

## **Local Government Administration and Minority Rights Issues in Michika and Madagali Local Government Areas of Adamawa State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines local government administration and the question of minority rights in Madagali and Michika Local Government Areas of Adamawa state, Nigeria. The study utilized both primary and secondary sources of data, using survey method and available documents. The objective is to interrogate management strategies for even development among local government areas in Adamawa State. The method of data collection was the field method involving primary and secondary sources. The data collected were analyzed using simple statistical tools, cross tabulation, tables, multiple regression equation ( $Y = a + bx_1 + bx_2 + \dots + bx_n + E$ ) and partway coefficient to determine the effect of management of minority issues on local government development as an independent variable against dependent variables like; minority issues in the local government such as decision making on minority issues; opinions and responses of communities on minority issues: Inter-governmental relations on minority issues and minority participation in decision making process for even development. The result indicated that, minority issues are impediments to local government administration and development among newly created local government areas in Nigeria now and in the future. The study recommends that, key minority issues/persons at local government level should participate in the art and process of management, administration, developmental programs and hence periodic review of policies on the management of minority issues among local government councils in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Development, Local Government Administration, Madagali, Michika, Minority rights issues

### **Introduction**

The boundary of what is today known as Nigeria was defined in 1914 following the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates. Then, Nigeria became a federation of three regions at independence in 1960. She then evolved into a federation comprising, at one time or the other 12, 19, 21, 30 and now 36 states with 774 local government councils. Since Nigeria came into being as a political entity, the re-organization of the Nigerian nation has been an ongoing phenomenon in response to two

main factors; Willink (1957) reported that it was in the quest for even development at the grassroots and the desire to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the various ethnic and sub-ethnic minorities for local autonomy. This has continued to be actualized through the break-up and re-constitution of local government councils.

The restructuring and reconstitution of local government councils, though simple and routine, is in reality a complex process. It can be bedeviled with intrigues, especially when dealing with minority issues at the level of local government councils. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines and analyzes minority issues in relation to the creation of local government councils vis-à-vis meaningful development at the local government councils with special attention on Michika and Madagali Local Government Councils of Adamawa state. The objective is to come out with strategies for addressing minority issues among ethnic and sub-ethnic groups for even development in the study area.

Adebayo (1989) reports that the structuring of countries and nations into territorial administrative units of states and local government councils for political and administrative purposes has a historical trend. When a new state or local government council is created out of an old one, the decision on minority issues has always been the first to be addressed. The standing trend in Nigeria has been for the government of the day to set up a committee to determine how the issue will be resolved, especially when it comes to the issues on how to tackle minority issues of the defunct units among the new entities. According to Adekanye (1989), most of these exercises, especially in the recent past, took place under military regimes. While it has been easier to carry out the exercise under a military rule because of the dictatorial nature of military regimes, it is always a difficult exercise during a democratic/civilian period due to the rancorous interaction and processes associated with minority issues under a democratic setting. Among the thorny issues associated with this is to manipulation for selfish reasons which often led to dissatisfaction of people in the affected areas. The dissatisfaction is usually borne from the procedures and or methods by which the minority issues are addressed, all related to employment, administrative positions and even admission into schools at all levels.

In the wake of the creation of new local government councils in Adamawa State vide decree number 21 of 1991; Michika Local Government Area was split into two local government units consisting of Madagali and Michika Local Government Councils. Hitherto, the two local government areas were under what had been named Michika Local Government Area. Given the background of the area as being made up of fairly literate communities, different ethnic groups with different socio-cultural values, etc., It was expected that problems will certainly arise, leading to the contentious issues on minority issues between the two Local Government Councils as they break up. Accordingly, committees were inaugurated with terms of reference to determine how the minority issues

of the parent local government should be determined between the emergent Local Government Councils. It is important to note that the major tribe in Michika local government is HIGGI while that of Madagali is MARGI. The minority tribes of Sukur, Mahakam and Fulani are common to the two Local Government Areas. This paper identifies and examines the local government administration and minority issues in Madagali and Michika Local Government areas of Adamawa State.

### **Creation of Local Government in Nigeria: Historical perspective**

Historically, in many societies, a dominant group of people exercises greater influence over government, business, and culture than other groups. Okpu (1977) states that, minority groups differ from the dominant group in some ways, and they often suffer from discrimination and have less political power. Traditionally, minority groups are defined on the basis of cultural differences, such as language or religion. In practice, however, minority groups are defined by both physical and cultural differences. Examples of minority groups in the United States include African Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans.

In Nigeria, minorities have a lower average socioeconomic status than the dominant group in their society. According to Willink, Philip and Sheerer (1958), this is the case of the major tribes like the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba' against minority tribes like the Kanuri, Tiv and many other tribes in Nigeria. Minorities also often face barriers, for instance, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides that, a minister must come from each state of origin which consists of many Local Government Areas. However, the minority groups are not always given chances to produce a candidate. In the same way, in the admission into higher educational institutions, especially State owned schools, where minority tribes are not always given little or no consideration when it comes to catchment areas.

In recent times in Nigeria, there seems to be a continuous conflict between the major and sub-ethnic groups due to the inability of the government of the day to address the minority issues. This has serious setback on the development of communities at the grassroots.

Awolowo (1947) reports that on a political map, the biggest red patch on the West Coast of Africa is Nigeria. It covers a land area of 923,773 square meters. Similarly, Lugard and Kirk-Green (1965) remark that, it is one third of British India or the size of France, Belgium and the United Kingdom put together. Its population is estimated at over 120,000,000 people as per the 1991 population census figures. Today, the estimated population is 160,000,000.

Nigeria consists of different ethnic and sub-ethnic groups. Each group has certain generic and political features common to all in the group, but each has certain differential characteristics peculiar to it and thus their needs and wants are based on similar political values. A country with these varied characteristics and features entails restructuring for better governance, improved efficiency and equity among the groups and sub-ethnic groups. Oliver (2001) reports that, specific factors led to the adoption of a federal system in Nigeria among which include; diversity of the country, desire for political unity in spite of ethnic and religious differences, shared colonial experience since 1914 amalgamation by the colonialists, problems associated with the emergence of tribal nationalism and ethnic based political parties, desire for economic and political viability as a country and general disenchantment with experimenting the unitary constitutions and the eventual breakdown of the Macpherson Constitution. Until today, these factors form the basis for the creation of states and local government councils in Nigeria. The re-structuring exercise continued with the creation of more states from nineteen in 1987 to thirty-six in 1997.

Further changes in the administrative composition of the country where the redefinition of the political regions as local government councils and the creation of Abuja Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in 1991. With this, Lagos ceased to be the Federal Capital, a position it held right from before independence. There are at present 36 states with a total of 774 local government councils in the country. According to Dlakwa (1997), this is an indication that the creation of administrative units would be deemed a continuous process in Nigeria as various ethnic and sub-ethnic groups continue to press for the creation of more states and local government areas for obvious socioeconomic and political conditions. Okoli (1986) states that, the demand for, and creation of local government councils could be traced as far back to the advent of the McPherson Constitution in 1950 when an attempt was made to democratize administration at the local government level. Seeing that local governments are very important in the life of the entire community, there were more agitations by ethnic and sub-ethnic nationalities to have their own Local Government Areas for economic, cultural and sociopolitical development of their areas. Since then, there has been the creation of more and more States and Local Government Councils in Nigeria to serve the yearnings of the diverse ethnic and sub-ethnic nationalities in the areas of social, economic and political development.

It is imperative to note that, the existing structures of local government councils in Nigeria have come a long way through different administrations. This could be referred to as a circumstantial structure of local government councils in Nigeria. In 1985 the Ibrahim Babangida's military administration ordered the replacement of the Muhammadu Buhari's "Sole Administrator" system with a five-man committee system of which one must be a woman. Most of the programmes of Babangida's regime gave credence to the wishes and aspirations of the people as reported by Adebayo (1989) that the program put in place public political debate and discussion as the bases for reforming the federal structure. It

was also to ensure collective participation in governance, motivate the physical and economic development and create the conditions for employment opportunities and to provide social services that will improve the well-being of rural people. For these reasons, many communities and or ethnic groups sought for the creation of more local government areas. Thus, between 1976 and 1996, 774 local government councils were created in Nigeria, as shown in Table 1

**Table 1: Local Government Councils between 1976 and 1996**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Number of local governments</b>
1976	301
1989	449
1991	589
1996	774

**Source:** Augustus Adebayo, 2000

The gains of local government under the military deduced from Table 2.1 show that 774 local government areas were created within 20 years in Nigeria (301 + 473 = 774). Until this time, local government areas were created in pursuance of the same reasons given before, that is, even or equal socio-cultural development of the ethnic and sub-ethnic groups that existed in the 774 local government councils in Nigeria. The strategic question is: how has the creation of local government councils addressed the minority issues/rights?

### **Methodology**

This study adapted survey design. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Questionnaires were structured in both open and close-ended forms to obtain the desired information from the respondents. This created a provision for more uniformity of ideas and thoughts for easy assessment of the intrigues involved in the minority issues related to employment, administrative positions and employment at the level of local government councils. One hundred and twenty (120) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents. The population for this study was 1200 for Michika and Madagali Local Government Areas jointly put at (600+600) that is, 300 people for major tribes and minority tribes from each local government of the study. This was to enable a cross sectional coverage of local government staff and stakeholders that take decisions, fully employed and have full participation in development programs of the local government.

A sample size of 120 (60+60) that is, 30 for major and minority tribes from each of the local government of study was used. This figure consisted of 5 directors of the local government areas, 5 district heads, 5 ward heads, 5 youth leaders, 5 voluntary organizations, 5 women representatives and 60 members of the public from each of the local government

areas were utilized as sample size for the study. Thus, 120 copies of questionnaires were distributed to respondents in the two local government councils of study. The purpose is to obtain information on how minority issues, participation and employment in the two local government councils of Adamawa state were dealt with.

A purposive random sampling method was used to select the respondents. The sampling method was based on the number of local government staff and stakeholders that take decisions, fully employed and have full participation in development programs in the local government areas. The number consisted of the major and sub-ethnic groups in the localities of study.

The study made use of secondary information involving published books, committee reports on assets and liabilities sharing, Committee Reports and government White paper on minority rights in Adamawa State. The methods of data analysis for this study were simple statistical tools using percentage tables, multiple regression equation ( $Y = a + bx_1 + bx_2 \dots bx_n + E$ ) and partway coefficient to determine the effect of minority issues on development at the local government level. The objective is to assess whether factors like minority issues, decisions taken, and opinions of the communities and inter-governmental relations affected meaningful development in the areas of study.

**Data Presentation**

For the purpose of gathering and presentation of data, four relevant objective questions were formulated as a guide for the study. Each set of questions formed a section of its own. One hundred and twenty sets of questionnaire were designed and distributed in the local governments of study. Out of this figure, only 95 copies of the questionnaire were completed and returned to the researchers. This represents 79.1 7% response to the questionnaires distributed.

**Table 2. Distribution of questionnaire**

Local Government Area	No. of distributed questionnaire	No. of returned questionnaire	No. of Unreturned questionnaire
Madagali	60	44(73.3%)	16(26.7%)
Michika	60	51(85%)	9(15%)
	120	95	25

**Source: Fieldwork, 2018.**

From Table 2, there has been a positive response to the questionnaires distributed. This could be attributed to the simplified design of the questionnaires, which made it easy to read and to understand by the respondents. The outcome of the responses from the two local government councils shows that, there were good responses from the local

governments under study (with Madagali and Michika) forming 73.7% and 85% response to questionnaires distributed respectively.

### **Previous participation in minority issues**

Taking the right decision demands skill, experience and previous participation in a similar exercise. In the same way, the researcher wanted to find out if the respondents had previous experience and participation in taking decisions on minority issues. The outcome is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Previous participation in minority issues**

<b>S/No.</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a.	Yes	89	93.7
b.	No	6	6.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Field work 2018

Table 3 shows that, most of the respondents participated in one capacity or the other in the art or process of taking decisions in a similar exercise on minority issues from other localities in Adamawa State. It therefore means that respondents had the relevant skill and hence the skill and experiences in dealing with minority issues.

### **Decision Implementation**

At times, when decisions are taken, they serve as a guide for carrying out a task, especially implementing the decision taken on minority issues. The researcher tried to find out if the decisions that were taken on minority issues were implemented as expected. The result is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Decision implementation**

<b>S/No.</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a.	Partially implemented	58	61.1
b.	Fully implemented	37	38.9
c.	Not implemented	0	0.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Field work; 2018

Table 4 shows that the decision on minority issues were partially implemented as indicated by 58 respondents out of the 95 responses received. The case here will be reactions from the minority groups in the two localities which may not be good for meaningful development of the two localities.

### **Settling disagreements from inability to implementing decisions on minority issues**

Since minority issues involve intrigues; disagreements are bound to arise from the exercise over the criteria used. In this situation, the researcher sought to find out how these disagreements were resolved. The outcome is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Settlement of disagreement**

<b>S/No.</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a.	Third-party Adjustment	7	7.4
b.	Compromise	15	15.8
c.	Petitions	72	75.8
d.	Government intervention	1	1.1
	Total	95	100.0%

**Source: Field work; 2018.**

Table 5 indicates that, the resolution by compromise among the minorities in the localities is the major criterion used for settling a disagreement arising from settling minority issues. Other reasons deduced were that, the new local government entities did not want to waste time and resources when other methods to seek redress through petitions, intervention of a 3<sup>rd</sup> party and adjudication are used for the settlement of disagreements among the entities.

### **Satisfaction with minority issues exercise.**

The fact that almost the entire community was aware of the minority issues exercise. The need to find out if the communities were satisfied with the process by which the issues were settled is very important. The researcher sought to know if they were not satisfied by the way minority issues were settled among the minority groups in Michika and Madagali Local Government Councils. The report of the responses could be seen in Table 6.



**Table 6: Satisfaction with minority issue exercise**

<b>S/ No.</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a.	Yes	81	85.3
b.	No	14	14.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Field work; 2018.

From Table 6, it can be seen that, people were satisfied with the outcome of the exercise on minority issues in the two localities. Though the result portrays a positive response, one can rightly say that, people had some reservations on how minority issues were treated in Michika and Madagali Local Government Councils. However, the community satisfaction means an indication of meaningful development in the area of study.

### **Analysis and implication of findings**

This section analyses the implication of the opinions and responses of the communities on settling minority issues on how the committees took advantage of local government creation to amplify the struggle over resource allocation in the area of study. Regression analysis was used as a tool to examine the relative importance of the parameters that constituted tools therein:

- i. Decision making on minority issues in the local government councils of study;
- ii. Minority issues in the local government of study;

Results based on their multiple regressions that present the magnitude of each variable and their percentage equivalents are covered in Tables 8 — 10. They are presented in the order by which they were raised by the aims and objectives of the study.

### **Madagali and Michika decision-making on minority issues**

Decision-making process and procedures relating to the topic of study were considered to find out which variables were considered as the most important, using the multiple regression equation which was earlier mentioned as  $Y = a + bx_1 \pm bx_2bx_n + E$ . The combined result is presented in Table 8.

**Table 7: Decision-making process for Madagali and Michika on minority issues**

S/NO	ITEMS	Coefficient of regression (b-value)	Standard error	T-Values	Significance
	Intercept	.113	.213	.529	.598
1.	Involvement in final decision	.366	.032	31.078	.000
2.	Implementation of decision	.257	.045	21.601	.000
3.	Decision making procedure	.556	.020	49.888	.000
4.	Predominant way of making a decision	.594	.210	50.853	.000
5.	Community satisfaction	.217	.052	18.713	.000

Dependent variable: Local government Development

Combined results from the two local governments of study on decision process indicated that, the predominant way of decision-making; ‘decision procedure’, ‘decision implementation’, ‘final decision’, and ‘community satisfaction’ were ranked in that order. The researcher attempted to know the percentage contribution of the variables to determine which of the variables is rated high to decision making on minority issues among the local government of study, and hence the outcome presented as follows:

$$LD = f(x_1 + x_2 + x_3 + x_4 + x_5)$$

Where:

LD = Local government development

x<sub>1</sub> = Final decision on minority issue

x<sub>2</sub> = Decision implementation on the minority issue

x<sub>3</sub> = Decision procedure for minority issue

x<sub>4</sub> = Predominant way of decision making on minority issue

x<sub>5</sub> = Community satisfaction on minority issues

Operationalizing the formula, the coefficients of the regression (b-value) as seen in table 8 is substituted to find out which of the variables is ranked highest for decision-making on minority issues in the two in the two local governments under investigation.

$$LD = 0.366 x_1 + 0.257 X_2 + 0.556 x_3 + 0.594 x_4 + 0.217 x_5 - 1.99.$$

It is assumed here that, acceptable decision process on minority issues among the local government of study is a function of the ‘final decision made’, ‘implementation of the decisions’, decision procedures, the predominant way of decision-making’ and ‘community satisfaction’ in the exercise of the minority issues among the local governments of study. The coefficients of regression for the variables (items) enlisted in their order of appearance and their individual percentage contribution equivalence to the final decision on minority issues is as indicated below.

- i. Final Decision on Minority issue (FD) 18.39%
- ii. Implementation of Decision (ID) on minority issue 12.92%
- iii. Decision Procedure (DP) on minority issue, 27.94%
- iv. Predominant Way of Decision Making (PW) on minority issue 29.85%
- v. Community Satisfaction (CS) on minority issue, 10.90% 100%

The combined ratings for five parameters for both Madagali and Michika local government range from 10.90 - 29.85% as seen above. Among the decision variables, decision procedures’ and predominant ways of decision making’ topped the ranks as the most important features in decision making, ‘community satisfaction’ and ‘implementation’ were viewed as less important. From the combined results of the two local government councils, the decision-making variables contributed positively (b-values) to the total minority issues in the decision-making process. However, the negative intercept (a = -0.113) indicates that, decision-making process was not strictly followed on minority issues in the two local government councils. Thus, the negative intercept -0.113. The error margin of 0.213 indicates the contribution of other extraneous factors, not considered by the study.

### **Terms of Reference and Committee’s Decisions**

The fact that, terms of reference guides committees during the exercise of minority issues is not to be disputed. Variables affecting the impact of the terms of reference on committee’s decision were compared using the regression coefficient that explains the magnitude of each variable. Out of the four variables offered to test the impact of terms of reference on the committee’s decision. Effect on community opinions’ of the local government councils was the overall deciding factor (37.22%). This was followed by ‘effect of terms of reference’ and ‘effect of decision making’, which in turn significantly overshadowed ‘terms of reference’ in importance as shown below for both local government councils.

**Table 8. Effect of Terms of Reference on Committee’s Decision on Minority Issues.**

S/NO	ITEMS	Coefficient of regression (b-VALUE)	Standard error	T-Value	Significance
	Intercept	1.477E- 02	.341	.043	.966
1.	Terms of Reference	.123	.164	6.292	.000
2.	Impact of term of Reference	.477	.043	24.845	.000
3.	Effect on Decision	.456	.042	22.697	.000
	Effect on com. Opinions.	.626	.029	33.203	.000

**Dependent Variable: Local government development**

The combined result from Madagali and Michika Local Government Councils indicated that, the decision leading to the opinions of the communities affected localities witnessed ‘serious impact’ and hence rated as the highest variable affected by the terms of reference that guided the committee’s decisions. Other factors like ‘final decision’ were also affected. When this situation was analyzed from the percentage contribution, the outcome is presented as follows.

$$LD = F(X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + X_4 + X_5)$$

Where: LD = Local government development  
 x<sub>1</sub> = Terms of reference on minority issues  
 x<sub>2</sub> = Committees Decisions on the minority issue  
 x<sub>3</sub> = Extent of impact on decisions on minority issue  
 x<sub>4</sub> = Impact of decisions on community opinions on minority issues

Substituting the values of the variables from table 5.9.1 we have the following:  
 ITRD = 0.123 x<sub>1</sub>+ 0.477 X<sub>2</sub> + 0.456 x<sub>3</sub>+ 0.626 x<sub>4</sub> = 1.682. The coefficients of regression for the various variables (items) enlisted in their order of appearance and the individual percentage contribution equivalence is as indicated 7 below.

Terms of Reference (TR)	on minority issue,	07.31%
Committees Decisions (CD)	on minority issue,	28.36%
Effect of Decision (ED)	on minority issue,	27.11%
Impact on Take-off (ET)	on minority issue,	37.22%
Total		<u>100%</u>

The outcome of the combined contribution indicates that, the terms of reference' given to the committees had a serious impact on the community opinions of the localities. The order of importance placed on the features or variables ranged from 7.31%-37.22% for Madagali and Michika Local Government Councils. From the combined results of the two local government councils, the variables for terms of reference contributed positively (b-values) to the committee's decision-making process on minority issues exercise. However, the positive intercept (1.477 E-02) shows that, the terms of reference on minority issues were strictly followed by the committees. The error margin of.341 indicates the contribution of other extraneous factors, not considered by the study. Thus, the positive intercept 1.477.

### **The opinions and responses from the community**

The aftermath of an exercise similar to that of the minority issues could be the opinions and responses on how best the exercise would have been done. Variables affecting opinions and responses from both local government councils of the study were compared to explain the magnitude of each variable. Similarly, assessment was done for individual local government and hence the overall combined result as indicated on Table 10.

**Table 9. Effect of decision acceptability on local government development.**

Items.	Coefficient of regression (b-value)	Standard Error	T-value	Significance
Intercept.	1.1 bE-IS	.000	-	-
Awareness	.209	.000	-	-
Satisfaction.	.283	.000	-	-
Acceptable basis	.890	.000	-	-

Dependent variable: Local government development

Combined results from Madagali and Michika Local Government Councils indicated that the communities were more concerned about acceptable basis on minority issues. Other factors like 'community satisfaction' and 'awareness' were among the factors rated high by the community as to how best the exercise should have been done. To find out the percentage contribution of each variable, the result is presented as follows.

$$LD = COR = f(x_1 + x_2 + X_3)$$

Where: LD = Local government development

COR = Community opinions and responses on minority issue

x<sub>1</sub> Community awareness on minority issues

X<sub>2</sub>= Community satisfaction on minority issues

X<sub>3</sub>= Acceptable basis for consideration of minority issues

Substituting the values of each of the variables from the coefficients of the regression (b-value) on Table 10, we have the following;  $COR\ 0.209\ x_1 + 0.283\ X_2 + 0.890\ x_3 = 1.382$ . The coefficients of regression for the variables (items) enlisted in their order of appearance and the individual percentage contribution equivalence is as indicated below.

Community Awareness (CA) on minority issue	=	15.12%
Community satisfaction (C S) on minority issue	=	20.48%
Acceptable basis (AB) on minority issue	=	<u>64.40%</u>
Total	=	<u>100%</u>

The combined result of the two local government councils shows that, ‘acceptable basis for minority issues was rated highest variable as a true reflection of the opinion and responses from the Michika and Madagali communities. The order of importance placed on the features or variable ranged from 15.12%-64.40% for Madagali and Michika Local Government Councils.

### **Result of the Findings**

This section deals with the issues arising from minority issues as the Nigerian nation continued to be restructured. As more states and local government councils are being created. Minority issues must be addressed for development. However, minority issues are not an easy task as it involves some contentious issues relating to administrative positions, employment, school admission and dissatisfaction on decisions taken on minority issues in the two local governments of study.

### **Previous Participation of Committees in the Determination of Minority Issues.**

The determination of what constitute minority issues varies with the localities and skill and experience of the committee members. From Table 3; the committees are said to have participated in a similar exercise as the responses indicated 93.7%. This is an indication that the minority issues among the two localities of study were adequately determined. This view is acceptable as most Nigerians know the minority issues between the ethnic and sub-ethnic tribes in Nigeria. Thus, the determinations of minority issues are not a problem and hence have little significance on the development of the local government councils of study.

### **Decision-making process for Madagali and Michika on minority issues**

Effective decision-making requires a rational selection of a course of action, which is seen as part of every one’s livelihood. In the same way, problems relating to minority issues among local government councils or the community must be decided upon. However, some decisions are rational while some are irrational in the sense that they follow the conventional methods and otherwise respectively of the ways of making a decision. Whichever method adopted by either the individual or the committee members, there must

be a decision. However, the concern of this study is who takes the final decision on minority issues at the local government level, and of what relevance has it on the development of the localities of study?

Table 8 indicates 18% on final decision which is an indication that, decision may be taken at the local level, but the white paper (final Decision) will be taken by the state government. The case here is that, decisions will have little or no impact on development at the local government areas as the committees set up sub-committees at the local government level and then refer all issues to the terms of references without reflecting on the provisions of the constitutional powers of the state and local government on the minority issues.

### **Decision implementation**

This is the art and process of putting into action the decision that was taken. This requires competent administrators that must come from a combination of the tribes who will be able to understand and interpret the decisions taken. From Table 4, it can be seen that, the right decision was taken on minority issues, but the implementation was very partial 61.1% as compared to full implementation 38.9%. This is not good for meaningful development at the local government level. The reason, according to Adejo (2006), is that; Nigerian governments have had very good decisions/plans that can transform the Nigerian nation, but the problem of implementing the decisions/plans is always the cause of concern. When this occurs over a period of time, there cannot be any development. The reason for this could be deduced from disagreements among ethnic and sub-ethnic tribes in the area of study.

Generally, there are a number of problems facing most local government councils when it comes to decision implementation. According to Ikoiwak (1994), the problems are categorized into, conceptual, institutional and operational. It is conceptual if the newly created and reconstituted local government councils do not possess the adequate capacity, requisite skill and aptitude for addressing such issues involving minority issues between local government councils concerned. Similarly, implementation of a decision encompasses those actions by public and private individuals that are directed at the advancement of the objectives set forth. Successful implementation requires that decisions be clearly stated and understood by the implementers. Any misinterpretation can lead to undesired outcomes. Clarity of decision objectives helps in the evaluation of the implementation of the decisions made.

The relationship between various committees both at the state and local government levels brings about institutional problems in tackling minority issues for a good decision. It needs to be cordial or with some degree of cooperation. This is rarely achieved at the local government level as the committees are not the only organs involved in the

implementation of the decision. On the operational problems, decisions as well as their implementation require participation of individuals, decision makers, the decision implementers and the decision enforcing bodies, which are the executive, the council and the law enforcement authorities. Where such participation is weak or not forthcoming, the decision will remain ineffective and hence its implementation becomes subtle.

### **Settling disagreements from inability to implement decisions on minority issues**

Communities comprise of people who are linked together with some common ties like history, economic and social interests. In the same way, interest groups are hatched in the event of such an exercise that has community interest at stake. These groups, usually political leaders, youths and elders, have ‘concern’ for the community. The intrigues here are that, while the interest groups are not conversant with constitutional and administrative provision in such exercise and have no knowledge of regional and local government experience in addressing minority issues, they insist on having an influence on how the minority issues were ascertained at the two local government areas. Specifically, village heads or district heads are part of the interest groups, who seek to influence their subject not to disclose the existence of minority issues in the community. The point here is that, the district head can be biased on his advice to the committees.

From Table 5, disagreement over non-implementation of decision on minority issues was full of petitions to 75.8%. To deal with petition cases requires time, which otherwise should have been used for development of the local government areas. For these reasons, the roles played by the interest groups (as sub-committee members at local government level) become matters of contention arising from minority issues among local government councils.

### **Satisfaction with the mode of minority issues’ exercise**

The researcher wanted to find out whether the localities under study were satisfied with the decisions taken as well as the implementation of the decisions on minority issues. The answer to this was based on the politics of minority issues in the localities of study. The politics of minority issues have a bearing on the system of governance of an era. Within a given community, a group of politicians would want to fulfill their political aspirations. When voted into office they ensure that, there is good bargaining, compromise, persuasion and reconciliation in their dealings as they try to fulfill their party promises. In the same way, when dealing with the minority issue, they would want to apportion more blame on the majority tribes of that area.

Table 6 indicated that the level of satisfaction is 85.3%, while those that were satisfied are 14.7% which is due to political reasons. As a result of this, instead of being persuasive, compromising and good bargaining in their manner of approach, they create



rancor between the Local Government Councils concerned. Where this exists, it becomes a problem that may lead either to a slow decision or incorrect decision for effective and smooth development in the affected local government councils. When this occurs, there are more intrigues affecting minority issues in the local government council leading to more disagreement between the parties responsible for making the final decision for meaningful development in the localities.

### **Terms of reference of minority issues**

Decisions on the terms of reference on minority issues were strictly followed by the committees as indicated on table 9. This is because members of committees were appointed by the state government to represent the interest of the various communities. In view of their representative capacity, appointed members may have little or no knowledge of minority issues in the area of study. In this case. They may work strictly on the provisions of the terms of reference to carry out the assignment they were asked to accomplish subject to a white paper by the state government.

### **Conclusion**

After a series of cross-examination, analysis, findings and discussions based on the objectives of the study raised earlier on, the study concludes on the followings: Firstly, the determinations of minority issues are not a problem and hence have little significance on the development of the local government councils of study. Secondly, decisions based on the provisions of the constitutional powers of the state and local government on minority issues will have an impact on the development of the local government. Thirdly, Decision implementation requires competent administrators that must come from a combination of the tribes who will be able to understand and interpret the decisions taken. Fourthly, disagreement over non-implementation of decision on minority issues was full of petitions to 75.8%.

To deal with petition cases requires time, which otherwise should have been used for development of the local government areas. There are more intrigues affecting minority issues in the local government council leading to more disagreement and dissatisfaction with the outcome of minority exercise. The need for adequate information about cases dealing with minority issues is required as minority issues have and stand as impediments to local government administration and development among newly created local government areas in Nigeria now and in the future. The terms of reference that served as a guide for minority issues affected the process of arriving at a decision for tackling minority issues in the affected local government councils.

## Recommendations

A study of this nature has serious implications on the political, social, economic and cultural development of the affected communities. Already, results from the study have indicated the items listed in the conclusion. Given these conclusions, the study recommended the following:

1. Minority participation in decision making on minority issues among local government councils should be promoted and encouraged for meaningful development at the grassroots.
2. Minority issues should be harmonized with the opinion and wishes of minority groups in the community at the local government councils for meaningful development in Nigeria as seen in Madagali and Michika Local government areas.
3. There should be adequate, implementation of the decisions reached on minority issues by improving on the ability, skill and experience of the committees and the staff involved in the execution of minority issues exercise.
4. The relationship between tiers of government on minority issues must be improved.

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