

ISSN: 2315-7844

Website: [www.arabianjbm.com/RPAM\\_index.php](http://www.arabianjbm.com/RPAM_index.php)

Publisher: Department of Public Administration Nnamdi Azikiwe  
University, Awka, Nigeria and Zainab Arabian Research Society  
for Multidisciplinary Issues Dubai, UAE

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA (2000-2012)**

**OKOLI, F.C, NNAMANI, D. O & EBERINWA, O.M**

*Department of Public Administration & Local Government, University of Nigeria, Nsukka*  
[dungabrazil8@yahoo.com](mailto:dungabrazil8@yahoo.com)

### **Abstract**

The study examined local government and good governance in Enugu state, Nigeria (2000-2012). It is obvious that Nigerian local governments have not been up and doing in terms of efficient and effective service delivery to the grassroots. The provision of basic services such as education, health, maintenance of roads and public utilities within the jurisdictions of local level is a mirage in Enugu state, Nigeria inclusive. The poor service delivery at the local government level in Nigeria could be linked to some factors like non participation of the grass root in political activities, undue interference of the state governors in local government affairs and some provisions in 1999 constitutions excessively empower state governors on the affairs of local governments. The data collected were analyzed using quantitative method to test the hypothesis. The results and findings revealed that non participation of the grass root in political activities, state government interference and some provision in the 1999 constitution undermined local government and good governance in Enugu state. The paper recommends urgent constitutional reforms to ensure full autonomy of local government to enhance effective service delivery in the grassroots; the anti-corruption agency should intensify efforts to tackle pervasive corruption in the local government system. Also, local government staff should be trained in policy development, monitoring and evaluation in collaboration with the private sector.

**Keywords:** Local Government, Good Governance, Social Service, Grass root, Development.

### **Introduction**

Local government is the bedrock for sustainable rural transformation in Nigeria (Barry, 2000, Adejo, 2003). The idea of local government is to bring governance closer to people in the grassroots for participation in governance, service delivery to enhance socio-economic development and good governance (Ogunna, 1996). Transparency and accountability in Nigerian local government is rhetoric, most local government officials display provocative wealth gotten through criminal institutionalized stealing and corrupt practices (Onah, 2010). Local government elected officials in Nigeria lack vision of good governance because they are not responsive to the

needs of rural people, the competent people who supposed to participate in local governance are scared away from grass root politics and this has not portend good governance (Kolawole, 2003, Ahmed, 2007).

Okoli (2000:5) states that “local government exists to fill a gap which the national government is too remote to fill” “Local government implements the ideals, objectives, programmes and aspirations of the national government at the local level” “The ideology of national government determines to a large extent the functions of local government”. Local governments is a “platform to attain the needs of the grass root and provide services within the capability of the rural dwellers; a machinery for executing policy at the local, regional or federal level and a training ground for political participation (Okoli, 2000:7). Local governance caters for the diverse objectives of self governance of the community, it is not just providing some local services but support the life and liberty of citizens, provide a democratic space for participation and facilitate outcomes that enrich the quality of life for residents (Mohammadi, 2010). Local government is an organ of government to enhance citizen participation and promote good governance in the rural area. There is no accountability and development programmes without citizen participation (Aref and Marof, 2009). The 1976 local government reforms brought watershed in local government system; the reform brings unified structure and makes local government bedrock for socio-economic development in the rural area (Agagu, 2004, Ajayi, 2000). From 1976-1979, local government is under the headship of elected chairman with direct disbursement of revenue from federation account for successful take-off. The 1999 constitution granted the existence of local government, there was no provision for their term of office but “Decree 36 of 1998” states three years term for local government, later the constitution was vitiated by section 7, and local government became an appendage of state government. This provision empowers state governors to run local government level with non-elected officers or care-taker committees (Nkwocha, 2009). The use of non-elected officers has undermined good governance at the local government of Enugu state, Nigeria. Musa (2011) asserts that local level has turned into a care-taker imposed by state governments. In some cases, care-taker ship is perpetuated if the outright denial of democratic local government through care-taker committees demonstrates increase in authoritarian holds on the councils by state governors, the case of where elections hold does not give cause for cheers.

In Enugu state, each time a governor assumes office, his first official function will be the dissolution or re-constitution of local government officials whether elected or appointed to secure grassroots support by hook or crook (The nation, 2012). Many argued that the poor performance of local governments in Nigeria is due to state and local government joint account. Many state governors and state assembly members handle local government as if they are not constitutionally guaranteed democratic elected officials (Mark, 2010). Some state governors remove elected council chairmen as their political jobbers appointed in their cabinet. Most local government chairmen always cry foul on funds allocated to them, due to the interference of state government in their affairs as orchestrated by governors (FRN, 1999). However, good governance cannot be ignored at the local government level if the yearnings and aspirations of people in the grass root must be attained to in Enugu state.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Over the years most local government have not been performing the development functions that underscore their institutionalization in Nigeria. Some factors have been identified to account for the poor performance of local government with respect to good governance in Enugu state (Ade, 2012). The constitution did not provide adequate political autonomy for local government in

Nigeria. It did not provide specifically the constitution for local government council to be solely through democratic elections, the tenure of political office holders at the local level (Ezeani, 2012). These effects make state government to determine the nature, content and direction of local government elections and other political activities. In this exercise, the state government decide dates of elections, who win elections, when to dissolve elected council, and the framework to administer local governments. Nico (2008) argued that local government cannot determine the contours of their performance targets, the purpose of undemocratic local government undermined good governance thereby making them mere appendages of state.

The performance in local government over the years have several sources of income like statutory allocations from federation account, share from state generated revenue and internally generated revenue (Ezeani, 2003). The revenue allocations from federation account are siphoned by state governments most times constitute inadequate source of fund to local governments (Onah, 2004). The internally generated revenue by local governments is very low due to poor creativity by the local level to explore reliable sources of revenue and high incidence of tax evasion by the citizens (Okolie and Eze, 2006). This account for inadequate funding in local government and the inability to initiate and execute development projects for good governance (Azelama, 2008). The interference of state in local government fund accounts for their inability to execute development projects especially statutory allocation from the federation purse between 90-95 percent of their financial expenditures annually (Halidu and Bello, 2012). The variables that undermine good governance in the grass root are as follows:

- i Absence of political participation affected local government and good governance in Enugu-State, 2000 to 2012.
- ii Undue interference of state government undermined local government and good governance in Enugu State, 2000 to 2012.
- iii Some provisions of 1999 constitution impeded local government and good governance in Enugu State, 2000 to 2012.

**Methodology**

The data was analyzed using quantitative method to test the hypothesis. The responses was presented and analyzed in frequency table, showing the response in their corresponding percentages.

**Table 1: The responses on how absence of political participation affected local government and good governance in Enugu state, 2000-2012.**

| SN | Item Statements  | SA | A       | UD | D  | SD      | Tota<br>I | $\bar{X}$   | SD   | Remark          |
|----|--|----|---------|----|----|---------|-----------|-------------|------|-----------------|
| 1  | Local council respond to the popular needs and expectation of the people in Enugu state      | 30 | 14<br>3 | 90 | 48 | 16<br>2 | 473       | <b>2.64</b> | 0.98 | <b>Disagree</b> |
| 2  | The elected officials represent the interest of its people in the grass root of Enugu state. | 27 | 12<br>9 | 75 | 47 | 19<br>5 | 473       | <b>2.47</b> | 0.90 | <b>Disagree</b> |
| 3  | The grass root express their feelings freely on the act of governance in Enugu state         | 36 | 11<br>8 | 71 | 57 | 19<br>1 | 473       | <b>2.49</b> | 0.86 | <b>Disagree</b> |
| 4  | Local government involves the grass root during project execution                            | 36 | 10<br>5 | 97 | 71 | 16<br>4 | 473       | <b>2.53</b> | 0.89 | <b>Disagree</b> |

|   |   |    |         |         |         |         |     |             |      |                 |
|---|---|----|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----|-------------|------|-----------------|
|   | in Enugu state.   |    |         |         |         |         |     |             |      |                 |
| 5 | Local government runs open and people-oriented administration in Enugu state. | 18 | 10<br>4 | 69      | 10<br>1 | 18<br>1 | 473 | <b>2.38</b> | 0.97 | <b>Disagree</b> |
| 6 | Local government is an agent of higher levels of government in Enugu State.   | 27 | 82      | 10<br>6 | 16<br>2 | 96      | 473 | <b>2.54</b> | 0.96 | <b>Disagree</b> |

**Note:**  $\bar{X}$  = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; Cut-off point = 3.00

**Source:** Field Survey, 2015

**Table 2: The responses on how Undue state government interference undermined local government and good governance in Enugu state, 2000 to 2012.**

| SN | Item Statements  | SA  | A       | UD | D  | SD      | Total | $\bar{X}$   | SD   | Remark          |
|----|--|-----|---------|----|----|---------|-------|-------------|------|-----------------|
| 1  | state governor appoints non-elected officers as care-taker committees in local council of Enugu state. | 235 | 12<br>7 | 84 | 22 | 5       | 473   | <b>4.19</b> | 0.95 | <b>Agree</b>    |
| 2  | Local government operates state joint local government account in Enugu state.                         | 287 | 11<br>5 | 56 | 15 | -       | 473   | <b>4.42</b> | 0.82 | <b>Agree</b>    |
| 3  | Local government officials account for stewardship to people in the grass root of Enugu state.         | 61  | 12<br>3 | 73 | 37 | 17<br>9 | 473   | <b>2.68</b> | 0.95 | <b>Disagree</b> |
| 4  | Local government provides effective and efficient service delivery to grass root in Enugu state.       | 58  | 93      | 90 | 85 | 14<br>7 | 473   | <b>2.64</b> | 0.88 | <b>Disagree</b> |
| 5  | Local government system is open and adhere to due process in Enugu state                               | 34  | 12<br>4 | 96 | 68 | 14<br>7 | 473   | <b>2.59</b> | 0.97 | <b>Disagree</b> |

**Note:**  $\bar{X}$  = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; Cut-off point = 3.00

**Source:** Field Survey, 2015.

**Table 3: The responses on how some provisions in the 1999 constitution impeded local government and good governance in Enugu state, 2000 to 2012**

| SN | Item Statements   | SA      | A       | UD | D  | SD | Total | $\bar{X}$   | SD   | Remark       |
|----|---|---------|---------|----|----|----|-------|-------------|------|--------------|
| 1  | The provisions of 1999 constitution enshrined democratically elected officials at local level | 28<br>6 | 11<br>0 | 74 | 3  | -  | 473   | <b>4.43</b> | 0.78 | <b>Agree</b> |
| 2  | The 1999 constitution makes local government an appendage of state government affair.         | 30<br>3 | 97      | 41 | 21 | 11 | 473   | <b>4.40</b> | 0.97 | <b>Agree</b> |

|   |  |         |         |    |    |    |     |             |      |              |
|---|--|---------|---------|----|----|----|-----|-------------|------|--------------|
| 3 | The 1999 constitution empower state governor to conduct council election in Enugu State.   | 28<br>2 | 10<br>3 | 51 | 26 | 11 | 473 | <b>4.31</b> | 0.86 | <b>Agree</b> |
| 4 | The provisions of the constitution recognized local level as the third tier of government. | 25<br>4 | 87      | 83 | 36 | 13 | 473 | <b>4.12</b> | 0.91 | <b>Agree</b> |
| 5 | There is a unified local government system in Nigeria.                                     | 32<br>7 | 71      | 48 | 27 | -  | 473 | <b>4.48</b> | 0.89 | <b>Agree</b> |

**Note:**  $\bar{X}$  = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; Cut-off point = 3.00

**Source:** Field Survey, 2015

**Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis/ Literature Review**

### **Local Government**

Local government concept depends on the political arrangement of every nation (unitary or federal system). Adeyeye (2000) define local government as the management of services and regulation of functions by local elected council which is officially accountable to them, under the supervision of central executive and legislature, with enough financial independence of local initiative and policy making. Also, Montague Harris cited in Adeyeye, (2000) states that local government is the local bodies freely elected to the supremacy of the national or state government, endowed with power, discretion and responsibility to exercise without control over their decision by the higher authority. Erero (2000), states that local government is exercised through local representatives established by law to exercise specific power within defined areas. Adeyemo (2005) describe local government as the bedrock for national politics in line with the objectives of the system. Ezeani (2003) asserts that local government is a veritable tool for people within and outside government circles to transform rural areas, and promote rural development. Local government is a small unit of governance for convenient administration through elected or appointed representatives to exercise powers conferred on them within a defined area (Awotokun, 2004).

### **Good Governance**

Good governance is the expectations and achievement of the societal well-being by mandated authority (African Leadership Forum, 2000). Good governance fulfills the social contract, empower citizens through participation in decisions affecting them. It is the right of a citizen to demand from his/her government in four dimensions such as rule of law, participation, human rights and sustainable development (Mo Ibrahim foundation, 2011). Oyovbaire (2007) declared the concept as the use of power and authority to affect human condition; this will enable the society to sustain and improve the quality of life and transform the physical environment. Hyden and Court (2002) describe that good governance as the arena in which state economic and societal actors interact to make decisions.

### **Indices and Characteristics of Good Governance**

**Participation:** involves freedom of association and expression, on one hand, and an organized civil society on the other hand (Onyishi, 2010). Participation is where citizens are engaged in formulating, implementing and evaluating policies that affect them (Simbine, 2004). According to Bangladesh government (1996), participation is a process in which people influence and have control over development initiatives. The need for participation exists for the citizenry to

participate and contribute in governance, to help regulate individual conducts in the society and provide for the good of the people (Madhav, 2007).

**Transparency:** involves taking decision and enforcement in a manner that follows rules and regulations, it is the available information directly accessible to the affected by such decisions and their enforcement (Sharma, 2006). Transparency means that leaders allow for public scrutiny of what they do while in public office. The citizens attend public meetings and are free to obtain information on what happens in public offices, who makes what decisions and why, as step towards accountability.

**Responsiveness:** means that policy decisions respond to popular needs and expectations; it is the fundamental interest and ultimate purpose that defines the actions of government to represent the needs of the people (Ojo, 2009). It ensures that public institutions serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe.

**Effectiveness and Efficiency:** is when an institution makes the best use of resources at its disposal. It covers the sustainable use of natural resources of the environment. The governance at the local government level makes adequate values derived from government resources committed to government programmes to achieve result for the needs of the society and use the available resources at its disposal (Carsten, 2005).

**Accountability:** is the responsibility to account for stewardship to the authority and the people, this conforms to whom powers and responsibilities are delegated. Accountability can be enforced with transparency, rule of law and constitutionality (Potter, 2000). Accountability implies that those who will be affected by its decisions and actions are those appointed or elected, and the personnel that man the institutions or stakeholders.

**Rule of Law:** is the legal framework enforced impartially to protect human rights particularly the minorities. The enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary and incorruptible police force to guarantee basic fundamental human rights. An incorruptible law enforcement agency is the pre-requisite for good governance (Sharma, 2006).

**Consensus Oriented:** is where the interest of people in the society varies, and good governance requires that this interest should be harmonized. The society must reach broad base consensus on the best interest of the whole community and how it can be achieved. This is a long term process on the need for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development (Simbine, 2004, Onyishi, 2010).

**Equity and Inclusive:** involves where all citizens in the society is treated equal to have a stake in governance, not to feel excluded in the society. It requires the inclusiveness of all groups such as the minority groups in a multi ethnic society like Nigerian society (Pryor, 2003). It entails equality before the law, and equality to realize individual capacities without regard to one's race, gender, ethnic background, religion or whatsoever.

### **Evolution of Local Government Reforms in Nigeria**

Local government system has passed through circuitous path in terms of reforms and re-organizations in Nigeria; since 1950s, no decade passed without a reform or reorganization of local government in Nigeria ( Onah and Amujiri, 2011). The fortunes of local governments in Nigeria were tied to the apron strings of pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial successes or failures. The coming of white men (Europeans) were relatively autonomous villages, towns and ethnic groups, each existing on its own with minimal contacts usually limited for trade, social transactions and political relationships with others (Okoli, 2000). An emirate system was divided into districts and villages in the north, the oba was the leader assisted by council of Oyomesi headed by Bashorun in the west (Mill, 1994). The system looks like what was operated in the

north, however the west had a semi centralized system because, the Obas decision was subject to approval by the Oyomesi. The local administration was at village and family level in east. Denga (2003) states that there was a pre-colonial village or local administration in the east characterized by same practice observed in modern local government of democratic participative governance as decisions by village assembly. The administration recognized local participation as the basis for grassroots democracy to involve the inhabitants in administering their area (Okoli, 2000). The native authority system was introduced via the native ordinance of 1916 to reinforce the powers of traditional rulers (Imuetinyan, 2002). The 1976 reform was a turning point in the development of local government; the reform brought a watershed in the evolution of local government in Nigeria (Ugwu, 2001). Orewa and Adewumi (1983) noted that the major thrust of 1976 reforms entrusted beneficial political responsibility to people for effective service delivery, due consultations at the federating units, recognize local government as the third tier of government as uniform institution with defined functions and responsibilities. The local government was managed from federation account and controls its spending, democracy as entrenched in the 1979 constitution of 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic (FRN, 1979). The second republic was the time state and federal level contest on the control of local government with each other. The state abused some provisions in the 1979 Constitution to suit their desires; they void some aspects of the reforms and appoint sole administrators on non elective principle (Gboyega, 2001). The re-emergence of military from 1984 to 1998 changed the control of local government from state to federal level, but Babangida regime of 1985-1993 came with local government autonomy and abolish ministry of local government, establish full democracy at local level and disbursed allocations direct, the Abacha regime of 1993-1996 revised some reforms by Babangida administration (Igbuzor, 2003). The Obasanjo administration of 1999 brought back the problem of local government; some provisions of Section 7 and 8 recognize local government as the third tier of government but give state the power to take charge of local government (FRN, 1999). The local government election of Abdusalm Abubakar in December, 1998 enact electoral law in which local government officials were elected (Decree No. 36 of 1998) to provide three-year term, but Association of Local Government of Nigeria (ALGON) proceed to Supreme Court of four-year term, but the apex court ruled that national law makers has no power to alter the tenure of local government officials. On May 2002, all the state governors appoint care-taker chairmen in 774 councils pending the date of new election (Obikeze, 2004). The election was postponed twice due to power tussle between state independent electoral commission (SIEC) and Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Although SIEC was empowered by law to conduct local government election, the INEC has to update the voters register and make it available. The election was postponed to 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2003 few days after general election, in 2003 the Association of local government of Nigeria (ALGON) pushed for constitutional amendment for state governors to appoint council chairmen and councilors. The Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) met with President Obasanjo in a council of state meeting and set up a technical committee to review local government structure in Nigeria (Obasanjo, 2003). In 2006, the committee submitted its report and local government elections held in newly created development centers of Kogi, Lagos, Niger, Enugu, and Oyo is not in line with some provisions of 1999 constitution. This generated rift between federal and Lagos state government, in which the allocations accruing to Lagos State government were seized during Ahmed Bola Tinubu tenure. The Lagos state government dragged federal government to apex court for justice, and the judgment was in favour of Lagos state, 12 months after the judgment federal government

released the money owed to Lagos state, the constitutional power of local government structure and functions is state affair (Nwabueze, 1983).

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

The existence of local government and its importance has not been justified. **Autonomy:** Despite the constitutional provisions for local government system beginning with the 1979 constitution and subsequent ones that defined functions and sources of funding for the council, local governments have not been able to extricate themselves from the apron string of state and federal levels of government in Nigeria (FRN, 1999). The high level of interference in local level operations undermines their autonomy. This brings the problem of diverting local government funds for personal use by state governors (Osaghae, 2006). Governor Chime aptly captured that the autonomy of local government councils as provided in 1999 constitution, but some governors greed did not give free hand for chairmen to operate with their funds independently (Lion News Watch, 2013 Vol. 10).

**Funding:** The financial paucity in local government system could be blamed on what Suberu (2004) see as cost of distributive federalism in a federal state dominated by redistribution of centrally collected revenue. The situation is compounded by the failure of local government administrators to explore and exploit some other internal sources of revenue base. Most local governments in Nigeria are comfortable with monthly allocation from the federation account; this has become a distributive outlet for federal and state generated revenue (Yomi, 2013). The 1976 local government reform reveals that local government has produced exactly the opposite of their original objectives. Instead of bringing socio-economic development closer to the people, they succeed in producing absentee chairmen seen at the council headquarters any time “Abuja allocation” arrives with standby jeeps and mobile police escorts after super-intending the sharing of national cake among stakeholders they vamoosed (Obasanjo, 2003). Most governors exploit constitutional provision to establish state and local government joint account to control council funds; they hijack nomination in subsequent election at the local level for their acolytes as council chairmen. The aspirants that emerges victorious after rigorous processes pay allegiance and political tithes or dues to the state governor, by accepting whatever deductions made from the state and local government level joint account. For instance President Obasanjo, in a meeting with 774 local government council chairmen acknowledged diversion of local government funds by some state governors (Oloyede, 2003). He argued that the proposed technical committee will look into the matter through local and state joint account; some states arbitrarily deduct from local government account and forced them to embark on projects that are not in congruence with the needs of the people under the pretext of uniform development (Radio Nigeria, 2004).

**Corruption and Abuse of Office:** is perpetrated by both career officers and political office-holders in the system. These categories of local government council administrators are bent on inflating contracts, outright embezzlement, kickback and non-execution of contracts (Oladunjoye, 2010). The inability of local government councils to provide quality governance to the people is linked to corruption virus among these officials (Onwuemenyi, 2008). Most state governors explore this undue advantage to divert part of the statutory allocation to frivolous projects, robbing local government level the capacity to live up to expectation (National Issue, Vol. 12, Vanguard Newspaper, 2011, May 11). In 2000, the former Chairman of Enugu North Municipal Council, Hon Ben Onyia and his counter-part from Enugu South Local council, Hon Sunday Anyanwu, were suspended by Governor Nnamani administration for insubordination and corruption in office (Ugoani, 2009, Source Magazine).



**Leadership Problem:** The democratic experience in the first twelve years in Nigerian local government produced either no election at all or pseudo election, for obvious reason some governors appoint transition committee chairmen to administer local government council when rigging is impossible due to formidable opposition parties. Most states organized their election if the state electoral commission (SIEC) is strong to rig the elections (Ushie, 2005). In 2004, the local government election during Governor Nnamani administration and Enugu state independent electoral commission (ENSIEC) in 17 local governments of Enugu state gave People's Democratic Party (PDP) clear victory in all the chairmanship and councillorship positions against opposition parties (ENSIEC Bulletin, 2004). The operations have come under severe criticisms with some persons calling for the scrapping of the third tier government. The 2003 re-election of President Obasanjo threatened the aspiration of council chairmen, councilors and patrons who were worried that the third tier of government was about to be scrapped. The flag bearers of various political parties at huge financial costs were at alert. When Mr. President postpone the local government election indefinitely in 2003 pending the reform of local government (Obasanjo, 2003, Live Radio Broadcast) thus:

*We are witnessing abysmal failure at the local government level. It is on record that no time in the history of the country has there been the current level of funding accruing to local governments from the federation account, yet rapid development has been a mirage as successive councils grossly underperformed in all the areas of their mandate.*

**Undue Interference:** the external intrusion in the affairs of local government needs re-evaluation and this subverts democratic process and good governance at the grassroots (Ogbe, 2013). The reluctance of most state governors to enthrone democratic rule in their local councils portends a lot of dangers for the polity and undermines good governance. The delayed elections denied stakeholders the much desired political participation and thus, the people do not have control over their leaders. Whereas, people should be able to call their elected representatives in order and hold them accountable, but because elections do not hold, their representatives' responsiveness is always the governor, rather than people. The governors' nominees neither enjoy the goodwill of the people at the grass root nor possess the constitutional mandate to question any strange directive in the administration of the local level (Asogwa, 2010). The council chairmen are hand-picked by the governors, with the assurance that they cannot to be removed or dropped. This hampers development at the grassroots and the dividends of democracy expected on the long run. The arbitrary power to run the local government council by state governors enables them to deduct local government funds at will. Because the council 'caretakers exist at the mercy of the governors, then it gives undue support to state executives to do and undo which is strange to good governance and democratic consolidation. The administration in the local government as extension of the state is alien to the federal structure that Nigeria proclaims. In a true federal structure, all tiers of government should be autonomous. Local governments have the right to operate as an independent, and equally partner in the governance process. All these undermined good governance since 1999 in most local government councils in Nigeria because state governors encroach in local government affairs (Ikeanyibe, 2009).

#### **The Performance of Local government in Enugu State (2000-2012)**

The expectation of third tier of government is to fast-track development in the rural communities based on the funds from the monthly statutory allocation and internally generated revenue (IGR)

of the council (FRN, 1999). Amucheazi (2013) asserts that the undue interference in the affairs of local government tier by the state government is undermining transformation in rural areas; the local government loses half of the monthly allocation to the predatory supervision of the state governments. The state level withholds their statutory contribution of 10 percent internally generated revenue to the councils (FRN, 1999). The sixteen years of democracy in Nigeria with reference to Enugu state has been characterized with diverting and looting of local government funds, especially from 1999 to 2007 (Okafor, 2013). The local government council chairmen collect paltry allowance after recurrent expenses to maintain their offices, while the bulk of funds accruing to them from the federation account were swindled through state and local government joint account (News World, December 24). The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) officials waded into the matter for detailed investigations on the local government funds (Amadi, 2011). The state and local government joint account set federal and state level on a collision course as both tiers take a different stands on the matter. The complex relationships undermined good governance at the local level with consequences on socio-political development (Afonne and Onokpegu, 2011). The allegations from the opposition parties' in Enugu state from 2007 to 2011 reveal that the governor is milking the local government council boss dry, but the allegations are not established as no serving council chairman complained of undue interference in the local government fund by the state government (Yusuf, Sun Newspaper, February 12, 2010). The Association of Local Government of Nigeria (ALGON) Enugu state chapter tagged Governor Chime administration "epitome of good governance" in the affairs of local government fund from the federation account. The chairman of Oji River local government Hon. Gab Onuzulike reveal that Chime administration impact on eight kilometer asphalt rural roads, street light and housing scheme within his council area, due to management of financial resources from undue interference of the state government (Edike, 2010).

In some states, the local level cannot embark on project without the approval of state governors (Agbu, 1995). The council chairmen partner with officials of Enugu state government to access car loans for 360 ward Councilors from 2007 till date. The two sets of councilors that served within Governor Chime administration benefited from this compulsory car loans deducted from their monthly wages (Uzondu, 2011). In Enugu State, local governments lack democratic ideals at the grassroots, the 1999 constitution prescribes democracy based on elective principle at the local level, but the state government is not helping matters for instance Governor Nnamani administration dissolved the 17 local government chairmen and councilors sworn into office in 1999, and appoint care-taker committee chairmen in 2002. For the past 12 years, each time local government election is held in Enugu state, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) swept the poll. The outcome of the election is predicted long before the poll, this is because no opposition candidate has ever won elections in the state since the return of the democracy in 1999. PDP has always taken everything leaving nothing to opposition parties (Ugoani 2009, Source Magazine). It is worrisome that since May 29<sup>th</sup> 1999, the 36 states of the federation comprising Enugu, Rivers, Jigawa and Lagos have been conducting regular elections in their respective local government council, while the remaining operate with care-taker committee members (Balogun, 2012). The 2003 local government election in Enugu state gave PDP overwhelming victory in chairmanship and councillorship positions vied for against opposition parties with the support of state independent electoral commission (SIEC). The elected local government chairmen in Enugu state from 1999-2007 were financially handicapped to enthrone good governance in the grassroots level.

The impulse for serving people and stimulating community development that serve as the major reason for local government creation do not count (Jakpa, 2004). The opposition parties accused the ruling party of lopsided arrangement with the umpire body, to scuttle the ambition of their candidates and party during grass-root election in Enugu state (Igbuzor, 2008, Benjamin, 1998). All the serving governors in Enugu state from 1999 to 2010 use local government election to consolidate their political structures for subsequent elections (Ugborgu, 2007, Sunday Independent). Most local government elections discouraged responsible people from participating in grass-root elections (PM News, 2010). The case of 2007 local government elections in Enugu state was marred with violence; two people lost their lives when a fight broke out between supporters of PDP and Labour Party in Ibagwa-Aka community, Igbo-Eze South Local governments. The L300 bus belonging to the supporters of the Federal House of Representatives, Hon Pat Asadu, an indigene of the council, were set ablaze by political thugs while the election was in progress. The police public relations officer (PPRO), Mike Abatam confirmed that the Labour Party supporter was arrested for masterminding the violence while the officials of Enugu State Independent Electoral Commission (ENSEIC) in the council took to their heels, this raised fears on cancellation of the election. The ENSEIC Chairman denied the violence and confirmed that the exercise was peaceful, irrespective of the 5pm extension time in the respective councils due to late arrival of materials. All PDP stakeholders in Enugu state assessed the exercise as peaceful after voting (Ugoani, 2009, Source Magazine).

#### **Results/ Discussion of Finding**

The findings of this paper revealed that local council do not respond to the popular needs and expectation of the people in Enugu state, that elected officials do not represent the interest of its people in the grass root of Enugu state, that grass root do not express their feelings freely on the act of governance in Enugu state, that local government does not involve the grass root during project execution in Enugu state, that local government does not run open and people-oriented administration in Enugu state and that local government is not an agent of higher levels of government in Enugu state. In Nigeria, local governments have not been up and doing in terms of efficient and effective social service delivery to the grassroots. Odo (2014) affirmed that the challenge of poor participation at local government level is a major problem of development at the grass root. Non participation of the rural areas in the development process is high at local level in Nigeria. However, development is about people and if it is to be meaningful, the people must be active agent and not just passive beneficiaries. Many development projects in the local governments failed due to non-involvement of the local communities in the conception, design and implementation of such projects. Idada (2006) noted that development programme which marginalizes the contributions of the primary beneficiaries, could hardly make serious impact on the lives of the people including lack of sustainability. This is because local communities which could have owned the programme and continued from where the government stopped are excluded. Local government is people's government at the grassroots level and government that represent the interests of the people; the people should be seen to be involved in its affairs (Adeyemi, 2013). The participation of rural people in decision-making and administration of local authority is what gives the local government the character of self-government or grassroots democracy (Odo, 2014). Once local community does not participate in the affairs of the local government, they become alienated and would not support any development programmes of such councils.

According to Egwemi and Odo (2013), grassroots development re-structures rural economy from dependent peasant and largely agricultural economy capable of sustaining improved quality of

life at the local level. In conceptualization grassroots development, the bottom line is that it is about improving the standard and living conditions of the rural people. Olusola (2011) reported that there is poor environmental state, deteriorating public school building, poor market facilities and poor health centers in local governments in Nigeria. The provision of basic social services such as education and health, as well as maintenance of roads and public utilities within the jurisdictions of local government is now both a myth and mirage (Agba, 2006). The failure of local governments in service delivery was expressed by former president Obasanjo in 2003 that we witnessed abysmal failure of local government system. It is on record that at no time in the history of the country has there been the current level of funding accruing to the local governments from the federation account, yet the hope for rapid and sustained development has been a mirage as successive councils have grossly under-performed in their assigned responsibilities.

The undue interference incapacitated local government from effective functioning on one hand, and alienated grassroots people from enjoying social service delivery expected of local governments in Nigeria (Agba, Akwara and Idu, 2013). Consequently, Eboh & Diejomaoh (2010) observe that local government now functions mostly as extension or appendages of state governments. The inherent nature of this problem, as reported by Adeyemi (2013) has caused subservience, a situation where local government waits for the directives from states government before embarking on developmental projects. This has made local government an object of control and directives by the state governor. The import of the above is that there are different dimensions of interference by state governors on local government in Nigeria. Chukwuemeka (2014) noted with dismay that the first is the fiscal interference by the state governors? The problem stems from the fact that Nigerian constitution did not totally grant financial autonomy to local governments. The report of Bashir and Mohammed (2012) the burdensome nature of 1999 constitution on the local government administration reported that the issue of autonomy of local government administration has been a recurring one as witnessed in the on-going constitutional review where the issue of local government autonomy got almost 100 percent support. While efforts have been made since 1976 to recognize local government as a tier of government under a three tier federal system, local government is seen as an appendage of the state governments. In spite of the constitutional provision which defined functions and sources of funding of the system, local governments in the country have not been able to extricate themselves from the apron string of state governments subject to the provisions in 1999 constitutions. According to Idada (2006), the provision in the 1999 constitution, the state governors appoint caretaker committees to whom they dictate and direct on how to run the operations of local governments in their respective states; yet, these committees are dissolved at will. Fajonyomi and Olu-Owolabi (2013) noted that, one other issue that impairs good governance and development at the local government level is the lack of real democratically elected local government. The report in Vanguard Online (2010) affirmed that state governments by 1999 constitutions appoint and reconstitute State Independent Electoral Commission to organize elections into local government councils, and such elections are won by the party in power at the state level. In Lagos state, Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) swept all the chairmanship and councillorship positions in an election conducted in twenty local government councils and 37 Development Council. The violence that characterizes these elections discouraged responsible people from participating in local elections.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The creation of local government anywhere in the world stems from the need to facilitate developments at the grassroots. All political systems seek the attainment of effective and efficient service delivery at the grassroots. The case of local government in Enugu state has grossly undermined effective grass root participation in politics and delivery of democracy dividends to the people. Local governments in Enugu state have not really facilitated rapid development at the grassroots, which is the essence of their creation. It was against this background that this paper investigate local government and good governance in Enugu state, Nigeria 2000-2012 bearing in mind the effects of non participation in political participation activities, state government interference and the provisions in 1999 constitution impeded local government and good governance in Enugu state within the period of 2000 to 2012. Therefore, the paper recommend as follows:

- i. There should be constitutional reforms to ensure full autonomy of local government. The reform is needed to increase the fiscal and spending autonomy of local governments and minimize the interference and control of state governments.
- ii. State governors should allow the council heads to manage their natural resources using planning standards to design appropriate policies and project suited to peculiar areas; and effective democracy dividends to the grassroots.
- iii. The anti-corrupt agencies should intensify efforts in tackling pervasive corruption in the local government system.
- iv. Local governments should have direct and unfettered access to statutory allocations from the federation account and their share of internally generated revenue.
- v. There should be institutional strengthening at the local government level to train local government staff in policy development, monitoring and evaluation in collaboration with the private sector.

## **References**

- Adejo, O. (2003): "Local Government and 1999 Constitution" in Kwanashie, M. (ed.) *Politics and Political Power Relation in Nigeria*. Zaria: Dat and Partners.
- Adeyemi, O. (2013). "Local Government and the Challenges of Service Delivery: The Nigeria Experience." *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Vol.15 (7), 84-98.
- Adeyemo, D. (2005): "Local Government in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective" <http://www.elgf.org.uk/index.cfm/pageid/112/Nigeria>.
- Adeyeye M. (2000): "An Analysis of Nigerian Local Government" A Mid-term International Conference Organized by IPSA RC 4 in Association with Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, and Centre for Democratic Governance, Abuja, June 28<sup>th</sup>.
- African Leadership Forum (2000): "ALF Dialogue Document"
- Agagu, A. (2004): "Continuity and Change in Local Government Administration and Politics of Under-development" in Ola, R. (eds.) *Development Agenda of Nigeria State*. Ibadan: Fiag Publishers.
- Agba, M. (2006): "Human Resources Management and Effective Service Delivery in Nigeria, *Sophia*." *An African Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 8 (2): 7-13.
- Agba, M. Akwara, A. and Idu, A. (2013): Local Government and Social Service Delivery in Nigeria: A Content Analysis." *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, Vol. 2 (2), 455-462.
- Ahmed, T. (2007): "Nigeria and the scourge of the Failed Local Government" *Business Day* October 19, 17-19

- Ajayi, K. (2000): "Democracy and Electoral Politics in Nigeria" in Kolawale, L. (ed.) *Issues in Nigeria Government and Politics*. Ibadan: Dakaal Publishers.
- Amadi, C. (2011): "Commission Indicts Enugu Local Government Areas over 11bn Federal Allocation" [www.thetidenewsonline.com](http://www.thetidenewsonline.com)
- Amucheazi, O. (2013): Chime Carpets Critics of Local Government System. Daily Independent, February 26, 4-5.
- Aref, F., and Marof, R. (2009): Community leaders' perceptions toward tourism impacts and level of community capacity building in tourism development. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 2(8), 208-213.
- Awotokun, K. (2004): Inter-Governmental Relations in Nigeria: Local Government and the 1999 Constitution. *Public Administration and Development*, XII, vii.
- Barry, J. (2000): *The Challenges of Democracy*. New York, Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Bashir, A and Mohammed, A. (2012): Challenges of Democratization at the Grassroots in Nigeria: A study of Taraba state. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2 (7): 98 – 108.
- Benjamin, S. (1998): Grassroots Democratization in Nigeria: Constraints and Prospects. NISER *Monograph series* (10), Ibadan.
- Carsten, A. (2005): "The Role of Transparency and Accountability for Economic Development in Resource Rich Countries" A Regional Workshop on Resource Management in CEMAC Countries. Abuja, 15<sup>th</sup> August.
- Chukwuemeka, E, Ugwuanyi, B, Okolo, P and Onuoha, C. (2014): Nigeria Local Government: A Discourse on the Theoretical Imperatives in Government System. *An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia*, Vol. 8 (2), 305-324.
- Eboh, E. and Diejomaoh, I. (2010): Local Governments in Nigeria: Relevance and Effectiveness in Poverty Reduction and Economic Development. *Journal of Economic and Sustainable Development*, Vol.1, (1), 12-28.
- Edike, T (2010): "Police Arrest 1, 088 in Enugu" Vanguard, February, 25, 7-8.
- Egwemi, V and Odo, L. (2013): Rural Development and Poverty Eradication in Nigeria. *Journal of Research in National Development*, Vol. 11(1) 34:48.
- Erero J (2000): "Accountability in Management of Nigerian Local Government Perspective" in Mukoro, A. (ed.) *Institutional Administration: A Contemporary Local Government Perspective from Nigeria*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd.
- Ezeani, E. (2003): *Local Government Administration*. Enugu: Zik-Chuks Press.
- Ezeani, E. (2012): *Fundamentals of Public Administration*. Enugu: Zik-Chuks Publishers
- Fajonyomi, .O and Olu-Owolabi, F. (2013): Good Governance and Local Government Administration for Development: Multiple Perspectives. *Journal of Capital Development in Behavioural Sciences* Vol. 1, (2), 1-16.
- Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (2004): "State of the Nation" A Network Service Programme Broadcast on January 5<sup>th</sup> by 7pm.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1976): *Guideline for 1976 Local Government Reform*. Kaduna: Federal Government Press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999): *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*. Lagos: Federal Government Press.
- Hyden, G. and Court, J. (2002): "Comparing Governance and Conceptual Challenges" in Olowu, D (eds.), *Better Governance and Public Policy: Capacity Building for Democratic Renewal in Africa*. Kumara Press.

- Idada, W. (2006): Limiting Factors on Local Government Capacity. *International Journal of Governance and Development*, Vol. 2 (1), 21-34.
- Igbuzor, O.(2005): "Local Government Reform and Constitutional Review in Nigeria, <http://www.dawodu.com/otivel.htm>
- Ikeanyibe, O. (2009): The Constitutional Status for Third Tier Government in Nigeria: Implications for Flexibility and Dynamism in Local Governance. *Journal of Constitutional Development*, vol. 8(3), 23-29.
- Jakpa, T. (2004): "Pitfalls of Local Government Creation" *Vanguard*, Friday February 27, 28-29.
- Kolawole, D. (2003): "Local Government and Problems of Service Delivery" in Ajayi, K (ed.), *Theory and Practice of Local Government*. Ibadan: Johnmof Printers Ltd.
- Madhav, .G (2007): "Report for Committee on Good Governance in Nigeria" <http://hrw.org/backgrounders/africa/nigeria0407/index.html>.
- Mark, D. (2010): "Local Government Crisis: Federal VS States Government, the Truth of the Matter". *The News Magazine*, 22nd February, 3-4
- Mo. Ibrahim, (2011): "The Agenda on Sustainable Development in Africa on Good Governance" [www.un.org/wcm/content/site/chronicle/cache](http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/chronicle/cache)
- Mohammadi S. (2010): Citizens' Attitude towards Local Government and Citizen's Participation in Local Government. *Journal of American Science*, 6(11), 575-583.
- Musa, A. (2011): "The Challenges for Improving Local Government System in Nigeria" The 3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Conference of Community Development in Nigeria. Asaba, November 20-24.
- Nico, S. (2008): "Democracy through Empowerment of Disadvantaged Groups" in John, K. and Rupak, C. (eds.) *Local Government in Federal System*. New Delhi Viva Books Ltd.
- Nkwocha, J. (2009): "Non Conduct of LG elections in Anambra State." *Thisday*, August 13, 11-13.
- Obasanjo, O. (2003): "An Address by the Technical Committee on the Review of Local Government in Abuja" <http://www.nigeriafirst.org/html>
- Odo, L. U. (2014): Local government and the challenges of grassroots development in Nigeria. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 3 (6): 204 – 213.
- Ogbe, C (2013): "Salvaging Local Government System from the Precipice in Nigeria" *PM News* March 11, 23-24
- Ogunna, A. (1996): *Hand Book on Local Government in Nigeria*. Owerri: Versatile- Publishers.
- Okafor, .O (2013): Constitutional Democracy and Caretaker Committee in Nigeria Local Government. *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*. Issue: 12,110-123.
- Okoli, .F (2000): *Theory and Practice of Local Government: A Nigerian Perspective*. Enugu: John Jacobs Classic Publishers Ltd.
- Okolie, D. (2006): "The Strength of Local Government System in Nigeria" <http://www.thisdaylive.com>
- Olusola, O. O. (2011). "Boosting Internally Generated Revenue of Local Government in Ogun State, Nigeria, A Study of Selected Local Governments in Ogun State." *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 8, (1), 336-348.
- Onah, R. (2004): "Local Government in Nigeria Structure, Roles and Expectations" in Onyishi, T. (eds.), *Key Issues in Local Government and Development: A Nigerian Perspective*. Enugu: Praise House Publishers.
- Onokpegu, C. and Afonne, E. (2011): "Joint Account Crisis: How Governors short-Change Local Governments" *Nigerian News world*, 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 8-9.

- Onwuemenyi, O. (2008): "Tackling Corruption in Local Government Councils" <http://www.punchng.com/article>.
- Onyishi, T. (2010): *Nigeria: A Handbook of Good Governance*. Enugu: John Jacobs Classic Publishers Ltd.
- Osaghae, E. (2006): *Nigeria Political Independence: Crippled Giant*. Ibadan: Hurst & Co Publishers.
- Oyovbaire, .S (2007): "The Crisis of Governance in Nigeria" A Convocation Lecture delivered on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ceremony, University of Port Harcourt, March, 15<sup>th</sup>.
- PM News (2010): "LG Elections Fall Out: ACN Agents Macheded, Hospitalized" [pmnewsnigeria.com/lge-elections-fall-out-acn-agents-machete hospitalized](http://pmnewsnigeria.com/lge-elections-fall-out-acn-agents-machete-hospitalized).
- Pryor, J. (2003): "How Private and Public Sector Can Sustain Good Governance" Daily Independent, Thursday 18 December, 18-19
- Sharma, S. (2006): Good Governance and Reforms Strategy. *Journal of Management in Governance* 32 (2), 1- 16.
- Simbine, A. (2004): "Citizen's Disposition towards Governance and Democratic Rule in Nigeria" *NISER Monograph Series*, No. 15.
- Suberu, .R. (2004): *Attractions of Multi-Ethnic Federalism: The Nigerian experience*. Ibadan: University Press.
- Ugborgu, V. (2007): "Local Government Polls of Controversy" Sunday Independent, December 23, 7-10.
- Ugoani, A (2009): "Predicted Victory" Source Magazine December 21, 15-16.
- Ushie, E. (2005): Electoral Malpractices and Democracy at the Grassroots in Nigeria. *American Journal of International Politics and Development Studies* 1 (1), 177-189.
- Uzundu, J. (2010): "Joint Account Crisis: How Governors Short-Change Local Governments" Nigerian News world Magazine, 11-12.
- Yomi, B (2013): "The Report of Local Government Autonomy" Held at Agip Recital Hall, Onikan. Lagos, May, 17<sup>th</sup> unpublished work.
- Yusuf, A. (2010): Critical Issues and Priorities in Local Government Social Policy Reform in Nigeria. *Journal of Development and Society, Abuja*. Vol. 1(4), 89-99.