



Reviving Public Service Delivery at the Grassroots through Public-Private Partnership in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

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Abstract

The paper examines the performance of local governments in Nigeria with special reference to their service delivery responsibilities. Local government is described as a veritable instrument of socio-economic development at the grassroots and it was for this purpose that it became constitutionally recognised as a level of government through the 1976 Local Government Reform. However, the capacity of the Nigerian local governments to carry out responsibilities assigned to them has been jaundiced by the unbridled attack on their finances by higher public authorities, particularly state governments. Specifically, local governments' share of revenue from the federation account and other sources of revenue have regrettably been annexed by the state governments, thereby reducing local authorities to governments on papers only. Using the secondary sources of data, the article examines how local government service delivery responsibilities can be resuscitated through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement. The paper revealed general absence of standard framework for the adoption of PPP to tap into the available huge private investment for public service delivery at the grassroots. The paper recommends active collaboration of the stakeholders in grassroots development toward developing a standard framework for PPP to restore the status of Nigerian local governments as primary providers of public services.

Keywords: Local Government, Public-Private Partnership, Service Delivery, Nigeria, #SDG17.

Introduction

It is common knowledge that Nigeria is an agglomeration of several ethnic groups, which have been roughly grouped under different sub-national entities called states. Both the first and second amalgamation – Lagos Colony and Southern Protectorate in 1906 and the Southern and Northern Protectorates in 1914 – were carried out through mere administrative fiats. The fear of domination and uncertainties created

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by this ‘marriage of inconvenience’ led to serious agitations bordering on representation and power sharing. These agitations manifested during different constitutional conferences in 1950, 1953, 1954, 1957, and 1958 (Falola, 2021).

Aside from the issues of representation and power sharing between or among the different levels of government in Nigeria, the question of acceptable revenue formula has remained the most hotly contested. Several revenue commissions (including Phillipson, 1946; Hicks Phillipson, 1951; Chicks, 1953; Raisman, 1958; Binns, 1964; Dinna, 1968-1969; Aboyade, 1977; and Okigbo, 1980) tried unsuccessfully to produce acceptable revenue sharing formula for the country. In addition to these, Decrees No. 15 of 1967, 13 of 1970, 9 of 1971, 6 and 7 of 1975, 49 of 1989, and 98 of 1993 were promulgated to achieve acceptable revenue sharing formula for the country. It is worthy of note that while other efforts to get acceptable revenues formula have been ad-hoc in nature, the 1989 National Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission and CAP R7 LFN 2004 remain the only statutory bodies established for continuous adjustment of revenue allocations in the country (Bello-Imam, 2010; Onuigbo and Innocent, 2015).

Amid the struggle between the federal and state authorities in relation to who gets the lion share of the revenue from the federation account, local government institution became elevated and recognised as the third tier of government in the country through the 1976 Local Government Reform. One ‘golden’ significance of this elevation of the local government institution to the status of a distinct tier of government in Nigeria according to Oyewo (2018) is its inclusion into the club of beneficiaries of statutory allocation from the federation account. Since the re-arrangement of Nigeria into a federation of three tiers, through the 1976 Reforms and its subsequent ‘constitutionalisation’ in 1979, the politics of Nigerian fiscal federalism has become a three-horse race.

However, in spite of the fact that allocation to each of Nigeria’s three levels of government (vertical allocation) is a statutory matter, the 52.68 and 26.72% accruable to the federal and state governments in that respective order appears to be largely due to the preponderance of their powers rather than enormity of responsibilities. While the federal and 36 state governments in the country receive 79.4% of the total revenue, the local governments that are supposed to function as centres of service delivery by virtue of their closeness to the grassroots are only entitled to 20.60% of the total revenue from the Federation Account (Bello-Imam, 2010; Onuigbo and Innocent, 2015). The statutory responsibilities of the grassroots governments in Nigeria as contained in the Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) clearly show local governments as a very important centre of public service delivery to Nigerians. Despite this, the percentage of revenue accruable to this level of government has remained between 10% and 20.6%. For example, statutory allocation to local governments in Nigeria started

with 10%, increased to 15% in 1990, 20% in 1992, and 20.6% in 2004 (NEITI, 2021; Onuigbo and Innocent, 2015).

Meanwhile, the disparity between the responsibilities of the Nigerian local governments and their share of statutory revenue from the federation account is nothing compared with the gap between how much is allocated and how much is released. According to section 162 (6) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), each state is mandated to have a dedicated account – State and Local Government Joint Account – that every allocation due to the local government councils from the Federation Account and the Government of the State must be paid into. This provision was apparently made for the purpose of control and coordination. However, state governments in Nigeria have abused this constitutional provision to settle their age-long struggle for more revenue by annexing local government’s share of statutory revenue, thereby increasing their own share of revenue through the back door.

This ugly situation has put local government in a very difficult situation to function as a government and centre of service delivery unlike in the previous years. For example, during the First, Second and aborted Third Republics when the taxing powers and other revenue sources of local governments in the country had not been amputated, they were reputable for providing important services such as sanitary inspection, construction and maintenance of roads, maintenance of law and order, among other functions. Although several studies have been conducted on the influence of financial challenges on service delivery at the local government level in Nigeria (Muraina, 2016; Agba et al., 2014; Bello-Imam, 2010), none of these have examined Public-Private Partnership (PPP) as a way of mitigating this problem. Therefore, the main objective of the paper is to explore PPP as an alternative funding arrangement toward rejuvenating the local government system in Nigeria. Relevant data on local government finances and other germane issues about local government administration were drawn from secondary sources and were subjected to interpretative analysis.

Review of Relevant Literature

Local Government

The term local government has been interchangeably used with several others such as grassroots administration, local administration, and native administration. However, the politico-administrative basis of the term local government separates it from those related terms mentioned above. Local government, like several concepts in the social and administrative sciences, does not lend itself to an ultimate or universal definition. However, this paper offers clarifications to enhance the understanding of the concepts, delineate its contours, and help in reducing the ambiguities associated with its deployment for scholarly purposes.

Local government has its meaning embedded in two different words, namely, 'Local' and 'Government'. The word 'Local' is derived from a Latin word "locus" which means a place, a nearby neighbourhood or a sub-division of a larger community. On the other hand, government represents a political instrument for the determination and implementation of policies toward addressing issues of common concern within a given territory. Put differently, government connotes a group of people with the authority to govern a country or state or any other such establishments (Oyewo, 2018). In a related dimension, Ojofeitimi (2000) opined that the word 'local' means that councils are meant for small communities while 'government' indicates certain attributes of government. From the foregoing, local government can be defined as an entity with authority to determine and implement collective decisions over common issues at the grassroots. In other words, local government represents the mechanics and structures through which the objectives of government at the grassroots level are developed, articulated and implemented.

Invariably, the essence of local government is to authoritatively address local sensitivities in the way preferred by the local people (Oyewo, 2018). On the essence of local government, Agagu (2004) asserted that the need to promote balanced development, stimulate citizens' participation, and induce quick service delivery remain the chief justifications for the government at the grassroots. Thus, the grassroots remain the centre of actions where we have local government, local administration and the like but the point of departure between these concepts is that local government carries a political authority while others do not. Local government is an establishment with elected or selected people with the authority to legislate and decide over important matters at that level. Therefore, local government is a product of devolution. Through devolution, grassroots government is given substantial powers to generate revenue and deploy resources to cater to the welfare of those residing within its area of authority (Orewa, 1991).

Nevertheless, the polysemous nature of local government has continued to elicit interests toward constructing a universally acceptable definition for it. Most of these attempts revolve around the structure, composition and functions of local governments. For example, the UN Office for Public Administration (1982, p. 14) defines local government as a political subdivision of a nation or state, empowered by law and granted reasonable control over certain responsibilities including powers to generate revenue and exert labour either by elected or selected representatives. Similarly, Awotokun (2000) sees it as a subordinate level of government, both in scope of its constitutional power and area of jurisdiction: and two, that local government is perceived as a creation of super-ordinate or superior governmental level.

Similarly, local government is a unit of administration with defined powers and authority imbued with relative autonomy while its decision-making organ as well as its chief executive could be elected or selected (Bello-Imam and Uga, 2004).

It is perhaps on the basis of this that Awofeso (2004) maintained that the government at the grassroots is basically a product of decentralization. He sees local government as a subordinate level of government, both in the scope of its constitutional powers and jurisdiction. Despite the fact that definitions of local government are as many as the writers on the subject matter, certain elements are common to all the definitions and these include:

- a. Public authority at the local level;
- b. Self-governing entity with a legal status;
- c. Powers over specific issues
- d. Powers of expenditure and revenue through taxes and other means;
- e. Territorial expression;
- f. Distinct tier of government;
- g. Powers to exercise authority over a set of people;
- h. Responsibility to promote welfare at the grassroots;
- i. Constituted by elected or selected representatives (Oyewo, 2018, pp 2-3).

Public Service

There are two major ways by which the concept of public service has always been deployed. First, it denotes what the government does to serve the population. In this regard, public service is regarded as the entire gamut of services provided directly or indirectly by a government to the people living within its jurisdiction. These include education, health care, transportation, telecommunication, gas, drinkable water and waste management. Second, the concept describes ‘the job of individuals in the employment of government. These include the elected and appointed officials on one hand, and on the other, the tenure-track civil service with a relatively permanent mandate to serve the public’ (Ezekwesili, 2011, p. 19). The bureaucratic system that makes it easier to translate the vision of the former into tangible performance measures in the form of services to the citizens according to Ezekwesili (2011) are among those that fall under this category.

While political actors must pass an electoral test to be considered legitimate, members of the civil service or public employees who work for agencies or parastatals as well as the core civil service as a whole derive their authority through the bureaucratic arrangement. This arrangement is characterised by clear hierarchy, specialisation, set of formal rules, recruitment based on competent examination, system of reward, among others. These defining attributes or

characteristics are crafted to aid the effective and efficient implementation of government programmes and policies. In this paper, the term public service is strictly used to describe various goods and services provided by government for the generality of the people.

According to Olowu (2002, p. 123), traditional theories of government institutions start with ‘an investigation of what determines the categories of public services’. "Public" products and services are those that demand ‘jointness’ of use or utilisation, and are difficult to divide. The foundation of a government's legitimacy to tax and rule its citizens is its ability to offer a variety of services that its citizens need. Olowu (2002, p. 123) explains that governments owe ‘their legitimacy and existence to the reality that there are activities in which the likelihood of market inefficiency is significant’. The difference between private and public goods is that public goods administration is mainly a political process aimed at public service delivery while private good/administration is often about business activity and is profit oriented (Marue, Jubankanda and Namusi, 2016; Yagboyaju, 2016).

Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

The term PPP represents a cooperative arrangement between private investors and government or its agencies for the purpose of providing public service, typically on a long-term basis. It encompasses several types of arrangement between private and public sector agencies towards public service delivery. Although, PPP is primarily a funding model for public infrastructure projects and initiatives, it is also argued that it brings gains of efficiency associated with the private sector and enhances public sector reform through a reallocation of roles, incentives, and accountability (Egbewole, 2011; Asian Development Bank, 2008). Similarly, certain people have claimed that involving more private sector actors in the process of providing public services enhances transparency and accountability. For example, Bovaird (2004) observed that the term PPP denotes an all-inclusive term for public-private frameworks, and it has moved from the realm of contested concepts to prevalent practices. According to Oyedele (2013), the important features of PPP include:

- a. It represents a collaborative effort between public and private entities aimed at project execution in a manner that human and material resources of both parties are brought together for optimum performance;
- b. Operationally, most PPP arrangements are structured in a way that finance, design, construction and operation of projects and associated risks are ceded to the private sector. Government entities mainly carry out regulatory responsibilities and bear certain risks;
- c. PPP arrangements revolve around combining the strengths of the public and private sectors in the areas of skills and resources for greater performance and output; and

- d. Private sector initiatives, capabilities and efficiency are brought into government activities with PPP arrangements.

However, while PPP is not all about funding or private investment in government infrastructure, issues of finance have remained the most prominent reason why PPP is commonly embraced. For this reason, the Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) have emerged as a major component of PPP. Under this initiative, policy goals of governments are achieved while the capital costs are transferred to the private investors. Under PFIs, the collaboration between the government and private investors is such that capital finance for a public project is raised by private investors while the government, in return, concedes partial or whole ownership or rents to the private investors on a short or long term basis after its completion. The PPP, to a large extent, represents an alternative funding arrangement which allows the government to render services to the masses through means other than the conventional sources of government revenue, while protecting investors to recoup investments, make profit through charges payable by the citizens and or government's agencies for access to goods and services.

According to Egbewole (2011), the private sector brings along more than funding in a PPP arrangement. Operational efficiencies, innovative technologies and managerial effectiveness, and risk sharing are some of the major justifications for PPP. Commonly adopted models of PPPs include Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT), Build-Own-Operate (BOO), Build-Operate-Lease-Transfer (BOLT), Design-Build-Operate-Transfer (DBOT), Lease-Develop-Operate (LDO), Operate-Maintain-Transfer (OMT) [Bevir, 2009]. The major sectors in which PPPs have been completed worldwide include: power generation and distribution, water and sanitation, refuse disposal, pipelines, hospitals, school buildings and teaching facilities, stadiums, air traffic control, prisons, railways, roads, billing and other information technology systems, and housing (Asian Development Bank, 2008).

Public-Private Partnership and Public Service Delivery in Nigeria

The Public-Private Partnership has emerged as a tool for enhancing service delivery responsibility of government around the world. This initiative has been employed to render services in several sectors such as security, housing, transportation, health and other critical sectors. In the United States, for example, PPP arrangement has been extended to more sensitive areas such as prison administration and national security. For instance, DynCorp and Aegis Defence Services were some of the major private security companies employed for security services, including serious combat operations in Iraq (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2005).

In Nigeria, the PPP arrangement is neither new nor strange in the country's public sector. The introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme in 1986 was the first attempt to bring private investment into the provisions of services that may be considered as public goods in Nigeria. Furthermore, the enactment of the Public Enterprise Privatisation and Commercialisation Act of 1999, which subsequently led to the establishment of the Bureau of Public Enterprises (PBE) also added impetus to efforts of tapping into private investment to provide public services in the country (Omoleke, 2008). Although PPP is neither the same as privatisation nor commercialisation, their introduction marked the beginning of a new era in Nigeria under which the public authorities no longer consider themselves as the sole financier of public infrastructure in the country.

However, in its bid to create a standard framework for the adoption of PPP in the country, the federal government of Nigeria by statute in 2005 established the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC). Accordingly, the ICRC developed both national policy on PPP and guidelines for its supervisory role. Sequel to this, every PPP project is expected to be compliant with the Fiscal Responsibility Act, Public Procurement Act and other regulations before submission to the ICRC for approval. Similarly, there have been a number of sector-specific laws for the regulation of Public Partnership and Infrastructural Development in the country. Examples of these are found in the rail and aviation sectors. In this regard, several projects such as Murtala Muhammed Domestic Airport Terminal, the domestic terminal of the international airport in Lagos and its ancillary facilities were developed under a build-operate-transfer (BOT) arrangement. Similarly, Katampe District (Abuja) infrastructure was undertaken under a design, build, finance and transfer PPP model between Deanshanger Project Ltd., a private partner, and the Federal Government of Nigeria (Law Review, 2020; Nwangwu, 2022).

At the state level, the Lekki-Epe toll road concession, for example, was executed on a BOT basis between the Lagos State Government and the Lekki Concession Company (LCC). The agreement between the parties in respect of this contract provided that the concessionaire will recoup its investment through remittances from the toll fees payable by the users. The Lagos State Executive Council and the Chief Executive are the approving authorities in matters of PPP in the state. However, the enabling law on the PPP in the state also empowers the State House of Assembly to ratify any such agreement before implementation. The story of PPP in Ekiti State of Nigeria is a little different. The Chief Executive Officer of the state reserves the power of the approving authority. According to the enabling law on PPP in the state, the Public Procurement Board has the powers to award concession, subject to the approval of the State Governor. Similarly, the Oyo State Public-Private Partnership Law of 2013 provides for the establishment of an Office of PPP for the purpose of enhancing infrastructural development and service delivery. Sequel to this, the administration of Senator Abiola Ajimobi

initiated series of PPP funded projects that covered education, waste management, housing, energy generation, road construction and hospital rehabilitation (Oyo State Public Private Partnership Law No. 61 of 2013; Law Review, 2020).

Local Government, Public Service Delivery, and PPP in Nigeria

Local government system by virtue of Native Authority Ordinance 14 of 1916 was the cradle of modern system of administration in Nigeria. The Colonial Administration in Nigeria employed Native Administration – a system under which indigenous chiefs were used and promoted as instrument of Colonial Administration. This practice continued until 1947 when it was quietly abandoned for a conciliar arrangement after the Second World War (Oyewo, 2018). Also, the Richard Constitution of 1946 that promoted regional configuration of Nigeria led to a situation under which regional government started to re-arrange local government in a way preferred by each of the three regions, thereby, leading to the abandonment of ‘national local administrative system’. These developments brought about the introduction of multi-tier and multi-purpose local governments based on democratic values into grassroots administration in Nigeria’s First Republic (Maduabum, 2008; Bello-Imam, 2007).

Nigeria’s Second Republic local governments, through the Reform of 1976, saw the return of ‘national local administrative system’ for the second time by prescribing unified structure, functions and conditions of service for local government and its employees across the country. It elevated local governments into a full-fledged third tier of government and for the first time made it a beneficiary of statutory allocation from the federation account. The Reform also prescribed advisory role for traditional rulers among others. The Local Government Reform of 1984 and Administrative Reforms of 1988, 1989 and 1992 affected Nigeria’s aborted Third Republic local governments politically, administratively and financially. It transferred the power to dissolve local councils to the President (Decree No. 15 Of 1989), abolished ministry of local government, drove the idea of presidentialism to the local government, and increased local government’s share of statutory allocation to 20% (Maduabum, 2008;Ugwu, 2001; Bello-Imam, 2010).

Indeed, the capacity of the Nigerian local governments to deliver public goods and services during the previous republics could easily earn the title of ‘glorious years’ when compared to contemporary times. For example, local governments during the Colonial and Nigeria’s First Republic were in charge of Native Police and Prisons in addition to the provision of public goods and services such as feeder roads, primary education, public sanitation, among others. Similarly, local governments of the Second Republic largely benefited from the 1976 Local Government Reform. The direct access to statutory allocation from the Federation

Accounts assisted the local governments toward better performance (Ihemeje, 2018; Bello-Imam 2011; Monday & Wijaya, 2022).

Local government institution under the current dispensation, through several sections of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), extensively borrowed from the idea of the 1976 Reforms. The Constitution grouped the mandatory functions of local government into eleven major areas while it also listed those functions which may be performed in conjunction with the governments at the state level. Like the 1976 Reforms, the major justifications for retaining local government institution as a full-fledged level of government in the 1999 constitution (as amended) include to:

- a. provide services and coordinate development in a way preferred by the grassroots people by granting substantial powers to their elected or selected representatives;
- b. encourage self-government based on democratic ideas for the purpose of promoting local initiatives and develop purposeful leadership;
- c. stimulate human and material resources by involving grassroots people in the development of their locality; and
- d. offer a two-way channel of communication between local communities and higher levels of authority.

Therefore, as observed by Ikelegbe (2005), provision of public services and regulation of public affairs within local government area are considered as the basic justifications for the government at the grassroots. However, despite the lofty ideas and litany of responsibilities assigned to the country's third level of government, higher levels of government have financially crippled and disabled this level of government, thereby robbing it of the necessary financial autonomy to carry out its service delivery responsibilities. The onslaught against the grassroots government in Nigeria is carried out mainly through the series of abuses and mishandling of State-Local Government Joint Account. Section 162 (6&8) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) provides that each state shall maintain a special account to be called 'State-Local Government Joint Account' into which shall be paid all allocations to the local government councils of the state from the Federation Account and from the Government of the State. The purpose of this provision is to enhance control and coordination.

However, nearly all state governments have either used this provision to either annex local government revenue under the veil of this law or delay the disbursement to the detriment of the local governments. Consequently, the institution responsible for grassroots government in Nigeria has been rendered

incapacitated due to their inability to function as a crucible for public service delivery at the local level. Specifically, state governments have crippled the finances of local governments in their domain, thereby making it impossible for them to carry out their assigned responsibilities. For example, a former Edo State Governor, Lucky Igbinedion expended a sum of 528 million naira on rice importation and compelled each Local Government Chairman to pay 5 million naira for onward distribution to their local government areas. According to Vanguard (April 11, 2001), the Governor also mandated the local governments to award a grant of 1.5 million each to his father's University - Igbinedion University.

Equally, in what seems like a case of double jeopardy, the administration of Adebayo Alao Akala in Oyo State unilaterally purchased rigs for the 33 local governments of the state from the revenue accruable to the Local Government. Aside from the fact that local governments in the state were not carried along in the decision to spend their money, the purchased rigs were said to be "best described as 'toy rigs' that could not function for six months before developing faults" (Vanguard, July 10, 2020). More recently, the Chairman of Ijebu East Local Government, Wale Adedayo accused Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun of diverting 10.8 billion naira local government fund. The Chairman maintained that the illegal appropriation of local council funds by the Governor has undermined the capacity of the local governments in the state to render services, thereby subjecting their officials to public ridicule for non-performance (Punch August 29, 2023).

Nevertheless, the state governments are not alone in the abuse of local government finance. In year 2000, for example, the Federal Ministry of Finance arbitrarily deducted 4.5 million naira from the allocation payable to the local government to purchase 1000 brand new Prado Jeeps for the Nigerian Police despite the non-inclusion of this expenditure in the budget of any of the 774 local government authorities in the country (The Guardian, February 5, 2000). Another major impediment to the service delivery responsibility of local governments in Nigeria is the usurpation of revenue yielding responsibilities of local governments across the country. According to Oyewo (2018), state governments in Nigeria are in the habit of hijacking the revenue yielding sources to themselves at the expense of local governments. For example, tenement rates listed as part of the sources of local government revenue have now been taken over by nearly all states of the federation. Other viable sources of local government revenue such as motor park rates and refuse collection and disposal fees have equally been taken over by the state governments or their agents.

Expectedly, the onslaught against local government finances has impacted its finance and service delivery responsibility negatively. Unlike during Nigeria's First and Second Republics when local governments in Nigeria functioned as centre of service delivery to the grassroots, local government institution in the present

republic has been reduced to the status of an onlooker and may be best described as the shadow of its past. Consequently, the onslaught on the local government finances across Nigeria has created a huge funding gap particularly, considering the litany of responsibilities listed for this level of government as contained in the Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). This has led to shortage of public infrastructure at the grassroots in the country. Delivery of services and enhancement of welfare objectives of the local governments in Nigeria have therefore become a forlorn hope.

Meanwhile, efforts of the local governments in Nigeria to survive the financial war against them by higher public authorities in the country have made PPP arrangements attractive. The PPP arrangement is not only advantageous for the reason of tapping into idle funds in the private sector for local development, it is also capable of attracting investment in some of the viable areas under local government administration. Similarly, driving PPP into local governance will assist in reducing the rate at which grassroots development is politicised in Nigeria. More so, political considerations have for a long period constituted a major drawback for development at the local level (Yagboyaju and Oyewo, 2017). Therefore, the comprehensive adoption of PPP at the local level will enable business environment to share space with political environment at the grassroots. The PPP arrangement offers the hope of driving global best practices into the administration of the grassroots. In addition, private sector efficiency, particularly in the area of mobilisation of resources may be tapped into to bring about rapid development of the grassroots.

Although, the use of PPP for the provision of services is not entirely strange to the local governments in Nigeria but largely limited to areas of revenue collection, project financing, and operation of public infrastructure such as transportation, parks and recreational facilities. For example, Oluyole Local Government, Oyo State, has at various times contracted out revenue collection from motor parks. More recently Oke-Ibadan Local Council Development Area, Oyo State, went into partnership with a private investor in the area of construction of a shopping complex on Build Operate and Transfer basis. However, there is yet a comprehensive framework for handling PPP projects at the local government level despite the need for private investment in the provision of private goods at the grassroots level. Local governments in Nigeria, at present, only go into contractual agreements with private investors per project through the instrument of memorandum of understanding which are required to be sent to the Ministry of Local Government, and Justice Ministry for vetting. In addition to this administrative bottleneck, lack of standard framework for PPP at the local government level does not allow this all-important tier of government to fully annex the benefit of PPP for service provision and mobilisation of resources at the grassroots for socio-economic development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Restoring effective public service delivery in Nigerian local government through PPP involves several steps and considerations. First among these steps is to evolve a robust collaboration among the stakeholders; state governments; private investors; professional groups; interest groups; representatives of community development associations (CDAs) and local government authorities. This engagement, among others, should be used to build a comprehensive legal framework for PPPs at the local government level. Doing this will require drafting or amending existing laws and regulations. Similarly, a comprehensive assessment of felt needs of the grassroots people is required in order to identify the specific areas of service delivery that need improvement in the local government area. This could include healthcare, education, infrastructure and waste management. This will assist in the identification of specific projects or services that could benefit from private sector involvement.

Furthermore, successful adoption of PPP for grassroots development requires a transparent procurement procedure and a system of effective risk allocation. A transparent and competitive procurement process is needed to select private sector partners. This process should prioritize companies with the required manpower and financial resources, track record of successful PPPs and a commitment to local development. As a corollary to the foregoing, the risk allocation aspect requires defining the roles and responsibilities of the public and private sectors in the partnership, including risk-sharing mechanisms. This is to ensure that risks are allocated appropriately to the party best equipped to manage them.

Additionally, the successful adoption of PPP initiative for the purpose of grassroots development demands effective system of performance monitoring. This will enhance a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track the performance of the PPP projects. This will promote a continuous assessment of the private sector partner's capacity to meet its obligations and achieve the desired outcomes. A major way to achieve this is to promote community involvement. Engaging local communities in the PPP projects will ensure that their needs and concerns are considered. This can enhance project acceptance and sustainability. Furthermore, there is a need for a renewed effort towards capacity building at the local government level. Local government officials who would effectively manage and oversee PPPs require training in contract management, financial management, project monitoring etc. Lastly, issues of sustainability, transparency and accountability must be well attended to for a successful adoption of PPP towards building revenue gap orchestrated by the raid on local government revenue by higher levels of government in Nigeria.

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