

BLUEPRINTS FOR DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the problem of leadership in local government administration with particular reference to Nigeria. This is done against the backdrop of the belief that leadership has failed generally in the Nigerian public service and in the local government in particular. The work depicts local government as very useful in ensuring that governments are made responsive to the needs of the people and responsible to them. This noble idea tends to be marred by leadership crises manifested in dismal and poor performances of local government administration in Nigeria. Even the various reforms carried out since 1976 have not been able to make the system effective and responsible to developmental challenges. This paper identifies, in addition to poor leadership, the problems of corruption, overstaffing, heavy dependence on federally allocated revenue, insufficient financial resources, loss of autonomy etc in local government administration. The work is a descriptive study which relied on sources of secondary data and qualitative analysis. The paper discussed a number of strategies capable of enhancing dynamic leadership in local government administration. One of the strategies is that local government leaders should adopt the transformational style of leadership. Another is that the followership should be proactive.

Keywords: Dynamic Leadership, Local Government, Administration.

Introduction

No group, organization or community can achieve its goals and/or make progress without leadership. Therefore, no group is without leadership. What you may find is the existence of inappropriate/inept leadership types, which adversely affects group existence and/or group action (Omale, 2007). The same is true of leadership in local government administration, especially in Nigeria.

There have been cases of failure of many public sector organizations in Nigeria in the recent past, and this problem led to the privatization and commercialization of many government owned enterprises or parastatals. The failures of most of such government establishments were a result of the absence of dynamic political and administrative leadership that could bring about success in the public sector. The same is true of leadership in local government administration, especially in Nigeria. Therefore, the discussion of leadership in this paper is seen from both political and administrative perspectives.

Political leadership is the capacity of incumbents of political positions to deploy special personality attributes or agency in order to lift their societies towards individual, group and national self-actualization (Ukaegbu, 2010). Political leaders, as perceived in this paper, means elected officials at national, state, provincial and local levels as well as appointed officials at high levels of the executive branch, such as ministers who serve on the federal or central government and their counterparts (i.e. commissioners, supervisory councillors etc.) who serve at state, provincial and local levels. In this arrangement, the president, prime minister, governor or chairman is the leader of leaders. Our focus in this paper however is local government administration.

How political leaders possess and exercise power or authority over the economy or society (i.e. political behaviour) determine the administrative behaviour and efficiency of the whole state or organization. This is because an administrative system usually responds to a complex of demands articulated through the political system (Self, 1977). Thus, it can be deduced from the foregoing discussion that the type and nature of political leadership existent in a society dictate the type and nature of administrative leadership that obtains, especially in public governance like the local government. It is thus noteworthy that in developing countries such as Nigeria, where leaders are seen as role models, their actions or inaction can make or mar the followers and the organization.

Leadership is interpersonal influence towards the attainment of specific goals in specific situations. It is the art or process of influencing people so that they strive willingly and enthusiastically toward the achievement of group goals. Leadership is a dynamic process at work in a group whereby one individual, over a particular period of time, and in a particular organizational context, influences the other group members to commit themselves freely to the achievement of group tasks or goals (Tilley and House, 1986; Koontz and Wehrich, 1988; Cole, 2002).

Therefore, leadership is a deliberate and concerted effort in a social environment in which the leader exercises legitimate powers to persuade, influence, motivate and guide his followers to co-operate and contribute to the collective achievement of the goals of the organization. Thus, leadership is a collective and co-operative effort by both the leader and followers.

It is apparent from the foregoing discussion that leadership involves people – the leaders and the led. There can be no leaders without followers; neither can there be followers without leaders. In the words of Agbese (2010):

A leader is a leader because he leads; he leads because he has followers. He has followers because a group of people surrenders part of its independence to him in return for his performing certain defined functions on its behalf and in the common interest.

This scenario is characteristic of all organizations, including local governments.

Local government is a form of decentralization of authority known as devolution of powers. Devolution of powers was driven by the failure of national economic planning to deliver quality services to users at the local level (Ezueke et al, 2013). Local Government is a government organ or body created by the central government or an Act of Parliament to be in charge of political administration of a locality or a local unit in a state. The United Nations Department for Public Administration (1961) defines local government as:

...a political sub-division of a nation or (in a federal system) state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the powers to impose taxes or to exert labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected.

This definition contains a number of salient features, namely, a local government is a lower level of government in comparison with a national or state government; it is established by law; it has responsibilities; and it is normally elected or, in the alternative, selected. In his contribution to the conceptualization of local government, Whalen (1970) observes that:

...each unit of local government in any system is assumed to possess the following characteristics: a given territory and population, an institutional structure...a separate legal identity, a range of powers and functions authorized by delegation from the appropriate central or intermediate legislature and, within the ambit of such delegation, autonomy subject always...to the test of reasonableness.

These features were all embraced in the Nigeria's local government reforms. The Guidelines for A Reform of Local Government in Nigeria (1976) defines local government as:

Government at (the) local level exercised through representative council established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. Those powers should give the councils 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 Government in their areas, and to ensure, through active participation of the people and their traditional institutions that local initiatives and response to local needs are maintained.

Thus, local government can be described as government at the grassroots level established to perform specific functions within its area of jurisdiction. According to Ekpo (2003), local governments were created in Nigeria to give self-identity and local independence to groups of villagers and to perform localized functions pertinent to their area of jurisdiction. Since the 1976 Reforms, local governments in Nigeria have been going through considerable changes to enable them render effective services to the people at the grassroots without much success.

Local government administration is a form of public administration which, in a majority of contexts, exists at the lowest tier of administration within a given state (Wikipedia, 2018a). Public administration is an aspect of the generic term "administration" whose essence is "determined action taken in pursuit of group-earmarked goals" (Apeh, 2014). In a nutshell, public administration denotes the application and the study of the principles of administration in a political setting. It is the harnessing and utilization of human, financial and material resources to implement government policies and programmes aimed at achieving specified objectives, such as developmental projects, maintenance of access roads in a locality or provision of services effectively by the local government.

However, the effective performance of the assigned functions by the local government depends to a great extent, on effective or dynamic leadership – leadership that will be transformational in its approach to their duties and followers. Such leadership in local government administration must have a charismatic disposition, courage, vision, imagination, transparency, predisposition for decisive action, expressive power and empathy for their followers. That is what local governments need to be able to render services to the local populace efficiently and effectively and to bring about development that will reduce or even eliminate the uncertainties and backwardness that the grassroots people have experienced over the years.

What we have had so far in local government administration, especially in Nigeria, is ineffective leadership – both political and administrative – that produced undisciplined, ill-motivated and discontented body of employees and followers, hence their inability to influence, guide and direct the actions of followers toward desired ends – provision of services and development projects, among others.

The objective of this paper therefore is to examine the strategies that can enhance dynamic leadership in local government administration with particular reference to Nigeria. The paper also discusses the two theories on which the study is anchored as well as the *raison d'être* of local governments. The challenges to local government administration are also delineated. The paper also contains strategies for dynamic leadership in local government administration as well as conclusion.

Theoretical Orientation

This paper adopts both the transformational leadership theory and democratic-participatory theory to underpin efficient and dynamic leadership in local government administration.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership is a style of leadership whereby a leader works with subordinates to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of a group (Wikipedia, 2018b). Transformational leadership tends to enhance the motivation, morale and job performance of followers through a number of mechanisms, such as connecting the followers' sense of identity and self to a project and to the collective identity of the organization; being a role model for followers in order to inspire them and to raise their interest in the project; challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work, and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of followers, allowing the leader to align followers with tasks that enhance their performance.

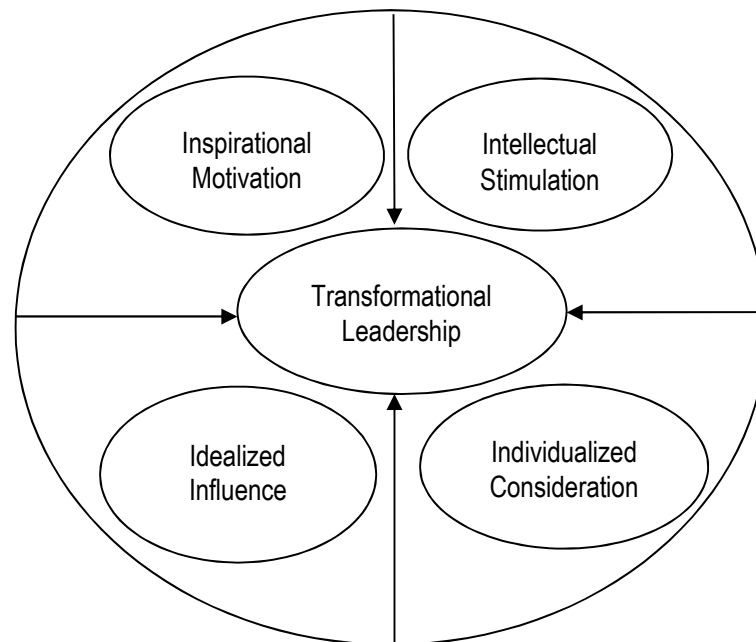
The concept of transformational leadership was introduced by James V. Downton but developed by James MacGregor Burns in the late 1970s (<https://cvdl.ben.edu/blog/leadership...>). Burns identified two types of leadership, viz:

- (i) Transactional – in this, a leader influences others by what they offer in exchange, the transaction.
- (ii) Transformational – here, a leader connects with followers in such a way that it raises the level of motivation and morality.

These two words – motivation and morality – are essential as they demand that transformational leaders be committed to a collective good. This may be a societal good, such as embarking on a developmental project in a local government area or a community centre or maintenance of a rural access road. It may even be a more personalized good, such as committing more resources to the welfare of workers.

Transformational leaders are visionary, charismatic, inspiring, daring, risk-takers and positive thinkers. To be able to bring about major changes, transformational leaders must be able to exhibit some unique behaviour traits, namely, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence and individualized consideration. The factors or behaviour traits are captured in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: A Model of Transformational Leadership



Source: <http://managementstudyguide.com/...>

Inspirational Leadership: The foundation of transformational leadership is the promotion of consistent vision, mission, and a set of values to the members. Their vision is so compelling that they know what they want from every interaction. Transformational leaders guide followers by providing them with a sense of meaning and challenge. They work enthusiastically and optimistically to foster the spirit of teamwork and commitment.

Intellectual Stimulation: Such leaders encourage their followers to be innovative and creative. They encourage new ideas from their followers and never criticize them publicly for the mistakes committed by them. The leaders focus on the “what” in problems and do not focus on the blaming part of it. They have no hesitation in discarding an old practice set by them if it is found ineffective.

Idealized Influence: They believe in the philosophy that a leader can influence followers only when he practices what he preaches. The leaders act as role models that followers seek to emulate. Such leaders always win the trust and respect of their followers through their action. They typically place their followers’ needs over their own, sacrifice their personal gains for them, and demonstrate high standards of ethical conduct. The use of power by such leaders is aimed at influencing followers to strive for the common goals of the organization.

Individualized Consideration: Leaders act as mentors to their followers and reward them for creativity and innovation. The followers are treated differently according to their talents and

knowledge. They are empowered to make decisions and are always provided with the needed support to implement their decisions.

Democratic-Participatory Theory

This is one of the earliest models in the social sciences, especially in political discourse since 2000BC (Alao et al, 2015). The work of Mills (1964) on Utilitarianism, liberty and representative government that gave impetus to renewed commitment to this model is the spring-board for democratic participation in addition to other intrinsic and extrinsic functions it performs.

The core message of this theory is that local governments are created so as to encourage participatory democracy, to serve as training grounds for recruitment of leaders and to provide a channel(s) of self-government and political education at the grassroots level. As displayed in the works of Chukwuemeka et al (2014) and Adeyemo (2011), the notion of local government is intricately linked to a philosophical commitment to democratic participation in the politics and self-governing at the grassroots level.

In Britain, for instance, a study carried out on British politics in 1964 revealed that 53 per cent of Labour Party members of Parliament and 45 per cent of defeated Labour Party parliamentarian's candidates were former local government politicians and political office holders (Alao et al, 2015). The same is true of Nigeria where, according to Ajayi (2006), Tony (2011) and Adamolekun et al (1988), President Shehu Shagari, Umaru Dikko, Ali Monguno and a host of others started their political careers at the local government level.

According to Fischer (1993), however, representative democracy should not be generally considered participatory because citizens may lack the time, knowledge or will to contribute to policy making. Besides, and as observed by scholars and practitioners on the Nigerian situation, despite the constitutional provision for local government in Nigeria and the 1976 Reforms, it is unfortunate that the local government is run in a manner contrary to the stated objectives. As averred by Alao et al (2015):

The overbearing posture of the State Governors in Nigeria especially since 2003 has strangulated local government (LG) from serving truly as the third tier of government. In most cases, caretaker systems were adopted to ensure that the Governors have total control over the operations of LGs. In situations where elections were claimed to have been conducted, the process deviated from any civilized democratic norms as candidates were imposed by the governors and the elections conducted by the State Electoral Commission only returned candidates contesting the elections on the same political platforms as the governors.

Even though it appears the democratic-participatory theory does not work as expected in some societies like Nigeria due to systemic obvious reasons, it still remains relevant to the study of local government.

Raison D'être of Local Government

The justification for the existence of local government cannot be over-stressed. According to Peters and Pierre (2007), one of the impacts of the lower echelons of government is that they bring government face-to-face with the people. This face-to-face interaction often defines what government means to them. It enables the people at this level feel and see the workings of government. Therefore, the local government is important because it helps to create an image of government in the mind and vision of the populace.

According to Hsueh (1962), the central government of a developing country assumes the primary responsibility for national development but local government also has its share to contribute. In fact, some scholars and practitioners argue that national development can hardly succeed without a genuine partnership among all the tiers of government.

Local government is also necessary because the local populace have a greater capacity to understand and conduct their affairs in accordance with local peculiarities. People are naturally used to their locality and, thus, are better placed to understand its needs more than strangers from the cities.

In addition, each locality has its idiosyncrasies (i.e. economic history, customs, tradition, beliefs, taboo etc.). It is the inhabitants or indigenes of a particular area that can operate successfully there with the prevailing conditions.

Besides, people are usually opposed to changes that are imposed from above. They rather tend to be more comfortable with changes that are generated from within, which have been debated and agreed upon.

Nonetheless, an analysis of the current state of local government in Nigeria reveals basic weaknesses in their administration despite the various reforms that have already taken place in the system. Observers assert that many local governments in Nigeria have not been able to deliver services to the people equitably. This is because chairpersons of local governments, councillors and senior management officials (i.e. the leadership) shared the monthly allocations, pay salaries (some cannot even pay) and warm their seats while awaiting the next round of allocations (Frank, 2013). Therefore, further reforms are still necessary, especially in the area of leadership for the purpose of development and efficient service delivery.

Challenges to Local Government Administration

Before discussing the factors (i.e. strategies) that can make for dynamic leadership, let us examine generally the problems militating against effective administration of local government, focusing on the Nigerian experience. It is however impossible to discuss all the problems here, for they are multifarious. Suffice it to itemize each of the major issues.

(i) **Poor Leadership.** The success or failure of every organization (public or private) depends on the quality of its leaders. Effective leadership that is knowledgeable and visionary, inter alia, is likely to produce a well disciplined and motivated body of staff committed to the accomplishment of the goals of the organization. On the other hand, bad, ineffective or poor leadership is both a threat and liability to the organization or society, for it is capable of producing undisciplined, ill-motivated and discontented body of employees. Besides, such poor leaders are without the knowledge of the dynamics of leadership that would enable them chart a course(s) of action for development and equitable service delivery. This is the pathetic situation existing currently in Nigerian local government administration. According to Frank (2013):

Most often the political party has allowed itself to present people who are less knowledgeable in the dynamics of public administration. The patronage system rather than a democratic process compound this. To this end, the patronage system mortgaged the freedom of the chairpersons, even when they have ideas of what to do...

This means that state governments stage manage elections into local government councils to ensure that their parties and their handpicked candidates win such elections. The import of this action is to make the leadership at the local governments responsive to the governors rather than the electorates. This unfortunate practice by state governments can hardly produce the calibre of people that can provide dynamic leadership in local government administration.

(ii) Overdependence on Federated Fund or Statutory Allocation. It is very difficult (almost impossible) for local governments in Nigeria to function effectively without receiving federal allocation monthly. The Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, for example, states clearly the functions of local governments and their sources of revenue. Apart from the fact that these sources of revenue are often not tapped to the advantage of the system, some state governments have usurped most of the lucrative sources of internally generated revenue, such as large markets, naming of streets, tenement rates, radio and television licences, among others, from which local governments would have secured a chunk of the fund they need to run their affairs. Besides, most state governments often fail to remit to the local governments the stipulated 10 per cent of the internally generated revenue of the state government. These factors combine to deprive local governments of the needed funds, make them depend heavily on the federal statutory allocation and consequently tend to mar effective service delivery.

(iii) Corruption. Corruption is a monstrous malaise that has grievously plagued the Nigerian public service in general, a result of which the country now ranks very high on corruption ranking (Transparency International, 2017). This hydra-headed monster permeates the entire Nigerian society, including the local government. The matter is so serious that it inhibits service delivery as well as democratic participation, as election votes are usually bought and sold (Alao et al, 2015). Similarly, Aluko (2006), Aina (2007) and Ejike (2014) aptly contend that corruption is one of the greatest impediments to effective service delivery at the local government level.

Corruption in local government ranges from employees shamelessly accepting bribes, grafts and gratifications for carrying out their lawful duties to willful falsification of financial transactions, inflated contracts, existence of ghost workers, connivance with state apparatus (such as the Ministry of Local Government and Local Government Service Commission) to engage in fraudulent practices. As we know, corruption has dire consequences, as it breeds inefficiency, raises transaction costs, leads to poor governance, hinders equitable service delivery and retards development, among others.

The Federal Government of Nigeria has been trying to contain this monstrous pathology through the establishment of anti-corruption agencies, such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Public Complaints Commission (PCC), the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB). The existence of these institutions notwithstanding, corruption in Nigeria does not only increase – it has become more infectious.

(iv) **Bloated Staffing.** Most local governments, particularly in Nigeria, are overstaffed. Overstaffing increases the financial burden of the local government, as it increases recurrent expenditure without a corresponding income and service delivery. This is a politically motivated problem through political patronage and interference. Though all states in Nigeria have Local Government Service Commissions, inter alia, to streamline employment and other personnel matters, most appointments are made politically, especially through donation of staff rather than through the normal recruitment, selection and placement procedures. That is why Frank (2013) opines that the relationship between the Local Government Service Commission and the local government should be reviewed with specific guidelines in respect of requisition and deployment of staff of the Councils.

(v) **Ministry of Local Government and Local Government Service Commission.** These are two supervising bodies of the Local Government, but they do not have the capacity to assess the programmes of local government councils to ensure service delivery to the people. This is because as the yardstick or standard for such evaluation has not been developed, they only concentrate on scrutinizing and approving expenditure. In doing these, what happens between the local government leadership and officials of the Ministry and Commission, I guess, can be scandalous.

(vi) **Loss of Autonomy.** The autonomy of local government in African countries such as Nigeria is more in theory than in practice. According to Olowu (1988):

Most governments in Africa have opted for the direct control by central government of their local governments through a battery of legal, financial and administrative controls... so-called "local government" units in reality operate like field administrative units of the central governments or, worse still, exist as parallel institutions to the government's field administration, controlled by both the central and field units.

The heavy dependence of local governments in Nigeria, for example, on statutory allocation from the federal government erodes the autonomy of the former. It puts local governments at the mercy of the federal government.

Furthermore, successive Nigerian governments (both state and federal) have interfered in the actual functioning of the local governments. For instance, between 1984 and late 1987, local government councils were abolished and the administration of the affairs of the local government were placed entirely on the Sole Administrator. Again, in 1994, the elected local government councils were disbanded by the military government of General Sani Abacha and replaced with Caretaker Committees (Ezeani, 2004).

Also, the financial autonomy of the local governments has on many occasions been usurped by the state governments. This is currently the case in Nigeria where some State Governors intercept federal allocations to local governments and give whatever amount they like to the Chairmen to run their local governments.

(vii) **The Practice of Local Government Joint Account.** The local government is regarded as the third tier of government. Therefore, the practice of a joint account in which the local government is not free to generate its budget and expend resources without recourse to the state government or its agencies is an aberration. This arrangement violates the 1999 Constitution as amended since the said

Constitution seeks to enhance the autonomy of local governments by clearly assigning them responsibilities. Besides, it allows them direct access to funding from the Federation Account through periodical statutory allocation.

Few out of the plethora of problems confronting local governments in developing countries, especially, Nigeria have been identified and examined. It is deducible from the foregoing discussion that the greatest challenge facing local governments especially in Nigeria is ineffective leadership. We shall now therefore go ahead to advance and delineate the strategies needed for dynamic leadership in the administration of this level of government.

Strategies for Dynamic Leadership in Local Government Administration

The strategies considered necessary or appropriate for attaining dynamic leadership in local government administration would be x-rayed on the following topics:-

- (i) Adoption of the transformational style of leadership
- (ii) Recruitment of Managers/Leaders for the Local Governments – the Role of Political Parties
- (iii) The Imperatives of Good Governance
- (iv) The Local Government as Participatory Democracy at the Grassroots level
- (v) Proactive Followership.

(i) Adoption of the Transformational Style of Leadership

Peradventure, the most important factor or strategy for effective performance of the local government is the availability of good leadership which would create an enabling environment in the council areas. The current local government environment characterized by poor leadership, mismanagement of funds, overstaffing, corruption, over-dependence of the local government on federally allocated revenue, among others, calls for transformational leadership to be adopted in the system. Transformational leaders identify the need for change, where necessary, and take steps to effect it (Spreitzer et al, 2005).

According to Hay (2007), transformational leaders disseminate new values and seek alternatives to existing arrangements with unity and shared purpose of leaders and followers; they raise followers into leaders, focus on personal power, values, morals and ethics, transcend daily affairs, concentrate on long-term issues and have an organic world-view and altruistic motives based on the promise of a better future. In the words of Ukaegbu (2010):

Such a leadership sees development as a race in which better performers move forward and laggards are left behind. It is a leadership willing and determined to use the people's money to solve the people's problems instead of allowing the people's money to vanish into the private pockets of the powerful and the well-connected, while the majority remains deprived.

The foregoing discussion explains why transformational leaders are seen as unique people. They have a charismatic disposition – a quality they demonstrate through their knowledge, courage, vision, imagination, transparency, predisposition for decisive action, expressive power and empathy for their followers. That is what Local Governments need for development and effective service delivery. In fact, local governments need such leaders with strength of character, knowledge and courage to build strong institutions required for good performance.

The followers of such leaders will exhibit high levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. With such a devoted workforce, it will be necessary to consider making efforts towards transforming the local government status quo through leadership to be able to deliver the goods.

(ii) Recruitment of Managers/Leaders for the Local Government – The Role of Political Parties

How to identify and recruit appropriate person(s) (effective leaders), who understand(s) how to generate development and other administrative techniques is a major task of a local government council's administration. What usually happens is that those who are competent and are known in the locality do not emerge as the party candidates for local government elections. Rather, state governments often stage-manage elections into the councils to ensure that their party and handpicked imbeciles win the elections. In fact, generally, recruitment, engagement and deployment of staff have mainly become a political consideration instead of being based on merit or actual need for effective and efficient performance in the local government system.

A study carried out on Kwara State, Nigeria revealed that between the years 2000 and 2015, there were conversions of primary and secondary school teachers into top levels of personnel administration in the local government system, and they were appointed Director of Personnel after one year of conversion without undergoing a course or writing an appropriate examination for the cadre (Alao et al, 2015). The chairmen (the leaders) were quite comfortable with this arrangement because they were dealing with administrative heads who could be manipulated easily because they did not have cognate experience. This pseudo-practice could be found in the other local government councils in the country. New and better ways must be devised by the political parties for recruiting staff (especially managers or leaders) for the councils through elections or by appointment. It has been observed that people who usually present themselves for positions do not have appropriate knowledge, skills nor programmes germane to effective local government administration.

(iii) The Imperatives of Good Governance

Exercising power and decision-making for a group of people is called governance (Agalamanyi, 2010). Governance is all about the rational exercise of authority and the commitment of institutional resources in the management of the problems and affairs of the society for general improvement of quality of life and socio-economic growth (World Bank, 1991; Rosenau, 1999). Good governance is anti-corruption while the authority with its institutions are accountable, effective, efficient, participatory, responsive, equitable, transparent and consensus-oriented. These are the major features of good governance outlined by the United Nations. Thus, the yardstick for assessing performance of government in most countries of the contemporary world is the degree of good governance.

The Worldwide Governance Indicators Project of the World Bank defines governance as the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. These include the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced, the capacity of the government to formulate and implement sound policies, and the respect of citizens and the state of the institutions that govern economic and social interactions. The Project evaluates six dimensions of governance, to wit: voice and accountability; political stability and lack of violence; government effectiveness, regulatory quality; rule of law; and control of corruption.

Elaborating on the imperatives of good governance, Obama (2009), a former American President, during his visit to Ghana, averred:

*...The true sign of success is not whether we are a source of aid that helps people scrape by, it is whether we are partners in building the capacity for transformational change. No country is going to create wealth if its leaders exploit the economy to enrich themselves... With better governance, I have no doubts that Africa holds the promise for a broader base for prosperity. The continent is rich in natural resources. But old habits must be broken. Dependence on a single export concentrates wealth in the hands of the few and leaves people too vulnerable to downturns. As I said earlier: **Africa's future is up to Africans.** With strong institutions and a strong will, I know that Africans can live their dreams in Nairobi and Lagos; in Kigali and Kinshasa, in Harare and right here in Accra. You have the power to hold your leaders accountable and to build institutions that serve the people.*

Basically, one of the major reasons for the creation of local government is to afford the grassroots populace the opportunity to participate in their own governance. It is a means of enabling the local people manage their affairs, by formulating and implementing decisions affecting them. Therefore, good governance at the third tier of government presupposes participatory democracy and provision of services to the people in a transparent and accountable manner. This is one of the major factors which can enhance dynamic leadership in local government administration.

(iv) Local Government as an Instrument of Participatory Democracy at the Grassroots Level

As discussed in Section (iii) above, local government was created fundamentally to give the local populace the opportunity to take part in politics (governance) at the grassroots level. Local government is the government closest to the people. Thus, it feels the problems and needs of the people most. It is a government by which the local people manage their affairs. It is meant to promote democracy as people are given the opportunity to participate in the formulation and implementation of policies governing them (Agalamanyi, 2010).

Participatory democracy as a model holds that local government exists primarily for bringing about democracy and creating opportunities for political participation by the citizens (i.e. to educate and socialize the people politically). This will afford the people the opportunity to learn the values of fair play, tolerance and respect for the rights of others. Learning and internalizing these values at the local government level will make governing easier for the managers or leaders (chairmen, councillors, secretaries etc.). Thus, local government provides opportunities for training people in the art of self-governing as well as serving as a good training ground for prospective national political actors.

(v) Proactive Followership

Followership is part of leadership. Followership must possess certain attributes so as to keep the leader in check, and also for both to perform the task of balancing “what is popular but unnecessary with what is unpopular but critical to societal progress” (Agbese, 2010). It has been suggested that critical followership – dynamic and active in turning the leader’s vision into concrete reality – be used to accomplish objectives. Such type of followership must be educated, enlightened and confident.

However, some Nigerians are yet to develop the “culture of resistance to bad leadership” (Adelusi and Saliu, 1997). Rather, such followership remains docile, irrespective of the type of leaders they get. People who hate dictatorship, for example, would do something to advise it for a change or overthrow or remove it. Failure to do so is tantamount to acceptance of it (Egwemi, 2008). It is noteworthy, nevertheless, that to dislodge an unacceptable leadership does not necessarily require violent actions. It can be effected through non-violent means as done successfully in some countries (Adelusi and Saliu, 1997), such as through elections or peaceful protests.

Proactive or critical followership is essential in a polity especially in local government because:

It is active. It is alive to its watchdog role. It helps to moderate the swing of the pendulum and saves it from being held prisoner in the praise corner. It prevents a leader from extending the frontier of democratic convention to suit himself. It creates an atmosphere that prevents a democratic leader from turning himself into an autocrat and even an autocrat from turning himself into a god (Agbese, 2010).

Leadership in local government administration will be dynamic if, inter alia, followership is so alive to its responsibilities of checking and balancing the activities of the leadership.

Conclusion

Local government is an essential agent of service delivery and development in a country. It brings government nearer to the people at the grassroots level. In fact, it serves as a link between the local people and the higher level government(s). Moreover, local government affords the people the opportunity of participating in the formulation and implementation of policies that affect them. Ideally, local government should be the hallmark of efficient, transparent and accountable service delivery, but that is not to be due to a number of problems, the most prominent being poor leadership. Others include low fiscal capacity despite huge monthly allocation from the federation account, lack of good governance, poor service delivery, overstaffing, corruption, loss of autonomy.

This study which focused on one of the challenges – leadership – affirmed that leadership in local government administration, particularly in Nigeria, has been both inefficient and ineffective. Thus, to make leadership dynamic in the administration of this tier of government, a number of strategies has been identified and delineated and they include adoption of the transformational style of leadership, appropriate means of recruiting leaders should be devised, the imperatives of good governance, seeing local government as an instrument of participatory democracy at the grassroots level and to have proactive followership. These suggestions are capable of repositioning local government administration for optimum performance since its leadership will now be dynamic.

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