

Assessment of the Nigerian Bureaucracy and National Development in the Fourth Republic

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Abstract

The study focused on the assessment of the Nigerian bureaucracy and national development in the Fourth Republic. Specifically, the paper examined the role of the bureaucracy as a veritable agency of government, through which the state realizes her national development objectives. Over the years, the Nigerian bureaucracy has made itself burdensome and a cog in the wheel of the nation's progress. Despite the reforms that have been carried out in the Nigerian bureaucracy, some of the officials have continued to indulge in some sharp, unethical, and unprofessional conducts and practices that have derailed Nigeria's national development. National development has to do with multi-faceted approaches aimed at addressing the welfare of every segment of society. Methodologically, the paper relied on secondary and primary sources of data collection. The data were descriptively analyzed. Douglas McGregor's theory X axis, which sees workers' attitude to work on the negative side, was adopted as theoretical framework. The study found that, despite the reforms that have been carried out in the Nigerian bureaucracy to make the agency more efficient and effective, the agency, up until the Fourth Republic, has continued to indulge in some unwholesome practices that have remained inimical to Nigeria's national development. The study recommends a non-partisan, non-ethnic and unbiased approach in getting rid of the bad eggs in the Nigerian bureaucracy.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, Corruption, Fourth Republic, National Development, Nigeria.

Introduction

Just like other developing countries, the Nigerian government is saddled with enormous responsibilities that are targeted at bringing about national development. This is more so given the situation of weak participation of the private sector and where the state has invariably seen itself as the highest employer of labour. As much as the day to day activities of modern governments are carried out by the state bureaucracy, this places the bureaucracy in a pivotal position in the implementation of government programmes and policies aimed at driving national development. Thus, the rise of the modern state itself, the scientific and industrial revolution, mass urban society and the consequent mass production and distribution of goods and services have made rational bureaucracy an inevitable form of social organization (Weber, 1947).

As Ejiogu (2001; p.41) argued, "the bureaucracy the world over is an organ for the formulation and review of government policies and programmes." The extent to which it is positioned to perform these roles effectively affects the level of economic and political growth of such country. The bureaucracy is very vital in the development process. The bureaucratic capacity, for instance, determines what will be done, when, and how well it will be done. The greater the capacity of the bureaucracy to implement complex economic and social development plans, the higher the development potential of every society. This does not in any way imply that the bureaucracy is the only force for societal or national development.

The Nigerian bureaucracy has remained the major machinery of government for the formulation and implementation of public policies. This is usually done by translating the plans and programmes of government into concrete public goods and services for the overall use of the citizenry (Emmanuel & Oyedele, 2001).

As the bureaucracy is primarily concerned with governmental administration, the management of public affairs squarely rests on its shoulders. Whatever the system of government in practice, the bureaucracy is usually designed as the prime mover of the social and economic development of a nation.

The restoration of democratic rule in Nigeria in May 1999 led to a major change in the focus of government. A democratic system is usually charged with a good number of functions and responsibilities among which are: the production and equitable distribution of goods as well as the execution of government development policies for over-all citizens' welfare. Thus, the need for government to perform these functions and discharge such crucial responsibilities tends to be even more pronounced and compelling, especially in developing countries. Under a democratic dispensation, Nigeria, for instance, has been compelled more than ever before to properly define, design and discharge these crucial responsibilities for the good of its people (Abubakar, 1992).

As La Palombara (1971) observed, irrespective of developmental circumstances, it is inevitable that every political system will, at one point or the other, attempt to develop some patterned means through which the wishes or statement of public policies are transformed into action affecting those within the system over whom political power is exercised. These "patterned means" usually refer to one form of bureaucracy or the other in modern political systems.

Over the years, the Nigerian bureaucracy has been engulfed with a myriad of criticisms, following her indulgence in acts considered to be inimical to the realization of national development in Nigeria. Thus, there have been alleged and even proven cases of corruption, red-tapism and ineptitude perpetrated by some members of the Nigerian bureaucracy. Former Nigeria's president (Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, May 29, 1999 – May 29, 2007) while launching his administration's reform initiative in 2005 noted that "Nigerians have for long have been short changed by the quality of public service... we shall ensure that they get what is better". For decades, the Nigeria bureaucracy has constituted itself as a cog in the wheel of national development in Nigeria.

National development is usually a comprehensive strategy aimed at positively addressing the socio-economic challenges of the society irrespective of class, sex, social status, religious or party affiliations. Despite the reforms that have often been carried out in the Nigerian bureaucracy in order to re-focus and make the agency more result oriented, the Nigeria bureaucracy has continued to manifest some unethical and unprofessional acts that have continued to derail Nigeria's national development efforts. This paper therefore attempts a critical examination of the Nigerian bureaucracy and national development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Theoretical framework

The paper adopted Douglas McGregor's motivational theory X and Y (Douglas, 1960) McGregor had proposed two major assumptions about people who render services in organizations. The first called "theory X" sees workers attitude to work on the negative, whereas the second, "theory Y" sees workers attitude to work on the positive. However, this paper adopted the theory X axis. Theory X is based on the assumption that employees have a natural tendency to dislike work and if possible, would avoid it. Thus, an employer must devise a means of coercing workers to do their job in order to realize organizational goals. Next, employees shy away from responsibilities and would have to be directed for them to perform their job (Sharma, Sadana, & Kaur, 2011). Theory X therefore assumes that most people would want to be directed as they dislike accepting responsibilities, such individuals lack ambition, are indifferent and self centred. They place safety above all needs. Related to this philosophy is that "people are motivated by money, fringe benefits, reward", threat of punishment... people are passive or resistant to organizational needs and need to be persuaded, rewarded, punished or controlled in some way in order to achieve organizational goal" (Nwizu, 1999: 221).

Applying Douglas McGregor's motivational theory X assumption to the study on critical assessment of the Nigerian bureaucracy and national developmental in Nigeria, the fact had remained that the lack of ambition, laxity and resistance to change by some public bureaucrats has grossly affected their performance. Thus, a greater majority of public servants are neither service-oriented nor committed to the realization of development goals. Instead, they have persistently demonstrated a lackluster and lackadaisical attitude to the service. They often compare themselves with their peers in some more lucrative sectors who, they claim, are better off economically

with improved conditions of service. This feeling, therefore, promotes a disincentive to hard work among some public servants who are only interested in economic rewards.

Conceptual Clarification

Bureaucracy

According to Njoku (2009, p.335) the word, “bureaucracy, is derived from French and Greek words. “Burea” which means office, tables, and desks, and “Kratos” which means power or authority to rule (Laxmikanth, 2005, p.109). Literally, bureaucracy means rule by officials. The word, “bureaucracy” was first coined by Vincent de Gournay (1712-1959), a French economist. As he once observed, “we have an illness in France which bids fair to play havoc with us.” This illness is called bureaumania (Maheshwari, 1993). Max Weber (1864 – 1920), a German sociologist, popularized the modern concept of bureaucracy. His idea of bureaucracy is based on the notion of rational legal authority. That is, an authority which employees recognize as legitimate. Weber freed bureaucracy from pejorative connotation and emphasized its indispensability in the rational attainment of the goals of an organization (Nwizu, 2002).

A German publicist, Johan Gorres, “was the first to give a dual meaning to bureaucracy in 1821” (Muozelis, 1967, p.9). The first sees bureaucracy as a form of government where power is in the hand of officials, while the second meaning sees it as a collective designation for these officials. Public administrators and political or social scientists usually use bureaucracy to describe that part of the government charged with the implementation of government policies and the laws of the land. In other words, “a form of complex organization which is concerned mainly with the execution of government policies and decisions” (Nwachukwu, 2011, p.200).

Bureaucracy, as Rao (1990) argued, can be used in two senses. Firstly, it refers to the tasks and procedures of administration, as well as a collective word for a body of administrative officials. Often times, it also stands for inefficiency and improper exercise of power on the part of officials, and thus, has become a term of abuse. Accordingly, Rao (1990) defined bureaucracy as an organization characterized by rules, procedures, impersonal relations and an elaborate and fairly rigid hierarchy of authority responsibility relationships.

As Nwizu (1997:217) averred:

Bureaucracy is aimed at ensuring an efficient and rational organization in which there is a clearly defined hierarchy of offices, each office filled by an individual tested to possess the highest technical qualification and the entire set of offices linked together by a system of rules, procedures and impersonal relationships.

Ile (1990) submitted that bureaucracy denotes an integrated hierarchy of specialized offices defined by systematic rules and impressional routinized structures wherein legitimized authority squarely rest in a body of officials. As Hicks & Gullet (1987:127) contended, “man created bureaucracy to overcome or arrest what would have led to utter confusion in organizations, since human organizations without necessary arrangements would end in chaos.” Thus, bureaucracy attempts to prevent confusion which distracts the attention of workers from working towards actualizing organizational goals.

Marx (1971) posited that the typical bureaucracy occupies a vantage position as:

- a) The gathering of facts from administrative activities.
- b) A surveyor of public needs and government performance to meet such needs.
- c) A recorder of interest, pressures and public sentiments affecting political courses.
- d) An inaugurator of organizational and technical procedures suitable for attaining the government ends.
- e) A fountain of idea about what ought to be done to redress conditions that cry for remedy;
- f) Knowledge and skillful draftsman in converting broad understanding about desirable goals into the detailed language of regulatory measures.

Theoretically, scholars have expressed divergent views on the role of the bureaucracy in national development. Scholars such as Karl Marx, Gaetano Mosca, Robert Michels, Max Weber among others have contributed in this direction. Karl Marx, for instance, developed his idea of bureaucracy within the framework of the theory of class conflict. As he argued, bureaucracy is an instrument by which the dominant class exercises its dominion over the other social classes (Aja, 1997).

In Karl Marx’s analysis, bureaucrats are seen as office holders whose aim is to manage public affairs. Thus, bureaucracy expresses the imagined universality of state interest, a kind of closed and hierarchical corporation, which treats public affairs as its own private business. In a capitalist society, bureaucracy imposes itself on the whole society. In this way, class division and domination interposes itself as the general interest smoke screen between the exploiters and the exploited. The characteristic features of bureaucracy, according to Marx, include: “the general process of alienation, incompetence, bureaucratic imperialism, domination, oppression and sordid materialism” (Muozelis 1967, p.10; Ogunna, 1999, p.40; Marx, 1971).

Gaetano Mosca’s theory of bureaucracy is centred on power. Mosca classified all governments into feudal and bureaucratic. In the bureaucratic form, the ruling class is structured into distinct organs, each being entrusted with a specific function of government. Bureaucracy was conceived as one of the organs of the ruling class composed of salaried officials which made the state to be known as a bureaucratic state. In Gaetano Mosca’s view, the three characteristic features of bureaucracy are specialization, centralization and the use of salaried official (Albrow, 1970). Similarly, Robert Michel’s idea of bureaucracy was developed within the framework of the theory of the “Iron law of Oligarchy”. According to this law:

In all societies, two classes of people appear – a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class, is directed and controlled by the first. Also, the minority dominates the majority and veils this domination with more or less elaborate façade of democratic trappings. Michel emphasized that the price of increased bureaucracy is the concentration of power at the top and the diminishing of the influence of the masses (Ogunna, 1999, p.407).

Max Weber (1864–1920), a German sociologist, gave bureaucracy a detailed, systematic and scholarly inquiry. He was concerned with an ideal type bureaucracy. This was expressed in the works of Laxmikanth (2005). Weber formulated the three concepts of authority, namely: traditional, charismatic and legal-rational. He emphasized the indispensability of bureaucracy for the rational attainment of the goals of an organization and, by extension, national development.

Weber’s ideal type bureaucracy has, however, been subjected to series of criticisms. La Palombara (1963), for instance, insisted that Weberian bureaucracy is a less efficacious instrument of social change. Similarly, Riggs (1963) and Laxmikanth (2005) argue that Weber’s ideal model of bureaucracy is not particularly relevant to the study of developing countries, as it assumes a relatively autonomous administrative system. Despite its obvious shortcomings, the public bureaucracy has without doubt been active in effecting socio-economic development in a developing country such as Nigeria.

Functions of the Bureaucracy

Modern organizations and sovereign states have become bureaucratic to the extent that formal activities are no longer conducted by rule of the thumb. The celebrated German thinker and social scientist, Max Weber, whose ideas popularized the study of bureaucracy, noted that bureaucracy is characterized by distinct features such as division of labour, hierarchy efficiency, career service, specialization, rules and regulations, rationality and records keeping (Nwizu, 2002). Similarly, Nwizu (1999) noted the following as vital roles played by the bureaucracy to ensure national development:

- i. **Advisory:** Political executives or heads are, often times, amateurs in technical or scientific areas of societal needs and, thus, depend on bureaucratic officials for expert advice or information on those areas of societal needs where the political executives are not versed in.
- ii. **Delegated legislation:** The ever increasing burden or work load of parliaments in modern times has made it inevitable for bureaucratic officials to be involved in filling the gap, whenever it comes to framing or drafting of policies.
- iii. **Implementation of policies:** The public bureaucracy is charged with the responsibility of executing as well as actual implementation of policies made by the legislature. Without such implementation, such policies will remain sterile, end on paper and fail to achieve the purpose for which they were made.
- iv. **Responsible for general administration:** The bureaucracy does a lot to ensure the proper functioning of the day to day running of the government which goes a long way to getting the people informed and mobilized to enable them have trust in the activities of the government and, therefore, lend their support.

Akinwale (2007, p.64) has further noted the enormous role of the public bureaucracy in national development to include:

- i. The placing of objective standards in the place of work through adherence to rules and regulations. The bureaucratic emphasis on rationality and objectivity usually lead to the engagement of competent and qualified workers.
- ii. Bureaucracy makes room for harmony with the goals of an organization. The principle of esprit de corps which is emphasized by bureaucracy ensures that members of the organization work towards the attainment of organizational objectives.
- iii. Bureaucracy makes it easier to predict individual and organizational behaviour which provides a lee way for handling the conflicts that may hamper the realization of stated goals.
- iv. The bureaucratic principles of specialization and division of work make room for greater productivity in the sense that workers often discharge their duties satisfactorily and with greater competence.

In addition, bureaucrats are the major custodians of information needed for effective debate and decision on any bill. In developed democracies such as the United States of America and Britain, bureaucrats are, sometimes, summoned to congressional or Assembly committees to give evidence over some goings on in their respective ministries which help in fine tuning legislation. Developing countries such as Nigeria have borrowed this practice. In the view of Odegard (1954, p.18):

A government without bureaucrats is like a centipede without legs, unable to move, even to save itself and powerless to accomplish any of the goals for which governments are instituted among men. For it's upon the bureaucrats that we depend on to see that these goals or policies are realized in practice.

National Development

National development has remained the burning desire of every responsive and accountable government in modern times. Being national in focus, it holistically seeks the improvement of every segment of society. National development efforts are targeted towards a qualitative and quantitative increment in the overall welfare of the entire citizenry. It, therefore, covers the social, political, economic and cultural orientation of the people. Other areas covered include: the improvement of the material wellbeing of every citizen irrespective of class, status, social, religious or party affiliation; reduction of poverty and inequality of access to the good things life can afford. Thus, national development attempts to improve citizens' personal needs, physical security, livelihood and expansion of life chances (Gboyega, 2003).

National development is usually people oriented. In other words, it involves the people at all stages of the planning and execution processes, of efforts targeted at bringing about significant changes in the lives of the citizens. Generally, national development is multi-faceted and multi-dimensional as it has to do with major positive

changes in the social structure, popular attitudes, national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty.

Besides, national development denotes a widely participatory process of directed social change in any given society, aimed at bringing about social and material advancement, greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities for a greater number of the people through their active participation and greater control over their environment in virtually all sectors. This notion of national development led Wignaraja (1976-5) to contend that:

National development implies the development of every man and woman, and not just things which are merely means. It is usually geared towards the satisfaction of needs beginning with the basic needs of the poor who constitute a greater number of the world's population... development aims at ensuring the humanization of man by the satisfaction of his needs of expression, creativity, conviviality and deciding of man's destiny.

According to Ijioma (2002, p.145), "national development occurs over time if progressively a higher percentage of the population shares in the fruits of economic growth, especially in such sectors as manufacturing, utilities, construction and governmental administration." National development plans are usually aimed at achieving qualitative transformation from an undesirable level of development to a more desirable one. In other words, the transformation must be rooted in such a manner that the expenditure on national resources should be able to improve upon the living standard of the citizenry. According to Amucheazi (1980, p.3), "any definition of national development of any country especially Nigeria with given impressive figures in terms of material achievements and relative rise in the Gross National Product (GNP) must address some pertinent questions such as; how far the lot of the common man has been affected and the main beneficiaries of these products of material development".

Man is usually the ultimate end of developmental efforts as such is expected to fulfill his basic needs (Mahbub 1973; Streetan & Burki, 1977). Growth in output or income does not actually indicate development. Thus, after reviewing the different alternative measures presented through a world research project on the issue, Hicks & Streetan (1980:91) submitted that:

Obviously, the rapid growth of output will still be important to the alleviation of poverty, and Gross National Product (GNP) per head remains an important figure. What is required are some indicators of the composition and beneficiaries of GNP which would supplement its data, not replace it. The basic needs approach therefore can be the instrument for giving the necessary focus to the work on social indicators.

National development in Nigeria suffers from several impediments such as: low technological capacity, lack of funding from financial institutions, unfocused and incoherent policies or legislation, inadequate infrastructure, unfavourable business climate and lack of partnership or joint venture between indigenous contractors and technically competent foreign companies.

Nigerian Bureaucracy and National Development in the Fourth Republic: The Nexus

Up till Nigeria's Fourth Republic, the bureaucracy has remained an important institution of the state. Its importance is felt in the daily lives of the Nigerian citizens. Its necessity to modern life is traced to its role on national development. At the restoration of democratic role in Nigeria on May 1999, Nigeria's second executive president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo actually captured the essential rule of the bureaucracy. Consequently, the administration embarked on a wide range of reforms on the agency with a view to refocusing and making it more result oriented and visionary. It has been noted severally that the quality of the bureaucracy has a lot to do with the quality of modern life.

Generally, the bureaucracy is composed of a permanent body of officials for the sole purpose of implementing government decisions. As modern states emerged, the bureaucracy became a derivation of the political system within which it operates. As Ajayi (1997, p.50) contended:

Aside from the primary functions of the civil service (bureaucracy) which include: advising political office holders on all aspects of government activities to ensure the formulation of policies that are in line with the objectives of the incumbent government and that are relevant to people's needs; implementation of governmental policy decisions; sustenance of continuity of the state; regulation of business activities and provision of social services, the bureaucracy also plays a dominant role in the socio-economic development of any country especially in Nigeria where the public sector plays a direct role in national development.

Since the return to democratic rule in Nigeria, the bureaucracy has occupied a unique position in the formulation and implementation of developmental strategies in Nigeria. The public service Review Commission Main Report (2004) clearly outlined the development and the use of the bureaucracy for the attainment of national objectives. The commission noted a trend in social change in Nigeria as it pointed out the increasing role of government in sustainable development. Implicitly, the bureaucracy was mandated to increasingly adopt management methods, develop requisite managerial skills as well as project management techniques that will bring out sustainable development.

In fulfilment of the yearnings of Nigerians, especially following the restoration of democratic rule in May 1999, the administration of the various Nigerian leaders since 1999 had, at various times, set for themselves some laudable programmes for bringing about national development in Nigeria. For instance, the administration of Nigeria's former president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, came up with the following development initiatives:

- i. National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS);
- ii. New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD);
- iii. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGS);
- iv. The Servicom, Popularly known for effective service delivery (Abdulummin, 2004; Tunji, 2008).

Similarly, late President Musa Yar'Adua's administration came up with the 7-point Agenda, in order to drive national development in Nigeria (Otoghagua, 2007). Areas covered included security, agriculture, energy and power, education as well as Niger Delta affairs. Former President Goodluck Jonathan's administration pursued the Transformation Agenda that was aimed at touching the various sectors of the economy and do away with previous bottlenecks that militated against national development in Nigeria. In addition, the Subsidy Re-investment Programme (SURE-P) of the administration was initiated to utilize the gains derived from the oil sector to drive development in other sectors of the economy.

The administration of President Buhari, since its inauguration on May 2015, has not relented in its fight against corruption which the administration has noted as a major cog in the wheel of Nigeria's progress. The change agenda was initiated by the administration as representing a new pattern and orientation in the mindset of both the leaders and the led with the sole aim of bringing about a new and better Nigeria. The N-power has also been put in place as a way of empowerment to selected unemployed young Nigerians (in batches) with the sum of thirty thousand naira (N30,000.00) monthly stipend. The vision is aimed at enabling the beneficiaries start a little trade (business) or acquire a skill for self sustenance. The market and trader money have also been put in place by the Buhari administration to improve a lot of poor Nigerians.

Given the lower development of the private sector in Nigeria, government shoulders much of the burden of development. The state has, therefore, become one huge instrument for addressing unemployment and other socio-economic challenges facing the people. As a heterogeneous social environment characterized by powerful contenders to state authority, Nigeria has consistently been faced with greater challenges of development and rational allocation of societal and national resources. In this vein, Nwosu (1997, p.10) posited that:

In Nigeria, the wider society looks up to the civil service or bureaucracy not only to implement developmental goals and administer government policies on a day to day

basis, but also to play significant roles in formulating development strategies that will stimulate social and economic changes. Such desired changes are naturally expected to lead to reduction in unemployment rate, increased social products and a more equitable redistribution of income.

The need to arrest the decaying nature of Nigeria's bureaucracy that hitherto led to its abysmal performance in Nigeria made the Obasanjo administration to go beyond previous reform efforts made to reposition the agency. The efforts were aimed at bringing about the ideal bureaucracy required for the much needed national development in Nigeria. Among others, such bureaucracy is expected to be creative, information-based and a productive agent (Ejiogu, 2001).

Critical Assessment of the Nigerian Bureaucracy and National Development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

No doubt, the Nigerian bureaucracy has been making some impact on the growth of the various sectors of the economy in order to drive national development in Nigeria. However, it has to be noted that the unwholesome activities of some Nigerian bureaucrats has significantly derailed the efforts of the state towards national development up till Nigeria's fourth republic. This paper examined the following:

i. Corruption in the service: Corruption has been noted as a major cankerworm that has constituted serious stumbling block against the efforts of the state towards national development in Nigeria. The various manifestations of it have actually left sad memories in the mind of most Nigerians. Little wonders why the various administrations in Nigeria since the restoration of democracy in 1999 have continued making frantic efforts to curb the social problem. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000) defined corruption as dishonest or illegal behaviour especially by people in positions of trust; the act of or effect of making somebody change from moral to immoral standards of behaviour. According to Nwachukwu (2011, p.136):

Corruption manifests in various forms such as bribery, inflation of contracts, extortion, nepotism, age falsification, embezzlement of public fund, over or under invoicing, favouritism, among others. Corruption is not only a crime; it is an enemy of progress as it debases a people, their value, and culture in its entirety. Corruption is retrogressive as it stagnates development. Corruption has so much contributed to the stunting of the growth of public institutions and agencies...

Nigeria's foremost novelist, Chinua Achebe, had once noted that corruption in Nigeria had degenerated from an alarming to a fatal stage and that Nigeria would die if nothing urgent was done to curb it (Achebe, 1983). Similarly, Odondiri (1995, p.80) rightly observed that "corruption in Nigeria has become endemic and institutionalized to the point that the problem is not only that officials are corrupt but that corruption has become official. It is quite disheartening to note that up to 2019, the incidence of corruption has remained a worrisome experience in Nigeria.

The fight against corruption in Nigeria by the Buhari administration in particular since his assumption of office in May 2015 has led to the indictment of several public officials who often collaborate with public bureaucrats to embezzle and siphon huge sums of money and other resources belonging to the government for their private use. According to Ofosu (1999, p.2):

Corruption exacts heavy economic costs, distorts the operations of free markets, slows down economic development and destroys the ability of institutions and bureaucracies to deliver the services that the society may expect. Implicitly, corruption is among the major causes of ineffectiveness, waste and low productivity in public agencies.

ii. Sabotaging of government programmes: The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language (2010) defines sabotage as an act of malicious damage; deliberately poor workmanship to cause damage, obstruction of plans or aims with the intention of frustrating a proposed undertaking. For several selfish reasons, certain government programmes aimed at improving the socio-economic lives of the citizens have often been sabotaged by some public officials who should have implemented such programmes. For instance,

evidences across Nigeria have shown that public bureaucrats had often frustrated the full realization of certain government programmes aimed at improving the lives of the masses such as poverty alleviation programmes, the N-power, free primary or secondary education programmes among others.

iii. Politicization of the bureaucracy: The manner of recruitment into the Nigeria public bureaucracy has often generated serious concern due to some kind of preferential treatment and considerations given to some category of applicants which, often times, lead to compromising of standard on the alters of expediency. For instance, the entrenched ugly syndrome in Nigeria whereby consideration is often given based on ethnic, religious or party affiliation before appointments or certain promotions in the public service are made has rather encouraged ethnic consciousness and statism in the service.

The “favoured ones” often pay more allegiance to their ethnic nationalities rather than showing or demonstrating greater patriotism to the nation. The entrenchment of politics into the public bureaucracy has also led to an over bloated bureaucracy which has remained burdensome on the system.

iv. Constant friction between career bureaucrats and political executives: The Nigerian state is yet to get rid of the frictional relationship that often exists between the elected or appointed political executives and the various bureaucrats in the ministerial departments under them. In most cases, it has been difficulty to work out clearly their different spheres of authority. The career bureaucrats often see themselves as having professional qualification and consider the political executives as amateurs in administrative matters. On the contrary, the latter see themselves as pace setters on policy issues. In this vein, Eme & Ugwu (2011, p.51) contended that “the career civil servants tend to assume some level of superiority and dominion and often show contempt for the political executives many of whom are appointed not based on academic background which some of the bureaucrats possess.”

The level of friction often witnessed between the two cadres of state servants had occasionally resulted in incessant quarrels and undue delays in carrying out government business which often paralyze official activities and delay in the realization of set targets.

v. Red-Tapism: This has remained a major dysfunction of bureaucracy even in contemporary times. Red-tapism has to do with the rigid or excessive observance of routines and procedures which result in delay or inaction (Nwachukwu, 2011). Similarly, Dike (1985) submitted that red-tapism denotes senseless rules and procedures that manifest in undue form filling, multiple approval and endorsement requirements, extensive consultation and observance of other forms of delay which the public often conceive as inconveniences and frustrating. Other manifestations of red-tapism are conservatism, formalism and ritualism. The observance of these has usually been interpreted to be the cause of lower productivity and efficiency in public operations.

Although the strict observance and adherence to laid down rules by bureaucrats is often aimed at bringing about efficiency and accountability, concrete evidences have, however, revealed that some bureaucrats often manipulate and take undue advantage of the system and members of the public they have pledged to faithfully serve to their own selfish advantage. This has seriously contributed to the inbuilt negative impression which most of the people have developed against the public bureaucracy.

vi. Indiscipline and poor attitude to work: Indiscipline is simply defined as an act or attitude that is inconsistent with the established rules of conduct. Some category of public servants often sideline and maneuver established order; take to dishonest or unethical conducts and exhibit some attitudes that are inconsistent with the objectives of the service. In most cases, some of the staff or officials that see themselves as “highly connected” hardly show respect to those who they should be answerable to or adhere strictly to the rules of engagement. Instead, they take delight in indulging in habits which are inimical to the system such as; lateness to work, truancy, absconding from duty without permission, laxity, absenteeism, insubordination and reluctance to carry out lawful duties. Unfortunately, appropriate disciplinary actions are hardly taken against them as they are often treated as “sacred cows.”

vii. Manifestation of favouritism and nepotism in the service: Favouritism is used to refer to an outward show of preferential treatment to an undeserving individual for various reasons. Similarly, nepotism has to do

with the application of tribal or ethnic sentiments in considering somebody for an award offer or appointment. Both vices carry high level of subjectivity and bias.

These negative vices which have led to compromising of standard and merit in the Nigerian public service have continued to manifest among public servants in Nigeria. According to Nwoba & Nwokwu (2018:95), "Favouritism and nepotism are often times observed during the process of recruitment, promotion, staff development or training and in the discipline of erring staff."

Experience in the service has revealed that the occasional intervention and mounting of pressure by some political heavy weights or influential citizens in favour of their preferred candidates or relations which ends up shielding such officers from punishment no matter the gravity of their offences has worsened the level of sanity in the system. Thus, the show of selective justice results in workers alienation and apparent lack of appreciation for hard work.

Conclusion

In contemporary times, the public bureaucracy has remained a veritable agency of the government for the realization of state or national development initiatives. Due to long years of military rule in Nigeria, the public bureaucracy actually lost focus, got ethicized and politicized which led to its abysmal performance on matters of national development. However, following the restoration of democratic rule in Nigeria in May 1999, concerted efforts have continued to be made to reform or reposition the Nigeria bureaucracy in order to bring about a progressive, visionary and result oriented agency.

Over the years, the Nigerian bureaucracy had been alive in its onerous function of policy initiation, advising, implementation and execution of government development strategies which has assisted in the realization of some national development programmes. In several instances, however, the activities of the Nigerian bureaucracy have continued to constitute some cogs in the wheel of societal progress and development. For various reasons, some public bureaucrats have not resisted the urge or freed themselves from indulging in unethical practices such as bribery and corruption, various forms of sabotage, over invoicing or under invoicing, absenteeism, non-adherence to the principles of anonymity, among others. No doubt, these unwholesome activities of some Nigerian bureaucrats have continued to leave sad memoirs in the mind of Nigerians to the extent that there has been a serious disconnect between the state and the public service as the agency has at several instances failed to deliver quality and effective services aimed at national development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proffered:

- i. For improved performance by the public bureaucracy, efforts should be intensified in carrying out refresher courses, workshops and training on contemporary challenges facing the public service.
- ii. Realizable targets with respect to adherence to work ethics, transparency and professionalism by bureaucrats should always be set for public servants.
- iii. Government functionaries with proven cases of indulgence in corrupt practices should always be sanctioned accordingly. The system should not continue to harbour the so called "sacred cows".
- iv. Recruitment and promotion in the Nigerian public bureaucracy should always be based purely on merit so as to engage only those that can deliver expected results.
- v. The state should endeavour to consider workers welfare and better conditions of service as issues that should be given topmost priority as such would likely lead to increased productivity and service delivery.

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