

CLASS: SS2
SUBJECT: GOVIC
TOPIC: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS IN NIGERIA
WEEK: 8
TERM: SECOND

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THE 1976 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS

As a result of the shortcomings of different local government systems since the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, the federal ministry government under the Murtala/Obasanjo administration effected a uniform local government administration throughout the country in 1976. The reform was meant to harmonize their structure and functions.

The main features of the reforms are:

1. **Uniform Local Administration:** The 1976 reform introduced a uniform system whereby the native authorities, municipal councils, district and county councils were scrapped and replaced with the title of local government councils nationwide.
2. **Statutory Roles:** the reform created statutory functions for the Local Governments. For instance they were required to provide dispensaries, maternity home, pay the salaries of primary school teachers and maintain school building.
3. **Third Tier of Government:** Local governments became the third tier government of the federation and were granted limited governmental powers over certain subjects.

4. **Full Time Service:** the reform introduced a full-time chairman as the chief executive of the local government with supervisory councillors as heads of departments or committees on finance, and economic development, health, education, youths etc.
5. **Condition of Service:** the reforms harmonized the conditions of service of local government's personnel with the personnel of state and federal government.
6. **Appointment and Discipline:** the federal government introduced the local government service board or commission throughout the country to control appointments, promotion, transfer and discipline of local government employees.
7. **Position of Traditional Rulers:** they were mandated to establish a traditional or emirate council whose primary responsibility was to maintain peace, law and order within their domains.
8. The reforms excluded **traditional rulers** from the local government councils.
9. The **federal government became directly involved** in the administration of the local government by providing policy guidelines to be implemented at the local level.
10. The local governments were given **take-off grants** to enable them provide infrastructure for the people.

MEASURES TO IMPROVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

1. **Transparency:** Transparency is the foundation of accountability. Local government officials should be concerned with increasing transparency and making data more readily available to the citizens. It will allow people to see what their government spent their money on.
2. **Honesty:** honesty is being loyal to the people that they are serving. Local government officials should be able to fulfil their electoral promises. They should learn to be honest by showing loyalty to the people, telling and showing people their budget, fulfilling their electoral promises and operating an open door policy.

3. **Integrity:** this is the quality of having and manifesting good moral principles. When the local government officials are men with integrity there will be good values in the society.
4. **Statutory Allocation:** there should be provision of statutory allocation from the central and state governments so that they can provide the required services to the people.
5. **Political Autonomy:** political autonomy should be given to local governments and they should be free from political control.
6. **Training Programme:** there should be training and retraining of local government staff for effective performance.
7. **Creation of New Local Government:** creation of new local governments should be based on national interest of Nigeria and viability and not on political or sentimental consideration.

ASSIGNMENT

Identify any seven problems confronting local governments in Nigeria.