GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION OF BURKINA FASO, MALI.NIGER, SENEGAL AND GAMBIA: AN ANALYSIS OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

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Abstract: This paper examines Local Government Administration in Burkinafaso Division, with a discourse on grassroots development. Specifically, it reported on how effective and efficient local government administration led to grassroots development whereas the contrary leads to community stagnation. Local Government Administration in Division is currently highly ineffective and inefficient due to concentration of power at the center, mismanagement of funds and limited resources. This study provides information on Local Government Administration in Gambia in general and Division in particular. The Integrated Political Economy Framework developed by Denis A. Rondinelli, James, S. McCullough and Ronald in 1989 was adopted to support this work. The framework uses the Public choice theory in conjunction with the Public Policy Approach. The researcher adopted the mixed method of data collection using the case study design. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included; questionnaires, interview guide, and observation, while the secondary sources included journals, articles, books, magazines and internet sources. Findings revealed that, most communities who are the main beneficiaries of grassroots developments provided by councils do not benefit from the decentralization process. This is because of concentration of power at the center, corruption, and lack of autonomy and resources. Based on the findings, it was recommended that, the 2004 and 2019 law/code on the orientation of decentralization in Cameroon be reviewed to give councils more autonomy. The study provides data that can be used by the citizens to judge the performance of their councils. The study will equally enable the citizens understand the major challenges that their municipalities encounter in the provision of essential services regarding development.

Keywords: Local Government, Administrative system, Grassroots mobilization, Development, Grassroots Development, Council, Burkina Faso, Mali.Niger, Senegal and Gambia.

Introduction

It is generally acknowledged that no central government can effectively conduct administration from the centre through the civil servants based at the headquarters. This has naturally necessitated the need for some forms of decentralization to enable the central government reach out to the people at the local level (Finken, 1996). This underscores the rationale for the creation of local governments to provide services aimed at meeting the peculiar needs of people at the most basic level of society (Wraith, 1964). In other words, the major reason for the existence of local government in senegal and elsewhere in the world is to facilitate grassroots development and this has attracted serious attention both nationally and internationally. The objectives of grassroots development in burkinafaso, Senegal, mali, gambia and niger include the following: Reducing the level of rural poverty and rural unemployment; Integration of the grassroots communities into the national socio-economic and political development through effective participation in their own affairs; Improve incomes of the rural people whose major economic activity is agriculture and non-farm activities such as craft, petty trading, among others; and Improve the quality of life of the people through the provision of basic necessities such as food, potable water, electricity supply, health-care services, schools, Local Governments have and will continue to be one of the bold step to development in different parts of the world and their importance and impact on daily activities of citizens cannot be over emphasized. Local government is the order of the Government closest to the people (Okolo and Onuoha; 2017). Local Government Administration is used as a form of devolution of powers of the state. It is the government at the grassroots level that is designed to serve as instrument of rural transformation and development to the society in general.

Local Government as a means for grassroots and National development has persisted in spite of modern achievements in the fields of politics, economics, technology, communication etc. (John, 2001). The existence of Local government has always been defended on the basis that it is a current aspect of the process of democratization and intensification of mass participation in the decisionmaking process. No political system is considered complete and democratic if it does not have a system of local government. The increasing demand for local government in every part of the world is being motivated by the desire of the rural populace to contribute directly in the affairs of their communities (Linn, 1992).

Over the years, the importance of local dimension to development has been overstretched and local territorial authorities in Africa are emerging as key actors of development just like their Western and Asian counterparts (Linn, 1992). In fact, the emphasis on local government administration worldwide has resulted in almost every country having some form of sub-national government structure either to maintain control or to deliver public services across the country, or both (Heymans, 2006). These sub-national structures range from elected state, provincial, municipal or local governments with high degrees of autonomy, to local agents of the central state with minimum discretion (Devas 2008). The World Bank Report (1994) indicates that there are about 150 constitutionally decentralized countries in the world with all countries in Africa having some sort of shared responsibility in governance among centralized and decentralized units.

With the current global trend of streamlining the role of the state, the governments of most developing countries have devolved power to grassroots institutions with a view to enhance development. But in reality, such devolutions have in many cases been quite inefficient to achieve this goal. The need to empower the local people responds to the growing recognition that local people in developing countries lack control over resources and opportunity to participate in decision making processes. Unless rural people are empowered to participate in the development process, development efforts will only have partial positive effects if at all they have any positive effect (Eyong, 2007: 9).

Effective local government administration at the grass root level leads to development and growth of the country, state or community (Bird, 1995), but in the case of Fako Division; the practices are currently highly ineffective and inefficient and the performance of local government administration has been on a decline as service delivery to communities has become a challenge due to mismanagement, wide spread corruption, lack of social amenities in local government area and the concentration of power at the center. In almost every rural community in Fako Division, there is the lack of potable water, healthcare delivery facilities, accessible roads and good schools among others and also infant mortality rate and maternal deaths are on rampage (Ewumbue-Monono, 2007).

Over the years, efforts have been made to reform the local government system and to increase the participation of the people. Despite these reforms, there are still problems with the local government system like insufficient funding, lack of adequate human, material and financial resources in terms of quality and quantity to carry out its own activities, corruption and mismanagement of funds (Eyong, 2007).

Majority of the population in Fako Division live in the rural communities which have failed to witness any significant development, despite the strategic position the local government occupy in the scheme of affairs. Poverty is endemic and a stark reality that people die from unpreventable ailment. Farming which is the main occupation of rural dwellers is on a decline and the quality of primary education has fallen, healthcare delivery and access roads are in deplorable conditions (Eyong, 2007) Furthermore, the Local Government in Fako Division lacks autonomy as a result of interferences by the central government. They lack freedom to plan, execute and evaluate their own projects without interference from the central government (Pilot study by researcher).

Statement of the Problem

Lack of qualified politicians, excessive local politics, corruption, a lack of community involvement in the development process, a misalignment of priorities, poor local government revenue bases, a shortage of highly skilled workers, a lack of autonomy, and other issues prevent most local governments from realizing their full potential as vehicles for grassroots mobilization in selected states of african. Given that lack of financial autonomy and corruption are the main issues, it should be noted that since the early 1990s, the sum of funding at local governments in Nigeria has greatly increased. Because local government funding is misappropriated by state governors and House of Assembly members, and distributed among political godfathers, there is a shortage of necessary funding. The media story dated Monday; December 26, 2011 described how state governors would improperly shift resources intended for local governments to nonexistent projects. Additionally, local government funding has been diverted from the federation account by state governors via the joint Account. The difficulties in realizing LG's potential as a tool for grassroots mobilization were made significantly worse by all these corrupt practices and issues. This paper therefore tends to address these problems which have posed serious adequate grassroot mobilization in Nigeria at local government level. Thus, in this study, fundamental ideas like local government, political participation, political integration and grassroots mobilization will be defined.

Objectives of the Study

- Examine the challenges to the realization of the potentials of local government as vehicles for political participation in selected African states.
- Evaluate the challenges to the realization of the potentials of local government as vehicles for national integration in African.

Scope of Study:

The aim of this paper is highlighting the historical background of local government and decentralisation in The Burkinafaso, Mali, Senegal, Niger and Gambia, the structures of local governments in The Gambia and their functions and the challenges of local government and decentralization in The Gambia.

Operational Clarification of Terms:

Grassroot Mobilization:

Grassroots mobilization refers to the process of engaging and organizing people at the local level to advocate for social or political change. It involves empowering individuals and communities to take collective action and participate in decision-making processes, often through bottom-up approaches.

Local Government:

Local government refers to the administration of towns, cities, counties, and districts within a larger political entity like a state or nation. It's the level of government closest to citizens and is responsible for delivering essential services and addressing local needs.

Grassroot Mobilization:

Grassroots mobilization refers to the process of engaging and organizing people at the local level to bring about social or political change. It involves building a movement from the ground up, empowering individuals to participate in decision-making processes, and creating collective action to address specific issues. This approach emphasizes community involvement, local knowledge, and self-determination.

Development:

Put simply, development represents positive change. It is the process by which livelihoods are improved as communities and individuals are empowered to lead happy, healthy and prosperous lives.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Clarification:

Local Government

The conceptualization of the term "local government" has been problematic; this is because there is no unanimous acceptance definition of local government among the scholars of local government and public administration.(Kyenge 2013) posits that the concept of local government has been given various definitions by various scholars but no matter how differently the concept is defined, it focuses on the transfer of political areas by involving the inhabitants in the provision of basic needs in their respective communities. At this juncture, it is imperative to note the definitions of some of these scholars in the subject matter.

Specifically, local government is a unit of government below the central, regional or state levels established by law to exercise political authority through a representative council within a defined geographical area (Chukwuemeka et 'al, 2017). Local government constitutes the most critical level of government at which the momentum to sustain national development can be created (Ndefru, 2020: 295). Appadorai (1975) define local government as government by popularly elected bodies' charges with administration and executive duties in matters concerning the inhabitants of a particular district or place. The International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences (1976), defines Local Government as "A political sub-division of national or regional government which performs functions which nearly in all cases receive its legal power from the national or regional government but possess some degree of discretion on the making of decisions and which normally has some taxing powers. As noted in the works of Adeyemi (2012)., Achimugu, Stephen & Agbom (2013), Chukwuemeka et al., (2017:29), the Nigeria 1976 Guideline for Local Government Reform defines local government as: Government at the local level established by law to exercise specific powers within defined area and to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal government in their areas, and to ensure that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized. The United Nations Office for Public Administration quoted in Ola and Tonwe (2009). Ubani (2010), Achimugu, Stephen & Agboni (2013) defines local government as thus: A political subdivision of a nation or (in a federal system) state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the powers to impose taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such as entity is elected or otherwise locally selected.

In addition, local government is seen as a system of government whereby the state allows the establishment of local units of government with powers and authority to make local decisions on matters that affect the local communities and to mobilize local resources for implementation or execution of the decisions made (Eboh & Diejomaoh, 2010).

The aforementioned definitions by various scholars above clearly show that local government is a multidimensional concept. However, the main features of these definitions of local government are noted in the works of Maddick (1963), Mawhood (1983), Tumini (2011). Eziani (2012) and Chukwuemeka et al.(2017), Otinche (2014). These features include the facts that a local government:

- Operates within a defined geographical area
- Has certain population living within the confines of a defined territory
- Operates at the local or grassroots level.
- Has a range of constitutionally delineated function to perform
- Has a relative autonomy or independence.
- It is a legal entity of its own and can sue and be sued.
- Has council composed of elected representatives.
- It is the lower-level government in a unitary political system and lowest level government in a federal three level government.

Thus, local government in Cameroon context is established as the third tier of government, protected by the constitution, which comprise of democratically elected representative whose purpose is to provide basic services to the people at the grassroots (Adeyemi, 2013). In the system of government like Cameroon, local government is usually the fifth tier of government. In a unitary system, like Britain, it usually exists as the second order government to the national level. However, what the local governments have in common, either in federal or unitary system of government is responsible for the most immediate needs of their citizens without any other body between them and individual. In other words, it is the order of government closest to the people (Chukwuemeka et al., 2017).

Grassroots participation

Grassroots participation is simply a site of political participation that principally relates to participation which takes place at the local or grassroots level with its characteristics of passive citizens, limited access to information and lack of capacity by local natives to compel accountability from elected local representatives. It entails the involvement of people at the grassroots in the business of the government. The United Nations (1981) sees grassroots participation as the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community to actively contribute to and influence the development process and to share equitably in the consequences of development. Grassroots participation in governance is a complex mechanism, and in effect, there is no single blueprint for its design. Hence, each area is characterized by different dynamics and demographics. The methods of participation at the grassroots play a crucial role in terms of meaningful participation (Nekwaya, 2007). Grassroots

participation is rooted in democratic approaches to public policy, community planning and development, which assume that people have a right to make decisions that affect their lives (Bakare, 2016). Oakley and Marsden (1984), state that there are two main vehicles for implementing this notion of participation; (1) community development programmes which were aimed at preparing the rural population to collaborate with government development plans and (2) the establishment of formal organizations (cooperatives, farmers association, etc.) which were to provide the structure through which the rural people could have some contact with, and voice in, development programmes. Thus, participation is an indispensable element of democratic governance, such that meaningful and functional democracy depends solely on the participation of the people at the rural community (Bakare & Raji, 2019). Therefore, the conclusion can be drawn to the effect that meaningful participation of the rural poor in development is concerned with direct access to the resources necessary for development, and some active involvement and influence in the decisions affecting those resources (Burkey, 2000).

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Grassroot Government:

Grassroots government refers to a system where citizens actively participate in decision-making processes at the local level, rather than relying solely on elected officials or a centralized authority. It emphasizes citizen involvement in shaping policies and initiatives that directly affect their communities. This approach often involves community-based organizations and local governments working together to address issues and promote development.

Grassroots Development

There is a need to explain what is meant by grassroots development because it has been loosely defined in the literature. This has been rightly captured by Aroh (2002), who asserts that grassroots development has a deep foundation making it challenging to give a one-for-all kind of meaning. He avers that the term grassroots development symbolises a set of guidelines to improve the well-being of the rural dwellers that usually have a vast population in society. Grassroots development is often conflated with community or rural development and is generally used as a framework to measure the impact of community growth and expansion. Viewed in this context, particular attention is paid

to development indicators such as organisational capacity, the tradition of the community, living standard, civic and social setting, skill, knowledge, and attitudes.

Despite the seeming ambiguity surrounding the meaning of grassroots development, this study relied on the definitions given by the World Bank, Gaventa and Lewis, and George Kennedy. The World Bank (1975) views grassroots development in terms of the methods and strategies designed to promote the well-being of a specified group of people, particularly those in the local areas. The definition given by Gaventa and Lewis (1989) is not at variance with that of the World Bank. They perceive grassroots development as an alternative to the trickle-down approaches to local development in poor communities. George (1988) advances the view that grassroots development denotes the approaches and initiatives and capacity-building initiatives aimed at empowering vulnerable communities to develop following their needs and values. Viewed in this sense, grassroots development focuses on mechanisms of development that deemphasise the trickledown method or the top-bottom approach but emphasise a bottom-up approach to development which stresses the participation of the local population in addressing local issues as well as promoting and protecting the interest of the local inhabitants.

Local government systems play a crucial role in grassroots mobilization by serving as the primary link between citizens and the broader governmental structure. They are responsible for delivering essential services and facilitating citizen participation in local affairs. However, the effectiveness of this system is often hindered by issues like inadequate funding and interference from higher levels of government.

Key aspects of local government and grassroots mobilization:

- **Administrative Structure:**

  Local governments are typically organized with elected officials (chairpersons, councilors) who oversee specific areas (wards or districts). This structure aims to decentralize governance and bring decision-making closer to the people.

- **Grassroots Development:**

  Local governments are expected to promote grassroots development by addressing local needs, such as infrastructure, healthcare, and education. This involves identifying priorities, allocating resources, and implementing projects at the local level.

- **Citizen Participation:**

  A vital function of local government is to encourage citizen participation in local affairs. This can be achieved through public consultations, town hall meetings, and other forms of engagement that allow residents to voice their opinions and contribute to decision-making processes.

- **Challenges:**

  Despite their intended purpose, local governments often face challenges, including limited financial autonomy, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and interference from state or federal governments. These issues can impede their ability to effectively mobilize communities and implement development initiatives.

- **Examples:**

  In Nigeria, for instance, there are 774 local government areas, each with its own council, responsible for administering local affairs. Similarly, in India, Panchayati Raj institutions (village councils) serve as the primary unit for grassroots governance in rural areas.

- **Importance of Autonomy:**

  To enhance grassroots mobilization, it's crucial to ensure that local governments have sufficient autonomy, both financially and administratively, to effectively address local needs and promote citizen engagement.

By strengthening local government systems and fostering greater citizen participation, communities can be empowered to address their specific needs and contribute to broader development goals.

Local Government and Grassroot Mobilization

The local government remains the most effective structures to foster grassroots mobilization of the local people in the decision making. The local government is the government closest to the rural people. According to estimates, 80 percent of Nigeria's population lives in rural local governments. It is legitimate to assert that the so-called third world is a rural world, as some analysts do, and that any discussion of rural development that is meaningful must also discuss overall national development because it is at local levels that issues like unequal resource distribution, a pronounced lack of purchasing power, and grinding poverty are most acute. Therefore, in order to ensure the fulfillment of fundamental social demands, local responsibility and cooperation must be promoted. This can be done most effectively by encouraging local citizens to get involved in both their own community's issues as well as those of their local government. It is crucial to note that Nigeria's third tier of government should, at the lest expectation, prevent the deterioration of living circumstances in the rural areas of this nation. In addition to being better equipped to halt the "growing wave of rural poverty," a competent local government will also be better positioned to inspire "local cooperation," making it easier to organize and mobilize the community.

Local Government as a Vehicle of Political Participation:

This has to do with the various official procedures and mechanisms that allow the people to participate in the formulation of public policy as well as the election of representatives to their government (Paki & Inokoba, 2008:157). Equivalent to this to this, Falada (2014:18) defined Political participation is the process through which an individual participates in the political sphere of their community and has the opportunity to help determine what the common goals of the community are and the best approach to achieve these goals. Direct or indirect participation is allowed in this voluntary activity. People can participate in politics in a variety of ways, such as through choosing or electing political leaders, forming policies, participating in community affairs, and other civic activities (Falade, 2014:18).

Local Government as a Vehicle of National Integration

On whether local governments in multiethnic states can advance political stability and national cohesiveness, scholars are divided. F.G. Carnell (1962), Several authors have argued in

support of local government as a means of fostering or maintaining cohesion and stability in significantly divided governments, including Duchacek (1977) and Mazrui (1971). K. C. Coleman, the dean of local government [cf. Ojo, 1958:14], believes that federalism is a A suitable type of government to propose to communities or governments of diverse nationality that wish to establish an united administration and act as a single entity for a specific purpose but wish to maintain their independence, especially the desire to preserve their nationality in every aspect. Nevertheless, local government as a tool for integrating and fostering stability in multiethnic communities has fallen short due to the denial of the diversity in the continent, which Diamond [2009:387] estimates to number over a thousand. Politicians continue to mobilize and use ethnicity at the local level despite 5 widespread rejection of ethnic plurality. According to Diamond [2009], the result of this situation was a schizophrenic political system where persons who denied ethnicity pursued the politics of ethnic balance. As a result, local governance in Nigeria and other developing nations has been susceptible to deterioration, instability, and dissolution. As evidenced by Nigeria's experience, these efforts have either progressed in one direction—toward unification and increased centralization—or in the opposite direction—against the former Yugoslavia and the defunct Soviet Union, to name just a couple. Scholars Elazar (1987), Bash (1997), and Ayoade (1988) are notable examples from this camp. Elazar (1987:169) asserts that unless there have been additional causes compelling integration, local government grass-roots mobilization has not proven to be a very effective technique for merging multiple societies. In a similar vein, Bash [1997] contends that there is a threshold at which a nation's diversity cannot coexist.

The Local Government System In Senegal

Senegal

Capital and largest city	Dakar 🌐 14°40′N 17°25′W
Official languages	French
National languages	Wolof Serer Diola Hassaniya Arabic Pulaar Soninke Mandinka
Lingua franca	Wolof French Pulaar Serer Diola Hassaniya Arabic Soninke Malinke Arabic others
Ethnic groups (2019)[5]	39.7% Wolof 27.5% Fula

	16.0% Serer
	4.9% Mandinka
	4.2% Jola
	2.4% Soninke
	5.4% others
Religion (2019)	97.2% Islam 2.7% Christianity
Demonym(s)	Senegalese
Government	Unitary presidential republic
President	Bassirou Diomaye Faye
Prime Minister	Ousmane Sonko
President of the National Assembly	Amadou Mame Diop
Legislature	National Assembly
Independence	
Republic established	25 November 1957
from France[d]	4 April 1960
Withdrawal from the Mali Federation	20 August 1960
from France[e]	20 June 1960
as Senegal	22 September 1960
dissolution of the Senegambia Confederation	30 September 1989
Area	
Total	196,722 km² (75,955 sq mi) (86th)
Water (%)	2.1
Population	
2024 estimate	18,847,519 (67th)
GDP (PPP)	2023 estimate
Total	▲ $78.547 billion (106th)
Per capita	▲ $4,324] (156th)
GDP (nominal)	2023 estimate
Total	▲ $31.141 billion] (111th)
Per capita	▲ $1,714 (157th)
Gini (2011)	40.3 medium
HDI (2022)	▲ 0.517 low (169th)
Currency	West African CFA franc (XOF)
Time zone	UTC (GMT)
Date format	dd/mm/yyyy
Driving side	right
Calling code	+221
ISO 3166 code	SN
Internet TLD	.sn

The local government system in Senegal has a rich history that dates back to the 19th century. Initially, Senegal had four municipalities with French status: Saint-Louis, Gorée, Rufisque, and Dakar. Decentralization in Senegal began well before independence, with the creation of these municipalities. Over time, the country saw the establishment of additional municipalities in the 1950s and the empowerment of territorial chiefs to create rural communities with legal identity and financial autonomy in 1957.

Significant milestones in the evolution of the local government system include the adoption of a local authorities' code in 1966, which recognized thirty fully-fledged municipalities. Subsequent reforms in 1972 delineated special arrangements for

municipalities and rural communities, distinguishing between executive powers appointed by the central government for municipalities and elected rural councils for rural communities.

In 1990, there was a reform that introduced fully-fledged municipalities and transferred executive power to the presidents of rural councils. The local government code of 1996 further solidified the regions, municipalities, and rural communities as seats of local government, fostering collaboration between them. The creation of districts within municipalities and the establishment of a Senate in 1999 to represent local governments at the national level were also notable developments.

Territorial Organization:

Regions, Departments, and Municipalities: Senegal is divided into 14 regions, further subdivided into 45 departments, and comprising 550 municipalities (151 urban, 353 rural, 46 urban sub-districts).Decentralization System: Decentralization in Senegal began in the 19th century under the colonial system and was formalized in 1996 with the Local Governments Code, transferring powers to subnational levels of government. Senegal's local government system has undergone continuous enhancement, with a third Act of decentralization launched in 2014 to strengthen municipalities, extend decentralized status to all local towns, and elevate departments to decentralized entities. This Act aimed to empower departments by enabling them to raise taxes, expand areas of competence, reform grants and subsidies, and foster synergies among the three tiers of government. Overall, the local government system in Senegal reflects a commitment to democratic governance and transparent, equitable management involving local communities.

Function

> Decentralization of power and authority: Senegal has a three-tier decentralized system of government, with regions, departments, and municipalities all having elected local governments. This decentralization aims to bring decision-making and service delivery closer to local communities.
> Provision of public services: Local governments in Senegal have been devolved responsibility for key public services like land management, natural resource management, health, education, culture, and urban planning
> Promoting local democracy: The local government system in Senegal enables greater citizen participation in governance through elected local councils and assemblies. This strengthens democratic self-governance at the community level.
> Coordinating development: Local governments play a role in planning and coordinating local development initiatives, working with both the central government and local communities.

The Local Government System in Mali

Mali

Capital	Bamako
and largest city	12°39′N 8°0′W
Official languages	**13 national languages**
	Bambara
	Bobo
	Bozo
	Dogon, Toro So
	Fula
	Hassaniya
	Kassonke
	Maninke
	Minyanka
	Senufo, Senara
	Songhay, Koyraboro Senni
	Soninke
	Tamasheq
Working language	French (de facto)
Spoken languages	Bambara
	Fula
	Dogon
	Soninke
	Songhay
	Mandinka
	Minyanka
	Tamasheq
	Senufo
	Bobo
	Bozo
	Kassonke
	Samogo
	Dafing
	Arabic
	Hausa
Ethnic groups	33.3% Bambara
	13.3% Fula
	9.6% Soninke
	9.6% Senufo / Bwa
	8.8% Malinke
	8.7% Dogon
	5.9% Songhai
	3.5% Tuareg
	2.1% Bobo
	4.5% Others
Religion (2021)	95% Islam
	5% Others
Demonym(s)	Malian
Government	Unitary presidential republic under a military junta[8]
President	Assimi Goïta (interim)
Prime Minister	Choguel Kokalla Maïga (interim)

Legislature	National Assembly
Formation	
Mali Empire	1235
Establishment of the Sudanese Republic	24 November 1958
Merger with Senegal to create the Mali Federation	4 April 1959
Independence from France	20 June 1960
Dissolution of the Mali Federation	20 August 1960
Declaration of the Republic of Mali	22 September 1960
Area	
Total	1,241,238 km^2 (479,245 sq mi) (23rd)
Water (%)	1.6
Population	
2024 estimate	21,990,607 (61st)
Density	11.7/km^2 (30.3/sq mi) (215th)
GDP (PPP)	2023 estimate
Total	▲ $61.625 billion (115th)
Per capita	▲ $2,639 (174th)
GDP (nominal)	2023 estimate
Total	▲ $21.309 billion (123rd)
Per capita	▲ $912 (175th)
Gini (2010)	33.0 medium
HDI (2022)	▼ 0.410 low (188th)
Currency	West African CFA franc (XOF)
Time zone	UTC (GMT)
Date format	dd/mm/yyyy
Driving side	right
Calling code	+223
ISO 3166 code	ML
Internet TLD	.ml

The local government system in Mali has undergone various changes throughout its history. Mali gained independence from France in 1960 and established its own system of local governance.

In Mali, the local government system is based on a decentralized model, aiming to promote local participation and development. The country is divided into regions, which are further divided into cercles (districts), and then into communes (municipalities). Each level of government has its own set of responsibilities and functions.

Following the democratic reforms in the 1990s, Mali implemented a system of elected local officials. This allowed for greater citizen participation and representation at the local level. Local governments in Mali are responsible for providing basic services, such as education, healthcare, infrastructure development, and local economic development. The local government system in Mali is structured around several levels of decentralization, allowing for the effective management of local affairs and the promotion of local development. Here is a detailed overview of the local government system in Mali based on the provided sources:

Functions

- Construction and maintenance of roads, gardens, streetlights, drains, public highways, and parks

- Registration of deaths, marriages, and births
- Establishment and maintenance of slaughterhouses, markets, and motor parks
- Naming of roads, streets, and numbering of houses
- Establishment and maintenance of cemeteries and burial grounds
- Provision and maintenance of health services, development of natural and agricultural resources, and provision of primary, adult, and vocational education (in partnership with the state government)

The Local Government System In Niger

Niger

Capital and largest city	Niamey 🌐13°32′N 2°05′E
Official languages	French
National languages[1]	Arabic Buduma Fulfulde Gourmanchéma Hausa Kanuri Zarma Songhai Tamasheq Tassawaq Tebu
Ethnic groups (2021)[2]	53.1% Hausa 21.2% Zarma & Songhay 11.0% Tuareg 6.5% Fulani 5.9% Kanuri 0.8% Gurma 0.4% Toubou 0.4% Arab 0.9% others
Religion (2012)[3]	99.3% Islam 0.3% Christianity 0.2% Animism 0.1% irreligion
Demonym(s)	Nigerien
Government	Unitary republic under a military junta
CNSP President	Abdourahamane Tchiani
CNSP Vice President	Salifou Modi
Prime Minister	Ali Lamine Zeine
Legislature	National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland
Independence from France	
Republic proclaimed	18 December 1958
Declared	3 August 1960
2023 coup d'état	26 July 2023
Area	
Total	1,267,000 km^2 (489,000 sq mi) (21st)

Water (%)	0.02
Population	
2024 estimate	26,342,784](56th)
Density	12.1/km^2 (31.3/sq mi)
GDP (PPP)	2023 estimate
Total	▲ $42.739 billion(144th)
Per capita	▲ $1,57 (188th)
GDP (nominal)	2023 estimate
Total	▲ $17.073 billio(145th)
Per capita	▲ $6 (185th)
Gini (2014)	▲ 34
	medium
HDI (2022)	▲ 0.39
	low (189th)
Currency	West African CFA franc (XOF)
Time zone	UTC+1 (WAT)
Driving side	righ
Calling code	+227
ISO 3166 code	NE
Internet TLD	.ne

Niger's local government system is decentralized, with administrative divisions that include one capital district, Niamey, and seven regions: Agadez, Diffa, Dosso, Maradi, Tahoua, Tillaberi, and Zinder. Each region is further subdivided into departments, which are then divided into communes. Communes are the basic units of local government in Niger and are led by elected municipal councils. These councils are responsible for local governance, service delivery, and development initiatives within their respective areas.

At the regional level, prefects are appointed by the central government to oversee administrative functions and coordinate activities within their regions. Subprefects are responsible for managing districts and ensuring the implementation of government policies at the local level. This hierarchical structure ensures that governance reaches down to the grassroots level, allowing for effective administration of services and resources across the country. Local governments in Niger play a vital role in promoting local development, providing essential services such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and social welfare programs to their communities. The decentralization of power to local authorities aims to enhance citizen participation in decision-making processes and improve governance efficiency at the local level.

Functions

This system is part of the Seventh Republic of Niger, established by the Constitution of 25 November 2010. The governance structure involves a representative democratic process through national and local elections, within a multi-party system. The core functions of the local government in Niger include pre-school, primary, and adult education; public health; town planning; roads and transport; and waste disposal. The local government system in Niger is crucial for grassroots democracy, citizen participation, and the effective delivery of essential services at the local level.

The Local Government in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso

Capital and largest city	Ouagadougou
	🌐12°22′N 1°32′W
Official languages	Mooré
	Bissa
	Dyula
	Fula
Working languages	English
	French
Ethnic groups (2010 est.)	52% Mossi
	8.4% Fula
	7% Gurma
	4.9% Bobo
	4.6% Gurunsi
	4.5% Senufo
	2.4% Lobi
	1.9% Tuareg
	0.8% Dyula
Demonym(s)	Burkinabè
	Burkinese
Government	Unitary republic under a military junta
Interim President and MPSR President	Ibrahim Traoré
Prime Minister	Apollinaire Joachim Kyélem de Tambèla
Legislature	Transitional Legislative Assembly
History	
Republic of Upper Volta proclaimed	11 December 1958
Independence from France	5 August 1960
1966 Upper Voltan coup d'état	3 January 1966
2014 Burkina Faso uprising	28 October – 3 November 2014
Jan 2022 Burkina Faso coup d'état	23–24 January 2022
Sep 2022 Burkina Faso coup d'état	30 September 2022
Area	
Total	274,223 km^2 (105,878 sq mi) (74th)
Water (%)	0.146%
Population	
2023 estimate	22,489,126 (60th)
Density	64/km^2 (165.8/sq mi)
GDP (PPP)	2023 estimate
Total	▲ $62.788 billion (114th)
Per capita	▲ $2,682 (171st)
GDP (nominal)	2023 estimate
Total	▲ $20.785 billion (124th)
Per capita	▲ $888[6] (180th)
Gini (2020)	▬ 38.9
	medium
HDI (2022)	▼ 0.438
	low (185th)
Currency	West African CFA franc (XOF)
Time zone	UTC+00:00

Date format	dd/mm/yyyy
Driving side	right
Calling code	+226
ISO 3166 code	BF
Internet TLD	.bf

Axes belonging to a Neolithic culture have been found in the north of Burkina Faso. The Bobo, the Lobi, and the Gurunsi are the earliest known inhabitants of the country. About the 15th century CE, conquering horsemen invaded the region from the south and founded the Gurma and Mossi kingdoms, in the eastern and central areas, respectively. Several Mossi kingdoms developed, the most powerful of which was that of Ouagadougou, located in the central of the country. Headed by an emperor, the morho naba ("great lord"), the Ouagadougou Mossi state defeated attempted invasions by the Songhai and Fulani empires yet maintained valuable commercial links with major western African trading powers, including the Dyula, the Hausa, and the Asante.

Burkina Faso is divided into regions, which in turn are divided into provinces, which are further divided into departments. Each region is administered by a governor, and each province is administered by a high commissioner. The local government system in Burkina Faso is characterized by a unitary state structure with a two-tier local government system that includes regions, municipalities, and provinces. Decentralization has been a key aspect of governance in Burkina Faso since 1991, with a devolution process ongoing since 1995. The country is divided into 13 regions, each further divided into 368 municipalities, which are shared between urban and rural status municipalities based on demographic and economic criteria. The responsibilities of subnational governments in Burkina Faso have been progressively devolved to local authorities through a step-by-step process. This devolution of competences includes the transfer of 10 areas of responsibility to regional and local authorities, although there can be confusion regarding the scope of devolved responsibilities and financial transfers to support the implementation of decentralization, programs like the Programmers Decentralization and Municipal Development (PDDC) have been established. These programs aim to enhance the technical and financial capacity of municipalities to provide basic social services and improve local democracy. Initiatives include supporting local elected officials, civil society representatives, and municipal media to engage more with citizens, improving training for local actors, enhancing local finance mechanisms, and strengthening accountability linkages between policymakers and citizens

Functions

- ➤ Local Democracy: The local government system supports local elected officials, civil society, and the media to improve communication with citizens, increase transparency around policy decisions, and make local development planning more participatory.
- ➤ Capacity Building: The local government system provides training and support to local elected officials, municipal staff, and regional institutions like the Regional Institute of Administration (IRA) to help them better fulfill their duties and responsibilities.
- ➤ Local Finance: The central government provides financial transfers to local authorities based on their needs, and the local government system advises municipalities on increasing their own revenue sources.

- ➤ Coordination and Planning: At the regional level, local governments play a role in coordinating development and planning across their territory.

Local Government Structures in the Gambia: An Overview

The Gambia is the smallest country on the African mainland. It is surrounded by Senegal, except for a 60 km Atlantic Ocean front (Hughes, Arnold& David Perfect ,2008). Although small in size, The Gambia harbors a wealth of terrestrial, coastal, marine and wetland habitats and species of local, 111 national, regional and global significance, making Gambia an attractive tourist destination and a hub for trade in the region. The country has a population of 1.8 million with a significant portion living abroad (GBOS, 2013). The current population has been growing at a fairly high rate of 2.8 % per year over the last decade (World Bank, 2013). The main languages of the country are English, Mandinka, Wolof, Jola and Fula, and 90 % of Gambians are Muslim (GBOS, 2014). Since its independence, little has been done to improve the living conditions of the Gambian population. The Gambia is only ranked at 172nd place for human development, and 70 % of its population lives below the poverty threshold (UNDP, 2014) Looking into the history of decentralisation in The Gambia, Munawar Alam and Rishi Athreya (2008) noted that: "Decentralisation in The Gambia was initiated in the late 1980s in consultation with international agencies such as the UNDP, EDF, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the World Bank. However, the momentum of the reform process has waxed and waned due to domestic issues. In 1986 the Gambia Government worked together with UNECA on organising a high-level workshop. In the early 1990s the UNDP commissioned a study to make recommendations on decentralisation in the country. The UNDP report was submitted to the government in 1993. In 1994 the Ministry of Local Government, together with other concerned ministries, submitted a joint paper that was approved by the Cabinet in April 1994" (M. Alam & R. Athreya, 2008:28) Futhermore, the National Policy for decentralisation and local government observes that: For administrative purposes, the country is divided into five administrative regions headed by Regional Governors, appointed by the President. The other two regions; Banjul and Kanifing are municipalities which are headed by Mayors who are elected to office. The five regions are further divided into 36 Districts headed by Chiefs. Chieftaincy posts, governed by customary law had hitherto been traditional appointments, which were hereditary. The 1997 Constitution however brought about changes in this situation to allow for the appointment of Chiefs by the President. At the village level, eligibility for being Alkali (village head) was predicated on among other things on yard ownership, thus women were nominally excluded from elections as they generally do not qualify as yard owners under customary laws. Hover, this is changing as women Alkalis are emerging (MLRG, 2014:11). Since the attainment of Independence in 1965 from Great Britain, successive governments have in one way or the way initiated and promoted issues of local government and decentralisation in their respective national policy agendas. This was basically as a result of ensuring democratic governance at all levels and the popualr demand from people which to a large extent arose because of the experiences from colonial governments in which power was highly centralised and exclusive. Decentralisation in The Gambia was therefore conceived within the framework of the country's local government and decentralisation reform program. As an alternative country-wide

development strategy, it was derived from a broad consultative process that involved all local, national and international stakeholders designed to strengthening local government in order to facilitate more effective citizen participation in governance and accountability in the delivery of public services as the basis for decentralization(MLRG, 2014:6). Having gain significant momentum at post independent period in The Gambia, the current national policy for decentralisation and local government (2015-2024) observed that the government of the first republic had some issues with their quest to promote local government and decentralisation due to domestic issues. However, the coming of the government of the second republic, they injected vigour and dynamism. Before going further into the structures of local government in The Gambia, it is significant to note that local government in The Gambia is adequately supported by institutional and legal frameworks.

Munawwar Alam (2009) in his work entitled 'Decentralisation in The Gambia' observed that local government in The Gambia is based on the 1997 constitution, sections 193-194 and 214(3); the Local Government Act (2002); the Local Government Amendment Acts (2004, 2006 and 2007); and the Local Government Finance and Audit Act (2004). These legal frameworks instituted by the Government of The Gambia has helped paved the way for the creation of various structures of local governments such as Municipal councils headed by Mayors, Regional Governors offices headed Regional Governors, 112 Local government councils headed by councillors and Village heads headed by Village 'Alkalos'. The roles of these local government structures are clearly spelt out in either the constitution of the the Local Government Act. Having instituted these structures, the constitution further prescribed the provision of central government grants to councils and gave councils the authority to provide basic services in education, health, agriculture, road maintanance, sanitation and animal husbandry, with a concomitant transfer of resources from central to local governments (Munawwar Alam, 2009:8). Given the fact that these local government structures are guided by a comprehensive national policy, it also significant to highlight the policy actions that guide the governments policy objectives towards the promotion of local government and decentralisation. This will help us to adequately understand why some structures execute their functions in a certain way. These policy actions are in line with current trends and realities and they include: political decentralization; administrative decentralization; fiscal decentralization; decentralized development planning and budgeting; local economic development; popular participation and accountability; the involvement of private sector non-state actors in local governance and promoting the rights-based approach to development (MLRG, 2014:7). After given a brief background on the Gambia and the emergence of local government, the subsequent parts of this article will examine the structures of local government. It will highlight their mandates, revenue earning methods, election and level of autonomy. The challenges they face will be highlighted, too. Some possible recommendations will be highlighted at the end.

Municipal Councils & Area Councils

The Municipal councils otherwise known as Municipality were established in The Gambia by the Independent Electoral Comission in accordance to Article 192 of the constitution of the Republic of The Gambia. The Mayors are elected through elections of which residents of the area elect their Mayors. In the Gambia, the Mayor as in the case of Banjul and Kanifing Municipality are responsible for the day to day running of the Municipality. Futhermore, under the local government areas are different wards which are reprensented by Councillors who are elected by people living in the concerned areas. These elected Councillors work under the Municipalities through specialized committees such as health, agriculture, environment, education, youth, women and children and sports and culture. The municipal councils in The Gambia established a Technical Advisory Committee that will seek to advice the council on issues related to the improvement of the general welfare of people living in the area. Furthermore, there are Ward Development Committees and under them are Sub Ward Development Committees in which councillors represent their people. The municipalities based on the report from the Sub Ward Development Committees intervene in local communities under their purview to respond to the development needs of people living in the area. With respect to the revenue earning methods of Municipalities in The Gambia, they normally raise money from daily market fees collected from vendors, business trade licences and fees, land rates, car park fees and subvention from central government. These funds are later invested into communities through the construction of public taps, community centers, roads and community markets. Now concerning Area councils, they are headed by a Chairman who is mandated with the task of running the day to the day activities of the Area Council. In the Gambia, there are 5 area councils namely, Basse Area Council, Mansakonko Area Council, Kerewan Area Council, Jangjangbureh Area Council and Kuntaur Area Council. These area councils were responsible for the collection of rates and duties which were later paid to the central government.

Regional Governors' Offices

Now moving into the specificities on the role of regional Governors, the local government act of 2002 provides that the Governor shall represent the President and the government accordingly and can exercise executive powers in the area (Local government Act, 2002:36). Furthermore, the act provides that the Governor can advice the Minister of Local Government on issues that affect the area and as well policies and programmes. The local government act of 2002 also provides that Governors shall be responsible for the inspection and monitoring of activities of local government authorities and can carry out functions assigned by the President or National Assembly (ibid). 113 Concerning the financial autonomy of Regional Governors Offices, the local government act of 2002 provides that every council has an autonomy over its financial matters.

Traditional Rulers

(ALKALOS & CHIEFS) In the Gambia, the Alkalos (Village Head) and Chiefs (District Traditional Head) commonly known as Seyfolu represents the traditional authorities in the governance process. The role of the Seyfolu has been purely traditional and have been exsiting since British rule as representatives of the British government in the protectorate. The local government act of 2002 provides that the President shall appoint a District Seyfolu in consultation with the Minister of Local Governments. The Disctrict Seyfolu is also responsible for the promotion of peace and good order in their districts. Given the fact that their roles are traditional roles, they are also responsible for the promotion and protection of customs and the wellbeing of

their people. Furthermore, the Seyfolu play a significant role in resoluting conflicts arisen from land disputes,marriages and among communities Now in trying to examine the role of Alkalos, it is essential to note that their roles have been purely traditional and are the custodians of tradition and culture in the various villages they head. In line with the local government and decentralisation changes in The Gambia, there has been some changes in the Alkaloship as a structure of the local government and decentralisation process. The local government act of 2002 further expanded the roles of the Alkalos.

The local government act of 2002 provides that: the Alkalo shall promote good order, peace and stability in his or her village, promote general economic development of his or her village, safeguard the customs and traditions of his or her village and shall perform other task assigned by the Council or District authority (Local government act, 2002: 40). Having highlighted the local government structures in The Gambia, the legal framework that guides their operations and the roles they play, the next section of this article will present the challenges that local governments face in the process of executing their roles and some policy actions.

Theoretical Framework

This research is anchored on Decentralisation theory. Decentralisation theory which serves as the study's theoretical underpinning was found to be exhaustive in explaining local government autonomy and the challenges of grassroots development. Rondinelli (1981) and Heywood (1997) are proponents of this theory. The theory explains how the central government transfers authority and responsibility for public activities to subordinate or quasi-independent government organisations. It is concerned with how the central government assigns roles and obligations to various institutions in order for them to perform better and more effectively. There are two major types of decentralisation that have been identified in the literature: deconcentration and devolution (Olowu, 1995). Within the same administrative structure, the former refers to the shift of governmental responsibilities and resources from the centre to the periphery. It denotes an internal kind of responsibility delegation among organisation officials. Devolution, on the other hand, entails the transfer of specific responsibilities and resources to the community, which is typically represented by their own leaders or elected (i.e. non-appointed) officials, and delegation entails the delegation of power and autonomy to the elected officials to function.

Decentralization theorists (Rondinelli, 1981; Heywood, 1997) also believe that decentralisation has fulfilled its promise in terms of enhancing democracy at the national level and the central government's commitment to rural development. It has thus helped to move away from a development bias toward urban areas and to effectively manage the coordination of integrated rural development initiatives, assuring their long-term viability. Decentralization has also helped to alleviate poverty caused by regional disparities by paying more attention to the associated socio-economic factors and facilitating the gradual increase in development efforts and the promotion of cooperation between the government and nongovernmental organisations, all while increasing transparency, accountability, and institutional response capability.

Empirical Review

Abiola-Oke, Aina & Abiose (2019) carried a study on Democratization of Disempowerment in Africa. Centre for African Social Sciences. To carry out this study, the researcher collected primary data through a questionnaire which was administered at some study area. The population for this study is the residents in Africa, from the population; a sample was drawn using convenient sampling. The researcher was able to distribute 1070 questionnaires, and retrieved 1007. The data was analysed using both descriptive and statistical analysis. The result of the finding from the analysis made shows that local government has great potentials in grassroot mobilization for both sustainable development in Nigeria. Wanshan, Qingyi & Gozgor (2020) conducted a study on Local Government and the Challenges of Community and Rural Development in Nigeria: The Way Forward. The researchers used ADF (Augmented Dickey-Fuller) and PP (Phillips-Perron) tests, causality tests, quantile regression, and fixed-effect panel models on data from 1995-2018. According to empirical findings, local government administration in the entire country faces an array of problems and difficulties, including interference by the federal and state governments with local governments' constitutionally mandated functions, issues with administration, arrangement and organization, issues with public perceptions and beliefs, and financial difficulties. Grassroots Leadership and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria: Periscoping the Impediments and Exploring the Imperative was the subject of research by Jiang and Wang in 2022. It does so by using the techniques of literature research investigation, information technology retrieval, and excavation. The index weight of the subsystem for rural revitalization in province A is computed using the entropy weight method. According to the findings, the outcome is that local government administration in Nigeria cannot effectively address issues, based on learnings from developed and emerging nations in the globalized world as regards the realization of the potentials of LG as vehicle for grassroot mobilization in Nigeria except the nation changes its existing administrative culture.

Research Methodology

This research adopted the mixed method of data collection which consisted of both the qualitative and quantitative data collection, using the descriptive design. The quantitative method was used mainly to measure level of Local Government Administration as an instrument of grassroots development in burkinafaso local government Division, through statistical records and questionnaires. Also the qualitative method was used to collect and analyze data.

Data for this study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source was collected from questionnaires, interviews and observations. The secondary source was obtained from books, related academic journals, articles, internet sources, official documents and statistical information and particularly useful was the rich material on local government administration kept and documented at the councils. This study is largely descriptive and quantitative thus percentages, ratios and proportions, constitute its major analytical tools.

Results and Discussion

> - **The study identified the following challenges**: The study found that Nigeria's local government system faces

a myriad of issues that tend to diminish its capability and ability to accomplish developmental objectives as well as goals. As a result, they have fallen short of meeting the local demands and needs effectively. The respondents have laid out a number of explanations why the local government system have performed poorly, with the following being the most important:

➢ **Lack of Qualified Politicians:** The respondents agreed that most of the time, the most competent candidates do not run for office in local government councils; as a result, unqualified people are elected as council members, supervisory council members, and council chairmen. School dropouts frequently serve as council members or chairman in various local government councils, as correctly noted by Ganduje (2008). These individuals are incapable of conceptualizing and formulating development plans and programs that will transform their local governments.

➢ **Next in line for the poor performance of local government is Corruption**: Many local government councils lack the resources necessary for development as a result of corruption. At the local government level, corruption takes the form of inflated contracts given to friends for projects that may not even be completed once the contractor receives a significant portion of the contract's value as a mobilization fee. The local administrations are also targets of corruption, which takes the shape of questionable expenditures including claims for duty tours, hospitality payments, and financial aid, among other things.

➢ **Furthermore, another challenge identified is Lack of Community Participation in the development Process:** Local governments get their sense of self-government or grassroots democracy through the involvement of the populace in decision-making and administration. The moment the grassroots are excluded from local government matters, they feel alienated and cease to support any development initiatives of such administration.

➢ **The study also found that Misplacement of Priorities is a significant challenge**: This is a result of the people's lack of participation in decisions that directly impact them. According to this premise, many development initiatives carried out by some local governments 9 do not take into account the fundamental requirements of the people they serve. This leads to either waste of funds or the people revolting in such project.

➢ **Poor Revenue Base of Local Governments is also a challenge**: Since the majority of the local governments are wholly dependent on federal funds to operate, the inconsistencies of the country's oil revenue have negatively impacted on their ability to deliver services to the general public. One important problem that has hindered the efforts of most local governments in grassroot mobilization is the absence of a reliable revenue base.

➢ **Among the challenges were the Dearth of Highly Skilled Manpower**: In Nigeria, the majority of local governments are understaffed. This emphasizes how important human resources are to the growth process. In most local governments across the nation, the majority of the staff members on hand are generalists, including administrative/executive officers, clerks, skilled artisans, office support staff (messengers), typists, and others.

➢ **Lastly, the study identifies Lack of Autonomy as one of the major challenges**: The state governments continuously reduce the authority of the local governments. Some local governments have been reduced to local administration or local branches of state administration as a result of the states' excessive control over them. They are not included in government priorities like the fundamental health program, significant agricultural programs, or housing programs, among others.

Summary of Findings

This research work examined the challenges to the realization of the potentials of local government as vehicles for grassroot mobilization in Nigeria. From data presentation and analysis of the study, the following findings were made: Local government has failed to encourage involvement at the grassroots level. The main causes of this failure are the following: ineffective community participation in governance; a lack of qualified and competent office holders; apathy brought on by the public's loss of faith in politicians; the absence of credible local elections; a lack of adequate political education and awareness; the absence of feedback mechanisms; and the suzerainty of the state, to name a few. These difficulties have made it more difficult for the local government in Nigeria to fulfill its potential as vehicle for grassroots mobilization.

Conclusion

It has been observed by some scholars that decentralization or local governments as a whole has the potential of improving livelihood at the base and facilitate local development better than the central government. The argument is that local governments are closer to the people and can easily identify community needs and address them using participatory and democratic approaches. The findings of this paper showed that services provided by the council authorities is far below the expectation of a good number of the inhabitants.

As a result of our findings, the study came to the conclusion that there is little political mobilization at the grassroots stage in Nigeria. Many, particularly the dispossessed and excluded grassroots population, now lack interest in the political process; as a result, they are not dedicated to the electoral process and other political obligations. This study showed that the political system and governance methods in Nigeria, particularly at the third tier of government, do not encourage thorough and effective participation in politics. The evaluation also identified a few barriers to effective political engagement in African selected states.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusion, suggestions are offered to increase the amount of grassroots involvement in local administration processes based on the research findings and conclusion. To promote grassroots involvement and leadership of local governance processes and structures, a persistent civil-based political awareness, training, and awakening initiative needs to be launched. To inform people of its significance and benefits of taking an active role in politics, formal and informal strategies

should both be used. The local population should be encouraged to understand their political duties and responsibilities with the local government authorities in project design and execution through the implementation of concrete measures. This will ensure community ownership of projects, which is necessary for program sustainability as well as the growth and development of grassroots democracy. As a result of our research, we were able to determine that the state governors' control over the LG administration is the primary barrier to genuine grassroots democracy and growth. The Nigerian constitution must be amended immediately to give local government system in Nigeria the needed autonomy in order to tame the abuses and impunity of the governors and other higher authorities. It will be more challenging for state governors to arbitrarily dissolve elected local councils by state fiat for various political reasons as a result of the strengthening of local government rules. Actionable legal frameworks must be put in place that will free state election bodies from the influence of the governors and other higher authorities in order to address the undemocratic phenomenon of fraudulent, corrupt, and violent electoral processes. The civil society should be given more control in the hiring of staff and running of these state electoral bodies so that they can become truly impartial and independent. The establishment of democratic consolidation and grassroots governance in Nigeria depends on steps to make the electoral process more open, reputable, and free.

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