

INAUGURAL LECTURE SERIES 284

**GOVERNING THE LOCALITIES:
LESSONS (UN) LEARNT**

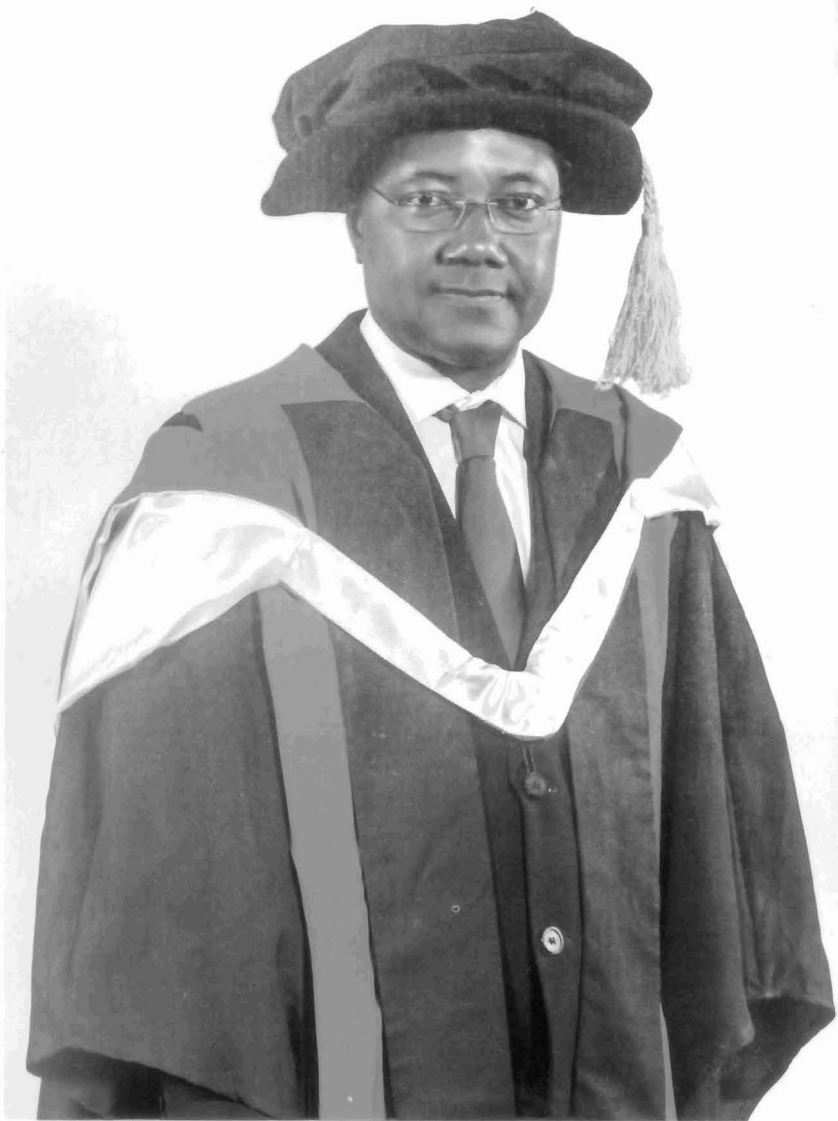
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I. Introduction

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir

Eminent Scholars

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I consider it a privilege to present this inaugural lecture, the seventh in the series this session. Coincidentally, this is also a significant year for me as it marks my thirtieth year in the employment of this university as an academic. It is a leap year and since in Greek and Yoruba mythologies, leap years are regarded as periods of unexpected productivity, presenting this lecture at this time comes with a fulfilment of hopes and aspirations. More so, this is also the fourth inaugural lecture to be presented by a member of staff in the Department of Local Government Studies of this University. My predecessors on this dais have been Professor Oladimeji Aborisade, who delivered the first of the inaugural lectures from the Department on the topic “That All Politics is Local” in 1993. Professor Bamidele Olowu followed in 1996 with a lecture on “Bureaucracy and the People: The Nigèrian Experience”; and Professor Adekunle Awotokun on “Localism, Communitarianism and the Logic of Grassroots Democracy in Nigeria’s Political Landscape” in 2015. A notable trend about the topics of these lectures and the timing is that they beamed their searchlights on the key issues of the period with sound theoretical perspectives and erudition. Not only did they bring to the fore the issues of the day, they also illuminated our understanding of why the issues of governance, local governance and nation building remain intriguing in an unending flow of discourse and learning. This, without looking back, is the academic tradition I have elected to walk, in deciding to address you on the topic, *Governing the Localities: Lessons (Un) learnt*.

However, coming up with a fitting subject matter for this inaugural lecture was not without its twists and turns. Since an inaugural lecture is supposed to be a constellation of myriad ideas and reflections on a scholar’s intellectual trajectories and dispositions,

stepping back to the very beginning was intriguing. The topic “Local Government: an endangered species?” was initially considered but shelved as it could send a wrong signal of a total failure of an institution in dire need of life support. Another, “Governing the Locals: the twist, the turns” conveyed an assumed portrayal of distinctive category between the locals and the rest of the society. Albeit, localities are an assumed universe of discourse in this lecture; hence, the topic, *Governing the Localities: Lessons (Un) learnt.*

My foray into academics was not by happenstance; it was evidently divine. As a teenager, I was opportune to observe at a distance the acrimonious political activities of the First Republic in Nigeria. The activities of the major political actors (Awolowo, Azikiwe and Tafawa Balewa, etc.) during this time, most especially on the radio, was a spectacle to behold. Undoubtedly, the political developments during the first military putsch and the civil war had their own share of influence on my engagement with understanding the science and art of governance. The pursuit of this interest spurred my studying Political Science up to PhD level. Also, the political activities in the Second Republic coupled with the violence witnessed rekindled my interest in what could motivate the spate of violence exhibited by the politicians and the people. Could it be the motivation to do what is right, or the desperation to do it their own way? Whatever that entails!

My engagement in the Department of Local Government Studies as an Assistant Lecturer came on the heels of the expiration of the Second Republic and the incursion of the second military regime with its warts and all. The discourse at this auspicious time centered on three main themes: federalism, democratization and rural development. The critical issue about rural development and governance was how to engage the local government on development activities and bring governance closer to the people. This would necessitate a reform regime that should streamline the structure, functions and administration of the local councils for the purpose of good governance and development.

Since my engagement as a lecturer, my research tours have involved critical issues of governance and development, ranging from democratization, local governance studies and global-local nexus (glocalisation) and public policy issues. The more engaging theme has been the reform of the public sector. While the reform of the local state has engaged my attention, and curious enough, the debates continue to rage on the suitability of local government to carry out its mandate, and the rationale for the failure of the various reform efforts. The local government system has not only come under harsh criticisms from citizens, some have also indignantly suggested that the local governments should be scrapped.

Furthermore, in the course of my academic career, I have come across prodigious scholars and mentors with whom I honed my knowledge in the quest for the great adventure of teaching and research and from whose fountains of knowledge my own learning has been refreshed. Such individuals include Professors Richard Joseph, Oyeleye Oyediran and Oladimeji Aborisade, who recruited me into the Department. Others are Professors Bamidele Olowu, Ladipo Adamolekun, Alex Gboyega (my PhD supervisor who cultivated my lifelong interest in local government reform at a time when public sector reform was becoming an albatross in Nigeria), and numerous others. My close encounters with Professors Olowu and Gboyega and their scholarly works actually fired my academic interests in the field of governance and development studies. My research outputs as we shall see shortly in this lecture are a manifestation of these diverse encounters and interventions.

II. Mapping the Discourse

It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who could profit by the new order. This lukewarmness arises partly from fear of their adversaries, who have the laws in their favour, and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have had an actual experience of it.—
(Machiavelli, 1950)

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, looking back on the more than 50 years since Nigeria's independence, it can be argued that one dominant theme in the post-colonial agenda of governance and quest for development is the restructuring of local government. Having observed the various alterations that have occurred in the structure of the Nigerian federation over the years, it is noticed that the changes in the balance of power among the tiers of government in the federal system, from the impact which prolonged military rule had on national-territorial administration to the various efforts at post-independence constitution-making, have been marked by challenges that could be said to comprise an admixture of progress and regression. This also regrettably includes the emergence of the oil economy and its impact on revenue generation and allocation, and the role and place of local administration in the overall architecture of post-colonial governance.

Different studies have meticulously chronicled and analyzed the weight of various reforms, direct and incidental, which were carried out during the lead-up to independence and in the years since then. The studies captured a number of significant developments in the post-colonial quest for a more effective system of local governance. These are: a) the 1976 local

government reforms pronounced by the Murtala Mohammed-Obasanjo administration and the subsequent debates on local governance that took place in the Constituent Assembly which drafted the Constitution for the Nigerian Second Republic; b) the incorporation of the principle of elected local government council into the 1979 Constitution; c) the 1992 decision by the Babangida military administration to abolish ministries of local government, make direct resource allocation to local governments, and introduce the principle of the separation of executive and legislative functions at the local level; d) the 1998 nationwide elections held into the 774 local government councils as part of the lead-up to the inauguration of the Nigerian Fourth Republic in May 1999; e) the 2003 Sanda Ndayako Commission on Local Government Administration enabled by the Council of State and; f) the on-going agitation by stakeholders for the review of the local government status in the 1999 Constitution (Adeyeye, 1989; Adeyeye, 2013).

By the same token, there is a consensus of opinions among the local government scholars that in spite of all the efforts that have been deployed, Nigerians are still an appreciable distance away from enjoying the benefits of a system of local governance that is empowered to be a legitimate driver in the national development project and a site for the pursuit of everyday democracy.

Adeyeye (2013) corroborated the aforesaid by surmising the experiences of the Nigerian local governance system having observed that all of the efforts at reform had to a large extent been futile. Why has this been so? The explanations that have been proffered are many and varied. They include the:

- failure of post-independence governments to depart radically from the colonial logic of local administration;
- adverse impact of prolonged military rule on the Nigerian federal system, including the over-

centralization and concentration of power in the federal centre;

- flip-flops in policy and orientation, including a rapid turnover and inconsistency, that is both reflective of the chronic instability of the Nigerian political system and its costs on local administration;
- absence of substantive autonomy for local governments, and their effective subordination to other tiers of government within an overall structure of power that consigns them to a residual position;
- inadequacy of mechanisms of accountability in the local governance system through which officials could be held responsible by citizens for their performance;
- ambiguities in the 1999 Constitution with regard to the functioning of the local government system;
- widespread corruption that takes place in the local government system; and
- non-viability of most local governments as autonomous economic units, including their low internal revenue base and near-total dependence on statutory federal allocations.

The various explanations that have been advanced for the inability of local governance in Nigeria to fulfill its mandate and promise expectedly are not individually and collectively without an element of validity to them. However, they seem to be half-done in some cases and simply symptomatic of larger problems in a number of others. To come to grips with the crisis of local governance in Nigeria such as it has been expressed in many of the studies that have been carried out, it will be necessary to revisit the entire project of the post-colonial state and nation-building with a view to having a coherent, clear and comprehensive vision of democracy and development in which the citizen is at the centre and the

community constitutes a prime building block (Adeyeye, 2011; Olukoshi, 2011).

Moreover, the response of the Nigerian people to all of these developments has been to fall back on the logic of the two publics. In the formal public of the modern state system, they have been content to utilize short-run maximization strategies—aiding and abetting corrupt activities, and efforts designed to extract as much as they can from the ‘national cake’—through frivolous demands for more states and local government units even when the existing ones can hardly pay staff salaries or allowing themselves to be bribed to support unpopular government policies. On the other hand, in the informal public arena where primary loyalty is based on region, religion, sub-nationalities and other primordial loyalties, citizens have invested resources in building veritable levels of infrastructures to improve their life chances. They have done this in collaboration with citizens of the towns and villages in the ‘diaspora’ as well as with those who are not indigenes of these communities but who simply live and work in these towns and villages (Ekeh, 1975; Olowu & Erero, 1995 & Adeyeye, 2000).

III. Governance: An Exploration

Throughout the world, governance issues have become increasingly crucial in recent years in all sectors and at all organizational levels-social, economic, cultural, administrative and political. The term governance is as old as government itself. Both terms date back to late 14th century and derived their etymology from the Old French words (*gouvernance* and *government*). Initially, their meanings were very close if not identical, with each referring to acts and/or the manner of government. By the mid-16th century, however, *gouvernement* denoted a “system by which something is governed”, and by the early 18th century it further evolved to acquire the meaning of a “governing authority”. In time,

though, the term governance gradually became marginalized, and by the 19th century it was deemed to reflect an incipient archaism (ILyIN, 2013). For the next 100 years, it would hardly be used as a political term. Dictionaries would define *government* in terms of a governing authority, including the political order and its institutional framework, while *governance* was treated as the agency and process of governing, and was often viewed as archaic (ILyIN, *ibid*).

In light of the third wave of democratization in the mid-1970s, the usage of these terms began to change once again, partly in response to the notion, sustainable development (Brundtland, 1987) and increasing globalization. Now, the term *governance*, with its emphasis on the process and manner of governing, seemed well suited to embody the shift from a model of asymmetrical top-down government to an alternative vision based on reciprocal partnerships intended to achieve political order. The new emphasis on interaction and networking was applied to many issues and research projects, including national and subnational policy-making (Rhodes, 1997), public management and new institutional economics.

Meanwhile, organizations such as the IMF, the UN and its agencies, the World Bank and NGOs were quick to pick up the term and use it in a variety of ways. Together with its derived term, *good governance* (Poluha, 2002), the catch-all term *governance* has since become a buzzword in the vocabulary of policy and administrative reform in developing countries dependent on support from international development agencies (Mkandawire, 2010).

A similar and perhaps more promising idea is a notion of *better* or *enhanced* governance (Unsworth, 2006). As its proponent, Chibba (2009), claims, "...the general term 'enhanced governance' denotes any and all endeavours to improve governance, including 'good governance' and 'good enough governance' though each of these two specific terms will continue to be used sparingly, and only where appropriate." Impressive results were obtained using a

better governance approach stem mainly from research projects undertaken at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex (GOVERNANCE 2007; *An Upside-down View of Governance* 2010).

Meanwhile, Francis Fukuyama justly examines notions of governance along dimensions of capacity and autonomy as part of a state-centered vision (Fukuyama, 2013), marking a visible departure from the state society approach of the 1980s. Empirically, his efforts are amply justified by a highly operational research tool for knowing more about a narrower notion of governance.

Putting the debate of governance in proper perspective for us to have a good global-local grasp of the issues involved, the definitions below are instructive:

Governance refers to self-organizing, interorganizational networks characterized by interdependence, resource-exchange, rules of the game, and significant autonomy from the state (Rhodes, 1997: 15).

Global governance is conceived to include systems of rule at all levels of human activity - from the family to the international organization - in which the pursuit of goals through the exercise of control has transnational repercussions (Rosenau, 1995: 13).

Governance is the stewardship of formal and informal political rules of the game. Governance refers to those measures that involve setting the rules for the exercise of power and settling conflicts over such rules (Hyden, 1999: 185).

These definitions of governance are a small sample of many that can be encountered when assessing the literature. Is there any core

to be identified in these definitions or do they refer to completely different phenomena? As noted above, all of them refer to something broader than government. The new use of governance does not point at *state* actors and institutions as the only relevant institutions and actors in the authoritative allocation of values. They all, to some extent, focus on the role of networks in the pursuit of common goals; these networks could be intergovernmental or inter-organizational; they could be transnational or they could be networks of trust and reciprocity crossing the state-society divide (Hyden, 1999).

IV. Conceptualizing Local Government

The official definition and narrative given by the Nigerian government is a fitting starting point. It defines a local government, *ad nauseam*, as:

Government at local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. These powers should give the council substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and financial powers 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 governments in their areas, and to ensure, through devolution of functions to these councils and through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized (FGN, 1976).

Other attempts to define local government both for official and analytical purposes indicate that this definition embraces all the salient attributes of modern local government. The United States of America's Bureau of Census defines local government as including

three characteristics, namely: the unit must have existence as a legal corporate personality (to sue and be sued); possess governmental character, and finally, it must enjoy substantial autonomy “as evidenced by fiscal and administrative independence, subject only to the requirements of state law and supervision” (Blair, 1964). These liberal legal provisions explain the strong ‘home-rule’ and local autonomy traditions exercised by the American local government system. Both the British and Canadian local government systems approximate the American system in its vitality and independence.

Therefore, taking the “modern state” as his frame of reference, Hugh Whalen, a Canadian political analyst, characterizes local authorities in such states as possessing:

a given territory and population; institutional structure for legislative, executive and administrative purposes, a separate legal identity; a range of powers and functions authorized by delegation from the appropriate central or intermediate legislature; and lastly, within the ambit of such delegation, autonomy—including fiscal autonomy (Whalen, 1970).

From a similar perspective, the British scholar, W. A. Robson, defines local government as involving:

the conception of a territorial, non-sovereign community possessing the legal right and the necessary organization to regulate its own affairs. This in turn pre-supposes the existence of a local authority with power to act independently of external control as well as the participation of the local community in the administration of its own affairs (Robson, 1949).

Whatever may be their differences, these definitions are clearly useful to summarize the salient characteristics of what local government is and what it is expected to be. These are: a) a given

territory, population and constitutional body; b) a range of powers and functions; and c) autonomy especially with respect to finance (Feldman & Goldrick, 1974).

But then, this is not to say it could maximize any or all of these values within a political system without bringing the sovereignty of the central government into question. These three characteristics, however, indicate the consensus of opinion about the pre-requisites for local government fulfilment of its traditional purposes, namely, community participation, functional-efficiency and resource-mobilization (Olowu, 1979). Although the image of local governments in some developed countries has undoubtedly undergone considerable reform, (Stoker, 1991) especially with regards to their financial autonomy, abundant opportunities exist for local governments in a developing country like Nigeria to perform these tripartite roles.

V. Decentralisation and Local Governance: Context and Processes

Decentralisation refers to a restructuring of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility among institutions of governance at the central, regional and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity. Based on this principle, functions (or tasks) are transferred to the lowest institutional or social level that is capable (or potentially capable) of completing them. Decentralisation relates to the role of and the relationship between central and sub-national institutions, whether they are public, private or civic. There are four main types of decentralisation: political, fiscal, administrative and divestment (UNDP, 2004).

Since the 1990s, decentralisation has increasingly gained prominence. Whether by own choice or as a result of external pressures, the large majority of developing countries are currently involved in some form of decentralisation, with varying degrees of commitment and success. These processes are fundamentally altering the institutional landscape in many of these countries. They are adding a new sphere of government at the local level,

with (elected) local authorities bound to operate close to citizens and required by law to provide a wide range of public goods and services (Adeyeye, 2008; Adeyeye, 2009).

What is different?

Decentralisation is not a novel term; it has been used since the early 1950s for a wide range of institutional reform programmes. In post-colonial Africa, for instance, decentralisation was attempted in a range of countries. However, many of these efforts failed to live up to their initial promise. In some countries, reforms were used by autocratic regimes as a means of tightening their grip over rural areas and became a tool of oppression. In other countries, the reforms never went beyond their initial stage, thus creating local authorities without democratic legitimacy or genuine powers for local decision-making and self-governance. However, the current wave of decentralisation is considered to be qualitatively different. A number of extenuating factors have contributed to this development:

- the erosion of the highly centralised 'developmental state' in the late 1980s;
- the rediscovery of the 'local dimension' of development and related recognition of local governments' potential role and added-value in promoting local development;
- the quest for improved efficiency in the delivery of basic social services (health, education, water and sanitation, etc.), especially in reaching out to poor people;
- the global imperative for democratisation and good governance, which has fuelled societal demands for local democracy and accountable local governments;
- the rise of participatory development approaches that allow a wide range of new actors to express

their voice and have a stake in policy processes, with local governments, in particular, lobbying to be recognized as a dialogue partner (at all relevant levels);

the need to cope with the dual challenge of managing the exponential urban growth in most developing countries while ensuring proper spatial development and regional planning, (including appropriate linkages between cities and rural areas with a view to enhancing local economic development) (European Commission, 2007).

From the foregoing, decentralisation is no longer reduced to a public-sector phenomenon rather it has now been considerably broadened to accommodate the following notions:

Conceived in a context of democratisation, the new decentralisation strategies claim to favour 'devolution' of power and resources to elected local governments as a distinct set of state actors, with an own identity, legitimacy and added-value in the development process. Thus, the new strategies seek to decentralize part of the management of public affairs to democratically elected entities that are accountable to citizens.

- The purpose is not only to put in place effective local governments, but to promote 'local governance'. This implies a different way of exercising local power, based on principles such as participation, transparency and accountability. It means going beyond the 'vertical' decentralisation of power, responsibility and resources from the central to the local level in order to promote a 'horizontal' process aimed at ensuring a participatory management of local affairs, with a key role for civil society. This

entails the need to integrate principles of gender equality to ensure that the potential benefits of decentralisation are equally shared by both women and men. It also calls for a wide range of institutional innovations (such as the introduction of participatory budget processes).

- Last but not the least, the new decentralisation strategies are embedded in broader reforms of the state. The question is not simply 'who is best placed to provide what service'. In Nigeria for example, the decentralisation debate raises more fundamental questions on what type of state is needed in the 21st century, on ways and means to improve state-society relations and on the necessary adaptation of the central state to both regionalisation and decentralisation trends (Adeyeye, 2013).

VI. Local Government Reform Dilemmas in Nigeria

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, much of my work for the past few years has been on dynamics of reform. I sought to understand why reform failure had increasingly concentrated in the public sector. Gradually, I developed the notion of the 'reform trap'. It shows how certain economic and political conditions make a country prone to reform failure, once reform has started, the cycles of vested interest becomes a trap from which it is difficult to escape, so much that good governance is put in abeyance. But except we inquire in detail into the local government system, we will not fully appreciate the argument being made here, and I will take some time to present an analysis of it.

The 1976 Reforms: The Starting Point

Ever since the Macpherson Constitution of 1951 initiated reform at the local government level, local government reforms have been routinized in Nigeria. However, it was not until 1976 that a clear landmark was set. The 1976 reform of local government in Nigeria

was the product of a nation-wide cross fertilization of ideas which began in 1975 in which zonal coordinative committees submitted briefs on various aspects of local government administration and politics. These were deliberated upon, and appropriate guidelines were derived.

The 1976 reform was part of the then Federal Military Government's programme of return to civil rule. Its *raison d'etre* were put forward to include the necessity to rationalize and stabilize government at the local level; the need to stimulate democratic self-government and encourage initiative and leadership potential at the grassroots level. 'Building a sound foundation for democracy' was thus an important premise. Beyond this was the expressed need for rapid local development. Both the local democratic and developmentalistic values were meant, above all, 'to entrust political responsibility to where it is most crucial and most beneficial, that is, to the people' (Nigeria, 1976—'Foreword'). The principal aims of local government were, therefore, listed as:

The 1976 reform provided for a multi-purpose 'single-tier' local authority to be called 'local government'. The institutions were to have complete budgets to enable the whole facet of local government in an area to be identified, costed and coordinated. The reform provided for the Chief Executive system of management, increased the functions of local governments and abolished the old divisional administrations. Each local government was thenceforth to have a population between 150,000 and 800,000 but with no upper limits for a metropolis which need not be split on account of population size. The concern for size neither reflected local community identity nor was it considered in the light of local government capacity to carry out strategic functions. Provision was, however, made for the establishment of subordinate councils to which the local governments could delegate specific functions.

In general, it was prescribed that the functions which local governments should perform should be those (i) which required

detailed local knowledge for efficient provision; (ii) in which success depended on community responsiveness and participation; and (iii) which were of a personal nature requiring provision close to where the individuals affected live, and in which significant use of discretion or understanding of individuals was needed (Nigeria, 1976:1). This way, three sets of local government functions were recognized, namely the exclusive (Mandatory), concurrent, and permissive (additional) functions. The additional functions are normally not listed in statutes but are assigned by the appropriate legislative body in the intergovernmental context.

One of the most important features of the 1976 reform was its unequivocal recognition of local government as the **third-tier** of government in Nigerian federalism, with the necessary accoutrements of a level of government, most of all, a grant of some measure of autonomy. This was consolidated in the 1979 Constitution. Yet, other provisions of the reform seemed to withdraw with the left hand the autonomy that was given with the right, and this undermined their institutional autonomy. It was, therefore, only a matter of time for the ambiguities at the level of ideas to show up in practice, much to the disadvantage of the local government.

Also, the post-1976 local government system was uniform in several respects including size of the local government functions; membership; tenure of LGCs; structure and institutions; establishment of Local Government Service Boards (LGSBs) to superintend over staff matters; and local government ministries to support local government in community development. The advantages of uniformity include that it enables local governments to optimize their status as a third level of government; they fit better into the overall structure of government if they have uniform area, population institution, staff and resources; uniformity facilitates the avoidance of varied interpretations of local governments' participation in local service provision; permits the application of uniform service conditions and salary scales throughout the country; and enhances political cooperation and

effectiveness of Local Government Councils (LGCs) in areas of common interest (Nwosu, 1986; 262-65). Uniformity was also rationalized on the basis that an uncoordinated approach to local government reform would be chaotic and lead to agitations for varied models of local government (Nigeria, 1976).

The uniformity imposed by the 1976 reforms, however had its demerits. It contradicted the Localist justification of local government on the basis of diversity of local conditions. In the United States for instance, diversity characterizes local administrations: each local government is culturally evolved by the people of the locality, with the common denominator being that they are elected representatives, and the people are self-governing (Ostrom, et al, 1988).

However, the 1976 local government experiment ended on a sour note as most of its policy recommendations especially the institution of a democratically elected local government system could not be realised. The 1984 Dasuki Report that followed collapsed before its implementation while the 1988 and 1992 Babangida Reforms with all their core recommendations seemingly created more problems than they were meant to solve. With the advent of the 1999 Constitution, the reform challenges still remain that of democratisation, decentralisation reform, finance, conduct of council election and good governance.

VII. Local Government and the 1999 Constitution

Structure and Functions

The 1999 Constitution provides, by section 7(1) thereof, that:

The system of local government by democratically elected local government councils is under this Constitution guaranteed; and accordingly, the Government of every State shall, subject to Section 8 of this Constitution, ensure their existence under a Law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions of such councils” (emphasis mine)

A simple interpretation of the aforementioned provision is that the 1999 Constitution has invariably made Local Government a creature of State Government, for the fact that the aforementioned italicized words have established and positioned Local Government under the control and supervision of State Government. However, the seemingly ambiguous nature of this provision which gives State Government seemingly absolute control over Local Government could be misinterpreted and abused, taking into consideration the untoward attitudes and inclination of Nigerian politicians for maladministration and misuse of power.

Funding

By section 7(6) of the 1999 Constitution, provision has been made for the funding of local government as follows:

“Subject to the provisions of this Constitution:

- (a) The National Assembly shall make provisions for statutory allocation of public revenue to local government councils in the Federation; and
- (b) The House of Assembly of a State shall make provisions for statutory allocation of public revenue to local government councils within the State”.

If the two sources mentioned above are added to its own internally generated revenue, it is clear that local government has three recognisable sources of revenue. It must be stated, however, that from experience, the State Governments have not always been readily forthcoming in fulfilling its financial obligations to local government. A reasonable way should be found, perhaps, through appropriate legislation, of compelling the State Government to contribute its expected share of revenue into the coffers of local governments as and when due. In the same vein, section 162 (3) (5) & (6) state thus:

(3) Any amount standing to the credit of the Federation Account shall be distributed among the Federal and State Governments and the local government councils in each State on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly.

(5) The amount standing to the credit of local government councils in the Federation Account shall also be allocated to the States for the benefit of their local government councils on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly.

(6) Each State shall maintain a special account to be called "State Joint Local Account" into which shall be paid all allocations to the local government councils of the State from the Federation Account and from the Government of the State.

Pertaining to the issue of "State Joint Local Government Account", there is evidence to show that many States have established and are operating this Account. However, there were allegations of manipulation and highhandedness levelled against some State Governments in the operation of the Account. In some cases, they were alleged to have diverted funds meant for councils to other ventures. But whatever may be the case, it is important that this

crucial issue be resolved in order that local councils may be accountable for the funds allocated to them.

Creation of Local Government

Historically, attempts to create local government in Nigeria during civilian dispensations had always been mired in controversies; and many a time created more problems than it had attempted to solve. As well, the inability of the civilian leaderships in accomplishing this task had always been laid at the doorstep of the contradictions in the country's Constitutions. Moreover, the current constitutional bottleneck generated by state governments' attempts to create local government cannot be divorced from the ambiguities created by various interpretations of the provisions of the 1999 Constitution.

The central principle of the provisions of the 1999 Constitution on local government is the recognition of the state government's power over local government. This results from the fact that, under the division of power, local government is not (except for certain aspects of it) mentioned either in the body of the Constitution or in the legislative lists as being within federal competence; as a residual matter therefore, it lies within the exclusive authority of the state governments (s.4(7) and s.5(2)). Thus the authority of state government over local government derives from the fact that it is a residual matter, and not, as is commonly supposed, from the provision of the Constitution requiring every state government to ensure the existence of democratically elected local government councils under a law which provides for their establishment, structure, composition, finances and functions (s.7(1)). That provision is not a grant of power, far from that: it is a restriction on the way a state government is to exercise its power over local government. It assures that a state government has power over local government under some other provisions of the Constitution, i.e., as a residual matter under s.4(7) and s.5(2). However, the provision (s.7(1) is an explicit recognition by the Constitution that the power to establish local government, to define its structure, composition and functions belongs to the state government.

The ideas emerging from the reform of local government and the 1999 Constitution are with a view to putting local government administration/activities in proper perspectives. The dominant concern in the reform regimes is that the incentives and accountability framework faced by the local councils is not conducive to a focus on service delivery consistent with citizen preferences. As a result, corruption, mismanagement, waste, and inefficiencies permeate local governments. Top-down hierarchical controls are ineffective; there is little accountability because citizens are not empowered to hold government accountable (Adeyeye, 2007).

VIII. Democratisation Practices and Local Government Elections Since 1999

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, my research tours did not also renege on the assessment of democratisation practices at the grassroots, one of which is an edited book “Local Government and Democracy: The Nigerian Experience” (Adeyeye, 1995) that specifically exposed the military punches thrown against an effective local government system in the military days. Another is a survey that was the outcome of my report (cf. Adeyeye, 2012) as the INEC district coordinator, Osun Senatorial Districts on research exercise organized by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Nationwide in 2012 on the title, *Democratization at the Grassroots in Nigeria from 1999-2011*. It was a research that assessed the democratic practices at the grassroots in Nigeria by examining issues relating to election, election umpires, electoral governance, and development process amongst others.

Let me assert here that viable democratic local government system serves as an impetus that ushers a full blown democracy (Adeyeye, 1995) and that good governance begins with a democratic foundation built on the platform of transparency and credible elections that well represented the people and their interest. Prior to 1999, the military set-up with its inherent ideals and values is antithetical to the tenets of a democratic local government system

and the local government systems created under such set-up were not responsive and beneficial (Adeyeye & Fagbohun, 1996; Adeyeye & Fagbohun, 2000); in the words of Gboyega (1987), militarism was detrimental to the local government system.

At the dawn of democracy, the search for a people-centered government that could afford people good governance possibly led to an overwhelming consensus among Nigerians that the electoral system was in dire need of reform. Furthermore, the country's search for solutions that would bring about an enduring political culture in the polity, and especially at the grassroots, agitated for the reform. One could have reasonably concluded that with the return to civil rule in Nigeria since 29th May 1999, grassroots administration should have experienced some level of orderliness coupled with regular and orderly conduct of elections. Unfortunately, the reverse is the case as it will be examined in the later part of this section, local government in Nigeria is bedeviled by infrequent council elections. Worse still, consolidating Nigeria's democracy through the conduct of credible elections has remained an albatross. It is even more worrisome at the local government level where sustaining democracy through the grassroots is mired in controversies. Different issues are thus responsible for this untoward development (Adeyeye, 2002): the local government councils have had more of skeletal elections and caretaker committees than true democratic regimes since 1999. Even with skeletal elections, the compositions of the councils was suspect, as elections were alleged to have been rigged in favour of the political party in power, people were disenfranchised and in some cases violence unleashed on the opponents.

Concerning local government elections, it has been 17 years since the fourth republic, and the ideal expectation is that local government system would have consistently experienced 5 election periods after the uniform 1998 council elections which ought to have ended in 2002. Table 1 is presented against this expectation.

Table 1: States' Records of Elections into Local Government Councils since the Inception of the 4th Republic (1999)

S/N	State	Years Elections Were Conducted				No. of Times Elections were Conducted
1.	Anambra	2013				1
2.	Ebonyi	2004	2010	*2013		3
3.	Oyo	2004	2007			2
4.	Osun	2004	2007			2
5.	Ondo	2004	*2007			2
6.	Ekiti	2004	2009	2015		3
7.	Ogun	2004	2007	2012		3
8.	Kwara	2004	2010	2013		3
9.	Lagos	2004	2008	2012		3
10.	Akwa Ibom	2004	2008	2012		3
11.	Cross River	2004	2010	2013		3
12.	Edo	2004	*2007	2013		3
13.	Abia	2004	2008			2
14.	Bayelsa	2004	*2010			2
15.	Rivers	2004	2011	2015		3
16.	Delta	2004	*2008	2014		3
17.	Imo	2004	*2008			2
18.	Benue	2004	2007	2012		3
19.	Enugu	2004	2007	2011	2013	4
20.	Nasarawa	2004	2009	2014		3
21.	Kano	2004	2007	2009	2014	4
22.	Kastina	2004	2010			2
23.	Sokoto	2004	2008	2011		3
24.	Kebbi	2004	2008	2012		3
25.	Kogi	2004	2008	2013		3
26.	Taraba	2004	2007	2012		3
27.	Zamfara	2004	2012			2
28.	Bauchi	2004	2008			2
29.	Yobe	2004	2009	2013		3
30.	Borno	2004	2007			2
31.	Plateau	2004	2008	2014		3
32.	Kaduna	2004	2012			2
33.	Jigawa	2004	2011	2014		3
34.	Niger	2004	2008	2011		3
35.	Adamawa	2004	2008	2012		3
36.	Gombe	2004	2013			2
37.	Abuja	2004	2007	2010	2013	4

** Years in which LG elections were held but councils later dissolved or elections nullified*

Source: Author's Compilation, 2015

Table 1 lends credence to the inconsistency in the councils' electoral system. The cause of this is not far-fetched; the state governments exerted undue control over the councils against the provision of section 7 (1) and (8) of the Constitution, authorizing

states to run the council affairs with unelected committees in the interim while putting in place appropriate arrangements for the conduct of fresh polls. This control further reflects in states' intermittent dissolution of the council at will even before the three-year tenure recognized by the Decree 36 of 1998 Electoral Law (the Basic Constitutional and Transitional Provisions) lapses.

Other interference includes the continual imposition of interim administration or caretaker committees contrary to the 1999 constitutional provision; the incessant postponement of council elections; arbitrary dismissal of local government elected chairmen and councilors from office; conduct of council elections at their will and terms perhaps to later secure grassroots supports through imposed chairmen and thus holding onto power; and even for elected councils, governors still influence the abrupt termination of their tenures in order to appoint loyal caretaker committees (CC) (Adeyeye, 2012; Adeyeye, 2013).

Other causes are instances of political crisis and turbulence; incessant injunctions arising from court cases over council elections and contestations over the conduct of SIECs and; the general boycotting of election by especially major opposition political parties in the state.

Initially, the issue started in 2002 when the tenure of the elected members ought to expire and new elections were to be conducted. The lobby for tenure extension of LG elected officials by one year, and postponement of election by SIEC to allow INEC register more voters and parties, gave room for the states to appoint CC until after the national elections in 2003. LG elections were later held nationwide in 2004.

Aside the few states that conducted council polls in 2007, LG councils in Nigeria have been under continual operation of one transition committee or the other. Even the states that conducted elections recorded inconsistency between the period of one council elections and another; many state governments seldom allowed the

chairmen to complete a span of 3 years before the dissolution of their tenure. Some spent 2 years while others, 3. Most state governments further flouted the May 2012 directive of the House of Representatives that all states should comply with the constitutional provision on the legitimacy of the local government regimes by conducting elections. Several states ignored the directive on reasons peculiar to them. The worst scenario seems to be that of Anambra State where the tussle of political godfatherism bedeviled the State. The Councils were run by series of appointed chairmen for 13 solid years! The State only conducted one but controversial election (on December 2013). By and large, these untoward practices by state governments have inadvertently undermined good democratic process in many states and localities in the country.

IX. The State of Poverty in Nigeria

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, poverty in Nigerian rural and urban localities is an issue which has generated a lot of statements of intent and attracted policies targeting the poor. Such statements are unwittingly populist in nature and due to lack of basic data and understanding of the issue, policies and programmes have been inappropriate or have ended up benefiting the elite rather than the poor. The greatest problems of these programmes are their ad-hoc nature, poor grasps of the problems of poverty and inability to identify the right target.

My research has delved into the challenges of development as an integral aspect of local governance, particularly in my quest for a better understanding and appreciation of the extent of poverty and the true state of living standard across Nigerian localities (Adeyeye, 2013). As it stands, we will not sufficiently interpret the implication of poverty for citizens in all its ramifications if we merely perceive it as state of being poor. It is better captured graphically in terms of development indices.

It is thus appropriate at this point to expound Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI, 2015) as it reveals the latest statistics on measure of acute poverty in Nigeria, purposely to

afford us see how poverty is experienced in each state in the country. As shown in Table 2 (the more extreme indicators of destitution: deprivation thresholds of those who are both MPI poor and destitute), the statistics is provided on the basis of 10 indicators which are used to estimate overall poverty in three dimensions—Education, Health and Living standards.

Also in Fig. 1, the proportion of the population that is poor and deprived in each of 10 indicators (excluding the deprivations of non-poor people) is revealed wherein Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) shows at the household level the percentage of Nigerians deprived across the three dimensions as well as the percentage that are **‘multidimensionally’** poor (‘MPI poor’) and the deprivations that stir them in the face.

Table 2: The more extreme indicators of destitution: deprivation thresholds of those who are both MPI poor and destitute

Dimension	Indicator	Deprived if	Relative Weight
Education	Years of schooling	No household member has completed at least one year of schooling	1/6
	Child School Attendance	No child is attending school up to the age at which they should finish class 6 .	1/6
Health	Child Mortality	2 or more children have died in the household.	1/6
	Nutrition	Severe undernourishment of any adult or any child	1/6
Living Standard	Electricity	The household has no electricity (no change).	1/18
	Improved Sanitation	There is no facility (open defecation).	1/18
	Safe Drinking Water	The household does not have access to safe drinking water, or safe water is more than a 45-minute walk (round trip)	1/18
	Flooring	The household has a dirt, sand, or dung floor (no change).	1/18
	Cooking Fuel	The household cooks with dung or wood (coal/lignite/charcoal are now non-deprived).	1/18
	Assets	The household has no assets (radio, mobile phone etc.) and no car.	1/18

Source: OPHI Country Briefing December 2015

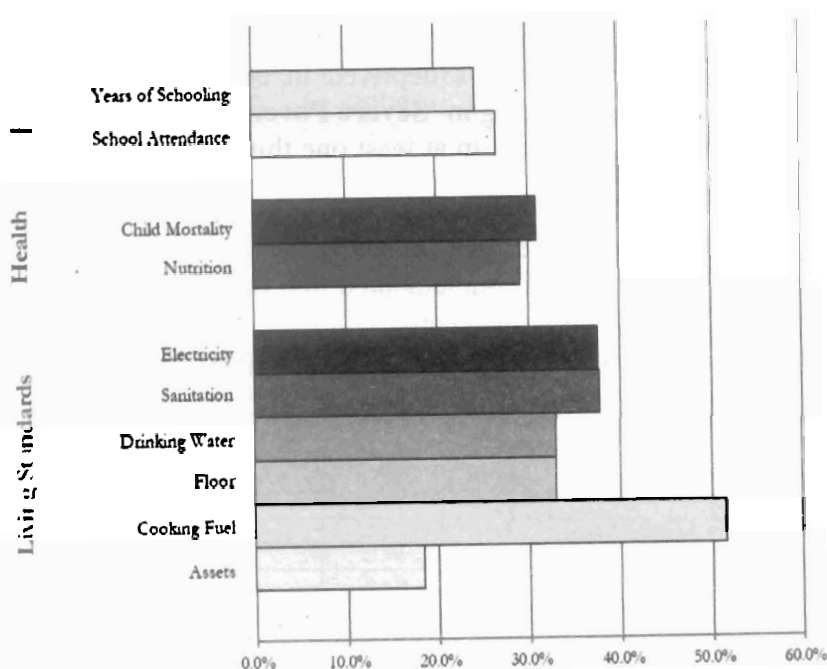


Fig. 1: The proportion of the population that is poor and deprived in each of 10 indicators (excluding the deprivations of non-poor people)

Source: OPHI Country Briefing December 2015

Multidimensional Poverty at State Level

In Table 3, a clearer disparity in poverty level within Nigeria is presented. It is a breakdown of statistics that reveals the measure of acute poverty across states and localities. For example, an 'MPI poor' person is deprived in minimum of one third of the weighted indicators; in other words, the cutoff for poverty (k) is 33.33%. A single deprivation may not represent poverty. The **incidence of poverty or headcount ratio (H)** represents the percentage of Nigeria's population that is 'MPI poor' while **intensity of their poverty (A)** represents the average proportion of indicators in which the poor are deprived. The MPI is thus arrived at by multiplying the H by the average A across the poor ($MPI = H \times A$)

to adequately show both the people's stake in poverty and the degree to which they are deprived. Whoever is deprived in **20-33.3%** of the weighted indicators is considered '**Vulnerable to Poverty**', and a person that is deprived in **50% or more** (i.e. **k=50%**), is identified as being in '**Severe Poverty**'. Those referred to as '**Destitute**' are deprived in at least one third of more extreme indicators.

In sum, it is regrettable that considering all measures and programmes initiated and implemented by the three levels of government in the context of poverty eradication, a larger number of Nigerian localities continue to be ravaged by poverty.

Table 3: MPI Results at both National and State Levels

Region	Multidimensional Poverty Index MPI (HxA)	Percentage of Poor People (H) Incidence (k = 33.3%)	Percentage of Population			Destitute
			Average Intensity Across the Poor (A)	Vulnerable to Poverty (k = 20% - 33.3%)	In Severe Poverty (k = 50%)	
Nigeria	0.303	53.3%	56.8%	17.5%	32.8%	34.6%
Urban	0.132	28.1%	47.0%	22.2%	10.5%	-
Rural	0.416	70.0%	59.5%	14.4%	47.7%	-
Lagos	0.035	8.5%	41.1%	20.0%	1.1%	1.3%
Osun	0.043	10.9%	39.7%	22.1%	1.5%	1.9%
Anambra	0.050	11.2%	44.5%	19.1%	2.7%	3.1%
Ekiti	0.051	12.9%	39.6%	27.0%	2.4%	2.8%
Edo	0.080	19.2%	41.5%	23.9%	4.5%	6.5%
Imo	0.083	19.8%	41.9%	24.0%	4.9%	6.2%
Abia	0.088	21.0%	42.0%	25.3%	4.8%	7.7%
Rivers	0.088	21.1%	41.6%	21.3%	4.7%	6.3%
Akwa Ibom	0.099	23.8%	41.6%	22.8%	5.2%	7.2%
Kwara	0.099	23.7%	41.9%	23.3%	6.2%	7.0%
Delta	0.107	25.1%	42.5%	22.5%	6.6%	9.6%
FCT (Abuja)	0.108	23.5%	45.7%	14.9%	9.5%	10.5%
Ogun	0.112	26.4%	42.5%	30.5%	5.6%	9.3%
Kogi	0.113	26.1%	43.2%	27.1%	6.4%	8.5%
Bayelsa	0.120	29.0%	41.4%	26.8%	5.9%	8.6%
Enugu	0.123	28.8%	42.6%	27.8%	6.9%	13.7%
Ondo	0.127	27.9%	45.4%	26.6%	8.2%	11.0%
Nasarawa	0.251	52.4%	48.0%	24.9%	23.2%	26.5%
Ebonyi	0.265	56.0%	47.3%	25.1%	23.5%	26.6%
Plateau	0.273	51.6%	52.9%	22.4%	26.9%	30.5%
Benue	0.280	59.2%	47.3%	23.4%	24.8%	24.8%
Adamawa	0.295	59.0%	49.9%	20.4%	27.7%	30.1%
Kaduna	0.311	56.5%	55.1%	18.2%	34.1%	36.9%
Niger	0.324	61.2%	52.9%	16.2%	33.2%	37.8%
Borno	0.401	70.1%	57.2%	16.2%	49.3%	54.7%
Kano	0.434	76.4%	56.8%	11.9%	48.2%	50.1%
Taraba	0.448	77.7%	57.7%	13.4%	53.1%	51.2%
Gombe	0.471	76.9%	61.2%	13.2%	56.1%	57.0%
Katsina	0.520	82.2%	63.2%	10.8%	63.7%	60.8%
Sokoto	0.548	85.3%	64.2%	8.2%	66.4%	66.8%
Jigawa	0.552	88.4%	62.4%	6.5%	69.0%	70.2%
Kebbi	0.553	86.0%	64.3%	8.7%	69.9%	71.3%
Bauchi	0.583	86.6%	67.3%	6.4%	70.7%	66.3%
Zamfara	0.605	91.9%	65.8%	5.8%	72.7%	74.1%
Yobe	0.635	90.2%	70.4%	4.5%	77.6%	84.6%

Source: OPHI Country Briefing December 2015

X. ICT, e-Governance and e-Local Governance

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are bringing about major changes in the way in which local and regional/state authorities operate, interact and communicate internally or with other administrations, enterprises and citizens. As the closest level of government to the citizen and the main providers of public services, local and regional authorities are in the front line in the development of e-government and e-governance initiative (Misuraca, 2007).

Against this background, e-government is the composite trend of government at all levels, mainly through their operational arm, the administration and, subsequently through the access of citizens to public affairs, aimed at promoting: 1) a better and more efficient administration; 2) more effective inter-administration and administration-enterprise relationships and; 3) user-empowering servicing and more transparent access of citizens to political decision-making.

E-governance is instead generally referred to as the capacity of ICTs to harness changes, looking not only at the increasing use of ICTs as a technological tool for delivering services online and improving the efficiency of administrations, but as a new paradigm for opening up government services to citizens, thereby increasing transparency and participation, and making government more responsive and centered upon its citizens' needs. Further, e-governance concerns a rapidly evolving multi-dimensional, multi-actor, multi-level and inter-sectoral area of application, influenced not only by the ICT-revolution, but mainly by globalization and state transformation.

Moreover, when local government employs e-strategies for the benefits of local citizens, we refer to it as e-local government; it is an initiative whereby all key stakeholders—the local government, social groups, private establishment and citizens—benefit from successful implementation of e-strategies. However, e-local

government is narrower in scope as it deals only with the development and delivery of online local government services to the citizen and businesses such as e-tax, e-procurement, e-participation amongst others.

More important also is the wider concept, e-local governance, which defines and assesses the impacts of technologies on the practice and administration of local governments and the relationships existing between the local government functionaries and the local community-community development associations, local elected bodies, NGOs, corporate entities, etc. E-local governance as a category is expected to encompass a series of necessary steps for the local government to successfully develop, administer and ensure provision of services to the local public via e-platform that ensures an efficient, effective and transparent governance system.

From the foregoing, there is an urgent need to recognize and strengthen the pivotal role of ICT in driving the process of local governance. At the local level, it is recognized that the appropriate use and integration of ICTs in the local communities can enhance and support social and economic development, particularly in empowering local officials and community representatives. It can also ensure linkages and community cohesion; provide timely, efficient, transparent and accountable services; improve the management of the services and operations; facilitate planning and policy making processes; monitor and record physical and social changes in the local government areas.

Moreover, the integration of ICTs into local governance can lead to informed citizenry being the basis of effective participatory governance and a knowledgeable community. Also, an important aspect of the application of ICTs at the local level relates to the recognition of the governance system as a combination of several actors and organizations who are critical stakeholders in facilitating good governance at the local level.

A cursory look at local government in Nigeria shows that it still suffers from poor governance, and its corollary—inability to properly administer and deliver services. However, from 1999, the new civilian administration has strongly advocated the use of ICT at all levels of government to facilitate better service delivery. Adeyeye & Aladesanmi (2010) in “Aligning ICT for Service Delivery in Nigerian Local Government” reviewed the challenges facing ICT application and opportunities accruable from it, especially in the area of service delivery. Findings from the work revealed an incredibly low level of ICT presence and application. Likewise, lack of web presence and web portals has deprived the LGs of efficient delivery of basic services; more so, most councils are riddled with bureaucratic lethargy. And that an implementation of appropriate ICT solutions offers an opportunity for reducing the cost of service delivery, creates easy access to government information, and facilitates openness and transparency in governance. The work recommended the development of web-based application to harvest data, catalyse data processing, develop capacity building, establish telecentres and integrate the LG councils into the national ICT strategic plan.

Furthermore, the global concern for good governance has engineered the idea of e-governance as a catalyst for transformational governance. As a new paradigm for opening up government services to citizens through the use of ICT, e-governance adoption traverses global, national, state, and local levels of government. Despite its importance, little evidence exists in Africa nay Nigeria, on its effects on local government manifest capacity. Another research work, Adeyeye & Aladesanmi (2011) “Re-inventing local government capacity in Nigeria: The e-governance imperative”, espoused the potential role of e-governance in re-inventing local government capacity in Nigeria, and its challenges and opportunities. It reviewed the various governments’ initiatives on e-governance between 1999 and 2010. Findings revealed that there was little impact of the deployment of ICT and their application for the administration of local government. Likewise, there were notable integration problems

due to lack of political will on the part of government to make the application of ICT effective. The work concluded that efficient local governance requires a responsive public administration system; and that a good deal of the promise of e-governance can be more readily accomplished not by mere adoption of ICT but also through appropriate adaptation.

XI. Conclusion

In concluding this lecture, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, it is necessary to raise a poser: where did we go wrong? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that we have not generally asked ourselves what it is that we want in Nigerian localities and what local government by its nature can supply. As Martin Diamond (1973) rightly asserted, "All political institutions and processes are only in the light of the purposes or ends for which men devise them or which unintentionally they come to serve". If what people want from an institution is contrary to what the institution can give, the result is at best a blend of processes that work at cross-purposes.

Besides, lessons are everywhere to be learnt, unlearnt and relearnt; however, in the context of local government, the Nigerian State has continually faltered to positively readdress the course of history and grasp the opportunity to address the current challenges. Nigeria is a static and restless State because it is a structure built on mistrust and contradictions. The 1999 Constitution (as amended) says "We the People, having agreed" as the source of authority, and yet it was a product of Decree 24 of 1999, foisted on the Fourth Republic without public debate, elite consensus or robust consultation (Adeyeye, 2000; Adeyeye, 2009).

By the same token, a constitution is the *grundnorm* whose source of authority is the people through a referendum of what has been drafted by a Constituent Assembly. Otherwise it could have been a transition document that would have ushered in a process of robust debate and consultation in view of something more inclusive and integral. But that has become farfetched. The ruling elite who are beneficiaries of the grand lie are not about to compel a cessation of

all their benefits and unilateral power. Instead they chose what has now been termed a civilian coup: a process of consultation and constitutional amendment but with off-limits whose ultimate conclusions were reached even before the process began.

My submission is that local government currently constitutes the weakest level of government in the federal system; it has been the object of inconsistent policies as successive regimes alternatively enhanced or undermined their autonomy and resources. This level of government has been unable to attract a sufficient number of dynamic and competent leaders to guide its development. This is particularly evident in respect of political leadership and the local government service.

With the return to democratic civil rule in 1999, authority to reform local governments reverted to state governments where some legislative houses have tried to wrestle supervision of the local governments from the executive arm of government. As a result many local governments have passed new local government laws that have significantly changed the operational rules of local governance. These rules continue to change with successive governments bringing their own rules, and thereby creating instability for the system.

Credible elections into local government councils have been haphazard in Nigeria since 1976 till date. The 1999 Constitution currently being operated empowers state governors to appoint chairpersons of SIEC, the electoral umpires mandated to conduct local government elections in the 36 States of the federation. As the situation stands, there is some ambiguity as to whether state governors can dissolve local councils before elections are conducted at the expiration of their tenure, but often, many state governors capitalize on this ambiguity to dissolve local councils at the end of their tenure, and appoint Caretaker Committees contrary to the spirit and letters of Section 7(1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). Often these committees are staffed with cronies and party sympathizers. This situation makes the possibility of conducting free and fair elections into councils very remote. The

result has been de-democratization of the local governments. In sum, the local government has not taken a critical step in confronting its manifold challenges; but there are still opportunities for renaissance.

What Needs to Happen

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, the foregoing comprises the kernel and substance of my research over the years. Its focus has been in trying to deliver a fuller understanding of the dynamics of local governance and development, how it works, who benefits and loses from this enterprise.

In broad terms, the need to restore the trust of the local people in the capacities of local government to deliver is imperative at this time that the citizens believe that political influences and clouts are what determine decision-making and implementation in the local government. The authority of the local government apparently needs to open up the government with greater transparency so that average citizens can access the information they need to hold their leaders accountable. Local governments need to hold true to the obligations they have as stewards of the people's resources and treasury. In addition, sensitizing civil society and community leaders on their role to publicise the responsibility in governance should not be left unaddressed. The following specific recommendations are therefore germane:

- Constitutional reforms should provide the kind of local government system Nigerians desire. The reform of local government system in the country should be all-inclusive enough to accommodate such issues that can enhance the self-government and efficiency of the local government. Constitutional reforms should focus on clearing the grey areas militating against creation of new local governments, and also set more precise criteria other than the political ones in the constitution such as economic and demographic criteria.

- The current excessive centralization of governance can only deepen corruption and abuse of power, no matter the extent of reform instituted. Decentralization of power, resources and responsibilities in favour of subnational levels of government should be vigorously pursued. There is therefore the need for far-reaching constitutional reforms to promote accountability, transparency and good governance at the sub-national (state and local) levels of government.
- The key pre-requisite for ensuring citizen demand for accountability in democratic or democratising polities is the sanctity of the citizen's votes. Getting electoral legitimacy right (that is assuring the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections in which citizen's votes count) must be considered a priority challenge because it is critical to giving meaning to the accountability of the governors to the governed.
- Election seems to be the only means by which leaders at the local government level are accountable to the people at the grassroots. Make the State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC) at various states independent through direct funding from Nigeria's consolidated revenue account.
- Ensure that there is effective governance in the local governments with a view to fighting corruption, providing for educational development/educational facilities, providing qualified staff and providing adequate infrastructure. Effective governance is needed at the local government in order to bring about rapid development at the tier of government.
- Financial reforms should focus on ensuring that the State-Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA) is

managed for the benefit of local governments exclusively. Emphasis should be placed on downward accountability by ensuring that local budgets are widely distributed statutorily to relevant local bodies such as traditional councils, civic associations and NGOs and interested parties should similarly receive audit reports of the local government.

- The purpose of reform should be that local governments remain under state jurisdiction while also being more autonomous of state governments, with more effective financial accountability and greater capacity to deliver services. The constitution is flexible enough to admit federal initiative without breaching the principles of subsidiarity which dictates that local government should be under state jurisdiction. The principle also implies that political power should be exercised by the relevant smallest unit of government (Gboyega, 2003).
- Recruit adequate and skilful personnel to the local governments in order to bring about initiatives that are needed for rapid development at the grassroots level. Planning, execution and implementation of various developmental projects call for personnel that are well trained and skilful in the art of project designs. Merit should be considered when recruiting personnel at the level of government.
- Establish strong institutions of oversight that are capable of imposing constraints on leaders so that outcomes are not dependent on the characteristics of leaders but rather on the institutions. There is a concern that autonomy, especially financial autonomy for local governments will not necessarily reduce corruption or mismanagement at that level.

Develop an effective, demand-driven Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanism which shall involve the people at the grassroots in monitoring various projects at the local governments. Monitoring the performance of local governments in Nigeria should be designed in a way not to subject either the local governments or the people themselves to further political control of the central government.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, it may interest you to know that aside plain academic research, I have been involved in a whole lot of extra-academic studies, commissioned and non-commissioned, some of which have impacted on the course in which organizations and communities had had to move. From 1986 till date, I have been involved with a number of trainings for senior local and state government administrators and political functionaries, many of them organized by the Federal government and international agencies such as World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, USAID, AU and numerous others. During this period also I have straddled the two divides-theory and praxis-researching, consulting and teaching. From 1991-1993, I was appointed the Secretary to Obokun Local Government, Ibokun, Osun State, an intriguing experience that gave a robust focus to my research direction. Here, it is interesting to discover that the art and science of politics and politicking are better experienced as a participant! I have produced many distinguished academics and seasoned administrators across universities and institutes.

Moreover, university governance is one turf in which I have garnered some experience. It was a privilege to have served in different echelon of the university system. I have been Head of Department, Vice-Dean of the Faculty, a member of the University Strategic Planning Committee (2016-2021), a member of Appointments and Promotions Committee (A&PC), Deputy Director, Centre for Distance Learning (CDL), and currently the Director of the Centre-a position that affords me a platform to advance my research interests in governance, e-governance and e-

local governance. I have been external examiner to a number of universities. It has been a privilege to assess colleagues for professorial chair in a number of universities. In relation to community service, I was and remain a consultant on governance and development to a number of agencies, local and international.

Having gone this far...

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, it is apposite for me to end this inaugural lecture with some salutations. First of all, I thank the management of this great University, the Obafemi Awolowo University, for granting me the platform, support and resources for my career development. I pay homage to the founding fathers for their vision and to various administrations that have tried to preserve *Great Ife's* ethos, *For Learning and Culture*.

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