

STATE-LOCAL RELATIONS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS IN
LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: Previous studies have shown state and local government plays a variety of roles to meet-up with the challenges associated with community development across the globe. This study examined the role of state-local relations in community development associations in Nigeria with respect to Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State. Local government involved in the process of development of their communities which ultimately translates increased standard of living among rural dwellers. Thus, there is glaring evidence of inadequacies in basic social amenities within communities with specific emphasis on mobilization for sustainable community development in Apapa LGA. Community Development Associations on the other hands are expected to be at the front burner of implementing their self-help projects in the LGAs. The Diffusion Theory was adopted as a process by which members of a certain community adopt an innovation way for growth and development of their locality. The idea of the theory is to change the backward mindset posture of enclosed typical rural communities for development through innovative means. The study generated data from array of both published and unpublished materials such as text books, journal papers, newspapers, magazines, internet materials, seminar and conference papers among other internet sources. The paper concluded that state and local governments have been able to play their constitutional roles, let alone making attempts at rural development due in the main to the fact that they have been emasculated by other tiers of government.

Keywords: State-Local, Community Development Associations, Development, Community, Local Government, Nigeria

Introduction

The 1999 Constitution unequivocally specifies the relationships between Local Governments and the State Government. It is an uncontestable fact that Local Governments are under the hegemony of the State. Section 7 provides for a system of local government by democratically elected Local Government Councils, and accordingly, the Government of every State shall ensure their existence under a law which provides for their establishment, structure, composition, finance, and functions.

Thus, Shiyanbade and Esan-Atanda (2024) collaborates this that LGs are mandated to participate in the economic planning and development in the State. In the same vein, section 162 (6) of the 1999 Constitution provides that each State shall maintain a special account to be called 'State Joint Local Government Account' (SJLGA) into which shall be paid all allocations to the Local Governments of the State from the Federation Account and from the Government of the State. Although, there have been controversies as to whether the State Governments are trustees of the SJLGA or channels for transmitting the funds to their respective local governments which

invariably among other factors led to the ruling of the Supreme Court that Local Government should enjoy fiscal autonomy (Okafor & Ijeoma, 2019; Dibal et al., 2020; Koko et al., 2021; Onanuga, 2024).

State- Local relations should have a fundamental pivotal focus which is nothing other than development. Any relationship between and/ or among tiers of governments that fails to culminate into development is mere child's play. No wonder Adesopo (2020) and Shiyabade (2024) asserts that what development connotes today is different from what it was in the early and even middle of the twentieth century. He depicts it to further denote people's well-being (rather than the State of the national economy) as well as the political structure and quality of the physical environment. This depiction suggests that development is man-centred and that its purpose is to create an environment in which all people in the State can expand their capabilities and opportunities for both present and future generation (Adesopo, 2020). As lofty as this seems, it will be pragmatically implausible if it is not stemmed from the source; Community as it is popularly affirmed that "charity begins at home".

A community is a collection of individuals who engage and help one another, and who are connected by similar experiences or traits; with a sense of belonging, and frequently by geographic proximity. The values of empowerment, human rights, inclusivity, social justice, self-determination, and collective action serve as the foundation for community development (Shiyabade et al., 2023; Joshua et al., 2023, Shiyabade et al., 2024).

Community Development Associations (CDAs) are groups formed by voluntary members of a given geographical territory, with the common interest of improving the living conditions in their society. It is seen as the coming together of people living within a given locality or community with the sole aim of identifying their felt needs and agreeing on the ways, means and moves towards the realization of such identified needs (Busari-Akinbode & Moses, 2020). The historical underpinning of Community Development Associations (CDAs) in Nigeria can be traced to precolonial times when people came together to address physical and social projects in the community and these included housing construction, road construction, clearing farmlands, and building the Oba's palace, market stalls and even town halls.

The involvement of CDAs in community life was also visible during the post-civil war reconstruction era when CDAs embarked on the reconstruction of damaged buildings. CDAs were formally incorporated into development planning in Nigeria in the 1975–80 Third National Development Plan as a means to promote meaningful physical development in villages and towns, to serve as an institutional channel for robust citizen participation in democratic governance and to promote self-help and the development of social capital in each community. They have legislative backing at federal and state levels and are included in the local government (LG) framework. For example, the Lagos State government enacted the first Community Development Associations Law on 18 February 2008 to provide guidelines for the registration of CDAs in every local government area in the State (Shiyabade, 2017; Uko, 2019; Oyalowo, 2021, Shiyabade, 2024).

Synthetically put, the collaborative efforts of both State and Local Government to ensure that the CDAs perform some roles in bringing social amenities to the people of the grassroots cannot be overemphasis, most especially the Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State, witness some level of development through CDAs which are maximally derived utilities of the duo or the antithetical. It is against this background that this research longs to probe into.

Conceptual Clarifications

The concept of intergovernmental relations has come to occupy an important position in the analysis of the operation of political systems all over the world in recent times. This importance has made the concept to enjoy widespread interest among scholars of Political Science and Public Administration alike. It is unarguable that Nigeria is a federal state with three levels of government viz – the central, state and local government. As a federal state, there is a constitutional division of powers, resources and jurisdictions among the aforementioned levels of government.

Despite the obvious share of responsibilities and jurisdictions, rooms have been created for each of them to interact and interrelate with one another either vertically or horizontally. This web of interactions and collaboration is the province of intergovernmental relations. The concept and practice of intergovernmental

relations have been widely associated with the federal system. However, it is not exclusive to federal systems as there are patterns of interactions and independence between the central and local governments in modern unitary systems. The evolution of intergovernmental relations in Nigeria could be seen as being evolutionary as it is not a one time and static configuration of interactions (Erunke & Mbumega, 2014; Shiyabade, 2024).

From the above, therefore, the concept of intergovernmental relations is more or less concerned with interaction and unity of purpose among various autonomous and independent bodies. It is a circle of interdependence and transaction between federating units in a federal system of government. This position is in tandem with theoretical model of federalism, which argues that each units of government within such a structure should operate independently within statutorily or constitutionally defined spheres of competence (Shiyabade, 2020). The model argues that although, the different units within such a structure are relatively independent yet, they operate within a single national sovereign structure (being themselves; intra sovereign units). They are coordinated with one another.

State

State, is a union or group of individuals inhabiting a specific region and living in accordance to a common legal and political principle. The state is a form of human association distinguished from other social groups by its purpose, the establishment of order and security. State entail solving the problems of the political economy namely; full utilisation of human resources, efficient and adaptive allocation of scarce resources and using benefits of economic activities to fund capability enhancement for its citizens to live good live through value adding employment.

Local Government

Local government in Nigeria is well recognized in the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) as a unit or level of government saddled with responsibilities to provide social amenities to the people at the local areas and generally adopted as local council as one of the tiers government which falls to third level. The establishment of the local government area in Nigeria has been a schedule of exclusive, advisory, and concurrent functions for the localities; mandated in order to transfer of federal and state revenue to local authorities as well as to guarantee the existence of democratically elected local councils.

Although, Nigeria's 1999 constitution did not accord any formal role in the local government system to a traditional authority, local government in modern Nigeria has its root in British "indirect rule" of colonised people through their indigenous or native political institution. Following Britain's "amalgamation" of Nigeria as a single political entity in 1914, the native Authority ordinance of 1916 established a uniform legal foundation for native administration throughout the country. Thus, local government in the local context of the concept situates the focus of the discourse on community and grassroots-related matters (Shiyabade & Esan-Atanda, 2024).

State-Local Relations

The state and local governments relations falls in the administrative field of the theory of intergovernmental relations, as it is one the vertical patterns of intergovernmental relations. Intergovernmental relations can be referred to as formal or formal processes aimed at ensuring harmony and correlation between separate levels of governments in decentralised and federal political systems.

In Nigeria for instance, the 1999 constitution outlines the functions and powers of the levels of government in such a way that one level of government cannot single handedly carry out the functions of delivering services to the people, hence, cooperation has become a crucial requirement of good governance (Shiyabade & Esan-Atanda, 2024).

The federal government places requests on the states and local governments, known as federal mandates, to implement its programs. These mandates are either fully funded by the federal government, partially funded by the states and federal government or the unfunded mandates. Intergovernmental relations is the processes and institutions through which governments within a political system interact (Phillimore, 2013; Apav et al., 2025).

Community Development

Community Development is a term that has been subjected by various scholars to many perspectives, in which each of them presenting several definitions to connote their views and fields. Community Development is intended to empower community members and create stronger and more connected communities. Community Development is a holistic approach grounded in principles of empowerment, human rights, inclusion, social justice, self-determination and collective action (Kenny & Connors, 2017).

Community development is a generic method of social work which has been in practice in Africa, specifically Nigeria for donkey years, though often practiced informally through self help efforts. Community Development Associations (CDAs) are expected to be at the front burner of implementing these self-help projects (Busrari & Akinbode, 2020; Shiyanbade, 2024).

Community development involves the principles of sustainable development, empowerment, inclusivity, social justice, human rights, participative democracy, and equality. These community-led programmes led by specific communities aim to address the challenges and gaps oppressing the community members. From the selection of issues to implementation and execution, the community members sit together and decide what steps are to be taken.

These programmes are necessary to ensure fairness and equality within society. Furthermore, these programmes can be used to uplift other members of society. One should note that when talking about communities in community development, it may not be limited to a particular geographical area. The term community refers to people sharing the same interest, identities, heritage, or culture.

Community Development Associations

The history of Community Development Associations (CDAs) in Nigeria can be traced to pre-colonial times when people came together to address physical and social projects in the community (Muse & Narsiah, 2015). These included housing construction, road construction, clearing farmlands, and building the Oba's palace, market stalls and even town halls. The involvement of CDAs in the community life was visible during the post-war reconstruction era, when CDAs embarked on the reconstruction of damaged buildings (Uko, 2019; Shiyanbade, et al., 2024).

There are potential outcomes at both individual and community levels. Children and families directly involved in community development initiatives may benefit from an increase in skills, knowledge, empowerment and self-efficacy and experience enhanced social inclusion and community connectedness (Kenny & Connors, 2017). As community members are empowered and develop as leaders, they can begin to challenge and improve conditions that are resulting in their disempowerment or negatively impacting their wellbeing (Ife, 2016). At a community level, community development initiatives are likely to achieve long-term outcomes such as stronger and more cohesive communities, evidenced by changes in social capital, civic engagement, social cohesion, community safety and improved health (Haldane et al., 2019; Shiyanbade, 2024; Kenny & Connors, 2017).

Thus, from the above, the study opined that there is an impact of State-Local Governments in the development of Community Development Associations in Apapa Local Government of Lagos State. For this, enhancement of Intergovernmental relationships should be encouraged at both state and local government levels to make the system truly emanate from the people. In so doing, it will enhance transparency, accountability, rule of law and unity among the communities. It will also promote democracy and grooming the grassroots.

Security Problems in Nigerian Local Government Administration

The need for security is as old as human history. In fact, among the hierarchy of human needs, security and safety takes a prominent position. In Nigeria, all tiers of government (federal, state and local) need to pay particular attention to the challenges of security of our rural and urban environments and how to ameliorate or completely obviate the problem. In the study conducted on security problems particularly at the Local Government level in Nigeria, Ojo, Lamidi, Odewale, Shiyanbade, and IHEMEJE (2019), has observed that until of recent, the problems threatening security in our rural Local Governments have not been so well pronounced. Many reasons could be advanced for the low rate of criminal activities in rural local levels. The above position, confirms the contribution

of Shiyabade (2025) as quoted by Apave (2025) who stated that these criminal activities range from cultural and religious, to social reasons. In the rural areas, cultural values, especially of honesty, good neighborliness, respect for elders and authorities etc. play a major role in minimizing the rate of crimes. Religious injunctions inhibit criminal tendencies while social interaction between communities and villages makes everybody his brother's keeper.

In addition, the role of the traditional rulers in the maintenance of law and order and maintaining vigilance in their domains play a prominent role in solving security challenges. That is not to say that our rural communities are completely immune from criminal tendencies. This position is supported by Adesopo (2020) who cited the examples of criminal activities that could be located in rural Local Governments that include: assaults, larceny, cheating and sometimes adultery. There are also cases of culpable homicide resulting from land disputes, chieftaincy tussles, protracted family problems and ritual killings perpetrated by secrete cults.

In semi-urban and urban Local Governments, arising from urbanization, industrialization, politicization and sophistication, uncountable number of criminal activities are noticeable, such as: bomb blasts, inter-city conflicts, religious intolerance, teenage robbery, persecution, power tussle, electoral fraud, assassination, abduction, and formation of ethnic based organizations (militant groups) amongst others. These constitute security challenges to the nation as a whole, (Ojo et al., 2019). Security problem do militate against development in no small measure as a result of this many communities in Nigeria are not developed.

Theoretical Framework (Diffusion Theory)

Diffusion theory has its origin in the explanation of the adoption of technological change by farmers, beginning with Everett Rogers reviews of all kinds of innovations -agricultural innovations, educational innovations, medical innovations, and marketing innovations. He found several similarities in these studies and concluded that the diffusion process displayed patterns and regularities, across a range of conditions, innovations, and cultures. In 1962, Rogers published this review of literature, as the seminal *Diffusion of Innovations* book, which provided a comprehensive theory of how innovations diffused, or spread, in a social system over time. Rogers describes diffusion as a dynamic process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system.

The idea of the theory is to change the backward mindset posture of enclosed typical rural communities for development through innovative means. This is supposed to lead to community acceptance of innovative ideas in disciplines spanning from agriculture to marketing. In other words, development takes place through innovative diffusion. So there are four key elements of the diffusion of innovation process:

- (i) an idea or innovation;
- (ii) channels of communication to spread knowledge of the innovation;
- (iii) time during which diffusion takes place;
- (iv) a social system of potential adopters in which this occurs (Yates,2001; Roger,2003).

Summarily, according to Stone (2023), Diffusion Theory was popularized by Everett Roger and analysed how new ideas and technologies spread through societies and cultures. The theory focuses on the adoption process of a new innovation or idea, and it proposes that adoption occurs in stages among individuals and groups. In the words of Rogers as cited by Stone (2023) the adoption process involves five stages: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption. Also identified five categories of adopters based on their level of readiness to try out new ideas or technologies: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. These categories help to explain the diffusion process and how it varies across different groups in society (Roger, 2003; Stone, 2023, Apav et al., 2025).

The key aim of the diffusion of innovation literature is to understand when and why innovations are adopted or rejected. Then, the assumption often made is that a good diffusion system is one that results in swift and widespread adoption of an innovation, which tends to be regarded as a good thing, even despite evidence of negative and unanticipated consequences.

This theory places some responsibilities on Community Development exponents. First, they should be concerned about the social and cultural likelihood of their proposed innovative ideas and projects. Second, they must actively encourage the use of local resources and communication packages in disseminating the innovative ideas and projects. Also, whether the society is urban or rural will also affect how the innovative ideas or projects are conveyed. The main advantage of this theory is that it antagonizes conservatism and embraces progressivism of the proposed area, community as well as the State as the case may be. Contrariwise, the crux of its disadvantage is that it discourages the sustainability of endogenous knowledge systems and institutions. There might be collective interest to preserve some indigenous beliefs and systems which are serious targets of innovative ideas and projects (Onodugo & Itodo, 2016).

The conclusion of this part is the applicability of the theory to the subject matter. Hence, for any innovative development to be instituted in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State, there must be same focus, selflessness, esprit de corps, resources pool among others on the part of both the different tiers of government on one hand and the different categories of the populace in the concerned geographical area, on the other hand.

Conclusion

The paper concluded that based on the examination of state-local relations and their impact on Community Development Associations (CDAs) in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State reveals several critical insights into the complex dynamics of multilevel governance and community development in Nigeria. It is also an evidence that the 1999 Constitution provides a clear framework for state-local relations, the practical implementation of these relationships significantly influences the effectiveness of CDAs in achieving their development objectives. The paper shown that CDAs, rooted in Nigeria's pre-colonial history, continue to serve as vital instruments for grassroots development and community empowerment. Thus, their success is heavily dependent on the nature and quality of state-local government relations. The constitutional provision for State Joint Local Government Accounts (SJLGA), while designed to ensure proper resource allocation, has created both opportunities and challenges for local development initiatives.

Through the lens of Diffusion Theory, it becomes apparent that the success of community development projects relies not only on the innovative ideas themselves but also on the effective communication and collaboration between state and local governments, as well as the readiness of community members to embrace change. The theory's emphasis on the adoption process highlights the importance of considering local contexts and cultural factors when implementing development initiatives. Finally, this paper underscores that effective state-local relations should ultimately culminate in tangible development outcomes that improve people's well-being, enhance the quality of the physical environment, and strengthen community capabilities. The role of CDAs as intermediaries between government structures and community members positions them as crucial actors in the development process, particularly in their capacity to mobilize local resources and facilitate participatory governance.

Recommendations

The transformation of state-local governance and community development necessitates comprehensive reforms across multiple dimensions. Based on the empirical evidences, this paper provides the following recommendations, they includes:

- a) The implementation of fiscal autonomy through independent monitoring committees and transparent electronic payment systems for the State Joint Local Government Account represents a foundational change, incorporating regular audits and dedicated community development funds with performance-based allocations.
- b) Effective governance requires a State-Local Government Joint Development Commission to coordinate activities and resolve conflicts, while comprehensive capacity building programs enhance Community Development Association leadership capabilities.
- c) There must be institutional framework which connects with an integrated bottom-up planning system, utilizing digital platforms to facilitate annual development summits and evidence-based project selection across governance tiers.

- d) Community engagement manifests through ward-level Development Forums that strengthen dialogue between officials and community members, establishing participatory budgeting and feedback mechanisms.
- e) There should be governance structures to support independent monitoring and evaluation system with multi-stakeholder representation, focusing on project efficiency, resource utilization, and social impact assessment.
- f) Reform is another key structure i.e. reform demands strong political commitment, adequate resources, and a phased implementation approach that prioritizes fiscal reforms.
- g) There should ultimate effectiveness of this governance transformation depends on sustained governmental support, meaningful community engagement, and systematic progress monitoring to ensure transparency and accountability in state-local relations.

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On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest among the authors.

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