

Impact of Local Government Bureaucracy on Service Delivery in Onitsha North and Onitsha South Local Government Area. (2010-2020)

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ABSTRACT: Local government Bureaucracy constitutes the permanent and professional part of the executive organ of local government. It is usually described as the non-political or politically neutral, permanent, and professionally trained civil service. It runs the administration of the local government according to the policies and laws of the local government political executive. Upon the qualities and efficiency of bureaucracy depends the quality and efficiency of the local government administration. This study tends to investigate the impact of local government bureaucracy on service delivery in Onitsha-North and Onitsha-South.. The study adopted descriptive design. Sample size of 210 was determined using Taro Yamen of 1964. The 152 suitably answered and recovered questionnaire were analyzed through the use of tables to depict the demographic characteristics, bureaucratic variables that influence service delivery, as well as the views, and opinions of respondents on service delivery by the local government area. Related literature on local government bureaucracy and service delivery were reviewed. One hypothesis was formulated and tested to guide the study. The study revealed among others that There is significant relationship between local government bureaucracy and service delivery Onitsha North and Onitsha South local government. The study recommends that, as a public institution empowered by law to promote and provide support for productive activities and development (community health and sanitation, maintenance of law and order, general amenities such as roads, bridges, basic education and infrastructure) public participation in the Local government programme is very vital to the successful implementation of its policies. It is in this vein that feedbacks on the Local government

performance are crucial and public input into policy formulation and implementation necessary in advancing development of the local government.

Keyword: Local Government, Bureaucracy, Service Delivery

I. INTRODUCTION

Local government Bureaucracy constitutes the permanent and professional part of the executive organ of local government. It is usually described as the non-political or politically neutral, permanent, and professionally trained civil service. It runs the administration of the local government according to the policies and laws of the local government political executive. Upon the qualities and efficiency of bureaucracy depends the quality and efficiency of the local government administration. According to OyelaranOyeyinka(2006) as cited in Anazodo&Ezenwegbu (2020) for any Local government to develop, it is very imperative for its government to provide goods and services that the private sector sparingly venture into, especially water, roads, health, education, electricity to mention but a few. These services are those that people at the grassroot cannot afford the price at the given market value. (OyelaranOyeyinka, 2006 as cited in Anazodo&Ezenwegbu, 2020). The delivery of such goods and services is premised on strong bureaucracies and institutions of the Local government (Ibietan and Oni, 2013). Bureaucracy is a type of formal administration with the characteristics of division of labour, rules and regulation, hierarchy of authority, impersonality of social relationships and technical competence (Reicheld and Sasser, 1990 as cited in Anazodo&Ezenwegbu, 2020). The essence of bureaucracy is to manage large organizations to

achieve efficiency and be more accountable to the people (Olatunji, 2013). Weber (1946) cited in Aluko and Adesopo (2004) refers to bureaucracy as the ideal and rational type of administration useful for achievement of positive results. Public bureaucracy has become inevitable in any modern society and, as such, much importance is attached to it (Makinde, 2005). This is because; it is the Local government bureaucracy that determines the course and speed of policy implementation. Technically, it is the public bureaucracy that decides what should be done; how it should be done and who actually benefits (Osawe, 2015).

In an attempt to improve service delivery by government agencies, ministries and departments, the Nigerian public sector has undergone a process of restructuring in the last two decades (Bureau of Public Service Reforms, 2007). The justification for the reforms has been to make it more responsive to the needs of the citizen by increasing the levels of accountability, promoting efficiency and effectiveness, introducing participative decision making and adopting proactive steps and practices in the public sector (Makinde, 2005; Abah, 2010). Njunwa (2007) asserts that the introduction, adoption and implementation of public sector reforms has seen a shift in focus, from the adherence of formalized procedures to an emphasis on resource allocation and goal achievement for improved service delivery to the public. According to Ezeani (2005) the reasons of establishing local government system is to complement the state and central government in the provision of services to grassroots population in their respective areas of authority.

According to Anazodo and Ezenwegbu (2020), The expediency for the establishment of local government anywhere in the world stems from the need to enhance development at the local areas. Local governments as a tier of government were created to bring government closer to the people at the rural communities and for transformation of lives at that level. One of the ways of bringing government closer to the people at the grassroots is through the delivery of social services in a satisfactory, timely, effective and adequate manner (Anazodo and Ezenwegbu, 2020).

Anazodo and Ezenwegbu (2020) stated that since the return to civil rule in 1999. Scholars and Practitioners have made different claims in respect of the performance of local government system in Nigeria. Despite these efforts at extensive reforms in the Local government for improved service delivery, the results are not so impressive. For instance, the depressing state of

service delivery in Onitsha-North and Onitsha-South Local governments is noticeable in the collapse of public utilities, market system, educational system, drainage systems, school which had "first degenerated into lesson centers" has now become "place for hard drug dealing" and the quality of services rendered by government agencies being the subject of continuous lamentation by the citizens.

Against this backdrop, this paper tends to investigate the extent to which the local government bureaucracy has contributed to service delivery in Onitsha North and South Local Government area.

II. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Anazodo and Ezenwegbu (2021), in their study on Local Government Bureaucracy and Service Delivery In Anambra State, identified bureaucratic challenges that the local government areas encounters in service delivery and identify the extent to which these challenges impact on services to the people of the Local Government Area. The study adopted descriptive design. Sample size of 210 was determined using Taro Yamen of 1964. Two sets of questionnaires were designed and administered i.e. one for the inhabitants/clients of the area and the other for employees of the selected local government, so as to capture both the views of the inhabitants/client of the local government area and the employees of the local government. The 152 suitably answered and recovered questionnaire were analyzed through the use of tables, bar graphs and pie charts, to depict the demographic characteristics, bureaucratic variables that influence service delivery, as well as the views, and opinions of respondents on service delivery by the local government area. Related literature on local government bureaucracy and service delivery were reviewed. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested to guide the study. The study revealed among others that even though there is a clear practice of division of labour, departments lack technical equipment to effectively coordinate their activities, thereby resulting in delays in meeting the expectation of clients and inhabitant. These are; lack of viable sources of revenue, mismanagement, joint account, undue interference from state government. The study concluded by recommending that local government should be made to go through bureaucratic reforms and offer its staff regular training programmes on customer care and satisfaction. It is also to provide adequate offices to enhance service delivery.

El-Rufai (2012), commenting on Corruption in Local government posit that, in the year 2011, the 774 Local Governments and the 6 Area Councils (LGAs) in Nigeria received almost N1trillion (about \$7billion) from the Federation Account, which is equivalent to the entire annual budgets of Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Burundi and Togo combined. These transfers were to enable them carry out their functions, which include the administration of primary education and primary health care, construction of markets and boreholes, and rural development in general. Most Nigerians would agree that is little or nothing to show for this huge transfer of free cash to the LGAs. It has not always been this bad.

According to Okoli,(2013) as a structure, the third tiers of government (local government) are generally believed to have failed woefully in the discharge of their constitutionally assigned function. This failure can justifiably be link to their lack of autonomy.

Almond (2006) stated that all systems perform two basic set of functions. The input and output functions. For him, the political systems is made up of a set of roles, structures and subsystems whose interaction are affected to a great extent by the psychological attribute and properties of the actors involved. Moreover, the process can be seen in relation to its environment so that the whole range of interactions can be interpreted as consisting of either input from the environment.

According to Olusola, (2011) Nigerian local governments have not been up and doing in terms of efficient and effective social service delivery to the grassroots. This is evident in the poor environmental state, deteriorating public school building, poor market facilities, and lack of health Centre's.

Barro (2017) suggest that voters are able to hold politicians accountable for their performance in providing crucial public services. In turn, politicians are able to use both formal institutional mechanisms to pressure the bureaucracy into performing (for example, legislative hearings) and informal mechanisms (such as private incentives) to induce bureaucratic performance. So, while local bureaucratic ownership might boost the performance of projects, it is not clear that unowned, politically-proposed, projects need fair any worse.

According to the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) research project cited in Onigbinde, (2017)., "Good governance is the process and institutions by which authority in a

country is exercised; the process by which governments are selected, held accountable, monitored and replaced; the capacity of governments to manage resources efficiently, and to formulate, implement and enforce sound policies and regulations; and, the respect for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them".

Potter (2003) calls good governance "sound development management" that is a broad sphere of public sector management; accountability; legal framework for development (reforms); information and technology; the legitimacy of government; the competence of governments to formulate appropriate policies; make timely decision; implementation them effectively and deliver services. Good governance can also be linked to the extent which a government is perceived and accepted as legitimate, committed to improving the public welfare and responsive to the needs of its citizens, competent to assure law and order, and deliver public services, able to create an enabling public environment for productive activities and equitable in its conduct.

Adamolekun (2007) simply views governance as the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs. He listed the main elements of governance as; rule of law, freedom of expression and association, electoral legitimacy, acceptability and transparency and development-oriented leadership.

Omolayo (2005) describes bureaucracy as an essential oil that keeps the wheel of government working without any difficulty. According to him, leadership makes the difference between success and failure in a county. It involves giving direction to citizens who are the critical assets of the nation.

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper adopted "descriptive design". The population of this study is 262,884 being the population of people in Onitsha-north and Onitsha-south Local government (2006 Census) while the sample size is 152. Quantitative data collected using a questionnaire were analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented through percentages, means, standard deviations and frequencies. Consequently, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was also used to test the hypotheses earlier postulated.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION

Bureaucracy and public service delivery

Table 1(a): Local Government Area officials and concern for citizens as clients

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	46	63.9	68.7
No	26	36.1	100.0
Total	72	100.0	

Source: Researcher's field work, 2019

Table 2(b): Staff involvement in the local government policies

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Through memos sent out to all departments Staff	42	58.3	58.3
	17	23.6	81.9
			83.3
			84.7
Department meetings	1	1.4	88.9
Durbar	1	1.4	90.3
local government chairman manifesto, workshops	3	4.2	98.6
Public discussions on radio	1	1.4	100
Local government meetings	6	8.3	
Seminars and workshops	1	1.4	
Total	72	100	

Source: Researcher's field work, 2019

Tables 1(a) and 2(b) show that 46 respondents believe that citizens are their clients whilst 26 remaining do not. As to whether development programmes are explained to staff of the local government area, 42 said that the local government explains programmes to them through,

memos dispatched to all departments with the remaining stating that it is done through seminars, department meetings, staff durbars and workshops, among others. This shows that development programmes and other administrative issues are widely circulated.

Table 3: Is Local Government Area well equipped to impact on development

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	22	30.6	30.6
No	50	69.4	100
Total	72	100	

Source: Researcher's field work, 2019

Table 4: Local Government Area officials’ response to Public outcry

Response to public outcry against concerning delay	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Local government has limited financial support	17	23.6	23.6
Citizen are not ready to pay taxes to the local government			
Public must be made aware of local government budget and inadequacies	10	13.9	37.5
local government area has done very well			
local government area must speed up approval and completion of projects	7	9.7	47.2
Unnecessary bureaucracy in local government area administration.			
Total	10	13.9	61
	3	4.2	65.2
	25	34.7	100
	72	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s field work, 2019

Tables 4 show responses to the local government ability to create the needed environment for social and economic development within the local government , 30.6% were confident of the local government capabilities, on the other hand, 69.4% do not think the local government is well equipped to create that enabling environment. However, reacting to public out cry against delay in providing solutions to socio-

economic issues, respondents expressed the following; limited financial support for the local government area, refusal of people within the local government to pay levies and unnecessary bureaucracy within the local government administrative systems. Others are of the view that budget allocated to the local government must be made public for all to know limitations of the local government area.

Table 5: The need for administrative reforms in Local Government Area

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	52	72.2	72.2
No	20	27.8	100.0

Total	72	100.0	
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Source: Researcher’s field work, 2019

Table 5 shows findings in answer to the question that seeks to understand how respondents assess current administrative processes, whether there is the need for reforms. In support of administrative reforms majority of respondents suggested better remuneration, computerization of working processes, staff capacity building, employment of more qualified personnel, yearly training programmes, personnel reshuffle and

transfer, creation of better working environment whereas 27.8% do not see any need for a reform.

Test of Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between local government bureaucracy and service delivery in Anambra state.

Hi: There is significant relationship between local government bureaucracy and service delivery in Anambra state.

Table 6

Correlations		Gender Diversity	adoptability to change
Legislative Oversight	Pearson Correlation	1	.224
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.049
	N	80	80
Bureaucracy Service Delivey	Pearson Correlation	.224	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.049	
	N	80	80

The result of the correlation coefficient for hypothesis one, as displayed using SPSS version 20 indicates that the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient is 0.224, showing that There is significant relationship between local government bureaucracy and service delivery in Onitsha North and Onitsha South local government.

Decision Rule: From the computation above, the probability value at 0.049 is less than 0.05 significant level. Therefore, we accept the alternative hypothesis that There is significant relationship between local government bureaucracy and service delivery Onitsha North and Onitsha South local government.

V. CONCLUSION

Public service delivery is the implementation of services and making sure they are timely delivered to people and places they are intended to. If the private sector is the engine of growth, then the public sector is the fuel needed to propel that engine to function profitably. However, the general view on public service delivery has not be satisfactory with complaints of excessive bureaucratic procedures intended to extort money from prospective clients, thereby stalling social and economic development, deepening the suffering of the people. The negative impacts of bureau

pathology, as a result of ineffective civil/public institutions are too costly to quantity in monetary terms. Until government pursue a strong public sector reforms, setting measurable objectives, disciplining corrupt public servants and reprimanding ineffective institutions, bureaucracy shall only be a word in the dictionary.

The research assessed the services rendered by Onitsha north and south local government from 2011 and 2020, in areas of education, health care delivery, infrastructural development, etc. The local government in the period under review performed below expectation. There is no doubt that as a third tier of government it has a central role towards her area of jurisdiction, in terms of development. This is an important reason that led to its establishment. It therefore, means that local government has meaning only when it contributes to the upliftment of the people’s lives and state of living.

Onitsha north and south local government had not succeeded in the performance of this role in the area during the period covered. This stem from the fact that there was still high level of inadequate and infrastructural deficits like poor feeder roads, portable water, educational facilities, health care services etc.

Nonetheless, it could be observed that the low level of performance by Onitsha North and South local government can be attributed to problems encountered in her developmental drives such as

financial emasculation in the name of joint account, poor leadership/mismanagement, etc.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the research data and analysis the recommends that;

As a public institution empowered by law to promote and provide support for productive activities and development (community health and sanitation, maintenance of law and order, general amenities such as roads, bridges, basic education and infrastructure) public participation in the Local government programme is very vital to the successful implementation of its policies. It is in this vein that feedbacks on the Local government performance are crucial and public input into policy formulation and implementation necessary in advancing development of the local government.

Staff of the Local government should be periodically trained in line with the tenets of New Public Management System which specifies the following; improvement of quality of services delivered to consumers; adherence to consumer focus principles; reduction of inflexibility, rigidity and other forms of bureau pathology in service; involvement of consumers in service delivery system design and packaging, etc. This will boost the confidence of clients/customers who are dissatisfied with the Local government performance in service delivery.

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