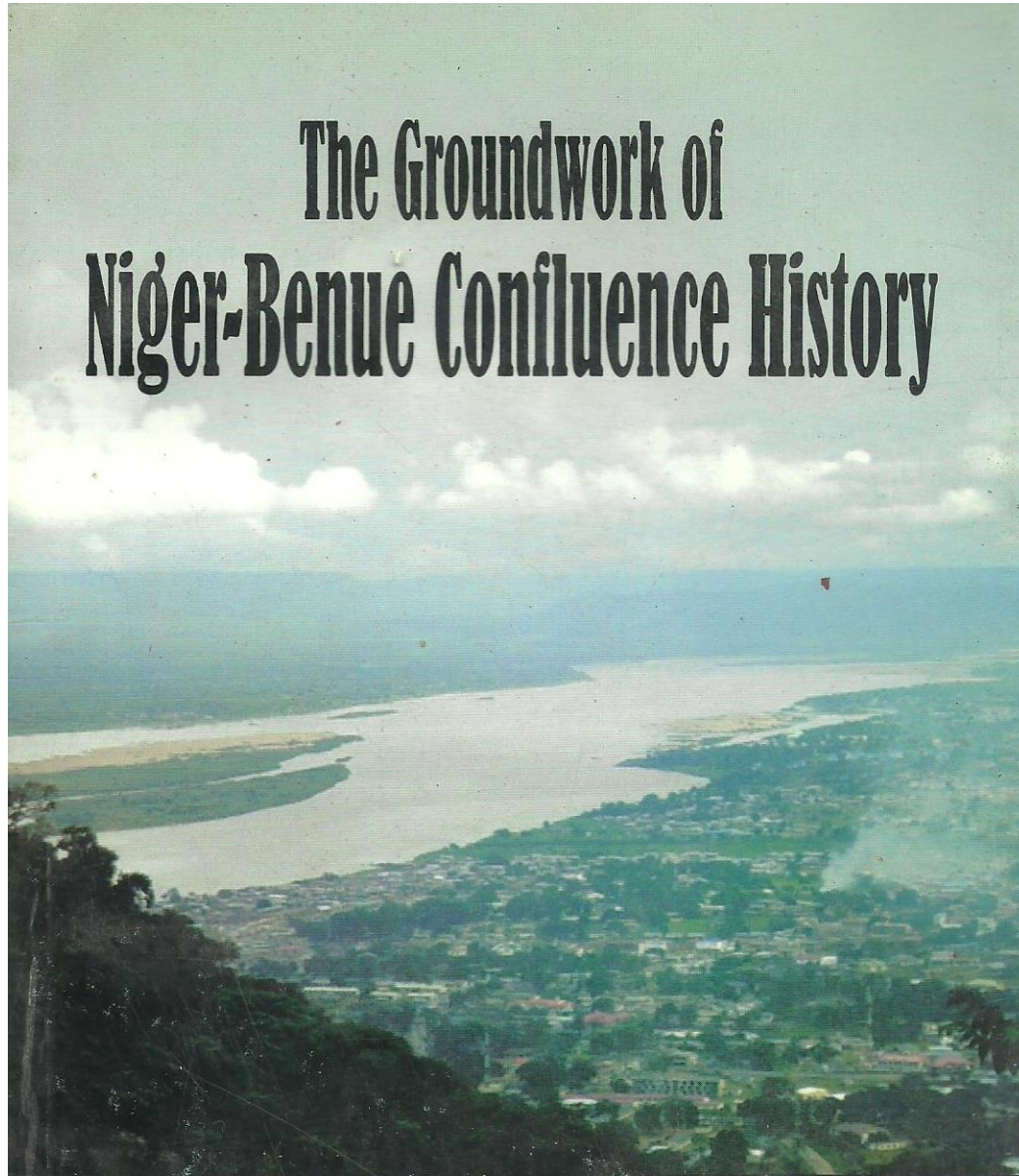
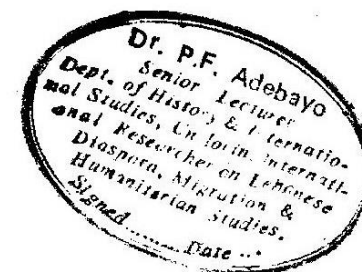


The Groundwork of Niger-Benue Confluence History



Edited by
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Yemi Akinwumi Ph.D

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all those who labour to popularize the history of Niger-Benue Confluence and to our departed contributors to this book – Professors Aliu A. Idrees and O. Balogun.

Creation of New Local Government in Kogi State: Problems and Prospects: West Yagba and Ijumu Examples

P.F. Adebayo, Ph.D

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1976 monumental local Government reforms,¹ there has been an increasing awareness of the potential importance of the local government institutions not only as a third-tier system of government but also as an avenue for spreading development and improving services. The realisation of this fact coupled with the politicisation of the issue of local government was perhaps responsible for the creation of eighty-nine local government councils by the Babangida Administration in August and September 1991 respectively.² In reality, the local government ought to have been created on the basis of economic viability, cultural affiliation and socio-political milieu. But the warning of the Vice President, Vice Admiral Augustus Aikhomu of the country's elites whom he described as being "Selfish" for mounting unnecessary, pressure on the government and

engineering agitation for the creation of local government and also that the more local government you create the more agitation you seem to have",³ lends credence to the fact that the local government creation exercise of 27th August and 23rd September 1991 was done on political ground. Indeed the statement equally shows that in a country like Nigeria consisting of great diversity in religion, culture, ethnic, political and social organisations the creation of a satisfactory local government presents a particularly difficult problem. As at the time of writing, the President, General Ibrahim Babangida had declared his intention of creating more local government in the country.⁴

Be that as it may, the local government councils when created are usually saddled with myriad of socio-economic problems especially in the area of infrastructural facilities, inadequate funding and shortage of skilled personnel. They are also bedeviled with political crisis which normally leads to violence as in the case of West Yagba Local Government where the people of Egbe initially rejected the siting of its headquarters at Odo-Ere and also in Ijumu Local Government where the Kogi State NRC Governor Audu Abubakar has persistently refused to swear in the rival SDP Chairman-elect Mr. John Ajewole despite the fact that he was twice duly elected. It is essential that these problems be solved so as to "fundamentally transform local governments into a relatively autonomous and constitutional level in the Nigerian Federal System".⁵ This paper therefore discusses the problems and prospects of these two newly created local governments of West Yagba and Ijumu in Kogi State respectively.

Kogi State is one of the nine newly created states on the 27th August, 1991 by the Babangida Administration with Lokoja as its capital. It is the most centrally located of all the states of the Federation. It comprises the Igala, Ebira, Kabba and Kogi division of the former Kabba Province.⁶ However, as at 27th August, 1991, when the state was created it consisted of the following local government areas Ankpa, Bassa, Dekina, Idah, Ofu, Olambero from Benue state and Kogi, Okene, Okehi, Oyi

and Yagba from Kwara State. But on 23rd September, 1991 the Babangida Administration added the following local government Areas-Kogi with its headquarters at Koton-Karfe, Ijumu with its headquarters at Iyara, West Yagba having Odo-Ere as its headquarters and later Ajaokuta and Adavi were created. The government defence 'of the creation of 89 local government councils that was done throughout the country, was as a result of the popular demand from different areas of the country and in line with its belief of bringing government nearer to the people.⁷ But the announcement of the creation of West Yagba local government with its headquarters at Odo-Ere was greeted with displeasure by the people of Egbe. They felt that as the most developed town of the newly created local government where about 55% of revenue was to be generated, Egbe ought to have been made the Headquarters rather than an under-developed Odo-Ere.

Their anger was manifested in the burning of four vehicles and motorcycles belonging to the government. Over seventy people were arrested in the chaos that erupted in the town on 24th September, 1991.⁸ The Kogi State government had to send in mobile policemen from Lokoja to quell the crisis. The people of Egbe were however placated with the offer of chairmanship of the local government.⁹ Moreover, out of the sixteen wards that make up the local government,¹⁰ Egbe was given control of eight. However, the people of Odo-Ere are not happy over the favour and the domineering influence that Egbe has on the rest Villages.¹¹

In Ijumu Local Government¹² the people welcomed the creation of the council on 23rd September, 1992 with happiness, but the euphoric excitement that greeted the creation of the council has since turned into nightmare. Iyara the headquarters of the Local Government has since September, 1992 been under police siege in order to forestall communal disturbances arising out of the persistent refusal of the Kogi State NRC governor Audu Abubakar to swear in the twice duly elected SDP chairman Mr. John Ajewole and the alleged involvement of the late

Olujumu of Ijumu, Oba David Olorunmaiye in the council's crisis.¹³

The preponderant effect of the political crisis that has engulfed Ijumu Local Government Area as will be demonstrated here is that it has had the negative consequence 'of not mobilising the people of the council for funds for developmental projects, where as the reverse has been the case in West Yagba Local Government. This issue of development is so crucial because local government "must progressively become development oriented and not see their role primarily as that of the day to day running of local services and the provision of functions".¹⁴ Indeed as an instrument of development local government should stimulate popular participation in developmental activities.¹⁵

Be that as it may, it should be noted as earlier mentioned that both local governments were confronted with the problem of infrastructural facilities viz. accommodation, shortage of skilled personnel/technocrats and funding, good roads/transport, electricity, water, agriculture, health, education and political crisis. The extent to which each of the local government tackled these problems is discussed below.

Accommodation

The issue of accommodation for both official and residential has become endemic in both local government with their headquarters, Odo-Ere in West Yagba and Iyara in Ijumu being mostly affected. Both councils are at present making use of private residential accommodation as their temporary secretariat at Odo-Ere and Iyara respectively. Both councils have also awarded contracts for the construction of their respective permanent secretariat at Odo-Ere and Iyara. In Odo-Ere the construction of West Yagba Local Government Secretariat has reached advanced stage and has so far gulped up to One million.¹⁶ The cost of building materials has however led to the review of the construction expenses. It is expected to be completed as soon

as the contractors are possibly paid from the five million take off grant already received from the Federal Government. Also work on the construction of the staff quarters which is nearing completion has gulped ₦361,576.30 kobo.¹⁷

In Iyara work has been slowed down in the permanent site where Ijumu Local Government Secretariat is being built. So far ₦ 70,000 has been spent in respect of the construction of the secretariat while a balance of ₦29,000 is still outstanding.¹² Also ₦ 61,059 had been spent on hotel accommodation of Federal, State and Local Government Senior Staff posted to the Local Government Area (including National Youth Service Corpsers).¹⁸ The council has equally spent ₦79,000 on residential accommodation for its staff and guests.¹⁹ On the whole accommodation problem will cease faster in West Yagba Local Government than Ijumu Local Government because of the rapid nature of the construction of the secretariat building and staff quarters.

SHORTAGE OF EXPERIENCED PERSONNEL AND TECHNOCRATS

This problem is more acute in Ijumu Local Government where the political crisis there has prevented highly experienced technocrats and young graduates from joining the local government as in West Yagba Local Government. As such there has been only very few people doing many jobs. Highly experienced personnel, young graduates and secondary schools leavers who could be persuaded to take a career in local government should be made to join the council as soon as the crisis is over.

In West Yagba Local Government, there are some experienced personnel coupled with young graduates and secondary school-leavers. But the council still needs to employ technocrats in its services. Actually both West Yagba and Ijumu Local Government councils should not have problem in recruiting

young graduates and secondary school leavers since education which is their major industry has enabled them to produce many graduates of various discipline and secondary school leavers.

Both councils have however embarked on staff training and development programmes for their staff. In this respect, Ijumu Local Government has spent the sum of ₦ 155,554.74 on the training and development of all categories of its staff.²⁰ It has also motivated its few staff by promoting five junior staff and ten employees on merit. Similarly nine senior officers were recommended to the Local Government Civil Service Commission for promotion based on their performances. Both councils have also been paying their staff regularly. Ijumu Local Government spent eight hundred and three thousand, three hundred and seven Naira and seventy-one kobo (₦ 803,307.71) as salary to its employees during the period, June to November, 1992 while a total sum of sixty-seven thousand and one hundred and sixty-four Naira (₦67,164.00) was spent as leave bonus to all categories of staff during the same period.²¹ In addition a sum of twenty-three thousand seven hundred and seventy-eight Naira and twenty-six kobo (₦ 23,778.26) was spent as settlement of the areas of Federal Government relief package to its employees.²²

SHORTAGE OF FUND

The problem of inadequate fund has remained endemic with all local government councils in the country. In spite of this both councils have been tapping all the available resources at their disposal to generate and improve on their internally generated revenue. In West Yagba Local Government for example its internally generated revenue from January to December 1992 was ₦ 500,376.95.²³ Its Federal Statutory Allocation received from January to December was ₦17,841,915.54 while its capital receipt or stabilization from Federal Government was ₦ 3,140,334.22.²⁴ The council has

however embarked on new generating drives by constructing new markets at Egbe, Odo-Ere, Odo-Eri and Ejiba. The council is developing these markets to standard in order to allow the people to make voluntary payments for using them.²⁵

In Ijumu Local Government the total grants received from the Federal Government since June 1992 is ₦ 8,369,708.00.²⁶ In view of the meagre fund received from the Federal Statutory Allocation, it is essential that both councils should continue to search for an alternative source of revenue in order to meet up their commitments. Indeed only internally propelled efforts will stimulate economic buoyancy and safeguard the autonomy of the third-tier thus freeing the council from the subordinative import of having to carry one benevolence of the superior tiers as a strategy for survival.²⁷

Roads/Transport

Bearing in mind that good accessibility could be regarded as the most vital economic and social welfare that could be provided to any community, both councils have paid serious attention to the in roads. The council of West Yagba Local Government has granted a total of one hundred and thirty-five kilometres of roads scattered through most of the nooks and corners of the area.²⁸ Township roads at Odo-Ere, Egbe and many roads linking villages together were graded. The thirteen kilo metres Ogga-Ogbe road is being rehabilitated at a cost of two hundred and fifty thousand Naira and is also going on the year round.²⁹ Rehabilitation is also going on the Akota-Egbe road. The sum of ₦ 35,000 has been spent on the construction of twenty additional culverts and bridges scattered through out the canal areas.³⁰ Also a five kilometre road is being opened up to join Ogbe with other areas of the Local Government without necessarily taking a diversion through another route. Others under construction are the Igbaruku-Iyamerin road, a ring road at Egbe to shorten the distance between Ogbe-Okene and Ogga-Ilorin road.³¹

In addition, the local government has ordered supply of laterites for the rehabilitation Ogga/Ogbe road at the cost of ₦ 50,000.²⁷ Similarly, eight ring culverts have been constructed on Ogga-Ogbe roads at a cost of ₦ 72,579.00, Egbe township roads and bridge at a cost of ₦ 71,000 and ₦ 83,335.00 respectively.³² More culverts were also constructed at the following villages, Igbaruku, six culverts at cost of ₦ 40,774, and Odo-Ere one culvert at the cost of ₦ 14,322.00.³³

In Ijumu Local Government, the council has also embarked on the construction and repairs of some roads linking the villages together for example the Ogidi-Kabba road is under construction. The council has also constructed culverts in fourteen villages at a total cost of ₦ 403,357.60.³⁴

Transportation

In order to ease the problem of commuters both councils have bought two buses. West Yagba buses have the inscription "West Yagba Travellers" written on them. Passengers plying the ever busy Lokoja-Ilorin route Iyara-Kabba-Ilorin route make use of the buses at reduced prices. Although the buses bought by the councils are not enough to alleviate the problems of the commuters, nevertheless they will supplement the efforts of the commercial and private vehicles that ply the routes. It is however expected that more buses will be bought in the foreseeable future.

Electricity

West Yagba Local Government has paid serious attention to its electrification programmes than Ijumu Local Government. The council was restored the street lights from Ejiba to Egbe which had been out of use for almost ten years. The street lights at ado Eri, ado-Ere, Ejiba and Egbe have also been are stored. The council has honoured its share of ninety-six thousand Naira (₦ 96,000) directorate of food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) for Electricity projects at Igbaraku and Iyamerin.³⁵

Water

Portable water supply has proved difficult for both local governments. However in West Yagba Local Government, provisions have been made for wells at Isanlu-Esa and Okeleke. The council has also rehabilitated some broken bore-holes at the cost of ₦ 29,000.³⁶ Pressures have also been mounted on Kogi State Government to urgently do something to enhance water supply to Odo-Ere, Ejiba, Ogbe and Egbe. It is expected that the problem of water in the local government will be reduced to a considerable extent when the dam on Oyi river at Omi is completed. It is being constructed by Niko Construction Company.

Health

The health sector poses a lot of problem for both councils. Well-equipped hospitals are lacking in both local government area. Indeed while there is only one General Hospital in the whole or West Yagba Local Government Area which is the ECWA hospital at Egbe, there is none at Ijumu Local Government Area.

West Yagba Local Government Council has taken over some basic health centres such as the District Health Centre at Odo-Ere, which is costing it about ₦200,000.³⁷ In fact the District Health Centre is to be turned to Cottage hospital. The council has also taken over the comprehensive Health Centre embarked upon by Egbe Ladies Club since 1981. It has awarded contract for its completion after which staff would be posted by the Ministry of Health to work in the hospital. Similarly, the Odo-Ara Community Dispensary started in about 1990 has been taken over by the local government as well as dispensaries at Omi and Ogbe.

In addition, the council has spent ₦101,400 to purchase antenatal cards, infant patient cards, child welfare cards, patient cards, monthly return forms, injection record, out-patient register, record of specified diseases and voluntary organisation certificates, all in a bid to meet the primary requirements under public health clinic programme.³⁸ The council has also constructed and renovated dispensaries and maternities (DHU)

at the following places ado-Ere at the cost of ₦ 128,618.46, Egbe in two places at the cost of ₦193,046.26 and ₦71,529.45 and at Odo-Ara at a cost of ₦ 40,00.35 In all the sum of ₦426,000.00 has been spent on the PRC programme and drug revolving loan respectively.³⁹

In Ijumu Local Government the council has been engaged in renovation of its health care centres. So far it has renovated six Health Care Centres at the following villages Ekinrin Adde, Iyah-Gbedde, Ogidi, Iyamoye, Aiyegunle-Gbedde, Aiyetoro-Gbedde at a cost of ₦181,323.25.⁴⁰ It has supplied drugs to the Health Centres and it has provided ₦100,000 to facilitate Drugs Revolving Scheme in the Local Government under Primary Health Care System.

It has also been spending ₦5,000 monthly as grant approved for EPI⁴¹ and succeeded in immunising about 2,759 children born when Kogi State was a year old.⁴²

Education

Education remains the sole industry of both Local Government Areas and in accordance with a former directive of the Federal Government that the salaries and allowances primary school teachers be paid by the local government councils, the two local government councils have performed fair well.⁴³ However, there are occasions when the salaries are paid late as in the case of West Yagba Local Government where the 1992 December salaries were paid on 4th January 1993.⁴⁴ In West Local Government the council has so far effected the payment of 1991 and 1992 leave bonuses to the teachers to the tune of ₦ 389,722.00.⁴⁵ In order to encourage the teachers it has promoted two hundred and fifty teaching and non-teaching staff, adjusted their salaries and absorbed the teachers deployed from Kwara State. However, some schools are over staffed. Even a graduate teacher was deployed to teach in Akata Primary School, in part of ado-Ere.

In order to broaden the teachers' knowledge the council

has continued to send them for further courses. In 1992 it effected the payment of bursary to teachers undergoing various sandwich courses throughout the Federation to the tune of ₦ 67,700.00.⁴⁶ In its drive to bequeath laudable education to its children the council has established four pivot science schools located at Ejiba, Egbe, Igaruku and Odo-Ere. It has also built six new primary schools at a cost of ₦1.5 million and renovated the schools in the local government at a cost of 5 million.⁴⁷ To make learning conducive it has purchased versatile teachings aids worth over ₦ 500,000 as well as essential textbooks for teachers at a cost of ₦ 250,000.⁴⁸ It has also supplied furniture to schools to the tune of ₦.5 million. It has equally provided highly furnished accommodation for its Local Government Education Authority to the tune of ₦ 750,000.⁴⁹ To provide adequate reading facilities, it has built two libraries at a cost of ₦2.5 million in all it has spent 4.7 million on its Education Management Programme.

Top priority attention was also given to the Educational sector of Ijumu Local Government Council. The deposed SDP chairman elect Mr. John Ajewole for example started with the provision of free writing materials like exercise books, chalks and pencils to the primary school pupils.⁵⁰ He also spent about two million in the payment of teachers salaries and allowances and was planning to build more classes.⁵¹ However, under the present care taker chairman Chief (Deacon) John Obayemi Folorunsho the Council has spent ₦250,000.00 for printing and distribution of 20,000 weekly/termly progress report cards curriculum model to the various primary schools in the local government area.⁵²

Also in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education the council has also spent ₦258,480 for instructional materials for schools in Ijumu to the zonal co-ordinator (special programme) at Makurdi in respect of the World Bank Assisted Primary Education Project in Nigeria.⁵³ It equally spent ₦ 35,000 on a seminar for the teaching of mother tongue in primary schools from November, 17th-19th 1992.⁵⁴

In order to provide a conducive reading atmosphere for the children of the local government the council has rehabilitated and renovated seven primary school building across the local government area at a cost of ₦ 143,300.⁵⁵

The council has continued to effect prompt payment of teachers salaries so as to enhance their effectiveness and motivate them to work. In fact it has spent the sum of ₦4,061,604.21 from June to November.⁵⁶ To sustain their interest it has spent ₦ 114,695.06 as Government Relief Package to teachers in the Local Government.⁵⁷ To encourage the teachers it has set up a committee to consider their promotion exercise.

To facilitate the adult and non-formal education classes, the sum of ₦ 68,000.00 has been paid to the European Economic Community (EEC) Account to commence the programme take and it has actually taken off.⁵⁸ The council also donated ₦ 10,000 towards the one million Naira Educational Endowment Fund organised by the Ijumu Students Union, in its effort to provide scholarship to its needy citizens.⁵⁹ This was in addition to the ₦ 8,650 the council gave for organising it.⁶⁰

Agriculture

In consideration of the fact that the bulk of the population is agrarian, both councils have scrupulously tried to develop their agriculture. West Yagba Local Government Council has already bought tractors which have been put into serviceable condition for hiring to farmers during the raining season. It also bought improved seeds which are resistant to diseases selling them at highly subsidised rates to farmers. The council has already contacted the Agricultural Development Project (ADP) for Fertilizer and chemicals during the 1992 farming season.

Again the council has gradually taken over some community lands to be turned into lands Development Scheme. Such lands will be cleared by the council, cultivated and then allocated to the farmers and grains will be allowed to be planted on such cultivated land. The completion of the Dam at Omi river will

definitely hasten irrigation projects in the local government area.

In Ijumu Local Government the deposed SDP chairman-elect bought three new tractors to be given to three main groups for onward transmission to farmers in the area on hiring bases at subsidized rate.⁶¹ However under the present caretaker chairman, the council has established an Agriculture and co-operative department. This department has been responsible for the collection and distribution of essential commodities and fertilizers to the various wards and districts wards as well as government officials, comprising of local, state and federal.

The Department is also engaged in Tractor Hiring Services. In fact from the period of June to December, a total of 117 farmers booked for agricultural operations at different locations.⁶² This involves a total of 354 acreage of farm land amounting to ₦637,720 (as revenue).⁶³ On the aggregate, 30 61/2 acres were ploughed, harrowed and rigged during the plant season. Finally the Department bought and distributed essential commodities. It procured beans, maize, and groundnut oil at a cost of ₦109,840.00. For distribution to farmers and others.⁶⁴

Thus it can be seen that both local governments have spent a lot of money in the provision of infrastructural facilities in other respective areas. Ijumu local government spent a total of one million and four hundred and ninety-four Naira and two hundred and fifty-eight Naira and eighty-five kobo (₦1,494,258.85 on provision of socio-economic amenities throughout the local government area.⁶⁵ But in spite of this amount intensive grass root development is hardly noticeable in the local government area. On the other hand in West Yagba local government there are evidences of pockets of grassroots development.

Besides these infrastructural and other related problems discussed above. Both local government have also been confronted with political crises. But this is more serious in Ijumu local government where it has led to political crisis. But this is more serious in Ijumu local government where it has led to

political instability. It seems appropriate here to adumbrate on the political crisis that has engulfed Ijumu local government.

The political crisis started as a result of the non-acceptance of the election result of the November 23, 1991 nation wide local government election by the defeated National Republican Convention (NRC) chairmanship candidate, Mr. Sunday Titus Ajina. Earlier on, Mr. John Ajewole of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) had been declared winner in the chairmanship election to Ijumu local government having polled 9,695 votes while his opponent Mr. T.S. Ajina polled 8,015 votes.⁶⁶ But the election result from the 15th ward, Egbeda-Egga/Okedayo was destroyed by thugs.⁶⁷

As such the National Electoral Commission (NEC) did not declare any result for the councillorship election in that ward. However, with respect to the chairmanship, the NRC felt that since only 700 votes were accredited in the ward, the non-declaration of the result would not affect the overall result since Ajewole was already leading with 1,680 votes in the 14 wards where results were declared.⁶⁸

NEC therefore declared Ajewole as the duly elected chairman of the Ijumu local government. The defeated NRC candidate Mr. T.S. Ajina challenged the election result before the local government election petition tribunal of Kogi State sitting at Isanlu, on December, 20th 1991.⁶⁹

The petition was determined on March 14, 1992, in favour of Mr. Ajewole. Mr. Ajina was not satisfied and so he filed an appeal which was heard at the Obangede High Court. The appeal was determined on 8th June 1992.⁷⁰ The court held that the election was inconclusive and that a bye-election be held in Egbeda-Egga/Okedayo ward.⁷¹ In respect of the position of the incumbent Mr. Ajewole, the Judge said that he should remain in office until a bye-election was conducted, but this clarification was never made part of the judgement.⁷²

But the Kogi State NRC governor Audu Abubakar worsened the crisis by acting in defiance of justice Ochimana's pronouncement that Ajewole should remain in office pending the conduct

of a bye-election in Egbeda-Egga/Okedayo ward.⁷³

The governor swiftly dissolved the local government, appointed and swore in a sole Administrator in the person of Deacon (chief) John Olayemi Folorunsho, on the 9th of June, 1992.⁷⁴

On the 10th of June 1992 when the sole Administrator assumed duty, the deposed SDP chairman elect challenged the legality of the appointed sole administrator and since then he had been engaged in a series of legal battle with the defeated NRC chairmanship candidate Mr. T.S. Ajina who has the governor's backing.⁷⁵

The governor's intention of perpetuating the crisis is manifested in his persistent refusal to swear in the deposed SDP chairman elect in spite of the fact that he won the second election on August 29, 1992 conducted by NEC as ordered by the Obangede High Court.⁷⁶ Indeed for about five times (September 7th, 30th, October 7th, 13th and 15th 1992) he failed to swear in Mr. Ajewole despite the declaratory promises he made to that effect.⁷⁷

It was this persistent refusal of the governor to swear in Mr. Ajewole coupled with the earlier mentioned alleged involvement of the Olujumu of Ijumu in the council's problem that led to the September 1992 protest March of about 5,000 women half-nude to the palace of Oba David Olorunmaiye.⁷⁸ Another planned demonstration by the women on October 28, 1991 which could have been a reminiscent of 1929 Aba Women Riot was aborted by the coordinator of the seven-man peace committee Chief Michael Asaju. The women had planned to carry coffin to the local government secretariat and Olujumu palace.⁷⁹

In response to these protests the state government had to send a contingent of about 3,000 policemen to Iyara to maintain peace and order.⁸⁰

Series of peace efforts made by the seven-man peace committee initiated by the prominent Ijumu Development movement to resolve the crisis have failed. In fact the seven-

man peace committee met for about twenty-one times to resolve the crisis without success.⁸¹ The committee's recommendation to the effect that the governor should perform statutory function invested on him constitutionally by swearing-in the chairman elect, Ajewole without further delay was rejected by the governor. The committee's efforts were under minded by some people that were benefiting from the crisis.⁸²

The committee however suffered a set back when the NRC members decided to pull out. Earlier the secretary of the peace committee Deacon (chief) John Olayemi Folorunsho had been appointed as the sole administrator and later care-taker chairman by the State governor, Audu Abubakar. This appointment was however seen by some people as calculated attempt made to disorganize the committee.⁸³ They might be right because no sooner had the care-taker chairman assumed office when he started to pursue an estrangement policy rather than a constructive policy that would have resolved the political crisis. He became hostile to the members of the committee and he instructed the police to impound the local government vehicle that took the members of the peace committee to Lokoja.⁸⁴

A much more painful aspect of the whole crisis is the questionable role played by the Olujumu of Ijumu, Oba David Olorunmaiye who as the royal father of the local government could have used his wealth of experience to resolve the political crisis. But unfortunately he was alleged to be partisan by openly embracing National Republican Convention (NRC) as earlier mentioned. Indeed according to the deposed SDP chairman elect, the late Oba was the brain behind the council's crisis. Although the late Oba defended himself twenty-four hours before his death, nevertheless, his role in the whole crisis left much to be desired.

In West Yagba Local Government the political climate there is benevolent to party members of the NRC rather than the whole generality of the people. As such the SDP members of the local government are not happy over the style of administration of the chairman. Indeed prominent members of

the SDP have complained bitterly about the leadership and administration of the NRC chairman chief Gbenga Asagun.⁸⁵

Be that as it may, it should be noted that the impact of the political crisis on developmental activities in Ijumu local government is that it has made it impossible for the people to realise the spirit of oneness, the goals and aspiration of good government. As such there is an element of divide and rule in the local government. Compared to West Yagba Local Government Area where pockets of grassroots development has been noticeable, Ijumu local government has suffered in this direction.

Capitalising on the impasse in the local government, funds that are supposed to be judiciously used are been diverted to unrewarding activities. Thus undermining the growth and development of the local government. Local Government funds are diverted to the pursuit of law suits. Besides the prodigality of the local government chairman is the fact that precious official time is being wasted in the resolution of internal crisis. However, the crisis was finally resolved when the deposed SDP chairman elect was restored to his post as a result of the pressures mounted on Governor Abubakar Audu. Since then peace has returned to the area and it is hoped that the people will be mobilize for participation in developmental projects.

CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

West Yagba and Ijumu local governments have to some extent solved the infrastructural and other related problems that have confronted both local governments. In West Yagba local government pockets of grassroots development have been noticed because of the relatively peaceful co-existence there. This has made it possible for the people to be mobilized for developmental projects. The reverse has been the case in Ijumu local government which has been infested with political crisis. This, mobilize the people for developmental projects.

The extensive research conducted in respect of the two local

governments have shown that the local governments are yet to create adequate sources of revenue to sustain their socio-economic development. A reasonable amount of fund that is being used for socio-economic development are grants from the State and Federal Government.

It has also been observed that education is the sole industry of the two local governments. This of course has a side effect on the socio-economic development of the areas as the secondary schools leavers move to urban centres for gainful employment. In order to help develop the two local government areas it becomes pertinent that they should encourage the development of economic projects which will attract the already qualified personnel that left the areas to return home. It is also necessary for the State government to assist in the development of the abundant natural resources scattered all over the areas.

While the prospect for development is high in West Yagba local government because of the ease with which the people can be mobilized, in Ijumu local government, "the entire populace will have to be mandatorily"⁸⁶ to participate in developmental projects.

Both local government are however economically viable, if only those entrusted to run the affairs of the two local government are ready to sacrifice for the development of the areas.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- * I am grateful to Chief Seth Maiyekogbon, a renowned management consultant for providing most of the materials used in the preparation of this chapter.
- 1. The 1976 reforms sought to revamp the local government system as an efficient and effective catalyst of grassroots development by providing for the decentralization of significant functions of State governments to the third-tier of government fostering better funding arrangement, and providing for a more effective manpower management policy and practice designed to attract high calibre staff. Professor Sam. Oyovbaire, "Emergence of true

- third-tier government", *The Guardian*, March 12, 1991 p. 7. For more details on 1976 Local Government Reforms see 1976 Guide lines of Local Government Reforms.
2. See the *Daily Times*, 24th September 1991 for details, p. 1.
 3. Ibid, p. 1.
 4. For details see the *National Concord*, 11th February, 1993, pp. 1-2.
 5. Professor Sam. Oyovbaire, "Emergence of a true third-tier government, *The Guardian*, 12 March, 1991, p. 7.
 6. Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Investment Guide for Potential Investors, p. 8.
 7. For more details, see the *Daily Times* 24th September 1991, p. 2.
 8. For details see the *Sunday Herald*, 29th September 1991, p. 4.
 9. Mr. Gbenga Asagun, an indigene of Egbe won the local government chairmanship election on November 23rd and was therefore sworn in as the chairman of the local government.
 10. West Yagba local government area consist of the following districts Odo Ara-Okeri, Omi, Okoto-odo Eri, Odole-Odo-Eri, Okoleke, Isanlu-Essa, Ogbe, Odo-Ere, Iyamerin-Okeri, Egbe, Ejiba, Okunran, Akata, Igbaruku-Okeri, Ogga. Historically the people of West Yagba Local Government Area are Yorubas and are known as 'Okun' Yorubas.
 11. Most of the people interviewed at Odo-Ere expressed this view.
 12. Ijumu Local Government consists of the following District, Iyara, Ikoyi, Ife, Egbeda-Egga, Ekinrin-Adde, Origa, Igbalayan-Iyara, Iyamoye, Igbopin, Igboloke-Aluju, Aiyegunle-Gbedde, Iyab-Gbedde, Iluhagba-Gbedde, Aiyetoro-Gbedde, Ilu-Hafan-Gbedde, Aiyere Arima, Aiyede-Ogale, Aduge, Idioro-Ogale, Ogidi, Okoro-Gbedde, Aiyeh-Gbedde. Historically, the people of Ijumu Local Government Area are predominantly Yorubas. Their dialect is 'Okuu'. It is relevant to state that the anthropological connotation of 'Ijumu' means 'Ajumomu'-land of concession. Ijumu is grouped into three historical and administrative units for administrative convenience. Hence Gbedde group in the north, Ijumu-Arin in the middle-belt and Ogidi group in the south. For details see Sportlight on Ijumu Local Government Area. Kogi State, *The Graphic*, December 30, January 1993, pp. 7-18.
 13. Before his death Oba David Olorunmaiye was alleged to have openly embraced the National Republican Convention Party and

- that he was the brain behind the council's crisis. But less than 24 hours before he passed away he defended himself before his people that he had no hand in the political crisis and that as a father he would not be responsible for setting his house on fire. He went further to say that 'Ijumu Konituka' (meaning that may Ijumu continue to be united). For details see Chief Joshua Nihi, 'How things fall apart in Ijumu'. A rejoinder, *The Graphic*, January 27 to February 2, 1993, pp. 12-13.
14. The future of Local Government in Nigeria, the report of the National Conference on Local Government Institute of Administration, Ife University of Ife, April 29th - 3rd May, 1969, p. 48.
 15. Sorka Paul Akase, "Democratic Values and Limitations of Local Government Reforms", in Oyovbaire, S.E. (ed.) *Democratic Experience in Nigeria*. Benin City: Omega Publishers, p. 111.
 16. Chief M.A. Omoya, Focus on West Yagba Local Government, Landmark of progress and development in one year (January - December, 1992), p. 7.
 17. Ibid, p. 7.
 18. "Sportlight on Ijumu Local Government Area, Kogi State," *The Graphic*, December 30 - January 5, 1993, op cit, pp. 7-19.
 19. Ibid, p. 7.
 20. Ibid, p. 7.
 21. Sportlight on Ijumu Local Government Area, Kogi State, *The Graphic*, December 30 - January 5, 1993, op. cit, p. 7,
 22. Ibid, p. 7.
 23. Ibid, p. 7.
 24. Chief M.A. Omoya, op. cit, p. 7.
 25. Ibid, p. 7.
 26. Ibid, p. 7.
 27. Sportlight on Ijumu Local Government Area, Kogi State, *The Graphic*, December 30 - January 5, 1993, op cit, p. 8.
 28. Bisi Abidoye, "LGA and the potentials of small scale industries", *Nigeria Tribune*, 6th January, 1993. p.10.
 29. Chief M.A. Omoya, op. cit, p. 7.
 30. Ibid, p. 2.
 31. Ibid, p. 2.
 32. Ibid, p. 2.
 33. Ibid, p. 2.

34. Ibid, p. 2.
35. Ibid, p. 2.
36. Ibid, p. 2.
37. Ibid, p. 2.
38. Ibid, p. 2.
39. Chief M.A. Omoya, op. cit, p. 4.
40. Ibid, p. 4.
41. Ibid, p. 4.
42. Ibid, p. 4.
43. Spotlight on Ijumu Local Government Area, Kogi State, *The Graphic*, op cit, p.8.
44. Ibid, p. 8.
45. Ibid, p. 8.
46. Decree 53 of 1989 transferred funding of primary school to the local government councils. The Federal Government has however, been forced to repeal the decree as a result of the recent teachers nation wide strike action which demanded amongst other reasons for the strike that the decree be abrogated.
47. The writer was fortunate to be present at the scene of payment of the teachers on the 4th January, 1993.
48. Chief M.A. Omoya, op. cit, p. 8.
49. Ibid, p. 8.
50. Ibid, p. 8.
51. Ibid, p. 8.
52. Ibid, p. 8.
53. For details see *Herald*, April 5, 1992, p. 8. Actually I have not been able to get the six months record of activities of Mr. John Ajewole. Efforts made to get in touch with him in his office failed. What is evidently clear about him from the *Herald* report is that he was determined to pursue a comprehensive programme for the rapid socio-economic development of the local government. In fact he administered the affairs of the local government to the administration of his electorate. His relentless pursuance of the SDP educational programme was according to him stated by the Kogi State NRC Governor Audu Abubakar as a fundamental reason for his refusal to swear him in as the chairman elect of the Ijumu local government. For details see Biodun Ezekiel, op. cit, pp. 1-5.
54. Biodun Ezekiel, op. cit, p. 5.

55. Spotlight on Ijumu Local Government Area, Kogi State, *The Graphic*, op. cit, p. 8.
56. Spotlight on Ijumu Local Government Area, Kogi State, *The Graphic*, op. cit, p. 8.
57. Ibid, p. 8.
58. Ibid p. 8.
59. Ibid p. 8.
60. Ibid p. 8.
61. Ibid p. 8.
62. Ibid p. 8.
63. Ibid p. 8.
64. For details see the *Herald* April 5th 1992, p. 8.
65. Spotlight on Ijumu Local Government Area, Kogi State, *The Graphic*, op. cit, p.17.
66. Ibid, p. 17.
67. Ibid, p. 17.
68. Ibid, p. 17.
69. Biodun Ezekiel, op. cit, p. 17.
70. Ibid, p. 4.
71. Ibid, p. 4.
72. Ibid, p. 4.
73. Ibid, p. 4.
74. Ibid, p. 4.
75. Ibid, p. 4.
76. Ibid, p. 4.
77. Ibid, p. 4.
78. At one of the peace meeting's convened by chief Asaju led seven-man peace committee to resolve the crisis Mr. Ajewole said that his opponent Mr. Ajina once confessed to the committee that the governor was an interested party and that he (Ajina) could not step out without the governor's order.
79. For details see Biodun Ezekiel, op. cit p. 5.
80. Ibid, p. 5.
81. Ibid, p. 5.
82. The half-nude protest by the women was a sign of bad omen and the beginning of an end for an Oba, according to an elderly woman in Ekinrin Adde. Actually the Oba died on 29th December 1992.
83. Biodun Ezekiel, op. cit. p. 5.

84. Ibid, p. 5.
85. Ibid, p. 5.
86. For other recommendations of the committee see Biodun Ezekiel op. cit, p. 5.
87. Ibid, p. 5.
88. Ibid, p. 5.
89. SDP members interviewed at Odo-Ere and Egbe expressed this view.
90. Spotlight on Ijumu Local Government Area, Kogi State, *The Graphic*, op. cit, p.18.

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Groundwork of Niger-Benue Confluence History is an outcome of tireless efforts of scholars drawn from the length and breadth of Nigeria. This scholarly and intellectually stimulating work covers a range of themes which address various aspects of history of the region. This work which covers roughly the geographical areas of Kogi and Benue states. My sabbatical leave at Joseph Ayo Babalola University afforded me the opportunity to bring the work to fruition.

This book written in a lucid and clear language is highly recommended to scholars and students of History and other disciplines that touch on Niger - Benue Confluence.



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