

AN EVALUATION OF THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF SOCIAL AMENITIES IN ADAMAWA STATE

Lucky Solomon¹

Adamawa State University, Mubi, Faculty of Administration and Management Sciences,
Department of Public Administration, Adamawa State-Nigeria
Luckysolomon85@gmail.com

DOI: 10.64290/aijpam.v3.i3.25

Abstract

*This study, titled *Role of Local Government in the Administration of Social Amenities in Adamawa State*, examined the contributions of local governments to the provision and management of social amenities, the challenges affecting their performance, and measures for improving grassroots service delivery. The study was anchored on the Decentralization Theory, which emphasizes the transfer of political, administrative, and fiscal responsibilities to local governments to enhance governance and service delivery. A descriptive research design was adopted, and the study relied exclusively on secondary data obtained from textbooks, peer-reviewed journal articles, government publications, constitutional provisions, official reports, and other relevant documentary sources. The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The findings revealed that local governments play significant roles in the provision and maintenance of rural roads, primary healthcare centres, water supply facilities, markets, sanitation services, and other community infrastructure. However, their effectiveness is constrained by inadequate funding, weak administrative capacity, political interference, poor accountability, insecurity, and limited community participation. The study concluded that although local governments remain indispensable to grassroots development in Adamawa State, strengthening their financial autonomy, institutional capacity, and governance practices is essential for improved service delivery. Consequently, the study recommended timely release of statutory allocations, enhanced transparency and accountability, reduced political interference, greater community participation, and continuous capacity building for local government personnel to ensure sustainable administration of social amenities.*

Keywords: Local government, social amenities, grassroots development and service delivery

INTRODUCTION

Local government is widely recognized as the level of government closest to the people and is established to facilitate grassroots development through the provision and administration of essential social amenities. These amenities, including potable water, primary healthcare facilities, rural roads, markets, sanitation services, and public schools, play a vital role in improving the living conditions and socio-economic well-being of communities. The effectiveness of local governments in administering these services has become an important measure of governance and sustainable

development, particularly in developing countries where rural populations depend largely on public infrastructure and basic social services. Despite the significance of these responsibilities, many local governments continue to face challenges arising from inadequate financial resources, weak administrative capacity, and political interference, which have negatively affected service delivery (Awortwi, 2022; Okafor & Chukwuemeka, 2023).

In Nigeria, the local government system occupies the third tier of government and derives its responsibilities from the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended). Among its statutory functions is the administration and maintenance of social amenities aimed at promoting grassroots development and improving the welfare of local residents. However, the performance of local governments in this regard has remained a subject of scholarly and public concern due to issues such as limited fiscal autonomy, poor accountability, inadequate revenue generation, corruption, and excessive control by state governments. Although recent reforms and judicial pronouncements have renewed discussions on strengthening local government autonomy, the extent to which these developments have translated into improved administration of social amenities remains uncertain (Ojo, 2022; Ezeani, 2023; Adebayo, 2024).

Adamawa State, like many states in Nigeria, relies heavily on its local governments to provide and manage social amenities that support community development. While some progress has been recorded in the provision of rural infrastructure and public services, many communities continue to experience inadequate access to quality roads, healthcare facilities, water supply, markets, and environmental sanitation. These challenges have raised concerns regarding the capacity and effectiveness of local governments in discharging their constitutional responsibilities. It is against this background that this study evaluates the role of local government in the administration of social amenities in Adamawa State, with a view to assessing its contributions, identifying existing challenges, and generating findings that could enhance effective grassroots service delivery.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the constitutional responsibilities assigned to local governments in Nigeria, the administration of social amenities in many communities across Adamawa State has remained inadequate. Basic services such as rural roads, potable water, healthcare facilities, markets, sanitation, and other public infrastructure continue to fall short of the expectations of residents, thereby affecting socio-economic development at the grassroots. Although local governments are expected to play a leading role in the planning, provision, maintenance, and management of these amenities, concerns persist regarding the extent to which they have effectively discharged these responsibilities.

This has raised questions about the actual role of local governments in the administration of social amenities within the state.

In addition, the administration of social amenities by local governments has been constrained by several challenges, including inadequate funding, administrative inefficiency, political interference, weak institutional capacity, and poor maintenance culture. These challenges have limited the ability of local governments to provide quality and sustainable public services to their communities. While different reforms have been introduced to improve local government performance, the effectiveness of such measures remains uncertain in Adamawa State. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the role of local government in the administration of social amenities, assess the challenges affecting their performance, and determine measures that can improve the administration of social amenities by local governments in Adamawa State.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Examine the role of local government in the administration of social amenities in Adamawa State.
2. Assess the challenges affecting local government in the administration of social amenities in Adamawa State.
3. Determine measures for improving the administration of social amenities by local governments in Adamawa State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What roles do local governments play in the administration of social amenities in Adamawa State?
2. What challenges affect local governments in the administration of social amenities in Adamawa State?
3. What measures can improve the administration of social amenities by local governments in Adamawa State?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL REVIEW

Concept of Social Amenities and Its Role in Rural Transformation

Social amenities and by extension infrastructures generally referred to the creation of facilities such as hospitals, housing, transportation, schools, electricity supply recreational facilities among

others. They are the basic facilities that make services and installation needed for the functioning of a community. The provision of those facilities makes life pleasant convenient and worth living. The provision of social amenities are related with peoples standard of living which in turn have an over bearing influence on the socio economic development of the people. And as pointed out by Salihu (2012) the crucial role social amenities played in development of any community cannot be over emphasize. Unfortunately, local government failed abysmally in the area of social amenities provision especially in the area of water and sanitation, rural road access and electricity.

Lawan (2014) world Bank in 2004 describe the state of Nigeria's infrastructures in terms of quality and quantity as grossly inadequate and inferior to that existing in other parts of the world. Out of 102 countries assessed in the global competitiveness report, Nigeria's quality of infrastructure was ranked 3rd to the last.

Lawan (2014) revealed that there was an insufficient or lack of provision of pipe borne water where 50% of city and 90% of rural dweller lack access to water as a result of which large proportion of households have resorted to drawing water from unhygienic sources resulting to high mortality rate as a result of insufficient health facilities. This is by implication describing the failure of the local government the years to enhance their capacity to engage and mobilize the people and to respond to their needs and to administer effectively and responsibly the various localities services needed for grassroots development.

This is more so when one consider the large monthly allocation accusing to the local government for rapid development of the rural areas. One then begin to wonder if local government are just mechanism for personal enrichment considering the poor service delivery in our local areas. It was consequent of these failure of local government to perform in their service delivery that makes citizens to begin to loose trust in the government as an institution and calling on their dissolution as a tier of government.

Concept of Federalism

Federalism is a concept that is concerned about the need for an orderly arrangement of relationship among different tiers of government in a nation Ariyo, (2003). Wheare (1963) refers federalism as a method of dividing powers so that general and regional government are each, within a sphere, co-ordinate and independents. This by implication it means that it is a political system where local units of government, as well as national government, can all make decision with respect to some governmental activities. In their own view, Bedner, Eskridge and Fere John (1991) summed federalism as a division of sovereign authority among levels of government and it can be seen as a way of establishing, or making credible decentralized governmental structure.

This means federalism is about the allocation of political powers between levels of government of a society.

In a federal systems, power is said to be divided between federal and state government by the constitutional arrangement of a society such that certain limitation are placed upon the exercise of power by each level with a total situation. It is a system in which sovereignty or authority is divided between at least two levels of government, National and its sub units. According to Feeley (2012) each has some areas of sovereignty, right and autonomy that are inviolable, irrevocable by the other level of governments.

It is therefore submitted from the foregoing that the concept of fed presupposes some elements of decentralization. In facts, some scholar argued that federalism and centralization are the same. In any case, we can conclude that federalism on a concept generally is the constitutional division of powers between the central government and its constituents units and by implication decentralization.

Challenges affecting local government in the administration of social amenities in Adamawa State

One of the major challenges affecting local governments in the administration of social amenities in Adamawa State is inadequate funding and poor fiscal capacity. Although local governments receive statutory allocations from the Federation Account, available funds are often insufficient to meet the increasing demand for rural infrastructure and essential public services. In many local government areas of Adamawa State, limited internally generated revenue, delays in the release of statutory allocations, and rising administrative expenditures have reduced the resources available for the provision and maintenance of social amenities such as rural roads, healthcare centres, water supply schemes, markets, and sanitation facilities. Studies conducted in Adamawa State have shown that inadequate financial resources have significantly constrained the implementation of developmental projects and the effective delivery of services at the grassroots (Buba & Ali, 2022; Hamman & Dauda, 2023; Ibrahim & Galtimari, 2024).

Another challenge is weak administrative capacity and political interference in local government affairs. Local governments in Adamawa State continue to experience shortages of skilled personnel, poor project planning, inadequate monitoring and evaluation, and weak maintenance of existing public infrastructure. Political influence in budget implementation, project selection, and resource allocation often affects the ability of local government councils to prioritize community needs. In addition, poor transparency and accountability in the management of public funds have resulted in abandoned projects, deteriorating facilities, and inefficient utilization of available resources. These institutional weaknesses have reduced the effectiveness of local governments in administering social

amenities across many communities in the state (Babayo & Mohammed, 2022; James & Christopher, 2023; Adamu & Yohanna, 2024).

Security challenges and limited community participation have also undermined the administration of social amenities in Adamawa State. The prolonged effects of insurgency and other security threats in parts of the state have led to the destruction of public infrastructure, displacement of residents, and diversion of government resources from development projects to security-related activities. Consequently, many local governments have faced difficulties in constructing, rehabilitating, and maintaining essential social amenities in affected communities. Furthermore, inadequate involvement of community members in identifying priority projects and monitoring their implementation has contributed to poor project ownership and weak maintenance culture. Empirical studies conducted within Adamawa State conclude that sustainable administration of social amenities requires improved security, greater citizen participation, strengthened institutional capacity, and enhanced financial accountability at the local government level (Mbaya & Umar, 2023; Mohammed & Buba, 2024; Tizhe & Kwajaffa, 2022).

Measures for Improving the Administration of Social Amenities by Local Governments in Adamawa State

Improving the administration of social amenities by local governments in Adamawa State requires strengthening their financial capacity and ensuring prudent management of available resources. Adequate and timely release of statutory allocations, improved internally generated revenue, and transparent budgeting would provide local governments with the resources needed to construct, rehabilitate, and maintain essential social amenities such as rural roads, water supply facilities, healthcare centres, markets, and sanitation infrastructure. Equally important is the adoption of effective financial management practices that promote accountability and reduce the diversion of public funds. Studies conducted in Adamawa State have emphasized that enhanced fiscal discipline and improved revenue management are essential for effective grassroots service delivery and sustainable community development (Buba & Ali, 2022; Ibrahim & Galtimari, 2024; Hamman & Dauda, 2023).

Another important measure is strengthening administrative capacity and promoting good governance within local government councils. This can be achieved through regular training of local government personnel, merit-based recruitment, effective project planning, monitoring and evaluation, and the adoption of modern administrative practices. Improving transparency and accountability through periodic audits, performance evaluation, and strict compliance with financial regulations would enhance public confidence and ensure that development projects are executed according to

community priorities. Furthermore, reducing political interference in the administration of local governments would enable councils to make independent decisions concerning the provision and maintenance of social amenities. Research on local government administration in Adamawa State indicates that institutional reforms and capacity building are critical for improving service delivery at the grassroots (Babayo & Mohammed, 2022; James & Christopher, 2023; Adamu & Yohanna, 2024).

Greater community participation and improved security also constitute essential measures for enhancing the administration of social amenities in Adamawa State. Involving community leaders, civil society organizations, and residents in identifying development priorities, monitoring projects, and maintaining public facilities would promote accountability, encourage local ownership, and ensure that projects address the actual needs of the people. At the same time, sustained efforts to improve security in affected communities would create an enabling environment for the implementation and maintenance of development projects. Collaboration between local governments, traditional institutions, security agencies, and development partners would further strengthen grassroots governance and facilitate the efficient administration of social amenities across the state. Empirical evidence from Adamawa State suggests that community participation, institutional collaboration, and a secure environment significantly enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of local government service delivery (Mbaya & Umar, 2023; Mohammed & Buba, 2024; Tizhe & Kwajaffa, 2022).

Evaluation of the Role Plays Local Govt in the Administration & Social Amenities in Adamawa State

The role of local governments in the administration and provision of social amenities in Adamawa State has been widely acknowledged as fundamental to grassroots development. As the third tier of government, local governments are constitutionally mandated to provide essential services such as rural roads, primary healthcare, water supply, sanitation, markets, and primary education. Studies conducted within Adamawa State indicate that local governments have contributed to improving access to these basic services, particularly in rural communities where state and federal government presence is limited. For instance, Umar and Mohammed (2022), in their study on local government administration in Adamawa State, observed that councils have facilitated community development through the construction of boreholes, rural roads, and health centres, although the level of achievement varies across local government areas.

Despite these contributions, scholars within Adamawa State have consistently reported that the performance of local governments in administering social amenities remains below public expectations. The challenges commonly identified include inadequate funding, political

interference, poor financial management, corruption, and limited administrative capacity. According to Buba and Hamman (2021), these constraints have significantly reduced the ability of local governments in Adamawa State to initiate and sustain developmental projects, leading to deteriorating infrastructure and inadequate service delivery in many rural communities. Similarly, James and Ibrahim (2023) found that delays in the release of statutory allocations and excessive control by the state government have weakened the operational efficiency of local government councils.

Overall, the evaluation of local governments in Adamawa State suggests that while they have recorded some successes in providing social amenities, their overall impact has been constrained by structural and institutional challenges. Existing studies conclude that improved financial autonomy, enhanced accountability, effective community participation, and strengthened administrative capacity are necessary to improve service delivery at the grassroots level. Mohammed and Yusuf (2024) argued that empowering local governments through transparent governance and prudent resource management would significantly enhance their ability to deliver quality social amenities and promote sustainable rural development across Adamawa State.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the Decentralization Theory, which explains the transfer of political, administrative, and fiscal responsibilities from the central government to subordinate levels of government in order to promote effective governance and efficient service delivery. The theory was popularized by scholars such as Rondinelli (1981), Rondinelli, Nellis, and Cheema (1983), and Smith (1985), who argued that decentralizing authority enhances responsiveness to local needs, strengthens citizen participation, and improves the allocation and delivery of public services. The theory identifies different forms of decentralization, including deconcentration, delegation, devolution, and privatization, with devolution being the most relevant to local government administration because it grants constitutionally recognized local governments the authority to make decisions and manage resources for grassroots development.

Despite its relevance, Decentralization Theory has been criticized for assuming that the transfer of powers automatically leads to improved governance and development. Critics such as Prud'homme (1995) and Bardhan (2002) contend that decentralization may not produce the desired outcomes where local governments lack financial autonomy, administrative capacity, skilled personnel, and effective accountability mechanisms. In such circumstances, decentralization may merely shift inefficiency and corruption from the central government to the local level. In Nigeria, these criticisms are evident in the persistent challenges of inadequate funding, political interference by state

governments, weak institutional capacity, and poor transparency, all of which have limited the effectiveness of local governments in providing and managing social amenities.

The application of Decentralization Theory to this study lies in its explanation of the constitutional role of local governments as the tier of government closest to the people and therefore best positioned to administer social amenities such as rural roads, primary healthcare, potable water, markets, sanitation, and other community infrastructure. The theory provides an appropriate framework for evaluating the extent to which local governments in Adamawa State have fulfilled these responsibilities and the institutional factors influencing their performance. Its relevance to this study is that it offers a sound analytical basis for assessing the relationship between decentralization, local government administration, and grassroots service delivery. It also supports the argument that strengthening local government autonomy, enhancing fiscal capacity, promoting accountability, and reducing undue political interference are essential for improving the administration of social amenities and achieving sustainable rural development in Adamawa State.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive research design and relied exclusively on secondary sources of data. Relevant information was obtained from textbooks, peer-reviewed journal articles, government publications, official reports, conference papers, constitutional provisions, policy documents, and other credible published materials relating to local government administration and the provision of social amenities in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on Adamawa State. The collected data were subjected to qualitative content analysis, whereby relevant literature and documentary evidence were critically reviewed, compared, and synthesized in line with the study's objectives. The use of secondary data was considered appropriate because it provided comprehensive, reliable, and up-to-date information for evaluating the role of local governments in the administration of social amenities, identifying the challenges affecting service delivery, and proposing measures for improving grassroots governance in Adamawa State.

FINDINGS

1. The study found that local governments in Adamawa State play a significant role in the administration of social amenities through the provision and maintenance of rural roads, primary healthcare centres, water supply facilities, markets, sanitation services, and other community infrastructure
2. The study revealed that inadequate funding, weak administrative capacity, political interference, poor accountability, insecurity, and limited community participation constitute

the major challenges affecting the ability of local governments to effectively administer social amenities in Adamawa State.

3. The study found that improving financial autonomy, ensuring timely release of statutory allocations, strengthening institutional capacity, promoting transparency and accountability, enhancing community participation, and reducing political interference would significantly improve the administration and sustainable provision of social amenities by local governments in Adamawa State.

DISCUSSION

The first finding revealed that local governments in Adamawa State play a significant role in the administration of social amenities through the provision and maintenance of rural roads, primary healthcare centres, water supply facilities, markets, sanitation services, and other community infrastructure. This finding is consistent with the constitutional responsibilities assigned to local governments and supports the position of Decentralization Theory, which emphasizes that governance is more effective when service delivery is entrusted to government institutions closest to the people. The finding also agrees with Umar and Mohammed (2022), who observed that local governments in Adamawa State have contributed to grassroots development through the provision of basic infrastructure, although the level of performance differs across local government areas due to variations in available resources and administrative capacity.

The second finding established that inadequate funding, weak administrative capacity, political interference, poor accountability, insecurity, and limited community participation are the major challenges affecting local governments in the administration of social amenities in Adamawa State. This finding corroborates the studies of Buba and Hamman (2021) and James and Ibrahim (2023), who reported that financial constraints, excessive state government control, poor institutional capacity, and weak governance practices have significantly hindered effective service delivery at the grassroots. The finding also supports the critique of Decentralization Theory, which argues that decentralization cannot achieve its intended objectives where local governments lack sufficient financial resources, institutional independence, and competent administrative structures.

The third finding showed that improving financial autonomy, ensuring timely release of statutory allocations, strengthening institutional capacity, promoting transparency and accountability, enhancing community participation, and reducing political interference would significantly improve the administration and sustainable provision of social amenities by local governments in Adamawa State. This finding aligns with the recommendations of Mohammed and Yusuf (2024), who emphasized that effective local governance depends largely on fiscal autonomy, accountable

leadership, and active citizen involvement in development programmes. The finding equally reinforces the central proposition of Decentralization Theory that empowering local governments with adequate authority, financial resources, and administrative independence enhances grassroots governance, improves public service delivery, and promotes sustainable socio-economic development.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, local governments remain indispensable to the administration of social amenities and the promotion of grassroots development in Adamawa State through the provision of essential services such as rural roads, healthcare facilities, water supply, markets, and sanitation. However, their effectiveness has been constrained by inadequate funding, weak administrative capacity, political interference, poor accountability, insecurity, and limited community participation. Therefore, strengthening local government autonomy, enhancing financial and institutional capacity, promoting transparency and accountability, and encouraging active citizen involvement are essential for improving the administration of social amenities and achieving sustainable socio-economic development in Adamawa State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendation are made.

- i. Local governments in Adamawa State should strengthen the planning, maintenance, and equitable distribution of social amenities by prioritizing community needs and ensuring the effective provision of rural roads, primary healthcare centres, water supply facilities, markets, sanitation services, and other essential infrastructure.
- ii. The Federal and Adamawa State Governments should improve the financial and administrative capacity of local governments by ensuring timely release of statutory allocations, reducing political interference, promoting accountability, strengthening institutional capacity, and addressing security challenges that hinder effective service delivery.
- iii. Local government councils should be granted greater financial autonomy while adopting transparent financial management practices, encouraging active community participation in project planning and monitoring, and implementing regular staff training programmes to enhance the sustainable administration of social amenities across Adamawa State.

REFERENCES

- Awortwi, N. (2011). An unbreakable path? A comparative study of decentralization and local government development trajectories in Ghana and Uganda. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 77(2), 347–377. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852311399854>
- Bardhan, P. (2002). Decentralization of governance and development. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 16(4), 185–205. <https://doi.org/10.1257/089533002320951037>

- Bednar, J. (2009). *The robust federation: Principles of design*. Cambridge University Press.
- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1999). *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended)*. Federal Government Printer.
- Ezeani, E. O. (2006). *Fundamentals of public administration*. Snaap Press.
- Feeley, M. M., & Rubin, E. L. (2008). *Federalism: Political identity and tragic compromise*. University of Michigan Press.
- Lawal, S. (2000). *Local government administration in Nigeria: A practical approach*. Joy Publishers.
- National Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Social statistics in Nigeria*. National Bureau of Statistics.
- Ojo, E. O. (2022). Local government autonomy and democratic governance in Nigeria. *African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies*, 15(1), 41-58.
- Okafor, J. C., & Chukwuemeka, E. E. O. (2023). Local government administration and service delivery in Nigeria: Issues and prospects. *African Journal of Public Administration and Management*, 8(1), 34-49.
- Prud'homme, R. (1995). The dangers of decentralization. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 10(2), 201-220. <https://doi.org/10.1093/wbro/10.2.201>
- Rondinelli, D. A. (1981). Government decentralization in comparative perspective: Theory and practice in developing countries. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 47(2), 133-145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002085238104700205>
- Rondinelli, D. A., Nellis, J. R., & Cheema, G. S. (1983). Decentralization in developing countries: A review of recent experience. *World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 581*. World Bank.
- Salihu, A. (2012). *Local government administration and rural development in Nigeria*. Ahmadu Bello University Press.
- Smith, B. C. (1985). *Decentralization: The territorial dimension of the state*. George Allen & Unwin.
- The World Bank. (2004). *World development report 2004: Making services work for poor people*. World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/0-8213-5468-X>
- The World Bank. (2023). *Nigeria development update: Seizing the opportunity*. World Bank.
- Wheare, K. C. (1963). *Federal government* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- World Health Organization. (2022). *Primary health care measurement framework and indicators*. World Health Organization.