

Local Government Administration and Insecurity in Nigeria

By

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Abstract

If allowed to operate effectively, the local government system can address Nigeria's rising level of insecurity and is extremely important to the development of rural areas. Given the roles the local government system plays in rural areas including infrastructure provision, human capital development, participatory governance, rural economic sustainability, and rural population empowerment: this paper is extremely pertinent. The government is investing vast sums of money to crack down on those deemed a threat to security from all geopolitical zones because insecurity has risen to unimaginable levels in recent years. The purpose of this paper is to inform the federal government that more work needs to be done on its functioning system by encouraging the third tier of government to operate with complete autonomy free from state intervention. In Nigeria, local government administration and insecurity were examined using qualitative analysis. Suppose the local government operates to its full potential. In that case, rural residents will be empowered, rural-urban migration will be reduced, the local economy will be strengthened, and young people will have access to direct and indirect employment, preventing them from becoming victims of crime that fuels instability or being readily used as political thugs during elections. Poverty and unemployment, perceived injustice and unfairness, and electoral violence, Nigeria has been plagued by security threats, including the proliferation of small and light weapons. Among the numerous problems facing the local government are the state's repressive authority, corruption, and the meager revenue base it faces when dealing with security issues. In addition to enhancing citizens' well-being, good governance, helping widows, and empowering grassroots citizens will address the root causes of insecurity at the local government level.

Keywords: insecurity, local government administration, security, Nigeria

Introduction

Since the beginning of creation, man has sought ways to safeguard people and their possessions. All societies have security concerns, which are at the core of national goals for their internal and foreign policies. One's sense of safety is influenced by their feeling of social group membership on an emotional and psychological level, which is the center of security. Most local and state governments in Nigeria are concerned about security in the 21st century (Adewale, Kehinde & Sunday, 2023). The primary objective of the municipal the administration's creation in 1976 was to provide development and governance to the majority of rural residents. The preservation of law and order is one of the duties of local government, security, provision of motor parks and

markets, etc.... Since the movement towards sustainable national development, the most significant level of government is the local government. Given that local government is widely acknowledged as a crucial instrument for rural development and as the means of effectively delivering socioeconomic services to the general public, national development has long been envisioned as starting at the grassroots level (Omini & Ofre, 2021). The significance of this level of government cannot be overstated in Nigeria because any attempt to subvert the original intentions behind the establishment of local government will lead to social problems and underdevelopment in rural areas, which will subsequently spread to urban areas and seriously harm the local economy.

Nigeria is currently placed at 144th out of all sovereign states in the world when it comes to the 2023 Global Peace Index. The level of insecurity in Nigeria at the moment is reflected in the global peace index. The federation's ongoing crime and violence are the root cause of insecurity. Criminals and violent individuals in Nigeria are not limited by age, gender, or social class. Nigerians are prone to committing a wide range of crimes, such as pipeline vandalism, oil theft, smuggling, human trafficking, armed robbery, and internet scams (Abdulyakeen, 2022). The conflict between farmers and herders in various regions of the nation, the insurgency in the northeast, the militancy and unrest in the Niger Delta, and the calls for self-determination in the southeast of the country all contribute to Nigeria's high crime rate. There is documentation in Nigeria that conflicts between farmers and herdsmen originated in rural areas in the country's north, where, before the state and federal government's involvement, local governments were unable to use government resources to end the violent crisis. Adekola & Enyiche (2017) studied how insecurity affected community development initiatives in River State, The local government areas of Ahoada East and Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, Nigeria. They found that rival political parties, cult crises, unequal resource distribution, violent opposition to government and private companies exploitation, and population neglect were the main causes of insecurity in the study area (Abdulyakeen, 2022).

The federal and state governments imposed the Joint Account System, which has left local governments at the mercy of their states following the restoration of democracy in the 4th Republic in 1999. Ojougbeli & Ojoh (2014) carried out an analysis that showed that the Joint Account's implementation was problematic and abused because various state governments used local government as a way to raise money. They went on to say that when local government performance and productivity fell precipitously, this attitude turned pathological. Productivity and performance are at an all-time low, making it difficult for the government to fulfil its responsibility as an operational third tier in terms of economic and physical development, and as a result, insecurity in Nigeria's rural areas is growing. The undermining of Nigeria's local government system is the root cause of these security problems that give rise to illicit activities. In rural northern Nigeria, herdsmen attacks on communities are common, but intercommunal disputes are most prevalent in the country's south (Abdulyakeen, 2022; Adewale & Kehinde & Sunday, 2023).

When a community crisis arises, state governments frequently use the Joint Account to intercept resources that would have motivated law enforcement agents and mobilized resources, leaving

powerless the local government, which is the one closest to the people. It is noteworthy that some Nigerian states have not held local government elections in decades which could easily lead to the establishment of a complete governance, as well as that the states that have conducted elections prevent the local governments from receiving monthly funding from the Federation Account. Although, the Bola Tinubu administration has granted autonomy to local governments in the country it is yet to materialize. Certain states opt to manage local government operations through Care Taker Committees, which hinders and deviates from the actual function of the management of local government. Based on this, the study intends to investigate the administration and security issues facing the Nigerian local governments.

Conceptual Clarification: Local Government Administration

Numerous authors have contributed to the understanding of local governance, making it a concept subject to differing perspectives when viewed as an institution or process of governance. The third level of government, local government, was established by law to promote rural development and serve as a conduit between the people and the government. According to the National Guidelines for Reform of Local Government (1976), local government is defined by the UN as "government at (the) local level carried out through representative councils created by law to exercise particular powers within designated areas." Together with staff, institutional, and financial authority, these powers should grant councils significant control over local affairs. They should also give them the freedom to select and carry out projects that will complement federal, state, and local government initiatives and guarantee that local efforts and responses to local conditions and needs are optimised through the active participation of the public and their traditional institutions (Adekola, & Enyiche, 2017).

According to Ikelegbe (2005), a local government is an entity established by law to oversee public affairs and provide public services within its borders. It is a part of the people, state, or nation-state. Depending on the variety of social amenities, the local government is in charge of maintaining law and order, promoting cooperation and participation, and ensuring that living conditions are improved and that people lead fulfilling lives, according to Fajobi (2010). According to Nnaa & Abeki (2017), a local government is a legally recognised political division of a country (or a state in a federal system) that has significant authority over local affairs, including the ability to levy taxes or require labour for particular objectives. The responsibilities of local government are fairly clear: they include safeguarding the public by using public funds and developing human capital to lower unemployment, violent crime, and social unrest that results from systemic failure.

Security concerns prevent development in rural areas, and migration often has a knock-on effect in urban areas. Crime and violence are rampant in Nigeria's sociopolitical and economic environment, claim Adekola & Garba (2015). He claimed that this was ultimately the cause of agitation, anger, and acts of violence committed by both individuals and groups against the Nigerian government. He clarified this by stating that Nigeria's many administrations have failed to address the issues of poverty, unemployment, and unequal wealth distribution among ethnic nationalities.

Security and Insecurity: The Concept

Thomas Hobbes claims in his "Social Contract Theory" that the leviathan (the sovereign, state, or government) emerged to preserve social order, people's safety and property within the state. Because of this, every modern society has made security a top priority. The idea has proven difficult to define in a way that will provide a comprehensive understanding of its nature. Security, as defined by Oghuvbu & Chidozie (2018, p. 294), is "the mitigation of risk to the survival of individuals or groups that are generally associated with it." Thus, security may be understood as their release from risk, injury, or suffering both now and in the future." Security can help people, organisations, ecosystems, social groups, and anything else that could change unintentionally. To combat insecurity, community security combines the concepts of state building, development, and human security in a people-centered way. The plan makes communities, security companies, and local government organizations more capable and prepared to address their sources of insecurity.

The enemy of national development is insecurity. Hence according to Denney (2013), there is a significantly stronger correlation between underdevelopment and insecurity than there is between peace and development. Dike (2013) echoed this sentiment when he said that a major barrier to meaningful development is the lack of security for citizens' lives and property. Local and foreign interests will inevitably be discouraged from carrying out development projects in an atmosphere of "induced" fear brought on by the local government system's neglect, which fuels violence and insecurity. This could hurt people's ability to find work and live comfortable lives. For Oghuvbu (2021) the consensus is that "freedom from danger or threats to an individual or a nation" constitutes security. It is the capacity to uphold and defend one's interests, cherished values, and legitimate rights, whether one is an individual or a country, as well as to improve well-being. Oghuvbu & Oghuvbu (2020) examined insecurity from two angles. Firstly, "being exposed to or prone to danger of danger is vulnerability, and danger is the state of being susceptible to harm or injury." Secondly, anxiety is a vague, uneasy feeling that arises in anticipation of any misfortune, whereas insecurity is the state of risk or anxiety. This definition of insecurity highlights an important point: when it manifests, people who experience it are frequently exposed to threats and dangers in addition to not knowing what will happen. Human security, according to the US, is "protection from covert and harmful disturbance in everyday activities, at home, office, or in communities."

On page 48, Adagbabiri & Okolie (2018) according to the United Nations Development Programme (1994), "security is the secure and safe vulnerability state, it may also be safety from persistent dangers such as poverty, disease, and repression." "A state of threat or danger is insecurity. Conversely, instability is the opposite of insecurity. Nonetheless, due to the various ways that insecurity has been recognized, there are a variety of ways in which it impacts individuals. Given that Nigeria is thought to be Africa's most populous nation, the three levels of government in Nigeria must practice good governance to meet the needs of the populace. Any attempt at misgovernance, combined with the current level of insecurity, will cause a helpless situation that will necessitate the assistance of foreign governments (Nnaa & Abeki, 2017). This

is the rationale behind this paper, whose goals are to stop the nation's spiraling insecurity and restore a working system of local government.

Local Government Neglect and Insecurity: The Nigerian Case

Without a doubt, the local government system has been neglected for more than ten years, which has led to an increase in socio-problems such as kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, conflicts between farmers and herders, religious crises, and communal crises. For more than ten years, the local government system has undoubtedly been neglected. The Joint Account System (JAS) was one way that the federal and state governments ignored local government, which is supported by the Nigerian Constitution. "The amount standing to the credit of local government council in the Federal Account shall also be allocated to the state for the benefit of their local government councils on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly," Section 162(5) of the Nigerian Constitution states, among other things (Adekola & Enyiche, 2017; Abudulyakeen, 2022; Muhammad, Mohd & Zuliha, 2023). The sixth section of section 162 states that "Each State shall receive all allocations from the Federation Account and from the government of the State to the Local Government Councils of the State." Ojugbeli & Ojoh (2014) claim that state governments mismanaged the Joint Account System, seeing it as a goldmine for themselves, by deferring, postponing, and making several illegal deductions from the council's statutory allocations.

Along with the Joint Account, which led to the council's financial collapse and serious harm to the local government system, the Governors established caretaker committees in place of elections and, if they were held, installed stooges loyal to the governors in positions of power, thereby eclipsing democracy at the local government level. This had a significant impact on the local government structure and hampered the main goals behind the establishment of local government. Rural-urban migration has become inevitable due to the harsh lifestyle, high crime rate, and obvious unemployment in rural areas. Because the local government is the first to respond to crimes committed at the local level, the system's neglect intensified security issues. The absence of democratic structures and backup financial power in council areas renders the system incapable of effectively addressing criminal activity and issues that threaten public safety (Nwachkwu & Ellah, 2020). The creation of caretaker committees, which is fundamentally against the law, is another way that the principles of the local government system were disregarded. The committee's members are frequently used to rig local government elections as goons for the state governors. Through the "initiatives" of the Governors, the various State Houses of Assembly frequently decide the term of the local government chairman (Eboh & Diejomach, 2010). Because state governors in various states would ensure that winners belong to the same political party, against popular wishes, this illustrates how the system lacks the requisite autonomy. Because of this, the third level of government worsens poverty, underdevelopment, and high crime rates rather than fostering the required development. Eboh & Diejomach (2010) & Ajibulu (2012) claim that excessive state governor meddling has essentially made local government an adjunct of the state government, lowering it to the level of a ministry.

Risks to Nigeria's Local Government Administration and Insecurity

Any country can face an external or internal security threat. Threats that originate from outside the country are known as external threats. The majority of the internal threats are the result of years of consistent failure. According to Ubong (2016), Nigeria's immediate internal security threat is caused by a variety of factors, such as misperceptions about the government by the general public, ethnoreligious conflicts, a lack of institutional capacity that prevents the government from addressing deep-seated corruption and infrastructure breakdown, the loss of the country's socio-cultural and communal value system, material inequality, unfair resource distribution, porous borders, terrorism, and the mass migration of young people without jobs into urban areas.

Nowadays, intergroup relations in the Niger Delta state and across the nation are defined by conflicts between farmers and herders in almost every region of Nigeria is one of the many factors that have endangered the country's corporate existence in the modern era. There have been reports of conflicts in the South East, South-South, North Central, North East, and North West. Conflicts like these impede the production of food for the general public and the raw materials required to power the manufacturing sector. The conflict is to blame for the high rates of hunger, poverty, and social disarray in the impacted areas. The International Crisis Group Report (2017) goes on to say that there is concern about the potentially far-reaching consequences of these conflicts. The Fulani herders may be able to entice their brethren from outside Nigeria into Nigeria to aid in the conflict. They can rally support from Central and West Africa, which would exacerbate Nigeria's security issues.

The availability of small arms and light weapons has made it easier for people to use violence to accomplish goals, which poses another threat to Nigerian local government administration through illicit trafficking and the willingness to use force. It is appealing to warlords, rebels, terrorist organizations, criminals, and other non-state actors as a means of achieving their objectives. Human rights and humanitarian laws have been broken as a result, along with a disdain for the rule of law. The unauthorized transfer of weapons to conflict zones has caused instability in several areas and is currently accelerating the emergence of terrorist organizations and extremist groups, endangering international peace. Without the illicit trafficking of small and light weapons, it is obvious that there would not have been any conflicts or, consequently, the rise in popularity of internally displaced people in Nigeria and around the world in recent years. In Nigeria, there are approximately 1.6 million internally displaced people and another 1.6 million refugees who are trying to find safety in the neighboring countries of Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. Prembiri, Amabulou, Olugboiri, Ogbolombiri, Gbaramatoruu in Balyesa, and Ogoni, Ogbogoro, Ogbakiri, Emuoh, Rumeke, Rumuolumeni, & Ahuda in River state are among the Niger Delta communities where there has been displacement. In the Niger Delta, internal displacement has led to a serious humanitarian crisis, violations of human rights, and problems with politics, society, and security (Wosu, 2015).

Food security includes both access to and availability of food. When a household is free from starvation and hunger, it is deemed secure (FAO, 2001). According to the World Bank (2001), there are three components to food security: affordability, accessibility, and availability. Therefore, the concept of "food security" implies that all citizens of a nation have physical, social, and financial access to enough wholesome food that meets their needs and tastes and is safe

enough for them to live active, healthy lives. Nigeria is far from achieving food security, which is a basic necessity for human survival. In many parts of Nigeria, food insecurity is on the rise and is often associated with violence and conflicts. It also acts as a covert source of tensions between various ethnic and religious groups. The growing awareness of life's inequalities is one of the primary causes of insecurity in Nigeria. The general public's perception of unfairness and inequality has led to many people filing grievances. This impression is the result of a portion of the population feeling marginalized. A significant portion of the population, particularly the youth, in most rural areas feel dissatisfied and have given up hope. They have now come out to voice their disillusionment about the perceived level of inequality (Omini & Ofre, 2021). Government development, policies, and political office have become the main sources of discontent and resentment.

Nigerian Local Government Insecurity and Administration Challenges

Local government autonomy equates to independence or popular democracy. The idea is to empower the vast majority of people to actively choose their fate at the local level, which is currently absent in Nigeria. In Nigeria, even under democratic regimes, the governor of each state has the authority to appoint unelected and selected individuals to caretaker committees, which results in the unconstitutional and abrupt termination of most local government councils. The foundation for local government creation is undermined by the fact that caretaker committees, once established, report to the governor rather than the people (Adeyemo, 2005). The inability of career, elected, and appointed officials to exercise autonomy will impede the effective and efficient provision of public services. Most local governments find it challenging to operate at their best due to the state government's overbearing power, which essentially paralyzes system autonomy. Overbearing attitudes are prevalent in democratic regimes. The resources available to local governments are too alluring for most states to overlook. States have systematically developed cynical ways to deprive local governments of funds that will help them protect people's lives and property while hiding under sections 7(1) and 6 of the 1999 constitution (Adeyemo, 2005).

Adeyemo (2005) asserts that local government autonomy is equivalent to independence or popular democracy. The goal is to give the great majority of people in Nigeria the ability to actively decide their local destiny, which is currently lacking. The majority of local government councils in Nigeria are abruptly and unconstitutionally terminated because the governor of each state has the power to appoint unelected and selected individuals to caretaker committees, even in democratic regimes. The fact that caretaker committees, once formed, answer to the governor instead of the people weakens the foundation upon which local government was built. The efficient and successful delivery of public services will be hampered by career, elected, and appointed officials' lack of autonomy. Anger that will not be good for peace and order in the community is caused by the overconcentration of development projects in some communities in Nigeria at the expense of others. Political leaders can prioritize projects in their communities while ignoring those in other communities. Local party politics typically serve local interests rather than the community's overall interests. The local administration areas' diverse communities are divided rather than brought together by it. Political parties have acted

negatively rather than positively by combining the interests and demands of the 24 people to support grassroots development. Local government has become ineffectual and inefficient in grassroots development due to excessive politicking at the grassroots level (Odu, 2014). Since the majority of qualified politicians rarely run for office, unfit candidates are frequently chosen to serve as chairmen and councilors. As Odu (2014) correctly noted, it is not unusual to find school dropouts serving as chairmen, councilors, and supervisory councilors in the majority of local government areas. These individuals are incapable of creating development plans that will improve the quality of life for citizens of the local government.

Corruption erodes public confidence and hinders efficient law enforcement. Due to this unsightly trend, the majority of Nigerians are now forced to consider other options for safeguarding their lives and property. While some Nigerians use jungle justice to address their crime problems, many would rather keep information that is essential to preventing crime to themselves. According to Akanbi (2004) in Aina (2007), institutional weakness, poor governance, and development—all of which are essential to the local government's existence—are caused by systemic corruption. The existence of ghost workers, inflated contracts, outright financial transaction fraud, and collusion with the state machinery that is meant to carry out oversight functions are all examples of corruption in local government. In Nigeria, corruption increases transaction costs and fosters inefficiency. Effective service delivery in Nigeria is hampered by corruption, which also makes it more difficult for the government to address the general welfare of its citizens at the local and national levels (Aina, 2007).

People are the key to development, which is why it should be an active process rather than a passive one. Therefore, development program beneficiaries need to be engaged participants (Odu, 2014).

Because local communities are not involved in many development programs that usually address the quality of life in local government are unsuccessful in their planning, development, and implementation. Involving local government citizens in administration and decision-making is what gives local governments their grassroots democracy and self-government characteristics. The usefulness of the program is undermined when the locals stop being involved in local government affairs because they feel alienated and stop seeing it as their own (Odu, 2014).

Conclusion

A wide range of duties and responsibilities that strive to raise everyone's standard of living are assigned to the area covered by local government. With the people as the primary focus and goals, good governance is the answer to maintaining peace and order at all levels of government. Therefore, maintaining long-term peace and order in the local government depends on social and economic development that benefits the populace. Unfortunately, Nigerian local governments are struggling to fulfil their statutory obligations to improve the quality of life for residents due to a number of institutional and attitude-related laws. The security risks that are obvious to everyone are not being addressed by the local government. Instead of responding to security threats in their jurisdiction in an episodic and reactive manner, local government must take an institutional approach. The following recommendations are offered to address Nigeria's insecurity problem and guarantee the quick restoration of the local government system: Elections should be held in

every Nigerian local administration, as instructed by the federal president. It is recommended that the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) routinely look into local government funding in order to better people's lives. A constitutional review should be conducted in order to eliminate the Joint Account of State and Local Government.

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