

# STATE-LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF ABEOKUTA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN OGUN STATE

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the nature of and nexus between state-local government relations, governance as well as development in Ogun State, Nigeria. A sample of 213 staff of Abeokuta North Local Government was selected for the quantitative data using the stratified random sampling techniques, while 15 other political stakeholders of Abeokuta North LG were interviewed to yield the qualitative data. The quantitative data was analysed using the SPSS statistics software while the qualitative data was analysed thematically using the NVivo software. Results showed that local government councils and state government (Mean = 2.62) were in a master-servant type of relationship, also, a positive correlation was found between the state-local government relations and grassroots development (Mean = 3.25) and, that these relations positively affected development (Mean = 2.77) in Abeokuta North LG, in particular, and Ogun State, as a whole. Thus, the study concludes that state-local government relations tend to impinge on governance and development at the grassroots

level in Nigeria. It, therefore, recommends that the controversies surrounding the position of the local government in the 1999 Constitution (as amended) be resolved without any further delay; otherwise, the desire for much more autonomy and development at the grassroots level would continue to be a mirage in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Intergovernmental relations, State-local government relations, State-local government joint account, Autonomy, Local government.

## INTRODUCTION

Intergovernmental relations (IGR), in a federal system like Nigeria, are dominated by relations between the national and other sub-national governments; while the features of such a federation are enshrined in the national constitution. In other words, each level of government's jurisdictional powers are spelled out in a constitution, any need for rearrangement expectedly requires a constitutional amendment with the involvement of all levels of government. Akindele and Olaopa

(2003) describe a healthy system of IGR as "a perfecting mechanism" in a federally political arrangement, as we have in Nigeria, simply because it treats all levels of government as equals in a federal system of government. The essence of the mechanism is to guarantee the greatest freedom of choice, especially at the local level of governance in a federation, and avoidance of what Akindele and Olaopa (2003) refer to as the "beggar-my-neighbour decision". IGR in a federal system of governance can be relations between central and state governments, central and local governments, states (interstates), state and local governments, and local governments (inter-local). Although a central government can unilaterally decide by fiat the substance and type of IGR in a unitary system of government (Adamolekun, 2002). IGR is the relationship between federal, state, and local governments. The relationship emphasizes interactions between the federal and state; while the local governments are usually placed under the management and control of state government in most federations (Odoh, n.d.). The local government system, established by federal law, is a product of decentralization in Nigeria.

It is the third tier of government, after the federal and state governments, constitutionally established and recognised within the country's intergovernmental relations such as political, administrative, financial, and judicial; as the case may be (Okafor, 2010). IGR is defined as "the complex pattern of interactions, cooperation and inter-dependence between two or more levels of government" (as cited in Okafor, 2010). In the context of Nigeria's federal system of governance, there are three organs (arms) and tiers (levels) interacting and providing governmental

functions and services to the citizenry. The interaction between these arms and levels of government in the course of performing functions of the Nigerian state is referred to as the IGR (Onwughalu *et al.*, 2018). IGR is noted to be of two types of relationship, namely bargaining and negotiating relationship, as well as a superior-subordinate relationship (Odoh, n.d.). The relationship is superior-subordinate where the central or state government maximally controls and interferes in local government administration. This is the type of relationship that exists between the state and local government in Nigeria, while the negotiating/bargaining type of relationship can be observed in some democratically advanced countries (Odoh, n.d.). This is a case of control versus autonomy. Again, in Nigeria, the state governments appear to be superior to the local government councils. The local government councils are constitutionally created as the third tier of government to bring governance closer to the people at the grassroots level and for the development of local communities, but this does not happen in actual practice. Nigerian LGs have increasingly become vulnerable and susceptible to state control and interference to such an extent that the relationship has become more like a master-servant type of relationship as the former is dependent, in nature and structure, on the latter's whims and caprices (Odoh, n.d.).

Despite the unique advantages of the local government system, governance at this level has always been problematic due to the politicisation of issues by the regional government at first and state governments in contemporary times (Fajobi, 2010). Thus, a local government that belonged to opposition camps suffered a great deal of discrimination

and tough times at the hands of the state government to which they were (are) responsible. For instance, a typical drama was played out in Edo State, in the year 2009, when Comrade Adam Oshiomole of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) took over power from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) (Braithmoh, 2011). There was a sweeping defection of local government chairmen from the PDP to the ACN for the fear of ever incurring the wrath of Mr. Governor, In a nutshell, the three chairmen who refused to decamp were removed and replaced by the 'almighty' governor. Some of them were stifled of funds, in most cases; they could not satisfactorily perform their legal responsibilities. Some of them are often arbitrarily dissolved and caretaker committees appointed to fill the vacuums created (Braithmoh, 2011). This was the bane of local government administration in the hands of state governors. By all intents and purposes, local government councils are created to bring governance and development closer to the people at the grassroots level (Salau, 2009). This laudable intention is unfortunately not being rigorously pursued, as today's LGs in Nigeria have suffered a lot of setbacks politically and financially in recent times, and it appears that citizens have yet to feel much of the impact of this third tier of government at the grassroots level. This study, therefore, set out to investigate the relations between state and local government and how these relations have affected governance and development in Nigeria, with a focus on Abeokuta North Local Government Council in Ogun State as a typical case study.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study was guided by the following questions:

- What is the nature of relations existing between Ogun State government and its local government councils?
- What is the nexus between state-local government relations and development at the grassroots level in Ogun State?
- How have these state-local government relations affected development at the grassroots level in Ogun State?

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

For analysis, this study relied on several theoretical frameworks put up by some schools of thought in its investigation of state and local government relations and grassroots development. These include decentralization theories. However, mention must be made that there are other theories in the study of local government. Gboyega (1987) argues that two basic classes of theories of local government exist. The first class of theories justifies the existence or need for local government, based on its being essential to a democratic regime or for practical administrative purposes like responsiveness, accountability, and control. While the second class of theories states that an effective local government system contradicts the purpose of a democratic regime. This position is premised on the ground that local government institutions are neither democratic in their internal operations nor admit responsiveness, accountability, and control.

Be that as it may, decentralization theories have been considered most appropriate and most suitable for this study, because decentralization is a term that summarizes the spectrum of power relations or levels of institutional power. In some systems, local

governments enjoy greater control over their affairs (especially Federal Systems), while in a unitary system, the tendency is for greater control of the local government. Kasfir (1993) has made a powerful case for decentralization. He argues that physical and social conditions in Africa favours it as a pragmatic response to the problems of government. He contends that the inability of the central government to reach its citizens effectively suggests that something else is necessary. He further opines that the continuing strength of the democratic norm in the city and countryside demonstrates the persistent desire of people to participate in the management of their affairs. Decentralization theory, as it were, is an initiative to support grassroots development. Hence, its choice for this study is considered appropriate and suitable.

### **STATE-LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW**

For the sake of emphasis, local governments are political divisions below the state in a federation, which are constituted to address local development with substantial local participation and control. Usually, they are constituted by law and conducted by local bodies with some powers, discretion, and responsibility to manage local affairs (Oyediran, 1988:2). Essentially, local governments are constituted to facilitate local governance and development. These comprise the facilitation of local political participation, local discretion in policymaking and project/service management, participation in the politics, policy development and economic planning, and development efforts of state and federal governments. Thus, a local

government is that which enables local initiative, responses, and interests through local representatives who exercise specific and actual powers in the performance of local functions and are responsible and accountable to the local people. In essence, local governments in federal systems epitomise three central values: substantial decentralization, local governance, and efficient development (Ikelegbe, 2004:141).

In Nigeria, the values of local governance and grassroots development have underlined the development and orientation of the local government system since 1976. A critical examination and assessment of state-local relations, according to Ikelegbe (2004), reveal that it may not altogether be functionally and positively related to the performance, operation, autonomy and viability of the local government system. There are complaints that state controls are so detailed, recurring, and exacting that they undermine local discretion in decision-making, planning, and programming. Furthermore, there are allegations that these controls provide channels for corrupt enrichment of state officials as LG functionaries buy their way around the controls. Thus, to undertake projects and expend funds above limits may entail that local governments compromise relevant state authorities. Ikelegbe (2004) argued that the state governments have undermined and weakened the integrity and capacity of the local government system through the creation of local governments. The import of such numerous creations is that the LGs become diminutive, weak, and unviable. This is apart from reproducing financial dependency, lack of manpower and other capacities, and increasing administrative and operational costs.

## METHODS AND PROCEDURE

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design for investigating the nature of and nexus between state-local government relations and grassroots development in Ogun State, Nigeria. The mixed methods research design is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches; it often uses closed-ended questionnaires to produce numerical data, interviews, and observations for qualitative data collection (Zohrabi, 2013). This study was conducted at Abeokuta North Local Government Council in Ogun State, by collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data; otherwise known as concurrent triangulation (Badaru & Adu, 2021). Abeokuta is famous for being the seat of government and the capital of Ogun State. It is also the largest urban centre in the state. It is about 90 kilometres from Lagos and 740 Kilometres from Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria (Ogun State Government, 2021). Ogun State is politically divided into 20 local government areas (LGAs) and Abeokuta North Local Government is one of them. The local government first came into existence in 1981, as the Abeokuta South Local Government to make up the defunct Abeokuta Local Government in the state. It, however, re-emerged again on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1991, when the Federal Government moved closer to the people at the grassroots level (Badaru, 2012). It was chosen for this study because it was one of the two LGAs in Abeokuta, the state capital. The researcher was convinced that Abeokuta North LGA would provide outcomes and insights into the understanding of the nature of state-local relations and the nexus existing between such relations and grassroots development in Nigeria.

## Research Participants

The study's participants were staff of the Abeokuta North Local Government who were selected using probability random and purposive sampling techniques which Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016) referred to as judgement sampling. The staff population here consisted of workers in all of the departments within the local government council under the study. The population of this study was, therefore, four hundred and fifty-five (455), comprising two hundred and seventy-five (275) senior staff and one hundred and eighty (180) junior staff. The population of four hundred and fifty-five (455) was considered rather too large and the researcher, therefore, applied Taro Yamani's (1964:280) formula in determining the sample size for the study, as represented in Figure 1 below.

**FIGURE 1: Taro Yamani's formula**

$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$
Where; n = Sample size; N = Total population; and e = 0.05 n = ? N = 455; e = 0.05
$n = \frac{455}{1 + 455(0.05)^2}$
$n = \frac{455}{1 + 455(0.0025)}$
$n = \frac{455}{1 + 455 \times 0.0025}$
$n = \frac{455}{1 + 1.1375}$
$n = \frac{455}{2.1375}$
$n = 212.8$
$n = 213 \text{ approximately}$

Source: Author

Hence, the sample population size was put as two hundred and thirteen (213) staff.

Table 1 reveals that 213 participants were involved in the study, out of which, 51.6% were females and the remaining 48.4% were males. By implication, it could be safely concluded that the study was never gender-biased. It further shows that out of the 213 staff of the local government sampled, 23.9% were less than 20 years of age; 59.6% were between the age of 20 and 35 years, while the remaining 16.4% were between 36 and 64 years of age. The implication of this is that the majority of the respondents (76.0%) were

relatively old enough to effectively respond to the questionnaire with much more experience and knowledge of the subject matter of the study. More so, Table 1 indicates that out of the 213 respondents that participated in this study, 75.1% had just spent less than 10 years in the service of the local government, while 13.6% had spent between 10 and 20 years in service and the remaining 11.3% had spent between 21 and 35 years in the service of the local government.

Further analysis from Table 1 reveals that a considerable percentage (24.9%) of the respondents had stayed in the service of

**TABLE 1: Participants' Socio-Demographic Characteristics**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	103	48.4
Female	110	51.6
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 20 years	51	23.9
20-35 years	127	59.6
36-64 years	35	16.4
<b>Number of Years in Service</b>		
Below 10 years	160	75.1
10-20 years	29	13.6
21-35 years	24	11.3
<b>Professional Cadre</b>		
Senior	71	33.3
Junior	142	66.7
<b>Educational Qualifications</b>		
Master's Degree	14	6.6
Bachelor's Degree	75	35.2
Higher National Diploma	51	23.9
Ordinary National Diploma/Nigerian Certificate in Edu.	52	24.4
School Certificate	21	9.9

Source: Author

the local government for at least 10 years or more. Hence, their experiences, particularly within the last 13 years of the return of civil rule, would be imperative for the outcomes of this study. It is equally shown that out of the 213 staff of the local government involved in this study, 33.3% were in the senior category, while the remaining 66.7% were in the junior category. However, this should not be surprising at all, because most local governments in Nigeria face the problem of paucity of funds and are thereby constrained to engage the services of highly qualified personnel in the senior cadre category. In the final analysis, Table 1 shows that out of the 213 respondents that participated in this study, 6.6% were master's degree holders, 35.2% had a first degree, 23.9% held HND certificates, while 24.4% and 9.9% had OND/NCE and O' Level certificates respectively. The implication of these results suggests that the majority of the staff of the local government is educated up to the tertiary level, either at university or polytechnic level. This high level of education of the respondents would mean that their level of reasoning would be high, and their responses to the research questions of this study would be quite appreciable, incisive and insightful.

### **Instruments for Data Collection**

The instruments for data collection included questionnaires, interview guides and observation templates (Zohrabi, 2013). These were utilised by the researcher for the collection of reliable and valid data on any subject of investigation (Badaru, 2019). The main instrument used to gather data for the study was the questionnaire. The researcher of this study constructed five (5) research questions, out of which 15 items of closed-ended

questions and five (5) other open-ended questions were developed. The questionnaire had three parts: part A contained the personal bio-data of the respondent; part B contained 15 items that were developed to sample the opinion or determine the knowledge of the respondent about state-local relations and grassroots development in Ogun State of Nigeria. This part also consisted of four response scales: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) and; part C had two (2) open-ended items to which the respondents freely expressed their opinions/knowledge on matters relating to state-local relations and grassroots development in Ogun State. Before the researcher administered the questionnaire, the verbal consent of the participants was sought. They were also informed of their liberty to discontinue their participation in the study if they so wished.

In addition to the use of the questionnaire, the researcher endeavoured to gather more information relevant to the study by conducting interviews with 15 major stakeholders of the Local Government Council. The stakeholders included 3 senior administrative staff, 5 members of the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) and 3 political office holders and appointees in the local government council, 2 other politicians, 2 officials of the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, and the Local Government Service Commission, respectively. The researcher used an interview guide validated by other research experts for the conduct of the interviews. Again, the consent of each of the participants was secured for their responses to be recorded with a tape recorder. The responses were later transcribed verbatim and the textual report

was given to the participants to read and confirm that there were no deviations from their original narratives during the data collection phase. Thereafter, the transcribed data were coded and recoded into different themes and sub-themes in line with the research questions. To confirm the dependability of the findings, the researcher went a step further to perform an audit trail on the qualitative data (Badaru, 2019). The collection of data took the researcher 25 weeks of shuttling between the secretariats of the local government at Akomoje, the Local Government Service Commission, and the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs located within the state secretariat.

### **Validity and Reliability of the Data**

To determine the validity of the questionnaire, however, a pilot study was employed by the researcher. Borg and Gall (1993:100) define a pilot study as the process of trying out the entire aspect of the study including analysis of the data, following closely the procedure planned for the main study before embarking on the said main study. The researcher administered the draft copy of the questionnaire to just 20 different respondents, but identifiable with the proposed sample group for the main study, from a population other than the one stipulated for use in the main study. After the scoring, the researcher assessed by comparing the individual sample group scoring with his scored copy of the questionnaire to note the similarities. This was done by the researcher taking an ideal copy he scored himself in the way he expected everyone in the pilot sample group to score the questionnaire. Out of the 20 respondents considered for the pilot study, the researcher discovered that the correctly scored copies of the questionnaire were only

17 or 85% (0.85) of the pilot group. This result invariably made the researcher conclude that the instrument was valid.

Although the researcher judged the instrument based on face value, face value validity, according to Odo (1999:62), means that the researcher's appraisal judgment of the scores of the pilot respondents on the instrument for the study administered to them confirms that the instrument measures what it purports to measure. In testing the reliability of the instrument, the researcher employed the test-retest technique. As explained by Odo (1999:61), the test-retest technique is a process whereby the researcher administers the constructed questionnaire on the same reliable sample group more than once with the view of finding out how consistent each element of the group is in the scoring of the instrument at different times. Thus, the constructed questionnaire was distributed to the same group of people with the same characteristics, but different from the group to be used in the main study. The researcher then compared the first set of the scored questionnaire collected a week before with the second set administered a week after. This comparison was repeated until the entire 20 paired copies of the instrument were exhausted. On the completion of the exercise, the researcher discovered that the responses given by the respondents in the two sets of the questionnaire were consistent or near consistent in short. Hence, the researcher concluded that the instrument was reliable.

### **Data Trustworthiness**

There are four criteria and/or methods for ensuring the trustworthiness of qualitative data; these are credibility or internal validity,

transferability or external validity, dependability or reliability, and confirmability or objectivity (Loh, 2013; Anney, 2014; Badaru, 2019). To ensure the credibility of this study, the researcher engaged the participants for as long as necessary. Credibility is facilitated by ensuring that qualitative data is truthfully supplied by the participants and that their original narratives are not given a different interpretation (Badaru, 2019).

### **Data Analysis**

The IBM SPSS statistical tool was utilised for the analysis of the quantitative data, while the NVivo software application was deployed for the analysis of the qualitative data. Items of the questionnaire were coded and captured using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet which was later exported to the IBM SPSS statistical software for the analysis. While the quantitative data were analysed by using simple and descriptive statistics, the qualitative data were thematically analysed and interpreted by the researcher in tandem with research questions and/or objectives of the study.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Before proceeding with this study, the researcher sought and obtained an ethical clearance to conduct this study from the office of the Head of the Department of Political Science in his institution. He also got a written clearance to conduct the study from the Director of Personnel Department at Abeokuta North Local Government in Ogun State. Other ethical issues which included voluntary participation and confidentiality were all observed and complied with. At the onset, the participants were briefed that they had to complete and sign an informed

consent form. They were also informed that they had the liberty to voluntarily participate and discontinue their participation if they so desired as the study continued.

## **FINDINGS**

This study investigated the state-local government relations, grassroots governance, and development in Ogun State of Nigeria. In this investigation, a mixed-research design was utilised for concurrent collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The findings are presented as follows:

**Research Question 1:** What is the nature of relations existing between Ogun State government and its local government councils?

Table 2 reveals that the local government staff agreed that Ogun state government and its local government councils were in a master-servant relationship (mean = 2.62); the two tiers of government relate like equal powers and partners in progress (mean = 2.57); although, about 52.1% of the staff disagreed that they do not relate like equal powers and partners in progress; that state government exercises too much control over the local government (mean = 2.83); that local government cannot exercise any power without the state approval and/or interference (mean = 3.04). Based on these findings, it is safe to conclude that the nature of state and local government relations is a type in which both tiers of government relate like the master-servant; a type of relations in which state government seems to be more powerful than the local government by exercising too much control over the latter, and the latter cannot exercise any power without the state approval and/or interference.

**TABLE 2: Nature of State-Local Government Relations in Ogun State**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.D
1	Local and state governments are like servant and master in Ogun.	20 (9.4)	136 (63.8)	28 (13.1)	29 (13.6)	2.62	0.88
2	The state and local government relate like equal powers and partners in progress.	46 (21.6)	56 (26.3)	89 (41.8)	22 (10.3)	2.57	0.98
3	The state exercises too much control over the local government.	33 (15.5)	142 (66.7)	22 (10.3)	16 (7.5)	2.83	0.83
4	The local government cannot exercise any power without the state's approval/ interference.	74 (34.7)	91 (42.7)	30 (14.1)	18 (8.5)	3.04	0.91

SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree; Std.D= Standard Deviation

Source: Author

### **A Cordial Relationship**

All of the respondents believed that the relationship between the state and the LGs has always been very cordial and instrumental to the grassroots development in the Ogun State. The politician interviewed in the Ilugun/Iberekodo ward of the LG assumed as follows:

The relationship between our state government and the LG has been cordial partly because past governors and the LG chairmen have always been members of the same party; be it SDP, AD, PDP, and then APC (Mr. Awelewa, pseudo name).

### **A Collaborative and Cooperative Relationship**

On the contrary, the two supervisory councilors both at Abeokuta North LG disagreed with the position of Mr. Awelewa. They believed that the LG chairman and the state governor, being in the same party, might not prevent any disagreement between them.

The governor and the LG chairman can always disagree and later agree for the benefit of the people, because the governor himself cannot execute projects for the local people without the cooperation and collaboration of the LG boss. The popular opinion was that there has always been a very good working relationship between the state and the LGs. From the narrative obtained from the state office of the Ministry of LG and Chieftaincy Affairs, there is a State-Local Joint Account Committee that meets every month to disburse funds accordingly among the LGs in the state. All of the LGs' bosses are standing members of this committee. The state government cannot just expend funds from the joint account unless it is decided by the committee and forwarded to the Ministry of LG Affairs, and the Local Government Service Commission ratifies or approves it for disbursement.

### **A Master-Servant Relationship**

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) chairman of the Abeokuta North LG branch believed

that the relationship between the two tiers of government is like one between a master and servants. In this case of state-local government relations, the state government is the master over the affairs of the servants, being the LG authorities. This view was also supported by the NULGE chairperson, the supervisor for Health and Water Supply & Environmental Sanitation (WES), and the LG's health officer. They hinged their claims on the fact that the LGs do not have full financial autonomy to operate as an independent tier of government, but rather rely on both the state and the federal government for 10% accruable allocation from the state's internally generated revenue (IGR) and the federation account, respectively. So, the state has total control over the LGs' funds which were usually paid into state-local joint accounts.

It can, therefore, be concluded that Ogun State government and its local government councils have always maintained good and cordial relations, but what appears to be a master-servant relationship, irrespective

of the political platforms that produce the leaders at the two levels of governance.

**Research Question 2:** What is the nexus between state-local government relations and development at the grassroots level in Ogun State?

Table 3 points out the fact that the staff of the local government in this study agreed that: the state and local governments have partnered to carry out projects to benefit the people of Abeokuta North Local Government Area (mean = 3.26); that there is development at the grassroots level, because of the cordial relationship between the state and local government (mean = 3.07); that there is a positive relationship between the state and local government (mean = 3.25) and; that the state and local relations have a positive relationship with grassroots development in Ogun State (mean = 2.82). Having ascertained all of these facts, it is, therefore, safe to conclude that there is a relationship between state-local relations and grassroots development.

**TABLE 3: Relationship Between State-Local Relations and the Grassroots Development**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.D
5	State and local governments have partnered to carry out projects to benefit the people of Abeokuta North LG.	85 (39.9)	107 (50.2)	12 (5.6)	9 (4.2)	3.26	0.75
6	There is development at the grassroots because of the cordial relationship between state and local government.	48 (22.5)	137 (64.3)	22 (10.3)	6 (2.8)	3.07	0.66
7	There is a positive relationship between the state and the local government council.	72 (33.8)	123 (57.7)	18 (8.5)	- -	3.25	0.60
8	State and local relations have a positive relationship with grassroots development in Ogun State.	57 (26.7)	83 (39.0)	70 (32.9)	3 (1.4)	2.82	0.90

SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree; Std.D= Standard Deviation

Source: Author

## **Provision of Employment Opportunities**

According to one of the senior administrative officers of Abeokuta North LG, the people of the LG have always felt the impact of LG's relations not only with the state government, but also with the federal government. In her words:

The relationship goes beyond the state-local level, it also involves federal-state-local relations in the area of job creation and building infrastructural facilities for the local people (Mrs. Ogunrinde, pseudo name).

She further elaborated that the people of the LG have been trained in the programmes under the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). The federal government, through the NDE, supplies the trainers and the selected LGs make people available for vocational training in fashion designing, catering, auto-mechanics, hairdressing, carpentry, shoe-making, etc. Both the state and local governments provide soft loans for the youth after receiving the training from the NDE to establish themselves. For the loans, the state and local governments stand for the beneficiaries as sureties. The training is also open to vulnerable groups, including the blind, the handicapped, and even the prostitutes. In this way, the state and local governments, in collaboration with the federal government, have always empowered the unemployed youth in the local government area. She averred further:

We do not just train people in the air. The selection of people for training is done based on senatorial districts. Each district has the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs) office and every LG falls under one senatorial district or the other. Abeokuta North LG falls under Ogun Central. People bring their children for training programmes. We have programmes that last 3 months, 6 months and even 9 months. The good working relationship between or among levels of government has engendered enormous grassroots development (Mrs. Ogunrinde, pseudo name).

## **Funding of Education**

Commenting on how state-local government relations have affected education, she had the following to say:

Funding of primary education is now handled and supervised by the state under the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) to ensure even standardization of basic education across the state. Although, the funding is deducted at source by the state from the LGs' allocations from the federation accounts, LGs submit bills of quotations for school projects and get them approved by the state but the projects are being executed by the state government based on the specification of standards. That is why there is uniformity in the structures of schools across the state (Mrs. Ogunrinde, pseudo name).

## **State Government as the Final Arbiter between LGs**

She went on to explain the role of the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs as follows:

The Ministry handles boundary disputes between one LG and another and settles issues relating to chieftaincy affairs like the

appointment of "Obas" and "Baales" within the LGAs in the state (Mrs. Ogunrinde, pseudo name).

### State Control of LGs

On the contrary, the supervisor for Health and WES in the LG expressed the view that states across the country have taken over most of the responsibilities of the LGs. They affirmed that:

The state government is doing that because it has control over the state-local joint account from which deductions are made by the state government to fund most of its projects in the local government council area (Supervisor for Health and WES, Abeokuta North LG).

He, therefore, advised that the joint account should be abolished as a matter of necessity to pave the way for more grassroots

development in the LGAs. From all these submissions, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between state-local relations and grassroots development. The fact of these findings is that projects for development must have to be located for people in their local government areas. Hence, there is a need for all tiers of government to work in synergy for the good of the people at the grassroots level.

**Research Question 3:** How have these state-local government relations affected development at the grassroots level in Ogun State?

Table 4 indicates how state-local relations have affected grassroots development in Ogun State. It is a pointer to the fact that the staff of the local government agreed that state-local relations have: promoted education at the local government level (mean = 2.77);

**TABLE 4: Effects of State-Local Relations on Grassroots Development in Ogun State**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.D
9	State-local relations have promoted education at the local government levels.	62 (29.1)	60 (28.2)	76 (35.7)	15 (7.0)	2.77	0.99
10	State-local relations have promoted primary healthcare service delivery at the local government level.	36 (16.9)	126 (59.2)	38 (17.8)	13 (6.1)	2.85	0.83
11	State-local relations have advanced the business of agriculture at the local government level.	48 (22.5)	45 (21.1)	104 (48.8)	16 (7.5)	2.56	0.97
12	State-local government relations have increased road projects and access to motorable roads for the rural people.	61 (28.6)	79 (37.1)	63 (29.6)	10 (4.6)	2.87	0.94
13	State-local government relations have assisted in the delivery of water supply to the local people.	23 (10.8)	77 (36.2)	79 (37.1)	34 (15.9)	2.39	0.93

SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree; Std.D= Standard Deviation

Source: Author

promoted primary healthcare service delivery at the local level (mean = 2.85); advanced the business of agriculture at the local level (mean = 2.56) and; increased road projects and access to motorable roads for the rural people (mean = 2.87); whereas, they disagreed that state-local relations have assisted in the delivery of water supply to the local people (mean = 2.39). From the above findings, it can be concluded that state-local relations have positively affected grassroots development in some aspects of service and infrastructural provisions such as education, primary healthcare, agriculture, and road projects, while the relations have no impact whatsoever on the aspect of water supply to the local people of Ogun State. All of the stakeholders interviewed at Abeokuta North LG agreed that the good relations between the state government and the executive of the LG have engendered development for the people of the LG in the area of education, roads, health, and other projects.

### **Development in Education**

In education, the state government is collaborating with the LGAs in the state to provide free uniforms and free meals to primary school children by the time the new school calendar begins in the year. At the time of this study, the researcher was told that the state government had started the distribution of free exercise books, textbooks, and writing materials to pupils in both primary and secondary schools. In order to confirm the authenticity of this information, the researcher took a trip to Abeokuta North Local Government Primary School, located at Ilugun Asalu in Abeokuta, and it was confirmed that the collaborative efforts of both the state and local governments have

positively affected the advancement of education and schools. Schools have been equipped with standard computer laboratories with a considerable number of computer units for teachers and pupils. Rehabilitation work of most dilapidated school buildings was also ongoing at the time of this study.

### **Infrastructural Development and/or Renewal**

On-road projects, the state and LG are in collaborative efforts to dualize some road networks across the LGs in the state. According to the Supervisory Councillor for Health and WES, some roads within the Abeokuta North LG area have been dualized through reconstruction efforts jointly made by the state and the leadership of the LG. He mentioned some of the roads which have been expanded and reconstructed at the time of this study, which are Ikereku-Idan/Enugada Lafenwa and Sokori/Totoro/Ita-Eko Areas. Although most of these projects were seen as state projects, they were jointly funded from the state-local joint accounts.

### **Healthcare Delivery Services**

On health, a senior official of the Health Department at the LG confirmed that the state and LG have been doing wonderfully well to ensure good hospitals and well-equipped health centres across all of the LGAs in Ogun State. Health programmes such as immunization, the campaign against polio, and maternity centres have received tremendous attention from both the state and the local government authorities. This claim was also confirmed by the prominent politician interviewed in the Ilugun area of the council.

## **Agriculture Received Boosts**

In agriculture, a senior official in the administration department confirmed that through the FADAMA programme, state and local governments have received federal government intervention to assist local farmers to boost their farming activities through the distribution of the federal government's subsidized fertilizers. Again, the local government partnered with the State Ministry of Agriculture in securing modern farm implements such as tractors, bulldozers, etc., which are rented out to farmers at an affordable cost to help farmers engage in mechanized farming all year round. It can, therefore, be concluded from all of these submissions that the good relations between the state and the LGs have positively affected grassroots development as well as the delivery of governance to a greater extent in Ogun State. Although, the researcher still felt that more efforts, on the part of both the state and LGs, are required to open up the rural areas through aggressive road projects that would always help them link the urban area for transportation of farm produce to the major markets in the towns within the state.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The general discussion, here, is based on the findings of the study on "State-Local Relations and Grassroots Development in Nigeria: A case study of Abeokuta North Local Government in Ogun State". In this study, a question was asked to establish the true nature of relations that exist between the Ogun State government and its local government councils. The analysis of the results presented in Table 2 show that the majority of the sample population that was involved in this study agreed that the two levels of

government are in a "master-and-servant" relationship. The state is the master while the LG is the presumed servant, that only has to implement directives and orders issued to it by its master (state). It was also agreed that both levels act as partners in progress when there is a cordial relationship between them to bring about development to the people at the grassroots level. It was further revealed that LG cannot act on certain issues relating to local affairs without the interference and/or approval of its master (state government). Hence, the conclusion was made that the state usually exercised too much control over the administration of the LG. This conclusion is corroborated by Odoh (2009), who submitted that the local government system in Nigeria is susceptible to manipulative control and political interference from the state government to the extent that the relationship is more like a master-servant type.

The second question was raised in this study to ascertain whether or not there exists any relationship between state-local relations and grassroots development. The analysis of the results presented in Table 3 indicates that there is a relationship between state-local relations and grassroots development. This implies that if there is a cordial relationship between state and local council, it will engender positive and desired development at the grassroots level, and vice-versa. Again, it is the opinion of the researcher that positive and cordial relations between state and local government would in turn bring about the desired grassroots development which is the fulfilment of the purposes and constitutional rationale behind the existence of local government as the third tier of government in Nigeria. The result was, to a large extent, supported by Salau (2009), who opined that

the creation of local government is, by all intents and purposes, to bring government and development nearer to the people at the grassroots level. Ikelegbe (2004) equally buttressed this view that intergovernmental relations are about governance and development. The popular opinion, expressed by the respondents interviewed in this study, held that a good working relationship between the state and LG would positively impact grassroots development. The conclusion made, therefore, from the oral interview results was that positive relations between the state and local government could translate to grassroots development; otherwise, negative relations would certainly hamper the development of people at this level.

This last question was raised in this study to ascertain the extent to which state-local government relations have affected development at the grassroots level in Ogun State. Specifically, this study was interested in finding out if state-local government relations are cordial or not, and whether the relations have positively or negatively affected grassroots development in Ogun State. Perhaps, this is the research interest that would fill some gap in the existing body of literature on state-local relations and grassroots development as far as Ogun State, in Nigeria, is concerned. The analysis of the results presented in Table 4 points to the fact that state-local relations, as cordial as they were, have positively affected grassroots development. In addition, results from the oral interviews also buttressed this emerging fact that the cordial relationship between the state and local government, and even between the federal government and state/local government, has always translated into positive development at the grassroots level in the areas of infrastructural provisions such as

road projects, regular water supply, education (school buildings and educational facilities), and the promotion of agricultural business in Ogun State. Although the researcher was informed authoritatively that water supply was primarily the responsibility of the state, the LG also plays a complementary role by sinking boreholes in communities that are not well connected to the water networks of the state waterworks. Nevertheless, the story may be different in some other states of the federation, as pointed out in the body of literature reviewed in this study, where bad relations between the state executive and the executive of LGs have negatively impinged on grassroots development.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study has investigated state-local relations and grassroots development in Nigeria. It has, therefore, shown in its findings that there exists a positive correlation between state-local relations and grassroots development in Ogun State; and that, state-local relations tend to impinge on the development of people at the grassroots level in Nigeria. In light of the findings, the following recommendations should be implemented to improve these relations in the interest of good governance and development at the grassroots level in the state:

- There is the need to ensure the abolition of state-local council joint accounts; state and local councils should therefore have separate allocation accounts.
- There is a need to review the Constitution to grant full autonomy and increased funding to local government councils.

- The Constitution should also be reviewed to properly define the responsibilities and functions of the local governments and to make them completely independent of the state executive.
- It is also imperative for the local government elections to be conducted by the national body responsible for such functions at the national and state levels.
- The state's Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) should be equitably distributed between it and its local council areas to empower the LGs to carry out meaningful development-oriented projects at the grassroots level.
- The state should also ensure that they do not infringe on the revenue-yielding areas of local governments.
- The state should comply with the constitutional provision that they should remit 10% of their internally generated revenue to the local councils.
- In the same vein, local governments also need to increase their internally generated revenue base, rather than relying on federal allocation.
- Local governments should re-order their priorities and block all avenues of wastage and leakages.
- Finally, the controversy surrounding the position of the local government in the 1999 Constitution (as amended) should, without delay, be resolved otherwise the autonomy and developmental efforts at the grassroots level will be a mirage.

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