IJAAR PUBLISHING®

Scholarly Journal of Social Sciences Research | ISSN: 2955-0785
Vol. 3, Issue 6 (June, 2024) | www.ijaar.org/sjssr

BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND LEADERSHIP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

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Abstract
This study examines Democracy, Leadership in the development of Local Government in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. There has been a growing concern over the deplorable conditions of the rural people. Unarguably, the expediency for the creation of local government as the third tier government is to facilitate Development at the grassroots. However, it is worrisome that the deterioration and overall decline in the quality of service delivery in the local government as a result of unbridled and unpatriotic leadership style adopted by the state governors towards local government administration has unimaginably brought dysfunctional and deficit infrastructure to the Local Government System. The objective of this study is to explore the Nexus between Democracy, leadership in the Development of local government system in Nigeria. The study reviewed extant literature conceptually, theoretically and empirically with the democratic participatory prepositions for its theoretical framework. Methodologically, the study being a non-structured, non-experimental, non-survey, adopted qualitative documentary secondary sources of historical description and explanatory approach for its secondary Data collection. Content analytical technique was utilized for its analysis. Based on the analysis, findings show that abysmal and unpatriotic leadership coupled with the lacuna in the constitution has necessitated the State Governors embarking on unilateral, arbitrary, unlawful joint account and dissolution of democratically elected Government leaders which negatively undermined the affairs of local government administration, and it has given limited, hindered access to the funding of local government for development programmes. Therefore, the study recommends among others, that patriotic leadership, constitutional amendment and devolution of powers that will prevent state Government arbitrarily interference and diversion of local Government funds and full political participation of the citizenry in the third tier government should be strengthened.

Keywords: Democracy, Leadership and Development, Constitutional Amendment, Local Government

Ebiziem, J. E. & Umoh, C. O. (2024). Between Democracy and Leadership in the Development of Local Government in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. *Scholarly Journal of Social Sciences Research. 3*(6), 20-34. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.13370388

Introduction

Local government is a level of government with assigned legislative and executive powers to execute and make policies covering a particular area made up of communities (localities) of the local government. The constitution provides for its establishment, defines its structure, functions, powers and sources of revenue for its activities. Furthermore, its relationship with the state and federal governments is clearly stated in the constitution (Philip, 2009). However, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria introduced some ambiguous clauses in the relationship between the local and state governments and prominent among them is the state-local government joint account (SLGJA) arrangement which has seriously eroded the financial autonomy of the local government system in Nigeria. The SLGJA has been so much misinterpreted by the state government that the local government council whether elected or by appointment is heavily under the overbearing influence of the state government always (Ananti, 2016). Local government was designed to assume the position of a third tier of government envisioned as self-governing entities with elected officials, local Government handled critical aspects of Community life, primary education, health, local infrastructure and community security was a dream of grassroots democracy closer to the people where decision were made (Ebiziem 2021).

Ebiziem, (2021), further posisted that other specific reasons for the creation of local government include but not limited to: making appropriate services and development activities responsive to local wishes and initiatives by devolving or delegating them to local representative bodies, others are sensitizing and mobilizing the various communities in their areas of authority in order to get involved in the overall development of those areas. It is highly doubtful if local governments in Nigeria have been able to effectively meet these laudable goals and others since their creation.

The democratic participatory school holds that local government functions to bring about democracy and to afford the citizenry opportunities for political participation as well as to educate and socialize them politically. The efficient service delivery school of thought, on the other hand, stresses that what is important and central to the local government is not the bringing about of democracy but rather its ability and capability to provide efficient and effective basic services to the people at the grassroots. The developmental school of thought lays emphasis on how local government in a developing country can be an effective agent of a better life, an improved means of living socially and economically, and as a means to better share of the national wealth.

The recurring abuse of the provisions concerning local government in the 1979, 1989 and 1999 Constitutions, especially by the state government, refreshed agitations for local government autonomy. As a result, scholars including Okoli (1980); Nwabueze (1982); Adeyemo (2010); Lamidi & Fagbohun (2013); Onuigbo (2015); and Ugwu (2017), Ebiziem (2021) have not wavered in their advocacy for direct financial allocation to local government, in order to protect its autonomy.

Local governments symbolize catalyst of socio-economic and political development in every country of the world. They provide the foundation upon which other structures of governance (state and federal) are created. Local governments are closet than other levels of government to the vast majority of people who inhabit the rural areas. They are thus, in a better position than the state and federal governments to appreciate the real problems of the people and serve as the most effective agents for mobilizing the people for collective energy and resources towards engineering positive social, economic and political development of the country. It is the realization of the importance of local government as a catalyst of

development and engine of progress that the paper advocates the autonomy of this tier of government in the conduct of their internal affairs in order to enhance the performance of their traditional role as vehicles of socio economic and political development at the grassroots. Ebiziem (2021), Ezeani (2006).

The history of Nigerian local government system has been characterized by yearnings for democratization and autonomy to enable the local governments assume their socio-economic and political functions of transforming their local communities. This thinking accelerated the demands for the right to participate in local politics. Before the adoption of a uniform local government system in Nigeria, following the 1976 Local Government Reforms, issues and problems of local governments were entirely left to the whims and caprices of the regional and later state governments. The regional or state governments, without exception, modified and manipulated local government systems and institutions as they considered expedient. These situations whittle down the power and autonomy of the local government authorities.

More worrisome, the 774 local government councils in the country are presently in dire financials strait and unable to cater to people at the lowest level in accordance with their constitutional mandate due to the actions and inactions of state governors who undermine the 1999 constitution by embarking on unilateral, arbitrary, unlawful joint account and dissolution of democratically elected local Government leaders. Following the poor state of affairs in the local government councils across the country, the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees accused state governors of crippling the third tier of government. The Nigeria Financial INTELLIGENCE UNIT (NFIU), NASS and the Federal Government (FG) took 36 Governors to supreme court seeks full autonomy of LGA. See suit No SC/CV/343/2024. PUNCH Investigation revealed that apart from the structures and premises of most local government council headquarters being currently in a dilapidated state, funding of the councils had become difficult due to the continued tampering with the money belonging to them by state governors. NULGE also raised the alarm that 34 out of the 36 state governors were guilty of diverting local government funds, leaving the government closest to the people with inadequate funds to develop the communities. https://www.ourheritagereporters.com.ng NASS (2024).

Out of the 36 states, NULGE said only Rivers and Jigawa were clean of the allegation, while the remaining state governors had refused to steer clear of local government council funds despite a directive by the Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit for them to desist from the act. The governors, the union alleged, had rather devised a means to manipulate the NFIU guidelines and continued to divert the funds. The constitution of Nigeria recognizes Federal States and Local Government as three tiers of governments and that deliberate act by the state governors as they denied the grassroots of the effective leadership the masses desired, adding that the diversion of resources meant for development in the grassroots would continue to be undermined. Against this background, this paper examines democracy and leadership in relation to development in the local government thus, for easy comprehension, it is divided into introduction, conceptual clarification, theoretical framework, methodology, Nexus of Democracy and Development, Conclusion and Recommendation.

Conceptual Clarifications

Local Government

The term local government means different things to those who at various times have attempted to explain what the term really stands for. Adrain (1972) writing in the International Encyclopedia of the Social sciences, defines local government as.

> *A political sub decision of a national or regional government which performs functions that are culturally defined as local in character which in nearly all cases receive its legal powers from the national government but possess some degree of discretion in the making of decisions, and which normally has some taxing powers. (Adrain, 1972:7).*

Similarly, Wraith (1972) and Emezi (1986) in Awa (1987) and Ebiziem (2021) states that the term local government refers to a political authority set up by a nation or state as a subordinate authority for the purpose of dispersing or decentralizing political power. A fairly comprehensive and more up to date definition was that given by the federal government blueprint or reform guidelines that preceded the 1976 local government reforms which saw it as;

> *Government at the local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise powers. Within defined areas, has substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to ensure that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized (Fed. Govt. Blue print; 1976:1).*

From the above definitions, we can deduce that local government is political and administrative machinery for governing or for the provision of governmental services at the sub-national level. Generally, local government means the breakdown of a country or state into small units or localities for the purpose of administration in which the inhabitants of the deferent units or localities concerned play direct and full part through their elected representatives who exercise power or undertake transactions under the general authority of the national or central government.

In addition to foregoing, local government is the system of political decentralization within a country in which the power base of the decision maker is to a large extent, not national but local. The word decentralization as used here implies organizational arrangement whereby the management of public function is transferred to sub-national bodies or agencies with jurisdictions limited to only certain parts of a nation's territory. Decentralization can be classified into two; decentralization through deconcentration and decentralization through devolutions. Decentralization through deconcentration is transfer of administrative functions from central ministries to field agencies, it is the delegation of executive and non-decisional responsibilities to sub - administrative structures, which are, in fact, part of the central government structure. Deconcentration can, thus, be regarded as a limited form of decentralization. Government bodies created under this pattern are regarded as having no substantive decision-making or allotted powers, such powers are retained by the headquarter, and they only have control over matters of implementation. Under these types of decentralization, the staffs operating at the local level are central government personnel who can also be transferred back to the central level.

Decentralization through devolution involves the transfer of functional responsibility, including decision making authority to legally constituted sub-national units of government such as states in a federal system and districts or municipal authorities. In such arrangements under devolution, central and sub-national governments are supposed to be structurally differentiated; each level has its own legally defined powers and activities, as well as separate institutional bodies for personnel recruitment. Under this kind of decentralization, districts or municipal authorities like local government councils formulate and implement policies. On one hand, lkelegbe (2005) defines local government as "a segment of a constituent state or

origin of a nation state", established by law to provide public services and regulate public affairs within its jurisdiction. Fajobi (2010) defines local government "as a unit of government to maintain law and order based on range of social amenities and to encourage cooperation and participation of people at the grassroots to improve their living conditions". The 1976 Nigerian Local Government Reform guidelines define local government as:

> *Government at the local level, exercised through representative council, established by law to exercise specific powers within a defined area. These powers should give the council substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and ins fitutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to complement the activities of the state and federal government in their area; and to ensure, through devolution of these function to these councils and through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, that local initiate and response to local needs and conditions are maximized.*

United Nations Development Programme (2009) define local government as a unit of government covering the range of government issues that exist at the local level including decentralization of policies and processes, the role and inter-relationships of deferent actors and institutions, local democracy and local government performance. For the purpose of this paper, different issues raised from the definitions above are to form a broad conceptualization of local government as follows:

- The Local Government is a political authority with elected officials which has political powers to take decision.
- The Local Government is a subdivision of the central Government established by the law.
- The Local Government is a unit of Government closet to the people to provide basic social and economic activities.
- The Local Government is an entity that has substantial autonomy to make laws, rules and regulations. Also the autonomy to formulate and execute programmes and policies.
- The Local government is expected to facilitate the existence of democratic self government close to the local government levels of the society, and to encourage initiative for leadership potentials.
- The local government is expected to mobilize human and materials resources through the involvement of members of the public.
- The local government is expected to provide a two way channel of communication between the Local government and central government

From the above issued related, we can therefore adopt the broad functions of the local government and the rationale behind the existence of local government

Democracy

Democracy, according to the Greeks, means the rule of the people. Democracy is both a philosophy and a form of government. As a philosophy, it is an ideology of human society and a way of political life, "a set of ideas and methods motivating and guiding the behavior of members of a society towards one another not only in their political affairs but also in their economic, social and cultural relationships as well" (Rodee et al, 1957:83). As Merriam (1939:44) puts it, democracy is "not a set of formula or blue print of an organization, but a cast of thought and a mode of action directed by the common will".

As a form of government, democracy is defined by Bryce (1921) as "a government in which the will of the majority of qualified citizens rules, taking the qualified citizens to constitute at least ¾ so that the physical force of the citizens coincides with their with their voting power". In his book, the **Nature of Democracy**, Holden (1974:8) defines democracy as "a political system of which it can be said that the whole people, positively or negatively make or are entitled to making or determining decisions on important matters of public policy". In his own view, Appadorai (1968:137) conceives democracy in simple way thus "system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by themselves". Put simply, an American President, Abraham Lincoln, defined democracy as "government of the people, by the people and for the people. What is implicit in these definitions is popular sovereignty. (Ebiziem 2010).

Democracy can, therefore, be defined as a system of government in which the people possess the power to make final decisions on major issues of public policy, and in which the end of government is the realization of the common good for all citizens, the development of independent human personality, the creation of equal opportunities for all citizens, and the full realization of active participation of the great majority of the citizen in the process of government. Similarly, Democracy operates under the following principles, namely:

- Self-government/popular participation;
- Public Accountability;
- Human Rights
- Equality;
- Legitimacy;
- Independence of the judiciary;
- Freedom of the Press; and
- Public welfare.
- Periodic election
- Constitutionalism

Leadership

Leadership is the exercise of power or influence in social collectives such as groups, organizations, communities or nation. Olugbade as cited in Ebiziem et al (2021) sees leadership as both a research area and a practical skill encompassing the ability of an individual or organization to "lead" or guide other individuals, teams, or entire organization. Leadership can either be understood as a pattern of behavior or a personal quality. As a pattern of behavior, leadership is the influence exerted by an individual or group over a large body to organize or direct its efforts towards the achievement of desired goals. As a personal attitude, leadership refers to the character traits which enable the leader to exert influence over others. Leadership is thus equated with charisma which is the personal charm or power to lead.

He says democratic political leaders therefore have to be mindful of the side effects of their leadership style on the people they lead least the undesirable effects derail democratic process. Bad leadership lead to underside outcome like it concretes power and can thus lead to corruption and tyranny, hence the democratic demand that leadership should be checked by accountability, it creates a situation of subservience and difference which may discourage people from participating in issues that concern them and thus lead to failure to take responsibility for their own destiny.

Scmidt (1933:283) says, the relation of leadership arises only where a group follows an individual from free choice and not under command or coercion and secondly, not in response to blind arises but on positive and more or less national grounds. The concept of leadership should be understood as encompassing a wide range of activities. It applies to the running of social groups and the governing of nations, it may concern the relatively diffuse process of influence in establishing norms of style or opinions; or it may involve specific orders in a chain of command. It includes supervision and statesmanship, routine administration and organization building. Writing on the continued existence of under-development, such as poor and inadequate infrastructure, inefficient and ineffective service delivery, corruption, high level poverty and misery, Achebe (1983:1) Assert that "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. In other words, good leadership is a prerequisite in the development of Local Government in Nigeria.

Development

The concept development has been subjected to many controversial explanations and definitions purportedly because of its multi-dimensional facet. Development appears to be one of the terminologies that touch almost every aspect of human existence either positively or negatively. However, our approach here touches on the positive aspect of development as a way of improving the standard of living of the masses. The concept of development encompasses economic, political, socio-cultural and environmental development. When a state is working assiduously to achieve these spheres of development, the citizens will no doubt be on a fast match on enjoying improved standard of living and longevity. "Development is not what the economist and other experts proclaim it to be, no matter how elegant their language. Development is not something to be decided by experts, simply because there are no experts on the desirable goals of human life. Development is the desirable course to be taken by human beings in a particular situation" (Berger, 1976.p.59). Accordingly, it means that what constitutes the concept of development is usually determined by the affected human beings in a particular situation believed to be geared towards the resolution of the current circumstance. Similarly, Okereke (2003,p.1) averred that development is conceptualized as the qualitative improvement in the standard of living of the majority of the people through the provision of economic and social infrastructures like industries, employment, water, electricity, health facilities, good roads etc. Sen (2008) defined development as collective activities by any human society directed at reducing the totality of perceived obstacles to a higher standard of living; thus maximizing the quality of lives of its citizens. Development can also be seen as gradual advance or growth through progressive changes. It is a gradual differentiation of an ecological community; the term is also used to describe the process of economic and social transformation within the countries. While Seers, in his conception, related development to eradication of poverty, unemployment and in equality in a society among other variables when he asserted that:

> The questions to ask about country's development are therefore;
> what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to inequality?
> if all the three of these have declined from high levels than beyond doubt
> this has a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two
> of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if the entire have,
> it would be strange to call the result "Development" even if per capita
> income doubled (Seer, 1969:3).

For Seers, understanding how a country is firing in these three indices can help us answer the question of how developed a country is. Seers (1969) questions are still crucially relevant

today in development discuss and in understanding how emerging democratic states like Nigeria are tackling the socio-economic and political challenges they face.

Scholars such as Rodney (1972), Nnoli (1981), Ake (2001) and Ebiziem (2021) have argued that development is multifaceted and indeed centered on man. For them, man is the beginning and end of development, as other manifestations of development are artifacts of development and leads to total repudiation of the state of being. For Nnoli (1981) development could be seen as a dialectical phenomenon in which the individual and the society interact with their physical, biological and inter human environments transforming them for own betterment and that of humanity at large and being transformed in the process. Okolie (2009) corroborates this view by positing that development leads to total transmogrification of man. For him, development improves man's potentials and capacities and subsequently eliminates and/or reduces poverty, penury, condition for human existence and self-reproduction. Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) conceptualized development as the process of empowering people to maximize their potentials and the ability to exploit nature to meet daily human needs. It can also be seen as a process by which quality of human lives and capacity to surmount daily needs are considerably improved. In a similar vein, Goulet (1971,p.2), indicated that "life sustenance, self esteem and freedom of choice are the three core values of development for individual and societies". Development should be conceived as a state of human wellbeing rather than as the state of national economy. It is defined as the increase in the value of goods and services produced by every sector of the economy.

In another academic presentation, Igboeche (2017 p.297) cited (Todaro and Smith, 2003 p.17) observed that development should be conceived as a multi:-dimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of poverty. They further stated that "development in its essence, must represent the whole gamut of change by which an entire social system, tuned to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within that system, moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory towards a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better"

Development is therefore defined as the encompassing efforts made by both constituted authority and the citizens to achieve a prosperous nation whose citizens enjoy sustainable high standard of living, security and environmental protection. Thus, in connection to the study, development will mean collective effort by the Imo State Government and controlling ministries to ensure that requisite tangible and intangible structures are put on ground or instituted to provide social and economic infrastructures such as functional and affordable healthcare, electricity, quality education, security of lives and property, environmental protection, portable water, good roads, industries that can creates job opportunities, agriculture that will enhance food production among others. Sen (1999) has argued for an even boarder concept of development as an integrated process of expansion of substantive freedoms. Economic growth, technological advancement and political change are all to be judged in the light of their contributions to the expansion of human freedoms. Among the most important of these freedoms are freedom from famine and malnutrition, freedom from poverty, access to health care and freedom from premature mortality. From the foregoing definitions, development implies change or advancement. It also implies continuous process of positive change in the quality of life of an individual or a society, reduction of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Theoretical framework

The underpinning theory for the study is the Democratic Participatory School of Thought developed by Panter-Brick in 1970. The theory believes that democracy is a way of life that demands that one another's point of view and one another's interest be mutually appreciated (Panter-Brick, 1970). It is a concept that is based on fair-play, tolerance and respect for the right of others, a concept that accepts those to be intrinsically undeniable values (Ola, 1984). It is expected that real democratic governance would be good governance. Good governance amongst other things involve the enthronement of due process, constitutionalism, rule of law, transparency and accountability; respect for constituted authority in the conduct of public affairs. Absence of good governance and its by-products, automatically leads to two or more negative outcomes such as massive corrupt practices, political instability, ill-feelings among the governed, poor performance of development indicators among other negative consequences. As Muo (2007) notes, none of such outcomes is conducive for development.

It is worthy of note that the theory recognizes the relevance of democracy as the popular choice for enthroning leadership in the local government council as opposed to caretaker committee transition or sole Administrator method being practiced by most governors in the local government areas across the country. The problem is that corruption has been institutionalized in the local governments and it is reinforced by traits of antidemocratic governance which have prevented community development by the LG administration in the country over the years. Democratic governance guarantees equal participation which is one of the conditions for rapid socio-economic as well as political development at the community level.

Methodology

The data used for this study was generated from secondary sources. Accordingly, books, journals, periodicals, monographs, seminars and conference papers, unpublished research works, newspapers and magazines, internet materials, etc, constituted the sources of data for the study. Thus, relevant data and information were collated from the foregoing sources and studied. The secondary data were generated in the course of this study were analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis has to do with the rigorous analysis and examination of written records and documents in a critical, analytical, descriptive and explanatory manner so as to make generalizations and meaning from such written records and document. However, content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, quantitative and qualitative description of the manifest content of communication. The central objective of content analysis is to convert recorded data or information into data which can be treated in a scientific manner so that a body of knowledge may be built up. Content analysis as a method of analyzing qualitative data was used in this study to examine Democracy, Leadership in the development of Local Government in Nigeria.

Nexus of Democracy and Leadership in the Development of Local Government: Nigeria Experience

In fact, a further analysis of the parameters and indices of Democracy and Leadership trajectory in the operations of Local Government system in Nigeria, unfold the following:

- **The challenging of Financial Autonomy and Accountability:**

Local Government System in Nigeria have ability to generate revenue without external influence through decentralization. They are empowered to collect rates, radio, markets, park fees, etc as internal revenue spelt out under the fourth schedule, section 7 of the 1999 constitution. They have been given powers to collect rates from their citizens as internal revenue to assist in the provision of services they are to provide in line with the constitution or law. Some LGs shy away from the collection of rates and

licensing of bicycles, trucks, canoes, wheel barrows, carts, etc. The situation is worse in heterogeneous communities and to a less extent, since it is difficult to collect any form of tax or raise revenue in a local government that lacks cohesion, community spirit or homogeneity as seen in those areas because the various elements which make up the local governments regard any form of financial payment as either imposition or cheating. The 10% state allocation to the local governments as required in section 162 (7) of the constitution is often delayed government. Several deductions of local government funds had been made since the establishment of the state Joint Local Government Account. The state-local fiscal relation has been characterized by a poor and ineffective intergovernmental network as local governments did not function properly. Consequently, the local governments did not get enough funds to execute their projects. In fact, the ability of local governments to transform rural communities was hampered because they lost more than half of their statutory funds to the state government. Local government performance was unsatisfactory. Most of them could not really predict what could come to them as revenue allocations. No local government can pursue development plans, development activities, facilitate democratic self governance, mobilize human and material resources and link the local government to other tiers effectively without predictable source of fund (Onah, 2005). *The Revenue Allocation Act of 1981* provided for statutory allocation of 10% of the federal revenue to local government councils, and this was reviewed upward to 15% and 20% in 1981 and 1992 respectively. The State governments were initially required to allocate 10% of their total revenue and later reviewed to be 10% of their internally generated revenue to local government councils. The local government system in Nigeria represents part of an identified effort at solving perceived problems as it concerns rural development. Local government exists to provide services to the teeming population under its domain, and must be judged by its success in providing the service. The local governments in Nigeria are expected to harness all the available resources in their custody to enable them achieve their stated objectives.

- **The unprecedented deprivation at Rural Areas:**

Knowing fully well that local government is a grassroot government recognized by law, it is very important to know what this grassroot is all about. Grassroot which is commonly known as rural area, are those communities with inhabitants living together in fraternal environment, know to each other and not living in large towns where facilities are closer to them instead, they live under a particular geo-political tradition with a common phenomenal language, common social amenities and possible an ancestral lineage known to one another. In other words, rural areas/communities are those small enclaves known to institutions like schools, churches, markets and other social amenities that involve a local touch or to a rural personality. These communities suffer deprivations or neglect such as:

-Portable access water
-Electricity
-Health facilities
-Viable & functional schools
-Poor hygienic environment
-High rate of unemployment
-High morality rate
-Incessant insecurity of life and property among the rural dwellers etc.

Indeed, the negative impact of this pitiable
-Neglect or deprivation include
-Rise in crime
-Premature death
-High rate of poverty
-Unprecedented disease and other calamities
(Ebiziem 2021)

- **Poor Social Sector**

The local government, which is charged with the responsibility of alleviating the suffering of the rural dwellers by providing the basic necessities of life like electricity, employment, health care centre, education and good road network etc has failed woefully in the discharge of this responsibilities owing to the fact that corruption has eaten deep into the lifes of those who are at the helm of affairs in our various rural communities and this has given rise to conditions such as high rate of unemployment, poverty, crime, high mortality rate and poor hygienic environment. Reacting to this social problems, Adamolekun (1983); advocate for social welfare which denotes full range of organized activities of voluntary and governmental agencies that seek to alleviate and contribute to the solution of re-organized social problems to improve the well being of individuals, groups or communities. Social welfare in community development, covers a wide range or many aspects of social life such as health care, education, science and technology utilities including water, roads, electricity, communication and transport. These services help to tackle rural problem if well provided. Ebiziem, (2021).

- **Decayed Economic Sector:**

It is the pivotal point of tackling poverty and unemployment at the rural areas. The local government has not justified the reason for its establishment at this sector due to its failure to provide the necessary infrastructures such as roads, electricity supply, water supply Establishment of Industrial estates as may induce accelerated industrial development of the area under their jurisdiction. These infrastructural facilities are necessary not only to induce industrialists to set up business in local government areas but to provide inter- sectoral linkage between agriculture and industry (Ogunna, 1996) (Uchegbu 1997).

- **Leadership Deficit at the Grassroot:**

The aim for the establishment of the third-tier of government was for the people at the rural areas/communities to participate fully in their governance but today that aim has been defeated. The political and democratic participation has failed in the rural area due to constant distortion of the democratic institution by appointing sole administrators, transition committee chairmen and caretaker committees has continued to violate the leadership role of local government in rural development because the appointees work for the interest of the governors who appoint them and not for the interest of the rural dwellers. They relegate the indigenes/members of the rural area to the background because they do not participate in the democratic activities of the State. For instance, since 2011 local government elections have not been conducted in Imo State.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This paper has scholarly examine the dynamics, complex wed of politics on the nexus between democracy and leadership on Local Government in Nigeria's fourth Republic. The study observed that local Government has been bedeviled by several crisis vix, political, institutionally, organizationally and constitutionally.

In fact, the history of local government in Nigeria shows that there are problems of governance issues: over the year, efforts have been made to reform the local government system and increase the participation of the people. Despite these reforms, there are problems with the local government system. However, these problems are not unique to the local government. They are also prevalent at the state and federal levels. The present effort to single out the local government for reform with pre-determined terms of reference smacks of military hangover and may actually lead to democratic reversal in local governance. In order to consolidate the gains made in local governance over the years and reposition local government along certain lines first, local government as a third-tier of government should

not be scrapped or changed to local administration. Rather, it should be strengthened and democratized. Officials of the local government should always be elected and not appointed. Second, there is the need to put a mechanism in place to promote transparency and accountability at all levels of governance. In this regard, it will be crucial to strengthen institutions of horizontal accountability and anti-bodies. In addition, civil society organizations particularly at the local level, should be oriented and empowered to hold elected officials accountable.

Moreover, there is a great need to reform the structure of government at all levels (federal, state and local government). All these will require a comprehensive review of the 1999 constitution. The executive and legislature should display the political will and commitment to reform the 1999 constitution that has been criticized by all strands of society the reform of the constitution will address other issues that are germane to good governance such as party financing, campaign financing and proper electoral system to mention but a few. Finally, government should place premium on the participation of the people in all governance and development issues. If all these recommendations are implemented, not only the local government system but also other tiers of government will be in a better footing to deliver what Nigerians have termed dividends of democracy.

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