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## **THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENT ON ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN NIGERIAN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Nigerian administrative system has been affected by environmental factors which determine the effectiveness of the public administration since administration does not exist in a vacuum but environment. Some of the environmental factors are listed as economic, political social and cultural. All those factors play major roles in shaping the administration of any nation or countries. This paper is set out to X-ray the influence or role of environment on any nation administrative system. The paper also finds out that a possible influence on the environment can enhance a good administrative system.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The practice of public administration in Nigeria, like in any other country is affected by environmental factors. Through the approach of systems school of analysis, this paper tries to find out the role of environmental factors on the administrative system in Nigeria. But before going further, it is imperative to review what system is, it is by this that the subject matter would be brought into proper perspective. A system, according to Henry (2002) comprises of components that work together or the objectives of the whole. It means therefore that a system approach is largely a way of thinking about the components and their relationships. As Haynes (1980) points out, a system is always a complex mixture of sub-system which interacts with each other in various planes and dimensions. This implies that, public or private administrative organizations exist within and environment, viz formal structures, procedures and mechanisms of control; and external component viz social, economic, political historical and other critical variables that impinge on the functioning of the administrative system.

Nigeria is a very diverse nation which according to Okedigi (1976) is made up of a multiplicity of nationalities, ethnic and lingual formations. Otite (1976) posited that there are over 250 ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. The country has a population of over 150 million and a land area of 923.763 square kilometers. And as enunciated by Rousseau (1913), even though unwritten explicitly, government has a social contract with the people. That is, by electing a government, people lend, alienate or give up their power to political rulers on condition that it be used to satisfy what Hampton (1986) termed certain of their most important needs. Under such an arrangement, the security, social order, welfare, social services and general prosperity must be believed by governmental authorities and as a matter of fact the public sector administration. Governments are put in place to serve the people. Even a military government that is considered an aberration functions in the manner that the welfare of the people is not overtly relegated to the background. Therefore, government and public

servants, according to Vigoda (2002) have to work faithfully and diligently for the sake of society and its members. In line with the forgoing, it is sufficiently clear that public administrative does not operate in a vacuum. It operates in an environment, hereby refer to as the totality of the people who have diverse interests and associated backgrounds. Variables of this environment of the Nigerian public administration consist of the pressure and influence emanating from the socio-cultural, political, pressure group, interest group, trade union economic; and even international environment which often constrain the structure, process and output factors. Though external to public institutions, these factors together influence the output, or even the input of public administration. Some of the roles played by these factors are negative, but as nothing indeed is absolute, positive results come out of some of the contributions. It must be pointed out that delving into the nitty-gritty of the positive and negative aspects of the roles of these variables is not the object of this paper, as these are complex and lengthy issues that this particular work may not be able to accommodate in a manner that would be most appreciable. And for the benefit of doubt, only the political, cultural, and economic aspects which play salient environmental roles on the administrative system in Nigeria would be examined.

### **POLITICAL FACTORS**

The Nigeria State which is a cluster of diverse ethnic nationalities lacks that cohesive force that may form a consensus national ideology. The result of these cleavages is that leaders struggle to take control of the centre so as to dispense privileges to their kinsmen or affiliation. This politics of ethnic and regional sentimentalism has denied Nigeria of a national character and hence also of evolving concrete notions of national interest. Therefore, there arose what Akpomuvire Mukoro (2005) terms that encyclopedia of Nigeria's administration, such policies zoning, federal character and quota system, etc. The struggle to control the centre by ethnic leaders has resulted to the inability to have a successful and acceptable population census. This has affected the drive for viable planning and policy making by both the politicians and administrators. This largely accounts for the failure of many national development programmes. Anuwo (1996) contends that it does appear that after all, public policy objectives are enunciated by elected civilian politician mainly as a vote-catching contrivances, and part of an elaborate game plan to secure legitimacy and win political acceptance. The consequence is that; there now arise a ruling class that has no clear vision and great dreams. Anuwo went on to state that it matters little whether or not the politicians, elected and appointed perform. Indeed, criteria of performance have nothing to do with how well or badly the output is. Performance, unfortunately, is evaluated on the basis of material satisfaction of the public office holder. The peril here is that the Nigeria State and administration have become centralized. The political class has largely failed to keep the sovereign obligation that they owe to the people. This class, whether civilian or military has formed a cabal. They are very few in number and they continue to rotate themselves in government. Since their primary objective is to hold on to power and accumulate wealth, they inevitable lack vision. The resultant effect of the Nigerian policies is rather the generation of rancour in the polity, lack of sincere patriotism, the promptings for the people's temperament to stride the edges of frustration, anger and agitation, which often

erupts in violence, strife, and crime. Thus, the relation that should go with leadership and followership manifest only at the negative. Often, the inability of the politicians to deliver the goods resulted to military interventions in the past. But the incursion into politics by the military quite obviously exacerbated the situation as sooner did they professed probity, accountability and transparency and indeed fair play, than they themselves slipped on the "banana peel" and did worse than the civilian politicians they had accused of wrong doings as justification for their incursion in politics. The advent of the military into politics, according to Jemibewon (1982) himself, a former military governor, as he lamented, was "regrettable." Because it has done more harm than good to both the military institutions and that of the civilian including the public service. This scenario has placed the Nigeria's public administration on a cross-road.

From the international arena, it must be emphasized that globalization and improvements on information technology constitute demands that are placed on both the political and the administrative class. Also the influence of the super-power nations and other advanced societies impact on what is to be done in terms of policy and in terms of implementations. Whether these contribute negatively or positively on public administration in Nigeria, is a matter of intellectual debate. But indices such as technological backwardness produce quite negative effect. It has even drawn insinuations from international figures as a criticism against the Nigeria public administration. Not long ago, precisely on Sunday, 9 August, as part of media conferences and interviews on her 7-nation Africa tour, Mrs. Hilary Clinton, the present American secretary of state, stated on the CNN interview that "Nigeria is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest oil producing nation in the world and the first in Africa but Nigeria imports oil, well that is the style of Nigeria's governance." Whether comments like the one made by Mrs. Clinton, ever seethe into the mind of the Nigerian policy makers is what remains in the realm of imagination. But clearly, such comments are pointers to the fact that the Nigerian political environment has done great damage to the Nigerian administrative system.

### **ECONOMIC FACTORS**

When we talk of economic factors, we are referring to natural and mineral resources and indeed agriculture, etc; and of course what government has been able to make of the wealth derivable from the natures gift to this great country. The role of the organized private sector also come into play, as same as technology. Nigeria's development plans which results from the consultations carried out with different interest groups in the society reflects on the economic environment of government. Essentially, Nigeria's economy relies on two economic variables, viz agriculture and oil. But agriculture, which was the mainstay of the economy during the infancy of the country's independence, was push into the doldrums when oil started producing massive wealth for the country. The danger posed by the neglect of agriculture was/still is that Nigeria's foreign earnings which would have been plunged into technological development were utilized for the important of foreign consumable goods including food, food that would have been in abundance if earning from oil were used to harness agriculture. And because, the oil that has become the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, is unfortunately, not produced in the real sense of the word by Nigeria. As a

littoral state, the country relies more or less on the payment of royalties that come from multinational oil companies. Therefore, since business at whatever level constitutes no trustworthiness in its entirety, many feel that Nigeria does not even know the quantity of its oil, as the subterranean activities of the oil companies sometimes create the impression that not all the oil that is being extracted is being accounted for. Coupled with the activities of the militants in the oil producing region of Nigeria, which accentuate affirmation of oil bunkering, and the blowing up of oil installations, oil pipelines and oil wells, the country's development plans do not in totality see the light of the day. This situation is compounded by the fact that the crumbs that are rinsed into the national coffers, are substantially pilfered in chunk leaving the abysmal pittance that are thinly spread on development projects in quite incremental manner that scarcely meet the aspiration of the people.

Oil business is indeed a profitable business in Nigeria, but this is in favour of those who do oil business. Nigeria, as an oil country imports fuel because the country has refused to refine oil. I have already dwelt on this using the American Secretary of state Mrs. Clinton's comments as a base. The lack of oil refining facilities is perhaps encouraged by the policy makers because they reap bountifully from it. Nigeria has no business importing oil because even if it can not produce the technology, it has the capacity to import and install it in whatever requirement that is adequate. Coupled with dwindling down turn in oil prices, accentuated by fluctuations, the result is a shortfall in revenue projections, and with the ever expanding population, this has precipitated crisis in the economy with the resultant inability by the leaders to provide adequate welfare for the people. And the devastating effect is the neglect of the rural areas, because what the policy makers have decided to do is to concentrate attention to the urban centres. Like one senator asked in debate in the National Assembly (AIT Sunday 9 August, 2009) on the FCT budget especially the budget components of the expansion of the Abuja Airport Road and the construction of additional flyovers in the FCT, "how many Nigerians are going to use the (airport) road?" Thus, as Mabogunje (1960) rightly pointed out, under this urban-bias development process, the urban areas have become parasites on the rural areas. This is not however to say that there should be no development in the urban areas, but this should not be at the detriment of the rural areas. Administration plays a pre-eminent role in the process of policy making and implementation. Therefore, they contribute a great deal at influencing the economic system through the control and operation of government administrative machinery. Most of the national development plans have ended up failing because of the internal contradictions arising from the plan environment. Coupled with the ideological pursuit of mixed economy where government gets involved in the management of certain sectors of the economy that should have been left with the private sector, encourages wasteful spending. These and other factors make all the development plans unworkable.

### **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS**

Studies by Riggs (1964) argued for the fact that most developing nations exist in an environment of where the traditional and the modern ways of doing things co-exist. This results into the problems of communication, political mobilization, ethical/ethnic confusion,

and so forth. In Nigeria for example, there is the presence of several indigenous mother tongues. But the English language serves as the medium of communication. And with the high rate of illiteracy, the substance of message being disseminated is lost to reason, and only the few literate population benefits. The multiplicity of mother tongues, ethnicity, and other parochial configurations create problems over issues that should not have ordinarily constituted obstacles to national development. Ethnic and clannish allegiances and inclinations still hold sway in the Nigeria policy. Worse, the ruling elite accentuate these cleavages. The end result is confection in policy making and implementation. This affect public administration in no mean measure. The civil service is torn by the presences of ethnic and selfish allegiances. The quota system, federal character system and other Sunday parochial considerations result into an unproductive bureaucracy, as most of those manning strategic bureaucratic positions are incompetent and lacked the skills to handled complex administrative matters. The few that possess the requisite administrative and policy making prowess are swallowed by sectional interests, and this makes the pursuit of positive result a far cry from objective expectations.

## **CONCLUSION**

The experience of Nigeria is such that the administrative state allows a clique of public officials; the military and politicians accumulate wealth, get away with it and leave the entire system to suffer for it. The effect of this and other constellating factors earlier mentioned render public administration ineffective, ineffectual and corrupt. Administrators support whatever government is in power and end up becoming part of the rot. The environmental implication of these drawbacks in the relationship between government, administrators, and the public are that the myriad problems discussed above become mutually reinforcing to one another, thus manifesting negative results. A way out is to allow political integration to prevail. By this, there will be ideological unity that would fashion out a path for the entire citizen and the nation to follow. Also, government programmes should be able to bring the good life for all by ensuring that services provided are satisfactory, facilities and infrastructures work perfectly, there is accountability and prudence in the dispensing and management of public wealth and the rule of law is made to take pre-eminence over mundane demands.

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