

Productivity in the Local Government, Panacea to National Development

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ABSTRACT

Local government in Nigeria plays vast role specifically in promoting, coordinating and providing community amenities as well as encouraging greater mass participation and involvement in nation building. This study sought to examine productivity in Local Government as a panacea for national development in Nigeria. The study employed the descriptive research design. Primary source of data was used in the study, which was complemented by secondary data. A structured questionnaire was designed and used to elicit information from selected respondents. An in-depth interview was also conducted on key informants in the study area. The population of the study is 767,306 (sum of both Kaduna North and Kaduna South Local Government Areas). The sample size of the study was 384. The collected data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study found that improving the productivity of local government can be a veritable instrument for resolving the issue of underdevelopment in the nation. Based on the finding of the study, it was recommended that priority be given towards the improvement of productivity in local government services as this has been observed to have positive effect on national development.

Keywords: Local Government, Productivity, National Development

I. INTRODUCTION

Development is said to be a predictor that determines whether a country is progressing or not. A critical assessment of Nigeria's development despite her abundance in human, natural and material resources reveals that the country is yet to achieve the desired expectations as clamored by her citizens (Akande and Abasilim, 2015). Development is critical and essential to the sustenance and growth of any nation. A country is

classified as developed when is able to provide qualitative life for her citizenry. Nigeria in the last fifty years has been battling with the problems of development in spite of huge human, material and natural resources in her possession (Lawal, 2011).

The paradigm for development that favors development in the western world has had a dereliction on the developing nations with a specific attention on Nigeria; the top-down development paradigm will be compared with the bottom-up development paradigm. The top-down development strategies in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular have generally not succeeded (Oye-Adeniyi, 2014).

The local government is the level at which people meet face to face, create partnerships and alliances, find synergies and complementarities for mutual support, and devise strategies relevant to the particular conditions of their community. It is in recognition of this that several nations of the world have undertaken programs of decentralization, devolving to the local scale responsibility for economic development in their jurisdictions. In many cases, however, this process of decentralization is incomplete, as it has not included clear, legislated mandates with defined roles for the various tiers of government, nor has it provided adequate human and financial resources to the local government to enable them play their roles as panacea for development at the grassroots, state and national level (Abioro and Adefeso, 2014). It is based on this premise that this study sought to examine productivity in Local Government as a panacea for national development in Nigeria.

Concept of Productivity

Productivity is commonly defined as a ratio between the output volume and the volume of inputs. In other words, it measures how efficiently production inputs, such as labour and capital, are being used in an economy to produce a given level of output. Productivity is considered a key source of economic growth and competitiveness and, as such, is basic statistical information for many international comparisons and country performance assessments. For instance, productivity data are used to investigate the impact of product and labour market regulations on economic performance. Productivity growth constitutes an important element for modelling the productive capacity of

Concept of National Development

Development is associated with modernization, material advancement, industrialization scientific and technological progress, the emergence of nuclear energy, electronic and biological revolution, new knowledge about man and the universe. It means urbanization, socio-cultural transformation, mass literacy, vertical and horizontal mobility, employment opportunities and the emergence of specialized and independent occupational roles (Umuru, 2002).

Development as a concept is a victim of definitional pluralism. It is a difficult word to define. However, attempts have been made by erudite scholars to conceptualize development. Some of these definitions will be explored for the purpose of this study. Gboyega (2003) captures development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. It implies improvement in material wellbeing of all citizens, not the most powerful and rich alone, in a sustainable way such that today's consumption does not imperil the future, it also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances.

National development therefore can be described as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation. This is best achieved through development planning, which can be described as the country's collection of strategies mapped out by the government.

The problems of national development in Nigeria

Despite the series of development strategies, put in place by successive governments, and sometimes with good intentions, all attempts to generate meaningful development proved futile. Based on this, one is now confronted with these puzzles: "Were those previous development plans or strategies bad in their context, or wrongly projected?" If nothing was wrong with the plans, then why is it still difficult to generate meaningful development in spite of the huge resources at our disposal? The solutions to these puzzles are not farfetched.

A lot of factors have combined together to fetter nation's development. One, there are in most cases, no executive capacity responsible for the formulation and implementation of the plan. What we usually see are officials entrusted to such a position but without any meaningful executive authority. Some of the previous development plans failed because; there was little or no consultation of the general public. Planning is supposed to involve even the peasants in the villages. Even, the Local Government officials who are close to the people were not consulted. Lack of good governance also militates against national development. Where there is no good governance, development becomes a mirage

Historical Development of Local Government Administration in Nigeria

Before the advent of British colonial administration in Nigeria, each town or village had its own system of local Government. In the North, an autocratic emirate system was divided into districts and villages. In the West, the oba was the leader assisted by the council of chief (oyomesi) which was headed by the Beshorun. There was an organized army to protect the area from external aggressions. The system looked like what was operated in the North, however the west had semi centralized system because, and the Obas decision was subject to approval of the oyomesi council. In the East, local government administration was carried out at village and family levels.

Denga (2003: 19) observed that, there was a pre-colonial village or local administration particularly in the East that was characterized by the same practices being observed today in modern local government, example democratic principles and elements of participative governance, as demonstrated by decisions taken by village assembly. During colonial period, the colonial administration quickly recognized the importance of local participation as a base for grass root democracy, and henceforth introduced the indirect rule system so as to involve the inhabitants in the administration of their areas.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study employed the descriptive research design. Primary source of data was used in the study, which was complemented by secondary data. A structured questionnaire was designed and used to elicit information from selected respondents. An in-depth interview was also conducted on key informants in the study area. The target study area is the Kaduna Central Senatorial District, from which Kaduna North and Kaduna South Local Government Areas were selected for the actual field data collection exercise. Kaduna North local government has a population of 364,575 and Kaduna South has a population of 402,731 (NPC, 2006). The population of the study is therefore 767,306 (sum of both populations for the LGAs). The sample size of the study was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970)

sample size determination table. According to the table, 384 is the suitable sample size for the study. 384 copies of questionnaires were therefore administered to respondent, randomly selected from the study area (Kaduna North and Kaduna South Local Government Areas). The participants for the in-depth interview were purposively selected from the senior staff members of the selected Local Government Areas. The collected data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative approach comprised the use of statistical software (SPSS), while the qualitative approach comprised the content analysis method.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected for this study was analysed and the result presented and discussed under this section.

Table 4.1 Assessing the Level of Productivity in Nigerian Local Governments

| S/N | Items | Mean | Std. Dev |
|---------|---|------|----------|
| 1 | Absenteeism; a common feature among employees inhibits productivity of local governments in Nigeria | 3.62 | 0.21 |
| 2 | The level of productivity in Local government in Nigeria have not been commensurate to their allocated resources | 3.68 | 0.37 |
| 3 | Corrupt practices have made the local government in Nigeria less productive | 4.65 | 0.13 |
| 4 | Lack of local government autonomy and state government control have limited the productivity of local government in Nigeria | 3.93 | 0.43 |
| Average | | 3.97 | |

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The above table shows the result of respondent's responses to the questionnaire items for assessing the level of productivity in Nigerian Local Governments. The average value obtained for the items; was 3.97, and it falls within the 3.5 to 4.4 value which shows agreement. This implies that respondents agree to the options provided for

assessing the level of productivity in Nigerian Local Governments. The highest mean (4.65) was obtained for "Corrupt practices have made the local government in Nigeria less productive", while the lowest mean (3.62) was obtained for "Absenteeism; a common feature among employees inhibits productivity of local governments in Nigeria".

Table 4.2 Determining How Productivity in Local Government Can Contribute to National Development

| S/N | Items | Mean | Std. Dev |
|-----|--|------|----------|
| 1 | Local government can be made an instrument for national development through employment generation and human resource development | 4.14 | 0.90 |
| 2 | A productive local government can provide services that improves the lives of people in the grassroots, thereby contributing to national development | 4.81 | 0.62 |
| 3 | A productive local government justifies the allocated resources through transparency and accountability | 3.58 | 0.73 |
| 4 | Productivity helps evolve the local government into veritable avenue of citizenship mobilization for sustainable national | 3.74 | 0.48 |

| | | | |
|---------|-------------|------|--|
| | development | | |
| Average | | 3.94 | |

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The above table shows the result of respondent's responses to items for determining how productivity in Local Government can contribute to National Development. The average value obtained for the items; was 3.94, and it falls within the 3.5 to 4.4 value which show agreement. This implies that respondents agree to the options provided for determining how productivity in Local Government can contribute to National

Development. The highest mean (4.81) was obtained in "A productive local government can provide services that improves the lives of people in the grassroots, thereby contributing to national development" and the lowest mean (3.58) was obtained in "A productive local government justifies the allocated resources through transparency and accountability".

Table 4.3 Correlation Matrices Result

| | Productivity in Local Government | National Development |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Productivity in Local Government | 1.00 | |
| National Development | 0.79* | 1.00 |

* $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$

The table 4.2 presents the correlation matrices results computed for the study. According to the results, productivity in Local Government has significant positive correlations with national development. The result specifically shows that productivity in Local Government has significant positive relation with national development, having a correlation coefficient of 0.79, significant at 0.05 confidence interval.

This result revealed that productivity in Local Government has significant positive correlations with national development. This implies that increase in the productivity of local government has the capability to influence increase in national development.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Government in Nigeria is an indispensable tier of government in the Nigerian federal system. This study found that improving the productivity of local government can be a veritable instrument for resolving the issue of underdevelopment in the nation. Local governments as agent of transformation and Nation building, can be made a panacea for national development by the improvement of their productivity. Also the laws governing the Local government should be in the exclusive list and not

con current list that allows the State governments lay claim over this level of government.

When local governments are well positioned in terms of placing necessary modalities for better productivity, this in turn directly influences the growth and development at the grassroots, state and national level.

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The Local government should be allowed to recruit its entire staff from the lower cadre to the higher cadre and put a stop to incidences where State governments send their acolytes as Treasurers or Directors of Administration and General Services to them just to have an eye on the Local government purse.
- ii. A well packaged and articulate plan for Local government in the country would reduce criminality, unemployment, rural-urban drift and encourage economic, agricultural growth and political education attained.
- iii. The revenue base of the Local governments should be widened.
- iv. Priority should be given towards the improvement of productivity in local government as this has been observed to have positive effect on national development.

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