EFFECTS OF ECOLOGICAL FACTORS ON THE EFFICIENCY OF DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
A dominant theme in the administration of most developing countries, after the attainment of independence in the late 1950s and 1960s was the expressed desire of the ruling governments to bring about rapid socio-economic development of their societies. The situation on ground today does not give much credence to the realization of desired results through the sub-set of Public Administration called “development administration” which focuses on the relationship between administration and economic development. This paper attempts at examining the ecological factors that has impeded the realization of the objectives of development administration in Nigeria and to serve as a vehicle for change and modernization. The data for this study are largely secondary. It is concluded that for development administration to achieve its objectives in Nigeria, the starting point will be the enthronement of purposeful political leadership, a sound and permanent enthronement of democracy and the limiting of socio-cultural clearages on administration. This can be achieved through a holistic re-orientation of our values and institutional reforms to bring about rooted development-oriented bureaucracies.

Keywords: Ecology, Administration, Development, Development Administration
Introduction

One of the most dominant features of Public Administration in most developing countries, especially after independence in the late 1950s and 1960s was the expressed desire of the ruling governments to bring about rapid socio-economic development of their societies. During the struggle for their independence, they had led their peoples to believe that their destinies would be better arrived at, if they were to assume the commanding heights of the political and economic controls. According to Anyebe (2008:1) “the masses had been led to expect that independence would bring about an immediate improvement in their living conditions.” It was against this background that the intellectual orientation began to grow around the concept of “development administration.” It was felt strongly that the traditional model of Public Administration would be inadequate and thus incapable of providing the guidelines for bringing their nation states out of their traditional societies and leading them to the proverbial “Eldorado.” In Nigeria this argument was further accentuated by the fact that the country had everything in natural resources to galvanize the much needed development. Thus the various governments became the dominant players in their economies hence controlling the commanding heights of their economies. They became the prime agents of socio-economic development, providing infrastructure and producing goods and services, often through the mechanism of Public Enterprises. Ranis (1971) also asserts here that “government in developing areas has become the goal setter or change agent of the society, producer and distributor of goods and services, regulator of the political and economic behavior of the people” Anyebe (2007:2) espouses the innovating thrust of development administration by asserting that:

*Development administration is a carrier of innovating values, as the term is commonly used; it embraces the array of new functions assumed by developing countries embarking on the path of modernization and industrialization. Development administration ordinarily involves the establishment of machinery of planning economic growth and mobilizing and allocating resources to expand national income. New administrative units, frequently called nation-building departments are set up to foster industrial development, manage new state economic enterprises, raise agricultural output, develop national resources, improve transportation and communication network, reform the educational system and achieve other developmental goals.*
It is in line with this innovation thrust of development administration that Abdulsalami (1988) defined development administration as “a subset of Public Administration, which focuses on the relations between administration and economic development.” He asserts further that beyond the concern of maintaining law and civil order, and the collection of revenue (the preoccupation of traditional Public Administration), this model of administration is particularly concerned with developing countries embarking on the path of modernization and industrialization. Bogber (Abdulsalami 1998), Riggs (1971), Garcia – Zamor (1973, Timsit (1981) Swrdlow (1975) Dwivedi and Ned (1982) all, variously expose the conceptual, operational and developmental objectives of development administration which Abdulsalami (1998) again summarizes thus: It is concerned with how to accelerate the pace of development and modernization: how to catch up with the more advanced economies; break the vicious circle of poverty and stagnation; and set in motion the vehicle of development, modernization and nation-building propelled by the forces of modern science and technology, and modern management techniques. The situation on ground in Nigeria as in most other developing countries does not appear to portend any success story for development administration as a vehicle intended to galvanize the much needed development.

Poverty: Statistics indicates that rather than poverty declining in the country after independence, it has always been on the increase. This is in spite of the country’s enormous resources, (both human and natural). The country still ranks among the poorest countries of the world. Statistics indicates that more than 70 percent of the country’s population live below the poverty line and the gap between the rich and the poor continue to widen daily (Agba et al, 2009). The alarming increase in the incidence of poverty has turned the country into a host of 6% of the core chronically poor in the world. This means that Nigeria currently hosts the third largest concentration of the poor people in the world after China and India and is among the top 20 countries with the widest gap between the rich and the poor. It is estimated that about half of the estimated 170 million populations i.e. 85 million, live on less than a dollar a day and up to 70 percent (i.e. about 119 million altogether) of the people live on less than 2 dollars a day. The incidence of poverty is even higher compared to some countries in the west African region, like Ghana and Ivory Coast (44 percent and 10 percent respectively) living on less than a dollar a day (APRM 2008:219).

Adagba (2012:82-83), posits that “the level of poverty is however at variance with the huge revenue profile of the government over the years, a pointer that successive governments have failed to apply the rising oil revenues to improve the lives of Nigerians; no thanks to corruption among Public officers and institutions of government”.

Educationally, our educational level is still at a deplorable state. For over two decades now, no level of government in Nigeria, particularly from 1999 till date has been able to allocate the minimum 26 percent of national budget to education as recommended by UNESCO. Indeed the allocation to education in 2011 was the least, with 1.5% of total budget (The Nation, 2011:4). Between 1999 and 2010, the budgetary allocations to education ranged between 5.09 and
13 percent, without discounting for inflation. Edun (2009), assert that millions of school age children are out of school, teachers are inadequate, ill-trained and ill-motivated, libraries and laboratories are empty, classroom are crowded and school buildings are dilapidated. With particular reference to higher institutions, the situation is not any better. According to the 2010 world university ranking the best ranked university in Nigeria, university of Lagos, is ranked 31 in Africa and has no place among the first 6000 in the world (Edun, 2011:23). The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM, 2008:301-302) found that out of 1.2 million applicants for university admission annually, only 148,323 places are available. There would only be a slight improvement in admission with the establishment of about 12 more federal universities in the country in 2011 by the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan.

The UNDP report of 2007/2008 ranked Nigeria 158 in human development index (HDI) out of 177 countries, trailing behind countries like Eritrea, Senegal, Namibia, Togo, Gabon and even war torn Sudan and just barely ahead of 19 countries (like Rwanda, DRC, Ethiopia, Sierra-Leone, Mali Niger, Benin etc) all of which don’t possess the quality and quantity of our resources.

Public infrastructure in Nigeria has deteriorated before 1999 to the extent that no meaningful economic growth could be supported. It has continued to grow worse. Power supply is very erratic and has driven most small and medium scale entrepreneurs to park up. The bigger ones are not spared. Generating private power, provision of water and even security has heightened cost of doing business. Thus many have been forced to relocate to neighbouring countries in the West African region.

All these low indicators indicate a serious crisis in the socio-economic and political life of the country and the well-being of its citizenry, occasioned by the failure of leadership within the government machinery for formulating and implementing policies/programmes (the Public Service). The objective of this paper therefore is to highlight the effects of ecological factors on the efficiency of development administration in Nigeria.

The Ecology Of Development Administration In Nigeria

One of the earliest proponents of the environment or ecology of Public Administration, hence development administration is Riggs (1964:426-429) who espouses the view that there is a direct interdependent relation between Public Administration on the one hand, and the economic, social, cultural, technological, political and geographical environment on the other. In the same vein, Balogun (1986) sees the ecology of Public Administration as covering … a network of political, economic, socio-cultural and physical sub-systems which are in dynamic relationship with the Public Administration and management subsystems. The recurring issues are those of system interaction, direction of system interaction, direction of system change and pattern of independence. Thus, in looking at how the ecology may have affected the realization of the objective of development administration in Nigeria, it is here pertinent to note
that the ecology of development administration consists of the pressures and influences emanating from the socio-cultural, political, economic, national and international environments which often constrain the structure, process and output of Public Administration geared towards accelerated development of the country. Heady (1979:64) sums up this viewpoint thus:

*Bureaucratic as well as other political and administrative institutions can be better understood, if the surrounding conditions, influences and forces that shape and modify them are identified and ranked to the extent possible in the order of relative importance and if the reciprocal impact of these institutions on their environment is also explored.*

In all, we are seeing that National development does not take place in a vacuum, rather it represents a dynamic process which is both a cause and effect of the various forces, or factors in the environment. Umukoro (2005) gave an analysis of the effects of the environment on development programme by asserting that the environment of a development programme is the set of external forces that influences its outcome. He further asserts that when a programme is limited to a small area or region of a country, the local or regional environment may have a stronger influence on its performance than does the national environment. If programme of activities are affected by international development either on the output or input side (e.g. international markets and prospects etc.), then the trends in the international environment may influence its performance. Environments and programmes interact dynamically.

**Effects Of The Ecological Factors On The Efficiency Of Development Administration In Nigeria**

It has been mentioned earlier that governments in developing countries, especially after independence (including Nigeria) had become the prime agents of socio-economic development and taking over the management of national resources, with a view to achieving rapid and even development of the country. As the situation on ground today clearly indicates, the notion of an accelerated development is now widely acknowledged as a myth. At the thrust of the problem is the lack of leadership in most African countries, especially Nigeria. Adamolekun (2006:96-97) suggests a three factor model strategy for establishing leadership that is capable of asserting its will and ready to exercise political power in the interest of the entire citizenry of the state. Such a leadership sets out the goals of the society in clear terms. This kind of political leadership must exist on a permanent basis because political power has to be exercised on a continuing basis and the definition of societal goals needs periodic re-examination and orientation. The second factor, a clear conception of Public Service implies an unambiguous understanding by all those who hold public office that public office/service requires a commitment on their part to the
achievement of the objectives of the state. The third factor in the model strategy refers to the tactical necessity to institutionalize administrative reform machinery that will review on a continuing basis the three problem areas of structural re-organization of the machinery of government, human problems, and management practices and techniques, with a view to introducing any necessary changes. Unfortunately, Nigeria has always been unfortunate in terms of having strong and purposeful political leadership, with clear objectives and interest of the people at heart.

The immediate post colonial regimes could not manage their administrative inheritances. Our leaders could not operate according to the theories and practices that underlie the British bureaucracy. The British had strong and purposeful leadership which was combined with other appropriate ethos of Public Service and administrative reform measure that serves as efficient and effective instruments for achieving their stated objectives of development. But this has not been the case with Nigeria. Her common good had been threatened and later completely abandoned. Claude Ake (1993) has captured this Hobbesean choice which Nigeria continues to face even today thus:

The only thing we seem committed to is unrelenting cynicism which we parade as a mark of honour. Scratch the surface however and you will see that it is only the other side of insecurity and despair. We wear it like protective armour against the discomfort of looking at reality in the face, against the obligation of carrying and the burdens of taking responsibility ... the Nigerian ruling elite survives against all odds. There is no legitimacy to draw on. It has run out of ideas, even bad ones ... we are always looking up to someone else, forever searching for good leaders to see us through ... the Nigerian state is a negative unity of takers in which collective enterprise is all but impossible.

Another major factor that has negatively affected the achievement of the objectives of development administration in Nigeria is the wrong work ethics and attitudes to work by the Nigerian public Service. The perception of government business as nobody’s business has for long drawn the country back in her quest for rapid development. It has affected rational decision making, critical reasoning and innovation in the public sector. It has breded indiscipline, long entrenched it in our bureaucracy and has led to the ever declining productivity of the work force. Commitment to positive change and innovation for the good of the country as a whole can only come about if and where individual personnel in the Public Sector possesses a significant measure
of Max Weber’s attributes for recruitment of officials into the bureaucracy. These include specialized knowledge, competence, neutrality, loyalty, discipline, courage, probity, industry, honesty, tact and courtesy, transparency, frugality or parsimony in relation to expenditure of public funds, patriotism or national consciousness. But certainly apathy has predominated Nigeria’s attitude to work and have continuously rendered bureaucracy ineffective as change agent.

One other important feature of Nigeria as a country, right from independence which has affected the efficiency of her development administration is her pluralism or ethnic composition.

Aguda NIPSS (2003:11) describes the latent forces that impinge on our national development by describing her ethnic composition thus “At the inception of colonial rule (and after independence) Nigeria consisted of more than 100 independent nation states embracing over 400 ethnic and linguistic groups.” The figures above, represents one of the highest in any one country and this kind of a plural society, of diverse cultural institutional and ethnic groups of various population and law affect the efficiency of development administration. Furthermore, NIPSS (op-cit) describes three categories of ethnic groups within geo-political compartments in Nigeria thus,

First, we have the dominantly Islamized ethnic groups and nationalities of the North such as the Hausas, Fulani’s, Kanuris e.t.c. Second, we have the dominantly Christianized ethnic groups such as the Ibibio, Ibo, Ijaws, Efiks e.t.c. of the South. Third, we have ethnic groups that have adherents of both “Islam” and “Christianity”, such as the Yoruba in the South-west, Nupe, Igbira, Igala, Tivs and several ethnic groups in the Middle belt.

The members of every society, including ours, act within the framework of an on-going culture that shape their general goals, specific objectives and the procedures that members feel ought to be used. Every culture derives part of its unique quality from the fact that it emphasizes one or more special aspects of behaviour and this strategic emphasis serves to differentiate it from other cultures with respect to demands it generates and makes into the political system to be acted upon or churned out as policies. As far as the mass of the people is concerned, some cultures such as ours are heavily weighted on the side of ethnicity, religion and such other primordial factors over and above economic wants, leisure activity and rational efficiency. Thus, with this kind of a plural society, of diverse cultural, institutional and ethnic groups of various population and land with people practicing different religions, Nigeria readily becomes a very complicated country with the behaviour and relationship, of individuals and groups determined by the imperatives of cultural symbols and strategic social institutions. And as Anyebe (2001) concludes, “the price a country pays for
being uncritical of the beliefs held by its citizens that their lives are controlled by forces outside their control is grave indeed. Apathy becomes the predominant attitude of such citizens in work place and renders organizations ineffective. Abdulsalami (1984:12) also here asserts that “it is generally believed that ethnicity in administration breeds indiscipline, favouratism and related forms of corruption and declining morale at other levels”.

However in all this, Adewunmi sees a colonial hand in our development woes when he also asserts that “England headily banded unlike peoples of unlike histories, languages, cultures, sizes, primordial sentiments and nationalistic feelings, resources, mental and intellectual capabilities, priorities and world outlooks into one so-called nation in Nigeria.” This is one of the major undercurrent of our development woes as a country up till today. Developmental goals and objectives are often interpreted with primordial meaning and often seriously opposed. Location and localization of industries were often done without economic considerations like nearness to raw materials and other clear economic benefits. Rather spread for political reasons and national integration were more considered. This has definitely set our development efforts back, because as Riggs (1971) opines, the clue … the management of change lies in the meaningfulness of events to human beings and the frame of reference involved in human identification and interpretation must be looked into. According to Fainsod (1963) too, any drastic reorganization in the society will almost inevitably course innovating forces to collide with traditional routine to which people are deeply rooted. The Nigerian Public Service, administration which at independence offered or promised to be an agent of change and innovation and set to bring about rapid socio-economic development, to fulfill the aspiration of the people soon ceased to be that. The basic requirements for knowledge competence, experience and efficiency (the ideal Weberian construct) were soon thrown away for such other ethnic and primordial factors. Square pegs began to be filled in round holes and the country started drifting away from any credible socio-economic development. Nwosu (1977) also assets here that “When ethnic factor predominates in employment, development and promotion of high level manpower, the Public Sector will gradually cease to be innovative, goal setting and problem solving.” Our inability as a country since independence to successfully formulate and implement any development plan to any logical or reasonable level, unnecessary reviews of plans/projects before any reasonable time for its assessment, outright abandonment of projects, duplication of similar programmes and project by different regimes (military and civilian) is a clear indication that the Nigerian Public Administration has ceased to be innovative and problem solving. Besides, to meet the varied demands on government in some places, with little help from the society/community and even politicians, imposes heavy burden on the civil service. A wide range of problems arise in this respect. Often, the philosophy of the civil service, the climate in which it operates, certainly require changing in the same way that the government programme has officially changed from the negative ‘law and order’ aspect-to a positive responsibility for social and economic improvement. Added to this, the various Nigerian government or bureaucracy have been
known to be too elitist and thus neglects the rural sectoral areas. While at the centre, the politicians and administrators alike have been known to despise the rural sector, for its ignorant and often times stubborn resistance to the new (and often urban) concepts of the good life, the rural sector has its own traditional views of the purpose of government. Perhaps, the two extremes are symbols of mass exploitation and public by the despotic rulers and foreigners; or as a universal and bountiful provider which with a few grand gestures can relieve the locality of all of its problems. Neither of these attitudes can produce the support that the government needs to enlist, if its programmes are to be fulfilled. Taken together, these attitudes of both the government and the mass of the rural sector, can obstruct the progress and development of any country, hence our development administration too, was negatively affected.

Another ecological factor that has affected the efficiency of development administration in Nigeria is corruption. Corruption and the abuse of office have long been a way of life both in the public and private sectors in Nigeria. In fact, it has been institutionalized that today, corruption exists in low and high places of the Nigerian society, cutting across all works of life. Its magnitude and manifestation are high and endemic. It has reached alarming stage that even the international community dread doing any form of business with Nigerians or their government.

Although corruption is a global malaise, not known to have spared any nation, its occurrence and magnitude in Nigeria is unique and disturbing. It is so endemic that no sector or institution is spared or protected from its corrosive effects. Corruption has evidently been a great impediment to the realization of the objectives of development administration. According to Olajide (2006:27),

*The Nigerian ruling class, apart from the fact that they permitted corruption also indulged in kleptomaniac and massive looting of the national treasury. It was said that about $220 billion was stolen by the past Nigerian rulers and stashed abroad. With no purpose and apparently no direction and no solid industrial base, the outcome of this mismanagement was the creation of poverty for the Nigerian people. With each successive regime promising heaven on earth and better life for the people, all their development plans especially since 1962, never translated into anything concrete.*

In fact, the effects of corruption in our quest, since independence for rapid socio-economic development, are diverse and very excruciating.

*In the political realm, it undermines democracy and the legitimacy of government by subverting formal processes. In*
doing so, it reduces seriously the trust and confidence of the people in their institutions. Corruption in elections and in legislative bodies reduces accountability and representation in policy making. Corruption in public administration results in uneven provision of services. It undermines economic development in a variety of ways, of creating distortion, inefficiencies and diverting resources (American Diaspora Initiative; 2007:3).

Another important factor that impeded the achievement of the objectives of development administration in Nigeria was military intervention and their long period of misrule. The military has ruled this country for the greater part of her history after independence (Three and half decades out of the 56 years of our nationhood). This very factor took us back in our national quest for political, social and economic development. They destroyed our national dream and aspirations and put the country on reverse gear. These are some of the reasons why economic experiments have largely been failures under this regime type. First of all, there is a clear connection between the severe ideological structural limitations imposed on the logic of dictatorship and its effects on policy formulation and application. Thus the enduring legacy of internal crisis which have dogged the conception and application of economic policies shows that there is a correlation between the failure in the application of these policies and their conception. The dictators’ knowledge of the landscape is largely circumscribed by the limitations of his training and this means that more often than not, an intellectual has to place his intellect directly at the service of the military dictator. Even at that, policies most time get trapped in the cesspool of the personal greed of the dictators. Intellectuals therefore conceive wonderful seemingly fool-proof ideas only to watch them dissipate into nothingness, gather dust in the bins of history, or freeze in the cocoon of bureaucratic neglect. The bureaucracy is a glorified barracks where everything must be done “with immediate effect,” where there is no questioning and where the last order must be obeyed. Secondly, the military dictators treat the state as a conquered territory. Economic theoreticians’ expressions are given different meanings. Even the market became the reigning dictator’s minor since he considers that he owns the state. The main actors in economic management such as industrialists get sidelined as the business of manufacturing, imports and exports get caught up in bureaucratic quagmire. Under the military regimes economic activities tend to revolve around “state house” and as such, those who have access by way of being part of the clientele had better chances than genuine industrialists. Thus contracts and paper hawking replaced industrialization (Kukah, 2003:77-78). Although this paper does not absolve the civilian regimes of any wrong doing, it is evident that the military used terror to intimidate people and to go unquestioned by any organ of the government or the citizenry because the constitution has been suspended.
Conclusion and recommendations
The objective of development administration is to bring about rapid socio-economic development or transformation. However, change and innovation is a function of the society and the environment. Thus in Nigeria, development administration has not been able to achieve the much needed socio-economic transformation and improvement in the standard of living of the people in spite of the ever increasing revenue to government. This could be traceable to the absence of purposeful political leadership since independence, conditions relating to socio-cultural environment, the long period of military misrule, structure and operation of the bureaucracy, and the attitudes and orientation of the Public Service which are not conducive for change and development. It is therefore recommended that:

• The government embarks on a wholistic ethnical reorientation of the citizenry with a view to inculcating in them the right attitude and values most appropriate for change and transformation of the country.

• The enthronement of capable political leaders, with a blend of intellectual and institutional experience, who are capable of asserting their will and exercising political power in the interest of the whole country and who will not be ethnic or religious bigots. Political leaders who will maintain our sovereignty and are committed to the achievement of goals they consider to be in the public interest. They should be leaders who are prepared to jump a generation of politics, to run counter to its social setting – to lead dynamically and not just keep in front of the race.

• The various anti-corruption agencies should be further strengthened and given absolute independence to fight a total war on corruption in our Public Service. More so, special courts should be established for them for a quick dispensation of corrupt cases.

• Reforms in our administrative, institutional and legal system to bring about a disciplined, dedicated and loyal workforce who will not turn over public offices and resources to themselves and members of their ethnic groups. There should be a permanent machinery to perform this task.

• The military should on a continuous basis, be reoriented to see their involvement in politics as an aberration; that by dabbling into politics, they have lost or will lose their professional sense and concentration.

It is only when we do this that we will be moving towards establishing a development – oriented bureaucracy that is innovative, performance oriented and change conscious and that is capable of bringing our country out of the present quagmire and leading us to the proverbial “Eldorado” that we all have been craving for since independence.
References


