AN EVALUATION OF SOCIAL SERVICES DELIVERED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF EBONYI STATE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ADMINISTRATION (1996-2012)

Nwoba, M.O.E (Ph.D)
Department Of Public Administration, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki
E-mail: martinonyema@g-mail.com

Abstract
For quite some time, the local government has been grappling with the issues of social services delivering and development of the local population. Inspite of the efforts made so far to tackle the issue of social service delivery, its inadequacy is still visible among the people. This paper examines the extent to which local governments are empowered to deliver the required social services, determines how the state of infrastructure has affected the delivery of required social services. The study covered Ebonyi State local governments. However six (6) local governments’ areas were systematically selected from the three senatorial zones. The theory of expenditure limitation was adopted as the theoretical framework of analysis. One way analysis of variance and chi-square was adopted to give scientifically verifiable answer to the questions and objectives of the research. The findings revealed that there is variation in the empowerment of local governments for the provision of social services, and that inadequate infrastructural related services negatively militate against the delivery of the required social services. As a result the people at the local governments cannot contribute meaningfully to the economic growth and development of the local government areas. The study therefore recommended that social services presently rendered should be renewed in such a way that the needs of the entire citizenry be adequately catered by making sure that enough resources is provided for the provision of the required social services. Also there is need for the federal government. State governments and non-governmental organization to be deeply involved in the provision of social services in the local government areas.

Keywords: Local Government, Social Services, Local Administration, Development Administration, Administrative System, Centralization, Political And Economic Development
INTRODUCTION

In most of the African Countries the responsibility of providing essential social services and bringing about development to the rural dwellers has been delegated to the local government councils. Social services represented services which are official to individuals, groups or communities either by the government or by non-governmental agencies in order to cope with social problems and to enhance the welfare of the people individually and collectively and are justified outside the free-market mechanism. It is those services provided to foster integration and discourage alienation among the members of society.

In pre-colonial Nigerian society for example, the nature of social services delivery evolved to cope with societal needs varied from some ethnic groups to another and were tempered by the existing social structure. Ethnic and religious heterogeneity mediated the social services delivery system differently, as the Islamic and clientele system of Hausa, the much egalitarian system of the Igbo’s and the much extended family system of the Yoruba’s varied (Olowu, 1980). The old region of the East, West and North, as a result of different levels of development traversed different paths to strengthen their system of local administration for effective social services delivery (Okoli, 2004).

The colonial experience brought along its trails, and increased rate of urbanization and industrialization, which combined to undermine the extended family system that previously ensured the provision of social services in many traditional society (Nwoba, 2011). The colonial social service act of 1940 focused more on child labour (children under 14 years). The 1945 ordinance emphasized free education service for the disabled and a disables register was opened in 1955. The 1942 act focused on the establishment of boy’s club in order to prevent delinquency (Olowu, 1980). The missionaries activities especially in the furthenance of education as an instrument of social change and a prerequisite for religious conversion further jettisoned the traditional values on which the traditional social services were built (Nwoba 2011).

The missionaries were however, the initial cornerstone of the early social services delivery in Nigeria, especially in relation to healthcare and education of most people in Nigeria outside Lagos (Olowu, 1988). The military intervention and civil war in Nigeria led to a creation of a new class of beggars and displaced people, the interstate and intercity transport and communication, which has led to greater urban concentration, and the declaration of 1979 as the international year of the child has direct consequences for the development of social policy and social services delivery in Nigeria. The guidelines of the third National development plan in Nigeria (1979-1980) indicated five areas of federal government policy in respect to social services, namely health, workers welfare, destitute, sport development and the promotion of cooperatives. In addition, the guideline of the forth National development plans identified some of the problems which have militated against the realization of social policy objectives to include low priority ranking accorded to the sector, lack of clear definition and conception of the real scope and meaning of the social services, shortage of qualified personnel, instability of constitutional arrangement and inadequate facilities for the provision of social services. The reason for the rapid growth of social services lies in the self-evidence fact that increasing social services is what really constitute “development” from the peoples viewpoint, individual, political
parties, or governments who seek popularity, political support or votes must patronize the populace through the most ambitious promise of social services provision (Nwoba, 2014). The Nigerian elections of 1979, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 were marked by competing promise among the political parties for social service provisions and indicates the trends in Nigeria and other countries socio-economic position (Nwoba, 2014).

Similarly, government has a commitment to providing basic services for all, the scarce fiscal and manpower resources available to government, coupled with the need for the rational planning and use of available resources often leads to extreme administrative centralization and a partial distribution of social services in favour of urban centres (Okol, 2008). The yearning of the masses of the people who still reside in rural areas and the fact that politics in these areas are the politics of social services availability, commits the government to decentralize administrative structure often seeing the local institutions as the agents of bringing development to the localities. Few governments have in fact, been able to reconcile this paradox of development administration. Other government continue to maintain a strongly centralized administrative system, or an excessively decentralized one while some others alternate the extremes of either type, depending on what is happening in the political and economic development.

Statement of the Problem

The provision of essential social services such as health, education, water, roads and housing has always been the responsibility of the federal, Regional or state and local Governments in Nigeria. It cannot be said yet that Nigeria has evolved a definite social policy such as obtained in Britain, Federal Republic of Germany, Nether lands, and the former soviet union for the provision of essential social services. In Nigeria, it is important to note that these services are not only economically unproductive activities directly but also that their provision has to be financed from the other sectors of the economy consequent upon the several limited resources available to governments and parastatals which provide these services. This is aggravated by constantly widening range of consumers in our cities with their phenomenal population growth and density, competition for financial resources allocation between the directly productive activities and these social services has become stiff (Nwoba 2014). The situation was worsened by what seems to be a general but erroneous belief in Nigeria that government has the sole responsibility of providing the comfort of all Nigeria. The individual is expected to contribute little or nothing in return. This widespread notion follow the ideas of sharing the national cake.

The primary objective of the 1976 local government reform has been to facilitate even development services at the grassroots level. But their capacity and effectiveness to achieve these goals and objectives are to a considerable extent circumscribed by how to segregate those social services from other that may be regarded as such, distinguish the effect or impact of local government from that of other governmental bodies and also determine the degree to which they complement or sub-vert each other, (Abonyi; 2012).Abonyi (2012 continued that the difficulty is all the greater not only because of the fact that many if not most of the kind of social services that have a direct bearing on the life of communities such as health Centres, dispensaries, roads and water supply are on the concurrent list of functions of state and local governments, but administrative conflicts arise due to a clash of opposing interests within the levels of
government. With regards to power struggle between the state government and local governments, conflict arises as to which level government is responsible for the provision of a particular type of social service or not. Most social services that have a direct bearing on the life of communities such as Health Centres, dispensaries, primary and adult education, roads and water supply are on the concurrent list of functions of state and local governments, enormous variation exist between and within states in the level to which local governments have been allowed to carry out such functions, and also between the needs, resources and capacity of urban and rural local governments. In contrast the beneficiary may weigh such decision as to which level of government is best qualified and positioned to provide a particular type of social service using non-market valuation technique such as pareto optimality, social cost verses social benefit conditions, and contingent valuation technique. Thus, the issue of using both levels of government into the provision of social services usually throws the beneficiary into a combat continuum of extremes as non of the government can be held responsible for inadequate provision.

The study seeks to evaluate the powers of the local governments in Nigeria for the provision of social services and how the state of infrastructure has effected the delivery of social services by local governments in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study
The broad objective of this study is to evaluate the powers of local governments in social services delivery in terms of the development of the people in the local government. Specifically, the study intends to investigate the extent to which local governments are empowered to deliver the required social services to the people.

Determine how the state of infrastructure has effected the delivery of the required social services.

Determine how inadequate provision of essential social services has effected the development of people living in the local government areas.

Theoretical Review
Service delivery at the locality level takes many forms and demands a corresponding breadth of responses. Making services accessible to the poor is integral to the effort to achieve the purpose to the poor is integral to the effort to achieve the purpose for the creation f local government. Basic government services allow people to be productive members of society, therefore, the provision of fundamentals like Agricultural support and irrigations, roads, health, and primary education are essential for accelerating the rate of development at the local governments (John, 2010). In recent decades, National Governments have increasingly shared the responsibility of service provision with the local government, in a variety of inter-governmental public arrangement that aim to increase the accountability and responsiveness of service delivery. In some cases, National Government find it difficult to develop and implement a coherent approach to decentralizing the delivering of public services (Okoli, 2008). The ministry of local government and chieftaincy matters may be able to guide decentralization initiatives through legislative hurdles, but it was not usual for sectoral ministries to reject the legislation (Onah, 2010). Onah, continued that the result was conflicting legislation and inconsistent implementation across sectors. The lag in the implementation of sound sectoral decentralization offer contributes to service outcomes that are far from what was expected.
Akhakpe and Kolawole (2010), continued that, where the national government is consistent and supportive of the legislation, the introduction of a sound local government system meets with other daunting challenges.

Furthermore, local governments also struggle to have their challenges placed on the national agendas. In many countries, meager resources are provided to the local governments and there are wide variations of resources and capacities among the local governments. These element present considerable obstacles to the effective analysis of common challenges and make it difficult to mounts effective communication and advocacy initiatives for the national policy and programme changes that could serve to strengthen local governments in their service provision roles (Duru, 2008). The structure of local governments is determined by the state only by virtue of state government legislation (Meneil, 1997). While this legislation varies from state to state in the 1990’s most Australian state moved from prescriptive legislation to enabling acts that allowed local government to determine in consultation with the local community what activities it could undertake. While state and federal governments have continued to manage most of the larger infrastructure and community services programme from a central framework, local government has continued to focus on these areas; community bridges and road, rubbish and water.

Additionally, the overall system of government in Australia have avowed with a growing recognition that in some cases, it is better to deliver social services through local governments given their proximity and relationship with their constituents (Chapman, 1997). Serder and Varsha (2008), posited that Ethiopians constitution, ratified in 1915, established the federal structure based on nine ethnic regional states and give the right to Secede (Article 39 of the constitution). They continued that the regional government are responsible for implementing economic and social development policies and for maintaining public order, including administering a police force, and the federal state is responsible for all powers not delegated to or shared with the region.

On the expenditure sides, Article 50, institute the principle of subsidiary by allocating service delivery responsibilities to the lowest level of government called the Woreds (Serder and Varsha, 2008). In 2001, the government of these decentralized four regions decided to move important sector or department (such as health, education, agriculture extension, water supply) form the zonal level to the Woreds level (Serder and Varsha, 2008). Nico (2005), posited that in Switzerland the general principle was that all tasks not under federal or cantonal rule fall to the municipalities. These principle, called subsidiarity, states that task has to be transferred to the higher level of government only if the lower level cannot, is no longer able to carry out this task (Nico, 2005).

In a similar development Nnaemeka (2010) assert that in the united state of America, local governments are that government that build market and motor parts, collect refuse, provide water, build culvert and community bridges, fight fire and breaks, pave street and clean them and educate children. Obi (2010), narrated that the structure of a local government system in Russia refers to the general principle of local self government organization in Russia federation of October, 2003. The new law however introduced a two tier model of local government which includes three types of municipalities (settlements eg Urban and Rural, municipal rayons and city.
Okrugs). Here, the local government of urban and rural settlement should be in change of such services as the supply of hot and cold water, water, disposal gas and fuel supplies etc. municipal rayon should pay less attention to powers that can be fully used by settlement to focus on inter-settlement powers that govern health-care, general and supplementary education and guardianship (Obi, Ibid).

Nwizu (2008), posited that in the Federal Republic of Germany municipalities right to self government includes cultural matters (eg Museums, theatres, sport facilities, and schools) and public services (eg the provision of water and power, waste disposal, abettors, cemeteries and hospital, as well as the maintenance of public roads and streets within a municipality. Districts consist of number of municipalities with the function of providing services more effectively through the pooling of resource and expertise.

**Empirical Review**

In evaluating the social services provided by the local governments administration in Nigeria, Samihah and Salibu (2012) carried out a study on “fiscal planning and local government Administration in Nigeria; the quest for sustainable social services Delivery”. The study critically examined local accountability in respect to budget and budgeting system in order to improve sustainable social services delivery at the local level. They adopted both survey and explanatory technique. The findings of the paper revealed that less than five percent (<5%) of the statutory allocation to the local government under consideration is being expended on social services while more than ten percentage (>10%) is used for personnel expenditure as the cost of delivering the social services. Prichared (2010), posited that local government is best place to engage with local communities in Nigerians to understand their needs, priorities and preferences in order to make well-informed choice about how resources should be spend in the best interest of local people in Nigeria. Okoli and Akume (2011) examined the application of inter-governmental (IGM) tools during Obasanjo Administration, (1999-1997). The work adopted a simple survey design and descriptive method of analysis. The result show that, the inability to organize at the aspect of governance has had a woeful outcome on the nations capacity to effectively put together the abundant resources nature has endowed for the good of its citizenry. The most insightful quantitative study was done by Mbanefo, Soyibo and Anyanwu (1998) when they conducted an econometric investigation odd women’s demand for health care service in Nigeria. Specifically, the survey was designed to identify both the patterns and determinants of public and private health service utilization by individuals. In addition, it ascertained individuals access to primary health care facilities and their healthcare seeking practices. Using multinomial logic estimation techniques, they obtained empirical result showed that the price of health care services, household income, travel time, age and road significantly affected the demand and access of women to health care facilities.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theory of expenditure limitation was utilized. This theory was propounded by Aaron Wildavsky in 2003. This theory is not about why government should choose to limit spending, the problem of expenditure limitation exist only when there is a public will but not yet a public way to hold down spending. The desire to limit spending, of course does not necessarily means that citizen or government dislike all or most or even any individual items of expenditure. They
may well like each and every one consider separately and yet dislike the total to which their desire adds up. The people preferences on total may well be at radiance with their preferences of individuals programme. Most expenditure is approved but total spending is disapproved. Reconciling these incapable demands constitutes the contemporary political problem of public spending.

The theory of expenditure limitations tells about the doctrine of opportunity cost which states that the value of an act in measured in terms of opportunity forgone. This means that the spending of government should be based on hierarchy of importance because when you spend less on other items. The theory supports the fact that more resources should be spent on productive sectors of the economy and less on unproductive sectors since the long run effect will be positive on the economy. Generally government regulations that impose financial burdens would not be viewed as desirable but would be balanced against the loss to the economy on which the size of the social services depends.

Methodology
This research work makes use of both descriptive and inferential statistical analytical methods to investigate the extent to which local government are empowered to deliver the required. Social service to the people. Face ands content validity was used, while internal consistency method was used to establish the reliability of study. The study was carried out on two selected local government areas in each of the three (3) sensational District of Ebonyi State. The researcher adopted cross-sectional survey research design in its method of analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Summary of the Amount Funded on Social Services by Ebonyi State LG Councils

Primary Education & Welfare Services
Figure 1 above presents the summary of the amount (in millions) which each of the six (6) selected LGAs in Ebonyi State had, over a period of 17 years, used to fund primary Education & Welfare services as required/demanded by their people. The state of empowerment of these LG Councils can therefore be deduced from the chart above. The least empowered LG Councils are Ezza North LG Council, Ivo LG Council and Ohaukwu LG Council. The amount committed to Education & Welfare by these LG Councils since the 17 years period has not been up to N500,000 whereas, other LG Councils like Abakaliki, Afikpo North and Ezza South had committed over N4m. Abakaliki LG Council alone had committed about N6,214,110 to primary Education & Welfare while Afikpo North LG Council had committed N6,154,281. Ezza South LG Council seemed to be the least among this category of LG Councils. It has so far committed N4,905,115.

To investigate the extant in which local government in Ebonyi State were empowered to provide social services, data were collected regarding the amount local government council and to fund social services with a seventeen (17) years period (1998 - 2014) were used. One way classified Anova test was used. The aim was to check whether local government councils, based on their finding patterns, are adequately empowered to deliver the acquire social services to the people. Table 1 Anova Test of Difference in Primary Education and Welfare Empowerment of the Local Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of square</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Seg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>2.223E15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.557E14</td>
<td>49.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>1.099E.15</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>1.133E13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.322E15</td>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nwoba’s field work, 2012

Table 1 and 2 above present one-way Anova test result on the empowerment of local government councils in delivering the required social services for the people. At 5% level of significance, it can be deduced that there in a significant (F=29.506; F = 49.047; P<0.05) difference in the local government councils empowerment toward delivering the required social services to the people. The result showed that there is significant different in the empowerment of the local governments in delivering the required social services. These explain the variation in the provision of social services by different local government and States in Nigeria.

Table 2 Summary Of The Opinion Of Respondent Regarding The State Of Roads, Electricity, Water, Basic Medicinal Facilities And Teaching Aid For The Provision Of Social Services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items on questionnaire</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agreed</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Road is bad, as a result people hardly visit primary health care centres</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inadequate water supply negatively effect social service provision.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>There is no specific equipment to treat people</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Power supply is hardly stable and</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
there is not even power generation plant
4 Bad road network is usually a problem and prevent parent from sending pupils to public school
5 Classroom Blocks are dilapidating
6 Sufficient teaching and non-teaching aid/materials
7 Primary health centres building blocks are dilapidated

Nwoba’s field work, 2012

Total strongly disagree = 335
Average strongly agreed = \( \frac{\text{total SA} - 335}{\text{No of items}} = 41.875 \)

Total Agreed = 429 = Average = \( \frac{\text{Total Agreed}}{\text{No of items}} = 53.625 \)

Total Disagreed = 327 = Average = \( \frac{\text{Total D/A}}{\text{No of item}} = 40.875 \)

Total undecided 190 = Average = \( \frac{\text{Total Undecided}}{\text{No of item}} = 23.75 \)

Total strongly disagree 211 = Average = \( \frac{\text{Total SD}}{\text{No of item}} = 26.375 \)

The above analysis shows that overall response of the respondent on whether roads, adequate power, supply, water, basic teaching and primary health centres facilities militate against delivery of social services across the six (6) selected Local governments areas in Ebonyi State. Those who agreed (41.875 + 53.625) compared to those who disagreed (40.875 + 26.375), it can be deduced that majority of the people (staff) captained strongly support that bad road, inadequate water supply, inadequate teaching aid and primary health facilities militate against the provision of required social services.

Findings
1. In the area of empowerment to deliver the required social services, it was deduced that the local governments are not adequately empowered to provide the required social services.

2. And there is variation in the funding of social services among the local governments and individuals in the study. These explain the variation in the provision of required social services and the gap noticed in the delivery of required social services.

3. That inadequate supply of teaching aid, water and power have negatively effected the delivery of required social services.

4. And the nature of roads in the local government areas forced parent to register their children in private schools near to them.

5. Based on the fact that the people in the local government area’s find it difficult to have access to basic essential social services the issue of growth and development become a different concept.

Recommendation

1. Local governments should be empowered and made capable to deliver the acquire social services needed by the people

2. Allocation of fund to local government should be increased and their tax base increase to enable them satisfy the demand of social service delivery by the people.

3. Social services provision expenditure should be seem as an investment in the public sector of the economy and not as a non-productive sector expenditure.

4. Investment in social services should be seen as investment in human capital which uses other resources for the provision of goods and services.

References


Nieo.S (2005) the place and role of local government in federal system cap town-kef-new publication.


Obi, E.A (2010) comparative local government An ecological approach, Onitsha, Book point Education Limited 360P.