

Promoting and Sustaining Good Governance at the Local Government Level in Benue State of Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper has focused on the areas of seemingly insurmountable problems facing good governance at the Local government level and the way out. These include financing, Staffing, central Local government relations, Politics and Political Leadership. The main concern of the paper is about the democratization of governance in Nigeria, at large and Local government in particular. This explains the quest for greater autonomy in the workings of the Local government system. This involves, especially changing the provisions in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria that pertain to Local Governments, in order to make them a third tier of government. However, this paper has also emphasized the need to exercise some level of control and accountability over the workings of the Local Government System. For Local Governments are not Sovereign entities from states and the Federal Government. Given the wide spread corruption and mismanagement at the local government level, it behoves on the state governments to strengthen the office of the Auditor-General of Local Government and the Local Government Service Commission which should be a part of the 1999 Constitution. This paper emphasizes that the balancing of autonomy of local governments with control by the state governments is the solution of the challenges of promoting and sustaining good governance at the local government level in Nigeria.

Introduction

Good governance, principally has to do with a governance that meets the basic material and social needs as well as the aspirations of the generality of the people, within a given state. It is not just about ideas and philosophies in people's heads. Good governance has to do with producing the goods and services that bring quality to the lives of the majority of the people. This entails ensuring growth in the productive forces, especially science technology and Industrialization, so as to produce what people need and equity in the distribution of the basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, potable water, education, good health and law

and order. Given the immense endowment of natural resources and labour power in Nigeria, the country should have been in a position to produce the goodies that uplift the material and social lives of the people

Since good governance has to do with the generality of the people in a state, there are certain features of the state and its governance that guide an understanding of what it is. They include freedom of choice, respect for rule of law, equality before the law, promotion and defence of human rights, accountability of the leadership to the followership, and periodic, free and fair elections. Since independence in 1960, in varying degrees, the Nigerian democratic experience has been closely linked with the background of the general endemic poverty and deprivations that have been the lot of most Nigerians that have to be done away with. This paper is not going to delve much on the background history of the political economy that has promoted bad governance. Our main concern is going to be on how to promote and sustain good governance through the instrumentality of local government.

The Role of Local Government in Good Governance

In Nigeria at large and Benue State in particular, most people live and work in the rural areas. It follows therefore that local government as the closest level of government to the people is expected to be more effective and efficient than the states and the federal government in catering for the basic needs of the generality of the people. It is clearly understood that there are obviously difficulties of undertaking a wide variety of government functions from the headquarters of states and the federal government. Given the high level of illiteracy, poor communications and transport and a high attachment to different communities, local governments are expected to decongest government in the headquarters. This is expected to not only bring the government closer to the people, but also ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness in administration and service delivery (Sorkaa, 2014).

A key role of local government in the promotion and sustenance of good governance has to do with its being an instrument for development. Emphasis is laid on local government as a tool for national development because of the assumption that small units of government promote grassroots participation of the people in development activities that are their priority. It is expected that within the people's small communities, they have the initiative, and the enthusiasm to adopt and enrich national policies. Understandably, this is bound to make the development plans of the federal government and states more realistic to the local needs of the people.

Today, a major challenge facing good governance has to do with the issue of securing lives and property in Nigeria and many believe that local governments could be a key instrument in assisting the federal and state governments to maintain law and order in the society. One tends to accept the position of Enyi, (2014) that local governments are better placed than states and the federal government in the promotion of law and order. This is said to be so because the local people are assumed to have more knowledge of their communities and with the involvement of traditional rulers, much can be achieved in ensuring law and order. This was the main approach by the British colonial government in Nigeria, under the Native Authority system. In fact, there are so many ways by which local governments could contribute to good governance like providing for political education as well as enhancing democracy at the grassroots level of the society. It makes people in the rural areas aware about happenings in government and they are in a better position to supporting government policies and programmes. Equally important is to realize that local government is a training ground for higher public offices. In Nigeria, there are notable examples of prominent political leaders who had experience at the local government level as a way to political leadership at higher levels. The Sardauna of Sokoto, Ahmadu Bello, Tafawa Balewa, Aper Aku and Shehu Shagari among many others were former local government top functionaries.

Clearly, therefore, local government can be promoted and sustained to be a key tool of good governance for overall national development in the following ways:

...It is principally expected to be an instrument for reducing the delays that are typical of the centralization of power, an instrument for realization of grassroots participation in politics, national unity, the development of leadership at the local level; a communication channel between the government and the people; and above all, a mechanism of socio-economic and political change at the local levels of Nigeria (Sorkaa, 2023).

The promotion and sustenance of good governance through the instrumentality of local government is surely bound to usher in national development in Nigeria at large, and Benue State, in particular for the good of all and sundry.

Promoting and Sustaining Good Governance at the Local Government Level

We have already looked at the importance of promoting and sustaining good governance at the local government level. What we intend to do

next is to briefly take a look at the history of the workings of the local government system in Nigeria, regarding the promotion and sustenance of good governance. We intend to show how the general perspective points more towards a situation of bad governance within the workings of the local government system in Nigeria and how we can therefore promote and sustain good governance so as to remedy the failures of the past, in varying degrees. The following areas are going to guide the analysis and they include, the 1999 Nigerian Constitution and The Benue State Local Government Law 2007, The Financing of Local Governments, The Staffing of Local Governments, Central Local Government Relations and Political Leadership and Politics in the Local Government.

The 1999 Constitution and the Benue State Local Government Law 2007

To Alabi, (2018), the Nigerian 1999 Constitution appears to make provision for autonomy and fiscal relations in Section 7 and 8 of the Constitution but also introduced overlapping incongruence, especially in Section 7 (6b) and Section 8 (5 and 6). The above raises fundamental questions on the actual locus of power on local government creation. Ijohor (2012) is of the same opinion that the 1999 constitution of Nigeria has not made elaborate constitutional provision on local government administration. The 1999 Nigerian Constitution provides comprehensive legislative lists for both the federal and state legislative houses but not for local government legislatures. This is bound to affect good governance.

To carry out its statutory roles, the 1999 Constitution provides local governments with the responsibilities in Section 7, 8, 162 (SS4-8), the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution as amended and in the Benue State Local Government Law 2007 and Guidelines. Unfortunately, some of the provisions of the foregoing are subject to manipulations that have led to treating local governments as an appendage of the state, rather than a third tier of government within a federal structure in Nigeria. This is why Alabi (2018:40) says that:

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria created fundamental contradictions, confusion and ambiguity that have been so exploited to decimate the local Government and subsequently made them appendages to the apron of the state government, so much so that in some states they are mere extensions of the state Ministry of Local Governments.

Infact, a clear case of the creation of the contradictory environment by the provisions of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria on the local government system that has warranted greater control of its activities by the state can

be deduced from Section 7(1) of the Constitution which says that:

The system of local government by democratically elected local government council is under this constitution guaranteed; and accordingly, the government of every state shall subject to section 8 of this constitution, ensure their existence (BSLG Law, 2007) under a law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions of such councils.

But the same constitution in Section 7(6) submits that "the National Assembly shall make provisions for statutory allocation of public revenue to local government councils in the federation". The confusion and contradictions of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria are further heightened by the provisions of the same constitution which says in the provisions of Section 7(6) (b) that "the House of Assembly of a State shall make provisions for statutory allocation of public revenue to local government councils within the state". This clearly shows that Section 8 (subsection 5 and 6) have provided the State Assemblies with functions to exercise excessive control over local governments in Nigeria, including state laws and guidelines that undermine them as a third tier of government. Infact, the erosion of the powers and functions of local government that have undermined good governance in Nigeria are further reinforced in Section 162(6) of the constitution which establishes the State Local Government Joint Account for the purpose of payment of all allocations to the local government councils of the state from the Federation Account and from the State government. The aim of this provision is to prevent the problems of reckless spending within local governments so as to have transparency and accountability in the management of the finances of local governments. However, to Roberts, (2018 p.2) "the joint account framework has been particularly vulnerable to abuse, with allegations that it is subject to routine manipulation by state governors at the expense of local development".

It shows that the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, together with the state laws and guidelines have led to excessive control over local governments in Nigeria. This has consequently compounded the administrative, Political and financial capacity of local governments to provide good governance. Furthermore, the 1999 Constitution by directing state governments to make laws on local governments puts them under the control of state governments. Today, in Benue State, you have the Benue State Local Government Law of 2007 for the control and supervision of Local Governments. A close look at the Local Government Law of 2007 could be used to manipulate the local governments and reduce them as appendages of the state government.

Section 62 of the Local Government Law 2007 provides that:

The Governor, with the approval of the House of Assembly may suspend a chairman of a Local Government on the occurrence of the following:

- (a) Failure to hold cash flow meetings at the council secretariat and the exclusion of council members from such a meeting.
- (b) Failure to obtain permission before travelling outside the state.
- (c) Failure to recourse to the budget before embarking on expenditure.
- (d) Absence from duty for over seven days consecutively without permission;
- (e) Failure to execute development projects where it is established that the local government is sound enough financially to do so.
- (f) Borrowing without the approval of the Governor (Ijohor 2012 p.163).

Furthermore, the Governor is given power under Section 86(1) of the law to issue written instructions, usually called financial memoranda (FM) "to ensure better control and management of the financial business of local governments in the state and for the regulation of the procedure of finances, tenders and General Purpose Committees". The Local Government Law 2007 of Benue State therefore shows a clear legal basis that could be used for excessive control over local governments in Benue State.

Financing Local Governments in Benue State

The success or failure and the effectiveness of local government in the final analysis rests largely on the financial resources available to them and especially, the way these are utilized and managed. The need therefore arises for local governments to have adequate finances to have the capacity to bring about good governance. What really matters is that the local governments should not only have the financial resources to deliver good governance, but that a substantial part of these funds are derived from internal revenue generation. This is expected to promote more autonomy for the local governments from the states and the Federal Government. This is why Enyi (2014 p.197), says that "The growing dependence of local governments on funds from the federation account (to the tune of 80% to 90%) has serious implications for local governments".

What has been common to most local governments in Nigeria is that of their being starved of funds that could be used for good governance deriving mainly from their excessive control by the state governments.

This is why Alabi, (2018) says that the state joint local government account has become one of the greatest tragedies that have befallen local governments in Nigeria. This is said to be because of the abuse and non-compliance with the relevant constitutional provisions that guide the operations of the state joint local government account. Especially irksome are the illegal and sundry deductions from local government funds.

Also, generally, there has been a non-compliance by state governments with the revenue allocation formula which stipulates that states should contribute 10% of their internally generated revenue to the joint account. Indeed, sometimes local governments may even be compelled to shoulder responsibilities of expenditure that normally should be the purview of Federal Government agencies, like the Police, Customs and Excise, Immigration and Electoral Commissions.

However, regarding the financing of local governments in Nigeria, I tend to emphasize and stress the fact that the main challenge and impediments to good governance deriving from that element has largely to do with inefficient financial management that lacks accountability. There is definitely the need for a more effective and efficient financial management system with emphasis on control and accountability within the workings of the local government system in Nigeria, so as to attain good governance. The popular demands for greater autonomy regarding financing local governments seems to be mainly a derivative from the assumed excessive control over local governments. But Edoh, (2018:103) says that "the apparent dishonesty and mismanagement of such funds paid to them directly in the past by some local governments, caution should be exercised". This means that the direct remittance of funds to local governments from the federation account has to be predicted on strict anti-corruption strategies and policies.

Staffing Local Government

The ability to have a local government system that promotes and sustains good governance has much to do with the availability of the staff with the requisite qualifications, experience, status and a high sense of integrity, dedication and commitment to duty is basic for an effective and efficient system, in that regard. Unfortunately, Enyi, (2014) emphasizes the general lack of experienced staff in the local governments in Nigeria with the required qualifications and experience to promote and sustain good governance. What is emphasized is the inability to recruit and retain staff who are sufficiently professionally qualified to man the different departments of a local government. There was the establishment of three

centres of learning for the training of intermediate and high level manpower for local governments in Nigeria at ABU, Zaria, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Enyi (2014) also believes that most of the local governments in Benue State are overstaffed with both junior and senior staff, most of who have no schedule of work. Most of the staff are said to be seen in the local government only on pay days. It shows that the bulk of the budgets of the local governments is mainly devoted to salary payments and overhead costs, particularly huge expenses of chairmen of councils and other political office holders. It clearly shows that the situation of staffing of the local governments in Benue State, in particular cannot promote good governance.

According to Orewa, (1991) it was the hitherto existing politicization, particularly and the general insecurity facing the staff of the local governments and the need to have a productive and contented service in the local governments that led to the establishment of the Local Government Service Commission. So a unified local government service had to be introduced with the onset of the local government reforms of 1976, in order to reduce the hitherto challenges facing staffing of local governments in Nigeria. Enyi, (2014) however makes a seemingly plausible point that top functionaries of local government, especially the elected chairmen need to have a say in the recruitment of their staff so as to facilitate effective implementation of their policies and programmes since they are representatives of the people. The quest by the top management of local government to be in-charge of the employment and discipline of their staff as is the case of the state and federal levels led to the Federal Government of President Babangida in 1990 allowing the chairmen of local government to appoint secretaries of their local governments as the heads of the administration. More significantly, when the presidential system of government was extended to the local government administration, the Local Government Service Commission was abolished. Unfortunately, the problems facing the staffing of local governments reminiscent of the First Republic resurfaced and Local Government Service Commission had to be resuscitated barely a year after its abolition (Gboyega, 2003).

Central/Local Government Relations

Promoting and sustaining good governance through the instrumentality of local governments has much to do with the nature and character of the relationship of control and autonomy that exists between local governments and the central government in the guise of states and the federal government of Nigeria. Local governments are not autonomous

sovereign political entities from the states and the federal government. Since local governments are creations of the state or the central government and therefore, have to be controlled in order to achieve minimum standards of good governance that are necessary and desirable in order to accord with the national standard. Also, certain responsibilities and functions cannot be carried out successfully by local governments without the support of the central government. In many countries, the central governments usually have the powers to review or even annul the decisions of local governments concerning certain issues. It means therefore that there must be some level of control over the activities of local governments by the central government in order to ensure accountability and transparency in the management of public affairs in fostering good governance.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a general agreement among scholars that there has been too much control in all the key areas regarding the relationship between local governments and the central government, especially the state governments. The too much control over local governments by especially state government is said to have had dire consequences on the viability of the local governments in providing good governance. However, given the inevitability of the control over the workings of the local governments by the central government, there must be away of this write up recommending how to balance control of local governments and the realization of the semi autonomy needed to provide good governance.

Politics, Political Leadership and the Local Governments

Clearly, it seems as if the challenge of leadership has been for long, the bane of the Nigeria local government system. One tends to accept the notion that the nature and character of the Nigerian state and society has much influence on the evolution of a poor and corrupt leadership that usually lacks vision and mission. The dominance of bad governance in the present workings of the local governments in Benue State and Nigeria at large, is mainly a derivative from the nature and character of the economy and the state in Africa, in general. To Ake (1996 p.157),

The political class in Africa typically lacks coherence. More often than not, it is riddled with factionalism and strong centrifugal tendencies associated with the inculcation of parochial loyalties that are exploited for economic and political power. The public sphere is a battlefield where parochial groups and interest groups struggle for power relentlessly, and sometimes violently. In this context, the state chronically unstable, usually privatized, corrupt and inefficient, and largely incapable of carrying out a development project.

It is therefore clear that the greatest challenge facing local governments in general, is that of poor leadership. The poverty of the leadership seems to have completely alienated the local government system from the people it is expected to serve.

How to Promote and Sustain Good Governance at the Local Government Level

I have in this paper earlier on emphasized the fact that we are more concerned with how to promote and sustain good governance at the local government level more than the political economy of the history that has ushered in the dominance of bad governance, especially at the local government level. In July 2024, a major breakthrough that promises to be the beginning of the promotion and sustenance of good governance was provided by the decision of the Supreme Court of Nigeria that funds from the federation account should be directly remitted to the local governments instead of the usual joint account. Since July 2024, this decision of the Supreme Court is yet to be implemented because there are far reaching changes that have to be done in the 1999 constitution to accommodate the decision of the Supreme Court.

This means that the status of local governments under the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria has to be changed in order to provide for local governments as a third tier of government. This is because the authority of councils in Nigeria today is not derived from the constitution. It means that the functions of local governments must be incorporated in the 1999 Constitution like those of the other tiers of government. Simply put, the functions of local governments must be such that give them specific legislative competence in order to promote good governance. Such functions and responsibilities allocated to local governments have to accord with their taxing power and the ability to generate funds internally. It means also that profitable items of local government internal revenue generation such as markets, building plan approvals, tenement or property rating and collecting of forest royalties should be given back to local governments.

To give more autonomy to local governments in order to promote and sustain good governance, Nwabuoku (2019) says that there is the need for constitutional amendment particularly Sections 7, 8, 162(3) (5) (6) (7) and 8. Alabi (2018) suggests an elaborate constitutional amendments to the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria so as to realize more autonomy and accountability in local governments. All the contradictory provisions of the 1999 constitution (as amended) that allow for confusion and manipulation have to be removed. For instance, in Section 7(1), all

the phrasing that appears after the words "and accordingly" should be deleted. Instead, the following should be inserted "there shall be for the local government council a chairman". Also, the Constitution should be reviewed to have a provision that takes care of the areas of structure, functions, composition, establishment, funding, status and other matters that affect local governments, rather than delegating it to the state government or House of Assembly. There should be also a new provision for local government councils to read thus: Section 5(4), the executive powers of local government councils shall be rested in the chairman, 5(5). The executive powers vested in the chairman shall not be exercised so as to impede or prejudice the exercise of the Executive Powers of the Federation or of the State in which the Local Government Area concerned is situated or to engender any asset or investment of the Government of the Federation or the State or of the Local Government Area.

To Alabi (2018), the foregoing constitutional changes recommended are geared towards ensuring greater autonomy for the local governments in Nigeria, deriving from the overbearing interference with local government administrations. Unfortunately, I believe that central to understanding the bad governance in the local government system has much to do with the pervasive problems of the low level of probity and poor financial management ability by the leadership. Most of them seem to be corrupt, incompetent and inexperienced in the governance at the local level of the society. In fact, they are a reflection, of the nature and character of the political leadership at the national level. Enyi, (2014), Odo, (1988) and Edoh, (2018) all emphasize the issue of lack of accountability and transparency in the management of local governments by the political and administrative leadership. Hence, there is the need to exercise some measure of control in order to ensure a judicious use of public resources for good governance. This explains why emphasis is laid on balancing control over local governments with some level of autonomy in order to achieve the goals of local government that promote and sustain good governance.

In terms of powers and control over public funds, the office of the Auditor-General of Local Government is the main agency available to the state government to supervise and control the management of the finances of local governments. There is the need to strengthen this body to effectively carry out periodic audit of accounts of local governments. At the end of each financial year, all the treasurers of each local government are required by law to sign and present to the Auditor-General accounts showing fully the financial position of the local

expected to send to the Benue State House of Assembly copies of the accounts signed and presented by the treasurers, together with their certificates of audit. This includes also a report of the auditor-general on the examination and audit of all accounts relating to the public money, stamps, securities, stores and other properties of the local government.

We have seen that curtailing, corrupt practices in local governments has much to do with ensuring that all financial transactions of the local government must be audited and published. Additionally, civil society organizations should also be encouraged to monitor the performance of local government officials and report any found wanting to anti-corruption agents. The anti-corruption agents like the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) need to step up efforts at tackling the challenges of corruption in the local governments of Nigeria, especially as now that there is more autonomy given to local governments regarding powers and control over public funds. In terms of powers and control over public funds, Section 120-124 (3) of the 1999 constitution has to be adopted and adapted to Local Government Chairman, Vice-Chairman Auditor-General for local government and the chairman and members of Local Government Service Commission. For local government, the sections are to be placed after that of the state, hence the numbering to look like this: Section 125-129, 124(4) now reads 129(4) to cover the role of the Auditor-General for Local Government, who shall be appointed in accordance with Section 130(3). The Auditor-General for Local Government shall audit the public accounts of all local governments in the state.

Equally important especially as given the greater autonomy granted the local government system and in the furtherance of good governance, the need arises for the establishment of a Joint Planning Board, through a law enacted by the Benue State House of Assembly to require each local government in the state to participate in the economic planning and development of the local government areas. Also, equally important to note is the importance of primary education as the foundation on which all the higher levels of education stand. It means that it has to be given the priority in planning and implementation it deserves. This explains why in terms of funding primary education, the level of participation of local governments should be by an act of the National Assembly. The payment of primary school teachers should be the sole responsibility of the Federal and State Government. This is because primary education is a subsidiary function as per the provision of the 4th schedule of the 1999 Constitution.

Regarding personnel matters in the workings of local governments, the Local Government Service Commission has responsibility for administering personnel matters for staff on GL. 07 and above and staff of GL 01-06 are delegated to local government councils regarding powers of appointment, promotion, discipline, posting and termination of appointment. To have good governance in the workings of the local government system, principally it behoves on the leadership of the Local Government Service Commission to be dedicated to the overall success of the local governments in the state. This means that they must be fair and just in handling different cases of staff with similar circumstances, the same way, there should also be justice and fairness in the application of staff regulations, schemes and conditions of service to all staff irrespective of their varying family or social backgrounds. Above all, the condition of service of the local government staff should be such that would attract and retain staff with the requisite qualifications and experience to promote and sustain good governance.

Concerning the qualifications of the staff of the local government, I believe that it has more to do with imbibing the ethics and the values that are in consonance with the needs and aspirations of the generality of the people, who mostly, live in the rural communities. Most of the development activities that are taking place at the grassroots of our societies are outside the purview of the government and are dependent on the efforts of the people themselves, deriving from their felt needs. Equally important is that the Local Government Service Commission is saddled with the responsibility of training staff of the local government. Such training must also include imparting certain values to the staff of local government that promote rapport between them and the people. This is expected to promote community driven development (CDD). This has been asserted also by Tumba (2015) and Muyiwa, (2018) where the people themselves, through their institutions and the support of the state and the local governments, assume responsibility for their development, rather than just being simply recipients of centrally led programmes and projects. Overall, the success of the Local Government Service Commission could be better assured when they are able to regularly carry the chairmen of local governments along before major decisions of staff affecting their local governments are taken. This would definitely promote a smooth working relationship between the local Government Service Commission and the Chairmen of Local Government, for the good of all and sundry.

In the final analysis, it seems as if the main way out of the challenge of promoting and sustaining good governance at the local government

level lies in the more democratization of the Nigerian political system at large. We have to rely on Ake (1996) regarding the kind of democracy that is bound to promote development in Nigeria and Benue State Local Governments. This is a democracy that is based on strong political institutions of the legislature, judiciary and executive arms of government, as well as other development institutions for the aggregation and articulation of interests.

To Ake (1996 p.132), such a democracy has to reckon with:

“Social and economic realities of Africa, such as Africa's Social pluralism, its poverty, its relatively low level of literacy and the emphasis in rural communities on solidarity and cooperation”. This democratization also involves recognizing nationalities, ethnic groups and communities as social formations that are allowed to express freedom and self-realization in cultural, political and economic participation. It has to be a democratization that is all inclusive as possible. This is a democracy that has special representation of mass organizations, especially the youth, labour movements and women groups. Despite the seemingly insurmountable problems facing democratization, Ake (1996), says that given the achievements of democratization witnessed from 1990 in Africa, it seems the political framework that could enable the project to take off is in progress. This is because, a people have the kind of governance they deserve, based on the choices they make.

We must commend President Tinubu for taking the major decision of going to the Supreme Court of Nigeria in the quest for autonomy of local governments. But we can only promote and sustain good governance by greater democratization that has to do with changing all the provisions in the Constitution of 1999 that contradict the autonomy of local governments. Equally important for greater democratization has to do with expunging completely from the 1999 Constitution the State Independent Electoral Commission. This is because they have become instruments of anti-democratic practices by the state governments.

Good governance has to do with a governance that has to do with the people. The challenge of promoting and sustaining good governance at the local government level is quite enormous. The dominant features of bad governance that have much to do with the nature and character of the Nigerian state are glaring. But this paper has focused on the areas that we have to focus on so as to overcome the seemingly insurmountable problems facing good governance at the local government level. These include changing the provisions in the 1999 Constitution that pertain to local governments to make them a third tier of government. This paper has emphasized the need to exercise some level of control over the

workings of the local government system. Local governments are not sovereign entities from the states and the Federal Government. Given the wide spread corruption and mismanagement at the local government level, it behoves on the state governments to strengthen the office of the Auditor-General of Local Governments and the Local Government Service Commission which should be a part of the 1999 Constitution, so as to ensure good governance. However, the main concern has to do with the democratization of governance in Nigeria at large and local governments in particular. This explains the greater quest for the greater autonomy in the workings of the local government system. The main way out is the ability of the political system to balance control and autonomy in the workings of the local government system. We have no other choice but to promote and sustain good governance at the local government level for the good of all and sundry, to the glory of God.

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