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## **DEMOCRACY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF ZARIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT (LG) IN KADUNA STATE NIGERIA**

Idris Ahmed Jamo<sup>a</sup> \*

<sup>a</sup> *Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Department of Public Administration, Nigeria*

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### **Abstract**

A growing body of scholarship explores correlation between Democracy and Development. The majority of the scholarship focuses on certain indices of Development especially in developed democracies. We know little on the influence of democratic governance on grassroots communities particularly in terms of provision of physical infrastructural facilities. Local Governments are positioned to improve development at the local level and bring rural communities closer to the government. But studies show the contrary, grassroots communities in Nigeria are the most downtrodden citizens with difficult access to physical infrastructural facilities. This study examines the influence of democratic governance on infrastructural development at the grassroots level. The scope of the study is limited to Zaria Local Government in Kaduna state, Nigeria between 2000 and 2017. Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized. In the case of primary data, interviews were conducted; questionnaires were randomly administered to members of the public in six wards across Zaria LG. Data gathered were subjected to Spearman correlation analysis. Findings of the study indicated that democratic governance in Nigeria has improved infrastructural development in certain areas of Zaria Local Government. The study concludes that for infrastructures to be adequately provided at the grassroots level, democratic ideals, accountability and prudent management of public resources must be improved.

**Keywords:** Democracy; local government; infrastructures, development

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\* Corresponding author: Idris Ahmed Jamo. Phone.: +2348028536501  
E-mail: [idrisahmedjamo7@gmail.com](mailto:idrisahmedjamo7@gmail.com)

## **I. Introduction**

Nigeria became independent state on the first October 1960. The first democratic rule in Nigeria lasted from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1960 to 15<sup>th</sup> January 1966 when the military intervened into the Nigerian politics. During that period (1960-1966) the LGs in Nigeria were under the Native Authority (NA) system. In 1976 Local Governments in Nigeria were accorded the third tier status in the federation (Jamo, 2016). Nigeria ushered in democratic rule of the second republic in August 1979 after thirteen years of military rule. The second republic ended in December 1983 when another coup d'état took place. The Third republic started with LGs elections all over the federation in December 1990 and later truncated after the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential elections. Nigeria's return to democratic rule on May 29, 1999 ushered in another era in the history of the Nigerian politics. The period witnessed smooth hand over of power from civilian to civilian administrations ever in the history of the Nigerian politics. The period witnessed efforts to restructure LG system in 2003 and to amend the 1999 constitution so as to ensure LG autonomy. However, this effort failed in February 2018 when the association of the speakers of the state houses of assembly announced their position on the status of the LGs in the country. The association resolved to maintain the present status (including the state-L. G joint account system) of L.G as enshrined in the 1999 constitution.

Infrastructures in Nigeria like many developing countries are in the state of decay and require either replacement or repair. Infrastructural development in Nigeria particularly at the Local Government level is facing different challenges ranging from corruption, insufficient funding, and inadequate Local Government autonomy to carry out its own projects, in adequate utilization of experienced staff of the LGs and over spending on recurrent budget (Jamo, 2017). Studies indicate that, although there have been improvement in certain infrastructures like telecommunication in Nigeria, however there are challenges in the other areas like health, roads, water, education infrastructures. In Nigeria, infrastructural facilities are mostly concentrated in the urban centres. This has resulted to rural urban drift, high rate of crimes, overpopulation and over concentration on available infrastructural facilities in the urban centres. Local Government (LG) is the lowest tier of government responsible for the provision of some physical infrastructural facilities such as primary schools, feeder roads, water supply and primary health care facilities on which the wellbeing of the people depends (Sehinde, 2008). Section 7(1) of 1999 constitution vested LG power to provide such infrastructural facilities (FGN, 1999). In recognition of the importance of Local Government to manage grassroots development through provision of basic infrastructural facilities, LGs in Nigeria were accorded revenue from the federation account (1976 LG reforms; 1999 Constitution). In spite of these constitutional provisions, infrastructural facilities are still inadequate and not accessible to many Nigerian rural communities. In Nigeria, Local communities constitute majority of the Nigerian populace and are living in poverty and miserable conditions due to lack of infrastructural facilities (Sehinde, 2008).

Many people expected that the return of Nigeria to democratic rule would improve infrastructural development at the grassroots level. However, studies show the contrary. Rural dwellers are the most downtrodden people in Nigeria with limited access to infrastructural facilities. But there are significant critiques on whether democracy brings about development at the grassroots or not (Duncan et al, 2009:30; Olarinmoye, 2010; Rivera-Batiz 2002: 135;

Stiglitz 2002, 164-167; Rivera-Batiz 2002, 139; Bashir and Muhammed, 2012). The question this research addresses is what are contributions of democratic governance on the provision of infrastructural facilities at the local level?. This study examines the link between democracy and provision of infrastructural facilities at the LG level with special reference to Zaria LG in Kaduna state, Nigeria. The study hypothesized that democratic governance contributes to provision of infrastructural facilities in Zaria Local Government.

The scope of the study is restricted to Zaria LG in Kaduna state, Nigeria. The choice of the area is guided by proximity and access to reliable data. The time frame for the study is the present democratic dispensation (i.e. 1999-2017). The rationale behind the choice of the period is due to uninterrupted democratic rule in Nigeria and increasing funding to LGs from the federation account. The choice of Zaria LG is based on the notion that the area is among the LGs that are suffering from shortage of infrastructural facilities in Kaduna state. The research made emphasis on the completed number of infrastructural facilities provided by the LG within the period of study particularly clinics, boreholes and primary schools provided by the Zaria LG council. This is because infrastructure is one of the indicators for measuring development of modern societies (World Bank, 2012).

## **2. Literature Review**

Infrastructures are basic structures and facilities necessary for the country or an organization to function efficiently (Hornby, 1995). Infrastructures are essentially classified into economic and social infrastructure. Economic infrastructure is part of economic capital stock that produces services to facilitate economic production or services as input to produce (e.g. roads and electricity) or are consumed by households (e.g. water, sanitation and electricity). Social infrastructures encompass services that have both direct and indirect impact on the quality of life such as health and education (Jerome, 2004). Infrastructure is therefore an input that enhances individual or societal development. In similar view, Andrew (1984) posits that infrastructures are economic and social facilities which are basically provided by either government, or private sectors with the aim of enhancing social and economic development of an individual or society in general. This suggests that infrastructures are basic required services provided by either government or private sectors operators for development of individual or society at large (Olukoju, 2003). Infrastructures are therefore any input that serves as requirement for the proper functioning of the economy, or facilitate the improvement of the living standard of an individual or society at large.

### *2.1. Concept of democracy*

Democracy like many concepts in social sciences defies single conceptualization. For instance, Held (1993) in Ojo and et-al, (2014) defines democracy as a form of governance that represent popular power and self- governance and self-regulation. This means democracy is a kind of governance that involve majority in the decision making of their own affairs. It also signifies a means of conferring authority on those periodically elected by the majority of the electorates. While Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1989) sees democracy as a system of government that guarantee competition among individuals and groups, parties for all governmental political

positions at regular intervals without application or use of force; a highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular, fair and periodic elections that ensures extensive participation of major (adult) social group; and a high level of political economic and social freedoms (Diamond, et al. 1989). But Ake (1991) perceives democracy in terms of principles of public accountability, widespread participation, and the consent of governed. To this end we can sum up democracy to imply a form of government in which people exercise the governing power either directly or indirectly through their representatives periodically elected by themselves.

## *2.2. Infrastructure and Development*

The usage of the word infrastructure is not recent, but has been used in English since 1927. Etymology Dictionary (2012) broadly defined infrastructure to connote “the installations that form the basis for any operation or system”. This means infrastructure can be anything that is considered as critical or important to the enhancement of the living standard of the society or development. Oyedele (2012) similarly classified infrastructure into “hard and soft”. The hard infrastructure denotes all the large physical set-ups needed for the operation of a modern industrial nation, while “soft” infrastructure implies to all the institutions needed to sustain a state. These includes: security, financial, education institutions etcetera (Kumar, 2005).

In essence, there are a number of multiple and complex connections between infrastructure and economic growth. First, infrastructure directly affects production and consumption. Second, infrastructure creates many direct and indirect externalities. Third, infrastructure creates additional employment. Studies have shown that infrastructure can have a significant impact on output, income, employment, international trade, and quality of life. Infrastructural development can reduce stress and promote good health. It will also reduce crime level. This indicates that infrastructural development has been considered as among important indicators for assessing the successes of democratic governance. This is because democratic government is expected to be more responsive to the needs of the electorates. Also agitations for infrastructural development are much higher in democratic government than in authoritarian regimes. Finally, ethnic group and other interest groups agitations and cries for marginalization are much higher in the new democratic states of Africa due inadequate basic infrastructural facilities.

Globally, infrastructural development has been considered as one of the strategies for improving living standard of people and as indicator for measuring the performance of good governance (Oyedele, 2012). While Moody (1997) observed that infrastructure does not lead to growth, but provides the necessary support for sustaining growth (Jerome, 2004). This suggests that, though infrastructure is important for growth but there is no direct link between infrastructure and economic growth. On the contrary, World Bank (1994) study proved that infrastructure promotes economic growth, increase competitiveness, and enhances quality of life (Jerome 2004; Magidu and Abu, 2009). Supporting this position, Oyedele (2012) research has shown that infrastructures can be used to solve a wide range of developmental challenges including unemployment, crime and other socio-economic problems. Findings of the study further indicate connection between economic growth and availability of infrastructures. This is in line with Omoren et-al, (2009) study which indicates correlation between road

infrastructure and socio-economic development at the LG level. From the foregoing studies we can deduce that, there is correlation between infrastructure and development.

### *2.3. Nexus between Democracy, LG and Development*

Local Governments were essentially created out of the need to facilitate grassroots development by decongesting the functions and burden of central government (Ntiwunka, 2011). This suggests that, the primary essence of creating LG is to effect development at the grassroots communities and reduce the burden of state and central governments. Similarly, Alawo et al, (2015) posits that, Local Government generally has the following characteristics: subordinate system of government or sub unit of a federal/central or state government and charged with powers to deliver certain services and to perform legislative, administrative and quasi-judicial functions as the case may be. It also enjoys power to formulate policies, prepare budgets and a degree of control over its own staff. But Chukwuemeka et al (2014), Otinche (2014), Ezeani (2012) Tumini (2011) as well as Whalen (1970) similarly notes that LG has the following characteristics: a given territory and population, an institutional structure. It is separate legal identity with a range of powers and functions authorized by delegation from the appropriate central or intermediate legislature and finally accorded autonomy within its sphere of jurisdiction and competence.

Scholars differ in their opinions on whether or not nexus exists between Democracy, LG and Development. For instance, Duncan et al, (2009:30) observes that there is relationship between political and economic change. Though there is limited hard evidence on the direction of causality, and the basic mechanisms through which politics affect development. But, Olarinmoye (2010) research established correlation between participation (democracy), social and economic development. Similarly, quantitative analysis validates a strong correlation between levels of income and aspects of good governance, such as market capitalism and liberal democracy. Hence, grassroots participation is one of the important aspects of democracy. It includes the involvement of people not only in choosing political representatives but included and empowered in the process decisions making process in the various levels of government and layers of society (Rivera-Batiz 2002: 135). Further argued, participation is necessary ingredient for both economic and social development (Stiglitz 2002, 164-167; Rivera-Batiz 2002, 139). Local government in Nigeria was essentially planned to ensure maximum participation of citizens at all levels of government in the development process; promote balanced development and ensure that the grassroots communities benefits from the democracy and development (Olufemi and Akanni, 2013). It is therefore evident that the creation of LGs in Nigeria was a deliberate attempt to inject a decentralized approach towards provision of adequate infrastructural facilities at the local level and involving grassroots communities in taking decision in their own affairs and bringing them closer to their immediate government.

Consequently, Local Government system was designed to ensure effective democracy and development at the grassroots level (Bashir and Muhammed, 2012). This implies that, Local Government is an essential means for ensuring grassroots democracy. On the other hand democracy provides better mechanism for smooth Local Government operation. Thus, when powers are decentralized to LG level, the tendency of grassroots democracy and development

assured. This is because local people are in better position to identify their problem themselves than people from above. Again certain infrastructural facilities can efficiently be delivered by the local communities than other tiers of government (Jamo, 2018). In this regard effective democracy and development can be achieved through decentralization of services to the grassroots communities. Democracy therefore, serves as an important avenue through which the purpose for which the Local Government is created and consequently development can be achieved. Local Government were essentially created out of the need to facilitate grassroots development by decongesting the functions and burden of central government (Ntiwunka, 2011). Abugu (2014) submits that Local Government in Nigeria is one of the important institutions that play important role in facilitating the actualization of both community and national development. The study further indicates that despite this important position upon which LG is placed in the country, LG is bedevilled with corruption, poverty, poor internally generated revenue and political instability to provide adequate infrastructural facilities. In Nigeria greater percentage of Local Government lack basic rural infrastructure required to stimulate development (Tolu, 2014).

### **3. Method**

#### *3.1. Sources and instruments of data collection*

Data were drawn from both primary and secondary sources from October to December 2018. Questionnaires were designed to draw responses from respondents in Zaria LG. The researcher used open ended questionnaires so as to give respondents chance beyond options in the questionnaires. The researcher went to the field and observed the level of Local Government performance in terms of provision of infrastructural facilities so as to ascertain the findings obtained from questionnaires and interviews. To ascertain performance of Zaria Local Government in terms of provision of infrastructural facilities under the present democratic dispensation, 4010 questionnaires were administered to respondents (members of the public) so as reliable sample size, 400 were duly selected from the returned questionnaires. To complement the primary source, the researcher gathered data from secondary source including conference proceedings, journals and government documents.

Preliminary investigation was made in Kwarbai B ward to test and ascertain the reliability of instruments data collection. Expert was contacted for necessary adjustment. The instruments were found reliable and capable of answering the research questions of the study.

Participants were drawn directly from members of the public particularly people who have been residing in the study area. The participants were drawn irrespective of their gender or other cultural differences so as to reduce bias in the sampling. The researcher used mixed method research design to draw information from both primary and secondary sources. Subjects were observed in their naturalistic conditions. Field work research was conducted within three months with the assistance of three research assistants.

### 3.2. Sample Size

To obtain the sample size, the research utilized Yamane's (1967; 886) formula as expressed by Israel (1992; 1 – 10).  $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$  Where n= sample size; N= total population; e= level of significance (95%). According to 2008 population census, Zaria Local Government has the total figure of 408,198.  $n = 408 / (1 + 408(0.05)^2) = 408 / 1.0225 = 399.022005$ . The sample size is therefore 399, or approximately 400.

### 3.3. Sampling Technique

The study used both simple random and stratified sampling techniques to draw sample from members of the public. The researcher utilized these methods because the parent population is known, as such each element in the population has equal chance of being represented and equal opportunity of being selected. Stratified sampling method was also utilized to draw our sample of wards in Zaria LG.

### 3.4. Method of data analysis

The data were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data gathered were analysed using simple percentages. Spearman correlation analysis was used to test correlation between variables and analyse quantitative data obtained from questionnaires.

## 4. Findings

This study utilized theory of Local Government as the theoretical framework to theorize the justification for the existence of Local Governments. Therefore, in articulating the functional responsibilities that Local Governments are supposed to perform, Adeyemo, (2010) identified three schools of thoughts, they are:

- i. The Democratic participatory school,
- ii. The Efficiency services school, and
- iii. The Developmental school.

The developmental school emphasized on how Local Governments in the developing countries could be 'an effective agent for better life, an improved means of a better living, socially and economically, and a means to better share in the national wealth' (Adeyemo, 2010). This implies that:

- a) LGs were basically created to provide accelerated development at the grass root levels
- b) LG can serve as an effective tool for improving better life by providing adequate infrastructural facilities at the grass roots level.

This suggest that, LGs were created to accelerate development at the grassroots level by providing adequate infrastructural facilities at the grassroots level so as to reduce over dependence on state and central government. The findings of the study are presented below:

**Table 1. Infrastructural facilities provided by the Zaria LG from 2003 - 2011.**

<b>Infrastructures provided by the Local Government</b>	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Feeder road</b>	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	5	Nil	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
<b>Water supply</b>													
Borehole	49	Nil	2	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	Nil
<b>Health services</b>													
Clinics/Dispensaries	13	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	2	Nil	Nil	4	Nil	3	Nil	Nil
<b>Education</b>													
Primary School	18	1	6	11	Nil	8	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	5	Nil	Nil

**Source:** Works and Health Departments, Zaria LG, 2018.

Table 1 presents the number of infrastructural facilities provided by the Zaria LG from 2005 to 2016. It shows that the year 2005 has the highest number of infrastructural facilities provided by the LG. While the 2009 and 2014 have the least or zero provision of infrastructural facilities. In 2005 the Zaria LG provided 49 boreholes, 13 clinics and 18 primary schools to six wards in the LG. This figure declined to only 1 primary school in 2006. In 2007 only 2 boreholes, 1 clinic and 11 clinics/dispensaries were provided by the LG. But in 2009 no single infrastructure found available provided by the LG. In 2010, 5 feeder roads were constructed, 2 dispensaries and 8 primary schools were provided. This means that provision of infrastructural facilities in Zaria LG has not been steady over the years.

**Table 2: Distribution of Questioners administered and returned.**

Wards	Questionnaires administered	Questionnaires Returned	Percentage %
Kwarbai A	70	68	17.00
Kwarbai B	70	67	16.75
Kaura	68	67	16.75
Gyallesu	67	65	16.25
Dutsen Abba	68	66	16.5
Wuciciri	68	67	16.75
Total	410	400	100

**Source:** Researchers Survey, 2018.

This section presents data gathered from the questionnaires administered to respondents in Zaria LG. The table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents in the six wards in Zaria Local Government. Out of the 410 questionnaires administered, 400 of the questionnaires were selected among the dully completed and returned. This decision was made so as to obtain the required sample size.



Table 3: Public Perception on Local Government provision of infrastructural facilities in this democratic dispensation

Rate of responses	N	Percentage %	Question
Agree	99	24.75	In your own opinion, do you agree that democratic governance has improved development in terms of provision of infrastructural development at the grassroots level?
Strongly agree	95	23.75	
Disagree	83	20.75	
Strongly disagree	68	17.0	
Undecided	55	13.75	
Total	400	100%	
100%			

Source: Researcher's Survey, 2018.

Respondents were asked whether or not Zaria LG. has provided adequate number of infrastructural facilities (particularly primary school, boreholes, and feeder roads) in this democratic dispensation. Table 2 indicates that, 194 of the respondents are of the view that Zaria LG provides adequate number of infrastructural facilities in the LG in this democratic dispensation. While 151 of the respondents are of the view that LG did not provide adequate number of infrastructural facilities. 55 of the respondents are undecided. This shows that majority of the respondents are of the view that democratic governance has improved development in terms of provision of infrastructural facilities at the local level.

Table 4: Public responses on involvement of grassroots communities in the selection of priority infrastructural facilities

Rate of responses	N	Percentage %	Question
Agree	62	15.5	In your own opinion, do you agree that local communities were involved in the selection of priority infrastructural facilities before being provided in your Local Government?
Strongly agree	53	13.25	
Disagree	103	25.75	
Strongly disagree	107	26.75	
Undecided	45	11.25	
Total	400	100%	

Source: Researcher's Survey, 2018.

Respondents were asked to express their opinion whether or not they have been contacted before the provision of the infrastructural facilities. 210 of the respondents said no, while 118 of the respondents attested that they were involved in the selection of priority infrastructural facilities in their communities before the provision. 45 of the respondents were undecided in their choice. This indicates that most infrastructural facilities were provided without involvement of the local communities.

Table 5: Test of hypothesis

**H1** = democratic governance contributes to provision of infrastructural facilities in Zaria Local Government.

<b>Correlations</b>			
	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.724**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	400	400
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	.724**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	400	400

Researchers' computation, 2018

From the results of the Spearman rank correlation coefficient in table 4, the value of 0.724 indicates a strong positive correlation between Local Government, democratic governance and provision of infrastructural facilities in Zaria LG. This implies that the present democratic governance has contributed to the provision of infrastructural facilities in Zaria L.G.

The study examines L.G. performance in terms of provision of infrastructural facilities in Zaria L.G. of Kaduna state, Nigeria under the present democratic dispensation with the view to establish correlation between infrastructure, L.G. and development. The research used both primary and secondary data. It was discovered that, there is correlation between democratic governance, infrastructure development at the grassroots level. Evidence to this proved that development requires basic facilities to take place. In essence, infrastructure whatever type, is very important for development, since it has the tendency to faster productivity and reduce difficulties. The research also found that Infrastructures are among the basic requirements for development. Yet in Nigeria, infrastructural facilities are often in adequate especially at the local level. This infrastructural crisis has often led to increasing difficulties to many local communities. This study also proved that though there is positive links between LG,

democracy and development. But this occur when LGs are properly structured and serve as viable instruments for achieving wide ranges of developmental objectives through provision of basic infrastructural facilities. However, in Zaria LG, though democracy has been entrenched at the grassroots level, but it has not been adequately addressed the needs of the grassroots communities especially in terms of provision of physical infrastructural facilities.

The research proved that Zaria LG performed below expectation particularly in terms of provision of feeder roads (within the period under study) in spite of the reform measures and the increased funding from the federation account. The study also established that Zaria LG performed better in the provision of water supply (particularly borehole), education (classrooms) followed by clinics and roads. Finally, the number also increased from the total number provided in 2010. This shows significant increase in LG performance over the years in respect to provision of infrastructural facilities.

The study also proved that Zaria L.G has provided a number of infrastructural facilities in this democratic dispensation. This shows that democracy has improved living standard of the local populace particularly in terms of provision of infrastructural facilities. Although some respondents testified that there were adequate infrastructural facilities during the democratic dispensation, however personal inspection of infrastructural facilities in some areas confirms that L.G perform below expectation terms of provision of infrastructural facilities during the period under study.

The study also shows that majority of the local populace were not contacted before the selection of priority infrastructural facilities provided by the L.G. This means that there is missing link between the local populace and the official of the local L.G. It also indicates that although L.G is the most closet government closer to the local communities and an instrument for viable local participation, however people are not being adequately involved in the administration of their own affairs in the L.G.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Local Governments are primarily created to decentralize services to grassroots communities, enhance wider participation so as to bring government closer to the people and reduce over dependence on state and federal governments. But in Nigeria, the supposed dividend of democracy is yet to be seen at the grassroots level. Even though Nigeria has spent long years of democratic rule, but the local government is yet to serve as avenue for projecting democratic ideals, it has been an instrument of oppression and wealth accumulation. In essence, L.G has not been performing their essential functions of provision of infrastructural facilities. The few ones available were provided without proper consultation of the local communities on their priority needs. This perhaps is what led to the growing infrastructural crises in most L.Gs in Nigeria. This infrastructural crisis has made lives unbearable in most rural communities despite the several reform measures taken to improve their performance.

Effort should be made to involve local communities in the selection of their priority needs particularly infrastructural facilities that have direct impact on their lives. Local Governments in Nigeria should devote large percentage of their budget on infrastructural development. This to a large extent would reduce difficulties at the grassroots level. Efforts should also make toward enhancing accountability and prudence in the management of public resources.

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