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Historical Epochs of Local Government Administration in Nigeria: Women and the Poor

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Historical Epochs of Local Government Administration in Nigeria: Women and the Poor

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Abstract- Local Government administration and development in Nigeria has, historically, undergone a number of epochs: Native Authority or Indirect Rule system; Local Administration system; Democratization of the system and the separation of traditional/ emirate council from democratic Local government system. The last of these epochs is the most spectacular in the way it deepened and still deepens democracy at local government level. To date, this last epoch has had not less than nine reforms: The 1976 Guidelines for Local Government Reform; The 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; The 1984 Dasuki Report on the Nigerian Local Government system; The 1988 Civil Service Reforms in the Local Government system; The 1989 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; The 1992 Handbook on Local Government Administration; The 1989 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the 2003 Review of Local Government Councils in Nigeria. What this paper sets out to examine is the changing nature of Local government system in Nigeria right from the days of Native Authority s system to the present democratic one and their impacts on women and the poor.

I. INTRODUCTION

Local Administration or Local Government Administration in Nigeria as the case may be, has passed through four distinct phases. The first phase or epoch covered the period between 1914 and 1950; the second period fell within 1950 to 1966, the third epoch 1967 to 1976, while the final era was from 1976 to date.

These periods have been so categorized because different types of management of local affairs took place in these periods with one improving on the other. Yet, today, experts on local government matters in Nigeria are not satisfied with the standard of Local Administration or Local Government Administration. Indeed, they do make distinction between Local Administration and Local Government Administration. To them, the two are not synonymous. They are basically separate and distinct but complementary in service delivery and ultimately in poverty alleviation.

This paper examines the competence of the different systems of local government and their

operators in fulfilling the missions for which they were set up – alleviating poverty at local and rural levels in Nigeria where women form the bulk of the population – right from the colonial days up to date.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND ANALYSIS

Three distinct terms that need clarification in this paper are administration, local government and the poor. The term 'Administration' has variety of uses; there are those that use it for business, - Business Administration. Others used it for public management - Public Administration. What then is Administration? What is Public Administration? When we talk of Local Administration or Local Government Administration, what do we mean? For, these forms of administrations are different from one another.

Vincent Ostrom defines administration as an invariant relationship in all systems of governmentⁱ. And to him, a science of administration has universal applicability to all political systems. Thus, he went on; conceiving of a theory of democratic government is a possibility, but not a theory of democratic administration.

Adamolekun therefore defines public Administration as referring to both the activities concerned with the management of government business and the study of these activitiesⁱⁱ. In other words, he says, it is used in two distinct series, as practice and as knowledge.

At this juncture, before making a distinction between local administration and local government administration we may briefly examine what local government is. There are two ways of seeing local government; we may see it from normative angle or institutional angle. Normative aspect deals with definition or various definitions of local government while the institutional aspect sees local government as a form of decentralization. There are two variants of decentralization we are concerned with here. One is de-concentration and the other, devolution. Prior to independence and the prolonged civil war, Nigerian

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ⁱ Vincent Ostrom. The Intellectual Crisis in American Public Administration. Rev. ed. Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1974, P.27.

ⁱⁱ Ladipo Adamolekun. Public Administration: A Nigerian and Comparative Perspective. New York: Longman Group Limited, 1983, P.1.

local government system was essentially de-concentrative but in 1976, it became devolved and “should do precisely what the word government implies i.e., governing at the grassroots or local level”ⁱⁱⁱ

Poor is philosophically interchanged with poverty because they share the same characteristics and whether the phenomenon is referred to as poverty or poor, is mere semantic. The characteristics that the “poor” and “poverty” severally share in common include low income per head, food scarcity and malnutrition, low energy consumption, low savings and low level of capital formation^{iv}. Collectively, the poor or the poverty afflicted people can also be identified by the environment that they occupy. Okunade identified two of such environment, which are the rural areas and the fringes of urban settlements^v. Their environment is characterized by a variety of social inhibitions and what Okunade termed infrastructural network handicaps. Compared with urban centres, Olowu says the “the quality of life is very low in the rural areas, whether we speak of life expectancy, food intake, living conditions, literacy level or the primitiveness of agricultural technology. Besides, rural conditions are worsening steadily in view of Nigeria’s strategy of development which, because of the wide disparities between urban and rural areas that it promotes, encourages massive youthful rural depopulation to the urban centers with resulting problem both for the urban as well as the rural areas”^{vi}

Henry Nwosu, in analyzing the situation of women in relation to poverty said, “Historically, psychologically and sociologically, women have always formed the bulwark of the family and hence the society. They are solid foundation to every family in every society. Generally, women constitute the majority of the population in every nation state”^{vii}. This is particularly so in our local and rural areas in Nigeria.

Phase I

Under the colonial administration, local government was known as Native Authority or Administration system. It was a form of indigenous rule

ⁱⁱⁱ Federal Republic of Nigeria. Guidelines For Local Government Reform, Kaduna: Government Printers, 1976. Forward.

^{iv} Adefulu R.A. “Leadership, Democracy And the Poor in Africa’s Political Science: Some Theoretical And Methodological Considerations”. Leadership, Democracy And The Poor (Ed.) Jos : A Publication Of The Nigerian Political Science Association, 1991, P19-20.

^v Bayo Okunade. “The New Local Government Reforms And The Nigerian Poor”. Leadership, Democracy And The Poor Leadership, Democracy And The Poor (Ed.) Jos : A Publication Of The Nigerian Political Science Association, 1991, P74.

^{vi} Dele Olowu. “Local Government And Rural Development In Nigeria”. The Nigerian Journal Of Local Government Studies (Ed.) Vol. 1 No.1, Ile-Ife: Local Government Training Programme, Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Administration, University of Ife, 1983. P48.

^{vii} Henry Nwosu. The Conduct of Free and Fair Elections in Nigeria. Abuja: A National Electoral Commission Publication, No 11, 1991, P 77.

under colonial authorities whereby “traditional institutions of chiefs and other traditional rulers administer the natives under the supervision of British Administrative Officer”^{viii}. There was nothing wrong with the use of indigenous institutions, chiefs and rulers in the then newly established local administration, for that was the existing governing structure before the advent of colonialism but there was certainly something wrong with the quality of these people expected to run these traditional institutions in ‘modern governance’ – Indirect Rule system. Very few of them (traditional rulers or chiefs), if any at all, had western education and exposure in modern governance to be able to run this newly introduced local administration. Ayoade expressed this better, according to him, “The policies were transmitted to the traditional rulers who hardly understood the logic and rationale of the policies. Nevertheless, they transmitted those policies to their people and expected compliance”^{ix}.

Besides lack of western education necessary for these indigenous rulers to understand their ‘superintendents’, some roles expected of them to perform by the new system were also repugnant to tradition of the people. For instance, the Native Authorities were expected to “be able to levy and collect tax for the salaries of the chiefs and other officials and services of the authorities”^x. But while some communities were already accustomed to this, others were not; though they also had their own traditional ways of carrying out such services^{xi}. In brief, their lack of exposure to Western education and modern governance hampered their administrative and service delivery capacity in the Native Authority system. It is therefore interesting to note that the operators of this Native Authority system could neither be described as executives, legislators nor administrators. Because they executed, legislated or administered nothing. At best, as Ayoade observed, they (traditional rulers) were mere “administrative curriers” to the colonial officers. This brings into question the status of the Native Authority System itself. Is it proper to call it local government or local administration?

It is fraudulent to call it local government because there was nothing governmental about it to warrant that nomenclature. If it was not democratic, legislative (it had no legislative power at all^{xii}) or clientele service delivery system, what then is governmental about it? Some argue that it could appropriately be

^{viii} Cletious E. Emezi. “The Changing Patterns of Local Government in Nigeria”. The Nigerian Journal of Local Government Studies, Vol. 1 No. 1 June 1983, P7-8.

^{ix} Ayoade John .A.A. “The Development of Democratic Local Government in Nigeria”. Aborisade and Mundt (Ed.). Local Government in Nigeria and the United States: Learning from comparison, Ife: Local Government Publication series, 1995, P19.

^x Emezi C.E, Op. cit. P8.

^{xi} Ibid.

described as local administration because it represented the activities of the central government at the local level. But one finds this nomenclature also contestable because, of what use is the implementation of the policy in which the local rulers never had input nor understood? If traditional rulers who operated the system did not have input nor understood the policies expected of them to implement, how would the local and rural poor, have the slightest idea of what was happening? At best, the appropriate nomenclature for the system is Native Confusion System.

Notwithstanding all these, the system made important achievement of whittling down the autocracy of patriarchal traditional rulers because hitherto these traditional rulers, under traditional system of governance, were embodiments of executive, legislative and judicial powers. The Native Authority system dismantled these and shared them among various stakeholders that included the colonial authorities. According to Gboyega, the new Native Authority system "comprised of four main interdependent parts:

- (i) The Resident who provided direction and control;
- (ii) The Native Authority, usually headed by a Chief who enjoyed legitimacy under the indigenous political system, and often supported by a council of elders;
- (iii) The Native Treasury; and
- (iv) The Native Courts composed of representatives of the Native Administration"^{xiii}.

Under the first epoch of local government administration in Nigeria therefore, the poor may not have been tangibly affected by the system with regard to alleviating their problems materially but, intangibly, were beginning to experience freedom as traditional rulers

were no longer sovereign in their various domains. Their sovereignty had been fragmented and dispersed.

Phase II

The failure of the first phase of Local government administration development is attributed to three factors. First, it lacked executive powers to assist the local and rural poor. What it had, at best, was regulatory powers because, as Gboyega observed, it had no mandate to provide any social welfare services and consequently engaged only the staff essential for their rudimentary administrative purposes^{xiv}. Secondly, under the system, communities felt no strong sense of belonging and self-involvement in the system called local government then^{xv}. Thirdly, towards 1946, the system had acquired a new nomenclature – Sole Native Authority System. As a Sole Native Authority System, Egba women expressed their disgust to it this way :

"The system of Sole Native Authority (SNA) had been a great source of oppression and suppression to the Egba people. Even most of the members of the council were not free to express their minds. The Alake always passed as 'Mr. Know all'. The Egba women would very much like the power of SNA removed because we are not happy under it. It is foreign to the custom of Egba"^{vi}

The introduction of Sole Native Authority System hasten the marginalization of women traditional rulers in communities with gender balance in traditional ruler ship. Such communities include Ondo, Ekiti, Ijesha, (in Yoruba land) Okpanam and Ibusa (in Delta State) and Onisha (in Anambra state). Below are pictures of those in Ijesha land:

Male King



Female King

Owa Obokun of Ijesha land, Oba Adekunle Aromolaran and Yeyerise (Female king) of Ijesha land, Obabinrin Felicia Modupe Obiwole.

^{xii} Ayoade, John.A.A, Op, cit, P19.

^{xiii} Alex Gboyega. Political Values and Local Government in Nigeria. Lagos: Malthouse Publishing Limited, 1987, P.14.

^{xiv} Ibid

^{xv} Cletious E. Emezi. Op. Cit.P 25.

^{xvi} Bolanle Awe. "Women and Politics in Historical Perspective" in Women and Politics in Nigeria, Ikeja: Malthouse Press Limited, 1992, P 139.

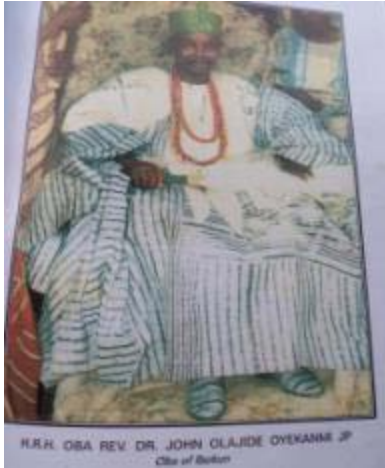
Male and Female Kingmakers in Ilesha West and East Local Government

Male Kingmakers

Obanla
Ogboni of Ilesha
Oba-Odo
Ogboni of Ipole
Ogboni of Ibokun
Ogboni of Ijebu-jesa

Female Kingmakers

Yeyerisa-Arise
Yeye Odofin
Yeye Baodo
Yeye –dole
Lejoka
Loro



Obabinrin Adenike Dununsin Yeye
Mojumu(female king)of Ibokun

Male and Female kingmakers in Ibokun, Ori-Ade Local government of Osun State.

Male Kingmakers

Odofofin
Ejemu
Aro
Osolo
Saba
Sajuku

Female Kingmakers

Odofofinbinrin
Ejemubbinrin
Arobinrin
Osolobinrin
Sababinrin
Sajukubbinrin ^{xvii}



Loja of Kajola Ijesha (Oba Omirin)



Yehelooobinrin of Kajola Ijesha
Obabinrin (female king) Elizabeth

^{xvii} Ishola Olomola. Bade Ajuwon. Dayo Omotosho. "Oba Ibokun". Prominent Traditional Rulers of Yorubaland (Ed). Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University &Celebrity Publication Limited, Ibadan, 2003, P102.

Male and Female kingmakers in Kajola Ijesha, Ori-Ade Local government of Osun State.

Male king

Baba Orisa
Baba Odofin
Baba Aro
Baba Salaro
Baba Ejemo

Female king.

Yeye Orisa
Yeye Odofin
Yeye Aro
Yeye Salaro
Yeye Ejemo



Owa Obokun of Ijesha land, Oba Adekunle Aromolaran and Yeyerise (Female king) of Ijesha land, Obabinrin Felicia Modupe Obiwole.

III. PALACES



Owa's Palace



Yeyerise's Palace



Alademure's Palace



Yeye Mojumu's Palace



Palace of Loja of Kajola-Ijesha



Palace of Eyelobinrin of Kajola-Ijesha

Table 1 : Statistics of Women Owa Obokun of Ijesha Land in the Pre-Colonial Days.

S/N	NAME	TOWN OR VILLAGE	L.G.A	STATE	TYPE OF RULERSHIP	DATE	TIME SPENT IN OFFICE
1	Yeye-Ladegba	Ilesha	Ilesha	Osun	Owa Obokun	A.D 1646-1652	6 years
2	Yeye gunrogbo	Ilesha	Ilesha	Osun	Owa Obokun	A.D. 1652-1653	1 year
3	Yeye Waji	Ilesha	Ilesha	Osun	Owa Obokun	A.D. 1691-1692	1 year
4	Yeye Waiye	Ilesha	Ilesha	Osun	Owa Obokun	A.D. 1692-1693	1year
5	Yeye Wayero	Ilesha	Ilesha	Osun	Owa Obokun	A.D. 1698-1712	14 years
6	Yeye Ori	Ilesha	Ilesha	Osun	Owa Obokun	A.D. 1734-1749	15 years

Source : Atayero S.A(1972) *A Short History of the Ileshas Part I, Ilesha: Olufemi Press, Pp 37-41.*

Fourthly was the restlessness of the educated elites who felt uncomfortable with their total exclusion from the Native Authority System.

In trying to address these defects, the last colonial Secretary of State, Lord Creech-Jones, in 1947, had argued that: "The key to resolving the problems of African administration lay in the development of an efficient and democratic system of local government. I wish to emphasize the words: efficient, democratic and local. Local because the system of government must be close to the common people (the poor in particular) and

their problems, efficient because it must be capable of managing local services in a way which will help to raise the standard of living, and democratic because it must not only find a place for the growing class of educated men, but at the same time command the respect and support of the mass of the people"^{xviii}.

^{xviii} Dele Olowu. "Local Governance, Democracy, and Development". Richard Joseph (Ed.), *State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. 1999, P286.

Following these policy statements, regional governments into which the whole country had broken into, began to reform their Native Authority systems to comply with the policy. First was the structure of the new local government system – Multi tier system – that tended to replace the old one – single tier – that had been in place since 1914. This multi-tier system was a concentric circle of variety of three Local Government systems: e.g. the County, District and Local council or Provincial, Divisional councils. The service types they rendered to the rural people made the distinctions among these three layers. To alleviate the suffering the poor, county or provincial councils were assigned with services related to education, maintenance of roads and bridges. The Districts or Divisional councils were in charge of markets, dispensaries and sanitary services while Local or District councils, the smallest of them all, were responsible for the maintenance of streams and footpaths^{xix}.

The basic difference between the single and multi tier system of Local Government then was while one emphasizes uniformity the other de-emphasizes it. Although the intention of adopting uniform system might be, according to Adedeji, to promote unity but the opposite is the case^{xx}. Uniformity, according to him, ignores the difference in history, culture and modes of social organization of the various communities in a heterogeneous polity and by so doing upsets Local Governments that are established on the fundamental assumption that people matter and that neither they nor their socio-economic, political and cultural dynamics are mechanistic. Diversity, rather than uniformity increase latitude of action. This indeed explains why American Local Government system is characterized by great variety and diversity^{xxi}.

Secondly, Regional governments, especially those of the Southern part of the country began to pass laws that provided for broad political participation under representative or democratic system of local government. The broadened participation included local representatives of the people, traditional rulers and chiefs, which the law still permitted to act as the chairmen of the local government councils^{xxii}. It should be noted that this is the beginning of gradual attempt at empowering local government system towards poverty alleviation at the local and rural areas. The local government law of western region of 1952 was more explicit on this when it distinguished between elected

and “traditional” members of the councils. The traditional members according to C. E. Emezi, were either ex-officio members of these councils or to sit on them by and from amongst themselves. The president of the council was the traditional ruler of the place but where they were more than one, the office rotated amongst them.

Although, the President of the Local government, under this new dispensation, had purely ceremonial functions like presiding at budget meetings and on other important occasions, he sometimes attempted to exercise executive authorities that tended to cause occasional out breaks of misunderstanding, if not outright fiasco, between him and the executives of the council^{xxiii}. How one expected a peaceful cohabitation of an entirely illiterate president of Local government with educated treasurer and secretary of Local government seemed not clear. It is not an overstatement that the restless educated elite at that time would actually encourage and work for the success of their colleagues both at the council pools and administration, so that, having formed majority in the council, they could always over turn the decisions or plans of their reactionary opponents. Alex Gboyega alluded to this when he said that 1950 Local government reform tended to produce more participation than even the government wanted^{xxiv}.

Thus, as mentioned earlier, conflicting composition of the management of Local government at this period did not allow for proper local government administration. While the traditional rulers who were presidents of the Local government councils were mere titular, technocrats of the Local government councils – Secretary and the Treasurer – exercise executive powers, though through directive from the regional government as they had no any initiative other than acting on ‘order from the above’^{xxv}. The intensity of this was high in places where educated traditional rulers headed the councils. Power tussle, not just on who ran the councils but who is superior in the system, frequently ensued between them and the technocrats.

Perhaps the regional governments deliberately created this cleavage between the traditional rulers, as the presidents of the councils and the technocrats so as to have inroad into happenings going on at the grassroots, for Local governments, as earlier form of government, were too important to the politicians and the regional governments to be left alone. Hence they, regional governments, held tenaciously on to power to create and abolish Local governments. With this power, they created, abolished and dissolved erring Local

^{xix} Cletious.E Emezi. “The Changing Patterns Of Local Government In Nigeria”. The Nigerian Journal Of Local Government Studies (Ed.) Vol. 1 No.1, Ile-Ife: Local Government Training Programme, Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Administration, University of Ife, 1983, p8.

^{xx} Adebayo Adedeji. “Search for Alternative system of Governance of the Grassroots” Daily Monitor, Sept. 5, 1997, p16.

^{xxi} Adebayo Adedeji. Op cite P16.

^{xxii} Emezi C.E, Op. cit.P10.

^{xxiii} Ibid

^{xxiv} Alex Gboyega, Ibid. P.46

^{xxv} Ayode, John.A.A, Op, cit. P20.

governments, beside the fact that they “must also approve their annual budget before they can be implemented”.

This way, Local governments under this second phase were effectively subordinated to the regional governments. The upshot of this for the local government system was lack of autonomy. The lack of autonomy concomitantly also meant that these Local governments were dependent on the regional governments in a “horse and the rider” relationship. While Local governments were the horses, regional governments were the riders. Given this, Local government system during this period cannot be properly called so, but, as Ayoade suggested, “Agents of the central government at the local level”. As agent of the regional governments, they (Local governments) could not provide for the people what they wanted but what regional governments wanted for them (local people) hence it is a misnomer, for the system, under this phase, to be regarded as Local government because there was nothing governmental about it. However, it could be appropriately termed Local administration.

Phase III

Civil war era was another important epoch in the administrative development of Local government. Not only was development in the East stalled, poverty was alarmingly skyrocketing as the East was at that time the theater of war. As a result of this civil war there was prevalent of emergency both in the West and the North. Sole Administrator ship system of administration was adopted in the West and Mid-West. It was a system supported by force and the emergency situation of the period^{xxvi}. It was not meant to perform any meaningful duty other than mobilizing support geared towards the war efforts. The North, during this period had also desired complete abolition of Native Authorities and its replacement by advisory council^{xxvii}. Local government development during this period, as earlier said, was in stupor while poverty was on the increase as virtually all resources were being mobilized towards successful completion of the raging war.

Phase IV

The 1976 Local government reform was a landmark in four important respects that empowered it. The empowerments are in the areas of uniformity, making the newly reformed democratic Local government councils a third tier of government with constitutional recognition, separation of traditional rulers from the Local government council and constituted into

a separate council known as traditional or emirate council (fourth estate of the realm!); last but not the least, is the financial empowerment. Uniformity had to do with standardization of Local government structures, personnel and functions throughout the country; making Local government staff transferrable from one Local government to the other throughout the country. This was a deviation from the previous arrangement whereby each region operated varieties of Local government systems. The separation of traditional rulers from the Local government councils was informed by decision to block one of the important obstacles hindering the growth of democratic Local government system in the country. For, traditional rulers had always tackled the Local governments for the resources and the loyalty of the localities^{xxviii}. As a level of government, the new Local government system, according to the guidelines for the 1976 Local government reform, “should do precisely what the word government implies i.e., governing at the grassroots or Local level”^{xxix}.

Arrival at the conclusion that decentralization – and specifically devolution – is the best method of catering for the local and rural poor, was preceded by robust debate as to desirability or otherwise of having Local government as means of assisting local and rural poor. The realization that 70 to 80% of Nigerian poor reside in the rural areas of the country led to this serious debate not just among the scholars but more importantly in the government circles. The best strategy of alleviating the sufferings of this class of people was the core of these debates. To assist them (local and rural poor) was not the issue but by what means? There were those who argued for and against institutional approach. In other words, the argument revolved around whatever assistance any governmental and non-governmental organization had for the rural people should be channeled through the institution of Local Government. But there were those who contend that other avenues other than creating any institution for that purpose should be explored. Three major areas where those in favor of creating Local Governments for the rural people to manage their affairs hang their contention on were local concern or interest, political education and accountability^{xxx}.

Five areas that proponents of this view believed Local Government could be the best strategy for service delivery were (a) provide political education to the rural people, (b) education in the possible and expedient (c)

^{xxvi} Alex Gboyega, Ibid. P.46

^{xxvii} Bolaji Akinyemi. Foreign policy and Federalism: the Nigerian experience, Ibadan : Macmillan Nigerian Publishers Limited, 1986, P21. See also Ahamadu Bello, My Life, Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation Limited, 1962, pp73-81

^{xxviii} Alex Gboyega. “Local Government and Democratisation in Nigeria, in the last two decades”. Paper presented at the National Conference on Two Decades of Local Government in Nigeria. Held at the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) Topo-Badagry on June 4-6, 1996. P3.

^{xxx} Alex Gboyega. Political Values and Local Government in Nigeria. Ibid.

^{xxix} Federal Republic of Nigeria. Ibid.

education in the use of power and authority and in the risk of power (d) education in practical ingenuity and versatility (e) that Local Government could serve as a training ground for national politicians (f) that information about the localities can be easily and cheaply made available to the local and central government authorities (g) that Local Government helps to realize the basics of a democratic state (liberty, equality and welfare). Liberty, they argue, is realized through Local Government because (i) Local Government provides for individual access to power and to the point of pressure and control (ii) it enables the minorities to avail themselves of governmental position and power and keep power close to the people thereby facilitating control of government officials by the people (iii) as a level of government it is a countervailing power to other governmental levels (iv) as a power sharing device, it help to localize and confine problems that may arise out of the government process^{xxxii}. Finally, it is believed that Local Government would teach the local politicians and the rural communities in general, the art of weighing and choosing between competing claims and justifying the choice as a just one –i.e. being accountable^{xxxiii}.

Traditional or Emirate council that was severed from Local government council shared some similarities with conventional democratic Local Government council. First, as there are 774 Local Government councils throughout the country today so are there 774 Traditional or Emirate councils. Secondly, as Local

Government councils render services allotted to it by the constitution so do the Traditional or Emirate council. Today in the academia, they (Emirate/Traditional Council) are referred to as “fourth level of government” or “fourth estate of the realm”, “grass-root” government or community government, “village government” “local development agencies” village development organs etc. These traditional councils are seen as “alternative non state structures that can respond to the economic and social needs” of the people. Conceptually, “it focuses on the totality of structures within the local community that comprises both state and societal organizations^{xxxiii}. Attributes of these types of government are distinct from conventional Local Government system. They non-state organs rooted in the indigenous traditions of social order, voluntary, and most importantly, “active and often successful in the provision of services required by their clientele”. In recent time, according to Olowu, some of them have become active in the political arena as well^{xxxiv}.

However, the way women are making progress democratically in the new Local government system, opposite is the case in traditional councils. While, since, 1987, women are making progress as elected chairpersons of Local government system, the reverse is the case in traditional council. Below is the statistics of women chairperson at the Local government level in Nigeria between 1987-1999:

Table 2 : Women Elected Chairpesons in Federally Conducted Local Government Elections 1987–1999.

S\N	STATES	LOCAL GOVTS	NAMES	POLITICAL PARTIES	DATE
1	Ogun	Abeokuta-	-Mrs Titi Ajanaku	Zero Party	1987
2	Katsina	Malumfashi	Hajiya Magajiya Garba Adamu	Zero Party	1987
3	Benue	Ushogo	Chief Mrs Kazieh	SDP	1990
4	Benue	Oju	Mrs. Eba Ogah	SDP	1990
5	Ogun	Abeokuta	Mrs. Titi Ajanaku	SDP	1990
6	Katsina	Bakori	Mrs. Mariya Abdulahi	SDP	1990
7	Plateau	Bokkos	Rachael M. Adanchin	PDP	1998
8	Anambra	Ogbaru	Calista Nwachukwu	AD	1998
9	Imo	Ehime	Agbiogwu Amaka May	PDP	1998
10	Osun	Ejigbo	Rukayat . Y.	PDP	1998
11	FCT	Municipal	Esther J. Audu.	PDP	1998
12	FCT	Municipal	Esther. J. Audu	PDP	1998
13	Katsina	Mani	Hajiya Yaha Mani	PDP	1998
14	Gombe	Kaltungo	Hajiya Bibiye Sadica	PDP	1998
15	Benue	Gboko	Lydia. I. Nyor	PDP	1998

Sources : Planning, Research and statistics Department, Independent National Electoral Commission, Abuja, Dora Obi & Juliet Njoku, Nigerian Women and the Challenges of our Time, Lagos : Malthouse Press LTD, 1991 and some Dailies.

^{xxxii} Fatai Ayisa Olasupo. “Philosophy and Poverty Alleviation”. Nigerian Journal of Environment and Behaviour. Port Harcourt, Nigeria: Besty Publishers, 2003, P42.

^{xxxiii} Ibid

^{xxxiii} Dele Olowu. Ibid.

^{xxxiv} Ibid

Despite abundant evidences of women traditional rulers in the country particularly in the communities with tradition of gender balance in ruler ship. Below is a calendar of gender balanced ruler ship from Ondo kingdom:



Ondo Male King and his Kingmakers



Ondo Female King and her Kingmakers



In any case the differences between these “traditional government” and the conventional democratic Local Government system are in the areas of legislative role (making of bye-laws) and democratization. Whereas modern Nigerian Local Government system is democratic, representative, legislative and executive, “traditional government” of Babangida’s vision lacked all these attributes and thus merely assists the other levels of government in service delivery, dissemination of information and explanation of government policy to the rural populace^{xxxv}. Additionally and more importantly, they engage in conflict resolution at all levels of governments – Local, State and Federal. Hear Sheu Malami, a scion and icon of Sokoto Caliphate:

Right from colonial days, whenever there is trouble government uses traditional rulers as crisis manger. When there is no trouble, they forget us. Why are

we called upon now because there is crisis? So we are like fire -fighting equipment, when there is no fire the equipment stays there. You don't maintain it. When there is fire you look for it. You will see when the country return to normal, traditional rulers will go back to the cobwebs^{xxxvi}.

The separations of the two councils notwithstanding, both councils – Local and Traditional councils – have areas of interaction. Under military regimes, a place was designed “for the traditional institutions in the form of a Consultative Council of Chiefs in each Local Government area which was expected to meet bi-monthly and consult with the Chairman and the Supervisory Councilors of the Local Government”^{xxxvii}. Thirdly, Local Governments were also expected to make available to the office of the

^{xxxv} Mead Timothy, D. “Barriers to Local Government Capacity in Nigeria”. Aborisade O. and Mundt R.J, Local Government in Nigeria and the Unites States: Learning from comparison lfe: Local Government Publication series, 1995, P 198.

^{xxxvii} Dennis Idonije Aidelokhai and Antony Ehidiamen Ehizuelen. “Traditional Institutions and Modern Governance in Nigeria within Adjustment Era: 1985-1995” in Governance in Nigeria: Economy, Politics and Society in the Adjustment years: 1985-1995. In Bello Imam (Ed.), Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers, 1997.

^{xxxvi} Fatai Ayisa Olasupo. “Traditional Rulers under the Military 1979 – 1999” Unpublished PhD. Thesis, 2006, P1.

Traditional Councils, their draft estimates well in advance for comments of the traditional rulers^{xxxviii}.

Fourthly, payment of their salaries, just like those of judges and diplomats/ambassadors, were to be from the consolidated fund^{xxxix}. Due to poor revenue situation occasioned by unbridled and blatant deductions at source made from Local government revenues to finance some of their responsibilities, General Abacha devised a means of robbing Peter to pay Paul. His (Abacha) administration "approved deduction of 5% of transfers from the federation account for the upkeep of traditional rulers". Under civilian administration of President Obasanjo, to drive home his administration's privatization policy, 5% deduction from Local government federal allocation revenue was made voluntary, although deduction continues^{xl}. Thus, traditional rulers were 'privatized' in theory and not in practice. All these show that even though the two councils have been separated to avoid clash of authorities they still maintain uncomfortable co-existence.

In 1988, the Military administration of General Babangida toyed with the uncomfortable coexistence of the democratic Local government system and the traditional rulers whom Ayoade referred to as "over mighty "subject" in the council area"^{xli}. Chief of general staff, Vice-admiral Augustus Aikhomu had, in his address to the assembled newly-elected Local government chairmen, directed that "A traditional ruler travelling outside his Local government area should inform the chairman of the Local government"^{xlii}. Again, "A traditional ruler wishing to raise any issue with the state government on matters relating to a particular Local government area should do so through the chairman of the Local Government"^{xliii}. Following massive protest of the traditional rulers that threatened the relationship between them and the military government, the military government of General Babangida soon reversed these orders although it had already created superiority tussle between the elected Local government council and the non elected leaders of the traditional or emirate councils. The civilian administration of retired General Olusegun Obasanjo reopened the wound when he became civilian Head of State. Some traditional rulers from Ekiti State, led by the then Governor of the state, Ayo Fayose, visited him at Aso Rock. According to the President, "in recognition of their importance" (traditional rulers) "and the role they

can play in good governance" he advised them (traditional rulers) "to be monitoring the local councils' chairmen and their activities in their domains"^{xliv}. To demarcate their lines of authorities, the 1979, 1989 and the Draft Constitutions of 1995 enshrined the different roles of these conflicting councils in their bodies.

IV. CONSTITUTIONAL ROLES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Three criteria, Gboyega observed, were applied in allocating functions to newly reformed Local Government councils. The parameters applied included:

- (i) Require detailed Local knowledge for efficiency performance;
- (ii) In which success depends on community responsiveness and participation and
- (iii) Which are of personal nature requiring provision close to where the individuals affected live, and in which significant use of discretion or understanding of individuals is needed

These parameters were applied to produce two lists of functions for Local Government. The first list, according to Gboyega, was considered the primary or mandatory functions that all Local Government had to perform. These are:

Markets and motor parks;
Sanitary inspection, refuse and night-soil disposal;
Control of vermin;
Slaughter house and slaughter slabs;
Public conveniences;
Burial grounds;
Registration of births, death and marriages;
Provision of community and local recreation centers;
Parks, gardens and public open places;
Grazing grounds, fuels plantations;
Licensing, regulation and control of bake houses and laundaries;
Licensing and regulation of bicycles, and carts
And other types of vehicles except those mechanically propelled and canoes;
Control or keeping of animals;
Control of hoardings, advertisements, use of loudspeakers in or near public places, drumming;
Naming of roads and streets and numbering of plots/buildings;
Control and collection of revenue from forestry outside the 'forest estate' of gazette forest reserves;
Collection of vehicle parking charges; and collection of property and other taxes, community tax, and other designated revenue sources^{xlv}.

^{xxxviii} Ibid

^{xxxix} Ibid

^{xl} Alex Gboyega. "Democracy and Development: The Imperative of Local Good Governance". An Inaugural lecture, 2003; Ibadan: The Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ibadan, 2003, P36.

^{xli} Ayoade John A. A, op cit, P24

^{xlii} Cover, "Royalty: Clouds of Uncertainty: New government directive confounds status of Nigeria's traditional rulers". Newswatch, April 18, 1988. 14.

^{xliii} Ibid

^{xliv} Ibid, P41

^{xlv} Fatai Ayisa Olasupo . "Women Rulers in Governing Institutions at the Local Level in Nigeria: A Comparison" in Wither Nigeria? Proceedings of the 14th General Assembly of the Social Science Academy of Nigeria August 9-11, 2 Abuja: Social Science Academy of Nigeria, 2005. pp 177-187.

"The second list was vested concurrently in State and Local governments. However, each State government was to devolve them to its Local government when it ascertained that they had capacity to perform them"^{xlv}. Included in this list are:

Health centers, maternity centers, dispensaries and health clinics, ambulance services, leprosy clinics and preventive health services;
Abattoirs, meat inspection;
Nursery and primary education and adult education;
Information and public enlightenment;
Provision of scholarship and bursaries;
Provision of public libraries and reading rooms;
Agricultural extension, animal health extension services, and veterinary clinics;
Rural and semi-urban water supply;
Fire services;
Provision of roads and streets (other than trunk roads), their lighting and drainage;
Control of water and atmospheric pollution;
Control of beggars, of prostitution, and repatriation of destitute;
Provision of public utilities except where restricted by other legislation, specifically including provision of roads and inland water transport;
Public housing programs;
Operation of commercial undertakings;
Regulation and control of buildings;
Town and country planning; and
Piped sewerage systems^{xlvii}.

V. CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF TRADITIONAL OR EMIRATE COUNCIL

- a) To formulate general proposals as advice to Local Government
- b) To harmonize the activities of Local Government councils through discussion of problems affecting them generally and giving advice and guidance to them.
- c) Co-ordination of development plans of Local Government by joint discussion and advice
- d) Community Tax Assessment within the area as a whole in consultation with Local Government Councils and announcement of tax. Also to aid, as is the usual practice, in collection of tax
- e) Determination of religious matters where appropriate.
- f) Support for Arts and culture.
- g) Chieftaincy matters and control of traditional titles and offices, except where these are traditionally the exclusive prerogative of the Emir or Chief in which case the council's function shall be advisory to the Emir or Chief.

- h) Determination of customary law and practice on all matters including that relating to land;
- i) Making representation or expressing opinions to government or any other organization on the collective behalf of the Local Governments in the area.
- j) Deliberating on or making representation or expressing opinions to Government or any other organization on, any matters which it deems to be of importance to the Emirate or Chieftaindom as a whole or which may be referred to it by Government or other organization^{xlviii}.

Given these complementary poverty alleviation roles that the constitution ascribed to the two disparate councils, it is clear which of the councils is ordinate and subordinate. While the new democratic Local Government system is indisputably the champion, the traditional council is there to provide advisory and complementary services. However, "in small towns and remote villages", as Olufemi Vaughan observed, "where state institutions are profoundly ineffective, local chiefs and village heads combine their "traditional" and customary functions with the pressing demands of community development"^{xlix}. "In many remote areas, the effectiveness of community-based doctrines is strengthened by the utilitarian attributes of local chiefs and leaders"^l, he concluded.

Last but not the least in the empowerment of Local government councils is granting them adequate sources of revenue. The structure of Local government finance in Nigeria changed radically in 1979 with the introduction of statutory fiscal transfer^{li}. Although before its introduction, Local government councils, before 1970, generated most of the funds themselves, they had no spending power. While they were gatherer of funds, regional governments were spenders. In 1979 therefore, the national constitution of that year guaranteed fiscal transfer from the States' revenue and from the federation account to Local Government. According to Gboyega, "Section 142 of that Constitution provided that the Federation Account would be distributed among the Federal, State and Local governments. It also provided that each State should pay to its Local Governments such proportion of its total revenue as the National Assembly prescribed"^{lii}. "The Allocation of Revenue (Federation Account, etc.) Act of 1981 passed by the

^{lii} Ibid. P 24.

^{xlviii} Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Constitution. Lagos: Government printers, 1979; Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Constitution. Abuja: Government printers, 1989, P 144.

^{xlix} Olufemi Vaughan. "Traditional Rulers and the Dilemma of Democratic Transitions in Nigeria". In Dilemma of Democracy in Nigeria. Paul A. Beckett and Crawford Young (Ed.), USA: University of Rochester Press, 1997, P 416.

^l Ibid.

^{li} Alex Gboyega. Ibid. P23.

^{xlv} Ibid, P21

^{xlvii} Ibid

National Assembly in 1981 fixed the proportion of the revenue to be transferred to Local government councils from the Federation Account and from each State's total revenue at 10% each^{liii}.

However, this monumental empowerment of Local government councils is bedeviled with series of corruption types: Deductions, Diversions, Withholding, Duplications, and even, Multiplications of the same project-execution by different governmental agencies. With regards to deductions, severally has Federal government deducted from the statutory transfers from the Local government Federal allocation to "fund primary school staff salaries" that "often wiped away the entitlements of some Local governments, giving rise to the expression "zero allocation". "Since Local governments depend on the fiscal transfers to fund their services, "zero allocation" according to Gboyega, "became an excuse for the inability to provide services"^{liv}. As for diversion, Gboyega accused State governments of often withholding their statutory

contributions to the Local governments and thereby deprived them (Local governments) of needed revenue. Sometimes as well, Gboyega continues, States also divert the statutory allocation of Local government from the Federation Account for their own use; for, for a long time, States and Local governments have maintained a joint account^{lv}.

Duplications and even, Multiplications, of same project-execution by different governmental agencies is also a corruption type that erodes financial strength of the new Local government system. It is found that the three levels of government in Nigeria – Federal, State and Local Government – are sometimes engaged in executing poverty alleviation projects through numerous Federal, State, Local, and, in some cases, nongovernmental, agencies. This result in nothing other than "intergovernmental, inter-nongovernmental and inter agency problem, as those of overlapping, jurisdiction, inadequate institutional channeling of funds and accountability"^{lvi}.

Table 3 : Some Selected Intergovernmentally Funded Poverty Alleviation Projects in Rural Areas.

Proejcts	Fed. Govt. Agencies Involved In Execution	State Govt. Agencies Involved In Execution	Local Govt. Agencies Involved In Execution	Non Govt. Agencies Involved In Execution
1. Rural Roads	DFRRI 2. Federal Min. of Agric. (Rural Department)	Rural Development Authority Ministries of Works Task forces ADP	Works Department of LGs Communities	
2. Rural Electrification	DFRRI NEPA	State Rural Electrification Board Rural Development Authority	Works Department of LGs Communities	
3. Rural Water Supply	1.DFRRI Federal Min. of Agriculture	State Water Corporation State Rural Development Authority Ministries of Health in some States e.g. Anambra	1. Agric. Departments 2. Communitie 3. Philanthropies	UNDP European Union Other international non governmental organisations
4. Food Crops	DFRRI Federal Min. of Agric. MAMSER	Min. of Agric ADP Various States grains, tree boards and committees	Agric Department Communities Local non-governmental organisation	UNDP European Union

Source : Fatai Ayisa Olasupo. "Local Government and Rural Development". *Journal of Development Alternative and Areas Studies* (formally *Scandinavian Journal of Development Alternatives and Area Studies*), USA: San Antonio, TX78232. March – June 2005, Vol. 24. No.1 & 2, P 192.

^{liii} Ibid.

^{liv} Ibid. P38

^{lv} Alex Gboyega. "History of Local Government Reforms and The Gains Made in Local Government Administration During The Transition Period". *Local Government in Nigeria and the United States: Learning from comparison*, Ife: Local Government Publication series, 1995, P 15

^{lvi} Fatai Ayisa Olasupo. "Local Government and Rural Development". *Journal of Development and Alternative and Areas Studies* (formally *Scandinavian Journal of Development Alternatives and Area Studies*), USA: San Antonio, TX78232. March – June 2005, Vol. 24. No.1 & 2, P 192.

What the table above shows is that, in certain typical localities in Nigeria, it should not surprise one to find two federal agencies, two state agencies and even a Local Government agency each executing one rural road or another without much co-ordination of personnel, equipment or funds. This tended to create in some cases the problem of who accomplished what; particularly in the area of rural road construction^{lvii}.

Often, the claims of what each agency accomplished conflict with one another. This situation according to Nwosu, during General Babangida's regime, required special Directorates of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) presidential teams to inspect in each state of the federation what each state claimed to have accomplished with DFRRI funds as well as special presidential grant of 1million naira to each of the Local Governments for the construction of urban roads. "According to him, it partially resulted into politics of signboards; that is, a particular road at different times would at different occasion, depending on the team inspecting, have sign boards showing that "this is a DFRRI constructed road at another occasion the same road would have a signboard indicating "this is a road constructed with the presidential grant"^{lviii}.

VI. CONCLUSION

Local government system in Nigeria did not start as a service delivery agent or channel through which poverty among local and rural folks could be addressed. The first and second epochs in its evolution were meant to lay the structure of modern system of local government although concrete structure that it would need to embark on service delivery had been laid – appointment of Secretary and Treasurer – and not least, the agitation of educated Nigerians for democratization of the system to accommodate them (educated class). The third epoch, when educated Nigeria assumed the mantle of leadership as leaders of government business and, later as premiers, marked the utilization of local government system as service delivery assistant to the Regional governments. It became a truly devolved body, able to generate fund, initiate and implement policies under military regime in 1976. But corruption at all the levels of government, including the Local Government itself, undermined its capacity to deliver services and thus unable to sufficiently alleviate the suffering of the local and rural poor in the country.

Nevertheless, no other body safe current Local government system, can adequately decide the needs and priorities of the local community. This is because, as Gboyega noted, "that decision of the representatives of the people regarding the needs and priorities of the local community are apt to be more accurate and, at

any rate, legitimate because it is of the community, rather than if they were made by agents of the central government"^{lix}.

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^{lviii} Ibid. P 193.

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