

# **Management and Control of Local Government System by States in Nigeria: an Evaluation**

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## **Abstract**

*The focus of this work is on the management and control of local government system by States in Nigeria: an evaluation. This work is descriptive in nature and the study employed the use of secondary data collection such as textbooks, internet sources among others. The Home Rule Theory was adopted as the theoretical framework. Findings show that local governments have been subjected to too much control measures, hence, has impeded on their performances since the undue interference by other higher levels of government is perceived as distraction. Recommendations were given that the federal government should accord the local government system some relative level of autonomy. Control over local government should be on the basis of what is practiced in other developed countries that is through which should be limited to Administrative, Judicial and Legislative control. Their financial audit should be made quarterly and such be published on national dailies. The constitutional provision which empowers local government should be upheld by all government departments. Other higher layers of government should seek court interpretation over issues not well defined so as to humble the local governments where they are perceived to have used their powers arbitrarily.*

**Keywords:** Management, State, Government, Control, Local Government

## **Introduction**

Nigeria became a federation in 1954. Before this period, she was under a Unified System when Sir Lord Lugard became the Governor General of Nigeria. This was changed in 1914 when the Southern and Northern protectorates were amalgamated. From 1954, Nigeria began to have different structures- central, regional and the native authorities. Every federated unit is made up of component units – the central government, regional/states, (provincial) governments and the Local Government Area as required by the constitution governing the country. Ordinarily, the constitution should be able to give a vivid and clear explanations of the areas by which each level of government should operate.

For the avoidance of clash and conflicts among the levels of governments, in Nigeria, the constitution has made clear areas of jurisdiction by which each level should legislate on. These areas are the concurrent, residual and the exclusive lists. This makes the federal system different from the unified system of government. Another area which gives the federated states a different look from the unitary system of government lies on the tiers of government which is made up of the federal, state and local government as the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tiers of government respectively. (Isaac, 2013:66)

In a unitary political system as in Britain, the constitution recognizes only one level of government. All other bodies, agencies, or authorities as do exist, do so at the pleasure and discretion of the national government which comes into existence through parliamentary legislatures and exercises such powers and functions as allowed to it by the British Parliament. France, another unitary state, however has the local government in its constitution of the French fifth Republic, but only as communities to be administered and not services to be provided. (Isaac, 2013). On the other hand in a federal system of government, the power of local government derives, not from the government in the nation's capital but from the provincial or state government in each case.

Generally, the power of local governments are derivable as contained in the statutes (or constitution) of the (province or state) government establishing it (Isaac, 2013). In a federal system such as America (USA), local governments have those powers which the states delegate

to them and they carry out their responsibilities for as much as the day-to-day administration of major services by way of decentralizing power to field officers.

Give or take, the local government in all these two systems (federal or unitary) as part of government is seen as a body that does not belong to a single parent. Whichever way it will be viewed from, as a government which is autonomous, as in the case of a federal system in the American style of federation, or as the Nigerian system of federation (where local government is under the state) but get their grants from the federation account), be it in the case of the unitary system of Britain where it is seen as agencies or authorities, or in France where local governments are referred to as communities that carry out administrative functions, the essence is to promote inter-governmental relations ( Njoku, 2009).

In Nigeria, local government is seen as a 3<sup>rd</sup> tier government, but has so much control from different bodies. So many scholars have clamoured for the statutes to be changed at least to have an autonomous status with some levels of control; but for one reason or the other, its control and management is absolute, questionable and tied to one body or the other. This work is to evaluate the state of management and control of the local government areas in Nigeria with the view to assess the various types of management and control of local government systems in Nigeria, to determine how effective the control measures have been over the period and to appraise the extent at which the control measures have affected the local government system in Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is the duty of every country to specify the powers of each level of government in her constitution. In Nigeria such provisions have been made, but that of the local governments are still suffering from lack of autonomy. This is besides the fact that autonomy without any form of interference is the prerequisites for a good and smooth running of the local government system in a healthy democratic government.

Based on this, reform measures have been captured and included in the 1979, 1989 and 1999 Constitutions. These Constitutions as amended, recognizes local authorities as third tier government and categorically spelt out areas of jurisdiction from each level of government. (Asaju, 2016).

In a follow up of this and in order to strengthen their financial autonomy to ensure maximal performance, funds were set aside for local governments from the federated account. To make them financially independent, funding increased from 10% in 1989 to 15% in 1992 and 20.60% in 2008. Unfortunately, in spite of these constitutional and financial provisions, local governments are still deliberately being controlled by various state governments; an action which has rendered them as mere departments in all the states.

It is most surprising that the same 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that recognizes and accorded them third tier status, is the same one that also made provision for the state governments to have joint account system where the local governments have no withdrawal powers to enable them, embark on developmental projects of any kind, a situation which so many Nigerians have seen as not good for the local people and have clamoured for a change. (Goni, and Asaju, 2014 and Asaju, 2016).

Three different bills concerning the autonomy of local governments have been sponsored by previous administrations. The annunciation of the bills went through on to amend section 7, sub-section 162 of the 1999 constitution with reference to local governments in the country having political and financial independence. It also sought to amend section 7 sub-section 313 and section 162 of the 1999 constitution to allow local government chairmen have a four- year tenure. The general public saw this and particularly the autonomy issue as a welcomed development, but some greedy people who are highly placed in positions of authority continue to frustrate all attempts made to grant autonomy to local governments. (Asaju, 2016)

## **Review of Literatures**

### **The Emergence of Local Government System in Nigeria**

The emergence and growth of Local Government System in Nigeria can be better understood with the under listed thematic:

1. The colonial native authorities.
2. The modern local government.
3. 1976 local government reform and beyond.

### **The Colonial Native Authorities**

The emergence of native administration can be traceable to the indirect rule first experimented in Northern Nigeria in 1890's.

The guidelines for the indirect rule were laid down by Sir. George Goldie, the director of the Royal Niger Company in 1886. (Kirk-Green, 1963:4, Flint, 1960:94 in Isaac, 2013)

According to Sir George Tubman Goldie, Nigerians would rather be misgoverned by their own leaders than governed by the best of British officials. The system was premised on the ground that traditional authorities in the colonies should be reorganized whenever possible and whenever they are needed, the metropolitan power should seek to rule them in accordance with their own social and political institutions.

The guidelines were defined and developed into actual system of administration by sir Frederick Lugard during his time as Governor of Northern Nigeria (1900 – 1906) and as governor of both Southern and Northern Nigeria (1912 – 1914). Lugard's concept of indirect rule were predicated on two concepts namely integration and dualism. In his words "British sovereignty, first is uncompromisingly declared then fitted gradually and selectively over the native institutions whether weakening or destroying, there will be retraining and reforming". Lord Lugard Memo, (1906: 264-265, captured in Egoumwan, 1999).

It will be observed here that the interest of the British colonial indirect rule on Nigeria was not just necessarily to tap her subjects (Nigeria) of their resources, but to govern management and control their “indirect rule” activities through thorough supervisory hands of the District officers. That is why haven identified problem spots of the native institutions/authorities in some parts of the country, there were reorganization of the entire system in 1930s and 1940s, which subsequently led to the culminating establishment of chiefs-in-council and chief-and-council to replace the sole native authorities in the southern Nigeria. Other reforms measures were the merger of small native authorities into large viable units. This was done to grading of councils according to their performance to improve their management skills. This is to say the issue of management and control of Local Government Areas dated during the colonial rule. The essence is for effective rule. (Isaac, 2013)

### **The Rise of Modern Local Government**

The expectations of the British colonial rule was not encouraging as a result of what they observed as a fallout from the officials of the indirect rulers; may be because of the ineptitude or lack of administrative and managerial skills made the Secretary of State for the Colonies to dispatch letter in 1942 to herald for a reform throughout its colonies in Africa in the 1950s. The progress of this is to introduce pattern of local government based on the British model.

This new model was characterized with the principles of “ultra vires” or legally defined responsibilities elected majority, committee system and different size authorities. The model gave the elected council members some level of autonomy and control over financial and personal issues, but soon lost the autonomous status because of corruption, bribery to fit into internal and external political conflicts in the council. The discovery of these unwholesome practices by the indirect rulers was as a result of the supervisory role of the colonial masters that made them to know the weakness of the native rulers.

### **The fall of Local Government in the Early 1960 – 1975**

Generally, between 1964 and 1974, the local authorities all over the country lost a number of their major functions namely: local government police and prisons native/customary courts; in the Northern and the then Mid-Western and East central state, Urban water supply and in the

southern states primary school administration. These lowered the status of local government as well as creating the impression of an inferior line status of all local government councils compared to the state government which appropriated most of these viable functions at the expense of the local government. This unexpected led to the manpower flight from the various council to the state and federal civil service; which happened especially during the military rule.

### **The Local Government Reform of 1976**

The effect of depression, confusion and other problems associated with the local government as a third tier of government, the federal and state government and other stake holders decided to work together to introduce the 1976 reform, which was seen and regarded as a milestone in the history of local government in Nigeria. The event of the reforms over took the different systems and indeed different patches of the work of local government in Nigeria based on whims and caprices of the various state governments in the federation. Highlights of the reform were:-

- The Local Government Areas to come under a democratically elected chairman and councilors.
- To be regarded a “third tier” government and as a legal entity capable of suing and being sued
- Local government henceforth has to have a share from the federated account like the other two tiers of government.
- Created in line with the Presidential system of government where the chairman is the Chief Executive having a Vice Chairman, Secretary to Council and Councilors’ (to be elected).
- Local Government Areas to function in line with civil service conditions of service. According to the views of (Gboyega, 2001 and Igbuzor, 2003) the reforms is aimed at radical transformation of the status of local government in the federal system.



## **Under a Unified Local Government System (ULGS) of 1988**

The 1991 Decree 23 introduced the separation of power, where legislators (councilors) were expected to formulate laws for the good and orderly governance, while the executive arm is to implement development programmes and the bye-laws enacted by the legislature. Both were to serve as checks and balance on each other and play complimentary role. But can the roles of these two institutions be equal and equivalent to their state counterparts? Will there be freedom to carry-out their roles? Are they seen as people capable of controlling and managing their own resources gotten in their own domains?

### **Reasons to the Establishment of Local Government**

According to Egbe-Egbu's view, local government is seen as that which complements the effort of both the state and federal government in the area of development at the rural or grass root. According to him such complementary roles can be summarized to encompass the need to:

1. Bring government closer to the rural populace.
2. Reduce the burdens at the central and state levels (decongesting the state and federal capital territory).
3. Create employment opportunity in their various jurisdictions.
4. Provide essential services for those at the grassroots.
5. Build and imbibe spirit of patriotism.
6. Enhance and maintain local laws, customs and norms and
7. Preserve and maintain culture and identity. (Egbe – Egbu, 2012)

(Njoku, 2009) sees the importance for why Local Government Areas are created as to:

- Checkmate abuses of governance by other levels of government and
- Reduce the level of dictatorship since it encourages the participation of people through their elected or appointed representatives and so on.

## **The Problems of the Nigerian Local Government Systems**

The federal system of government allows for a closer tie or relationship among the component units. But this relationship is not void of conflicts and problems. In spite of the common fictions which exist among them, inter-governmental relations among government units have not ceased to be promoted. The problems and challenges associated with the local government system in Nigeria had been that of conflict between the federal and state government for who really has the power over the local government especially under a presidential system of government.

The essence of the local government to be created in line with the presidential system of government in Nigeria is to see local government as a third tier of government set up for the sole purpose to propel the rural areas to modernize, diversify and expand the economy, with the aim of bringing about rural development, which is briefly defined as the social, economic and political transformation of the rural communities for the achievement of a higher standard of living for their people and for the building of their capacity to cope with social demands. ( Nyong, 2003, in Isaac, 2013).

This feature is quite different in a parliamentary system of government where the local government is fused in the system and seen as a large government department called field administration as it is practiced in Britain this is the essence of decentralization and devolution of power and process of government – (Njoku, 2009). The problems associated with the Nigerian Local Government system that warranted the need for a management and control measures are:

- **Nature of party politics in local government.**

The nature of party politics and its formation shows extreme ethnic class and personal cleavages. Local government administrations were used as a means of cultivating and enhancing party influence and support at the grass-root, especially those who had lost out in political tussles at the national and state levels. Government at the rural areas is now seen as avenues for extending political patronage instead of mobilizing the people for rural development. Political parties now sought to maintain strong control over their flag-bearers in the local government,

- **Lack of trained personnel**

Another major problem associated with local government is that, local government is now seen as a dumping ground for everybody. Politicians use the local government council to settle their family members and cronies after election, whether they are qualified or not, as most of them had no basic qualification.

- **Problems of top-bottom approach in the initiation and implementation of rural development programmes.**

The top- bottom approach refers to a situation whereby the rural people are not involved in the decision making process on rural development. According to (Bryant and White 1982 : 293 in Isaac, 2013), argues that “peremptory decision making is the hallmark of a top-bottom bureaucracy, and it tends to be part of the problem rather than part of the solution”.

Many scholars have argued that the non-participation of the rural people in decision making do not provide for appreciable rural development.

In trying to solve the problem of a particular people, the people should be part of the problem solving process.

- **Unnecessary political appointments:**

Another problem of the local government system is the superfluous political appointments. This has been a problem because of the long list of political appointments – senior special assistance, (SSA) special assistance (SA), on domestic and foreign affairs etc. This feat of unnecessary flamboyant and prestigious lifestyles is a mere reap on the council funds and revenues, thereby making the chief executive not to concentrate on developmental projects, instead he will be thinking of paying allowances of political appointments. Sometimes salary of workers seems difficult to pay because of the need to satisfy party faithful and loyalists.

### **Problem of finance**

It is indisputable that funding is the heart beat of effective and successful government. Local governments have so much responsibilities and commitments but because of inadequate funds at

their disposal in order to solve their problems, the federal government umpteenth times have tried to fashion out measures to ensure that they have adequate funds to perform their duties. For instance, the Dasuki report recommended that the federal government increased her financial allocations to local government from 18 to 20 percent. (Nyong, 2003).

In spite of these measures, Local Government Areas still find it difficult to melt their financial requirements, even though some have strong internal financial base.

### **Executive and Legislature Conflicts**

Conflicts always arise between the executive and the legislature, despite the fact that their functions are well defined and spelt out by the constitutions of the country. Majorly, their conflicts normally arise as a result of finance and hoarding of information concerning finance accrued to the council; and in a bit for the legislature to know the actual figure there might be clash and conflict leading to a breakdown of mutual understanding, cooperation and effective co-ordination between the two arms of government at the grass-root.

### **Control Measures of Local Government**

Besides these enumerated above, there are still issues of corruption, lack of social amenities, political instability, leadership, accountability problem, political interference, unqualified and experienced staffs, misappropriation of funds, among others, these are reasons that may have brought about the wake-up call for all relevance stake-holders of the local government to proffer solutions and measures of control and management. Below are some of the measures as provided by (Egbe – Egbu. 2012). There are various ways by which local government can be controlled and managed because of the ailing problems in it. In his views of, some of the ways are:

#### **Legislative control**

Local governments are established by an act of parliament which gave them their respective functions and powers where the local government refused to carry out their functions effectively. The legislature can reduce their power this can be done by revising the bye-laws which is enforced by the governments by re-amending it totally. But the implication of these control measures may result to a loss of power to function, act and perform. The guidelines of the local

government reform in Nigeria (1976: 1) as defined sees local government as a government of the local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. According to (Njoku, 2009), these powers gave the council substantial control over their affairs as well as the staff, institution and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services, to determine, implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal government in the areas. Again, to ensure through devolution of functions to these councils and the active participation of the people at the local levels to bring out their initiatives and response to the local needs conditions of the people if properly maximized. An interference without due diligence will amount to excessive display of power and usurpation of functions and rape on democracy by the state and federal government on the local governments, in spite of the provision of law establishing them. (Ikeanyibe, 2016).

### **Financial control**

No organization can function effectively without money. Finance has been a major constrain for the local government in Nigeria when issues of project executions are mentioned. This has made both the state and federal government to give out grants to local governments, so that they can execute projects in their jurisdictions, but it is most chagrin and socking to hear that such grants were not utilized or used for the purpose it was provided for. As a result of this, both the state and the federal government may not want to release such, but if at all they will, it will require them providing a strict financial control measure so that they (the local government) will be prudent in their spending. Other control measures included are Executive, Judicial, Audit and Public control. But on the contrary, (Amucheazi, 1980 in Njoku, 2009) writing on the issue of local government autonomy commented on one of the basic concept in the new reform (1976 reform of LG). This says that local government should be allowed to enjoy a measure of autonomy, particularly from the state government, that, in the past, local governments existed only at the discretion of their state governments, who had the right to dissolve them, as well as the right to dictate what happens in them. In his reaction, (Amucheazi) says that, councils have been specially incorporated into the new constitution (then, 1976 constitution), so that it is not easy now for the state government to increase or reduce the number or even to tamper with their powers.

This development is seen as a good omen to local government administration. But in areas of misdeeds, it is incumbent on state governments to seek court interpretations and not those taken laws in their hands in the name of control and managing techniques. For Njoku, he sees this development as a welcomed one, according to him it will reduce to the barest minimum all those actions of the state government that militate against the developmental processes at the rural areas. He maintained further that changes in structure/functions of the local government also affect the meaningful policies and planning already in progress and in the end most of the goals of the local government are hardly achieved. Some scholars have maintained that for local governments to be able to achieve the purpose for which they are created, they must be autonomous, just as the other two tiers of governments are (there should be no undue interference) either by way of control or management after all, local governments are constituted by the law and in line with presidential system of government, where the chairman, who is the Chief Executive is like the president and governors.

According to them, local government autonomy is described as the free hand of the local government to run its affairs in all its ramifications, within the constitutional provisions without undue interference from other tiers of government. In the past, they opined, local governments were considered an appendages of the state governments prior to the 1976 local government reform in Nigeria. As at then, state governments control/interfere and even took different dimensions; such as administrative, legislature as well as judicial means to trouble the local government all in the name of control thereby not allowing the Chief Executives of the local governments to concentrate. Whereas in their case, nobody dare point accusing finger or utter a word at them (the state governors). Some say, it is because of “immunity clause” covering the governors and the presidents captured in the constitution. For example, state do approve bye-laws, the annual budgets of the local governments, major big contracts, loan procurement, political appointments in the local government, etc. before they come to effect.

The negative effect of the action of the state government over local government in the name of control is automatically grounding the activities of the local government if approvals are not granted in time, or at all. Amucheazi (2003) lamented that, irrespective of the incorporation of the local government in the constitution, the new structure is still under the state government. The state government is expected to oversee the activities of the councils and give them

necessary direction. Under this arrangement, there will be no problems, since it is believed to be a meaningful control measure. Available facts have shown that on the contrary, state government have continued to interfere unduly with the activities of local governments and this has jeopardized their supposed autonomy. This scenario has made it difficult for the local governments to achieve their desire goals, thereby making them mere rubber stamps. (Asaju, 2016). In the views of (Dare and Oyewale, 2002, in Isaac, 2013), there is no system of government where there are no superior and inferior layers or tiers, and that, the higher levels must exercise some control over the lower ones. In other words, the main reason for such control is to ensure that the subordinate levels do not stray from the national policy and do not disburse with funds for programmes not intended by the higher levels.

In this case, the control exercised from the above is to safeguard the collective interest of the local populace and not for ulterior motives. In support of this, (Adigwe, 1979 in Njoku, 2009), averred that since the local government occupies the lowest level in the constitution hierarchical order, and provided the powers which the local government authorities exercise are granted by the central government, every local authority is subject to the control of the central government. That is, arrangement must be geared towards co-operating with and harmonizing the activities of the local governments in a country.

In the light of the above arguments, it would be pertinent to say that the activities of local governments in the country as a third tier of government cannot be free from control, but their control should only be channeled through the following three categories as provided by Njoku, namely:

- Legislative control
- Administrative control and
- Judicial control
- **Legislative control**

It is the duty of the other tiers of government to create local government areas by this it suggests that the constitutional provisions will be adhered to which means local government

is expected to obey the institution while carrying out their duties. Both the federal and state have the power/authority to create, remove or amend the laws establishing the local governments whenever the need arises.

Local governments are constitutional allowed to make bye-laws but cannot be operational until the state government has approved the bye-laws.

The state legislature can pass resolution compelling and directing the state to dissolve or to carry out a particular duty of the local governments.

### **Administrative control**

- The higher levels of government have the authority to restrict the procurement of loans by the local government.
- It is the duty of the state government (in Nigeria) to constantly check the expenditure of the local governments. Financial recklessness can be prevented through regular checks on the spending of the local government.
- The state government can withhold financial grants/aids to the local government.

### **▪ Judicial Control**

Customary laws enacted by the local governments required the approval of the state government before they become operational especially in Nigeria.

When local government go against their constitutional powers granted them, the state government can announce their dissolution. Local government as a legal entity can be sued in a court by other tiers of government. The state judiciary can declare the action of the local government unconstitutional ‘ultra vires’ and of no effect. But even with these prescribed control measures, both the state and federal government shouldn’t muscled their way in to the affairs of the local government precincts, since they created by act of parliament which derives its power from the country’s constitution.



## **Theoretical Paradigm**

This study has been discussing the issue concerning local government control and management. So many theories have been presented; this work will be adopting the “Home Rule Theory”. The concept of the Home Rule is the theory of democratic decentralization or devolution of power and authority given to local bodies. Historically, the “Home Rule” has its route in the typologies of charters granted to municipalities in the United States of America.

According to (Nicholas,1999) there are three general types of charters; special charters, general act charters, optional charter laws; the charter laws describe and explain the powers, organization, size, boundaries, geographical size, number and type of officers in the administration of municipalities. In United States of America, charter laws also contain the name and type of government, and the finances of the municipalities. Thus, each charter has its peculiarities in terms of the above essential contents of the municipal charter. Home Rule Theory was first used in the state of Missouri, USA in 1875, when the state legislature allowed municipalities a measure of self-governance. To Nicholas, home rule charter provides cities with the greatest degree of self-government”. Others who have written on this theory are (Mary Jane, Turner, Kenneth Switzer and Chariotte Redden 1987:297 in Njoku, 2009). They maintained that the Home Rule charters allow the people of an area to choose their own governmental organization and set guidelines for their local ordinances. The theory further says that the local bodies have the right to local autonomy, locally elected councils, with powers and authorities to make bye-laws, subject to the state and national laws.

## **Relating the theoretical framework with the study**

The Home Rule Theory as has been explained as the theory of democratic decentralization or devolution of power and authority given to local bodies order than the central or regional government. Local governments all over the world including that of Nigeria is seen or defined as the third tier government established by the act of parliament for the purpose of carrying out development at the grassroots. The Home Rule theory has its typologies of charters granted to municipalities in USA to have autonomy or self-government in the dispensation of functions in its jurisdiction.

The Nigeria system of local governments are created to have certain liberty of making bye-laws subject to the approval of the state (Regional) legislature; but these activities are not given full autonomy, rather they are subject to the control of the state through the instrumentality of the state apparatus such as the Legislature, Administrative and Judiciary, and Audit control. If a body recognized to be a third tier of government created by law, be controlled, then where is the power and authority given to them to perform?

The Home Rule Theory suggested that, an area seen as a tier of government, with representative elected officials, which has legal backing capable of being sued and be sued for, and the right to source for their own funds, then they should possess the right, power, authority and self-government to manage and control their wealth in their respective precincts. By application the federal and state government should allow the local governments (municipals) to have autonomy and self-rule to control their own affairs since the law (charter) establishing them has constitutional provisions and they have elected leaders with tax jurisdictions and can source for fund on their own, (although grant are sometimes given to local governments either by the state or federal government) they should be given the right to control and manage their own government. There shouldn't be a form of control of any kind. The constitution which gave them the third tier status should also recognize their financial autonomy, without a provision of joint account with the state.

For Mary Jane Turner, her argument maintained that an elected councilor is equivalent of a legislative officer or chief executive given the mandate by his people to represent them and should be given the full right to function without due interference. The measures of control to manage local government areas are too stringent with too many avenues and this has militated against the developmental processes at the rural levels- observed (Ikeanyibe, 2016, Asaju, 2018).

The excessive checks as means of control by either the federal or state government with its entire measures can jeopardized their supposed autonomy, thereby making the local governments not achieving their desire goals – (Njoku, 2009).For Adigwe, his contentions has been that the lowest level of government, must be subject to the control by the higher level of governments.

## **Conclusions**

As crucial and important as this topic is, local government as the third tier of government if not given the autonomy to function, the aims and objectives for which it was established shall be defeated, but if absolute freedom is accorded to them, it will as well spell doom to the local populace as it can be observed from the problems associated with local government autonomy enumerated above, as it will amount to abuse of power, financial rascality and recklessness, employing incompetent staff, derailing from national programmes, a breed of insecurity as a result of the legislatures trying to check on the executives, encouraging illegality and a host of other problems not mentioned are some of the likely occurrence which will be experienced in the council. On the contrary, the importance of local government autonomy cannot be wished away as the excessive control will not be healthy for a modern local government system if compared to ones practiced in other countries of the world.

This paper would have been tempted to toe the line of the trio-(Adigwe, Dare, and Oyewale) and their contentions which say that a lower level of government must be controlled by the higher level of government in a bid to check misrule and abuse power, but for the mere fact local government is established and recognized by the constitution as a third tier, with the purpose of developing the local areas, full autonomy needed to be given to it.

## **Recommendations**

On this note, this paper recommends that:

- The relevant of government that is responsible for creating local government should accord the local government system some relative level of autonomy.
- Control over local government should be on the basis of what is practiced in other developed countries that is through Administrative, Judicial and legislative control.
- Their financial audit should be made quarterly and published publicly in national dailies.
- The constitutional position which empowers local government should be upheld by all government departments.

- Other higher layers of government should seek court interpretation over issues not well defined so as to humble the local governments where they are perceived to have used their powers arbitrarily.

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