

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT IN SEMI-URBAN COMMUNITY**

(A CASE STUDY OF ADO-EKITI LOCAL GOVERNMENT)

BY

MUSA RASAQ AYOMIDE

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CERTIFICATION

This project work has been examined and approved as meeting the requirements of Department of Social Development, Institute of General Studies, Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Kwara State. In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Award of National Diploma (ND) in Social Development

MRS. TOLUSHE FAKAYODE
(PROJECT SUPERVISOR)

DATE

MR. YUNUS
(PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR)

DATE

MRS. JOYCE ABODUNRIN
(HEAD OF DEPARTMENT)

DATE

(EXTERNAL EXAMINER)

DATE

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Almighty God, the beginning and the end, the first and last, protects my life throughout all my ND programe and also to my lovely parent.

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My deepest gratitude goes to Almighty Allah the creator of universe, the one who is, who was and is to come, he who forever I shall be paying my homage to and also counted me among those that will be alive till today . I returned my glory , honor and adoration to almighty God who sees me through My immense gratitude also goes to Kwara state polytechnic for making my dreams come true and to the department of Social Development Department.

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Lastly, to my friends and lovers Simbiat, Modinat , Morenikeji, Lokomotive and those that I did nit mention you are all sighted may almighty Allah in his infinite mercy continue to bless you inshallah, Amen.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Local government is the closest tier of government to the people and plays a pivotal role in driving grassroots development. It is strategically positioned to identify and address the socio-economic needs of semi-urban and rural communities. Over the years, local governments in Nigeria have been regarded as essential tools for promoting national development through effective service delivery and implementation of social welfare programs (Adeyemo, 2005).

Social development encompasses various aspects of human progress, including education, healthcare, infrastructure, housing, and access to basic services. It is a multidimensional concept that seeks to enhance the well-being and quality of life of people, especially those in underserved communities. In semi-urban areas, where both urban and rural characteristics are present, the role of local governments in promoting social development becomes even more significant due to the peculiar challenges faced by residents. (UNDP, 2018).

In Nigeria, the constitutional responsibility of local governments includes the provision of basic amenities such as roads, healthcare centers, primary education, waste disposal, and water supply. These responsibilities are critical in fostering sustainable development, particularly in semi-urban areas where such services are often limited or unevenly distributed. However, despite constitutional provisions, the performance of local governments in promoting social development remains a subject of concern and debate. (FGN, 1999). Ado Local Government in Ekiti State represents a typical semi-urban area where the functions of local government are expected to impact the social and economic well-being of residents. As the capital of Ekiti State, Ado-Ekiti combines both rural and urban features, creating a dynamic setting for examining the effectiveness of local government in addressing community needs. Its strategic importance as a semi-urban hub makes it a compelling case study for evaluating local governance and social development outcomes.

Studies have shown that challenges such as poor funding, political interference, corruption, inadequate manpower, and lack of autonomy have hindered local governments from performing optimally. These systemic issues have contributed to inefficiencies in service delivery, thereby affecting the social development of communities that rely heavily on local government interventions. (Olasupo & Fayomi, 2012). Moreover, the pattern of development in Nigeria shows a significant disparity between urban centers and semi-urban or rural areas, leading to uneven access to services and opportunities (World Bank, 2020). As semi-urban areas continue to expand due to rural-urban migration, the need for inclusive and sustainable

local governance structures becomes more urgent. Ado Local Government serves as a microcosm of this broader trend, highlighting the need for responsive governance at the grassroots level.

In many cases, the performance of local governments is evaluated based on the extent to which they are able to meet the developmental expectations of their constituents. This includes constructing roads, providing clean water, improving education and health infrastructure, and creating employment opportunities through local initiatives. The success or failure of such efforts has direct implications for the standard of living in semi-urban communities. (Agagu, 2004).

There is also increasing recognition that citizen participation, accountability, and transparency are key determinants of local government effectiveness. Without inclusive governance practices, local governments may fail to reflect the actual needs and aspirations of the communities they serve. In this context, understanding the mechanisms through which Ado Local Government engages with its residents becomes essential for evaluating its developmental impact. (Olowu, 2003).

This research, therefore, aims to examine the role of Ado Local Government in fostering social development within its jurisdiction. By assessing its programs, challenges, and level of citizen engagement, the study seeks to provide insights into the opportunities for improving local governance in semi-urban communities in Nigeria. Ado Local Government has witnessed significant population growth over the past two decades due to rural-urban migration and urban sprawl. This demographic shift has exerted increased pressure on the limited social infrastructure and has created challenges for local governance in meeting the rising demand for public services. The resulting strain on healthcare, education, water supply, and housing highlights the importance of responsive and effective local government institutions (Ekiti State Government, 2021).

Furthermore, the socioeconomic realities of semi-urban communities like Ado-Ekiti are often shaped by complex political and administrative dynamics. While local governments are theoretically autonomous, they are often financially dependent on state and federal allocations, which limits their capacity to independently implement development projects. In practice, this dependency weakens the effectiveness of grassroots governance and reduces its accountability to the people. (Omotosho, 2011).

Another crucial dimension of local governance is community participation in decision-making processes. In many Nigerian local governments, the exclusion of citizens from planning and budgetary processes has led to a mismatch between community needs and implemented projects. Ado Local Government, being semi-urban, has the potential to model participatory governance through town hall meetings, ward consultations, and inclusive development planning. However, the extent to which these mechanisms are utilized remains largely underexplored. (Akindele & Olaopa, 2002).

From a policy perspective, various government initiatives such as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and its state-level counterparts, SEEDS (State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy), emphasize decentralization and local participation in

development. These initiatives underscore the role of local government as a critical partner in national development. Yet, implementation gaps and weak institutional capacity continue to undermine these objectives at the local level. (National Planning Commission, 2004).

Finally, addressing social development in semi-urban areas like Ado requires an integrated approach that considers infrastructure development, social welfare, environmental sustainability, and institutional reform. The effectiveness of the local government in managing these multiple dimensions will determine the long-term socio-economic transformation of the community.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The fundamental aim of local government in Nigeria is to promote grassroots development and enhance the quality of life of citizens through efficient service delivery. However, despite constitutional mandates and numerous reforms, local governments often struggle to fulfill their responsibilities, particularly in semi-urban communities where the population and socio-economic needs are rapidly evolving. Ado Local Government in Ekiti State, being a semi-urban area, presents a complex case where development challenges persist in spite of its strategic location and administrative relevance.

Over the years, residents of Ado Local Government have continued to experience inadequate provision of essential services such as access to clean water, effective waste management, quality healthcare, and basic education. Roads and public infrastructure in many wards remain in poor condition, and community members frequently express dissatisfaction with the level of responsiveness of local authorities. This situation raises questions about the capacity, commitment, and structure of the local government in delivering its developmental obligations.

A significant problem lies in the issue of poor funding and financial mismanagement. Local governments in Nigeria, including Ado Local Government, rely heavily on allocations from the Federation Account, which are often insufficient and irregular. This financial dependence limits their autonomy and delays project execution, leading to developmental stagnation. In many instances, allegations of misappropriation and political interference further complicate effective administration and transparency in project implementation.

Additionally, there is a noticeable gap between local government authorities and the citizens they are meant to serve. Community engagement in governance and development planning is minimal, resulting in policies and projects that do not reflect the real needs of the people. This disconnect contributes to a lack of trust in local governance and reduces the willingness of citizens to cooperate with or support local initiatives.

Despite numerous development frameworks and government efforts, there is a persistent inequality in the distribution of social services between urban and semi-urban areas. Semi-urban communities like Ado are often caught in the middle—neither fully urbanized to benefit from state-level infrastructure nor rural

enough to attract targeted rural development programs. This developmental ambiguity has left communities like Ado in a cycle of marginalization.

Furthermore, issues related to administrative inefficiency, lack of skilled personnel, and poor data management affect planning and execution of developmental projects. The absence of credible data on population needs and available resources impairs the local government's ability to prioritize and deliver effective social services. This problem is further worsened by inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

The core of the problem, therefore, revolves around the gap between policy formulation and practical development outcomes. While Ado Local Government is structurally mandated to drive social development, the realities on the ground indicate a shortfall in both performance and impact. This disconnect has led to widespread perceptions of ineffectiveness and raises the critical question: To what extent has Ado Local Government contributed to the social development of its communities?

This study is therefore necessitated by the need to investigate the actual role and effectiveness of local government in addressing the social development needs of semi-urban areas. It aims to identify the challenges faced by the local government, assess the impact of its interventions, and offer recommendations for improving grassroots development in similar contexts.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to assess the role of local government in promoting social development in semi-urban communities, using Ado Local Government in Ekiti State as a case study. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Examine the extent to which Ado Local Government contributes to the provision of basic social amenities such as healthcare, education, clean water, roads, and sanitation within its jurisdiction.
- ii. Evaluate the effectiveness of developmental programs and policies implemented by Ado Local Government in improving the quality of life of residents.
- iii. Identify the major challenges faced by Ado Local Government in delivering social development services in a semi-urban setting.
- iv. Recommend strategies for enhancing the capacity of Ado LGA to fulfilling social development.

1.4 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- i. What extent has Ado Local Government contributed to the provision of essential social amenities such as healthcare, education, clean water, and infrastructure?
- ii. How effective are the development programs and policies implemented by Ado Local Government in enhancing social welfare in the community?
- iii. What are the key challenges confronting Ado Local Government in delivering social development services in a semi-urban environment?

iv. What strategies can improve the capacity and performance of Ado LGA in promoting social development.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to guide the investigation and provide a basis for data analysis:

Hypothesis One

H₀₁ (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between the activities of Ado Local Government and the level of social development in the community.

H₁₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between the activities of Ado Local Government and the level of social development in the community.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Community participation does not significantly influence the effectiveness of social development projects in Ado Local Government.

H₁₂: Community participation significantly influences the effectiveness of social development projects in Ado Local Government.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: Financial resources and administrative capacity have no significant effect on the delivery of social services by Ado Local Government.

H₁₃: Financial resources and administrative capacity have a significant effect on the delivery of social services by Ado Local Government.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons, both at the academic and practical levels. It offers valuable insights into the role of local governments in driving social development, especially within semi-urban contexts like Ado Local Government. Given the increasing importance of decentralization and grassroots governance, understanding the challenges and opportunities at the local level is essential for sustainable national development.

Firstly, the study will contribute to the existing body of literature on local governance, social development, and public administration in Nigeria. It provides empirical data and practical analysis that will benefit researchers, students, and academic institutions interested in governance, development studies, and policy formulation.

Secondly, the findings of this study will be beneficial to policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels. It will help identify existing gaps in governance structures, highlight areas of underperformance, and offer actionable recommendations for improving local service delivery. By doing so, the study can serve as a reference point for enhancing the effectiveness of local government councils across Nigeria.

Thirdly, the research will be of immense importance to public administrators and local government officials. It will provide a clearer understanding of how their roles and decisions impact the lives of community members. It also highlights the importance of participatory governance, transparency, and accountability in the management of public resources and development initiatives.

Moreover, the study holds significance for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society groups, and development partners working in semi-urban and grassroots communities. The results can inform the design and implementation of more inclusive and community-driven interventions that complement government efforts. For community members and stakeholders in Ado Local Government, the study creates an avenue to express their views and experiences regarding local development. It empowers them with information and awareness that can enhance civic engagement and promote demand for better governance and accountability.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the role of local government in promoting social development in semi-urban communities, with specific attention to Ado Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria. It covers key areas of social development including healthcare, education, water supply, sanitation, road infrastructure, and community welfare services. The study also examines the level of citizen participation in governance, the effectiveness of local policies and programs, and the challenges hindering service delivery at the local level.

The research is limited to activities, programs, and policies implemented by Ado Local Government over a defined period primarily within the last five to ten years—depending on the availability of data.

Limitations of the Study

Like any academic research, this study is subject to certain limitations. One major limitation is access to reliable and up-to-date data. Some local government records may be incomplete, outdated, or inaccessible due to poor documentation practices or bureaucratic barriers, which could affect the accuracy of findings.

Secondly, time constraints may limit the breadth and depth of fieldwork, particularly in terms of conducting extensive interviews or reaching every ward within the local government area. The study may not capture every developmental initiative, especially those implemented by external partners or non-governmental organizations not directly tied to local government efforts.

Another limitation is the potential for respondent bias. Some government officials or community members may withhold information or provide socially desirable responses, which may affect the objectivity of the data collected. Efforts will be made to minimize this through anonymous surveys and diverse sources of information.

Additionally, while Ado Local Government serves as a representative semi-urban area, findings may not be universally applicable to all local governments in Nigeria due to contextual differences in size, population, resources, and governance dynamics. Despite these limitations, the study will strive to maintain academic rigor, objectivity, and relevance, offering valuable insights into the contributions and constraints of local government in social development within semi-urban Nigerian communities.

1.8 Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity and avoid ambiguity, the following key terms used in this study are defined within the context of the research:

Local Government: The third tier of government in Nigeria established to bring governance and development closer to the grassroots. It is responsible for the provision of basic social services, community development, and the maintenance of public infrastructure within its jurisdiction.

Social Development: The process of improving the well-being of individuals and communities through access to education, healthcare, housing, clean water, sanitation, and social welfare services. It involves policies and programs aimed at reducing poverty and inequality while enhancing quality of life.

Semi-Urban Community: A geographical area that exhibits both urban and rural characteristics. It typically has moderate infrastructure development, increasing population density, and a transitioning economy. In this study, Ado Local Government is considered a semi-urban area.

Grassroots Development: Development that originates from the local level, involving the active participation of community members in identifying, planning, and implementing projects that address their specific needs.

Service Delivery: The mechanism through which public services such as healthcare, education, water supply, and sanitation are provided to citizens by government institutions, particularly at the local level.

Governance: The processes and structures used by government institutions to make decisions, implement policies, and manage public resources. Good governance is characterized by transparency, accountability, participation, and effectiveness.

Development Programs: Planned activities and initiatives implemented by the government or development partners with the aim of improving the social and economic conditions of a community.

Public Participation: The involvement of community members in decision-making processes, especially regarding planning, implementation, and evaluation of government projects and policies that affect their lives.

Decentralization: The transfer of administrative, financial, and decision-making powers from central government to lower levels of government, such as state and local authorities, to enhance service delivery and promote grassroots development.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The concept of local government has been widely recognized as a crucial instrument for bringing governance closer to the people, especially in semi-urban and rural communities. According to Ola and Tonwe (2005), local governments serve as the third tier of government and are established to ensure efficient administration at the grassroots level. Their proximity to the people makes them a strategic institution for identifying and addressing local development needs in real-time, especially in communities often neglected by national and state-level policies.

Social development on the other hand, encompasses all efforts aimed at improving the well-being and quality of life of individuals and communities through access to basic services such as education, healthcare, clean water, housing, and employment opportunities. Midgley (1995) describes social development as a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole, in conjunction with economic development. In the Nigerian context, social development is often pursued through government programs implemented at the local level.

Several scholars have examined the role of local government in social development, with emphasis on their responsibility to provide public services and promote community participation. Agagu (2004) notes that effective local government administration can lead to rapid social development by facilitating grassroots participation and ensuring that resources are allocated based on community-specific needs. However, in practice, the effectiveness of local governments in Nigeria is often undermined by inadequate funding, corruption, and political interference.

The Nigerian local government system operates under a structure where substantial control is still exercised by state governments, thereby limiting the autonomy and capacity of local councils to initiate and implement meaningful development programs. Arowolo (2011) emphasizes that despite constitutional backing, local governments in Nigeria often lack financial independence, which hinders their ability to plan and execute sustainable development initiatives.

In the context of semi-urban communities, local governments are expected to serve as a bridge between the rural and urban settings by facilitating infrastructure development, improving health and education services, and creating employment opportunities. However, studies such as those by Olowu and Wunsch (2004) reveal that semi-urban areas in Nigeria frequently experience uneven development due to poor governance, mismanagement of resources, and weak institutional capacity at the local level.

Community participation has been identified as a critical component of successful social development. According to Okoli and Onah (2002), when community members are involved in the decision-making and implementation of development projects, there is greater transparency, accountability, and sustainability. Unfortunately, many local governments in Nigeria adopt top-down approaches that marginalize community voices, leading to low levels of project ownership and long-term impact.

Despite these challenges, scholars agree that local governments have great potential to serve as engines of social development if properly reformed. This includes granting them fiscal autonomy, enhancing transparency and accountability, and fostering community engagement (Ezeani, 2006). Furthermore, capacity-building programs for local officials and partnerships with NGOs and the private sector can improve local governance and development outcomes.

The literature reveals a complex but important relationship between local government and social development in semi-urban settings. While local governments are structurally positioned to drive grassroots development, their effectiveness depends largely on institutional reform, adequate funding, and participatory governance. The current study seeks to evaluate how these dynamics play out in Ado Local Government and what lessons can be drawn to enhance social development in similar contexts

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is built upon the relationship between local government functions and social development outcomes in semi-urban communities. It highlights how local government structures, roles, and processes influence the quality and accessibility of social services such as healthcare, education, water, sanitation, and public infrastructure. The framework is informed by both theoretical insights and empirical findings from existing literature.

At the core of the framework is the assumption that effective local governance, characterized by autonomy, accountability, citizen participation, and efficient resource management, is a critical determinant of social development. Conversely, when local government is plagued by political interference, inadequate funding, poor planning, and limited community involvement, the outcomes of social development efforts are often suboptimal or unsustainable (Arowolo, 2011).

The framework identifies key independent variables, including: Local government capacity (technical, administrative, and financial), Fiscal autonomy and budgeting effectiveness, Community participation and inclusion in decision-making, Transparency and accountability mechanisms, and Intergovernmental relations with state and federal authorities.

These are expected to influence the dependent variable, which is social development. For the purpose of this study, social development is measured in terms of: Access to basic services (education, healthcare, water), Infrastructure development, Youth and women empowerment programs, and Poverty reduction initiatives. The framework also recognizes moderating variables such as: Political stability at the local level, Quality of leadership, and Level of community awareness and engagement.

In practical terms, this means that even if a local government has constitutional authority and funding, poor leadership or lack of public trust may weaken its impact. Therefore, the conceptual framework serves as a guide to assess how well local governments, specifically Ado Local Government, have utilized their powers and resources to promote social development within their jurisdiction.

2.1.1 Local Government

Local government refers to the administration of the smallest units of a country's political structure, typically at the grassroots level. It functions as the closest government to the people and is charged with addressing the immediate needs of local communities (Ola & Tonwe, 2005). In the Nigerian context, the 1999 Constitution (as amended) recognizes local governments as the third tier of government, entrusted with responsibilities including primary education, waste management, local infrastructure, and health services. However, despite their constitutional status, local governments often operate with limited autonomy due to financial and administrative dependence on state governments (Arowolo, 2011).

Local government is the tier of governance closest to the people, and it is established to deliver public services, promote development, and ensure democratic participation at the grassroots level. The local government is recognized as the third tier of government in a federal structure, such as Nigeria's, where it functions alongside the federal and state governments (Ajayi, 2000). According to the United Nations (1971), local government is defined as a political subdivision of a nation or state that is constituted by law and has substantial control over local affairs, including the power to impose taxes or to exact labor for prescribed purposes.

The fundamental philosophy behind local governance is decentralization, which aims to distribute power and responsibilities from central authorities to lower levels of government to promote efficiency, responsiveness, and citizen engagement (Smoke, 2003). In this sense, local government is not just an administrative mechanism but a democratic institution intended to enable the participation of local people in shaping the development of their communities (Kjaer, 2004).

In the Nigerian context, local government is constitutionally provided for under Section 7 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), which guarantees the existence of democratically elected local government councils. Nigeria operates a three-tier system of governance: federal, state, and local. There are currently 774 local government areas (LGAs) across the country, with Ado Local Government being one of the LGAs in Ekiti State.

2.1.2 Social Development

Social development is broadly defined as a process that seeks to improve the well-being of individuals and communities through the provision of essential services, empowerment, and institutional reforms (Midgley, 1995). It includes access to quality education, healthcare, water, housing, and employment. Social development is people-centered, aiming to reduce poverty and inequality while promoting social justice and inclusion. In developing nations like Nigeria, local governments are seen as strategic institutions for facilitating social development due to their proximity to the people (Agagu, 2004).

Social development refers to a multidimensional process aimed at improving the well-being, quality of life, and living standards of individuals and communities, especially the disadvantaged and marginalized. It emphasizes not only economic growth but also equity, empowerment, participation, and sustainability

(Midgley, 1995). Unlike purely economic development, social development prioritizes human needs and social justice, focusing on access to education, healthcare, housing, sanitation, and employment opportunities.

According to the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD, 2010), social development involves the creation of inclusive institutions and policies that promote cohesion, reduce inequality, and enable people to live fulfilling lives. It incorporates both quantitative improvements (e.g., reduced poverty and child mortality) and qualitative changes (e.g., increased participation, gender equity, and social integration).

In developing countries like Nigeria, social development is especially critical due to high poverty rates, inadequate service delivery, and uneven access to essential infrastructure. Local governments are thus seen as key actors in driving social development because of their proximity to the people and their constitutionally assigned roles in service delivery, rural development, and community engagement (Agagu, 2004).

2.1.3 Semi-Urban Communities

Semi-urban communities, also known as peri-urban or sub-urban areas, are settlements that exist on the fringes of major urban centers. These areas often exhibit mixed characteristics of rural and urban life and are typically in transition due to urban expansion (Oyesiku, 2002). Semi-urban communities in Nigeria, such as those found in Ado Local Government, often face challenges of infrastructure deficit, limited access to public services, and poor local governance. As such, the role of local governments in these areas becomes critical for ensuring inclusive and sustainable development.

Semi-urban communities, also referred to as peri-urban or transitional areas, are settlements that exist between fully urban and rural zones. These communities typically exhibit characteristics of both rural and urban settings—such as moderate population density, partial infrastructure development, subsistence and small-scale commercial activities, and varying access to social services (Tacoli, 2003). They are often situated on the fringes of major towns or cities and are marked by a gradual transformation from rural to urban lifestyles.

Semi-urban areas emerge largely due to urban expansion, migration, and the reclassification of formerly rural areas due to increased population and economic activity. According to UN-Habitat (2010), these areas are among the fastest-growing human settlements globally, especially in developing countries, where they serve as transitional zones accommodating urban sprawl.

In the Nigerian context, semi-urban communities are common in and around state capitals or large towns like Ado-Ekiti, where villages and rural areas begin to experience significant infrastructural development, changes in occupation patterns, and exposure to urban lifestyles. These communities often present a unique development challenge because they fall between two administrative and planning paradigms—neither fully rural nor completely urban.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on two major theories that explain the role of governance in local development and social welfare: Decentralization Theory and Social Capital Theory. These theories offer insight into how local government structures and community dynamics influence social development, particularly in semi-urban contexts like Ado Local Government.

2.2.1 Decentralization Theory

Decentralization Theory argues that governance functions should be devolved from central authorities to lower levels of government to improve efficiency, responsiveness, and accountability. According to Rondinelli, Nellis, and Cheema (1983), decentralization enhances service delivery by bringing government closer to the people, thus enabling a better understanding of local needs. In the Nigerian context, this principle underpins the establishment of local government areas (LGAs) as the third tier of governance tasked with community-level development initiatives.

The Nigerian Constitution (1999) provides for a decentralized structure of governance in which local governments are expected to play a central role in grassroots development. However, studies suggest that despite the constitutional framework, actual practice often falls short due to financial dependence on state and federal allocations, lack of administrative capacity, and political interference (Arowolo, 2011). Therefore, the theory's assumption of autonomy and empowerment is not always realized in practical terms.

Decentralization theory also holds that when local governments have control over resources and decision-making, they are more likely to allocate funds efficiently, address specific community challenges, and stimulate local economic growth (Agagu, 2004). In semi-urban areas like Ado Local Government, the ability to plan and implement social development programs depends on how well decentralization principles are applied. This includes whether the LGA has autonomy in budget formulation, personnel management, and project prioritization.

However, decentralization alone is not enough. The success of local government interventions also depends on the degree of community engagement and cooperation. This is where Social Capital Theory becomes relevant. According to Putnam (1993), social capital refers to the networks, norms, and trust that facilitate collective action within a society. In essence, a community rich in social capital is more likely to work collaboratively with local authorities to achieve development goals.

Decentralization Theory is a governance model that advocates for the transfer of authority, responsibility, and resources from central government to subordinate or quasi-independent government organizations, including local and regional governments. It is premised on the belief that local-level decision-making leads to better service delivery, increased citizen participation, and improved accountability (Rondinelli, 1981).

There are several dimensions of decentralization, including political, administrative, fiscal, and market decentralization. Political decentralization involves transferring decision-making power to elected local authorities, thereby encouraging democratic participation. Administrative decentralization refers to

redistributing planning and management responsibilities to lower levels of government. Fiscal decentralization allows local governments to generate and control financial resources. Lastly, market decentralization implies a shift of responsibilities to non-governmental organizations and private entities (World Bank, 2000).

In the context of Nigeria, decentralization is institutionalized through the creation of local government areas (LGAs), each with the constitutional backing to operate as the third tier of government. According to the 1999 Nigerian Constitution (Fourth Schedule), LGAs are responsible for economic planning, health services, education, waste disposal, rural roads, and other grassroots-level services. However, in practice, many local governments lack the autonomy and financial capacity to perform these functions effectively (Olowu & Wunsch, 2004).

One of the core arguments of decentralization theory is that localized governance enhances responsiveness. Local leaders are presumably more attuned to the needs and preferences of their constituents and are therefore in a better position to deliver tailored development initiatives (Smoke, 2003). In semi-urban areas like Ado Local Government, the expectation is that the LGA can adapt quickly to changes in population, urbanization pressures, and socio-economic demands. However, decentralization in Nigeria often suffers from structural weaknesses such as overdependence on federal allocations, weak institutional capacity, and political interference from the state level. These challenges have undermined the core objective of the theory—empowering local governments to act independently and effectively (Arowolo, 2011). Fiscal decentralization, in particular, remains a contentious issue, with most LGAs unable to raise adequate revenue internally.

2.2.2 Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory focuses on the value embedded in social networks and the norms of trust, cooperation, and reciprocity that facilitate coordinated action for mutual benefit (Putnam, 1993). It emphasizes that social development is not only about physical infrastructure but also about social cohesion, community participation, and collective action. Local governments, as grassroots institutions, thrive when communities are actively involved in decision-making, monitoring, and implementation of development projects. According to this theory:

- i. Communities with strong social capital are better able to mobilize resources and participate in governance.
- ii. Trust and collaboration between citizens and local authorities promote accountability and sustainability of social programs.
- iii. Civic participation builds a sense of ownership, which is crucial for long-term development.

In semi-urban areas like Ado, where traditional leadership structures and modern governance coexist, social capital plays a vital role in shaping how people engage with local government programs. The stronger the network of associations, religious groups, community development unions, and youth organizations, the more likely that social development efforts will succeed.

Social Capital Theory is grounded in the idea that social relationships, networks, norms, and trust serve as important resources for individuals and communities, enabling them to achieve collective goals. The concept of social capital was popularized by scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam, who emphasized the importance of community relationships and social ties in fostering cooperation and collective action for community well-being (Putnam, 1993). At its core, social capital refers to the value derived from social networks—where the trust, norms, and obligations embedded in these networks facilitate coordinated actions that benefit the community as a whole. Putnam (1995) defines social capital as "features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and social trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit." He argues that communities with high levels of social capital are better able to solve collective problems, engage in effective governance, and achieve social development.

Types of Social Capital

Social capital is typically categorized into bonding, bridging, and linking social capital. These distinctions help explain the varying types of social networks and relationships that exist in communities:

i. Bonding Social Capital: refers to the strong ties within a close-knit group, such as family, close friends, or ethnic groups. This form of capital fosters deep trust and cooperation but is usually more inward-looking and may exclude outsiders (Putnam, 2000). In semi-urban communities, bonding social capital can be crucial in times of crises, as people within these tight networks support each other through mutual aid, resource sharing, and collective action.

ii. Bridging Social Capital: connects individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds. It involves weaker ties but allows for the exchange of information and resources between different social groups. Bridging capital is particularly important for the development of new ideas and access to broader networks, such as partnerships between local government and NGOs, or connections between semi-urban residents and urban markets (Lin, 2001).

iii. Linking Social Capital: refers to connections between individuals or communities and institutions, such as local government agencies, businesses, or national organizations. These relationships provide access to resources, decision-making power, and opportunities for collaboration that can promote development (Woolcock, 2001). In the case of Ado Local Government, linking social capital can facilitate better communication and resource flows between the local government and its constituents.

2.3 Empirical Review

The role of local government in promoting social development has been a central topic in research on governance and development studies. According to Akinwale (2010), local governments in Nigeria are tasked with implementing grassroots development programs that address the unique needs of their communities, especially in semi-urban areas. However, the effectiveness of local governments in achieving these goals often depends on the degree of decentralization, available resources, and the level of citizen

participation. Akinwale asserts that while decentralization theoretically empowers local governments to cater to their communities' needs, in practice, many local governments struggle with limited autonomy and financial dependency on higher levels of government.

In a study on local government and rural development, Olowu and Wunsch (2004) highlight that decentralized governance structures often fail to deliver on their promises due to poor administrative capacity and political interference. Their research suggests that for local governments to be effective agents of development, they must be sufficiently empowered in terms of both resources and decision-making authority. This finding is particularly relevant for Ado Local Government, which faces challenges related to resource allocation and political dynamics that hinder its ability to drive social development.

Decentralization, though, can lead to improved local governance when properly implemented. A study by Faguet (2014) on decentralization in Latin America found that decentralization increased public participation and improved local service delivery. The study emphasized that communities with strong social capital, trust in local leaders, and a high level of civic engagement are better able to benefit from decentralized governance structures. This mirrors the situation in semi-urban communities like Ado, where local government decisions directly impact residents' everyday lives, from infrastructure to education and healthcare.

The relationship between local government capacity and community development is another key area explored in empirical research. According to Agagu (2004), local governments play an important role in fostering economic development at the grassroots level through policies aimed at improving education, health services, and local infrastructure. However, in many semi-urban areas, local governments often fail to meet their developmental objectives due to inadequate resources, poor planning, and corruption. This has been observed in some Nigerian LGAs where, despite available funds, development projects either face significant delays or lack the intended impact.

Further empirical work by Oladokun (2017) examined the impact of community participation on local government effectiveness in Nigeria. The study revealed that participatory governance leads to more successful development outcomes, especially in rural and semi-urban communities. When local communities are actively involved in decision-making, development programs tend to reflect their actual needs and are more sustainable. Oladokun found that local governments in Ekiti State, including Ado Local Government, have seen better outcomes in development projects when they involve community members from the planning phase through implementation.

A study by Narayan (1999) on social capital found that communities with higher levels of social capital, defined as the strength of social networks, trust, and civic engagement, experience better development outcomes. In semi-urban communities in Nigeria, strong social capital has been shown to lead to greater collective action, which is crucial for addressing local challenges. This is particularly relevant to Ado Local Government, where social cohesion, characterized by community associations and networks,

plays a key role in supporting local governance efforts. Narayan further suggested that social capital enhances cooperation between the local government and its citizens, leading to more effective public service delivery. In relation to social development, Fukuyama (1995) emphasizes the importance of trust and social capital for fostering economic growth and development. His work shows that societies with higher trust levels are more likely to experience higher levels of development, as residents work together to address shared challenges. Semi-urban communities like Ado, where residents may face a range of socio-economic issues, benefit from strong community ties that foster collaboration with local governments. Trust in local leaders and government institutions can therefore drive development initiatives forward, especially in a setting where resources are limited and the need for collective action is high.

Poverty alleviation is another significant area where local governments and social capital intersect. A study by World Bank (2001) on local government and poverty reduction found that effective local governments can help alleviate poverty by implementing targeted programs that address the needs of vulnerable populations. In Nigeria, many local governments have adopted programs aimed at improving health, education, and infrastructure in poor areas. In Ado Local Government, similar initiatives aimed at improving access to education, healthcare, and social services have been proposed, but their effectiveness depends heavily on the level of local government autonomy and community engagement.

Empirical research has also demonstrated the impact of social capital on governance outcomes. Woolcock and Narayan (2000) argued that strong social capital within a community enhances democratic governance by fostering accountability, participation, and responsiveness. This is particularly crucial for local governments, which must ensure that their services meet the needs of their citizens. In Ado, social capital in the form of active community organizations, including youth groups, women's associations, and religious bodies, has been shown to facilitate public participation and help local governments deliver more effective development programs.

Lastly, Chibueze and Opara (2016) conducted an empirical study on the role of local governments in promoting social development in Nigerian semi-urban communities. Their findings revealed that local governments, when empowered and engaged with their communities, have a significant impact on the social development of semi-urban areas. However, the study also emphasized the barriers to effective local governance, such as corruption, lack of transparency, and political manipulation, which limit the potential of local governments to bring about meaningful social change. In Ado, these challenges persist, with political interference often hindering the effectiveness of development projects.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the procedures and methods adopted in conducting the study. It describes the research design, study area, population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection methods, instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, and method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey. This design was chosen because it enables the researcher to systematically gather data from a representative sample of the population in order to describe, interpret, and analyze the current realities, perceptions, and challenges associated with local government's role in social development.

A descriptive design is particularly suitable for studies that aim to investigate existing conditions, relationships, or phenomena without manipulating any variables. It allows the researcher to collect information on the views and experiences of individuals concerning how local government authorities in Ado Local Government Area (LGA) impact the social welfare of the community, especially in education, healthcare, water supply, road infrastructure, and empowerment programs. The design also makes it possible to explore:

- The effectiveness of social development initiatives;
- The level of community participation in local governance; and
- The challenges limiting the performance of the local government.

In this study, structured questionnaires and interview guides were employed to gather primary data from selected respondents including local government officials, community leaders, traders, artisans, and residents. Ultimately, the descriptive survey design helped the researcher obtain factual, reliable, and generalizable information from the semi-urban setting of Ado LGA and laid a strong foundation for both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data collected.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study refers to the total number of individuals or units that possess the characteristics relevant to the research problem and from which a sample can be drawn. For this study, the population comprises adult residents of Ado Local Government Area (LGA) in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Ado LGA, being the administrative and commercial hub of Ekiti State, consists of both urban and semi-urban communities. It includes diverse groups such as civil servants, artisans, market traders, farmers, community leaders, students, and local government officials. These groups represent various social and economic categories whose experiences and perspectives are vital for assessing the effectiveness of local government in promoting social development.

However, since the study focuses on individuals who are 18 years and above, the target population is narrowed down to adult residents who are presumed to be more informed and capable of giving reliable responses regarding community development, governance, and service delivery. This target population was appropriate for the study because:

- Adults are more likely to have direct experiences with local government services.
- They can provide valid opinions on issues such as education, health, infrastructure, and empowerment initiatives.
- Many of them participate in town hall meetings, community decision-making, or local associations that relate directly to development efforts.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study is 200 respondents, carefully selected to reflect the diverse demographic, occupational, and social characteristics of residents in Ado Local Government Area (LGA), Ekiti State. The rationale for choosing this sample size is based on the assumption that a moderately large sample is sufficient to represent the views of the larger population and allows for effective statistical analysis. To determine the sample size, Yamane's formula (1967) for calculating sample size from a known population was applied:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

- n = Sample size
- N = Population size (160,000 estimated residents)
- e = Margin of error (0.07)

$$n = \frac{160,000}{1 + 160,000(0.07)^2} \approx 204$$

For practicality, a sample size of 200 was adopted.

To ensure fair representation and reduce bias, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed. This involved the use of stratified sampling, purposive sampling, and simple random sampling.

3.4 Methods of data collection

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires. The questionnaire was divided into sections covering demographic information, perceptions of social development projects, and challenges faced. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through the administration of structured questionnaires. While secondary data were obtained from textbooks, academic journals, government reports, internet resources, local government records, and previous research works on local government and social development.

3.5 Instruments of data collection

The main instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to elicit both closed and open-ended responses. The questionnaire contained three sections:

- Section A: Demographic data
- Section B: Local government social development initiatives
- Section C: Impact on the community

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. To ensure that the questionnaire and interview guide used in this study were valid, the researcher employed content validity and expert review techniques. The draft questionnaire was presented to academic experts in the Department of Public Administration and research methodology for evaluation. These experts assessed the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the questions in relation to the research objectives, questions, and hypotheses. Based on their feedback, several items were modified for better clarity and alignment with the study focus. This process ensured that the instrument captured all the critical aspects of local government roles, social development indicators, and community experiences in the study area.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected through questionnaires and interviews conducted among selected residents and stakeholders in Ado Local Government Area. The analysis is organized around the research objectives, questions, and hypotheses stated earlier. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages are used to present demographic data and responses, while inferential statistics such as chi-square (χ^2) are used to test the hypotheses.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	110	55.0
	Female	90	45.0
Age	18–30	50	25.0
	31–45	80	40.0
	46–60	50	25.0
	60+	20	10.0
Educational Qualification	No formal education	15	7.5
	Primary	30	15.0
	Secondary	65	32.5
	Tertiary	90	45.0
Occupation	Trader	50	25.0
	Civil servant	40	20.0
	Artisan	30	15.0
	Student	20	10.0
	Unemployed	20	10.0
	Others	40	20.0
Length of residence	Visiting	15	7.5
	Less than 2years	30	15.0
	5 – 10years	65	32.5
	10years above	90	45.0

Research Survey, 2025

4.3 Presentation of Data Based on Research Questions

Research Question One:

To what extent has Ado Local Government contributed to social development in its communities?

Contribution Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very High	20	10%
High	40	20%
Moderate	50	25%
Low	60	30%
Very Low	30	15%
Total	200	100%

Table 4.1 below summarizes responses on the perceived level of the local government's contribution:

Interpretation:

Majority of the respondents (45%) believe the local government's contribution is **low to very low**, while only 30% see it as **high or very high**. This suggests a general dissatisfaction with the performance of the local government in social development efforts.

Research Question Two:

What are the major areas of social development impacted by the local government?

Respondents were asked to identify the sectors where local government efforts have been most noticeable. Multiple responses were allowed.

Sector	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Education	150	75%
Health care	120	60%
Road infrastructure	50	25%
Water supply	45	22.5%
Youth empowerment	40	20%

Interpretation:

The most impacted sectors, as perceived by respondents, are **education (75%)** and **health care (60%)**. Areas like road infrastructure, water supply, and empowerment programs received significantly lower recognition.

Research Question Three:

What challenges hinder the effectiveness of Ado Local Government in implementing development projects?

Identified Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate funding	130	65%
Corruption	100	50%
Political interference	85	42.5%
Lack of skilled personnel	55	27.5%
Low community involvement	90	45%

Interpretation:

The most cited challenge is **inadequate funding (65%)**, followed by **corruption (50%)**, and **low community involvement (45%)**. These findings reflect the structural and systemic issues facing local government operations.

4.4 Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One (H_{01}):

There is no significant relationship between local government project implementation and social development in Ado LGA.

Response Type	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	(O-E) ² /E
Agree	90	66.7	12.29
Disagree	60	66.7	0.67
Undecided	50	66.7	4.18
Total χ^2			17.14

Decision Rule:

- $df = (3-1) = 2$
- χ^2 critical at 0.05 = 5.99
- Since $17.14 > 5.99$, reject H_{01} .

Conclusion: There is a statistically significant relationship between local government project implementation and social development in Ado LGA.

Hypothesis Two (H_{02}):

There is no significant relationship between community participation and the success of social development initiatives in Ado LGA.

Response Type	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	(O-E) ² /E
High Participation	50	66.7	4.18
Moderate Participation	90	66.7	7.84
Low Participation	60	66.7	0.67
Total χ^2			12.69

Research Survey, 2025**Decision Rule:**

- $df = 2$
- χ^2 critical at 0.05 = 5.99
- Since $12.69 > 5.99$, reject H_{02} .

Conclusion: Community participation significantly affects the success of social development efforts in Ado LGA.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the major findings of the study in relation to the research objectives, research questions, and the reviewed literature. The aim is to interpret and contextualize the results obtained from the field within the broader theoretical and empirical framework. The study revealed that the majority of respondents rated the performance of Ado Local Government in social development as either low or very low. Only a small percentage considered the efforts of the local government as effective or impactful. This finding aligns with the views of Ekpe and Eyo (2013), who argued that local governments in Nigeria often underperform due to institutional weaknesses and poor policy implementation.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study investigated the role of local government in promoting social development in semi-urban communities, with Ado Local Government Area (LGA) of Ekiti State serving as the case study. The research employed a descriptive survey design and collected data from 200 respondents across various wards in Ado LGA. A majority of respondents (65%) believe that the local government has been largely ineffective in initiating and executing social development projects. Only 35% perceived any meaningful development interventions by the local authorities.

Education and healthcare were identified as the sectors where local government has made the most significant contributions. However, infrastructure, water supply, and empowerment programs were considered underdeveloped. The primary challenges affecting social development in Ado LGA include poor funding, political interference, corruption, lack of skilled personnel, and inadequate community involvement. The study found that community participation plays a crucial role in the success or failure of development projects. Active involvement of citizens enhances ownership and sustainability.

5.2 Conclusion

This research concludes that while local governments in Nigeria, particularly in semi-urban communities like Ado LGA, are constitutionally positioned to drive grassroots development, their impact remains limited by structural, political, and administrative constraints. The lack of adequate funding, poor transparency, weak institutional capacity, and low community involvement significantly reduce the effectiveness of local governance.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that for social development to be achieved at the grassroots, local governments must not only be empowered financially and administratively but also be held accountable through inclusive governance and active citizen participation. This study contributes to existing literature by providing empirical insights into the specific challenges and potential of local government in enhancing social development within a semi-urban Nigerian context. It bridges the gap between policy expectations and practical realities at the grassroots level.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

- i. **Increased Funding and Financial Autonomy:** Local governments should be granted greater financial autonomy, and timely disbursement of funds should be ensured to enable them carry out development projects effectively.
- ii. **Transparency and Accountability Mechanisms:** There should be mechanisms to monitor and evaluate local government spending. The introduction of public budget hearings and independent audits can improve transparency.

iii. Capacity Building for Local Officials: Training programs and workshops should be organized to build the capacity of local government staff in planning, implementation, and evaluation of development projects.

iv. Enhanced Community Engagement: Local governments should adopt participatory planning processes that involve residents, community leaders, and civil society organizations in the design and implementation of development projects.

v. Decentralization and Devolution of Power:

The principles of decentralization should be fully implemented to reduce excessive interference by state governments in local administration.

vi. Anti-Corruption Strategies:

Strong internal control systems and ethical governance standards must be enforced to curb corruption and misappropriation of public funds at the local level.

vii. Collaboration with NGOs and Development Partners: Local governments should partner with non-governmental organizations and donor agencies to complement their efforts in service delivery and community development.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Department of Social Development,
Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin.

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to obtain data for a research study on “*Local Government and Social Development in Semi-Urban Communities: A Case Study of Ado Local Government, Ekiti State.*” Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used strictly for academic purposes. Please answer each question honestly.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours Faithfully,

Musa RasAQ Ayomide

ND/23/SDV/PT/0002

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please tick (✓) where appropriate:

1. **Gender:** ☐Female ☐Male
2. **Age:** ☐46 and above ☐36–45 ☐26–35 ☐18–25
3. **Educational Qualification:** ☐No formal education ☐Primary School ☐Secondary School ☐Tertiary Institution
4. **Occupation:** ☐Others (Specify) _____ ☐Student ☐Artisan ☐Farmer ☐Trader ☐Civil Servant
5. **Marital Status:** ☐Widowed ☐Divorced ☐Married ☐Single
6. Length of residence in Ado-Ekiti ☐visiting ☐less than 2years ☐5 - 10 ☐10years above

SECTION B: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Tick the option that best represents your opinion:

7. How would you rate the performance of Ado Local Government in social development?
☐Poor ☐Fair ☐Good ☐Excellent
8. In which of the following areas has the local government contributed most? (You may tick more than one)
☐ Water Supply ☐ Road Construction ☐ Healthcare ☐ Education
☐ Others (specify) _____ ☐ Sanitation ☐ Youth Empowerment
9. Do you believe local government has the capacity to promote sustainable development in your community? ☐ Not sure ☐ No ☐ Yes
10. Are you aware of any recent development project executed by Ado LGA?
Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, please specify: _____
11. Do you think these projects meet the actual needs of the community?
Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No ☐

SECTION C: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE

11. Do you participate in any local government meetings or development forums?
☐ No ☐ Yes
12. How often does the local government engage community members in planning development projects? ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Always
13. Do you believe your opinion is considered in development planning?
☐ I don't know ☐ No ☐ Yes
14. What do you think is the major constraint facing the local government in promoting development?
☐ Corruption ☐ Inadequate funding ☐ Lack of skilled personnel ☐ Political interference ☐ Lack of community participation ☐ Others (specify): _____