

Local Government in Britain and Nigeria: Lessons from Comparative Perspective

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Abstract

Despite the fact that Nigeria was colonized by Britain and inherited local government administrative structure from her former colonial rulers, there are lots of differences in the establishment, structure, composition, finance, functions, pattern and efficiency in local government administration in both countries. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to examine the differences in Nigerian Local Government System with/to that of Britain. The study adopted democratic participatory theory as the basis of the argument and relied on documentary method for its analysis. The paper finds that local government in Nigeria has been subjected to the control of both state and federal governments and other challenges such as poor service delivery and corruption among others. It was thus recommended that Nigerian Government must emulate her former colonial ruler (Britain) and respect the provisions in the constitution that grants autonomy to local governments as a third tier of government and seek ways to ensure transparency, accountability and make provision for democratically elected Local Government Councils as this will lead to the development of the Local Councils.

Keywords

Local government, local administration, democratic participation, constitution, service delivery

Introduction

Local Government is the government at the local level and they are created with the ultimate aim of bringing government close to the people at the grassroots in order to decongest the functions and burden of the federal government (decentralization) to bring about democratic climate of opinion; to provide valuable political education, to provide two-way communication, to ensure even and rapid development. Local government is aimed to accelerate development and to enable the local population to participate in their local affairs and to hold those in power accountable for their governance roles (Idu, 2013). In a unitary system as in the case of Britain, governmental power is shared between the federal and the local governments. In a federal state like

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Nigeria, governmental power is shared among the federal, state and local governments. That is, in a unitary system, we talk of central-local relationship but in a federal system, the relationship is largely between the state/regional government and local government because constitutionally, local governments are within the constitutional jurisdiction of the state/regional governments (Hartwich, 2013). There are two issues of contention in this assertion: first, there is also federal-state-local relation in federal systems as the case of Nigeria vividly demonstrates. On issues like child immunization and nomadic education in Nigeria, federal, state and local governments interacts extensively. Second, while it is true that local governments are within the jurisdictional authority of the state in Nigeria, 1999 Constitution (as amended) requires that every local government created in the country must be ratified by the National Assembly without which new local governments cannot get constitutional recognition and be entitled to resource allocation from the federation account (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). However, a true third tier has never taken off in the governance structure of Nigeria, despite the widespread recognition of local government as a major system to mobilize people's support for local participation in governance. The paper identifies the challenges facing the Nigerian local government system compared to what obtains in Britain, which include issues such as poor service delivery, corruption among others. Therefore, in contrasting the theory and practice of Local Government in Britain and Nigeria which is the major focus of the study is to look at the secondary sources, in order to establish local administrative units for allocation of power in Britain and Nigeria. The effort is to examine how they operate, their democratic content, composition, structure, finance, functions and status of autonomy in both countries. Britain is an example of a developed country and Nigeria, a middle-income developing nation.

The main objectives of this study is to examine the comparative analysis of local government administration in Britain and Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- (a) Examine the roles of local government as the closest tier of government to the people at the grassroots.
- (b) Identify the challenges bedeviling the Nigerian local government system.
- (c) Make policy recommendations that could restore and protect the status of local government administration in Nigeria in the spirit of true federalism.

However, the research work is a comparative one and as such approached using documentary method, which entails obtaining secondary data from books, journals/articles, newspapers, magazines and materials from the internet. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis.

The paper is specifically divided into seven (7) parts. The first part is the introduction, while the second part is conceptualization of local government and local administration, the third part explores the theoretical framework, the fourth explains the British Local Government Administrative Systems, while

the fifth explains the Local Government Administration in Nigeria, the sixth explores the comparative perspectives of both countries, while the seven is the conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptualizing Local Government and Local Administration

It is difficult to find a universal conceptualization of local government that is applicable to both the developed and developing countries of the world. Therefore, there is the need to explore what exactly is meant by local government as conceptualized by scholars of different intellectual orientations. Local government is a public organisation authorized to decide and administer a limited range of public policies within a relatively small territory which is a sub-division of a nation which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs including the power to impose taxes or to exert labour for prescribe purposes (Abdulhamid, 2015). Local governments can also be defined as a territorial non-sovereign community possessing the legal right to regulate its own affairs (Olayiwola, 2013). Chukwuemeka (2014) sees local government as a unit of government below central, regional or state levels established by law to exercise political authority through a representative council within defined geographical area. According to Adeyemi (2012), local government is defined as an essential instrument of national and state government for the performance of certain basic services which could best be administered locally on the intimate knowledge on the needs, conditions, and peculiarities of the areas concerned. As local government unites people in a defined area in a common organisation whose functions are mutually complementary to those of the central government and in the interest of the local residents for the satisfaction of common community need. Local government is also defined 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 staff and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of social 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, 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 (Olayiwola, 2013). A local government is a form of public administration which, in a majority of context, exist as the lowest tier of administration within a given state. The term is used to contrast with offices at state level, which are referred to as the central government, national government, or (where appropriate) federal government which deals with governing institution within states. Local governments generally act within powers delegated to them by legislation or directives of the higher level of

government. In federal state, local government generally comprises the third tier of government, whereas in unitary states, local government usually occupies the second tier of government, often with greater powers than higher-level administrative divisions (Wikipedia, 2020).

Even in unitary system of government where the central government is legally supreme over all matters within its domain, local governments can be created to take charge of local functions. This is because, in all political systems, too much concentration of powers and governmental functions at the capital may not promote development. Through local government, the effect of government can be brought closer to the people and the national cake can be distributed to all parts of the country (Dare & Oyewole, 1983). According to Ojofeitimi (2000) the word “local” suggests that councils are meant for small communities and the word “government” means that they have certain features of government. Thus, he defined a local government as “a political subdivision of a nation (or in a federal system, a state) which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs including the power to impose taxes or to demand labour for prescribed purposes. Local government may also be defined as government established through an Act at the local level and to deal with specific matters as it affects them (Ajieh, 2014). Appadorai (1975) defines local government as a government by the popular elected bodies charged with administrative and executive duties in matters concerning the inhabitants of a particular district or place. A local government may also be defined as government at the local level established by law to perform specific functions within defined areas (Ibok, 2014). Lawal (2000) also defined the local government as that tier of government closest to the people that is vested with certain powers to exercise control over the affairs of the people in its domain. Local government is also defined as the breaking down of a country into small units or council areas for the purpose of administration in which the inhabitants of the different units or localities concerned play a direct part through their representatives who exercised power and undertake specific functions under the general authority of the national or state government (Egi, 1997).

In addition, by local authorities, we mean bodies which are set up by statute to discharge certain duties and to exercise certain powers including the power to levy taxes (Egi, 1997). Agbakogba and Ogbonna (2004) define local government from a legal perspective, they see it as a political administrative unit that is empowered by law to administer a specific locality. Local government is a political sub-division of a state or nation and it exists within geographical boundaries (Ozor, 2013). Local Government is also defined as a political division of a nation, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs including powers to impose taxes or exert labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected. It is a government in which popular participation both in the decision making process is conducted by local bodies, while

recognizing the supremacy of other levels of government, is able and willing to accept responsibility for its decisions (Oyediran, 1998).

Local Administration on the other hand, refers to the administration of locality by a body which is not responsible to the local people but to those who appointed them to govern the locality (Okoli, 2005). Generally, the officers of the body are appointed by the federal governments and they are also the representative of the federal government and these officers are given different titles such as district officers, residents etc. Ibim (2001) and Emeka (2004) opined that the main distinctions between local governments and local administration is where the responsibility lies, the mode of appointment of candidates for the local government whether by selection or appointment or election and who makes the appointment or selection. When the duty of choosing the officials that constitute the local government is done either by the state or federal government, are not by the people, then, it is no more a local government but local administration but when the elected officials at the local government level are elected by the people of the local government, it is referred to as local government.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, the author based his analysis on democratic participatory theory. This was demonstrated in the works of Chukwuemeka et al. (2014). Adeyemo (2011) opines that apart from describing representative governments as good government asserts that local government is the prime element of democracy and demonstrate the intrinsic value of democracy irrespective of the service it provides. The influence of this school was largely the work of John Stuart Mills (1953) in Bamisaye and Awofeso (2011) who argue that the existence of local government is premised on the need to engender grassroots democracy through popular participation, effective accountability and political representation. These three elements i.e. (participation, accountability and representation) are the tripod on which an enduring democratic practice is built in any civilized society. The local government system in Britain clearly exhibit these tenets through a well design and appropriately applied rules and culture of participation, nationalism and engagement. However, the culture of democratic participation as for a long time remained a sham in Nigeria as the people at the grassroots are not integrated into a true democratic system. The local government autonomy which ought to have promoted the socio-economic and the political development of the people in Nigeria has remained a controversial issue for a long time. The attitude of some state governors in Nigeria has strangulated local government from serving thoroughly as the third tiers of government because care taker systems were adopted in most states to ensure that the governors have total control over the operation of local government and a

situation where elections were claimed to have been conducted, the process was not in line with any civilize democratic norms as candidates were imposed by the governors and the elections conducted by the various State Electoral Commission only return candidates of the ruling party in the state as winners. The resultant effect is that local government that are expected to serve as an avenue for political participation, representation and political socialization, accountability, recruitment has not been fully achieved.

In conclusion, even, if the above stated objectives are not achieved as expected in some system like Nigeria due to attitudinal and institutional factors, it does not diminish the relevance of this theory because participatory system at the local level is possible. We however wish to posit here that local government will not only promote democratic value in a country like Nigeria, but can equally enhance grassroots development when these values are fully internalized by the local people.

British Local Government Administration

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (known as the UK) is a union of three countries: England, Scotland, Wales and the Province of Northern Ireland. There is no written constitution but there are local governments act for each. There are also acts pertaining to the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland which have single-tier principal local government. England has no devolved government and there are two-tier authorities made up of counties and districts (or Boroughs), and single-tier councils known as unitary authorities. The lower tiers of local government in England are known as civic parishes; in Scotland and Wales there are community councils which are overseen by local governments but are not a tier of local government (Olayiwola, 2013). The system of local government is different in each of the counties of Britain, the United Kingdom. The layers of elected local government vary. In different areas in Britain, the highest tier of elected local government may be:

- Counties, which may be single tier unitary authorities, or divided into districts also known as boroughs in some areas, especially in London.
- Districts, which are separate unitary authorities in some areas.
- Metropolitan districts (also called metropolitan boroughs) in some areas which are similar to unitary authorities but have joint boards with other districts in the same metropolitan county, examples include Liverpool, Birmingham, and Manchester etc.
- Greater London, which is divided into thirty-two London boroughs and the city of London (Olayiwola, 2013).

In most areas, there is a lower tiers of government, civil parish, with limited functions and most civil parishes are in rural areas, but if the parish is a town, the parish council may be called a town council. In a few cases the parish is a

city, and the parish council is called a city council. Metropolitan counties, and a few non metropolitan counties, no longer have elected councils or administrative functions, and their former functions are performed by districts and such counties remain ceremonial ones. In England, local authorities are given full description to exercise the function allocated to them and this does not mean they are completely self-governing. They are established by and subject to government. They cannot therefore be regarded as second tier in a unitary system of governments. The major reason is that their powers are derived from the government that set them up and not from the constitution and government allows these authorities to discharge their functions without interference as long as they do so effectively and efficiently. Interference therefore becomes sacrosanct only when local governments result to illegality or become inefficient (Olayiwola, 2013). Local government in Britain are majorly referred to as local authorities and they are created by Act of Parliament and the ideal of democratic self- government is a serious form in the power of these authorities. The government give appreciable autonomy to these units because such may act as distraction in the face of the social, economic and political unity needed by Britain as it forges integration democratically and related to the rest of Europe (Wikipedia, 2020).

Structure, Sources of Revenue and Functions of British Local Government

Local government within the state of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland each have a unitary, single tier system of local government. England has a mixed system of either single tier local government in the form of unitary authorities, London boroughs and metropolitan districts council, or two tier local government with county councils as the upper tiers and districts or borough councils as the lower tiers. In England, Wales and Scotland's they are also smaller unit of local representations known as parishes in England and community councils in Wales and Scotland. However, these are not uniforms and do not cover the whole population. Local government in Britain are principally referred to as local authorities and are created by Act of Parliament. Even though, there are various form of control, the ideal of democratic self-government is a serious form in the power of these authorities. Local authorities in Britain are not emanations of the state but are responsible bodies, competent to discharge their own duty, although there may be statutory bodies through which government policy is given effect and may operate to a large extent with government money, they exercise their own duties in their own right, not ordinarily as agent of government department. This means that governments, having given their local authorities to discharge their duties without interference as long as they do so efficiently, effectively and justifiably (Price, 1975).

The sources of revenue in British Local Government include council tax receipts, income from sales, fees and charges and capital receipt, the central government fund local authorities through several grant type, which have varying conditions attached including Ring-fenced grants, un-ring fenced grants etc. Over half of local government revenue comes via transfers from central governments and a further quarter comes from a property based local council tax.

In Britain, local authorities perform three major functions: environmental, protective and personal. Environmental functions concern the citizens immediate physical surrounding-road construction, provision and maintenance of street light, water supplies, recreation grounds, street cleaning and refuse disposal so as to provide a better, safer, cleaner and greener environment. Protective functions are those that deals with safety of citizen i.e. police and fire services while personal functions deal with individual wellbeing such as housing, education, libraries, museum, schools and health services. It should be noted that in Britain today, the most important complex and cumbersome functions of local authorities is housing but not all local governments can perform these functions. In rural Districts, Parish Councils have limited control in matters of local interest such as burial grounds, allotments, lighting and provision of amenities such as creation grounds, bus shelters and Parish halls. Local authorities can in addition acquire further power through delegated legislation law or bye-law, they also have general powers to acquire land by agreement by means of purchase, lease or exchange. Responsibility for various functions is split in the two tier system between county and districts, while unitary authorities have sole responsibility for implementing all local government functions, parishes and community councils may manage community facilities such as village halls, cemeteries, leisure facilities and playgrounds. In Britain, local government is the first point of call in terms of the peoples' primary needs and societal transformation and governance in actual fact, start from the local level and the people are inadequately involved and empowered to decide who becomes worth and what eventually transpires in the local government, when, where, why and how (Olayiwola, 2013).

Local Government Administration in Nigeria

Nigeria is a federal state with presidential system of government and one of the countries in West Africa with a population of over 200 million and land mass of about 925,000 square kilometers. Local Administration in Nigeria predated colonial rule as each of the separate entities that make up the nation had a unique but relatively effective system. The Hausa-Fulani North were ruled by the Emirs and adopted emirate system but the territory was divided into districts and villages for easy administration under the umbrella of districts or village head (Kyenge, 2013). The Oyo kingdom was ruled by the Alaafin assisted by Council of Chiefs known as "Oyomesi" headed by Bashorun. Towns and villages were under the control of local Obas and village heads that

were appointed by Alaafin and the Are-Ona-Kakanfo was the military head stationed outside the capital of old Oyo for the protection of the territorial integrity of the empire (Kyenge, 2013). There was a centralized administrative system in Igbo societies where there was lack of centralized head but largely based on compound, village and clan administrative system (Kyenge, 2013 & Denga, 2003).

British rule came with Lord Laggard introducing indirect rule system with the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 and the system revolved around recognizing the importance of the British administration and this gave birth to Native Authority system of local government administration that was introduced as contained in the Native Ordinance of 1916. The system was a total success in the North, partial success in the West but a total failure in the East (Laggard, 1922).

Reforms were brought to the system through the Local Government Ordinance of 1950 that led to elected councils with a three tier structures and these structures were the county, districts and local councils. In the North, the Native Authority Law of 1954 merely consolidated the native authority and the native and emirate councils were in place and this continued to be in operation till 1966 when the military took over power (Abba, 2008; Aina, 2006; Ezeani, 2004 & Lasisi, 1997). Between 1966 and 1976, local governments in Nigeria went through different reforms at both regional and state levels but that of 1976 local government reform was the major one because it introduced the single tier local government system throughout the country and established 301 local governments based on a given population between 150,000 and 800,000 with equal status and powers. Another significant landmark of the 1976 local government reform is that local governments became the third tier of government and began to receive statutory allocations from the Federation Account. Also, the reform also introduced full time elected chairmen of the local government and their councilors and the number of local governments increased and today there are 774 local governments in Nigeria (Abba, 2008 & Otinche, 2014).

The Structure of Local Government in Nigeria

The structure of local government in Nigeria is divided into two, namely: political and administrative council. The political structure consists of all elected officials such as the chairman, his councilors and supervisory councilors and with the adoption of the presidential system of government, the post of Secretary to the Local Government became a political appointment.

Local Government Structure under the Presidential System of Government

Local Government Council

Executive Council

Office of the Chairman

Vice Chairman

Office of the Secretary

Department

Agriculture, Works, Personnel Management, Finance, Medical Health, Education

Revenue and Finances of Local Government in Nigeria

Nigeria local governments generate revenue from external and internal sources. The external sources of local government revenue in Nigeria include; statutory allocation, grants-in aid, specialized funding sources, funds from development partners and district common funds. Local government are responsible for the setting and collecting of local revenue from internal sources such as rates, and fees, rents and licenses, investment and income from commercial activities and loans etc.

In another related instance, local governments in Nigeria have specialized joint accounts. Section 162 (6) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as amended states that each state shall maintain a special account to be called State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA) into which shall be paid all allocation to the local government councils of the state from the federation account and from the government of the state. Also, section 7 (6A and B), and section (62, sub-section 8 conferred the legislative power over the distribution of public funds as it relates to local governments especially on the Joint Account Allocation Committee (JAAC), although on a formula as may be described by the House of Assembly of the State.

In conclusion, local governments in Nigeria receives 20% of national revenue and 10% of Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) of its parent state. (1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended).

Functions of Nigerian Local Government Councils under the Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution

- A. The main functions of a local government council in Nigeria are as follows:
- i. Collection of rates, radio and television licenses.
 - ii. The consideration and the making of recommendation to a state commission on economic planning or any similar body.

- iii. Registration of all births, death and marriages.
 - iv. Establishment and maintenance of cemeteries, burial grounds and homes for the destitute or infirm.
 - v. Naming of roads and streets and numbering of houses.
 - vi. Establishments, maintenance and regulation of slaughter houses, slaughter slabs, markets, motor parks and public conveniences etc (1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended).
- B. The functions of a local government council in Nigeria shall include participation of such council in the Government of the State as respect the following matters:
- i. The provision and the maintenance of health services.
 - ii. The development of agriculture and natural resources, other than the exploitation of minerals.
 - iii. The provision and the maintenance of primary, adult and vocational educations.
 - iv. Such other functions as may be conferred on a local government council by the House of Assembly of the State (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended).

Comparative Perspectives

This paper examines some of the various factors that explain the differences between Britain and her former colony, Nigeria. There are different factors that are responsible for differences in the structure, mode of establishment, functions as well as finance of local government in Britain and Nigeria. In these two countries, it is clear that the latter was colonized by the former and inherited or adopted her bureaucratic administrative system at independence in 1960, yet there are lots of differences in effectiveness and efficiency in the area of service delivery, structure, functions, finance and institutions of local government.

However, in an attempt to find reasons behind the various differences in the administration of local government in the two countries the following yardstick serve as the bases of our comparative analysis:

(i) Political Involvement

In Britain, the participation level for local government election is very high. Omowunmi (2016) lauds Britain for her democratic values as councils are democratically constituted through proper, free, fair and credible election that are held periodically, every four years, to elect local councilors while in Nigeria, in spite of the provision made by the 1999 constitution for a democratically elected local government officials, the provision has been constantly eroded as no elections were held in many of the local councils as Sole Administrator were appointed

by some governors to take charge of local governments. With these Caretaker Committees in place, it becomes easy for the state government to manipulate local authority to the advantage of the state government and even for personal gains of state political leaders and this has hindered the performance of local government in Nigeria. Oyediran (2001) also observes that on several occasions the States of Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers truncated the tenure of the democratically elected councils and replaced them with members of the ruling political party in the state as Caretaker Committees. In most cases, the state government decided not to conduct elections for the local councils as in the case of Anambra and Osun State during the administration of former governor Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola which ran a Caretaker system for over six years. This practice is an assault on the principle of popular participation in grassroots democracy as against what is obtainable in Britain.

(ii) Process of Creation and Nature of Composition

In Britain, local authorities are established by Acts of parliament with defined functions and responsibilities with adequate authorities and financial autonomy. On the other hand, in Nigeria, local government are creation of state government with the approval of the National Assembly (Section 7 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended). These provisions subordinated local governments in Nigeria to the control of other levels of government. That is, state government in Nigeria can decide the establishment, composition, structure, and functions of local government.

(iii) The Status of Local Government

Britain operates a multi-tier system of local government created to meet specific needs of the people. That is, it was designed to be able to effectively provide services that are comparatively local in nature and based on their financial and human resources capabilities but such is not the case in Nigeria as it operates a unify system irrespective of the size, scope and capability. The manageable population in a multi-layer system like that of Britain also allow for grass root democratic development in that reputable and non-individual that are with high integrity are elected to run the various tiers of government (Omowunmi, 2016). The pattern of local government in Britain is quite complex with different arrangements in place in different parts of the country. In some parts, there are two tiers of local government i.e. county councils and district councils while in other areas, there are a single tier “unitary authorities” which have all the functions of counties and districts. On the other hand, structures and functions of local government in Nigeria under the 1999 constitution, Nigeria has a single tier system of local government (Olayiwola, 2013).

(iv) Finance/Funding

Local authorities in Britain raise much of their finance through rates, investments, fees, and charges. They also get some grants from the central government towards particular programmes primarily road construction. Other revenue generated apart from grants from central government are used on waste water treatment, water supply, public libraries, public transport, rubbish collection, waste disposal and recycling, community housing, museums, arts and galleries etc (Olayiwola, 2013). On the other hand, local governments in Nigeria rely heavily on allocation from the federation account which get to them through the Joint Account of State and Local Government known as “State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA) and through this account, the state government take substantial percentage or proportion (Wilson, 2013).

(v) Local Accountability

In Britain, there are legal institutions that ensure transparent and accountability in the local government system. Though, this may be due to the advanced or developed environment in which local government authorities in Britain operate. On the other hand, there is high level of corruption in Nigeria local governments which include mismanagement of local government funds, siphoning of money for the development of local government, embezzlement of funds etc. In Nigeria, legal institutions that will ensure transparent and accountability in the local government system are very weak and ineffective, public office holders steal public money with impunity (Olayiwola, 2013). In Britain, political office holders are those who considered their positions as an avenue to render selfless and essential services to their people and not an avenue to amass wealth and enrich themselves or their family members. On the other hand, political office holders in Nigeria mismanage local government fund with impunity and see the position as an avenue to amass wealth to enrich themselves and their family members. Political office holders in Nigeria are in political offices to compensate political stooges or the party faithfuls who have in one way or the other contributed to the success of the party which made the political office holders in Nigeria to listen to the voice or control of their godfathers at the expense of the people that voted for them into different political offices (Wilson, 2013).

In summary while the advanced/developed countries such as Britain have developed political culture, that of developing countries like Nigeria are in its rudimentary level.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the study of both countries, it is evident that local government in Britain are more developed than local government in Nigeria. This is as a result of many factors such as the system of government adopted, autonomy, structures, level of political orientation, functions, finance, mode of establishment, status or patterns of local government, corruption, political involvement and challenges faced by local governments in both countries.

The above mentioned factors have negative impacts on Nigeria local government system than Britain, though, the British system itself is not perfect. Nevertheless, Nigeria has a lot to learn or gain from the operation of local government in Britain to enable her move forward especially on the performance of functions, financing, composition, structure, establishment for efficiency and effectiveness in the area of service delivery, functioning and institutions of local government despite certain differences between the both countries.

In the light of issues raised, findings generated and discussed, and the conclusions drawn, and for local governments in Nigeria to be able to effectively assume its catalytic position in national development and quest for good governance, the following policy recommendations are suggested: -

First, there is the need to as a matter of urgency entrench new ethical orientation in the local citizenry as to the essence of local government. This should be aimed at letting the citizens know that local governments are not contrived to engage in “cash sharing”, but to discharge their constitutional functions to the citizenry in effective and efficient manner.

Second, in order to drive the principle of democratic federalism to its logical conclusion and to give constitutional reality to the concept of three-tier federalism, local governments in Nigeria should be clearly and unambiguously established in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Third, the controversial SJLGA should be removed from the constitution, and replaced by a new regime of fiscal federalism where local government council will be accountable for funds directly allocated to them.

Fourth, the Local Government Service Commission should be strengthened and given constitutional recognition. Given the Commission’s laudable objectives, such strengthening would support the human resource and staffing development of local governments in Nigeria.

Lastly, from the foregoing, it is safe to say that good governance at the local level can only be guaranteed through attitudinal change on the part of local politicians. These recommendations are seen as fundamental to developing local leadership skills, which will enable local politicians to achieve national relevance.

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