

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/Ojjor 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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