The Impact of Democratic Governance on Service Delivery in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the impacts of democratic governance on service delivery in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. The study aimed to evaluate the extent to which democratic governance provides primary education and primary healthcare services to the people at the grassroots level, and the impacts of such services on the lives of the people. The study used survey research design and adopted questionnaire as instrument of data collection. The study found out that democratic governance has a positive impact on service delivery, particularly in the area of primary education but has no significant effect on primary healthcare delivery in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State. The study recommended among other things that there is a need to improve the quality of laboratory services provided at healthcare facilities in Ifelodun Local Government Area. This can be achieved by providing necessary training to laboratory officials and ensuring that they are adequately equipped to perform their duties effectively.

Keywords: Democratic governance, service delivery, primary education, primary healthcare, citizen participation

Introduction

Democratic governance has been recognized as an essential component of promoting development and enhancing service delivery in many countries worldwide. In Nigeria, the adoption of democratic governance in 1999 marked a significant shift in the way government institutions operate and deliver services to the people (Oyedokun, 2017). Despite these changes, the quality of service delivery in many parts of Nigeria, including Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State, still falls below expectations (Obasanjo & Oshuntokun, 2021; Okunogbe, 2018). Several factors can contribute to this, including corruption (Ogbeidi & Omorogbe, 2021), poor accountability (Akpan & Ndoma, 2019), inadequate funding (Oluwafemi, 2021), and ineffective implementation of policies and programs (Bolarinwa, 2020). Democratic governance promotes service delivery in many countries (Mukand & Rodrik, 2018; Kramon & Posner, 2013).

Therefore, studying the impact of democratic governance on service delivery in Ifelodun Local Government Area can help identify the factors that hinder effective service delivery and provide insights into how democratic governance practices can be improved to address these challenges. Thus, studying the impact of democratic governance on service delivery in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State can help identify the strengths and weaknesses in the democratic governance practices of the area and provide insights into how service delivery can be improved to better meet the needs of the people. In summary, the study of the impact of democratic governance on service delivery in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State is a vital research topic that can have far-reaching implications for the well-being of the people and the development of the area. It is an important area of research that can contribute to the growing body of knowledge on democratic governance and service delivery in Nigeria and provide a basis for future research and policymaking in this area. Recent studies have shown that the impact of democratic governance on service delivery is significant and cannot be underestimated. For instance, a study by Obijiofor and Odoemene (2020) in Nigeria found that democratic governance positively influences service delivery by promoting transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in government institutions.

The impact of democratic governance on service delivery in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State is a relevant and important research topic that can contribute to the existing knowledge on the subject. The findings of this study can provide valuable insights into how democratic governance practices can be improved to enhance service delivery in the area and potentially in other parts of Nigeria. Furthermore, the study can also help policymakers and government officials understand the challenges of implementing democratic governance practices and identify effective ways to overcome them. As noted by Ansell and Gash (2007), democratic governance can promote service delivery by creating a more accountable and responsive government that is more sensitive to the needs and demands of its citizens. Furthermore, citizen participation in decision-making processes can lead to the development of more effective policies and programs that better meet the needs of the people (World Bank, 2004). Studies have shown that the impact of democratic governance on service delivery is significant and cannot be underestimated. For instance, Obijiofor and Odoemene (2020) found that democratic governance positively influences service delivery by promoting transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in government institutions. However, the effectiveness of democratic governance in promoting service delivery depends on various factors, including the quality of institutions, political will, and the capacity of government officials (Diamond, 2015; Bratton & van de Walle, 1997).

In the context of Ifelodun Local Government areas of Kwara state, democratic governance exist with elected local government council representing the yearnings and aspirations of their constituencies. The local government through LGEA and PHCD and social welfare services department engage in the provision of basic education and primary health care, to mention but a few all in the art of meeting better service delivery. However, the issue is that, the provision of such services is one thing and their impact to the lives of the people is another thing. Stemming from the foregoing, the work is aimed at studying democratic governance (at both State and local government level) and how it has impacted on the delivery of services (education and health) taking Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State as a study area. Against this backdrop, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To Ascertain the impact of democratic governance in the provision of primary health care services in Ifelodun Local Government Area.
- ii. To determine the impact of democratic governance in the provision of basic education in Ifelodun Local Government Area.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between democratic governance and provision of primary health care services in Ifelodun Local Government Area.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between democratic governance and provision of basic education in Ifelodun Local Government Area

Conceptual Clarifications Democratic Governance

Democratic governance is a type of government where all eligible citizens are given an equal opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. This can be achieved either directly or through elected representatives, and covers social, economic, and cultural aspects that allow for political self-determination (Fortunato, 2015). In constitutional democracies, the role of individuals in the government is to maintain cultural order without imposing their views or attistudes on the community. Instead, they aim to discover the truth about evolving needs while upholding the agreed constitution and avoiding conflicts with universal laws. Their responsibility is to represent the opinions and desires of an informed electorate while ensuring that the community is kept informed (Warren, 2009 cited in Sani 2018).

Politicians are regular people who, if selected carefully, can be better managers with higher moral standards and more specialized knowledge than the average citizen. However, they are generally not significantly different from those they represent. To maintain order, they require the authority to make laws within the boundaries set by the constitution. This involves the management of financial and security systems, as well as the provision of an adequate amount of money to allow human industry to run smoothly and without commercial abuse (Gourley, 2010).

According to Fortunato (2015), democratic governance differs from two other forms of government: monarchical, where power is held by a single individual, and oligarchic or aristocratic, where power is held by a small group of individuals. However, the distinction between these types inherited from ancient Greek philosophy is now unclear, as contemporary governments have a mix of democratic, oligarchic, and monarchical elements. Various forms of democratic government exist, but the two primary types are direct and representative democracy, both of which are concerned with how the entire citizenry can express their will.

Service Delivery

Service delivery refers to the provision of essential resources such as health, education, water, electricity, sanitation infrastructure, land, and housing that citizens rely on. However, the government's ability to provide and maintain these resources has often been unreliable, which has inconvenienced or endangered entire communities (Adelekan & Laing, 2015). This has resulted in an increase in the number of protests demanding better service delivery, commonly referred to as "service delivery protests" by the media (Van Donk, Swart, & Fouche, 2019). Public services are essential services provided by governments at the local, municipal, or larger-scale level for the benefit of the public. These services are often funded through taxation and are necessary for the public good, such as sewage, trash disposal, and street cleaning (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). Larger-scale public services such as public education and public health services are also examples of services provided by governments for the public benefit in countries that have them.

Primary Health Care Services

Primary healthcare (PHC) is a fundamental element of healthcare that aims to provide essential and scientifically sound health services to all individuals and families in a community. It emphasizes the importance of health equity, social acceptability, and affordability of healthcare at every stage of development, promoting self-reliance and self-determination. PHC extends beyond traditional healthcare, taking into account the environmental and lifestyle factors that contribute to health. Together with public health measures, PHC is considered a cornerstone of universal healthcare systems. The Alma-Ata Declaration, adopted in 1978 at the International Conference on Primary Health Care in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, promoted the concept of PHC and aimed to make universal healthcare accessible

to all. This declaration became a key component of the World Health Organization's goal of Health for All. The Alma-Ata Conference led to a movement of professionals, institutions, governments, civil society organizations, researchers, and grassroots organizations working together to address health inequalities in all countries, recognizing that these inequalities are politically, socially, and economically unacceptable (Cueto, 2004).

Primary Education Services

Ifelodun Local Government Area is one of the sixteen local government areas in Kwara State, Nigeria. The area has several primary schools which provide basic education to children in the locality. According to the Kwara State Ministry of Education, there are 163 public primary schools and 91 private primary schools in Kwara State, including Ifelodun Local Government Area (Kwara State Ministry of Education, n.d.). The National Population Commission (NPC) of Nigeria conducted a survey on the literacy rate in Kwara State in 2010. The survey revealed that the literacy rate for persons aged 15-24 years in Ifelodun Local Government Area was 78.2% (National Population Commission, 2010). In a report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on primary education in Nigeria, it was noted that access to quality education is a major challenge in many rural areas, including Ifelodun Local Government Area. The report recommended the provision of basic amenities, such as water and sanitation facilities, to improve the quality of education (UNICEF, 2018). The Kwara State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) is responsible for the management and supervision of primary education in the state. The board has implemented several initiatives to improve the quality of education in the state, including Ifelodun Local Government Area (Kwara State SUBEB, n.d.).

Overview of Democratic Governance in Service Delivery

According to Section 7(1) of the 1999 Nigerian constitution, local government councils must be democratically elected established by each state under state statutes. The constitution also outlines specific functions that are the exclusive responsibility of local governments, including the maintenance of cemeteries, slaughter slabs, public conveniences, and the collection of rates and petty licenses, as well as the naming of streets. Additionally, local governments are expected to participate in delivering various services concurrently with state governments, such as primary education, healthcare, and agriculture, among others. This places local governments as a third tier of government responsible for delivering key public services at the local level, alongside the state, and entitles them to receive 20% of federal allocation and 10% of state allocation from internally generated revenue. The UBE Act 2004 also directs the establishment of Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) in each local government, which are responsible for the day-to-day management of primary education with the support of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB).

Despite the fact that the 2011 amended Nigerian constitution has placed primary education and healthcare in the concurrent legislative list, local governments have been heavily involved in the execution of these responsibilities. In fact, advocates of centralization believe that local governments are in the best position among the three tiers of government to serve as both a principal decision-maker and a provider of basic services such as primary education and healthcare. They base their argument on the idea that local governments are closer and more connected to the local community (Jica, 2007, as cited in Dalhatu, 2015). Similarly, in 2004, the UNDP stated that local governments in Nigeria are better equipped to identify local needs and develop effective and

sustainable service delivery strategies than any other tier of government due to their proximity to the local community.

However, some scholars such as Linus (2014) and Khemani (2004) have argued that local governments lack the managerial and financial capacity to effectively promote the provision of goods and services that can lead to socio-economic development. They base their argument on the legal framework, local structure, composition, and the recent performance of local government authorities. Due to these issues, the state through bodies such as SUBEB and SPHCDA have taken over the manpower provision, determination of project locations, procurement, supervision, and regulation of primary healthcare, water supply, and basic education.

A survey carried out by USAID in 2001 on the assessment of local government position and performance in Nigeria reveals that the 1999 constitution section 7(1) guaranteeing the system of democratically elected local government councils and tasking each state to ensure their existence under state laws that provide for their establishment, structure, composition, finance, and function, has reduced local government to being subservient to the states. States have been empowered to create, dissolve and establish new local jurisdictions for local governments, and in exercising their powers over local governments, states have imposed administrative and political control that reduces the autonomy of the local government to effectively perform (Dalhatu, 2015).

The UNDP study on local government in 2004 further observed that many state governments have dissolved elected local government councils on the pretext of non-performance and replaced them with appointed caretaker committees. Furthermore, many states have encroached on local revenues by making purchases on behalf of local governments, withholding state statutory allocations meant for local governments, and taking over

constitutionally assigned local functions under the pretext that they were not effectively performed by the local governments.

Review of Empirical Studies

Several studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between democratic governance and socio-economic development in Nigeria. Pam (2015) found that public bureaucracies were more effective during military regimes than during democracy, and that democratic governance was weak in providing social services and economic infrastructures for growth and development. However, the study only focused on federal institutions, neglecting other levels of government that are closer to the people.

Diamond (2016) examined the relationship between democratic governance and socio-economic development in education, health, and agriculture at the grassroots level. The study found that development can be achieved under different systems of government, and that the nexus between democracy and development is neither positive nor negative. The study cited examples of some non-democratic countries such as Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Iran Republic that achieved high levels of socio-economic development, while some democratic countries such as Niger Republic, Nigeria, and Kenya were unable to provide goods and services that ensure socio-political and economic development. Adesina and Agbola (2018) emphasized the role of community-based organizations (CBOs) in promoting service delivery in Nigeria.

The authors argued that CBOs can help bridge the gap between government and citizens, and ensure that the needs of the community are effectively addressed. The authors suggested that democratic governance provides an enabling environment for the development of CBOs, and thus enhances service delivery. Olalere and Fadayomi (2018) examined the impact of democratic governance on primary healthcare service delivery in Oyo State

and found that there is a positive correlation between democratic governance and the availability of healthcare facilities, equipment, and personnel. The authors suggested that democratic governance provides a conducive environment for the development of primary healthcare services.

However, Akanbi and Akanbi (2017) criticized the relationship between democratic governance and service delivery in Nigeria, arguing that while democratic governance is necessary for service delivery, it is not sufficient. The authors pointed out that the lack of political will, inadequate funding, and weak institutional capacity often hinder effective service delivery. Similarly, Adesina and Agbola (2018) emphasized the role of community-based organizations (CBOs) in promoting service delivery in Nigeria. The authors argued that CBOs can help bridge the gap between government and citizens, and ensure that the needs of the community are effectively addressed. The authors suggested that democratic governance provides an enabling environment for the development of CBOs, and thus enhances service delivery. Olaniyan and Okunlola (2017) highlighted the importance of citizen participation in promoting service delivery, while Adesina and Agbola (2018) emphasized the role of community-based organizations in bridging the gap between government and citizens. Both studies suggested that democratic governance provides an enabling environment for citizen participation and the development of community-based organizations, which in turn can enhance service delivery. These findings underscore the need for a participatory and inclusive approach to democratic governance in Nigeria, where citizens and community-based organizations have a greater say in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Similarly, Okeke and Ezeibe (2017) examined the impact of democratic governance on public service delivery in Enugu State and found that democratic governance significantly improves service delivery. The authors suggested that democratic governance ensures that public officials are held accountable for their actions and that citizens have a say in the decision-making process, which ultimately leads to better service delivery. Ayuba (2015) focused on democratic governance and socio-economic development in Nigeria, looking at education, health, and empowerment programs in twelve states across each geo-political zone. The study found that democratic governance failed to deliver true development at the grassroots level, and described democratic governance in Nigeria as too expensive and lacking in passion for socio-economic development. However, the study only focused on physical infrastructures and did not consider manpower provision in the areas of study. Sani (2012) studied the impact of democratic governance on infrastructural development with primary health care and primary education in selected local governments in Katsina State. The study found high levels of political participation in the state, but the sample size of 120 in a state with a projected population of 6.5 million was too small. The study did not consider the impact of infrastructures on the lives of the people.

The reviewed literature on democratic governance, service delivery, and socio-economic development in Nigeria has mostly focused on the relationship between democracy and service delivery, physical infrastructures, democratization, good governance, and socio-economic development. However, there is a lack of research on the specific impacts of democratic governance on service delivery and socio-economic development, especially in the context of primary education and healthcare services for people at the grassroots level. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining the impacts of democratic governance on service delivery in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Theoretical Framework

The study utilized the localism theory, which is based on the ideas of Alexis de Tocqueville (1981). Localism promotes the production

and consumption of goods at the local level, local governance, and the provision of goods and services that are responsive to local needs and culture. The localist perspective emphasizes the importance of autonomous elected local authorities, similar to traditional public administration. Localism drew inspiration from various authors such as Leopold Kohr (1989), Schumacher (1988), Wendell Berry (1969), Alexis de Tocqueville (1981), and Kirkpatrick Sale (1979), among others cited in Sani (2018). By relocalizing democratic and socio-economic relationships to the local level, localism proposes that social, economic, and environmental issues can be better defined and solutions can be created more easily.

The theory of localism highlights the importance decentralization as a means of delivering services to the grassroots level. In the context of this study, there are national bodies like the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, Universal Basic Education Commission, and River Basin Development Authorities that provide guidelines and laws for the adequate delivery of services. At the state level, bodies like State Primary Health Care Development Centre (SPHDC) and State Universal Basic Education (SUBEB) supervise and regulate service provision, while at the local level, institutions like Primary Health Care Department (PHCD) and LGEA execute services that are responsive to local needs. Additionally, community participation is promoted through School Based Management Committee (SBMC) and Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) in the education sector and primary healthcare. The theory of localism also stresses the importance of local government institutions in providing services that are responsive to the needs of the people. These institutions are likely to ensure effective service delivery and enable local participation in democratic governance by electing representatives who are responsive to the people's wishes. The study has demonstrated the existence of elected representatives, who act as

intermediaries between the populace and the government. These councilors are actively involved in policymaking and project execution, and there are supervisory councilors assigned to oversee the activities of the primary health care departments. Additionally, the study has highlighted the importance of creating effective subsidiaries by showing the presence of state and local governments, Primary Health Care Department (PHCD), Local Authority (LGEA), Government Education Governmental Organisations (NGOs), which aid in the provision of goods and services. Finally, the study has identified new management styles, such as capacity development programs organized by the federal, state, and local governments, aimed at enhancing the skills of government officials.

Methodology

To conduct the research, the survey research design was adopted. This particular design enabled the researcher to gather data from a subset of the population by administering questionnaires. The sample was selected based on certain criteria that aimed to ensure that the characteristics of the population were adequately represented. The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula was used to determine the sample size. This formula is commonly used in research to determine the sample size needed to achieve a certain level of precision and is based on the size of the population and the desired level of confidence. By using this formula, the researcher was able to select an appropriate sample size that would allow for the generalization of findings to the entire population. Overall, the use of a survey research design with a representative sample and an appropriate sample size has provided the researcher with a robust methodology for collecting data and drawing conclusions.

Population, Sample Size and Instrument of Data Collection

To clarify further, the study focused on individuals residing in Ifelodun Local Government Area as the target population. The researchers arrived at a sample size of 382 using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, which is a commonly used method for determining sample size in research studies. To ensure that the data collected could be easily analyzed, the questionnaire was structured using closed-ended questions, which require respondents to select from a predetermined set of answer options. The questions also used a five-point Likert scale to measure the degree of intensity in respondents' feelings and perceptions towards the topic under investigation. This approach makes it easier to code, tabulate, and analyze the data collected from the questionnaire.

Method of Data Analysis

The study employed simple linear regression analysis as a statistical tool to examine the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. In this case, the independent variables were the factors being investigated in the study, while the dependent variable was the outcome or result of interest. By conducting a regression analysis, the study was able to determine how much of an impact each independent variable had on the dependent variable, and to what extent. This helped to test the hypotheses and draw conclusions about the relationships between the variables being studied. Additionally, the use of parametric statistics in regression analysis allowed for the establishment of a level of statistical significance, which helped to determine whether the observed effects were statistically significant or merely due to chance.

Results and Discussion

Decision Rule

The study will use a significance level of 0.05, which corresponds to a 95% confidence level. The null hypotheses will be rejected if the p-values are less than 0.05, and retained if the p-values are greater than 0.05. This approach allows for a rigorous statistical analysis of the data, and ensures that the findings are reliable and valid.

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between democratic governance and provision of primary health care in Ifelodun Local Government Area.

Coefficients

Table 1: Regression Standard coefficients

Coefficients"										
		Unstandardized Coefficients		-						
				Coefficients						
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.				
1	(Constant)	7.051	1.703		4.140	.000				
	Democratic	.036	.031	.821	1.132	.209				
	governance									

a. Dependent Variable: health care delivery

Table 1 shows the coefficients of the variables in model. Thus the model is presented:

PH = 0.036 + 0.031DG + c

Where PH = Primary Health Care

DG = Democratic Governance

The study's results indicate that there is a positive relationship between democratic governance and primary healthcare provision in Ifelodun LGA, but this association is not statistically significant at a 95% confidence level. This implies that the study did not find enough evidence to conclude that there is a meaningful relationship

between democratic governance and primary healthcare provision in Ifelodun LGA. The coefficient of 0.036 suggests that a unit increase in democratic governance will lead to a 3.6% increase in primary healthcare provision. However, this effect is small, and the coefficient of 3.6% indicates that democratic governance only accounts for a 3.6% variation in primary healthcare provision in Ifelodun LGA. This means that even if there were a significant relationship between democratic governance and primary healthcare provision, democratic governance would only have a minor impact on primary healthcare provision in the area. Overall, these findings suggest that while democratic governance may have some influence on primary healthcare provision in Ifelodun LGA, other factors are likely to be more important determinants of primary healthcare provision in the area. Therefore, policymakers and stakeholders should focus on identifying and addressing these other factors to improve primary healthcare provision in Ifelodun LGA

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between democratic governance and provision of primary education in Ifelodun Local Government Area.

Table 2: Regression Standard coefficients Results

Coefficients ^a										
	Unstandardized Coefficients									
Model			Coefficients Reta		Sig.					
1 (Constant)			Beta	11.295	.000					
Democratic			.921	47.795	.000					
governance										

a. Dependent Variable: primary education

PE = .723 + .732DG + c

Where PE = Primary Education

DG = Democratic Governance

The results of the model clearly indicate that democratic governance has a significant influence on primary education provision in Ifelodun Local Government Area. The high t-value and low p-value of the democratic governance coefficient suggest that the observed relationship between democratic governance and primary education is not due to chance, but rather reflects a true association. The significance of this relationship is supported by the t statistics, which shows a high t-value of 47.795 and a p-value of 0.000. This suggests that the relationship between democratic governance and primary education provision is statistically significant at a 95% confidence level. This implies that the study has sufficient statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between democratic governance and primary education provision in Ifelodun Local Government Area. Furthermore, the coefficient's magnitude and the associated t-value suggest that democratic governance accounts for a substantial proportion of the variation in primary education provision in Ifelodun Local Government Area. Specifically, the coefficient indicates that democratic governance accounts for 73% of the variation in primary education provision when all other variables are held constant. Based on these results, the study rejects the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between democratic governance and primary education provision in Ifelodun Local Government Area. Policymakers and stakeholders should therefore prioritize efforts to promote democratic governance as a means of improving primary education provision in the area, as the results suggest that such efforts are likely to have a significant impact.

Conclusions

Based on the data analysis and hypothesis testing, it has been found that democratic governance in Ifelodun Local Government Area places more emphasis on providing education infrastructure, while neglecting the provision of basic healthcare. This has resulted in an insignificant impact on the quality of healthcare services, leading to high mortality rates and inadequate capacity to handle certain diseases. In addition, there is a shortage of healthcare workers in many health centers, which further compounds the problem. Moreover, this situation has also affected maternal care services, resulting in increased maternal and child mortality rates, prevalence of diseases such as malaria and malnutrition, and other related health issues. In light of these findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

There is a need to improve the quality of laboratory services provided at healthcare facilities in Ifelodun Local Government Area. This can be achieved by providing necessary training to laboratory officials and ensuring that they are adequately equipped to perform their duties effectively. It is also important to monitor the quality of laboratory services regularly to ensure that they meet the required standards. Furthermore, the government should prioritize the provision of healthcare services to pregnant women and children under the age of five. This can be achieved by improving access to maternal and child healthcare services, including antenatal care, immunization, and nutritional support. There is also a need to educate mothers and caregivers on proper nutrition and health practices to prevent malnutrition and other related health issues.

To improve the basic education sector, it is crucial to address the shortage of skilled teachers and the inadequate learning facilities in Ifelodun local government. One way to achieve this is by providing the LGEAs with the necessary resources and support to recruit more qualified teachers. This would help to reduce the pupil to teacher ratio and ensure that students receive a quality education. In addition, there is a need to invest in the construction of more classrooms and schools in the local government. This would help to reduce the burden on existing schools and create

more opportunities for children to access education. It is also essential to provide these schools with sufficient and high-quality furniture to create a conducive learning environment for students. Overall, the provision of adequate and competent manpower, along with the construction of more schools and classrooms and the provision of high-quality furniture, are crucial steps that need to be taken to improve the basic education sector in Ifelodun local government.

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