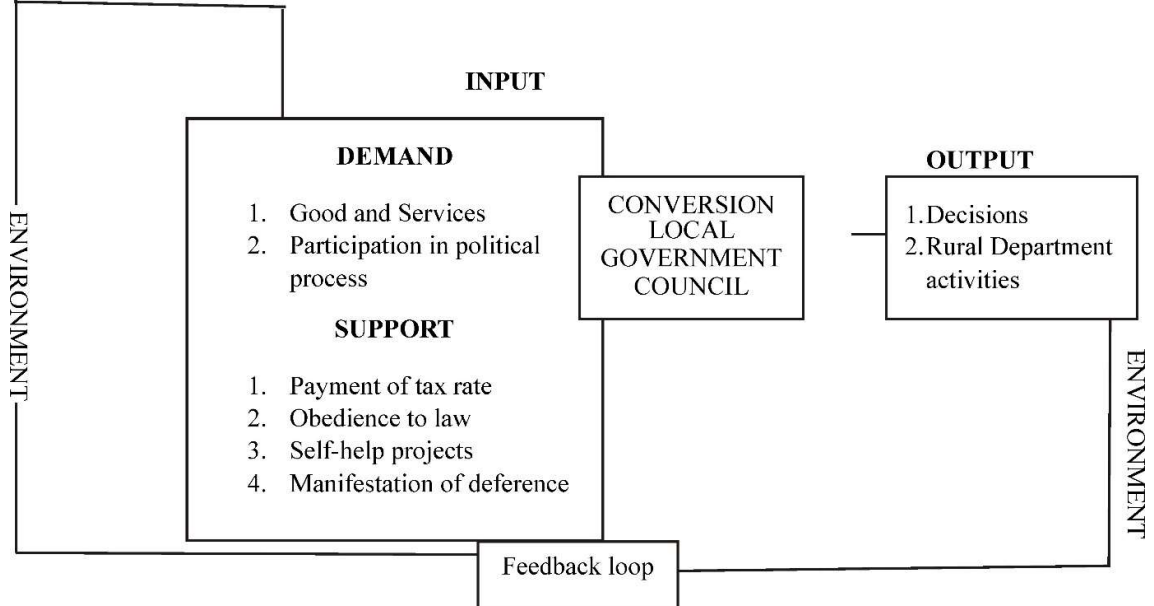
Omar asserts that; in most modern democracies, central governments are increasingly relying on local governments to perform services related to economic and social developments. In this regards new styles governance at the third world (especially in Asia and Africa) with a view to increasing the contribution of local government to overall economic and social development programmers (Omar, 2005). From the above it is clear that local government is synonymous with community development which is seen by Mathias (2021) as a self-directional effort of the people and for the people.

This research investigates the rural development activities of Munya Local Government Area in Niger State from 2017-2022. The **theory of systems analysis** is adopted to achieve this, this theory was first developed by David Easton he defined politics as the authoritative allocation of values which broadly constitutes the political process. Gauba (2003) this does not

take place in a closed circuit its ends are connected with the social process. In the allocation of values is made because there are corresponding demands from the society or environment it becomes authoritative because it gets support from the environment. In Easton's terminology the "political system" receives inputs from the environment in form of demands and supports, it produces output flow back into the environment through a feedback mechanism, giving rise to fresh demands.

This may be illustrated as follows:

**Fig 1. David Easton's System Model.**



Source: Gauba 2003:93

From the above figure we can see that Munya Local Government activities are influenced by the environment (internal and external). The internal environment consists of the local government council chairman, the councilors, the traditional rulers, religious bodies, trade unions, social clubs, the economic resources within the local government, the quality of the population, the staff of the local government, all these constitute forces that interplay and influence the operation and performance of Munya Local Government.

The external environment comprises the state and federal government. Both formulate rules and regulations which guide the operation of the local government authority. The external environment influences which affect the operation of Munya Local Government also include the federal and state government budgetary and financial allocation and control. Munya local government as a system receives input from both the internal and external environments in the form of demand and supports. The various towns and villages within the local government demand the provision of services such as roads, schools, health services, water and other things from the local government authorities. The local government also receives support in the form of payment of taxes and rates, obedience to its bye law, self-help projects from the residents and indigenes of the local government.

These various inputs are converted into outputs by the local government council chairman and other top officials of the local government. The output of Munya Local Government council is the decisions and actions of the authorities.

This process is described as a feedback-loop and is an important type of response to support stress in a political system (Munya Local Government). The feedback thus is a dynamic process through which information about the performance of the system is communicated back to it in such a way as to effect the subsequent behavior of the system. This, through the feedback process, people's feelings and reaction to the operations, actions and performance of Munya local government are communicating back to the authorities of the local government.

## 5. Methodology

The mixed method was used to gather the requisite information, oral interviews, personal observations and print materials were used to gather information. This was augmented by the use of personal observation of the condition of living of the studied population or level of their access to basic social amenities of life, especially as might be made available by the local government. Secondary data were sourced from books, journals, internet materials and related government publications under this study.

In the course of analysis, the researcher presented the data by way of tabulation which is a method of transferring data from its gathering instrument to a tabular form, where they were systematically examined for further analysis and interpretation. Data analysis involved the use of qualitative descriptive method, in summering the result of the subject under investigation. Through the use of qualitative method, the statistical results (i.e. interpretation) of the findings through the information generated were used to draw conclusion.

## 6. Results

**Table 1 Summary of actual projects executed against planned ones in Munya Local Government Area, Niger State in 2017.**

Total number of planned projects	Total number of executed projects	Percentage of executed projects against planned ones	Reasons for Non execution	Spread of Projects (Evenness.)
24	14	58	Numerous	Evenly spread.

**Source:** Field work 2023

From the above table it is clear that in 2017 projects were planned to be executed, but only 14 were truly executed and completed which represents 58%.

Though these projects were evenly spread, they were not concentrated in one ward. The Director of works department in an interview indicated insufficient fund as the factor responsible for the inability of the local government council to complete the planned projects, the director of finance and supply, planning research and statistics also gave the same reason.

**Table 2 Summary of actual projects executed against planned ones in Munya Local Government Area, Niger State in 2018.**

Total number of planned projects	Total number of executed projects	Percentage of executed projects against planned ones	Reasons for Non execution	Spread of Projects (Evenness.)
36	10	28	Selfishness, Insufficient fund etc.	Not Evenly spread.

**Source:** Field work 2023.

The above table clearly indicates that in year 2018, 36 projects were planned and only 10, representing 28%, were executed, some of the reasons given for the low number of executed ones range from insufficient fund, selfishness and so on. Again, the projects were not evenly spread; these projects were concentrated mainly in Daza ward.

**Table 3 Summary of projects executed against planned ones in Munya Local Government Area, Niger state in 2019.**

Total number of planned projects	Total No. of executed projects	Percentage of executed projects against planned ones	Reasons for Non execution	Spread of Projects (Evenness.)
14	5	36	Poor internally generated revenue	Not Evenly spread.

*Source;* Field work,2023.

On the above table, it is clearly indicated that only 36% of the planned projects were executed projects were not evenly spread; these projects were concentrated in Daza ward. The home town of the council Chairman. The main reason advanced for the poor execution of projects of poor internally generated revenue.

**Table 4 Summary of projects executed against planned one in Paikoro local government area, Niger state in 2020.**

Total number of planned projects	Total number of executed projects	Percentage of executed projects against planned ones	Reasons for Non execution	Spread of Projects (Evenness.)
3	1	33	Insufficient fund from the federal state allocation	Not Evenly spread.

*Source:* Field work, 2023.

It can be seen from the above table that only 3 projects were planned for the whole year out of which only one was executed. The Director of finance and supply of the local government said that this poor performance was due to the poor allocation from the Federal and state government.

**Table 5 Summary of projects executed against planned ones in Munya Local Government Area, Niger State in 2021.**

Total number of planned projects	Total number of executed projects	Percentage of executed projects against planned ones	Reasons for Non execution	Spread of Projects (Evenness.)
13	5	38	None	Not Evenly spread.

*Source:* Field work 2023.

The table clearly indicates that out of the planned projects in the whole year only 38% were executed and these were evenly spread.

**7. Conclusion**

The findings of this study provided evident ground for empirical conclusion that the three tiers of government (Federal, state and local) have some roles to play in improving the standard of living of the rural dwellers. However, the transformation of the rural areas is not achieved because of the inadequacy of funds, corrupt practices at different levels and so on, as human right watch (2007) rightly said 'local government is perceived as having brought corruptions, misery and disempowerment rather than development and common empowerment'. It could also be found out that the high level of under development of rural areas is due to the fact that most state governments have exploited the local government not even allowing the local government to perform its primary duties. It is also believed that the rate of suffering by the rural dwellers will continue to be high as long as nothing is done to address the issue of Joint State Local Government Account and so on. The rural dwellers should be provided with the basic social amenities so as to improve their living condition.

**8. Recommendations**

Based on the above conclusion, the following recommendation is thus offered.

Firstly, the federal government should ensure that local governments are adequately funded and these funds should be transferred directly to the local governments' account to prevent the state government from having access to these funds. This will adequately improve the provision of social services in the rural areas. This will make the rural dwellers feel the impact of government.

The study recommended that:

1. The federal government should ensure that local governments are adequately funded and these funds should be transferred directly to the local governments' account to prevent the state government from having access to these funds. This will adequately improve the provision of social services in the rural areas, thereby making the rural dwellers feel the impact of government.
2. Projects committees should be set up in every local government with each ward represented so as to determine the evenness of executed projects; this will lead to even development.
3. More Local Governments should be created so as to reduce the sizes of some of the existing ones, thereby bringing government closer to the people.
4. The activities of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) should be extended to both state and local government level in order to investigate the expenditure of the funds allocated to the local governments at the end of every financial year so as to bring sanity in the system.



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