INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN TIMES OF COVID-19 PANDAMIC: EVIDENCE FROM ZARIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

1st Faculty of Social and Management Sciences International Conference. COVID19 Pandemic, Security Challenges and Sustainable Development. Organized by the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria. Monday 29th-Wednesday 31st March.

By

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Abstract

Nigeria is a federal State with three tiers of government, namely Federal, State and LG. The Nigerian constitution specifies the powers of each level of government so that harmony and mutual cooperation in the administration of the whole system and the autonomy of the constituent units are maximized; such that no level of government or its powers will be jeopardized. In spite of the constitutional provisions which specify the powers of each level of government, studies indicate that Local Governments in Nigeria are at the disadvantage in the discharge of their constitutional responsibilities under the present InterGovernmental Relations (IGR). However the emergence of Covid-19 has affected public governance in Nigeria. The study examine the extent to which Covid-19 affected Intergovernmental Relations in Nigeria with special reference to Zaria LG in Kaduna state, Nigeria. The research is empirical and utilized both primary and secondary source. Questionnaires were designed and administered to members of the public, while interviews were conducted with staff respondents in Zaria Local Government. Information gathered were analysed using simple percentage and Chi-square tool. Findings of the research indicates that, though there are improvement compared to the previous years, yet the present InterGovernmental Relations in Kaduna state has negative impact on service delivery in Zaria Local Government during the period of Covid-19 pandamic. The study concludes that, for L.Gs. in Kaduna state to effectively perform their constitutional responsibilities, adequate autonomy must be ensured.

Key words: Autonomy, Intergovernmental Relations, Local Government, Service Delivery,Covid-19.

1. Introduction: Local Governments are essentially created to deliver services at the grassroots level so as to bring people closer to the government. This division of governmental power reduces difficulties in governmental activities and serves as a important means for achieving good governance and development. Local Government also serves as the most effective avenue for delivering basic goods and services to local communities in more faster, easier and efficient manner.

Nigeria is a federal state with three tiers of government. Hence, among the ideas of federal order is to share powers among constituent units that make up the federation so that each is independent and

have final jurisdiction on certain matters and also share common interest on the others; at least certain services would be more efficiently provided by one particular level of Government than the other. The constitution of the federal state usually specifies the powers of each level of government so that harmony and mutual cooperation in the administration of the whole system and the autonomy of the constituent units are maximized, such that no level of government or its powers will be jeopardized.

In a federal state like Nigeria, each unit of government is as important as the other, since higher (central or state) level of government cannot achieve its goals without the cooperation of the lower level of government (LG) and vice versa. The relationship between the levels of government may be in the distribution of power, finance or authority relationship. It is base on this that the Nigerian constitution provided that, main public sector responsibilities are split across various governmental levels. Thus, no particular government could deliver radical improvements in service delivery on its own. This implies that cooperation is pre-requisite for effective development of the whole federation.

To achieve harmony among the constituent units, the first schedule of the 1999 constitution clearly defined the functions of the LG, while the second paragraph of the same constitution listed concurrent functions to be performed by both state and local government (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). To substantiate L.Gs' position and strengthen their financial autonomy so as to effectively perform their constitutional responsibilities, Local Governments all over the federation were constitutionally accorded the privilege to receive funding from the federation account. Hence, the funding from the federation account continued to increase from 10% in 1989 to 15% in 1992 and 20.60 in 2008(Jamo, 2015).

In spite of the constitutional and financial provisions which clearly spelt out jurisdictions and financial provisions for each federating units, Local Governments in Nigeria are not confortable under the present InterGovernmental Relation. Local Governments are still unduly controlled by their State Governments which rendered them as mere a department in the states. The Local Government

authorities have also been showing their dissatisfaction with the present State – Local Government joint account system (Jamo, 2015; Rapheal, 2018).

However the emergence of Covid- 19 in December 2019 has wosen many activities in Nigeria and led to widespread disruption of the economy(Ja'afar, Hassan, Hussain, Gabriel,and Muhammad, 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic has now spread to over 177 countries (UNDP, 2020). Limited information about Covid-19 fuelled by media's framing have significantly contributed to irrational behaviours, inequality, xenophobia, exclusion and discrimination (United Nations, 2020).

Initially the lockdown measures were imposed by the Federal Government in Lagos, Ogun, states and the Federal Capital Territory in Abuja where the first incidences occurred. While some states imposed partial lockdown and interstates travel restrictions. Later curfews were imposed in all states of the federation. To reduce the difficulties that may be resulted from the lockdown, the Federal Government of Nigeria launched palliative measures for targeted groups (Eranga, 2020).

To control the spread of the pandemic, the Nigerian government resolved to serious lockdown. This has seriously implications on activities and public governance in Nigeria.

It is based on this background that this research examines the pattern of InterGovernmental Relation between state and LGs during the Covid-19 pandamic, the research will ascertain how best this pattern of relationship can effectively be managed. The study hypothesised that: (i) State government interference affects performance of Zaria Local Government during the Covid-19 pandamic. (ii) Smooth intergovernmental relations depends on the Level of LG autonomy.

2. Literature Review: Concept of InterGovernmental Relations (IGRs).

Studies on LG autonomy and service delivery in Nigeria have already existed, however this section concentrates on InterGovernmental Relations in Nigeria. In a political system, an interaction usually occurs among the governmental components, this pattern of interaction is what is referred to as Intergovernmental Relations (Abubakar, 1986). This relationship is inevitable since no unit of

government can perform its functions effectively without the other (Jamo, 2015). Ademolekun (1983) conceptualized Intergovernmental Relations as the interactions that take place among the different levels of government within the state. This definition conceived InterGovernmental Relation as any form of relationship among different tiers of government. In similar view, Ogunna (1996) viewed Intergovernmental Relations as the complex pattern of interactions and interdependence between two or more levels of government. This means, InterGovernmental Relations involves all networks of interaction, cooperations and interdependence that exist among different levels of government within a state. While Akinsanya (2005) added that InterGovernmental Relations is a pattern of both vertical and horizontal relationship that exists between the various organs and departments within a state (Tom, 2016). This conception viewed InterGovernmental Relations as patterns of interaction not only among different tiers, but in the same level of government. More elaborately, Bello (2014) viewed InterGovernmental Relations to encompasses not only a relationship between different levels of government but includes both the citizens, governmental institutions, agencies and officials. In this regard, InterGovernmental Relations is a relationship between tiers of governments, or within the same level, that facilitate the accomplishment of shared goals through co-operation (Opeskin, 1988 in Bello, 2014). Similarly Wright (1988) viewed InterGovernmental Relations as an "interacting network of institutions at national, provincial and local levels, created and refined to enable the various parts of government to cooperate in a manner which is appropriate to its institutional arrangements". This means that InterGovernmental Relations is a pattern of interactions (either vertical or horizontal) between levels or governmental units (Obi ,2004; Van der Waldt and Du Toit, 1997; Thornhill's, 2002). In the Nigerian context, InterGovernmental Relation s is a pattern of formal and informal interaction between central, state and LG.

Patterns of Intergovernmental Relations in Nigeria

In the Nigerian federal set up, Intergovernmental Relations takes place in the following six forms of interactions: Federal/ State/Local, Federal/State, Federal/Local, State/State, State/Local and

Local/Local. These patterns of interactions can further be classified into horizontal and vertical relationship. The relationship is said to be vertical when interactions take place among the different levels of government. This relationship includes: Federal/State/LG; Federal/State; Federal/Local and State/Local Government. While horizontal relationship is a form of interaction that take place among the same level of government. For instance, State/State; Local/Local relations. Relationship can further be classified as triangular when for example two federal or States agencies relate with one Local Government for the attainment of a particular goal(s). If the relationship involves more than two federal agencies with a particular Local Government, this form of interaction is referred to as poly angular relations (Jamo, 2015).

Models of InterGovernmental Relations (IGRs)

Scholars have developed different Models of Inter-Governmental Relations (Deid, 1978). These are: The Partnership or Overlapping Authority model of InterGovernmental Relations, The Inclusive Authority Model of InterGovernmental Relations and Functional Dualism or coordinate Authority model.

Partnership or Overlapping Authority model of InterGovernmental Relations: In this model power is spread among the three levels of government. Each tier of government is granted to enjoy a measure of autonomy, with final say and independent in certain sphere of activity (Tom, 2016). Each level of government is considered as equal before the law. The Constitution and legislature specify the powers and control the activities of each unit of government. Thus over time, the powers and responsibilities of each level of government could be increased or decreased (Bello, 2014). As such all the tiers of government (including LGs) are given tax powers and final jurisdictions on certain services. In this model, mutual cooperation and understanding among the tiers of government are insured, to the extent that the responsibilities of particular level of government could be performed by another level on its behalf.

The Inclusive Authority Model of InterGovernmental Relations: In this model, the central, states and LGs are placed in hierarchical nature of authority. The states and LGs are subordinates and assistants of the Federal (Jinadu, 2003). This exemplified the Federal-State-Local relations in Nigeria between 1966-1979, 1993-1999 where states and LGs solely relied on Federal Government in delivering the secondary and primary education which were exclusively reserved to state and LGs (Akinsayna, 2005). The States and Local Governments in this model are just an instrument for locally administering services determined by the Central Government. LGs in this model do not have substantial autonomy, rather powers to deliver services are deconcentrated not devolved (Bello, 2014).

The Functional Dualism or Coordinate Authority model: This is the opposite of Inclusive-Authority Model. In this model, powers are decentralized to component units. This means that, the Central Government is weakened to strengthen the periphery. This form of federal arrangement signifies the early days of the American union (Obianyo, 2005). This means that Governments are independent and autonomous. In the Nigerian situation, the Concurrent legislative List encouraged cooperation between the central government and the states.

In this model, all the tiers of government have functional competence in certain important services as measured by their technical competence. Therefore, functional autonomy is usually stressed. All the tiers of government operate within the constitutional provisions. In essence, the coordinate Authority model tries to integrate both the elements of the partnership and the principal/agent models of Intergovernmental Relations (Bello, 2014). LGs in this case are not sovereign, independent entity, rather they should oviosly be subjected to different administrative supervision by the higher tier of government (Humes and Martin, 1961 in Bello, 2014).

Areas of IGRs and Allocation of functions among the federating units in Nigeria

(i) **Exclusive Lists**

The 1999 Nigerian constitution allocated certain functions exclusively reserved under the jurisdiction of the central government. These include: Regulation of labor, inter state commerce, Federal trunk roads; Railways, Aviation, police and other security services; telephones, Posts, telegraphs, minerals, Social Security, Insurance, National statistical system, water resources and Guidelines for minimum education standards at all levels and National parks.

(ii) **Concurrent Lists**

The 1999 Nigerian constitution also listed certain functions to be executed by both central and component units. These include: Electricity; Industrial, commercial and agricultural development, Scientific and technological research, Statistics and surveys, University, technological and post-primary education, Health and social welfare services, Primary, adult, post primary and vocational education, Development of agriculture and non-mineral natural resources.

(iii) **Residual lists (LG)**

The constitution also enumerated cetain responsibilities that are local in their nature to LGs. These include: Cemeteries, Naming of roads, streets, drains, other public facilities; Markets; Sewage, street lighting, and refuse disposal, Homes for the destitute and infirm, Markets, Economic planning and development (Jamo, 2015).

From the foregoing, it is evident that, the Nigerian constitution encourages mutual cooperation and involvement of all the three levels of government in the delivery of important public services.

States/LGs Inter-Governmental Relations (IGRs) in Nigeria

Nigeria has since independence experienced different models of LG administration (Akpan and Ekanem, 2013). The 1976 reforms and 1979 constitution placed local government as a third tier of government in Nigeria, but the reform measures and the constitutional provisions have not granted LG autonomy. This has engendered unequal relationship between the LG and other tiers of

government in Nigeria (Wilson, 2013). While Olasupo (2013) posits that, previous reform measures granted LG autonomy, but successive governments have eroded LG discretion to effectively perform their functions and deliver services to local communities. This has rendered LGs ineffective in the discharge of their duties. This is in line with Akpan et al (2013) empirical study which shows that the types of all federations determine the nature and character of autonomy of the federating units. The research further posits that the denial for LG autonomy is more prominent in the area of fiscal and leadership recruitment. But Ijimakinwa, Zinsu and Osaked (2015) research proves that conflicts among levels of government in Nigeria in the fourth republic are mostly over issues of over concentration of power at the center, illicit removal of LG officials, InterGovernmental Relations fund transfers, revenue allocation, tax powers and jurisdiction among others. This corresponds with Tom's (2015) empirical research which indicate that LGs in Nigeria have been highly politicized and argued that, the 1999 constitution (as amended) has not fully granted LG autonomy. Similar studies by Ammani (2012), Akindele and Olaopa (2002) supporting this view posits that state governments in Nigeria have been withelding and misappropriating LG funds from the federation account rendering them incapacitated to accomplish their constitutional responsibilities of delivering services to its people (Akpan et al, 2013). Although there are quite number of literature showing areas of LGs discomfort under the present InterGovernmental Relations, evidence of similar study in Zaria LG in the times of Covid-19 is not available. This study fills this gap.

3. Methodology: The paper adopted mixed method utilizing both primary and secondary source of information, in the case of primary source, LG officials were interviewed, while members of the public were administered with questionnaires. For the secondary source, materials mainly journal publications and unpublished decuments were consulted.

Sampling Method: The study utilized puporsive sampling method. The justification for chosing this method is based for the reason that management and finance staff were considered important in this

research, they were therefore deliberately included them in the sample. However other senior staff in other departments were also contacted.

Yamane's (1967;886) formula as expressed by Israel (1992;1 – 10) was used to determine the sample size as follows: $n=\frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$. Where n = Sample size, N = Total population, e = Level of significance (95%). The 2006 population census puts Zaria LG figure to 408.198. n= 408/1+408(95%); =408/409(0.0025); =408/1.0225; =399.022005.

The scope of the study is Zaria LG in Kaduna state, Nigeria. The research is limited to the period of Covid-19 pandamic in Nigeria (i.e. between 2020 and 2021). Though there are different patterns of InterGovernmental Relations in the Nigerian federation but this research only focused on State-LG InterGovernmental Relations with special reference to Zaria LG.

Data gathered were presented and analysed using simple percentage and Chi-square test. Chi-square test is used to show correlation between variables.

4. Data Presentation: This section presents data based on the questionnaires administered to members of the public and interviews conducted in Zaria LG. Aproximately 400 respondents were contacted and considered as the sample size obtained from the Yamane's fomular. A total of 400 questionnares were retrieved and analysed out of 415 questionnaires administered.

Table 1: Responses on Local Government autonomy and intergovernmental relations

Variables	Responses	Responses	%
Zaria LG enjoys autonomy in the present InterGovernmental Relations.	Agree	23	5.75
	Strongly agree	13	3.25
	Disagree	148	37.00
	Strongly disagree	168	42.00
	Neither agree nor disagree	48	12.00
	Total	400	100

Source: Researcher's Survey, 2021

The table 1 is the responses on LG autonomy and InterGovernmental Relations. Respondents were asked to express their views whether or not Zaria LG enjoys autonomy in the contemporary InterGovernmental Relations. 316 of the respondents indicated that Zaria LG is less autonomous.

While 36 of the respondents were of the view that Zaria LG has considerable autonomy in the present InterGovernmental Relations. But 48 of the respondents were undecided in their choice. The responses shows that most staff respondents were of view that LGs in Kaduna State are not autonomous in spite of the constitutional provisions. This indicates that, there is strong feeling of dissatisfaction on the present InterGovernmental Relations.

Test of hypothesis One

H_0: Smooth intergovernmental relations does not depends on Local Government autonomy.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	436.311[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	421.432	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	24.232	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	400		

a. 11 cells (47.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .38.

The findings from table above revealed that Smooth intergovernmental relations depends on local government autonomy, since the chi-square value (436.311) and p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance at 95% confidence limit.

Table 2: Responses on the effect of state government interference on the performance of Zaria Local Government during the period of Covid-19 pandemic.

Variables	Responses	Responses	%
State government interference has effected service delivery in the times of Covid-19 pandamic in Zaria LG.	Agree	143	35.75
	Strongly agree	164	41.00
	Disagree	57	14.25
	Strongly disagree	25	6.25
	Neither agree nor disagree	11	2.75
	Total	400	100

Source: Researcher's Survey, 2021

The table 2 above represents responses on effect of state government interference on the performance of Zaria LG during the period of Covid-19 pandemic. The result indicates that 307 of the respondents are of the view that, state government interference has significant effect on the performance of Zaria LG. during the period of Covid-19 pandemic, 82 of the respondents maintained that State government interference in the affairs of Zaria LG. has not effected the performance of the LG during the period of the study. While 11 were undecided in their choice. This proved that, majority of the staff

respondents are of the view that State government interference in the LGs affairs has effect on performance of Zaria LG. during the period of Covid-19 pandemic.

Test of Hypothesis One. H_0: State government interference does not affect the performance of Zaria LG during the Covid-19 period.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	563.411[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	547.493	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	31.258	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	400		

a. 11 cells (44.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .36.

The table 4.1 above revealed that State government interference affects the performance of Zaria Local Government during the period of Covid-19 pandemic., since the chi-square value (563.411) and p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance at 95% confidence limit.

5. Interview responses

Following the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, it has imposed multiple challenges not only to Nigeria but across the globe. The lockdown measure is one of the strategies employed by the Nigerian government to limit the spread of the pandemic. But the lockdown has increased the long existing precarious situation of the ordinary Nigerians. Covid-19 has impacted on businesses and public administration. LG. is one of the tiers of the Nigerian federation which has significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandamic. This section provides interview responses with staff respondents in Zaria LG. on LG. and InterGovernmental Relations during Covid-19 pandamic.

Respondents were asked to express their opinions on whether or not, LGs are comfortable under the present InterGovernmental Relations. The result of the interview shows that majority of the respondents were of the view that LGs in Kaduna state are not satisfied with the present InterGovernmental Relations. This indicates dissatisfaction of the LGs officials within the contemporary InterGovernmental Relations. The respondents were also asked to express their views

on the area of dissatisfaction in the period of Covid-19 pandemic. Most areas outlined by the respondents include: State LGs joint account system which make it very difficult for LGs to expend expenditure on their pariority interest on less it coincides with the interests of the state government. This has subjected LG officials under the control of the state government officials. Budgets and expenditures of LGs during Covid-19 were framed to reflect the interests of the State Government officials. Approval for budgets and expenditures were delayed except if they comply with the directive or interests of the state government officials. These and other factors have effected LG service delivery during the Covid-19 pandamic.

The respondents also revealed that, following the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria and imposition of lockdowm measure. LGs. in the state (including Zaria LG.) were directed to provide Covid-19 palliative relief measures to their citezens. Local Governments in the state were also directed to jointly with the state to expend certain expenditure as Covid-19 palliative relief measure to their citezens. However the money was directly withdrawn from the Local Government account.

The respondents were further asked to express their views on the area of dissatisfaction. Majority of the respondents were of the view that, the present financial autonomy has its root in the 1999 constitution, which provides provision for the State-Local Government joint account system and also subjected LG under the control of the state government. This proved that there is feeling of dissatisfaction on the constitutional provision of the State-LGs joint account system as provided by the 1999 constitution.

6. Findings of the Study

This research examine the extent to which Covid-19 pandamic affected LG and InterGovernmental Relations in Kaduna state with special reference to Zaria LG. The study found that alhough the previous constitutions granted Local Government as a third tier status, the 1999 constitution creates provision for State-Local Government joint account system where the funds from the federation account are paid through the account of the State Governments. This make it very difficult for LGs to

spend expenditures on their pariority needs, except if it fall on the interest of their State Governments. This was intensified during the period of the lockdown in the state as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This indicates that LGs in Kaduna state (including Zaria LG) have been suffering from inadequate autonomy which make it very difficult to perform their constitutional responsibilities during the period of Covid-19 pandemic.

The study also revealed that certain institutions in Kaduna state make it very difficult for LGs to be autonomous tier of government, these institutions include Ministry for LG, LG Service Commission, Caretaker Committee and appointment of a Sole Administrator who administer the activities of LG. The activities of these institutions were strengthened and used by the state government government officials during the period of Covid-19 pandemic to undermine smooth InterGovernmental Relations.

The research indicates that LGs in Kaduna state are not confortable under the present InterGovernmental Relations during the Covid-19 pandamic in the area of budget, expenditures, award of contract and appointment of higher LG officials. Combination of these make it very difficult for LG to perform its functions as constituted decentralized tier of government.

The study shows that there were several effort aimed at making LGs confortable in their relation to higher tiers of government. These efforts include the 1976 LG reform which placed LG as a third tier of government, the inclusion of the reform measures into the 1979 and the subsequent constitutions, the provision for the LG statutory allocation from the federation account and the increasing of LGs percentage of the revenue from the federation account.

The research also shows that although the first schedule of the 1999 constitution listed the functions of LGs in Nigeria, but LGs can only exercise their constitutional responsibilities in accordance with the enabling legislation passed by the state house of assembly. This renders LGs in the state subservient to state government' officials in the discharge of their duties.

7. Conclusion

The Nigerian constitution provides that, the main public sector responsibilities are split across the three levels of government. Thus, no single government could deliver radical improvement in service delivery on its own, this means that coordination and cooperation are necessary for effective and development of the whole federation. Nigeria's constitution therefore, provides for the participation of all the three levels of government in the delivery of core public services. This makes policy coordination as an important pre-condition for effective and efficient service delivery. Nevertheless, it has been observed that the success and harmonious InterGovernmental Relations depends largely on effective coordination among the three tiers of government. The study concludes that LGs in Nigeria would continue to be subservient of the state government and ineffective means for service delivery to grassroots communities unless they are adequately provided with substantial autonomy. Evidence from the period of Covid-19 lockdown in Kaduna state has proved that LGs in the state are not autonomous tier of government under the present InterGovernmental Relations.

8. Recommendations

In the light of the above findings, the study recommend the following:

Section 7 sub section 162 of the 1999 Constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria should be amended so as to ensure financial independence for Local Government administration in the country. The section of the constitution should be amended in such a way that would allow direct flow of LG fund from the federation account. This to a large extent will reduce withelding of LG fund through state-LG joint account system.

Local Government should therefore have ability to formulate and execute its own policies and the right to recruit, promote, develop and discipline its own staff. This to a large extent will reduce State interference in the affairs in the affairs of Local Government as evidenced in the present State-Local Government intergovernmental relations. This can be achieved by reducing the powers of State

Minisstry for Local Governments and Local Government Service Board/Commision to supervisory agencies alone.

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