

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTONOMY UNDER THE 1999 CONSTITUTION OF NIGERIA: A REALITY OR MYTH

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Abstract

Local government autonomy denotes the ability of the local governments to manage local affairs within their areas of jurisdiction under the Constitution a tier of government without unjustifiable encroachment by other tiers of government. Nigerian local governments have gone through series of reforms under the military regime to make them better but without much success. There were rampant cases of interferences on the councils' affairs by state government. For instance, elected local governments were constantly dissolved and replaced by state government's appointed agents. Under the 1999 Constitution, the councils are confronted with myriad of challenges as everything about them is controlled entirely by state governments. In effect, there is currently dearth of development at the grassroots. The masses do not feel the dividends of government by way of social service delivery at the local level. Local government has failed to impact on the lives of rural dwellers and the people are not made to know what governance is all about. Hence, rural urban migration has drastically increased. There are arguments to scrap local governments in the country for their failure to live up to their expectations. Local government is indispensable in the development of the country's grassroots because majority of Nigerians live in the rural areas. This study appraises whether local government autonomy under the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria is a reality or myth. The researcher employed doctrinal methodology in the course of the work. The examination got materials from primary and secondary sources such as statutes, judicial decisions, text books, journal articles, dictionaries, and the internet. The researcher utilized analytical approach in the analysis of data collected and collated. This inquiry found that local government autonomy under the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria is a myth and not real. This research recommends that the 1999 Constitution be amended in order to grant full autonomy to the local government in Nigeria so that it can live up to its expectations as the third tier of government in the country.

Keywords: Autonomy, Local Government, Devolution, Reform, Grassroots, Management, Constitution.

1. Introduction

The local government is established in the entire globe to boost development in the grassroots. It is geared towards devolution of powers to enable the locales to participate in management of their own affairs. It is meant to guide against over concentration of powers at the center; that is the federal government.

Local Government Autonomy Myth Or Reality

Michael Rajnik



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