

## **Appointment of Non-Elected Political Functionaries and Its Implication on Local Government Administration in Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** *Nigeria is a federation with the component units saddled with different responsibilities. The local council is the level of government vested with powers to facilitate grassroots development and collaborate with higher levels to foster economic development. Regrettably, the local governments are more like shadows of themselves. One notable challenge the third tier of government had consistently encountered is political interference, especially the unconstitutional appointment of caretaker and transitional committees to manage the affairs of the local government. Thus, this paper examined the factors responsible for the appointment of non-elected political functionaries and its implications to the councils. Survey research design was used for the study, six of the twenty local governments in Ogun State were selected from the three senatorial districts. Sixty three unstructured interviews were conducted and 1,800 copies of a self-constructed questionnaire were administered. Findings revealed that four major factors necessitated the appointment of non-elected political functionaries and these appointments were more of compensation for political patronage than anything else. The consequences of such appointment is that these appointees serve the interest of their political god fathers rather than the wishes and aspiration of the masses they supposed to serve. The paper recommended that the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria should be amended to accommodate the tenure of political officers at the local government level. A period of four years is therefore recommended for the elected functionaries.*

**Keywords:** *Political Functionaries, Local Government, Caretaker/Transition Committees, Development, Grassroot.*

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### **I. Introduction**

The challenges negating good governance at the local government in Nigeria are among others a recurring decimal in the history of its politics. Local government administration started during the colonial era when it was vested in traditional rulers and was undemocratic to 1976 when elected councils were to administer its functions by virtue of the democratic norm in the 1976 local government reform. More importantly, the post 1976 reform brought a fundamental in the development of councils and for the first time a single-tier structure was eschewed as against the different structures practiced by various states across the country (Nwaodike, 2013).

At this era, people were to be accustomed to administer their affairs without interference from the higher level(s) of government. The orientation ordinarily should not give room for dictatorship and encroachment of responsibilities. Regrettably, the expectation of local government were never attained despite other in-house reforms.

After many years of experimentation of local government system, expression of this third tier of government in the minds of Nigerians especially the parlous state of its affairs and the apparent disconnect with it and those the council should address their basic needs is pathetic. The reality is that if anyone is to examine the state of affairs and the reasons for the underdevelopment in Nigeria, a visit and understudy of some of these local councils will be revealing.

The military and the unitary form of governance adopted by the military cabal did a huge damage and did not facilitate the already federal structure the system operated. Therefore, democratic principles and ethos were jettisoned. The military in Nigerian politic paved way for arbitrary appointments, proliferation of the councils and institutionalization of corruption among others. Thus, the emergence of a democratic government in 1999, after fifteen years and five months of military dictatorship (the military seized power on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1983) brought a new hope in the local government administration. The quest for local democracy and the need to erect a relative autonomous local government tier as a true foundation for a new democratic order in Nigeria was popular and fashionable that it consumed attention of leading scholars of grassroots governance and political commentators alike (Ebonhon, Osemwota and Agbebaku, 2011; Nwaodike, 2013). The reason is that, democratic culture was re-introduced and the expectation was that Section 7(1) of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution that stipulated a democratic local government system have come to stay and allow the grassroots people to direct their affairs in collaboration with higher level governments to promote socio-economic development.

## **II. Methodology**

The paper adopted a descriptive survey design which undertook qualitative and quantitative research. The population of study is the twenty local governments in Ogun State. The selection of the state is on the premise that a single tier multi-purpose local government system is practice in Nigeria. These local governments face similar challenges, therefore, two local governments each from the three senatorial districts of the state were purposively selected. Development indicators were used to select i.e rural and urban. These local governments include Sagamu and Odogbolu local governments from Ogun East, Abeokuta South and Obafemi Owode local governments from Ogun Central and Ado-Odo/Ota and Ipokia from Ogun West. The research instruments adopted were questionnaire and interview schedule. The former was constructed and administered to collect quantitative data from the respondents while interview guide was designed to collect qualitative data. 1800 copies of questionnaire were administered and 1657 retrieved representing 92 per cent success rate. 63 interviews were conducted with retired and serving public servants. Secondary sources of data were documentary. This include, textbooks, journals, published articles, local government yearbooks, local government annual reports and internet sources. Data collected through questionnaire were presented on title frequency tables while analysis of qualitative data were content analysis.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Local Government**

Local Government is government at the grassroot created to decongest the functions and burden of the other tiers of government, bring about democratic climate of opinion; provide valuable political education, provide two-way communication; and ensure even and rapid development (Nwaodike, 2013). It is usually created by a law of the State in a federal system of government like the case of Nigeria, and the law of the central government in a unitary state and given adequate power and autonomy to discharge the functions assigned to it.

The Federal Military Government of Nigeria (FMG) while introducing the nation-wide 1976 Local Government Reforms viewed Local Government as:

Government at the local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. These powers should give the councils substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the State and Federal Government in their areas, and to ensure, through active participation of the people and their traditional Institutions that local needs and conditions are maximized (Adeyemi, Akindede, Aluko and Agesin, 2012: 86).

This means that Local Government is a legally constituted government created for the grassroots level and for developmental purpose. These definitions has basic features which include elective representatives, constitutionally recognised functions and powers to recruit personnel and generate revenue so as to execute its programmes (Nwaodike, 2013). Section 7(i) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as amended is in tandem with the elective principle canvassed by Federal Military Government of Nigeria (FMG) when it proclaimed that local government shall be democratically elected. On this note, Nwaodike (2013:25) conclude that “local government is a government at the grassroot with powers to elect its representatives and is saddled with responsibility to provide social welfare of the local people with relative interference from the higher authority”. However, most Local Governments in Nigeria have been unable to fulfil their obligations at the grassroots due to excessive external control from the States. In this paper, local government and local councils are used interchangeably.

#### **Political Functionaries**

This is the term used to identify the non-career public servants in the local government. They are either elected/selected or on the other hand appointed. The elected/selected political functionaries often get their mandate from the people. They are elected on the platform of a political party through elections and are expected to be responsible to the people. The non-elected political functionaries are appointed by the state governor. These are politicians who had contributed to the success of a political party in an election, most especially at state level and are compensated for their loyalty to the party in power. They may come in different nomenclature such as caretaker committee, transition committee, interim management, sole administrator among others. They are the appointees of the state governors at the local government to manage the affairs of the councils. In relation to Ogun State, record shows that caretaker and transition committees were the dominant

appointees at the local government to manage the affairs of these councils in the absence of elected political functionaries.

In view of this, it is important to explain in details the differences between caretaker and transitional committee. Caretaker committee is indicative that the election date is not fixed, and when to hand over power to the elected political functionaries is not determined. On the other hand, it is transitional when the election date had been determined, and these are the people that will manage the affairs of the council before handing over power to the elected political functionaries.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research is anchored on democratic participatory theory. According to Sharpe (1970), one of the related aspects of democratic values of local government is the idea that the councils serves as political education, and as a means of civilizing man through the medium of self-government. This contention was collaborated by Adeyemo (2010) when he argued that local government motivates the citizen by engaging him in political education and political participation. Other proponents that supported this notion include Dahl and Mill. For instance, Dahl quoted in Sharpe (1970) argued that it is at least a great indispensable and comprehensible attribute. Mill (1912:159) in Ezeani (2004) also observed the democratic virtues of local government, especially, its role as an instrument or agent for political education.

The second contention on the theory is the widespread unwillingness to accept the full consequences of democracy where it involves the man in the street actually taking part in government. Another democratic value of the theory is the claim that local government serves as a training ground for democracy to strive. Furthermore, the theory sees local government as the essential element for establishing a stable and harmonious national state, the breeder of better societies. That is, it is only by participating in and learning the arts of self-government at the local government level that the individual had a stake in and came to appreciate the virtues of free government at the national level (Sharpe, 1970).

However, the theory has been critic for having some shortcomings. First, is that local community interests do not necessarily coincide with personal interest, neither with the national interest. Again, critics also argued that the theory does not necessarily prove convincingly that local government always provide a training ground for the higher levels of government.

On this note, political structure is regarded as the super structure, thus, ultimately affects other structures in the social system. If the local government councils fail to attain political autonomy, invariably they will also be denied of administrative and financial autonomy. The reason is that, it is only when the political functionaries at this level are truly elected that they can represent the interest of the people. As such will independently execute the local government's functions as stipulated or enshrined in the fourth schedule of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as well as generate and utilise the allocated revenue without been unnecessarily directed by the state chief executives.

### **Analysis of the Questionnaire and Interview Guide**

Atotal of 1,800 questionnaire was administered, out of these, 1,657 representing 92 percent were retrieved. This reveals that a higher level of questionnaire was retrieved and therefore higher level of rich data collected for the investigation of the subject matter.

Two categories of instruments were adopted for the purpose of collecting primary data for the study. These include unstructured interview and questionnaire. Out of these, 1657 or 96.3 per cent was questionnaire, while 63 or 3.7 were unstructured interview.

### **Research Question One: Do elections hold every three years in the local government area?**

1586 or 95.7 per cent of the respondents stated that elections did not hold triennially in Ogun State Local Government between 1999 to 2011, while 71 or 4.3 per cent maintained that elections were held triennially in the various local governments of the state.

This finding reveals that majority of the local government staff confirmed that elections do not hold every three years in local councils in Ogun State. This was also confirmed by the Ogun State Independent Electoral Commission that only three elections had been held in the local government of Ogun State since 1999 when the Fourth Republic commenced. The elections include local government elections of March 27, 2004, December 15, 2007 and July 21, 2012 respectively. However, the state electoral body reiterated that there was a local government election on December 5, 1998 that ushered in the political functionaries that managed the local government affairs from May 29, 1999 to May 29, 2002.

From the forgoing, in 2002 when the tenure of political functionaries expired and 2004 when there was another election that brought in political functionaries in April same year, there was no election in the local government councils in Ogun State. The same incident reoccurred between September to December 2007 and Dec 2010 to July 2012 respectively.

In a follow up unstructured interview on why state governors at different times in the state do not organise election after the expiration of the elected political functionaries in the local governments, Tayo an experienced grassroot officer and a retired Permanent Secretary, maintained that:

The issue is that the existence of local government political functionary is at the mercy of the state governor irrespective of whether elected or not. This is more reason when a new governor comes on board; he quickly dissolves the previous election and sacks the local government chairmen and councillors in the state. Moreso, most of the state governors do not bother to conduct elections since incoming governor will cancel these elections. In such a situation, all the financial resources spent for the local government election will be a waste. For this reason, most of the state governors will rather use caretaker committees which will cost nothing. But the implication is that, they chose their cronies to manage the local councils for their selfish interest.

**Research Question Two: If yes, do these elected officials participate freely in the administration of the local government, especially, the programmes without the interference from the state government?**

Response on the question shows that 1270 or 76.6 per cent of the respondents disagree and maintained that elected officials do not participate freely in the administration of the local government. While 387 or 23.4 per cent of the respondents stated that the elected political functionaries run the administration of the local government without the interference of the state government. Therefore, there is an interference in the administration of the local government by the state government.

**Research Question Three: Are there any overbearing presence and numbers appointed by the state government to manage local government affairs?**

Majority of the respondents agreed that there are overbearing presence and numbers of persons appointed by the state government to manage the affairs of the local councils. Thus, 1455 or 87 per cent respondents have this opinion, while, 202 or 12.2 per cent stated no.

This implies that majority of the local government staff surveyed in the six local governments of the state concurred that there is overbearing presence of appointed officials to manage the affairs of the local government in the state.

**Research Question Four: If Yes, in what capacity?**

Response shows that 1601 or 96.6 per cent of the respondents stated that caretaker committees were appointed, while, 45 or 2.7 per cent stated that Sole Administrator and 11 or 0.7 per cent, Interim Management respectively. The finding above shows that almost all the respondents understand what caretaker committee is all about and affirm that it exist in the local government at one point in time.

In a follow up unstructured interview with a political functionary who craved for anonymity on the question: In what capacity does state government appoint individuals to manage local government administration in Ogun State? The respondent maintained that caretaker and transitional committee were appointed to manage the affairs of the local government in the state.

The response shows that on May 29, 2002 after the expiration of subsequent political officers' tenure, state government under the leadership of Olusegun Osoba appointed care-taker committees at different occasions to manage the affairs of local governments in the state. These caretaker committee members were in government till May 29, 2003 when Gbenga Daniel assumed office as the governor of the state and subsequently dissolve the caretaker committees (that were appointed by Olusegun Osoba). This incident repeated itself during the administration of Gbenga Daniel, he appointed caretaker committees between May 2003 to April 2004, September to December 2007 and December 2010 to July 2011 respectively. The tenure of elected political functionaries in July 21, 2012 local government elections should have expired in 2015 and another election conducted, but the situation is different and these functionaries especially in the executives arm have been converted to caretaker committees managing the affairs of these councils. See table 7 for the synopsis of the date of political functionaries in the state.

From the foregoing, it is evident that different nomenclature in form of caretaker and transition committees were appointed by the chief executive of the state on different occasions to manage local government administration rather than organising elections at these periods. Thus, a synopsis of local government administration in Ikenne Local government (one of the 20 local governments in the state) indicate the name and tenure (date) of the political functionaries (elected and appointed). The election and appointment of the political office holders cut across the entire local governments in the state at the same time. It then means

that the appointment of caretaker and transition committees and their inauguration takes place on the same day and time.

**Table 1:** A Synopsis of Names and Tenure of Political Functionaries in Ikenne Local Government from May 1999-Date

S/N	NAME	NATURE OF EMERGENCE	DATE
1	Arch. Kayode Adebayo	Executive Chairman (Election)	May 1999-May 2002
2	Otunba Tiwalade Sobo	Chairman Caretaker Committee	May 2002-Apr. 2003
3	Evang. Olalekan Ifede	Chairman Transition Committee	May 2003-June 2003
4	Hon. Kayode Sodiyin	Chairman Transition Committee	July 2003-Feb. 2004
5	Chief Adepegba Otemolu	Chairman Transition Committee	Feb. 2004-April 2004
6	Chief Adepegba Otemolu	Executive Chairman (Election)	April 2004-Sept. 2007
7	Otunba Tiwalade Sobo	Chairman Transition Committee	Sept. 2007-Nov. 2007
8	Rot. Kayode Ogunderu	Chairman Transition Committee	Nov. 2007-Dec. 2007
9	Otunba Tiwalade Sobo	Executive Chairman (Election)	Dec. 2007-Dec. 2010
10	Mrs. Omolola Okunuren	Acting Chairman	Dec. 2010- Feb. 2011
11	Mr. Rotimi Onajole	Chairman Transition Committee	Feb. 2011-July 2011
12	Barrister Olufemi Adeniyi	Chairman Transition Committee	July 2011-July 2012
13	Hon. Tajudeen Salako	Executive Chairman (Election)	July 13, 2012- July 13, 2015
14	Hon. Tajudeen Salako	Chairman Caretaker Committee	July 14, 2015 to date

Source: Compendium on Ikenne Local Government, 2016.

It is important to note that out of the fourteen different local government administrations in the state from May 1999 up to date, elected political functionaries had managed the councils four times (149 months/70.3%), caretaker committees had managed the affairs of the councils on four occasions (44 months/20.8%), transition committees on four occasions (16 months/7.5%) and Acting Chairman (the most senior career officer) once (3 months/1.4%), and non-elected leaders have been in charge for ten times out of fourteen.

**Research Question Five: What are the factors instigating the appointment of caretaker/transitional committees in the administration of local government in Ogun State?**

From the data generated above, four factors were identified to have instigated the appointment of caretaker and transitional committees in Ogun State local government. These include political factor, continuity in governance, constitutional deficiency or lapses in the law and patronage.

17 or 27.0 per cent of the respondents stated that political factors are responsible for the imposition of caretaker/transitional committee in Ogun State local government.

In an unstructured interview conducted B. A. Owolabi, the former Director of General Service and Administration confirmed this school of thought when he stated that the state chief executive may want people especially, party members that will protect their political prospect when the political party in power had seen the hand writing on the wall that it will not likely win a landslide victory at the local government election, it is convenient for them to appoint these committees to manage local government administration pending when election will come up. It is expected that before this election, the appointed committees would have done their homework and strategise how to capture the local government. At times, these are the people that will do the ‘grassroot job’ for them to eventually win election.

15 or 23.8 per cent of the respondents stated that continuity in governance could have necessitated the appointment of caretaker/transitional committee. For instance, in an interview with O. O. Ogunsolu the former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs in Ogun State maintained that “government is a continuum and there cannot be a vacuum, but appointment should not be more than three months at a time and is renewable”. Therefore, for any government to continually function effectively there must be consistency in administration, especially in carrying out its responsibility to the masses. In this regard, the state government must not fold its arm and watch the local government operate without a leader.

About 10 or 15.9 per cent of the respondents stated that constitutional deficiency/lapses in the law had resulted or instigated the appointment of caretaker/transitional committees. In an interview with J. O. Safiriyu, the former Director of General Services and Administration in Sagamu Local Government maintained that the local government law in Ogun State stipulate that local government should be democratically elected; just as section 7(1) guaranteed the system by democratically elected local government councils, but did not specify the specific time the next election should be conducted. As a result of this loophole, the state governors capitalise on it to appoint caretaker committees.

This factor was also reiterated by the Association of Local Government of Nigeria Annual Meeting of 2012 held in Benin City, Edo State. In its Communiqué, ALGON noted that:

There is no express provision in the constitution regulating the tenure of local government councils as it provided for the president and state

governors, nevertheless the constitution guarantees the existence of democratically elected local government councils. As a result of the singular omission or oversight of not expressly providing for the tenure of local governments in the 1999 constitution, the various state legislatures now determine the tenure of its elected councils and therein lies the prescription for the unfolding chaos in Nigeria local government system. The result is that we now have a situation where there is no uniformity of tenure across the country of elected local government officials. While a few states graciously accord local governments 3 year tenure.

Constitutional deficiency/lapses in the law were again corroborated by Kemi Fadiya, the Acting Director of General Services and Administration in Ado-Odo/Ota local government. In an unstructured interview with her, she maintained that

Political issue is on one hand and the law on the other. For instance, before Osoba administration in 1999, the federal government was controlling the local government and there was no election at this level. But when the civilians came on board in 1999, it became a tug of war between the chairmen and the governors on the tenure of the council chairmen. Eventually, a law was passed that the tenure of political functionaries at the local government councils will be three years. At the end of the tenure of the chairmen and the councillors, the governors will not want the carrier officers to run the affairs of the councils and they will rather appoint their fellow politicians as caretaker committees who will be loyal to them. More importantly, the caretaker committee members are in the same political party with the ruling government and it is assumed that an opposition party will not be able to have access to the local government as long as party faithful(s) are managing the affairs of the councils. This is the reasons behind the appointment of caretaker committee members in the first stanza of the fourth republic in Ogun State.

Twenty one (21) representing 33.3 per cent of the respondents agreed that patronage were in most cases the reason behind the appointment of caretaker committee. Some of the personalities interviewed asserted that most times the state governors and the political party may want to spread the gains of democracy to party faithful that played key roles during electioneering campaign, thus, compensating them for a job well done. On other occasion, the governor and the political party may have evaluated the implication of losing some party members on an account of carpet crossing to other political party with their supporters, especially when they are out of favour by their respective party; one of the strategies of keeping them within the party is to offer them political appointment. In this respect, becoming a caretaker committee member is eminent especially, when political offices are scarce. Basically, the major reason is that a political party will want to entrench itself and gather momentum to be able to gain the substantial part of the local government.

This argument is in line with Orewa quoted in Aluko, 2010 when he stated that:

A serious point against nominated committees of management particularly in a civilian regime is that the government party may misuse the system to keep its supporters indefinitely in control of the local governments. This is to frustrate the opposition parties and use the interregnum to strength its party organisation at the grassroots through patronage which is provided by the local governments in form of contracts, job orders, junior staff appointments and promotions and such appointments touch sensitive positions as Liquor License Tribunals and Tax Assessment Committees.

**Research Question Six: Do these appointed people by the state government run the affairs of the council in accordance with the provisions of the 1999 constitution?**

Response shows that 782 or 47.2 of the respondents stated that, these appointed caretakers committee run the affairs of the local councils in accordance with the provisions of the 1999 constitution. While 875 or 52.8 per cent of the respondents stated no that the caretaker committees do not run the affairs of the councils in accordance with the provisions of the 1999 constitution.

In a follow up unstructured interview conducted, 51 or 81 percent of the respondents stated that the caretaker committees do not run the affairs of the local government in accordance with the provisions of the

1999 constitution. While 12 or 19 per cent maintain that they run the affairs of the local government according to the 1999 constitution.

In an unstructured interview with Safiriyu, he argued that:

Some did not, constitutionally, the local government should be independent, but in practice is an appendage of the state governor. So, it is the state government that dictates to the local government chairmen what to do. For instance, the appointment of almost all the political functionaries e.g. the chairmen, his deputy, secretary to the local government among other key positions are done by the state governor. He compiles and sends the name to the local government chairmen and the latter will then present the names to the legislative house of the councils for approval. This is more reasons there is interference in the administration of the political functionaries by the state governors, infact, the state government appoint their agents to run the local councils.

In a similar response, Owolabi also maintained that:

I don't think that these caretaker committee members run the affairs of the councils according to the law, because, they run it as if is a local administration. Local administration is like an extension of the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftancy Affairs. This is more pronounced during the caretaker or transition committee.

This is also the position of Sanni, the former Head of Local Government Administration in Odogbolu Local Government of Ogun State. He further clarifies the rationale for the appointment of a caretaker committee. According to him,

When someone is a caretaker, he is to be guided, which means that the caretaker committee is guided by the state government. So all they do is directed by the state government and Ogun State local government in the last four occasions when caretaker/transitional committee managed the affairs of the councils is not far from this scenario. But if it is according to the law or not is another ball game. But by and large, there is interference.

### **III. Discussion of Findings**

Factors that had necessitated the appointment of caretaker committees include: political factor, continuity in governance, constitutional deficiency/lapses in the law and patronage. However, patronage played a key role when compared with other factors. The reason is that, there were certain individuals or party faithful(s) who played key roles (either through financial donation, physical presence during electioneering campaign or other means) in the ascendancy to power of the state governors. The appointment of such people to manage the local government councils on temporary basis was the reward for their contributions. This finding agrees with the findings of earlier research by Orewa (1991). Caretaker committee members are more or less errand boys of the governors or at best, aides at the grassroots level. Therefore, appointment and election (selection) into offices at the local level are more of compensation than anything else; for loyalty to the governor and some other powerful political elites and/or political office holders, to whom the appointees sometimes owe their continuous stay in power and for access to part of the meagre council funds. This however, accounted for about 33.3 per cent of the factors making for the appointment of caretaker committees in Ogun State.

Closely related to patronage is the political factor. In this regard, the state governors in the past, desperately sought to protect their political prospect, especially, when it was obvious that they were not likely to 'capture' some local government areas in the state. In this line, they appoint party faithful(s) to manage the affairs of the councils pending when elections will come up. It is assumed that these political appointees will work out the modality at which to capture the councils so that the opposition parties do not win elections. This assertion was supported by Uzongu (2012). He argued that, despite the claim of being in control of political activities in their states, many governors fail to conduct local government elections out of fear that the outcome of the elections might hinder their political ambition. Therefore, they appoint loyalists that will protect their chances in the poll. The problem is that the state governors know that if their cronies are not at the helm of affairs at the local government level, they might have problems at the polls as the entire Nigerian electoral process is riddled with fraud and malpractice (Uzongu, 2012). This factor accounted for about 27 per cent of the reasons behind the appointment of caretaker committees in the state.

However, continuity in governance and constitutional deficiency/lapses in the law accounted for about 23.8 per cent and 15.9 per cent respectively. The argument on the former is that there cannot be vacuum in

administration and as a matter of fact, government is a continuum. Thus, at the expiration of the grassroots political functionaries term of office, pending the next election, the government party must appoint party supporters to manage the affairs of governance at the local government level. Whereas the latter is connected to the political gimmick that unfolded in the first stanza of the fourth republic that necessitated various interpretations until the Apex Court put to rest the issue of tenure elongation of the local government chairmen and councillors across the federation. These two factors still play prominent roles in the appointment of caretaker committee members in Ogun State.

In a nutshell, the appointment of caretaker committee in the Nigeria and Ogun State local government system in particular is “alien” to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and is a breach of Section 7 (1) of the 1999 constitution as amended. However, Ijediogor and Ezea (2012), noted that a situation where unelected caretaker committees are in charge of council administration in more than half of the local governments in the country is dangerous to the country’s democracy.

#### **IV. Concluding Remarks**

The appointment of caretaker committee members is unconstitutional and illegal and this is not the practice in civilised world, particularly in the United States from where we have copied our presidential constitution. The constitution does not give room for any caretaker committee since there should not be any vacuum in the first place in governance that could have called for it. Ironically, the governors want to consolidate their stay by appointing their cronies into office illegally. This will enable them to control the resources accrue to the councils without any opposition. The consequences of this scenario is that these appointed caretaker/transition committee members serve the interest of their political god fathers rather than the wishes and aspiration of the masses they claim to serve. Conclusively, the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria should be amended to accommodate the tenure of political officers at the local government level. A period of four years is therefore recommended for the elected functionaries. Elections should be organized as at when due to avoid vacuum in government.

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