

Grassroots Governance and the Challenges of Rural Development in Nigeria: A Study of Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State.

OBOITE, JONATHAN ALELE

Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Igbinedion University, Okada

Abstract- Grassroots governance have been argued to be a crucial mechanism for realizing rural development in Nigeria. This argument is premised on the fact that grassroots governance represents governments at the rural or local level, that is, one that is closest to the people and, one that can easily identify the needs and aspirations of the people in a more accessible, participatory and can mobilize the people to actualize their development. The above solidifies the foundation for the establishment of local governments through which grassroots governance is realized. Sadly, there have been a number of challenges that have identified to mar and inhibit the efficiency and effectiveness of grassroots government in Nigeria, in ensuring the realization of the qualitative and quantitative transformation of the rural communities. These factors include corruptions, financial lack, administrative bottlenecks, political usurpation of local government by the state, external interference in the activities of grassroots governments, etc. Thus, this paper sought to interrogate the challenges of grassroots governance in Esan West LGA and how it impact rural development. In doing this, the paper adopted the descriptive survey research and system theory by David Easton. The paper drew information from secondary sources to exhaustively deal with the subject matter in qualitative terms. It was however found that the challenges hindering grassroots governance in Esan West Local Government are a product of both internal/local and external factors that include political, economic, administrative bottlenecks which has impacted negatively on the trajectory of rural development in the council area and in Edo State in general. Therefore, the paper recommended among other things that in addition to granting financial autonomy to local governments in Nigeria, Esan West Local Government should put in place adaptive mechanism for feedback from the people it strives to serve and for whose purpose

grassroots governance exists. The Current disconnection between the communities and the local government leadership should be urgently ameliorated in order to build public trust and confidence.

Indexed Terms- Administration, Financial Autonomy, Grassroots Governance, Local Government, Rural Development

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the responsibilities of modern governments is the facilitation of the processes of development – socially, infrastructural, politically, economically and otherwise. Therefore, development cannot occur in the absence of governance, that is, the act of government performing their functions efficiently and effectively. In other words, governance is an important instrument at all level of society (national, state and local/rural) through which the people realize and enjoy improved and qualitative living. Given this, for people or society to enjoy better outcomes of governance, the government closest to the people at the grassroots level is strategic and fundamental to their development. Thus, grassroots governance is government at the rural level to which the people at the rural communities identifies themselves, demands representations, and whose responsibilities includes the provision of the basic material means of living such as the provision of clean pipe-borne water, basic child and maternal care, healthy environment, among other useful material goods and/or services.

Grassroots governance is the vehicle through which the government at the grassroots/ rural areas provides the basic social necessities needed for attaining the good life in the polity nearest to the people. More so, is the fact that the provision of social services to the people at the grassroots remains a major reason for the

establishment of the Local Government as the third tier of government in Nigeria through which grassroots governance materializes. And, in performing this function that it becomes a relevant institution for the people.

Essentially, rural development entails the provision of basic social services such as access roads, clean pipe-borne water, ensuring rural electrification; sustaining and supporting household livelihoods through the provision of credit facilities for agriculture, arts, crafts and small-scale business; and encouraging the formations of cooperative societies and other economic groupings, has so far become the modus operandi of local government. Hence, the actualization of these activities falls within the purview of local government administration, (Akhakpe, et al 2012). Clearly, it is on this basis that we can allude that local/grassroots governance would entail the political, economic and administrative utilization of men, materials and money within the control of the local government system and/or the rural communities to enable them coordinate and perform their duties.

Significantly, we cannot talk about local/grassroots government or governance and its administration system without paying attention to the fact that, it is a system for the engineering of rural development and the transformation of the lives of the rural people. Therefore, development in this context is seen as the ability of the rural people to live quality life by having access to social amenities (services) such as primary health care centers, electricity, and provision of markets, sanitation and other social needs. Implying that, grassroots governance administered through the various local government administrations fosters rural development.

Good governance came from the World Bank due to the harsh political resistance. Governance is used in discussing the achievement of various development goals such as poverty reduction, improvement of health; improvement of education, services e. t. c. (Human Development Report 2002). Local governance requires partnership between local governmental institutions, civil society organisations and private sector for participatory, transparent, accountable service delivery and local development. Local governance is about how power is exercised,

and how important decisions are made and executed. It also views the performance of other institutions (Oladimeji and Isiaka 2009).

Local government councils are created for the development and improvement of the environment and lives of citizens. Local government is the subdivision of a nation into federal state and local government. Local government cannot completely depend on either the state or federal government. The need arises to generate revenue to maintain its sphere of influence constitutionally provided. It has a legal backing which identifies an administrative structure, the powers, responsibilities and jurisdictional boundaries. The operations of local government are subject to financial regulations guiding income and expenditure. A good local government minimizes corruption, takes views of minorities into account and ensures the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision making. The local administration regularly calls on citizens to create policy in a participative manner.

Whatever reasons the local government has put forward for using public resources they must be made accountable. The resources are used in the interest of efficiency and fairness. These are also the vital ingredient in the development process. Accountability, transparency is essential for effective and efficient functioning of an organization and especially of governmental organizations in a democratic governed state. There is need to protect and safeguard the citizens freedom to speaking other words it helps to reflect the preference of the public as citizens. It also serves as a quality control device. It enables the society as a whole to identify those to be held responsible when in the words of Woodrow Wilson “.....things go wrong” (Adamolekun, 1981) it is the requirement that those who hold the public trust account for the use of that trust to citizens or their representatives. It also underscores the superiority of the public will over private interest for those engaged in the provision and delivery of services to the general public.

Different local governments are in different reform “eras” and, consequently, these local governments perceive of transparency differently. Local governments in “advanced” countries perceive transparency as expanding democracy in decision-

making. In doing so, developed countries tend to use the internet to foster greater communication between the government and the governed. Local governments in non-industrialized states are more likely to view transparency as an effort to fight corruption. The new composition of the population and the fact that the initial administration had their own culture were special motives for paying attention to the relation between local government and its citizens. The citizen's forum project is a serious effort to involve citizens in the decision making concerning the annual budget.

Therefore, the focus of this paper is to interrogate the state of grassroots governance in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State and explore the challenges militating against rural development in the area. Realizable to the above is the fact that grassroots governance is immeasurably important in facilitating the development of the rural people, hence, the need to understand and identify the challenges that they face and how these challenges consequently impact on the council area.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars over the years has written extensively on the concept of grassroots governance in Nigeria, however, it is imperative to note that the concept "grassroots governance" can be used inter-changeable with the concept "local government". It is on this note this study would review several literature from several scholars. Local government as an engineer to rural development has contributed tremendously in the transformation of grassroots living. There-by making life so meaningful to them; through the provision of social amenities, rural infrastructures and political education.

Thus, Iboje (1989) observed that the role of local government is to involve the local people in the political process and to assist them resolve their differences; that is local government political role is that it serve as an instrument for facilitating the spread of democratic participation to the local people. Consequently, Nwangwu (1996) observed that one of the principal objectives of the local government was to bring about even and rapid development to the local level throughout the country.

Nhol, (1986) refers to local government as government by local bodies freely elected which is subject to the supremacy of the national government and endowed in some respect with power, description and responsibilities which they can exercise without control. Local government as the name implies is the government established for the sole purpose of directly governing the local populace. This means that the government at the local level is expected to be transparent and accountable to the local people for whom it was created and the provisions of the constitution ought to be reflected through the running of this tier of government. As an aberration of good governance, corruption exists at the three tiers of government, and local governments in Nigeria are often seen as nurturing grounds for barefaced corruption and near absence of transparency and accountability in the conduct of its governance (Abubakar, 2010).

Gabriel (2011) argues further that corruption has become an everyday issue in the context of the Nigerian government, as there are frequent cases of stealing, embezzlement and mismanagement of funds, "thieving has become a major interest and diversion for Nigerians in high places. It has become a big-time occupation. All arms of government are affected and the local government is not excluded" (Gabriel 2011). The lack of autonomy and financial power to attract and retain qualified personnel is also a major problem as the local government do not possess the necessary resources needed to formulate and fully implement programs that are beneficial to the communities they govern. This lack of autonomy is partly attributed to constant interference and impediments on the affairs of the local government by the state government.

Lawal (2000) opined that local government is the tier of government closest to the people and it is vested with certain powers to exercise control over affairs of the people in its domain. A local government council is therefore expected to play the roles of promoting the democratic ideals of a society and coordinating development programs at the local level. It is also expected to serve as the basis of socioeconomic development in the locality. Despite the numerous challenges it faces, local government is essentially a pathway to, and patron of national integration, organization and development (Lawal, 2000).

Oviasuyi and Isiraijie (2010) averred that local government exists in Nigeria, yet the resident population in it is denied the benefits of its existence. Local government has however been criticized by many local dwellers in various parts of Nigeria for not living up to its expectation and actualizing the purpose for which it was created.

Ogunna (1980) attributed the low performance for local government to the following factors; inadequate revenue, low executive capacity, poor and inadequate working materials, incompetence and ineptitude of existing staff and excessive control by the state government which result in delays and red-tapism. The solution he suggested lies in the review of the local government system particularly in areas of financial relationship with the state government and personnel. This control of local government was made clear in the implementation, guideline on the application of the civil service reform in the local government service. On the aspect of development, Oladosun (1981) asserted “Local Governments are potential better placed than the state or federal government to provide to a large extent the necessary social services as basic education, roads, water supply, public utilities and other facilities on which the well-being of the whole nation depends, provided they receive the adequate, genuine and whole hearted support from higher governments.

This is because of their familiarity with the local needs and intimate knowledge of the knowledge of the problems and aspiration of the local communities than any other level of government; with this, (Olatunbosun, 1981) went further to say that “local governments are in better positions to ascertain local increment, determine community demands, gauge local political temperature and get priorities out of many and varied demands, pulled together local recourse and foster a sense of active involvement in the management of men and affairs of the community”. Orowa and Adewumi (1983) on their contribution tried to give a general background on the evolution of local government in Nigeria to the rise of modern local government so that the local government which are nearer to the people can be on a better position to deliver services that will help bring about socioeconomic development. For instance, they say “local authorities being close to the members of the

public both in towns and villages should be effectively in the overall national objectives of achieving a broad based social and economic development and securing an optimum utilization of manpower. Ikelege (2005) explained the concept to refer to “a segment of a constitution state or region of a nation state”, establish by law to provide public services and regulate public affairs within its areas of jurisdiction. It is government under the responsibility of the local people and in the interest of the local population by representative bodies.

Reacting also to the concept of local government, Nwankwo (1992), has it that local government is a government set up by a central authority or state government as a means of ensuring effective administration at the grassroots level. In other words, a local government is a type of government that helps either the central or state government to carry out effective administration of the country at the grassroots level. According to Ofoeze (1997), he sees local government as a system of government at the local level exercise through locally elected representative council enjoying sustained autonomy in the exercise of specific powers over a given locality in the performance of a range of functions and responsibilities allocated to it by law.

Thus, professor Ademolekun (1979) asserts that the local government must be able to exercise substantial control over local affairs such as the staff, institution and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects of its own. Okpata (2003) said that local government is a creation of the national government and the local government acquires its meaning and rationale only within the territories of an existing national government. Hence, local government according to Okoli (2003) exists to;

- Fill the gap which the national government is ought to fill, complement and extend national government closer to the people.
- Implement the ideals, objectives and programs and aspiration of the local level.
- The ideology of the national government, needs, objectives, and aspirations are crucial determinations of the structure and functions of local government.

- The primary objectives or underlying philosophy for the creation of local government in Nigeria can be summarized as;
- The provision and maintenance of facilities like roads, health care services, electricity, water, etc.
- To facilitate and bring democratic government and its dividends closer to the people at the grassroots level.

Therefore, local governance comprises a set of institutions, mechanisms and processes, through which citizens and their groups can articulate their interest and needs, mediate their differences and exercise their rights and obligation at the local level (Oladimeji and Isiaka, 2009). Local governance empowers local government with authority and resources and building their capacity to function as participatory institutions that are concerned with strengthening of grassroots democracy and empowering citizens communities and their organizations such as NGO'S.

Local governance includes Participatory, Transparent and Accountable. The functions are:

- 1) It is effective and equitable
- 2) It promotes the rule of law.
- 3) It ensures that political, social and economic priorities which are based on broad consensus in society
- 4) The voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision making over the allocation of development resources. (Oladimeji and Isiaka, 2009).

There are three types of local governance;

- a. Economic
 - b. Administrative
 - c. Political
1. Economic governance: this includes decision making process that affects a country's economic activities and its relationship with other economies.
 2. Political governance: this is the process of decision making to formulate policy
 3. Administrative governance: this is the system of policy implementation (Oladimeji and Isiaka, 2009).

Several things must be put in place for local governance to be good. This includes:

- i. Legitimacy: people who are governed must respect and accept the decisions of the authorities as legitimate.
- ii. There must be social inclusion, empowerment, equal voice, and participation (regardless of gender e.t.c)
- iii. Basic human right needs to be respected, as well as the rule of law and the division of power
- iv. Local governance must be responsive and transparent.
- v. The rules are to be accountable, which means that it should be possible to penalize inappropriate behaviour (Oladimeji and Isiaka 2009).

Since the process of local government reform started in Nigeria, there has been a broad consensus of all political and social structures on key objectives of the local government reform and the establishment of a democratic, decentralized and professional system of the local government in Nigeria. A number of important programmes and projects have been completed or are being implemented in order to build and strengthen legal, financial and institutional framework of the local government, build its capacities, achieve transparency, accountability and efficiency of work, build capacities and develop accountable governance in the local self-government, etc., with significant financial and expert assistance and support of international organizations (Union of Municipalities, 2010).

The local administration regularly calls on citizens to create policy in a participative manner. The citizens are part of a civil community in which the local administration is the authority and the citizen the subject.

Table: The dimensions of the relationship between citizens and local government.

Community client	←→	Local government service provider
Voter	←→	Elected representative
Co-producer of policy	←→	Policy maker
Subject	←→	Authority

Source: Union of Municipalities in Netherlands (2008 - 2012).

At the local level these dimensions are the most tangible because the local government and local administration is the governmental layer closest to citizens in this way the relationship are regarded as a source of power and authority relevant for the democratic system in general. It is now generally accepted that transparency in government is an essential element of good governance. The more informed citizens can be, the more meaningful the role they will play in dialogue with their governments and with each other. This does not imply that citizens are entitled to know everything about the workings of their government. But it does not suggest only that there should be clear definitions as to what is and what is not in the public domain, but also that there should be clear and cogent reasons for any secrecy, justified by the demands of the “public interest”, and not just the interests of those holding power (Union of Municipalities in Netherlands, 2010).

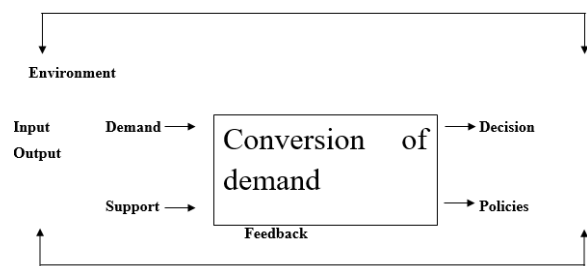
According to the Nigerian 1999 constitution section 7 (232 - 233) the functions of local government are;

1. Collection of taxes and fees.
2. Establishment and maintenance of cemeteries, burial grounds and homes for the destitute or infirm.
3. Licensing of bicycles, trucks (other than mechanically propelled trucks), canoes, wheel barrows and carts.
4. Construction and maintenance of roads, streets, drains and other public highways, parks, and open spaces.
5. Establishment, maintenance and regulation of markets, motor parks and public conveniences.
6. Naming of roads and streets and numbering of houses.
7. Provision and maintenance of public transportation and refuse disposal.
8. Registration of births, deaths and marriages.
9. Assessment of privately owned houses or tenements for the purpose of levying such rates as may be prescribed by the house of assembly.
10. Control and regulation of out- door advertising, movement and keeping of pets of all descriptions, shops and kiosks, restaurants and other places for sale of food to the public, and laundries.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory that the paper found most adaptive to the discussion of the challenges of grassroots governance and its impact on rural development in Esan West local government council is the general system theory. The theory was developed by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy from biology but was introduced into political science by David Easton (1965) which “sees the political system as a set of interrelated and reciprocally regulated patterns of actions and orientation, pattern that cluster together in equilibrium and that have certain needs of maintenance and survival. It is a phenomenon of whatever type, including physical, biological, social, political, etc. which is an organized whole with identifiable, interrelated structures delineating it from the environment (supra system) in which it is located and with which it interacts, processing the inputs from it into outputs for it.

The general systems theory seeks to argue that every system, including political system, has subsystems which make up the entire system. They are assigned functions and provided with enabling empowerment, including resources, appropriate authority, etc. to enable them discharge their responsibilities optimally. Where this is the case, there is said to be homeostasis (stability) in the political system. On the other hand, instability reigns in the political system where the contrary is the case and the subsystem and entire system are also unable to function optimally. Input and output analysis of a political system is very import. A political system is said to obtain its inputs (demands, supports, liberty or autonomy, cooperation, criticisms, resources, information, direct labor, etc) from the environment. These inputs are what the subsystems employ to discharge their responsibilities, so that the political system can send out its outputs into the environment and obtain further inputs for its operations.



Diagrammatic representation of David Easton's System Analysis.

Source: Gauba, (2004: p263).

Applying this theory of the systems analysis to the challenges of grassroots governance, the local government system in the country constitutes the sub-system. They must be well handled in terms of being fed with adequate inputs, so that they can contribute appropriately to the optimality of the whole (country) political system, as well as its homeostasis, if the reverse is the case, that is, if the grassroots governance system does not have the required inputs to operate on. According to Apter (1963), the political system has two elements viz input (made up of demand and support) and output (made up of authoritative decisions). By input, he meant those factors which emanated from the environment and go into decision making. They are those demands that come out from the society. Outputs are results that emanates from the demand and support made at the level of input. Esan West local government council is a system which carries out these functions by receiving inputs from the people and converting it into output. The citizens are involved in such demands above.

This demand on the system is in form of appeal to the council authority to provide some basic infrastructure like good road network, pipe borne water, health facilities, ultramodern markets etc. Support on the other hand could be people's participation in decision making process or voting in community development project as well as financial support, in form of tax, rates paid by the people including grant from Edo State and Federal Government of Nigeria. Though, this means they provide raw material on which the system acts, so as to produce output. This in turn will influence the environment of the system and consequently generate continued demand which in turn creates feedback and the whole process continues on a cyclical pattern.

IV. GRASSROOTS GOVERNANCE AND THE CHALLENGES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ESAN WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO STATE.

A key function of government in every tier is the provision of infrastructure that facilitates quality

living. It therefore becomes imperative that a key function to be performed by any government or machinery of administration is to ensure that there is an improvement in the quality of infrastructures. Infrastructural development entails the building of facilities needed for qualitative living. By so doing, it involves the provision those basic facilities that enhance the socioeconomic well being of the people. Infrastructural development in this sense of the responsibility to be performed by the administration of Esan West would be the construction of markets, public toilet facilities, community halls, motor parks and its consequent improvement. It also involves the renovation of schools, health care centers and pipe borne water, etc. Chiefly, infrastructural development is centered on building of viable life supporting structures that enables better living.

Therefore, as Orewa and Adewumi, (1983, p.114) stated that:

Infrastructural development as a responsibility of grassroots governance administration would mean; building of adult education centers; building and maintenance of jetties and bridges; building and erecting of structures which are declared by the local council to be the responsibility of the council; commercial motor vehicles stations; community development; dispensaries or health posts; water supplies including well-sinking and construction of minor dams; establishing and closing of markets; reading rooms and libraries for schools in communities; maternity welfare clinics; roads and drains which are declared by the local authorities to be the responsibilities of the council.

Adding from the above, it can be seen or argued that grassroots governance administration is responsible for facilitating the infrastructural development of rural communities. Thus, it is also true that the Esan West is constitutionally empowered as a grassroots governance institution to drive the process of infrastructural advancement that has haunt the progress of the rural people from attainment and enjoying quality life. From several accounts of indigenes in the rural communities in which the Esan West Local Government Area is constitutionally empowered to development of infrastructure. The accounts revealed by them highlight nothing but an

under performance of this core function assigned to them. From the submission of Enaholo Eguagie (2022):

One of the core functions of every grassroots governance is that they build facilities and infrastructures that beautifies a place. And Esan West LGA is no exception. With the few renovations of already existing infrastructures in different communities, there is not much of infrastructures To say the least, there need to be an improvement in this area in Esan West Council. Focus should be place of utilizing the availability resource in performing the actual purpose it was giving than diverting it for personal enrichment.

Corollary to the above assertion we can adduce that Esan West suffers from a serious infrastructural dearth. The dearth of infrastructure as observed by the interviewee is a manifestation of the fact that grassroots governance administration is paying very little quality attention to infrastructural development. Consequently, this neglect is poses very serious hardship on the rural people. Again, another interviewee working in the grassroots governance Council there in Esan West adduced a different reason for the lack of infrastructural development in the area.

Despite the argument presented above that, the challenge of infrastructural development by the administration of Esan West grassroots governance as not self-imposed. It does not exonerate them from the fact that, it is their responsibility to infrastructurally transform Esan West LGA through the provision of the needed facilities that enhances the lives of the people in various communities. More so, is the question of whether there has been a judicious use of the resources given to them for the purpose of development.

In other words, judging from the fact that the provision of infrastructure constitutes a perquisite function of grassroots governance administration aligns with the fact that the inability to provide this function undermines the effectiveness of the grassroots governance. Going by this line of thinking, it can be further argued that the paucity as well as the dearth of infrastructure in rural areas paints a troubling picture

on the performance of its grassroots governance administrative system in Nigeria and Esan West. In addition, the absence or the non-availability of infrastructures such as; Roads; Electricity distribution around communities; Markets; Motor parks; Public works, for example buildings and control of buildings; Street lighting shows ineffectiveness rather than effectiveness.

From the foregoing, it is clear that there exist inability of Esan West Local Government Area to meet some of its responsibilities on grassroots governance such as the provisions of essential social services and in facilitating the infrastructural development of the communities under its control are due to several challenges confronting its administration. The multiplicity of these challenges' crisscrosses different spectrum of issues – political, economic, environment, administrative, social and even cultural factors. As expected, there is no form of administration that does not battle with one constraint or the other. This is due to the fact that administration exist within an ecology. Hence, there are several ecological factors that impedes the smooth running of the business of governance in the society.

Inevitably, grassroots governance administration is also confronted with its own peculiar challenges. In this regard, this section tries to identify and examine the challenges limiting grassroots governance administration in Esan West Local Government Area. The factors outlined as impeding the performance of the function grassroots governance administration are both external and internal. This is from issues identified, there have been several challenges that confronts grassroots governance administration in Esan West grassroots governance which include:

1. Undue State Interference in the activities of Esan West Local Government Area

One of the challenges confronting grassroots governance administration in Esan West is the excessive political interference from the state government in deciding the activities of the grassroots governance. A major reason for this is that grassroots governance systems in Nigeria is the lack of autonomy that they suffer. This lack of autonomy that grassroots governance of Esan West suffers politically, financially, administratively and otherwise due to this undue interference have put a cog in the wheel of the

administrative progress of Esan West. In this line, Odoh (2014) agreed to the above when he stated that:

The grassroots governance suffer from constant whittling down of their powers by the state governments. The excessive control of some grassroots governance by the states has reduced them to local administration or local arms of state administration. This has greatly impeded the performance of the grassroots governance in grassroots development as they have to work according to the dictates of the state governments (Odoh, 2014, p.210).

Thus, the above makes us to understand the simple fact that the inability of the grassroots governance to elect their leaders, control their own finance, or decide what is to be done in their grassroots governance without the interference of the state government hampers their capacity to be effective. As such the case of Esan West has not been any different in the hands of the Edo state government that has only resulted in the use of caretakers rather than elected chairmen in the political performance of administration in Esan West grassroots governance area. From the above it becomes clear that, administration is driven better when the political will of the government in charge drives administration.

2. Lack of adequate Finance

A major bottleneck to the administrative effectiveness of grassroots governance anywhere in Nigeria is inadequate finance. The statutory provisions of the constitutions and means by grassroots governance are guaranteed funding is the federation account. The grassroots governance system as operated in Nigeria; funding is made possible through the state-joint account. This financial system as operated in the country has further constrained the capacity of the grassroots governance in meeting other important responsibilities beyond the payment of salaries. The case of State governments' only releasing money to grassroots governance only to pay staff salaries and in some instances their staff are owed for months, (Igbokwe-Ibeto and Nkah, 2014). Furthermore, Odoh (2014, p.209) avers that:

the revenue accruing to the grassroots governance from the federation account has been increasing over time, the cash flow has not been

correspondingly constant. This is because the federal government revenue is exclusively dependent on the sales of crude oil at the international market. Since most grassroots governance depend entirely on federal allocations to run their affairs, the fluctuations in the country's earning from oil has adversely affected their performance in services delivery to the people at the grassroots level.

The financial inadequacy of grassroots governance administration in Esan West has been implicated numerously on why the grassroots governance in Esan West cannot perform their responsibilities in achieving their rural development. Esan West grassroots governance like other grassroots governance in the country are disturbed by the allocation system that is presently operated in the country, (Suberu 2004). In his words, "for a federal system that is dominated by the redistribution of centrally collected revenue, it is hardly surprising that the revenue generation and allocation issue has remained particularly contentious and intractable in Nigeria", (Suberu, 2004).

3. Corruption

One of the fundamental problems facing grassroots governance administration is corruption. Esan West as a grassroots governance is not exempted from this. More so, the issue corruption has been institutionalized in the grassroots governance system. The ubiquitous nature of corruption is found in ill practices that have limited the administrative success of the Esan West grassroots governance in meeting its constitutional functions (Lawal and Oladunjoye, 2010, p. 232). Corruption has been established to be one of the banes of grassroots governance administration in the country.

In Esan West, the impact of corruption has led to the ineffectiveness of grassroots governance administration. Some of the areas where corruption thrives in grassroots governance in Esan West local government are: a) Inflation of prices of bought items; b) Over estimation of cost of projects; c) The ghost worker syndrome; d) Poor financial base and limited revenue e) Award of contracts and subsequent abandonment; f) Payment of huge sums of money to political godfathers; g) The age-long belief by the

officials that people are ignorant, illiterate and unenlightened; h) Lack of accountability, (Bolatito and Ibrahim, 2014).

4. Lack of adequate and untrained staff involved in grassroots governance administration

Grassroots governance in Nigeria are faced with the problem of inadequate skilled staff within his administrative cadre. The lack of trained personnel in the administrative services have constrained the ability of most grassroots governance to perform effectively. Trained workers such as engineers, accountants, medical doctors, town planners, statisticians, etc. are in low supply. In this same regard, Esan West grassroots governance area is also battling the negative effect of this inadequacy in administration.

As observed by Odoh (2014):

Most grassroots governance in Nigeria suffer from poor and inadequate staffing. The paucity of executive capacity in the grassroots governance service undermines the effective performance of the councils in grassroots development. This underscores the centrality of human resources in the development process. The available staff in most grassroots governance across the country are dominated by the generalists such as administrative/executive officers; clerks; artisans; office assistants (messengers); typists; among others. In areas of critical service to the people such as agriculture, health, education, works, finance, and administration, most grassroots governance are lacking in qualified and skilled personnel to offer professional and expertise services designed to transform rural communities. (Odoh, 2014, p.210)

This situation poses a major challenge in grassroots governance performance. In addition, the lack of personnel has crippled the capacity of the grassroots governance administration in Esan West. The lack of trained and skilled staff has made the grassroots governance not to have the necessary human capital for the functions it is expected to perform. Hence, this inadequacy puts the grassroots governance in Esan West in a precarious position.

5. Poor policy focus

One of the litmus tests performed on assessing good government in any society is the capacity of the government or system of administration to be focused on the people. People centric administrative system stands out as they are judged with how actual what the people need. After a careful assessment of the administrative system in Esan West grassroots governance is the observation that there is a disparity between the needs of the people and the focus of the grassroots government in the area.

Odoh, (2014, p210) noted that:

Many development projects executed by some grassroots governance administrators do not reflect the basic needs of the people. Many white elephant projects with huge capital costs such as secretariat complex, dam construction for tourist site, taxing grassroots governance to fund university education, among others are undertaken to the criminal neglect of the basic needs of the rural people. This is a negation of grassroots development, which ought to address the critical areas of rural development such as construction and maintenance of rural feeder-roads; provision of potable water; electricity; primary healthcare services; basic education; agricultural extension services; among others.

This is situation as painted above is clearer with how the people are disassociated with the developmental projects and policy thrust of the grassroots governance in Esan West. Many projects implemented in the area does not add to rural development or even satisfy the needs of the people. This happens because the people are hardly consulted on what they want from the government. The foregoing practice in Esan West Local Government Area grassroots governance are negates the very value for the reason for the establishment of the grassroots governance system in the first place in Nigeria. As such, the neglecting of the people's initiatives in government has made the people further removed from the activities of the grassroots governance posing very serious challenge for their effectiveness. The result of this is the lack of necessary basic amenities that is needed by the people in Esan West grassroots governance in living quality life.

Corroborating this view, Bolatito and Ibrahim, (2014, p.566) argued that:

The decline in delivery of social services for the people at the grassroots is perhaps, felt more by common people. This revealed that the grassroots governance administration has failed in meeting the basic needs of the people such as good roads, metro-transport, potable water, regular electricity supply, sanitation and rehabilitation of local road under their local jurisdiction, qualitative healthcare delivery and education.

To him, the above is rather a decline in delivery of essential social services. In Esan West, it is the absence the is the case. The outcome of a system in which the people are disassociated from the entire polity will only be bereft of the dividends of good governance.

6. Poor supervision of projects

One of the challenges facing grassroots governance administration in Esan West has been the issue of poor evaluation and monitoring of projects due to incapacity shown by the administrative structures in the area. This issue is reinforced by the fact that the grassroots governance does not have the material, human and political will to ensure that projects are actually implemented and serve the purpose to which they were created.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this paper is that grassroots governance has not impacted rural development in Esan West local government area of Edo State and this lack of impact has not impaired the development of rural communities and the entire local government at large. As part of the main thrust of the system theory, the grassroots government is a component of the political system which receives input from its environment and it ought to translate these inputs into developmental projects and political for the rural dwellers and its environment. However, developmental projects and programmes are not adequately carried out because of the several challenges that are being faced by the grassroots government. On the account of those challenges, this paper recommended:

- (1) conscious effort both within the purview of the local and other tiers of government must be directed towards eliminating the challenges of grassroots governance by granting the much yearned financial autonomy of local governments in Nigeria, and that;
- (2) Esan West Local Government should put in place adaptive mechanism for feedback from the people it strives to serve and for whose purpose grassroots governance exists. The Current disconnection between the communities and the local government leadership should be urgently ameliorated in order to build public trust and confidence;

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