

POLITICAL ELITE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper explores political elites and local government administration in Nigeria; this is informed by past and present realities of Nigeria political elites that play exclusionary politics. It argues the need for inclusive governance and political participation in order not to turn Nigeria into a fragile state to ensure that good governance is sustained. The reason for political relations between elites and citizens dictate development outcomes, service delivery involves working with the political dynamics that has citizens welfare as its focus. This is done by addressing social justice and extremes of inequality as well as top down socio-political and economic process that sustain effective states, efficient markets and societies. However, elite describe how the states and societies manage their affairs politically and the way power and authority are exercised. Consequently, entrusting local level governance to few people that constitutes the political class endangers development, participation and settlement. This will degenerate to cycle of poverty among citizens that does not belong to elite class. Political elite create fragile relation and equally hinders socio-economic development to its citizens. It is as a result of this that the paper adopt critical phenomenon as its methodology to redefine political participation with inclusiveness while dismantling the political elites and their corruptive practices that stagnate development with especially at the local level. The paper suggest that inclusive political participation will ensure that governance is centralized and built on fine philosophical ideals for the benefit of Nigerian citizens at the local level. With this, Nigeria will not be left in the hands of few less sensitive political elites at the local level.

Keywords: Local Government, Elite, Constitution, Administration

Introduction

The relation among political elite and local governance in Nigeria was found to be debilitating, this occasion incapacities, accentuated scenario of poverty and underdevelopment with particular reference in local government areas in Nigeria. Sustainable development in government practices occur all over the world with local governance in particular has become a discourse in many countries (Wilson, 2000). Local government in Nigeria is framed and influenced by elitist tendencies; this elite influence is detrimental to development in the country. However, Odubajo & Alabi (2014), posit that the reality to be established is that the elite are the dominant actor in political power-dynamics in Nigeria, the pertinent question borders on how the dominance may extend to local government setting and the effect of such over-arching domination to self-evident development in the country. Political elites has underscores exclusiveness, this has throw away non participation of citizens with multiply effects on nation building. The question of political elites tends to present the ultimate question of what ought to be the ultimate justification of the existence of any form of government within a political organization (Biggs, 2019). Political elite is a status group among citizens of a nation-state, it is a power elite, overlapping socio-economic networks (Odubajo & Alabi, 2014). The group is less than one percent populace; they exercise disproportionate power that varies with issue, over time; across states. They have various mechanisms to control the populace, from direct to indirect rules, mechanism and information; they exercise four levels of power: occupying; prevailing; preventing; manipulating (Matthew, 2012, Murshed & Gates, 2005).

They exert economic control as managers; non-executive directors as well as interlock directorships integrate all major companies (Biggs, 2019). This better explain politics as essential determinant of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that is better educated, healthier, more prosperous people (Orelope-Adefulire, 2022). These goals provide evidence of politics as the driver of change and ultimate cause of people's prosperity, security and access to justice. These shows how local political economy influences national status in global politics, state fragility and ability of citizens to participate in their own development. Local government as the third tier of government is enacted by act of parliament or decree aimed at bringing governance closer to people at the grassroots (Abubakar, 2010).

Local government provides social services such as access roads, dispensaries, clinics, primary schools, markets; they respond to the peoples' needs and enhance political participation at the grassroots (Afrobarometer, 2008; Aref & Marof, 2009). Local exists to fill the gap which national government is too remote to fill; they implement the ideals, objectives, programmes and aspirations of the national government at the local level (Okoli, 2000). Section 7 of the 1999 constitution (as amended) empowers local government to make room for democratically elected officials, the second aspect of the section makes the establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions of the local government dependent on the state government. This section states that the system of local government by democratically elected local government councils is under this constitution guaranteed accordingly, the government of every state shall subject to this section ensure their existence under a law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance, and functions of such councils (Akpan, 2016). Many argued that poor performance of local government officials in Nigeria is anchored on elitism through state and local government joint account. The chairmen complain that allocations accrued to them from federation account are not remitted due to state government interference (FRN, 1999). It is against this background that the paper examines how political elite has usurped local government administration in Nigeria especially in the fourth republic.

Clarification of Concepts

Political Elite

Elitism is the belief in or the practice of rule by elites, which implies focusing on them as the key political and social actors, the emergence of elitism is rooted in capitalism, an ideology that promotes class-distinctions in societies (Higley & Pakulski, 2012). According to Odubajo & Alabi (2014), the image of elitism is that which throws the salient relationship between politics and economics, and it is a creation of the political-economy dynamics of any society, derived through the very political dynamics and abilities that drive any social formation. Albert (2005), states that the theory of elite that leadership issues in societies do not thrive on pluralism, that the stratification paradigm holds the key to harmony within societies. Welsh (1979) posit that hierarchy has to do with the vertical ranking of people in the society in two categories, those at the top and those at the lower class. However, those at the bottom are assumed to be less important than those on top while social hierarchies are assumed to be pyramidal in nature. There are more people at the bottom of the hierarchy than those on top. The latter are responsible for the exercise of socio-economic and political powers. Their powers consist in their ability to articulate ideas, persuade, cajole, coerce, mobilize, embody and advance symbols to which large numbers of people respond. Albert (2005) states that the notion of political elite is associated with inequality, they organize themselves in a manner that makes them superior to the rest of their society. Elitism in governance pays no heed to the real needs of the governed; they promote the interests of the elite to the apparent disregard of the welfare of the subaltern constituents of the political space. It considers the needs or the greed of a few

people (elite) to be more important than the desires of the majority. As leadership propensity elitism at the local level negates everything that is desirable at this level of governance.

Political elite according to Marcello (2009) refer to those who have decision making power in the state resulting from their statutory or institutional position, or who have influence on policy decisions as a result of their status in the ruling coalition. To Guido (1949) cited in (Luca, 2012), political elite refer to that part of the ruling class (elite) that has strictly political functions. Luca (2012), argue that political elite performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, the ruled are directed and controlled by the ruler. The ruling class dominance is derived from society where they obtain the material, intellectual and even moral superiority to the scholar insist that members of the elite act in order to preserve their positions within their societies. Specifically, political elite's actions are aimed at the preservation of their political power. As Luca continues, the members of the political elite are ambitious people seeking office for individual recognition, career advancement and power to affect societies. As political power is always contested, the minimal objectives that drive elite is to stay in power. (Kifordu, 2011) agrees that elite constitute a tiny and organized portion of the society with valued and varied superior resources and capacity to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially, independent of the regime type. The political elites are considered to be a minority compared to the entire population. It is a class that has ascended to power from diverse resources, but relies more on state power and institutions for survival than on feedbacks from the Nigerian social structures. The Nigerian political elite operate within convenient and exclusive networks that support a core political executive composition that is predatory and disconnected from the society. Common background, recurrent appearances and vested interests are linked to typical elite practices such as patronage exchanges and corruption to enhance continuity in political offices and roles. The elite class through decision making steer other sectors of the society, hence they play greater role in national development. This successful decision making, interpretation and discourse among the elite class are fundamental and crucial elements in national growth and development. Power relations among the various elites reflect in the policy-making process in the context of the country's development, but the elite class in Nigeria seems to assume a dimension that is unusual of realistic functions in developmental context. The formation Nigerian elite class has not been translated into a source of national development despite the fact that a powerful initiative from within the elite group is important. The Nigerian elite class has little disposition to contemplate the positive use of elite advantage as a strategic instrument for engineering national development. Nigeria has realized little of her potentials because of ineffective mobilization of these potentials by the elites (Frank 1991). This has exposed millions of Nigerians to untold suffering from various diseases, prevalence of poor income due to unemployment of youths and street trading by children. The masses have limited access to quality education, lack of good drinking water, inadequate medical care and this is mostly at the grass roots. The PDP government came up with policies such as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies, Transformation Agenda, Sure-P, You Win and so on designed and implemented to bring about economic development. At the end of the party's rule, the elites became richer to the extent that 80 percent of Nigerians did not benefit from the 6.0 percent growth (Akpan, 2016) The unemployment rate rose up to 30 percent among the youths and most citizens lacked the basic amenities of live in a period characterized by huge oil revenue due to the poor perception of what development process is all about by the Nigerian ruling elites while some floated programmes for looting the treasury, others embarked on outright thievery of the common wealth of the nation.

Political Elite in Contemporary Nigeria

Nigerian elites have turned Nigeria into fragile state while others will prefer failed states (Olowu & Chanie, 2016, Rotberg & Campbell, 2021). The media (social, print, radio, television) echo same failure

exhibited by these elites, the members of the Nigeria political elite has failed to convince the rest of the citizens that whatever they do in politics and business was for the interest of every Nigerian. It was the conflict among the political elites that led to civil war, from 1967-1970, in which millions of Nigerian irrespective of social class that lost their lives. The resource control debate was a manifestation of the perennial conflicts among Nigerian power brokers over who gets what and how much from the enormous revenue accruing to the national government from the sales of petroleum (Ogbeide & Aghahowa, 2005). The Nigerian political elites were responsible for the derailment of democratic experiments in the past when there is strive, struggle and misunderstanding in the country over issues that is ideological, political, resource, these elites appeal to regional, ethnic and religious sentiments (Ezeani, 2003, Iyekekpolo, 2020). This attitude has led to the rating of Nigeria as the 7th poorest country in the world as well as the second most corrupt nation in the world (Transparency International, 2000). This is the premise that explains why schools, hospitals roads, electricity, water projects, and all other social infrastructure in Nigeria is collapsing, as well explains widespread insecurity of lives and properties in Nigeria. They sponsored insurgencies directly and indirectly such as Boko Haram and Herdsmen insurgences currently affecting Nigeria's security (Iyekekpolo, 2020). Most data showcase that corruption, political instability, poor economic growth, corruption, political instability and political tumult has continued to remain pervasive in Nigeria (Kyarem et al, 2020). Desperation of power by politicians, election violence, rigging and many more are manifestations of political instability in the country (CFR, 2019). Nigerian political elites spearheaded the transformations that affect the actors, context and process to neo-patrimonialism in Nigeria. This range from tectonic drifts resulting from democratic transaction or armed uprising, and godfather figures associated with Nigerian political transition (Gazibo, 2012). Political elites are godfathers who are able to dominate the public institutions by manoeuvre their protégés into elected offices and other important positions (Isaac, 2005, Nweze, 2012). God fathers are not just financial sponsors of these office holders, but succeed in fuelling violence, and corruption effectively enough to hobble every of their protégé over would be competitors while guaranteeing impunity for the numerous illegalities this entail (Lackey, 2012). Nigerian state is today a demonized social intolerant vilified for its weakness, its over-extent, its interference with the smooth functioning of the market, its repressive character, its dependence on foreign power, its ubiquity in absence all because of practices and activities of elites (Azaiki, 2015). Nigeria political elites have turned Nigeria to formalize power, deinstitutionalize nation and criminalize politics. Nigerian has been moved from a weak state to a failed state because it has manifested signs of failed state including the inability of government to protect the citizens, large scale violence and festering insurgence.

Local Government

Shah & Shah (2006) view local government as specific institutions or entities created by national constitutions by ordinary legislation of a higher level of central government, by provincial or state legislation or executive order to deliver a range of specified services to a relatively small geographically delineated area. On the other hand, Local government is the formulation and execution of collective action at the local level. Thus, it encompasses the direct and indirect roles of formal institutions of local government and government hierarchies, as well as the roles of informal norms, networks, community organizations, and neighborhood associations in pursuing collective action by defining the framework for citizen-citizen and citizen-state interactions, collective decision making, and delivery of local public services. Local level accordingly seeks to establish standards for citizen-citizen and citizen-state interactions, collective decision making, and service delivery at the local level. Local government is the system of political decentralization in which the power base of decision making is not national but local. Within this system, functions are locally and directly executed by elected officials who have direct control

over local affairs (Wunsch, 2008). According to 1976 guidelines, local government is a legally established representative council empowered to initiate and direct the provision of basic services to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal governments in their areas. The council ensures through devolution of functions, the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, such that local initiatives which respond to local needs are maximized. Local authorities provide an opportunity for rural people to participate in decisions within national policies that act as local centres for initiative conducive to development. Also, it is in the local level that roads, water, electricity, health, sewage, education, and other facilities are provided. Montague cited in Adeyeye (2005) views local government as local bodies freely elected to superintend national or state government, endowed with power, discretion and responsibility without control over their decisions by higher authority. They provide services and implement projects to complement state and federal level activities in rural areas through devolution of functions and active participation to maximize the needs of rural people (Awa, 2006; Onu 2011). Moreover, local government provides an opportunity for wider political participation as the authority to determine public needs and allocate resources as embedded in the political system. Agba and Chukwurah (2013) conceptualize local government as the third tier of government created to decentralize governance closer to people for service delivery and engender development. The creation of local government anywhere in the world stems from the need to facilitate developments at the grassroots. All political systems seek to attain efficient and effective service delivery as it affects day-to-day activities of people. Local government articulate and facilitate the needs of the rural dwellers through the application of needed human resources for the purpose of efficient and effective service in the localities (Ugwu, 2000). The idea of creating local government allows people in the grassroots to promote democratic ideals and coordinate development programme directly to rural areas. Some important distinguishing features of local government which was defined in the works of political philosophers like Alexis de Tocqueville (1969), Whalen (1969), and Mawhood (1983) all in (Ezeani, 2004) include:

Localness: Local government is the bottom most tier of government; it is the government at the grassroots or native level. It is the government nearest to the people. Local government functions to bring equality to the local citizens as well as to educate and socialize them politically since the participation of the citizens in governance is one of the underlying precepts of democracy (Agbakoba & Ogbonna, 2004).

Defining characteristics of Local Government

De Tocqueville	Whallen	Mawhood
(1) Localness	(1) Given territory, space or land and (1) population (people)	Representative of Locality
(ii) Participative	(ii) Established organization for lawmaking and administrative purpose	(ii) Authority to allocate substantial resources
(iii)Relative independence	(iii) Autonomy, subject to the limitations of common law and test of reasonableness	(iii) Authority to administer a range of functions
(iv)Authority especially to effectively influence community affairs to raise resources	(iv)Separate legal identity	(iv) Separate legal existence

Source: Olowu (1988:13)

- (i) **Legal existence enshrined in the constitution:** local government has a legal existence enshrined in the constitution which protects it from arbitrary actions of higher authority. It acts as a link through which government policies are communicated to the local people. As a legal entity, it can sue and can be sued. It does not expire with the end of each administration; the same way the action of a council do not expire at the end of its tenure (Agbakoba & Ogbonna, 2004).
- (ii) **Substantial autonomy:** this means that although the local governments are created by the state or federal government, and are subject to the state or federal government's control in some areas, they enjoy a reasonable degree of independence in administrative and financial affairs (Blair, 1977).
- (iii) **Defined territory:** As a sub-division of a nation or state, the local government exists within a geographical and political region which has well defined boundaries.
- (iv) Exercise its authority over a given people; as a corporate entity, local government is created to serve a community/a people resident in a known location.
- (v) The council is composed of elected representative of local people: the local government cannot be ruled by local notables, by traditional or hereditary rulers or some special elites, it is the government of elected representatives by the local people for the local people.
- (vi) Local government is divided into departments, divisions and units which facilitate the accomplishment of its goals, objectives and functions. According to (Ezeani, 2004:28) and (Eme et al,2016) adequate provisions were made to safeguard most of the features of the local government as enshrined in the guidelines of the 1976 local government reforms in Nigeria and in the 1979, 1989, and 1999 constitutions. Prior to 1979, no constitution had provided clearly for the survival of local government system in Nigeria. The survival of the local government has been left to the decisions of each regional or state government and legislature who determined the nature of the local government system in the state or region. The situation changed in the 1979 constitution states that the system of local government by democratically elected local government councils is under this constitution guaranteed; and accordingly, the government of every state shall subject to section 8 of this constitution ensure their existence under a law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance, and functions of such councils.

In the same manner, section 148(5) of the 1999 constitution went further to strengthen the financial positions of the local government by making provisions for allocations to them to be made through federal account and state government's total revenue sources. The actual functions of the local government were spelt out in the fourth schedule of that constitution. However, if the actual practice of the local government system in Nigeria is examined closely, one discovers that there are deviations from most of the basic features. For instance, the tenets of democracy and representativeness have been seriously violated especially during the military era when local governments were operated by councils whose members were not elected. Again, between 1984 and 1987, local government councils were abolished and replaced with sole administrators. The elected local government councils were abolished by the military government of Gen. Sani Abacha and replaced with Care-taker Committee.

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted for the paper is Democratic-Participatory Theory as propounded by theorist like Mills (1977), Panter-Brick (1954), Tocqueville (1969), Mackenzie (1961), Langrods (1953). The theory has it that local government exists solely to bring democracy and afford citizens opportunities for political participation and socializes people politically (Adamolekun, 1988). Local government is an element of democracy and demonstrates the intrinsic values of democracy to widespread participation. Ani (2013) states that local government is a commitment to participatory democracy at the local level. Most political

class at the local level target higher political offices using local government as a spring board in Nigeria (Tony, 2011). The theory reveals that democracy at the local level is maximized when people at the grassroots elect their representatives to account for stewardship (Hills, 2008). However, accountability, transparency and effective representation is a yardstick to realize participatory-democracy at the local level. The need for local government emanates from the desire to express distinctive identities through small, direct accountable self political units to peculiar needs at the grassroots (Ikwueze, 2008). In essence, local government allows independent self governance of smaller constituent units of government directly and democratically responsible for their own people. The proximity of the citizens to the elected representatives as it concerns local government level makes it easier to account for their stewardship. The participatory-democracy will be in place if rural communities that form the bedrock of grass roots politics participate fully in the political process to foster sense of ownership over common resources. Oviasuyi and Dada (2010), state that participation of citizens in rural governance promotes local government level, for instance, the chairmanship position, councillorship position, supervisory councilor position, personal assistants to chairman, secretary and other positions in local government widen the spectrum for grassroots participation. Some politicians do not participate in state or national politics but local government offers them the opportunity. Sharpe (1970) contends that participatory democracy creates opportunities for citizens to make meaningful development in politics through self government. It is through participation in self governance that individuals at the local level have a stake to appreciate the virtues of free government from the national level.

Methodology

The paper adopt critical phenomenon using primary and secondary sources, the primary sources are eye-witness account, oral interviews, diaries and archival materials while secondary sources are written documentaries, books, internet, newspapers, magazines, journals. This is a useful style of thinking; strength in its interdisciplinary appeal. Historically, Nigerian elites have been faulted bourgeoisies in the sense that their social position, economic pre-eminence and even values and personalities were shaped by colonialism. These political elite in Nigeria are a conglomeration of individuals who occupy and/or once occupied strategic position in all the political, economic and social institutions in the country.

How Political Elite Dominate Local Government in Nigeria

As noted by Kotter (2010) in Diah (2017) identify how power of political elites and influence operate in a country. Specifically, the power and influence of Nigerian elite operate in local government setting. The following scenarios are accordingly highlighted.

Caretaker Committee Culture: the political dimension of governance could be addressed through a focus on the process by which authority is exercised on the capacity of institutions (Wilson, 2000). In a bid to ensure that democratically elected governments are instituted in local council areas, the state governors found it expedient to continuously appoint caretaker committees in place. The Constitution expressly provides for local governments what these committees translate to rather than local administrations (Ezeani, 2012). Ananti, Onyekwelu & Madubueze (2015), states that caretaker committee system is a way in which sitting government especially state level selects and appoint individual, in most cases of the same political parties to manage the affairs of local government. These individuals are in most cases elite members of such political parties. This leads to the continuity of elite domination even in the local government areas, as the governors who make the appointments predominantly bring their political-elite associates into these positions. The committee members owe total allegiance to the governor (Ezeani, 2012). But local governance presupposes major grassroots participation (control) not domination by

some committee members who usually belong to the elite class.

Through Result of Fraudulent Elections: Nigerian elections have never been marked by sterling performances. The dispute is usually the functions of generic fraudulent tendencies on the part of the political elite, Nigerian elections are usually characterized by fraud. Human Rights Watch (2007), posit that many elected officials who came to power in fraudulent elections in Nigeria have committed abuses against their constituents and engaged in large-scale looting of public resources, this is applicable to local governance setting. The elite manipulation of the electoral processes do not usually spare the process of local government elections for instance during the 2004 local government elections in Nigeria is marred with usual violence, election observers reported widespread rigging of election results (HRW, 2004). Nyewusira & Nweke (2012), opine that is a threat to democracy especially in local government system from professional elite political groups in various political parties who engage in manipulating the electoral process to win elections at local levels, take ascend into power to destroy democracy at the grassroots. These politicians and groups in the various political parties also stand for the country's political elite. They engage in manipulating the electoral process to win elections at the local levels, and extend their elite networks to local level. They take over power to ensure that what obtains at this level is seen to be democracy on the face of it but sheer elite greed in practical terms. Gambo (2015) contend that election in Nigeria is marred with irregularities, especially at the state levels, and the outcome reflect the wishes of the political party mainly political elite that form government at the state levels. As soon as these elite figures are selected as caretaker committee members or their positions are brought about by fraudulent elections manipulated by the other elites at state government level, they come with their friends and associates to local governance setting and display political abracadabra. Wilson (2000) argues that direct interaction among citizens and government is most visible at the local level not when the local level is tainted by elite domination. Adedire (2014) adds that local government is expected to promote democratic ideals of a society, coordinate development program and serve as the basis of socio-economic development in the locality. However what elite sojourners at the local governance setting do is to provide the veritable platform for expanding the elite network for sharing booties that have been assumed to exist in all spheres of Nigeria public sector. The caretaker committee, fraudulently elected officials and career public servants in local government council wait patiently through the good offices of elite-offenders that monthly salaries would come, whatever elite-network decides that the workers may get part of the salaries in arrears monthly. The friends and associates of the political office holders must find plum job even if it entails overseeing the arrest of some commercial bus conductors and dragging them to police headquarters for one offence or the other while the vehicles were in motion. For the poor local creatures to regain their freedom, they would have to part with money meant for the maintenance of elite tastes and fantasies.

Non-Residency in their Area of Jurisdiction of Governance: when the tenure of office of the elite governors' end they return to the cities they came from. It is obvious ethical issue in a situation where a personality never reside or does not intend to live among people either during his tenure of office or thereafter, either by election or dubious appointment to take charge of local governance in such area. The political elite and the natives he putatively leads accordingly become strangers to each other; most Nigeria's 774 local government areas are predominantly rural setting as constitutionally entrenched jurisdictions for local development, but the affairs of these habitations are presided over by urban based elites. The leaders may be from these places by birth but they do not maintain residences there, outside political orders, they do not commune with the people. Occasionally, they attend funeral ceremonies and such attendances are tailored towards garnering of votes for future elections at higher realms when elite

exploitation of the people is over. Consequently, the needs of the locals could be the provision of security that insulate them from various attacks by sundry invaders but the foreign elite rulers would elect to give them borehole that only magically produced water on the day of its commissioning. The entire villagers are surrounded by rivers and tributaries of other larger waters, why would political elite see security issues as priorities when they do not reside in such locations? They measure development by number and class of automobiles that attend commissioning of ghostlike water project.

Illogic of Resultant Investments from Elite Loots: the political elite local leaders do not reside in their supposed constituencies they take their loot outside local government areas of official duty to invest same in other locations. The occasion incapacitation of the people accordingly and accentuates the scenario of poverty and underdevelopment in rural local areas. Odubajo & Alabi (2014) and Diah (2017) classify Nigerian elite are totally united by repellent greed, they do not usually thieve and leave evidence in form of investments in the source of the thievery, they travel Dubai in United Arab Emirates to hide such war booties. In the case of local elite, those of them that are yet to reach such distant destination of Dubai act by investing in property market in Abuja, the seat of government power. It is incongruous to pill these funds and take them to federal capital territory. Elite at the local level continues to orchestrate some political agitations like fiscal federalism and restructuring the federation. The primary duties of this elite element are local level governance with operational shift to where his loots are invested as stated in the table below:

Political Elite and the Local Government Councils

	State	LGAs	Salary regularity	LG Elections	Transition committee	Funds Allocated to LGAs
1.	Abia	18	Owed Four months salaries	Held last in 2007	Transition Committee	Tied to the State
2.	Bauchi	20		None since 2008/2009	Caretaker Comm as reward for loyalty	
3.	Ebonyi	13	Regularly paid	None	Care-taker Committee	Yes
4.	Edo	18	11 out of 18 are owed 3-5 months salaries	None since May 2016 after dissolution of past council Chairmen	Head of Service (HOS) of the council	Yes
5.	Enugu	17	Owed 2-5 months salaries arrears	None since November 2015	Care-taker/ Management Committee	-
6.	Imo	27	Irregular/inconsistent	None since 2011	Transition Committee	None since 6 years; yet to collect allocations
7.	Kaduna	23	Owed 3-5 months of salaries	None since July 23, 2015	Interim Management Committee headed by Chairman appointed July 2015	-
8.	Kwara	16	Owed 6 months salaries	Yes	-	-
9.	Lagos	57	-	None	Sole Administrator since June 11, 2016	-
10.	Niger	25	19 LGAs without salaries	December, 2015	Nil	-
11.	Osun	30	Owed 10 months half salaries and 2months full salaries	None since 2010	Local Council Managers on GL 14 are appointed to manage local council affairs	Subventions from Federation Account

12.	Oyo	33	Regular with 3 months debt.	None since 9 years	Care-taker Chairman	Regular from federation account
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Source: Compiled by authors from raw data (2016)

The Table reveals that most of the local governments owe council workers backlog of salaries, some of them over one year. These local councils could not have paid their workers when the states themselves owe over 200 billion naira in salary arrears which does not include pension arrears (Economy 2016). Secondly, the table revealed that local government council elections had not been held for many years contrary to the constitutional provision that regular elections into local councils should be held regularly. The political elites now resort to debasing practice of appointing committees, caretakers, interim committees, management committees to oversee the activities of maligned councils. These maligned councils is financial dependent on state level and this can be solved by amending 1999 Constitution which has become a bulwark against accountability and good governance. This has witness several political, structural, administrative, and financial reforms since independence to fulfils the purpose for which it was created, but the reforms have not in any way given it the capability as a democratic institution to achieve effective governance at the local level.

Based on this the following were discovered-

- Local governments owe the staff salary arrears for months ranging from 3, 4, 6 to 10 months in the various states.
- Local Council elections had not been held for many years contrary to the constitutional provision that regular elections into local councils should be held regularly. The political chief executives of the states now resort to the practice of appointing transition committees, caretakers, interim committees and management committees to oversee the activities of the maligned councils.
- The bane of these maligned councils is financial dependence on state government; solution to this essentially lies in changing the 1999 constitution which has in some ways become a bulwark against accountability and good governance.
- The Nigerian political elite are the policy makers and steer the other sectors of the economy. Hence, they are supposed to play greater role in national development. Instead, they are deeply engrossed in corrupt practices.
- Financial allocations to the local council have not been followed as stipulated by the constitution as it is tied to the state government and so do not get to the local councils.
- Nigeria has realized little of her potential because of the ineffective mobilization of these potentials by the elite.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The creation of local government all over the world stems from the need to facilitate developments at the grassroots. All political systems seek the attainment of effective and efficient service delivery to people at the grassroots. The implication of this elites is clear, there would be a continuity in their composition; in revolutionary ones, previous elites would be deposed, killed, imprisoned or driven into exile and new elite would emerge from the struggle itself. In practice, the contrast between the two is not so dramatic but still significant. There is need for elites to redefine their stand in Nigeria politics, develop true philosophy that will enhance indigenous political processes for working out Nigeria's own development. There is need to resuscitate this nation-state especially by checkmating the activities of these elites because sovereignty

belongs to the people. This has resulted on the failure of local governments for efficient service delivery; the citizens at the local level are beginning to lose trust in the existence of local government system in the state. It is against this background that the paper recommend as follows:

i. The importance of governance lies in its cross-cutting roles in all the various sectors of the Nigerian economy, regional, national and local units of socio-political organization and analysis. The political elites' should be caution for desperation of power and public interest of the society should supersede individual interest. This is so because patterns of history cast long shadows in governance which are too often poorly understood or ignore by outside development agencies. There is need to redefine elites' interest in national issues such that politics and governance will take a neutral and utilitarian perspective especially at the international relations. The international dimensions of conflict, bad governance and fragile and unresponsive states are highlighted as an area of particular importance to redefine Nigerian politics and governance. Nigerian elites interfere with foreign politics, aids and proposals, which undermine the efforts of sincere leaders to ensure good governance. There is need for checks and balances in the nation-state politics and governance through laws, constitution and institution.

ii. The influence and interference of elites in politics and governance using pressure groups and other forms of informal institutions to support or undermine state-building needs regulation. The informal processes emerge as vital in the political settlements, service provision and citizen engagement Nigerian-state; their activities need to be regulated. This will ensure smooth running of governance and give room for participatory politics without harm on the existing government. There need to engage appropriate local contents in determining what development is for each region in Nigeria and what serves as a measure to determine dividends of democracy. This will ensure that there is no bridge in relations between government and the governed. This allows indigenous political processes for working out a country's own development and institutions to flourish. It serves as a way for government to show interventions to its regions.

iii. Political elitism is trending in Nigerian politics, power, money and access to several manipulations in the society form a trend for power in Nigeria to the detriment of the citizens. This will enable us deal with official corruption among elites, and strategic policy formulation that will tame the influence of elites. This will help to reconfigure Nigerian state in such a way that its transactions will be transparent to both the citizens and the political elites.

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