

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

Ezo, Gabriel Oromena¹, Okereka O. P²

*^{1,2}Department of Political Science, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State

ABSTRACT

The purpose of local government is to bring development to the grassroots in every state of the federation. However, this purpose has not been completely achieved. Hence, the study examines Local Government and Community Development in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Government Areas of Delta State. In achieving the specific objectives of this study, two research questions and hypotheses were raised to determine the relationship between the variables. The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data, to generate the required data. Three hundred (300) copies of questionnaires concerning this topic were administrated to both male and females who were 18 years of age and above and it was gathered that majority of the people were not satisfied with the level of community development in their local government areas. The study adopted Marxist theory of the state as its theoretical framework and a cross-sectional research design was used in which the opinions of respondents are elicited. The Mean and Standard Deviation statistics was used to answer the research questions while The Chi-Square Statistical Tool was used to test the stated hypotheses. Based on the analysis of data, the study revealed among others that local government poor resource base, poor community relations are critical factors that affect the development of communities in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local government areas. Against all these findings, the study recommends among others that, the revenue base of the local governments should be increased, to enable the development potentials of the communities in the two local government areas. All office holders in the local governments should possess service ethics of transparency, accountability etc. finally, local government should be given full autonomy, as absence of external control over the local government would bring out their best performance.

KEYWORDS: Local Government, Development, Rural Development, Community Development

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of a people and their locality is fundamental hinged on a well, articulated and proactive measures that addresses the socio-economic problems that was encountered by people in their environment. This informed the decision to formulate policies and create viable infrastructures that have direct impact to the lives of people. (Agagu, 2020). The development of people in the rural areas is a significant idea that cannot be hampered with and as such need to be taken seriously. It was based on this notion that local government was created. Local government was established by constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria as the third tiers of government to address developmental issues at the grassroots level.. Local government in Nigerian context represents the third tier of governmental organization and provides the foundation upon which other structures of governance are created. It is a veritable agent of development and grassroots participation. Every political system has a process and a means of government at the grassroots and the whole essence is to affect the lives of the people (Ezeani, 2016). It is also evidently expressed by scholars, policy makers and critical stakeholders that the expediency for the establishment of local government stems from the need to facilitate development at the grassroots (Ikenga, Efebehi and Agah, 2020). All forms of government, regimes or political system have so far ensured the attainment of this goal. Such approach for ensuring national administrative development and political efficacy is found in the concept of local government (Chiedozie, 2021). Whatever is the mode of government; local government has been essentially regarded as pathway, and guarantor of national integration, administration and development (Gauba, 2020).Local government is defined as a unit of government established by law to exercise political authority through a representative council with a defined areas or space (Odalonu, 2021). With multiplicity of culture, diversity of languages and differentiated needs and means, the importance of such an organization in fostering the needed national consciousness, unity and relative uniformity as well as preservation of peculiar diversities cannot be over-emphasized. However, local governments are closer than any other levels of government to the vast majority of people who inhabit the rural areas. They are in a better position than federal and state governments to appreciate the real problems of the people and serve as the most effective agent for mobilizing the people for positive socio-economic and political development (Adeyemi, 2020)Central to the creation of local government, however, is its ability to facilitate an avenue through which government and the people intermix, relate and more quickly than any other means resolve or dissolve issues that may have heated the system (Okoli, 2020). The desire to catalyze balanced development, maximize citizen's participation, as well as the arousal of government response necessitates the agitation for local government creations. Local government serves as a type of

political and administrative structure with a view to facilitating decentralization, national integration, efficiency in governance and a sense of belongingness at the grassroots level. Local government is a unit of administration globally (Agagu, 2020). A local government is semi-autonomous territorial unit created by the constitution or general laws of a state to undertake certain functions within specified or limited geographical areas. These functions cannot be performed efficiently without sufficient fund generated by the local government to pursue development in the rural areas. Development is extremely linked with funds, much revenue is required to plan, implement and preserve infrastructures and facilities at the local government level. The feasibility for the formation of local government in the world stems from the need to facilitate progress at the grassroots. The importance of local government is a function of its capacity to generate sense of belonging, wellbeing and contentment among its populace (Fatile, 2020). All forms of government or political system have ensured the attainment of this goal. Such approach for ensuring national administrative development and political efficacy is found in the concept and practice of local government (Bello-Imam, 2020). A development oriented local government system is therefore expected to be a vehicle for the provision of goods and services which are necessary prerequisites for sustained development. According to Emezi and Oni, (2021), Local Government as a third tier of government are organized to maintain law and order provide social amenities and encourage cooperation and participation of inhabitants in improving their living conditions at the grassroots level. Every local jurisdiction has its unique economic, social and physical characteristics and its historical tradition which are better understood by its people. Hence, local governments are created to provide the services which the federal and state governments cannot easily undertake due to their remoteness in the rural areas (Uhunmwangho and Epelle, 2020). The significance of the above definition stemmed from the need to extremely underscore on the living standards of subsistence population through effective mobilization and allocation of resources to achieve extraordinary and desirable stability over times between the welfare and dynamic services available to rural people. Rural development is mainly concerned with enhancement and transformation of social, mental, economic, institutional and environmental conditions of low income dwellers through the enlistment and rational utilization of their human, natural and institutional resources aimed at improving their capacities to cope with tasks of life and demands of contemporary times (Okoli and Onah, 2020). Rural development involves multi-sectorial activities including advancement in agriculture, promote of rural industrial actions and the establishment of appropriate decentralized structures that fosters mass participation in development process. Rural development is faced with the paradox that the production oriented rural economy relies heavily on non-productive people who are all ill-equipped with outdated tools, technical information, scientific and cultural training and whose traditional roles and access to resources pose significant threat to their effective incorporation into modern economics systems (Onibokun, 2019). Hence, The local government is created to serve the rural communities, and it is expected to mobilize and harness local resources to ensure effective utilization for the advancement and development of the local populace. It is against this backdrop, that this study examined local government administration and rural development from 2012-2022, using Ethiope East and Isoko North Local government areas.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Local government administration in rural areas is often seen as the service provider to the grassroots people in both democratic participation and rural development. If substantial proportions of the rural people are served and are satisfied with the local government performance, then it is said that they have done well. The people can only be expected to give pass mark to their local governments if range of services and amenities are quantitatively and qualitatively met (Akinede, 2020). Local government is often seen as an institution, where democracy could be best tested. This in a plural society could meet the needs and aspirations of the constituent units that make up the nation. This is exactly one of the constituent units which make up the nation. This is exactly one of the increasing roles of the local government in Nigeria today (Mukoro, 2019). The expectation of the citizenry is one thing and living up to these expectations by the local government is another. The Nigerian position shows that there is a wide gap between the expectations of the people through what the local governments are able to offer besides in the area of community relations, the local government has recorded mixed results for instance, there has been a growing incidence of ethno-communal clashes and conflict in much local government across the country. In some local governments, the interest of the community is virtually delinked from all government policies and programmes. Rural development has generally been an abysmal failure in most local government; effort to improve the situation has been further compounded by the level of corruption, mismanagement of resources, poor community mobilization, undue interference by the state government and the near un-cordial relationship between the leadership of the local government and members of the communities (Akinede, 2020). It is against this backdrop that study intend to address by examine local government administration and the development of Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Government Areas in Delta State

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this paper is to examine local government and community development in Delta state. The specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the impact of Local Government Poor Community Relations on the development of Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments Areas in Delta State.
- ii. determine the effect of Local Government Poor Resource Base on the Development of Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments Areas in Delta State.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guide the study:

- i. To what extent has the impact of Local Government Poor Community Relations affect the Development of Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments Areas in Delta State?
- ii. To what extent has the effect of Local Government Poor Resource Base affect the Development of Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments Areas in Delta State?

5. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following research hypotheses are formulated to guide the study:

H_01 : There is no significant relationship between Local Government Poor Community Relations and the Development of Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Government Areas in Delta State.

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between Local Government Poor Resource base and the Development of Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Government Areas in Delta State.

6. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Local Government

Local government as an entity with the following characteristics, a given territory and population, an institutional structure for legislative, executive and administrative purposes, a separate legal identity, a range of powers and functions authorized by delegation from the appropriate central or intermediate legislative and within the ambit of such delegation. Effiom (2020) describes local government "as the breaking down of the country into smaller units or localities for the purpose of administration in which the inhabitants of the different units or localities concerned play a direct and full part through their elected representatives who exercise powers and undertake under the general authority of the state or National Government. Wada and Aminu (2021), notes that local government must have specific power to perform a range of function assigned by law. It must also enjoy substantial autonomy to perform array of functions, plan, formulate, and execute its own policies, programs and projects and its own rules and regulations as deemed for its local needs. Mgbachi (2020), notes that local government can be defined as a political sub-division of a nation which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affair including the power to impose taxes or exert labour for prescribed purpose. Agba (2021) expresses that local government is a third tier administrative structure created in Nigeria to decentralize governance and bring government closer to the people at grassroots and render social services necessary to engender national development. According to Emezi (2021) local government as a system of local administration under local communities that are organized to maintain law and order, provide some limited range of social amenities and encourage cooperation and participation of inhabitants towards the improvement of their conditions of living. Odalonu (2021), defined local government as a unit of government established by law to exercise political authority through a representative council with a defined area or space. Agagu (2020) on his account defines local government as the government by the popularly elected bodies charged with the administrative and executive duties in matters concerning the inhabitant of a particular district or place. Fajobi (2021) admits that local government is a political authority under state for decentralizing political power and delegation of authority. Wraith (1964), refers to local government as that government with elected council whose main purpose is to provide services with great degree of independence. The National Guidelines for Reform of Local Government (1976) defines local government as: Government at (the) level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. These powers should give the councils substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal governments in their areas and to ensure through active participation of the people and their traditional institutions that local initiatives and responses to local needs and conditions are maximized.

7. DEVELOPMENT

The concept of development has numerous definitions. Some defined development as an act while view it as a process. Development is simply a process which creates growth, progress, positive change or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social as well as demographic components. To Todaro, Smith and Ering (2019), is a multidimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic and social system. On his part, Ottong (2020) defined development as the act of creating conditions conducive to growth of people's self-esteem through the establishment of social, political as well as economic systems and institutions, which promote human dignity and respect. He stated further that it implies increasing access to better life and the freedom to choose by enlarging the range of choices available. In the words of Ekong (2021), development is a process of social change in which the people of a community organize themselves for planning and action, define their common and individual problems, and execute these maximum of reliance upon the resources of the community. According to Todaro, Smith and Ering (2019) development is a process of improving the quality of all human lives, such improvement may include raising people's living levels (e.g. income, consumption, education, medical services etc.) via relevant economic growth processes. Cockcroft (2014) stated that it is extremely helpful to maintain the optimistic value placed on the term development and see development as first of all the getaway of man out of the circumstances of exploitation, poverty and oppression. Olaoye (2021) noted that development is the method by which people generate and recreate themselves and their life conditions to realize higher levels of civilization in accordance with their own choice and values. David and Olayede (2020) avers that development involves changes in the basic institution and structures of society. Rodney (1972) sees development in human society as sided process. To him at the level of the individual it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing. He further argued that some of these indicators are completely moral categories and are very difficult to evaluate. For him at the level of social groups it implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships. Development can be defined as bringing about social change that allows people to achieve their human potential. It is the attainment of socioeconomic and political increase in the society. Developments over the years have been conceived as a process of economic and social changes with the aim of achieving better life. Schumpeter (1974) disagreed with the mere use of economic indicators as recorded growth of output and income to indicate economic growth. For him the economic growth indicated by such factors or indicators are mere changes in data. Seers (1972) noted that the questions to ask about a country's development are: What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? What has been happening to poverty?. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development; even if per-capita income doubted. No matter what may be said about development, it has become clear that the concept of development has undergone profound changes over the years. The very meaning of development has been altered from an almost exclusive pre-occupation with national income to a broader interpretation that encompasses the questions of poverty, inequality and unemployment

8. RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The concept of rural development in Nigeria lacks a unified definition as different scholars tend to view it from varying perspective. Some scholars look at rural development from the aspect of educational training like (Hinzen, 2021). Obinne (2020) perceives rural development to involve creating and widening opportunities for individuals to realize full potential through education and share in decision and action which affect their lives. Others like according to Olayide, Ogunfowora, Essang and Idachaba (2020) rural development as means for the provision of basic amenities, infrastructure, improved agriculture productivity and extension services and employment generation for rural dwellers. Olatunbosun (2020) and Ogunfiditimi (2021) view rural development from various perspectives. However, there is a consensus among them about the need for improvement in rural living conditions and standard of living of the rural populace. Olatunbosun (2020) states that rural development is based on the need to balance the pattern and direction of government for the benefit of both the urban and rural sectors and provide technical requirements for speeding up economic growth in the development. Adeyemo (2020) sees the concept of rural development to include resettling displaced communities or adopting new types of housing unit. He continues that rural development should include alongside land-use development, economic factors such as land carrying capacity for each area of farmland, irrigation improved farming method and finance. Lapalomebra (2021) notes that the whole phenomenon of rural development revolves around attempts by governments and people to address the basic factual problems bedeviling the rural areas in respect of basic needs such as safe and hygienic drinking water, the provision of primary health care, feeder road, electricity, schools and so forth. Any area that is without such things is backward and life in it, is certainly miserable and frustrating. Ibietan (2020) opines that rural development is concerned with the improvement of the living rural standards of the low-income people living in the rural area on a self-sustaining basis through transforming the socio-spatial structures of their productive activities.

Local Government Administration and Rural Development in Ethiope East Local Government

Local Government Administration refers to the process of governance, and management of both human and natural resources to promote development and socio economic well being of the people within the rural area. In the administration of local government, numerous public services are offered by government which includes; the provision of public utilities, security of life and properties, economic development of the rural dweller, enforcement of law and order. Our focus is on Ethiope East Local Government. (Adetoritse, 2020) posited that the delivery of public goods and services at the local government level or the grassroots is aimed at moving the standard of living of the people in rural areas to the provisions of basic amenities and social infrastructure for the people at the grass-root are key factors to the existence of any government. In any local government administration, the responsibilities of execution of projects are assigned to local government by constitution. Adeyemo, (2020) posit that the Nigeria Constitution assign responsibilities of infrastructural development to the three tiers of government, with states and local government playing the significant role of service delivery to the rural dwellers. Some of the services expected from local government administration includes; education, health, housing, pipe borne water, rural electricity, waste disposal services, roads, transportation and so on. (Binza, 2021). The Ethiope East Local Government is required to serve the public interest in areas of constructions of streets, roads, public markets, health care centres, drainages transportation, motor parks, building of primary schools, street lights (Diejomaoh & Eboh, 2021). In support of this, (Ugwuanyi & Chukwuemeka, 2020), stated that as agent of rural development, local governments are to use funds available to them by both federal and state government and their internally generated revenue to improve on the lives of the people within their areas of operations through initiation of developmental projects to the local government such as provision of access roads, water, and rural electrification. Apart from being a viable political and administrative organ for the transformation of rural communities, local governments also act as the training ground for grassroots democracy fundamental in national development (Agbodike, Igobokwe-Ibeto & Nkeh, 2020). In contrast to local government, (Rondinelli, 2017) defined local government administration as a form of deconcentration in which all subordinate levels of government within a country are agents of the central authority. Local administration is therefore a device established by either the state or federal government for the purpose of service delivery to the localities under its control. The sole administrator system and the caretaker committee of management established by both General Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha government are good examples of local administration. The essential features of local administration are as follows:

- i. It lacks substantive autonomy which makes it impossible for local agents to take any authoritative decisions which are binding on the citizens. It simply acts according to policy guidelines handed down to it by the central authority. The functions of the local body are not provided for in the constitution.
- ii. Local administration exists mainly to execute policies and programmes formulated by the central authority to which it is directly accountable.
- iii. The (central) federal or state government directly appoints and controls the staff of the local administration. The members of the local body are not elected representatives of the local people.
- iv. There exists a defined pattern of hierarchical control of powers and functions as channel of communication from the agents of local administration and vice versa, which the later adheres strictly
- v. Local administration lacks financial autonomy. The central or state government determines and control its finances (Ezeani; 2016).

In his critic of the government of the then Eastern Region of Nigeria (Ezeani, 2016), said that the use of central government officials in these roles, by limiting the financial and executive powers and functions of local government. To the whims of the federal government, in taking over control of staff serving local government and assuming the main financial responsibility for local government services; Eastern Nigeria from independence practiced a veiled form of integrated administrative decentralization with the so called local government serving as a mere arm of the central government. It is this reason that (Wraith; 1964) who has written books on local government, had to change his book title from "Local Government in West Africa" to "Local Administration in West Africa" as what existed in West Africa was mere local administration rather than local government. Ezeani (2016) stated that local government can facilitate rural development, in their role and its given statutory functions in the following areas;

Economic Sector: The bulk of the population live in the rural area hence every economic development measure should take special note of rural dwellers and their challenges. Local governments should be involved in economic planning and execution both at the state and federal level. That way, they stand a better chance of mobilizing their people to support government policies, and as well create jobs for their teeming population.

Health Sector: The state of most health centres in rural area are deplorable. There is scarcity of drugs, medical

equipment and manpower. Due to the lack and scarcity of drugs at local government health centres, most rural dwellers resort to trado-medical practices, and some have been victims of fake drugs sold by most local chemist and medicine shop in the rural community.

Transportation and Communication: Local government should construct and maintain local roads as this will ease the problem of transportation and make the rural area accessible. They can also set up mass transit to check the high cost of transportation. In the area of communication, efforts should be made to encourage the Global Service providers to provide network and connect the rural area to enable easy communication for the rural dwellers.

Agricultural Sector: Apart from crude oil as the main source of Nigeria economy, agriculture remains the main source of the country economy as majority of the rural dwellers generate their income from it. Nigeria government should improve the agricultural sector, by improving farming, mechanized farming, helping the farmers with soft loans, supporting them with tractors, improved seedlings, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and farm implements for planting, weeding and harvesting operations. And seminars and workshops to train farmers on best agricultural practices.

Security: Security of lives and properties is very important for rural development. 'When resources are kept for security, then there would be peace in the rural areas which makes investors to invest in such communities and it will bring development to the people in those area and the state and nation at large.

The local administrators should ensure that security votes and resources meant for security are properly managed. Industries would like areas that are peaceful and secured and this contributes to rural development; industries such as Garri processing plants, rice milling factories, palm oil processing plants, fishing hatchery and livestock will bring more development to rural area and it would provide employment to the people and empower them financially. And rural development will be achieved. Therefore, it is pertinent to say that the Ethiope East Local Government has not done well in terms of providing the necessary support for rural development. The local government receives monthly and statutorily allocations from the federal government couple with the internally generated revenue still yet, there is darkness beclouding nearly if not all communities. The level of encroachment by the state government is so alarming and precarious and as such needs urgent review of the existing laws to enable the local government to have freedom to embark on fundamental and essential services to the rural dwellers.

Local Government Administration and Rural Development in Isoko North Local Government

Isoko North Local Government have not been up and doing in terms of effective local government administration to the rural areas and the grassroots. This is evident in the poor state of its environment, deteriorating public school buildings, poor market facilities and lack of health centres and drugs in some health centres, as well as poor roads and public utilities within the jurisdiction of the local government.(Diejomaoh & Eboh, 2021) The failure of local governments in local administration was expressed by ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo in 2003. He lamented that what we have witnessed is the total failure of local governments' system .Local government and rural development is a broad term covering the basic facilities and services needed for rural communities and development (Asaju, 2021). It is designed as the totality of basic physical facilities upon which other economic activities in a system depend. (Binza, 2021). Local government administration comprises the assets needed to provide people with access to economic and social facilities and services such as roads, drainage, bridges, electricity etc Local government at the grass root level of administration is meant for meeting the peculiar needs of the rural dwellers (Adetoritse, 2020) in his analysis, he viewed local government as a level of government that is supposed to have great impact on the people in rural areas. It is a tier of government which is closest to the rural people and saddled with the responsibility of guaranteed political, social and economical development of its people (Enero, Dadoyin and Elumilade, 2021).Apparodai (2013) observed that there are problems that are local in nature and such problems are better handled by local government, because they are better understood by the people themselves. Based on the 1976 guidelines for local government reform, it is expected that Local government should engage in rural infrastructural development and good governance at the grass root level. Unfortunately, local government still lacks behind in the area of infrastructure, like pipe borne water and environmental sanitation rural road access and electricity in Isoko North Local Government. According to World Bank (2004) Nigeria's infrastructure in terms of quality and quantity is grossly inadequate and inferior to that existing in other parts of the world. Out of 102 countries assessed in the global competitiveness report in 2004, Nigeria's quality of infrastructure was ranked 3rd to the last, this is consistent with the World Bank survey results where manufacturing firms listed infrastructure as their most severe business constraint. The Nigerian roads were described as the lowest in density in Africa, where only 31 % of the roads are paved as compared to 50% in the middle income countries, and even where road 5 are provided, only 40% of these roads can be said to be in good condition (Odoh, 2019). Currently only 20% of Nigeria's rural population have access to electricity.The poor local government

administration has so much effect on the rural dwellers as during rainy season, because there are no drainages leading water directly to the swamp and rivers around the environs, there is flooding and most time the people are driven out of their houses and most times some buildings collapsed due to flooding. Farms are also overtaken by flood and crops are destroyed. Due to lack of electricity in the rural area, most health facilities lack qualified and certified nurses.

9. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts Marxist Political Economic Theory as it's framework of analysis. The State in Marxian Political Economic Theory continues to be an instrument of exploitation and class dominance. To this end, Marx argues that as the masses became poorer and more numerous, the capitalist became fewer and controlled greater concentration of the means of production, whose full productiveness they throttled back for their own gain (Mazi and Mbah 2006). Marxist begin with the notion that the state came about with the consolidation of the power of the bourgeoisie. The state came into existence as a special apparatus of coercion, immediately society was divided into antagonist classes the oppressed and the oppressors. Social division into classes arose and took firm root; the state also arose and took firm root within society (Lenin 1985).

- 1) The state is seen as an apparatus for the oppression of one class by another class, a machine for holding in obedience to one class by another class, other subordinated classes.
- 2) The state is seen as the autonomous force outside society to protect the interest of bourgeoisie.
- 3) The concept of class struggle plays a central role in understanding society's allegedly inevitable development from bourgeois oppression under capitalism
- 4) Actions and human institutions are economically determined. The Marxist builds on a materialistic understanding of societal development taking as its starting point to necessary economic activities required to satisfy the material needs of human society.

This theory is relevant to this study as it enables the study to investigate the contributions of local government administration and rural development in Ethiope East and Isoko North local government area of Delta State, from 2012 to 2022. Applying the theory to the study the issues raised by the theory, it enables the researcher to study the politics, interest and social relationship that characterize rural development. As noted by Tenuche & Ogwo (2021), the fundamental exploitative relations between the Nigeria elite classes who designed and implement development programmes and rural poor masses guarantee that rural development programmes and policies have the likelihood to consolidate the predominant class and exploitative interests of their imperialist collaborators. The assumption that the rural communities cannot identify their felt needs is an example of an opportunity for exploitation. Some of the policy efforts made so far includes Agricultural Development Programmes, Rural Infrastructural Development Programmes, Rural Banking and Credit Guarantee Scheme, Transportation Schemes, Health Care Delivery Schemes, educational Programmes that are rural driven, Low cost Housing Schemes, Gender Development Policies and other poverty alleviation programmes.

10. RESEARCH METHOD

The study is quantitative and as such the cross-sectional design was adopted. In this type of research design, the researcher has no control over the variables from which the opinions of the respondents are elicited. It enables hypothesis to be tested empirically and logical conclusion can be generalized from the sample used for the study. Therefore, the cross sectional design is adequate for the study because of the nature of the topic under-studied. The population for this study consists of Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Government Areas. The estimated population of Ethiope East is 200,792 people and Isoko North Local Government is 143,559 people according to National Census Figure 2006. Therefore the total population for the two local government areas is estimated to be Three Hundred and Forty four Thousand, Three Hundred and Fifty One (344, 351) inhabitants. The researcher adopts the stratified simple random sampling technique in order to get representative opinion of the people of Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Government Areas. A sample population of 300 respondents was used for this study and 150 respondents were randomly selected from 2 groups in each local government giving a total of 300. According to Harper (1977) "Stratification lessens the possibility of inaccurate assessment: therefore, the subject was randomly selected from the stratified group of civil servants, community leaders, youth's organizations, civil society groups, women group and others. The questionnaire and interview methods were used to collect primary data for this study. In this study a close ended type of questionnaire in which exhaustive question were asked and a broad range of answer were provided for the respondent to choose from. The simple percentage statistical tool was used to analyze the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the research questions were equally provided with quantitative answers by using mean and standard deviation descriptive statistics and the Chi-square statistical tool was used to test the stated hypothesis

11. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

All research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. The decision rule states if the calculated mean ≥ 2.50 then the item is accepted otherwise rejected. This rule will be used to answer all research questions.

Research Question 1: To what extent have local government poor community relations affect the development of rural areas in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments?

Table 4.6: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis showing local government poor community relations affect the development of rural areas in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments

Mean analysis presented in table 4.6, revealed that the calculated mean of all research items 1-4, 3.03, 3.10, 3.40

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	SD (2)	D (1)	Total	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
1		150 (600)	50 (150)	60 (120)	40 (40)	300 (910)	3.03	1.72	Accepted
2		160 (640)	40 (120)	70 (140)	30 (30)	300 (930)	3.10	1.77	Accepted
3		200 (800)	40 (120)	40 (80)	20 (20)	300 (1020)	3.40	1.01	Accepted
4		150 (600)	60 (180)	50 (100)	40 (40)	300 (920)	3.07	1.70	Accepted

and 3.07 are greater than the decision mean 2.50, therefore all research items are accepted.. This affirmed that local government poor community relations affect the development of rural areas in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments

Research Question 2: To what extent Local Government poor resource base affect rural development in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments?

Table 4.7: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis showing Local Government poor resource base affect rural development in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	SD (2)	D (1)	Total	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
1		160 (640)	40 (120)	80 (160)	20 (20)	300 (940)	3.13	1.71	Accepted
2		150 (600)	50 (150)	90 (180)	10 (10)	300 (940)	3.13	1.73	Accepted
3		140 (560)	60 (180)	60 (120)	40 (40)	300 (900)	3.00	1.68	Accepted
4		200 (800)	20 (60)	70 (140)	10 (10)	300 (1040)	3.37	1.46	Accepted

Mean analysis presented in table 4.7, revealed that the calculated mean of all research items 1-4, 3.13, 3.13, 3.00 and 3.37 are greater than the decision mean 2.50, therefore all research items are accepted.. This affirmed that Local Government poor resource base affect rural development in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments.

Hypothesis H1: There is no significant relationship between local government poor community relations and development of rural areas in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments

Table 4.9: Summary table of Chi-square analysis showing the relationship between local government poor community relations and development of rural areas in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local governments

Responses	Total	Df	X^2 - cal.	X^2 -crit.	Level of sig.	Decision

SA	660	9	33.64	16.92	0.05	Rejected
A	190					
SD	220					
D	130					

Chi-square analysis details presented in table 4.9 above revealed that Chi-square (χ^2) calculated value of 33.64 is greater than Chi-square (X^2) critical value of 16.92 at 0.05 level of significance, hence hypothesis two which states that there is no significant relationship between local government poor community relations and development of rural areas in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between local government poor community relations and development of rural areas in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments

Hypothesis H₂: There is no significant relationship between local government resource base and the development of rural areas in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local Governments

Table 4.10: Summary table of Chi-square analysis showing the relationship between local government resource base and the development of rural areas in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local governments

Responses	Total	Df	X^2 - cal.	X^2 -crit.	Level of sig.	Decision
SA	650	9	70.02	16.92	0.05	Rejected
A	170					
SD	300					
D	80					

Chi-square analysis details presented in table 4.10 above revealed that Chi-square (χ^2) calculated value of 70.02 is greater than Chi-square (X^2) critical value of 16.92 at 0.05 level of significance, hence hypothesis three which states that there is no significant relationship between local government resource base and the development of rural areas in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local governments is rejected. This signifies that there is a significant relationship between local government resource base and the development of rural areas in Ethiope East and Isoko North Local governments

12. DISCUSION OF FINDINGS

The study has examined local government administration and rural development in Ethiope East and Isoko North local government area of Delta State. The results of the analysis reveals among other things that rural development in Ethiope East and Isoko North local government area is below bar. This position has been supported by the results of our hypothesis. In hypothesis 1, the researcher was interested in establishing whether there is a significant relationship between poor Local government poor community relations and the development of Ethiope East and Isoko North local government areas. The result of the calculated chi-square (χ^2) of 33.64 was discovered to be greater than that of the critical value of 16.92 at alpha or significant level of 0.05%. In the second hypothesis, the researcher was interested in establishing whether there is a significant relationship between local government poor resources base and the development of Ethiope East and Isoko North local government area. The result of the calculated chi-square value (χ^2) of 70.02 is greater than that of the critical χ^2 value of 16.92 at alpha or significant level of 0.05%. This shows that there is a significant relationship between local government poor resource base and development of Ethiope and Isoko North local government area of Delta State. In the third hypothesis, the researcher was interested in establishing whether there is a significant relationship between state government interference and the development of Ethiope East and Isoko North local government area. The result of the calculated chi-square value (χ^2) of 43.55 is greater than that of the critical χ^2 value of 16.92 at alpha or significant level of 0.05%. The research result is therefore, stated that there is a significant relationship between state government interference and the development of Ethiope East and Isoko North local government areas of Delta State. These findings are in line with the study of other scholars, for instance, Onabanjo, 2020 and Abiona, (2019) assert that community relations have been a veritable tool for mobilizing and integrating people into contributing meaningfully to the growth of their areas in particular and the process of national development in general. This awareness has led many communities to embark on activities that could transform their local and rural environment into urban and better developed settings. Akinyemi, 2021) also added that poor community relations have been noticed to have impeded community development efforts in most local government.

On the other hand, the result of the third hypothesis contradicts the popular assumptions that undue state interference has been the bane of development at the local government level. Most respondents interviewed refute this assumption. They noted that while it is not untrue that the state government interference with local government funds, most leadership at the local government are inherently selfish, corrupt and lack vision for the development of the local government. Their lack of vision and clear concept of public service ethics has made most local government leadership not to properly harness local resources. Most respondents aver that the leadership of local government is only interested in lining their own pockets and as such most of them have used the excuse of state interference not to plan, mobilize and harness available resources for the development of the grassroots areas,

13. CONCLUSION

One of the major problems of the developing nations is to achieve reasonable level of development especially at the rural level, which is the grassroots. In this case, the achievement of the very vital level of development must be a focus, which local government directs a good portion of its contribution. This is especially so when it is recognized that local sentiments and local attachment are usually strong at the local level. It is our conclusion that if the local government system is well coordinated, it will be in a far better position than the national government to stimulate initiatives, inculcate feelings of national consciousness and encourages drive to development. The local government can more easily identify available local skills, interest and abilities and capitalize on developing them.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were made:

All office holders in the two local governments should have a public service ethics of transparency, accountability and a commitment to ensure efficient service delivery.

- 1) There should be proper auditing of local government accounts and any government that is culpable should be made to face the full weight of the law and adequate punishment for offenders.
- 2) Local government should be given full autonomy, as absence of external control over local government would bring out their best. While state or federal government intervention would be accommodated by local governments, the process should be followed and guided following provision of the constitution of federal republic of Nigeria

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