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**CARETAKER COMMITTEE SYSTEM AND ADMINISTRATION OF LOCAL
GOVERNMENT IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF ENUGU STATE (2003-2017)**

By

UGWU DARLINGTON OGBONNA

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, NNAMDI
AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA**

darlington.ugwu12@gmail.com

and

CHIKELUE OFUEBE (PhD)

**DEPARTMENT PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA**

chikelue.ofuebe@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

The study investigated the caretaker committee system and administration of Local Government in Nigeria: A study of Enugu State (2003-2017). In order to achieve the objectives of the study, three research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Data were sourced through secondary sources like text books, Journals, Government official documents, magazine, Newspapers etc. Literature that is relevant to the study was reviewed. A case study method was adopted for the research study. The study utilized simple table and Content Analysis to present and analyze data generated from source, and generalization was made through the hypotheses. The study adopted theory of Structural Functionalism as a framework of analysis. The empirical Literature was stated. Based on the data obtained, it was founded thus: that caretaker committee system did not impact significantly on the service delivery at the grass root level, that the State government activities affected the caretaker committee system in the management of its finances, that Corruption and State/Local government Joint Account are the major challenges that militated against the caretaker committee system in the administration of local government. Based on the background and findings of the study, it was recommended thus: that the caretaker committee in the local government system should be allowed to enjoy some degree of autonomy from State Government and exercise adequate powers for effective management of its affairs in Nigeria; that local government Councils should be given adequate freedom to manage their monthly allocations without State government interference; that Federal government should abolish the use of Joint Account and Allocation Committees, that is being headed by the State Government representatives since it deprives the Local government the power to control their funds; that the use of caretaker committee in the administration of local Government should be completely

discouraged so as to enable the local government councils achieve proper service delivery at the grass root levels.

Introduction

The existence of Local government in the world over has been recognized as being pivotal to the rapid development of localities where national and state governments may not be able to reach. Supporting the above fact, Obiora (2012) posits that Local governments are expected to act as the pivot in the realization of this dream. Consequent upon this, the local government system in Nigeria has undergone various changes so as to make it more responsive to the expectations of the people particularly at the grassroot levels with 1976 Reform as the first major step. In the word of Abada (2007), 'the local government Reform of 1976 initialized the local government autonomy, which was later strengthened by the 1988 and 1991 reforms respectively. It is pertinent to note that despite these reforms, local governments have not enjoyed real autonomy in the discharge of their functions. Take for instance, Section 7 of the 1999 constitution grants the State House of Assembly the powers to determine the existence of local government, under a law which provides for their establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions (F.R.N,1999).

Given these realities, it becomes obvious that local governments are under the control of the state governments and as such lack autonomy especially with the introduction of the caretaker committee arrangement in the management of the Local government. However, the practice of caretaker committee system is dated as far back as during the Nigeria's Second Republic. Ogunna (1996) noted that during the Second Republic, almost all the local governments in all the States of the Federation, were run by caretaker committee system consisting of party loyalists appointed by State Governors.

After the first practice in the second Republic, the idea of managing the local governments with caretaker committees has been increased in Nigeria. Out of the 36 States in Nigeria, 25 States have the local governments administered by the caretaker committees (Okafor&Orijinta, 2013) between 2007 and 2017. Apparently, this increase was as a result

of the lacuna created by the 1999 constitution as amended. The constitution did not specify the term of an elected local government council; hence the governors then capitalized on these loopholes and tuned the local governments as an avenue for settling their loyalists.

Between 2003 to 2007 and 2015 to 2017, local governments in Enugu State were managed by caretaker committees that are either appointed or selected by the State Government. This implies that local governments are under the control of the States and lack all vestiges of financial and administrative autonomy. Scholars, such as Chukwuemeka (2012) have highlighted the need for autonomy for local Government as he maintained that the political system of Nigeria requires that different levels of governments should be given some kinds of autonomy to function from federal government.

It should be noted that since the introduction of caretaker committee system, there had been cases of illegal diversion of funds belonging to the local governments by their respective governors (Omoniyi, 2013). In the bid to make the administrators sub-servant to their whims and caprices, some governors have even deliberately refused to conduct local government elections but instead have put in caretaker committees to oversee the affairs of the local governments. Ominiyi (2013) states categorically that evidence had shown from recent statistics that only seventeen (17) states of the federation including FCT have elected officers running the affairs of Local government as enshrined in section 7 of the 1999 constitution.

As a result, it has been very difficult to make the officials (caretakers) to be accountable to the people. This is part of the reasons why performance has been abysmally low across the Local government in almost the states of the federation.

However, it is important to note that the recurring issue of local government autonomy has in the recent past attracted the interest of the National Assembly who insisted on local government autonomy based on the constitutional review. Unfortunately, the governors opposed the bill when it reached to their domain. Take for instance; the embattled

chairman of the Nigerian Governors' Forum Rotimi Amaechi had literally launched an open campaign against the proposal, insisting that the bill would not see the light of the day (Amaechi, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Section 7 of the 1999 Constitution recognized the local government as the third tier of government and is mandated under the law to provide better services to the local dwellers. Unfortunately, the people at the grassroots level are denied the benefits of their existence. According to Olusola (2011) the environment is very poor and unhealthy, hence there is a noticeable deteriorating public school building, poor market facilities and lack of health centres. The failure of Local Governments under the caretaker committee in the area of service delivery has made the citizens to lose trust in government. In some areas, these appointed Caretaker committees are better known for their harassment of citizens than service delivery.

Ogu (2015) argues that finance is essential in enabling the local government transform the life of the rural dwellers through the provision of social services and rural infrastructures like construction and maintenance of rural roads, markets, etc. This has not been achieved in Nigeria local government due to State government interference in local government's financial operation. Local governments in Nigeria are sometime starved of fund by the State. Sometime, the state will give the local government a handout of the allocation due to them; they will accept it because they are all appointed by State government. Again, some local governments will embark on a capital project whose cost is beyond the physical structure of the project. The chunk of the money that is budgeted for the project is being siphoned by the appointed care takers in collusion with State government.

However, the attitude of the local government caretaker committee in managing the local government funds is questionable. Under the caretaker system, it is unfortunate that the allocations of the local government come jointly with the state allocation, and as such the state has the constitutional right to decide the amount of money to be allocated to the local government. Based on this, the state do not allocate the

reasonable amount of money due for local government, hence certain projects and programmes are abandoned due to insufficient fund in the pause. Due to the paucity of fund and the corrupt practices of the State and caretaker committee in the local government administration who collude together and siphon the meager amount that are due for local government, local government roads, are left unrepaired, rural electricity is in a state of dilemma, rural health centres are dilapidated with absence of drugs, and even rural borehole and water pump are not functional.

Staff development system under the caretaker committee system is low. There is hardly training, seminars and workshop for the staff of the local government. Most of the staff are dead wood, unproductive and inefficient due to lack of acquired skills and experience in the job they do.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the effect of caretaker committee system on the administration of local government in Enugu State of Nigeria (2003-2017). The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Investigate the extent to which the caretaker committee system has impacted on the service delivery at the local government areas between 2003 and 2017.
2. Find out how the activities of the State government affected the caretaker committee system in the management of the local government finances between 2003 and 2017.
3. Ascertain the major challenges facing the caretaker committee system in local government administration between 2003 and 2017.

Research Questions

These following research questions guided the study.

- (a) To what extent has the caretaker committee system impacted on service delivery at the grassroots level between 2003 and 2017?
- (b) How did the activities of the State government affect the caretaker committees in the management of the local government finances between 2003 and 2017?

- (c) What are the major challenges militating against the caretaker committee system in local government administration between 2003 and 2017?

Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Caretaker Committees System has not significantly impacted on Service delivery at the grassroots level.
2. The activities of the State government affect the Caretaker Committees in the management of the local government finance.
3. Corruption and Joint account syndrome are the major challenges militating against the caretaker committee system in the administration of Local Government.

Significance of the Study

This study has both theoretical and practical significance.

Theoretically the study will add to existing literature on caretaker committee and local government administration particularly by justifying the issue of appointed caretaker committee system in managing the affairs of the local government. It will also serve as a framework for further researches on caretaker committee system and local government administration. It will no doubt be able to provide scholars and practitioners of local government with new knowledge on the impact of caretaker committee system on the administration of local government. Also, the study will serve as a source of secondary data for future researches on caretaker committee system and local government administration.

Practically this study will provide policy makers, practitioners of local government, opinion leaders, experts with policy options on the best way to enthrone democratic governance at the grassroots level in order to enable the delivery of amenities to the people by their elected representatives that will be accountable to them. This is because the use of caretaker committee to manage the affairs of the local government system has made it very difficult for the local governance to achieve the

objective for which it was created. Party politics has been the bane of the Nigerian local government system since its inception; hence it is only democratically elected government chairman and councilors with political and financial autonomy that are the major conditions for effective and efficient delivery of democracy dividend of the grassroots.

Scope of the Study

The scope covered six local governments areas in Enugu North senatorial district of Enugu State. The Local Governments include:, Nsukka, Uzo-Uwani, Udenu and Igbo-Eze South. These local governments are covered by the study because the issues that bother on the administration of local government under the caretaker committee system are most common at those local government areas in Enugu State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

- Conceptual frameworks

The local Government Caretaker Committee System and staff Service delivery

The 1976 local government reforms, local government decree 1989,1990,1992 and section 7(70) of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria, all recognized the local government as the tier of government and as well guarantees it. However, section 8 of the 1999 constitution gave the state government through its House Assembly the authority to lord it over local governments and as such local government system in Nigeria depends on the state government for all they do, (Ananti etal, 2015).

The section 7 and 8 of the 1999 constitution provides as follows: The system of local government by democratically elected councils is by this constitution guaranteed and, that the House of Assembly of every state shall subject to section 8 of this constitution ensure their existence under a law which provides for establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions of such council.

The above therefore implies that the local government system in Nigeria cannot function as provided by the constitution without the State House

of Assembly passing a law for such actions to be taken. Asatu (2010) also argues that to make matter worse for the local government , the fourth schedule of the same constitution provides the function of the local government to include participation in the performance of such function as education, Agriculture, Health care and other functions as may be assigned to it by the House Assembly. This indicates that the local government in Nigeria is just an appendage of the State government that determines its survival, through the appointment of caretaker committee. Chukwuemeka (2015) is of the view that the caretaker committee system is an aberration in local government practice. According to him the practice is unconstitutional and does not make for effective service delivery of the local government staff. Money in which the staff is supposed to use and work to achieve the objective of local governments are not always available.

Ogu (2015) argues that finance is essential in enabling local government transform the life of the rural dwellers through the provision of social services and rural infrastructures like construction and maintenance of rural roads, markets, schools, health centres etc.

The use of caretaker system and especially the area it affects local government funds has brought set back in grassroots development. Chukwuemeka (2015) contends that for local government to be effective in the performance of their statutory functions, people should choose their leaders democratically and not the selection method. Ugwueze (2014) argues that the money that accrues to the local government is used by the state governors who operate the caretaker committee system. They merely give the caretaker committee chairman a handout from the huge government allocation to manage the local government.

However, due to the public condemnation of the use of caretaker committees in running the affairs of the councils and the hijack of the resources of the local government, the Nigeria House of Representatives in an unanimous decision on May 19, 2012 declared such practice as illegal act which has no constitutional backings. It directed Governors of the affected States to conduct local government elections and transfer power

to a democratically elected chairmen and councilors but this was not obeyed as some governors continued to appoint caretaker committees.

It is obvious that most of the State governors usurp local government functions and revenue sources, there by eroding the autonomy of the local government system in Nigeria. The state governments willingly take over the revenue yielding areas of the local government. This ugly situation has also impaired the efficient service delivery of local government staff, who are ordinarily the implementers of grassroot development. Within the period under investigation in Enugu State, due to the paucity of fund and other forms of corrupt practices among the appointed caretaker committee, local government roads are left unrepaired, rural electricity are in a state of dilemma, rural health centres are dilapidated with absence of drugs and necessary health personnel, rural bore holes and water pump have no water , rural water scheme projects are deserted.

Ananti, Onyekwelu, Nwabueze (2015) contend that the only visible things in the rural areas are the sign proof which shows the location , direction, and physical status of these rural infrastructures. Some of them are not functional due to lack of maintenance and uncompleted nature of the projects, vandalization, poor quality job and absence of community ownership of such projects.

Ojo (2014) argues that staff development within the period of caretaker system is low and also highly jeopardized as training, workshop and seminars that would have improved the capacity of the staff are lacking. If capacities of staff are improved through training, it will enhance effective performance. But all these are lacking during the period of caretaker committee system in Enugu State. Officers are not accountable to the people the people did not elect them; rather they are accountable to Governor that appointed them.

Ogbonnaya (2012) is of the view that the founding fathers of Nigerian local government system had good intentions for the people especially the rural people. He however, argues that the major of creating the third tier of government is to positively change the lives of the people at the grassroots but it is worrisome to state that the local government system had turned

out to be a place where the meager resources of this level of government are shared by the appointed caretaker committees who manage the affairs of the councils.

Intervention over the local government financial operation by the higher level of government is another major factor militating against the effective local government system in Nigeria. There have been various forms of protests by Nigerians against the interventions. For instance, Olamilekan (2006) was not comfortable with such interventions by other tiers of government when he noted that the control of revenue accruing to local governments by both Federal and State governments was not indicative of a genuine desire to strengthen the local governments or meet the high expectations of the people. It is known that these tiers of government actually fund the local government system in Nigeria, but regrettably they often turn round to collect the chunk of the allocations stipulated for the provision of rural needs. This evident in one of the directives by the former Governor Oserheimen Osubor of Edo State, that all councils should pay one million naira each to the State government account (Otabor, 2010). This directive was irresistibly carried out without any official paper issued to the payees, acknowledging the receipt of such money. It is worrisome to note that federal government intervenes indirectly. For instance, there are some federal agencies located in all the local government headquarters' premises. These agencies are being directed to collect funds from their host councils for their up-keep and conduct of States and national programmes. According to (Iwilade (2012) the last census and the most recent general elections in Nigeria are cases where certain logistics for the exercises were provided by the councils from the same allocations given by the same federal government.

Caretaker committees and local government finances

The issue of who control the local government fund has been a great concern to local government autonomy and democracy. Various State governments take advantage of the provisions of the provisions of the

1999 Constitution to abuse local government funds through the establishment of joint Account and Allocation Committee (JAAC) headed by a State government representative. The JAAC deprives the local government the powers to control their funds. In most cases, through the instrument of the JAAC the local government is starved of fund for her democratic activities. The effect is that the local government is now dependent on the State government command, and this affects local government democratic activities (Akhakpe,2012).

In Nigeria, as stated by Nwosu (in Egbo), Okeke and Anichie (2010), each state establishes local government Service Commission , which is charged with the responsibility of recruitment, discipline and promotion of local government personnel and they use this establishment to intimidate the entire local government structure in state. In his argument, Khemani (2001), state governments appear to be ultimately responsible for the actual delivery of these services, and often have to take over the activities and responsibilities of local governments in order to ensure delivery. Therefore, they are bargaining to complain that even though they oversee and sometime fulfill LGA responsibilities, their share of the federation account is not commensurately larger. He further averred that primary education and Health, water and sanitation, and local roads- are assigned as the responsibility of the state and local governments, with no clear legal delineation between the relative roles of these two sub-national tiers of government. As things stand now the state-level discretion with regard to the powers of the LGAs has led to wide variation in the extent of autonomy afforded to LGAs both within and across states in many cases they function as mere administrative extensions of the state governments.

Ekpo and Ndebbio (1998) posit that in a federal system like Nigeria, local governments are close to the people and hence could effectively alter socio-economic and political conditions within their jurisdictions. Apart from providing and maintaining basic infrastructures, local governments can complement the economic activities of other levels of government. In a system characterized by ethnic and clan conflicts, state governments have attempted for political reasons to frustrate the existence and effectiveness of local governments. The term local government administration in Nigeria

has attracted serious attention both nationally and internationally since the great local government reform of 1976 (Idada and Isiraojie, 2010). To them, local government is the closest tier of government of Nigeria, yet the resident population in it is denied the benefits of its existence. The failure of local government in the area of service delivery over the years has made the citizens to lose faith and trust in local government administration as an institution in Nigerian. They further posited that local government administration in Nigeria has undergone many changes of which the 1976 Reforms and the constitutions of 1979 and 1999 can be said to be most prominent.

Following the 1976 reforms, local government became recognized as tier of government entitled to a share of national revenue consequent on its constitutionally allocated functions (Imuetinyan, 2002). The power of the state government over local authorities has been wrongly applied to undermine elected and participatory governance and responsibility at the grassroots, and this has made operation of the constitution questionable (Idada and Isiraojie, 2010). They further argued that while local government is said to be the best institution that can facilitate the efficient and effective service delivery at the grassroots level, the fact remains that the third tier of government lacks the financial and human capacity to deliver on the statutory and shared responsibilities between it and the other tiers of government. Local governments make minimal inputs into the decisions on resource allocations at both federal and State government levels.

The 1999 Constitution has not really conceded much to the local governments as a third tier in the federation (Awotokun, 2005). It is important to remark that the way the manners of operation of local government councils across Nigeria in the current political dispensation vary from state to state. This to a large extent is determined by the local government law enacted by each state of Assembly. According to Ukwueze (2010) the local government reforms of 1976 marked the first time, local government got recognition and autonomy, but the autonomy is not complete since the local governments have limited authority to taxes on the natural resources exploited in their domain. This absence of complete

autonomy (as exemplified in a typical federal state) restricts the lower levels of government from mobilizing sufficient revenue for the development of the local governments. This serves as a constraint for the local governments from performing statutory functions and responsibilities.

Commenting on this, Olusola (2011) lamented that the local government is the closest tier of government to the people in Nigeria, yet the resident population in it is denied the benefits of its existence. According to him, this is evident in the environmental state, deteriorating public school building, poor market facilities and lack of health centres. The failure of local governments in the areas of service delivery has made the citizens to lose trust in government as an institution. In some areas, council officials are better known for the harassment of citizens than service delivery. He observed that many Nigerians crave for change in the local government system as presently constituted in order not only to bring it in conformity with present day realities but also to make it live up to expectations of the people who have been yearning for grassroots development. Local governments now face more challenges in terms of struggling to be less dependent on the federal and state governments for financial resources (Ekpo and Ndebbio, 1998). To them, the revenue allocation system mandates that a certain fraction of the federation Accounts system be allocated to local government; these funds are not enough to meet expenditure requirements. This is because the size of account is related to revenue from oil which is subject to fluctuations and the expenditures local governments incur, far exceed available resources.

Adeyemo (2005) argued that the struggle for local government autonomy in Nigeria has been a recurring issue. It is as old as the history of Nigeria colonial state. In the 1950s various reforms such as the Northern Nigeria local government law of 1954, the western and Eastern Nigeria local government law of 1954 respectively aimed at democratizing local government administration were initiated by the various regional governments. In the same vein, Athakpe (2009) put forward that the struggle to bring about a local government system in Nigeria has been a long drawn one. Efforts have geared towards moving the system from local

administration to local government with functional political and economic autonomy. Yet, local government administration is confronted with issues and challenges such as: federal and state government's interventions in the constitutional apportioned responsibilities of local government. The usurpation of local government functions and revenue sources by State government is another serious area of eroding the autonomy of the local government (Adeyemo, 2005). More often than not, parallel revenue boards, through the states unwittingly usurp and erode the revenue yielding areas of the local government. It is not uncommon to see such boards to include market, motor parks, building [plan approvals and forest royalty collection fund etc. Furthermore, he argued that it has been difficult to practice an enduring autonomy in Nigerian local government. Even though various institutional structures have been put in place since the 1976 local government Reform so as to concretize certain degree of autonomy, yet an amalgam of bottlenecks have been put on the ways of an emergent autonomous local government.

In the same manner, Asaju (2010) comments succinctly that the 1979, 1989, and 1999 constitutions recognized the local government as a third tier of government, subject to the control of State governments. The abuse of these provisions in the constitution, especially by the State government, has brought to the fore-front the question of local government autonomy. Writing on the autonomy of local government in Nigeria, Ugwu (2003) observed that the constitutional power to establish local government, define its structure, composition and functions, belong to the state governments. To him, as far as it is so, the local government is a mere state agency or a creation of the State government. It would therefore be erroneous to see it as independent third tier of government. As such, the issue of autonomy of local government becomes a myth and not a reality.

Challenges to the Caretaker Committee System in Administration of Local Government

According to Abutudu (2011), the main challenges to local governance in Nigeria are in the manner the provisions of sections 7 and 162 of the

Constitution have been handled by the State governments. The first relates to the issue of guaranteeing the third tier of government as a democracy. The second relates to its financial autonomy and capability to carry out its developmental functions. As they were required to do under the constitutions, the various states passed the necessary enactments to give effect to these constitutional provisions. In this word, these have rather compounded the problems of local government and, in fact, turn them into zones of governance critics. First, the financial autonomy which direct allocation from the Federation Account sought to confer on the local governments has been severely undermined as a result of various deductions and diversions of funds intended for local government. State governments have instead used the state local governments' joint Account mechanism (or Account) to hold local governments hostage and make them appendages of the state. In practice, the operation of the SLGJA has denied local governments their financial autonomy.

The constitution empowers the State to scrutinize and approve Local Government budgets, and expenditure through the State House of Assembly. States have exercised arbitrary and undue control over Local Government finance through the establishment of the State Local Government Joint Account. The issue of State

Local Government Joint Account has been a thorny issue in local government state relationship in the Fourth Republic. Observing this development, Okafor (2010) points out that the state government is not intended to be a beneficiary of the SLGJA, rather, it is a trustee of the Account. It is required to maintain the Account for the benefit of the local governments by ensuring that the amount allocated for this third tier of government is equitably and fairly shared among the councils, adhering strictly to constitutionally stipulated criteria. However, reports across the country indicate that most of the State governments are using SLGJA laws contrary to this intention (Okafor, 2010).

The spoil system with its attendant undesired consequences, which was accepted as part of American federal government throughout the nineteenth century, is being practiced in a disguised and diluted form in

the present Local government administration in Nigeria. For instance, caretaker committee chairman comes into an office and appoints his political loyalists who in various capacities will serve as Secretary, Chief of staff, assistants of different capacities and of course advisers who are there only to collect their stipends at the end of every month. Their appointments terminate immediately the chairman's tenure expires. In other words, these political appointees come and go with the chairman who appointed them (Ovaga, 2010).

The implications of this ugly practice is that it does not only cause chaos in the systems but keeps the career local government staff redundant because, these intruders and unqualified persons will virtually take over almost all the duties meant for the bona fide workers in the local government. The most worrying aspect of this undesired act is that, some Chairmen of Caretaker committee leave offices at the end of their tenure with some important records, thereby creating scenario whereby their successors find nothing to lay hands on for a take-off. This is spoil system which is applied to the systematic filling of low level posts by one's own appointees as a reward for political loyalty, such as helping in an election (Alistir, 2003).

Commenting on the issue of fiscal relations, Nwanegbo (2004) in Nigeria system opined that the continued maintenance of the local government, such that the fund will come from the federation account and the State government determines its usage and sometimes actually use it for the local government will continue. He argued firmly that instead of this system, as he echoed; let the system of local government seize to be a national issue. In his account, Emekwue (2004) observed that the local government Accounts are subject to the supervision and inspection by the external auditors who are usually state government officers. To him, local government is required by law to submit its plans and annual estimates or budgets for vetting and approval and local government cannot award contracts to the value of over five hundred naira (500,000.00) without the approval of the State government. Based on this, Emekwue succinctly argued that if the local government in Nigeria is really a third tier of a federation, it should be spelt out by the

Constitution, and not made a function of the state government. Most of the arguments in Nigeria over the fiscal relationship between the federal and constituent levels of government have centered on the question of revenue allocations between the different parts of the country and the principles upon which distributions should be based (Barongo, 1983). These principles became a major cause of the inter-governmental rivalry and conflict, which have dominated Nigeria politics (Dudley, 1982).

Another important militating factor against the effective local government system in Nigeria is the utter neglect and deliberate circumvention of rules and regulations guiding the system's operation during the caretaker committee arrangement. These measures are provided to ensure proper accountability in the system. It is provided in section 17, 10 of the Revised 2009 Model Financial Memoranda for Local Government, that all transactions costing over #50, 000.00 must go to open tender contracts (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2009). In other words, the Executive Councils of each local government is authorized to approve any job costing over #50,000.00 while anything less than the amount should be approved by the Chairman alone. Contrarily, local government functionaries quite often devise counter measures to circumvent due process. For instance, in a situation where a job to be done is expected to cost over #50,000.00, it is often split into units less than the spending limit, contrary to section 17, 8 of the same financial memoranda (FM) which states that it is forbidden to split job and local purchase into orders in order to circumvent the jobbing order forms LGT 65 and local purchase order form LGT 66 where their total cost does not exceed #50,000.00 (Federal Republic Nigeria, 2009). The apparent disregard for due process and laid down rules by the local government functionaries, is a deliberate attempt to defraud the Council. This is evident in the written petition against Ovia North East Local Government Councils, Edo State by Ovia North East Forum. Sequel to this, the Chairman of the Council was invited to appear before the House of Assembly Adhoc Committee set up to investigate the petition, it was discovered that instead of using contract procedure to grade the five Kilometers Okamu Road at the cost of #26.5 million, direct labour was adopted (Octabor, 2010). This act contravenes the local government financial regulations, which states that no local

government authority has the power to engage in any kind of job exceeding #500,000.00 without the approval of the state government. This act is common among most local government Councils in Nigeria especially during the dispensation of the caretaker committee system.

Caretaker Committee and Local Government Autonomy

Remarkably, in a federal structure, a local government is created by state legislation with the endorsement of the National Assembly. The Vice President is responsible to the President on all matters relating to local government. The States are political bodies with elections to their legislatures taking place in every four years. In several states, elected councilors and the Chairman of local government authorities have been suspended by the State Governor or State House of Assembly without due process of the law or allowing the councilors to exercise their democratic and constitutional roles. In such cases, the Governors have appointed Caretaker Committees to replace them (Ezeife, 2008).

The 1979 Constitution as re-enacted and re-entrenched in the 1989 Constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provided in Section 7(i) for the existence of a system of a local government by democratically elected local government Councils. The formation of Caretaker committees or transitional management committees is an instrument in the hands of the State governments to erode the autonomy of local governments in Nigeria. The ability of local government to transform rural areas is hampered under the caretaker committees arrangement particularly and more so too, as they do not get enough funds because, they lose more than half of their federal allocations to the State Governments. Also the State government does not adhere to the policy of remitting the ten percent (10%) of their internally generated revenue to the local governments account as supposed. This is due to Joint State- Local Governments Account, which has as its implication, the inability of most local Governments to prepare and execute annual budgets especially, during the era of Caretaker Committees (Dalhatu, 2007).

Empirical Literature

Many research works have been carried out with respect to caretaker committee and local government administration by some scholars, for instance, Ananti, Onyekwelu (2015) on Caretaker Committee system and Democratic Government in Nigeria's Local Government System: A study of Anambra State between (2003-2014).

Here, the study was aimed at finding out whether the Caretaker Committee system hindered democratic governance in the local government System in Anambra State between the years 2003-2014. The methodology adopted in the study was thematic i.e (Content) analysis. The study revealed that the use of caretaker committees to run the affairs of the local government has been the reason for the colossal failures of the grassroots development in Anambra State, that the running of the local government with caretaker committees has had three major negative effects which includes: political, economic and social. Based on this, it was recommended that a free and transparent election at the local government level, devoid of manipulations should be encouraged.

In another research study by Oviasuyi&Isiraojie (2017) titled Appointment of Local Government Caretaker Committees: An aberration in Local Government Administration in Nigeria. The study examined the history of caretaker committees and the reasons/causes of caretaker committees in Local Government Administration in Nigeria. The study utilized descriptive research design. Based on this, the implication of the continued use of caretaker committees was identified. It was found out from the study that lack of autonomy among the appointed caretaker committees was one of the reasons why there was an abysmal development in the Local Government in Nigeria. The study recommends that democratically elected individuals should be allowed to run the affairs of LGAs in order to check ineffectiveness, inefficiency, corruption etc.

Research study has been conducted by Alex, Gboyega, (1987) on Political Values and Local government in Nigeria: A study of Anambra State. Modern Local Government Administration by Otunba and Adenuga, (1991), Local Government in Nigeria and the United State Learning from

Comparison by Aborisade (1995), Corruption in the under development of the Rural Areas in Nigeria by Ibeto (2014).

Another research was conducted by Okafor and Orinta (2014) titled constitutional democracy and caretaker committee In Nigeria: An assessment. This work examines the impact of the caretaker committees in Nigerian Local Government on the practice of constitutional democracy. This study observes that party politics has been the bane of Nigerian Local Government since its inception and that democratically elected local councils with political and financial autonomy are the major conditions for an effective and efficient multi-purpose local government system in Nigeria.

A research study was also conducted by Ihemeje (2014) titled Mushrooming appointed caretaker committee: A quagmire to grassroots democracy in Nigeria. The study carefully examines budding appointed caretaker committees in Nigerian Local Government, which has become a quagmire to the survival of grassroots democracy. The study employs qualitative sources of data. Sample was drawn from the states operating appointed caretaker committee system in Nigeria. The study concludes that out of 36 (six) states, 14 states comprising six (6) geo-political zones are operating appointed caretaker committee in Local Government Council in Nigeria. That Local Government is thus hijacked and prevented from meeting up with its primary obligations; the citizens have been denied fair representation with feelings of alienation and disillusionment. The study, therefore, recommended that constitutional review and its strict compliance in order to democratize political institution of Local Government and Constitution should be amended to stem the proliferation of appointed caretaker committee in Local Government.

A study was conducted by Adalonu (2015) titled challenges confronting Local Govt administration in efficient and effective social service delivery: The Nigerian Experience.

The study examined the Nigeria experience with the local government administration and the factors militating local government in providing social service at the local government level. Secondary data formed the basis of data collection, interpretation and analysis. Data was collected

though a comprehensive review of relevant literature on the subject of inquiry. Based on the data collected, it was observed that lack of funds, commotion, and undue political interference among others are the major constraints to local government service delivery. Based on the findings, it was recommended that: There should be constitutional reform in order to ensure total autonomy of local government, enhance revenue allocation, capacity and institutional building that produce the human capital that is committed to the principles of good governance at the local level.

The study utilize efficiency service delivery theory. In a research study by Eze and Muanya (2013) titled between Democratic and the Care taker Committee Approach to Local Government Administration in Nigeria. Re-visiting the Anambra Experience from 2006 to 2013. The study examined the place of the caretaker committee option to local administration in the present day Nigeria's democratic setting as epitomized by the Anambra State since the year 2006 to 2013. The study employed structural functional theory as the theoretical framework. The descriptive qualitative method was used as a method, data analysis. Data were sourced through secondary sources. Based on the data, the following findings were made; that local government in Nigeria are the responsibility of both the Federal and State governments, that even though the Federal government is to make statutory allocations to the local government, such allocation must be passed to them through the state government; that despite the 1976 local government Reform that pronounced the local government system as the Third tier government, their actual autonomy has continued to be far from real.

That the adoption of the caretaker committee option to local government administration has further distorted whatever autonomy that may have been granted to the local government system. Based on these finding, it was recommended that the on-going constitutional review should be hastened by both houses of the National Assembly, that local government should be strengthened through its autonomous and democratic existence by ensuring that only elected officials are allowed to pilot its affairs as against the caretaker committee.

Finally, that local government should be autonomous. Another study was conducted by Eme and Onuigbo (2017) titled South-East Local Governments and Democracy in Nigeria. The study was aimed at investigating the role of the South-East Local government in democratic governance in Nigeria. The study used content analysis. Two major stream of theory were used democratic participatory Theory and the Development Theory. The descriptive and analytical method was used for data analysis. Focus group discussion, interview and documentary sources were also used as source of data.

The findings reveals that as a result of poor understanding of the operation of the constitution and excessive control by states on local government, corruption and the slaws in the 1999 constitution, they remain loudicepped. Based on the above, it was recommended that constitutional amendments Accountability and the diversification of the economy will help in addressing these challenges.

Gap in Literature

From the literature reviewed, it has been discovered that many authors and practitioners like Ananti and Onyekwelu(2015).Oviasuyi and Isiraojia, 2017; and Aborisade, 2017 has done a lot of studies on the impact of caretaker committee system on the democratic governance in Nigerians, political values of caretaker committee system in local government administration, local government in Nigeria and united State: learning from comparison but non of them to the best of my knowledge has conducted study on the impact of caretaker committee system on the administration of local governments in Nigeria. The study therefore, intendeds to fill that gap.

The Theoretical Framework

Structural Functionalism

This work adopted the structural functional theory as its framework of analysis. Structural functionalism is a framework for building theory that

sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. The intellectual precursors of structural functionalism include Talcot Parsons, Gabriel Almond and Sydney Powell (1972).

The theory also set out to investigate how to establish a doctrine of political order to replace political confusion, uncertainties and threats as well as setbacks to maintenance of a capitalists order. The question remains; how is order possible where individuals have different interests, passions and roles? These functionalist theorists started by examining the structures and processes involved in political behaviour, such as how a political system functions, its capabilities, the way it copes with its stress and generally how to maintain stability in the system.

Tenets of the Theory

The structural-functionalist theories argued that, in order to understand a political system, it is necessary to understand not only its institutions (or structures) but also their respective functions. They also insisted that for these institutions to be properly understood, they must be placed in a meaningful and dynamic historical context.

Almond and Powell (1972) maintained that a political system consisted of various functions, chief among them are political socialization, recruitment, and communication: Socialization refers to the way in which societies pass along their values and beliefs to succeeding generations and political socialization describes the process by which a society inculcates civic virtues or the habits of effective citizenship; recruitment denotes the process by which a political system generates interest, engagement and participation from citizens; and communication refers to the way that a system promulgates its values and information.

Structural functionalism views society as constantly striving to be at a state of equilibrium, which suggest that there is an inherent drive within human societies to cohere or stick together. Societies strive towards equilibrium, not through dictatorial mandate by the leaders of society but rather because the social structure of societies encourages equilibrium.

The theory assumed also that institutions are distinct and should be studied individually. Structural functionalists look at institutions individually as though they are divorced from other institutions.

Functionalists believe that without collective conscience/ shared values and beliefs, achieving social order is impossible and social order is crucial for the well being of society.

Summary of the Literature Review

This research study focused on caretaker committee system and administration of Local Government in six Local Government areas in Enugu State of Nigeria between (2003-2016). In the review of related literature to the work, the key concepts in the topic were identified, explained and clarified under the conceptual framework. Equally, the researcher went further into the theoretical analysis as well as the empirical studies related to the topic.

The study also revealed the concept of the local Government caretaker committee system and staff service delivery, Caretaker committees and Local government finances, Intergovernmental fiscal relation and community development, Local Government and Central government Administration, 1999 Constitution, Local Government Administration and separation of power and Caretaker committee and Local Government Autonomy.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted case study method. According to Ikeagwu (1997), studies of this nature will use case study method to look for information on facts, attitudes, and practices of local government caretaker committee.

Area of Study

The study was designed to cover about four local government Areas in Enugu State. They include, Nsukka, Igbo-Eze South, Udenu and Uzuwani Local Government Areas. These Local Governments were located at Enugu North Senatorial Zone, which has boundary with Kogi and Anambra State.

Sources of Data Collection

Data were collected from Secondary sources. Secondary sources of data were obtained from Textbooks, Journals, library materials, lecturer materials, unpublished works and official document of Governments.

Analysis of Data

The study utilizes content analysis as a method of analyzing data obtained from the sources. Data were also presented table by table

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Data Presentation

This section deals with the data presentation and analysis; findings and discussion of findings. It goes further to analyze the data based on hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: Caretaker committee system has not significantly impacted on the service delivery at the grass root level.

Table 1: Estimate and expenditure of Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area, 2017.

S/N	Function/ Code	Programme description	Budget 2017 million ₦	Actual 2017 million ₦
1	70100	General Public Service	70.000	- -
2	70300	(Admin) Public order and safety (security and justice)	1.000	- -
3	70400	Economic Affairs (Roads, Transport, Water, Agriculture, Electrification and market development)	655.00	358.33
4	70500	Environmental protection	- -	- -
5	70700	Health	6.00	13.00
6	70600	Housing and community amenities	- -	- -
7	70800	Recreation, culture and religion	5.000	5.00
8	70900	Education	10.000	17.00
		Total	747.000	383.33

Source: Department of planning and statistics, Enugu State Ministry of Local Government, 2017.

The above table shows the total estimate and expenditure of Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area under caretaker committee system between 2003-2017. The Local Government under caretaker committee system was established mainly to render services to the people at the grass root for the purpose of rural development. The services they render include

general administration, economic development such as Road Construction and Maintenance, digging of borehole, electrification and market development as well as the development of Agriculture and natural resources. They are also expected to pay their workers salaries and allowances as well as training and retraining of staff for efficiency in service delivery.

From the table 1 above, it is observed that the greater amount of money was spent on Economic affairs, which gulped the sum of N358.33, out of N655.000 that was budgeted for it.

This situation aptly shows that the appointed caretaker committee chairman toe the same line in the way they spend the Local Government revenue against the model financial memoranda of 1991 which was meant to ensure accountability, transparency and judicious use of the funds meant to develop the local areas. By this, the provision of basic necessities of life like good network of roads, community development, pipe borne water among others, which are expected to be performed were left undone or half-done. The analysis is based on sector by sector:

Economic Empowerment

The total sum of (N1,000,000) one million naira was estimated to be spent on the establishment of vetinary clinic, security re-orientation and contribution to neighborhood watch but nothing was done on that regard.

Health

In order to improve the human health condition of the people in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area, the caretaker committee system budgeted the sum of five million naira (N5,000,000) for the rehabilitation and construction of health care. The total sum of five million naira (N5,000,000) was actually spent for the construction of Health Center in the communities that make up the Nsukka Local Government.

Again, eight million naira (N8,000.000) was spent in immunization of children through NPI. This programme resulted in improvement of the Health of the children in the Local Government. Though N1, 000.000 was budgeted for free National child Health but no projects were executed in order to show for it. This indicates that Igbo-Eze North LGA did not achieve much on health condition of the people.

Education

Ten million naira (N10, 000.000) was budgeted for special intervention in school equipment but none of the needed equipment was provided in any school.

Youths and Sports Development

Five million naira was estimated to be spent in promotion of culture and festival but nothing was spent on that.

Private Sector/Market Development

The sum total of two million naira was budgeted for the construction and provision of market but thirty million naira (N30, 000.000) was spent on that. This was because some dilapidated shops inside Nsukka market was built to accommodate a good number of goods or products available in the market.

Reform of Government and General Administration

Government budgeted the sum of seven million naira (N70,000,000) for the purchase of vehicle for principal officers and Nigerian Union of Local Government Employees (NULGA) but nothing was done with respect to this. Many of these categories of workers are still travelling by commercial vehicle or use their old cars.

Roads and Bridges

A budget was not made but a sum total of (N24,300,000) twenty four million three hundred thousand naira was used for the construction of Eke Ovoko to MCC, MCC to Magistrate Court Alor Agu.

The sum of one hundred and fifty million was estimated but one hundred and thirty five million was spent for the construction and renovation of Iheakpu road Ndiagu Umuogbu, Umuida, Amaekpuru, Ichi-Ohe, Umuenyi

Nkalagu-Ichi, Igbudu-Akpaya Road and every other road in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area.

Hypothesis 2: The activities of the state government affect the caretaker committee in the management of its finances.

Table 2: Estimate and Expenditure of Nsukka L.G.A in 2017

S/N	Function/ Code	Programme description	Budget 2017 million ₦	Actual 2017 million ₦
1	70100	General Public Service Administration	55.000	3.00
2	70300	Public order and safety	23.000	- -
3	70400	Economic Affairs eg Roads, Transportation, Electricity etc	140.000	358.33
4	70500	Environmental protection	11.000	38.01
5	70600	Health	15.000	- -
6	70700	Housing and community amenities	31.000	- -
7	70800	Recreation, culture and religion	12.000	1.02
8	70900	Education	15.000	- -
9	71000	Social protection (Gender)	3.000	- -
		Total	305.000	84.40

Sources: Ministry of Local Government, Enugu, 2017.

The table 2 above shows that Nsukka Local Government made a budgeted of N305,000 in 2017 but spent N804,000 for capital expenditures.

Based on the table above, it is observed that a greater percentage of money was budgeted and expended on economic affairs such as electrification, provision of pipe borne water, road construction etc. Nothing was done in educational, safety and gender lines. This implies that Nsukka Local Government service delivery did not impact much on the masses. They complained that the money that was budgeted for was

not enough to run the programmes and projects needed for the development of sectors. The state government approves projects in those areas where they could have some shares. The analysis of data based on sector by sector:

Health Sector

In 2017, Nsukka Local Government under the caretaker committee system spent the sum of six million naira (N6,000.000) and one million naira (1,000.000) in provision of free material and child health care programme and fumigation of 10 no Health Centres and four (4) rounds immunization programme respectively.

These executed projects helped to save the lives of one thousand pregnant women and children in various communities in Nsukka Local Government Area.

Youths and Sports Development

The total sum of three million was budgeted but only two hundred and twenty thousand (220,000.00) was spent in support to school inter-house sport and cultural carnivals. The sum of three million naira was budgeted but only seven hundred and ninety nine N799,000.00 was spent for the construction of new pavilion, regressing, tatfam and construction of a game house and office.

Reform of Government and Governance

The sum total of five million naira (5,000.00) was budgeted but only three million (N3,000.000.00) was spent in renovation and furnishing of offices at Nsukka main Headquarters. The offices have enough seats for the staff and visitors.

Roads and Bridges

Under the caretaker committee system, Nsukka Local Government Spent the sum of thirty-eight million naira (N38,000.000) out of (N35,000.000) that was budgeted in grading of 300km roads across 3 communities. The grading of these roads made them motorable. Also, four million naira was

budgeted for the monthly environmental dustbins but nothing was executed then in this sector. This made the environment of some communities in Nsukka Local Government untidy and polluted.

None of the existing borehole was rehabilitated despite the fact that the sum of five million naira was budgeted for this.

More so, five million naira (N5, 000.000) was budgeted for the purchase and installation of 5 no 500KVA transformer but nothing was done in this regard; hence there was irregular supply of lights in some communities that make up the L.G.A.

Hypothesis 3: Corruption and state/local government joint account are the major challenges that militated against the caretaker committee system in administration of local government.

Table 3: Estimate and Expenditure of Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area under the Caretaker Committee System.

S/N	Function/ Code	Programme description	Budget 2017 million ₦	Actual 2017 million ₦
1	70100	General Administration such as purchase of official car, renovation of chairman's office etc	20.000	650,000
2	70200	Economic affairs such as renovation of primary school at Ugbene Ajima, Uvuru.	10.000	- -
3	70300	General and sports development	4,154,000	- -
4	70400	Power and electrification eg. Extension of electricity.	55.000	- -
5	70500	Water resources and rural development eg digging of borehole at Nimbo, Nkpologu etc.	14.000	- -
6	70600	Construction of roads and bridges eg grading/laterating Nrobo/Abbi etc	43.000	24.076
7	70700	Health sector eg fumigation of L.G building etc	20.800	- -

8	70800	Empowerment through Agriculture eg credit to farmers.	7.000	- -
9	70900	Poverty alleviation and employment generation eg construction of skill acquisition centre etc.	3.500	- -
10	71000	Societal re-orientation	8.000	- -
	72000	Information and Technology (ICT) eg Purchase of 7no laptop for HODs	3.500	
		Total	199.954	674.076

Sources: Department of planning and statistics, ministry of Local Government, Enugu, 2017.

The table 3 above shows that the estimate and expenditure of Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area in 2017 were one hundred and ninety nine million, nine hundred and fifty four naira (N199,954,000) and six hundred and seventy four million, seventy six thousand naira (N674,076,000).

Based on the data generated, it is observed that out of the estimated budget, the greatest sum of money was spent in general administration, which includes the purchase of official car, renovation of chairman's office etc. These projects gulped about N650,000,000.

Apart from this, this Local Government also budgeted N206, 34.000 for the renovation of primary school which gave birth to the renovation of primary school at Ugbene Ajima, Uvuru; gender and sports development, power and electrification, water resources and rural development, Health services etc.

Of all these projects which the local government intended to execute with the estimated budget, nothing much was done to show for the money budgeted.

This shows that Local Government under the caretaker committee abused, amassed and misappropriated public fund; and this indicates that the corruption and state and Local Government joint accounts are

one of the major challenges that militate the administration of Local Government. The analysis based on sector by sector:

Reform of Government and General Administration

In 2017, the total sum of four hundred and fifty million (N450,000.000) was spent in repainting of secretariat at Local Government Headquarter. In the same vein, the total sum of two hundred million naira (N200,000.000) was used for renovation of Quarters at the said Local Government.

Based on the documentary evidence, it is observed that a total sum of twenty million naira (N20,000,000) was budgeted for purchase of official cares, fencing of renovation of chairman's office.

Power and Electrification

Fifty five million naira was budgeted for energization of transformers, extension of Electricity but none was able to see the light of the day.

Road and Bridges

From the data gathered, it is obvious that a total sum of fifteen million naira was budgeted for grading and lacerating of Nkpologu to Umulokpa road but only Eleven million two hundred and seventy thousand naira (N11, 270,000) was used for its execution. Also, ten million naira was budgeted for grading and lateriting of Iga/Ojor road but only two million sixty thousand naira (N2,060,000) was spent for the project.

Moreover, the total sum of N1,000,000, N1.987,000. N1,900,000, N1,388,000 and N1, 116, 000 were spent for the grading of Awkunotor Umulokpa road,/lateriting of Adani Major road Alignment through concrete bridge, reconstruction of Nkpunato and grading and lateriting of Akiyi-Umulokpa road but only ten million was used for the road project at Akiyi-Umulokpa.

The total sum of eight million naira was budgeted for the grading and lateriting of Awkunitor Umulokpa raod but the government could not carryout this project.

Table 4: Estimate and Expenditure of Udenu Local Government Area in 2017

S/N	Function/ Code	Programme description	Budget 2017 ₦ million	Actual 2017 ₦ million
1	70100	General Administration such as purchase of 1 no official vehicle for the chairman and secretary, fencing of high court etc.	12.00	4.190
2	70300	Public order and safety such as construction of police station at Orba	2.790	- -
3	70400	Economic affairs such as grading of 250km road across 10 Communities (Ubahu,-Imiliki Agu Rd, Nkwo Orba, Ezimo-Imiliki Agu, Ovoko Rd) Asphaltting of L.G. Head Quarter internal Road, Bridge Construction Across river at Asama-Ogba Umuobigide.	48.444	92.72
4	70500	Environmental protection like construction of 20 no VIP, toilets in schools and Health Centres, in schools and Health Centres, Monthly environmental clean-up	2.040	3.00
5	70600	Housing and community Amenities such as construction of office block for principal officers at L.G, Obollo-Affor renovation and furnishing of LGDA complex at Orba and Ezimo	- -	5.500
6	70700	Health services such as the provision of free material and child care programme, renovation of 2 no health centres as Iheakpu, Aguorba and Umuitodo	- -	15.00
7	70800	Education eg rehabilitation of primary school block at Ibenda, Agu-Orba, Ohebe-Orba, Obollo-Eke etc.	- -	6.00
8	70900	Social protection (Gender) eg Empowering women by gift of grants to establish their own business.	- -	3.00
		Total	57.464	137.22

Sources: Department of planning and statistics, ministry of Local Government, Enugu, 2017.

The estimate and actual amount of money spent on capital project in Udenu LGA in 2017 under caretaker committee system are as below:

The total sum of fifty seven million four thousand and sixty four thousand naira (N57,464,000) was budgeted but one hundred and thirty seven million, twenty two thousand naira was spent. The capital expenditure based on sector by sector was as below: The analysis based on sector by sector:

Economic Empowerment through Agriculture

The local government under the management committee spent two hundred and ninety five thousand naira (N295,000) for the cultivation of 200 hectares of cassava and corn at Agu-Orba and Ohebe-Dim.

Law and Justice

The sum of two million, seven hundred and ninety thousand naira (N2,790,000) was spent for construction of police station at Orba.

Health

In order to improve the health of the people, the government budgeted the sum of (N15,000,000) for the material and child care programme for the renovation of 2 no Health Centres at Iheakpu and Ahuorba.

Education

In order to enhance the quality of education, the caretaker committee system had to budget the sum of six million naira (N6,000,000) for the purchase of primary school furniture but they did not carry out any project on this.

Employment Improvement

Udenu caretaker committee budgeted and spent the sum of two million naira (N2,000,000) for the construction of 20 no Vip toilets in schools and Health centres, and also for the monthly environment clean-up exercise.

Water Resources and Rural Development

The sum of four million five hundred thousand naira was budgeted and spent for the rehabilitation of Ohum-Orba and Ugugu water boreholes. There was also a budget of ten million five hundred thousand naira for the construction of 400 depp motorized boreholes in 4no communities like Imiliki-Etiti, Obollo-Afor, Uzoagu-Obollo Etiti, Amachalla Orba, also the extension of water facility to SDG skill acquisition centre at Obolla Afor in Udenu Local Government Headquarter.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Two million five hundred and seventy thousand naira was used for the purchase of the desktop and 6 laptop computer PRSD and 5 other principal offices.

Market Development

Twenty million and twenty two thousand naira was budgeted but only fifty million five hundred and ten thousand was used for the establishment of fresh market at Ohom-Orba through PPP. Twenty four million five hundred and twenty thousand was spent for construction of cashew nuts processing industry at Obollo-Afor.

Roads and Bridges

Thirty million naira was budgeted but only six million seven hundred and ninety five thousand naira (N6,79,500) was spent for the grading of 250km road distance across 10 communities (Ubahu-Imiliki Agu, Nkwo Orba-Umuafia road, Ezimo-Imiliki Agu, Ovoko road, Owerre Eze Orba road, Umugoji-Nkwo Orba road etc).

Findings of the Study

From the arrays of data generated from the sources, it was observed that:

1. Caretaker Committee system in local Government did not significantly impact on the welfare of the people at the grassroot level. This was based on the poor condition of living among the people in the local government. Many of them are yet to enjoy the social services that are meant to be provided to them.

2. It was observed that the caretaker committee system could not be allowed to use the local government finance for project execution without the approval from the State Government. Caretaker committee are appointed by the Governors, and as such cannot use a certain amount of money, say N500,000 without state government directive.
3. That Corruption and State Joint local government Account are the major challenges that militated against the administration of Local Government under the caretaker committee system.

Discussion of the Findings

The research study reveals that Caretaker Committees that are often set up by various State governments to handle the administration of Local Government Councils in the State have not succeeded in providing essential basic services at that level of governance. This goes to enunciate the fact that caretaker committees are not given free hand to administer their Local Governments and this have contributed immensely to the collapse of the existing structures in the Local Governments and also allowing the environmental conditions of the areas to depreciate to an intolerable level. For example,

1. The caretaker committees could not deliver a number of services to the people at the grassroot level because there are too many committee members and each has his own personal assistants and special assistants and much is spent on these members annually with the result that very little is left for service delivery to the people at the grassroots.
2. The caretaker committees are not given the freedom to use money to execute project without the approval from state government. The test on this reveals that caretaker committees are often starved of funds for execution of meaningful projects at the grassroots by higher tiers of government. The result is that viable projects are not executed at that level of governance. Obviously, Local governments in Nigeria have experienced several reforms with the intention of empowering the Councils with necessary power for democratic governance, but the implementation process created more challenges than prospects. These

challenges have in several measures contributed to low level of development to the local government administration in Enugu State. In most cases, the local governments were reduced to local administration, thereby encouraging the autocratic intentions of the state actors, and depriving the local people the access to choice of leadership in the government.

3. It was observed from the study that corruption and Joint state-local government account are the major challenges that militated against the administration of local government areas under the caretaker committee system. Under this arrangement, local governments do not have direct access to their monthly allocations but depend on the State government, which determines and controls all the administrative and financial actions of the L.Gs. Some local government caretaker chairmen have no option than to work according to the directives of the Governors who appointed them in the office. This is why it is always difficult for a monumental achievement to be recorded under the caretaker committee system.

Sometimes, some money that are budgeted for particular projects in the local government are embezzled by the so called appointed caretaker chairmen. In the same vein, the expenses on the projects are inflated, and sometimes, the physical projects being executed could not reflect the actual amount that are spent on them.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study revealed that the caretaker committee system in the local government administration did not impact well on the service delivery of staff of local government. This goes to indicate that the caretaker committee does not have the enough funds to engage in capacity building and staff training, which is a *siqua non* for effective delivery.

It was observed that caretaker committees have no autonomy to utilize any fund to execute a project without the approval from the State governments. It means that certain projects are delayed for execution because of the rigorous processes they undergo before their maturity.

From the study, it was found out that corruption and Joint-state/local government Accounts are the major challenges of caretaker committee system in the administration of local government.

Conclusion

From the analysis so far presented, it is clear that caretaker committee system is problematic. It has not been able to provide basic amenities to the people at the grassroots, which is the same story in all the states that practice it. It is also observed that caretaker committees in the local government councils throughout the country failed in their statutory duties, and this has generated hue and cry from different quarters against their inability to provide those needs as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Financial Management in the local government has a big question mark. This is true because the allocations to the councils come with that of the State allocation too, and the management is largely determined by the State governments which sometime see it as an avenue to siphon the public funds. Proper management of the local government finances can be ensured if local governments are given access to their monthly allocations without State interference.

Election of persons by the masses into the local government councils should be encouraged.

Recommendations

In view of the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The caretaker committees and elected officers in the local government system should be allowed to enjoy some degree of autonomy from State government and exercise adequate powers for effective democratic activities and governance in Nigeria. This is to enable the caretaker committee and the elected local councils to provide adequate social services.
2. Local government Councils should be given adequate freedom to manage their monthly allocations/finances without any form of interference from State government.
3. Federal government should abolish the use of joint Account and Allocation Committee (JAAC) that is being headed by the State government representatives since it deprives the local government the powers to control their funds.
4. It is recommended that the use of caretaker committees in administration of local government should be completely discouraged so as to enable the local government councils achieve proper service delivery at the grassroots levels.

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