

Politics and Administrative Responsibility in Nigeria: An Assessment of Legislative Mandate Performance and Executive Implementation of Public Programmes (1999-2012)

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Abstract

Politics and administration are closely interrelated activities in the governance process of any country. The interplay of these two social activities is expressed in the dictum “administration begins where politics ends”. Put differently, politics deals with “law making” and “authoritative allocation of values” while administration focuses on the implementation of public programmes and policies for the overall development of the country. Since democratic inception in May 1999, there has been an increasing surge for improvement in the delivery of administrative and democratic dividends to meet the needs of Nigerians estimated at 150 million. Thus, this paper is an assessment of legislative mandate performance and executive implementation of public programmes from 1999 to 2012. The paper argues that the past ten years of democratic governance in Nigeria has been very expensive and costly in terms of financial and human resources but less overtly impactful in terms of addressing poverty, insecurity and other challenges in the country. Consequently, as a prognosis for action and prescription, the paper advocates that government business should be directed at addressing injustice, natural disasters, insecurity of lives and property, decayed infrastructural facilities, unemployment, poverty, sustainable society, corruption, communal conflicts, etc. Politics and administrative responsibilities should be executed in an atmosphere characterised by service to the people, transparency, accountability, prudent management of public resources, periodic and honest evaluation of government programmes and activities and effective campaign against corruption at all levels. The place of control, checks and balances, harmonious relationship between the three arms of the government and foresighted leadership in improving performance of government and addressing the above challenges remain undoubtedly central.

Key Words: Politics, Administration, Legislative, Governance, Public Programmes, Executive and Implementation

Introduction

Government business involves a mixture of politics and administration defined within the three arms of government- the legislature, executive and judiciary. The conduct of government business is fundamental as it affects the stability and wellbeing of the people. In Nigeria, the bane of development is underpinned by the manner politics and administration is conducted and managed in the country. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the performance of the legislature and executive arms of government within the Nigeria, between 1999 and 2012. In doing this, the paper intends to unravel the strength and weaknesses in the operations of these two important arms of the government and seeks to offer a brief prognosis for action. This, is not, to say that the judiciary is a less important arm of the government.

For the purpose of exposition, the paper is decomposed into sections. The second segment of the paper takes a look at pre-independence politics and administration in Nigeria. This is followed by a section on the legislative mandate and executive responsibility in Nigerian democratic setting from 1999 to 2012. The two last segments of the paper focused respectively on the assessment of legislative mandate performance and executive implementation of public programmes in Nigeria and concluding remarks.

Pre-Independence Politics and Administration in Nigeria

Nigeria an oil rich West African country with a population estimated at 150 million, gained political independence from the British in 1960. It is a multifarious ethnic society (having more than 250 ethnic groupings) with a long-standing history of traditional administrative, military and democratic governance. Traditionally, before independence, Nigeria had well established traditional structures of politics and administration through which the various ethnic groups were governed and the needs of the people met. Attesting to the pre-independence history of Nigeria, Okigbo and Nsiegbunam (2000) observed that before the advent of Europeans in Africa, African countries already had existing system of administration. For instance, as they noted, the three major ethnic groups (Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo) in Nigeria had their peculiar system of administration. The Hausa/Fulani (the Northern part of what was later called Nigeria) political and administrative system had a well established tax system; centralized allegiance to powerful Emirs and Sultans and hierarchical theocratic rule (Okigbo and Nsiegbunam, 2000; Osaghae, 1998) based on Islamic principles. Similarly, Western Nigeria, long before colonialism, had organized traditional system of governance usually known as the “Yoruba Political and Administrative System of Governance”. The traditional political system of the Yoruba (one of the major three ethnic groups in today Nigeria) *ranked next to the centralized theocracies of the Islamized parts of the North* to use the words of Osaghae (1998:3).

Hierarchically, the Yorubas were governed by chiefdoms headed by *Obas*. The Oba administered the kingdom through the assistance of Senior Chiefs. Policies, programmes and major decisions were taken collectively by the Oba and the Senior Chiefs in the kingdom. Political decisions arrived at during deliberations were issued in the Oba’s name and were interpreted and implemented by a number of senior officials among who were the *Bashorun*-the head of the civil government and the *Are-Ona-Kakanfo*- the head of the army (Bagaji, 2002:22). It is important to note that politics and administrative governance in the Yoruba kingdom are usually described as highly democratic since no Oba was expected to rule autocratically, and decisions/policies were products of consultations and approval of the Senior Chiefs who were more or less representatives of the people (Bagaji, 2002; Pious and Robert, 2003).

For the people in the Eastern Nigeria, the system of administration was decentralized, and authority shared among political institutions like *Ofo-group* and the age-group. There was no recognition of paramount chiefs like the Sultan, Emirs and Obas. Thus, the Ibo society and administration has been described as stateless, a cephalous and or republican (Bagaji, 2002; Okoli, 2000; and Balogun, 1983). The above traditional political and administrative systems were adequate to satisfy the political, social and economic needs of the various ethnic groups at that time (see Okoli, 2000). They represented structures through which legislative, executive and judicial functions were discharged for the political, economic and social development of the then

ethnic societies. This agrees with Almond (1960) postulation on Structural-Functionalism, which argued that whenever there are functions, there must be structures to perform them.

With the advent of the British, the traditional political and administrative systems (in the territories now known as Nigeria) were disarticulated, and a colonial administrative structure established through which the political and socio-economic needs of the people were articulated and satisfied. Okoli (2000) is in agreement with these changes when he notes, the traditional political organizations were no longer adequate (with the advent of the British in Nigeria) for the increasing transactions between the Europeans and the inhabitants in Bonny to settle trade issues and conflicts between Nigerians and Europeans. Basically, the British administrative system in Nigeria led to the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates on January 1914 by Lord Lugard (the British Governor General in Nigeria). This is often regarded as the watershed of the Nigerian State or as Osaghae (1998:2) puts it, *the birth date of the Nigerian State*. Osaghae (1998:2) has further observed aptly that:

Before it (the amalgamation) – indeed, before the advent of colonial conquest and rule – there was no Nigeria, and the likelihood that a state could have evolved was quite remote. What existed in the period before the establishment of colonial rule was motley of diverse groups whose histories and interactions, interlaced as they were by external influences – principally trade with Europeans and the Arab World – had nevertheless crystallised in three clearly discernible regional formations by the end of the nineteenth century.

It is obvious from the above that Nigeria is a child of circumstance, a product of British colonialism and administration. Nigerian colonial government was characterised with the formation and execution of public policies and programmes under the tutelage of British expatriates. For instance, national economic policies and programmes were formulated and executed. Writing on the Nigerian development planning, Ozor (2004:47-48) notes that:

In 1945, the Nigerian colonial government under the aegis of the colonial office in London, launched the first ever development plan for Nigeria – A Ten-Year Plan of Development and Welfare for Nigerian Government's Sessional Paper No. 24 of 1945.

This plan was revised in 1951, and it lasted until 1956.

The development plan under reference was followed with a second development perspective (1955-60) formulated and executed by the Nigerian colonial government. Since 1960, other development plans have evolved, such as, the First National Economic Development Plan (1962-1968); the Second National Development Plan (1970-1974), the Third National Development Plan (1981-1985); and the Rolling Plans epoch-First National Rolling Plan (1990-1992); the Second National Rolling Plan (1991-1993); the Third National Rolling Plan (1993-1995); the Fourth National Rolling Plan (1994-1996); the Fifth National Rolling Plan of 1997-1999 (Ozor, 2004:48; Onah, 2006).

Before concluding this section, it is imperative to present some political milestones in Nigeria.

Table 1: Selected Political Milestones in Nigeria (1960-2012)

Month/Year	Political Events/Happenings
1 st October, 1960	Independence from Britain
May 1962	State of emergency declared in Western Region; aborted census exercise
1 st October, 1963	Nigeria became a Republic
15 th January, 1966 - June 1979	Military Regimes – Ironsi Regime; Gowon Military Regime; Mohammed/Obasanjo Regime
6 th July 1967 – 12 January 1970	Nigerian Civil War to stop the secession of the Easter Region (Republic of Biafra)
21 st September, 1978	The promulgation of the 1979 Constitution and the lifting of ban on politics by Obasanjo led Military Regime
1 st October, 1979	Inauguration of Civilian Administration led by President Shagari – Second Republic
31 st December, 1983	Fifth military coup/commencement of Buhari Military Regime
27 th August, 1985	Sixth military coup/commencement of Babangida Military Regime
May 1989	1989 Constitution promulgated, two-party system (Social Democratic Party-SDP and National Republican Convention-NRC formed by Armed Force Rule Council the highest law making body during the Military Regime of Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida)
April 22 nd , 1990	Eight military coup led by Major G. Orkar (abortive)
August 27 th , 1991	States increased to thirty
5 th December, 1992	Babangida, the then <i>Military President</i> steps aside and formation of Interim National Government (ING) headed by Ernest Shonekan
September 24 th , 1993	M. K. O. Abiola the acclaimed winner of the Presidential election of June 12, 1993 returns from self-exile
November 10 th , 1993	Lagos High Court declares Interim National Government (ING) illegal
November 17 th , 1993	Ninth military coup, Late General Sani Abacha Military Regime starts with the dissolution of all democratic structures in Nigeria
November 10 th , 1995	Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni Minority rights activists executed which attracted world-wide condemnation and made Late Gen. Sani Abacha unpopular in the eyes of the international community.
November 11 th , 1995	Nigeria expelled from Commonwealth
September 30 th , 1996	Five new political parties announced.
October 1 st , 1996	States increased to thirty-six following the creation of six more states. 138 Local Government Areas created.
June 8 th , 1998	General Sani Abacha dies suddenly, General Abdusalami Abubakar assumes office as Head of State
29 th May, 1999-Date	Democratic Governments in Nigeria

Sources: Osaghae, E. E. (1998). Nigeria Since Independence: Crippled Giant, pp. xvii-xx; Chronology of Major Events in Nigeria 1960-2000, www.dawodu.com/chronol.htm. Retrieved on 22 July, 2013.

Legislative Mandate and Executive Responsibility in Nigerian Democratic Setting (1999-2012)

The national legislative mandate of Nigeria is vested in the hands of the National Assembly, a bicameral legislature and the highest elective law-making body of the country. It consists of the 109-member senate and the 360-member House of Representatives. The tenure of the National

Assembly is usually four years in Nigeria (<http://www.nassnig.org>). The legislative mandate and executive responsibility in Nigerian democratic setting are clearly shared between the legislative and executive arms of the government. To assist in the execution of public programmes in Nigerian democratic set up is the civil service made up of men and women employed in civil capacity to translate government policies and programmes into action from one end of the country to the other (Nigro and Nigro, 1980; Bagaji, 2002).

According to Ezeani (2006:190), the civil service remains a vital mechanism for rapid socio-economic development of developing countries like Nigeria, where, over the years, the government occupies a significant position as a dominant instrument of change. Since political independence, Nigerian government (at federal, state and local government levels has assumed the mandate and responsibility of funding education, establishing industries, providing social facilities, providing employment among others (Ezeani, 2005). These responsibilities are constitutionally provided in the Nigerian Constitutions (1979, 1989 and 1999).

By legislative mandate, we mean the duties of the legislative arm of government (National and State Assembly). The National Assembly and the State Houses of Assembly are vital institutions and structures of constitutional democracy charged with the basic role of enacting, repealing, revising and reviewing existing laws and regulations for the development and wellbeing of Nigerians they are elected to serve. In this content, section 14(1) (b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides that the security system and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government.

This implies that, politics (*the authoritative allocation of values through law making*) and administration (the execution of public programmes and policies) are to harmoniously co-exist for the welfare of the people and sustainability of the country. Anything short of this expectation means that the government has failed in its responsibilities to the masses and engenders crises of legitimacy. Attesting to this point, Malemi (2008:119) succinctly maintained that:

Government is a great responsibility, and only persons who have carefully prepared themselves and have a high sense of self-discipline and responsibility should aspire to lead. For indeed, government is an awesome responsibility and trust which if abused or betrayed, holds untold political, economic and social consequences, loss of lives and sufferings for the people of the country as a whole.

Clearly, therefore, what leaders do as political office holders and administrators involved in the formulation and execution of government policies/programmes have the capacity of slowing down or facilitating the pace of the nation's development. Recognizing the importance of the legislature, Section 4(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides that:

- (i) The legislative powers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be vested in the National Assembly for the Federation, which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives (360 members).
- (ii) The National Assembly shall have the power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Federation or any part thereof with respect of any matter included in the Exclusive Legislative List set out in Part 1 of the Second Schedule of the constitution.

At the state level, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic Nigeria provides in Section 4 (6-7) that:

- (i) The legislative powers of the State of the Federation shall be vested in the House of Assembly of the State.
- (ii) The House of Assembly of a State shall have powers to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the State or any part thereof with respect to any matter not included in the Exclusive Legislative List set out in Part 1 of the Second Schedule of the Constitution; any matter included in the Concurrent Legislative List and any other matter with respect to which it is empowered to make laws in accordance with the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution of 1999.

It must be noted that the legislative arm of the government does not have the sole responsibility or monopoly of making laws for the development of the nation. Corroborating this point, Agi (2003:112) stated that:

The pressure of change included by the industrial, technological, scientific revolutions has made even the legislature inadequate, requiring it to lay down broad policy directives and delegate to administrative agencies the powers to make actual rules.

The implication of the above is that delegated legislation is a common feature of a modern legislature. Bairamian (1962) cited in Okany (2007:39) affirms this by noting that:

The fact is that the laws of Nigeria begin with the primary laws passed by the legislature itself, and then go to give the subsidiary legislation made by persons or bodies authorized by the legislature to settle its enactment.

Various arguments have been advanced to support delegated legislation in both developed and developing countries. They include lack of parliamentary time; technicality of the subject matter involved, unforeseen contingency, flexibility needed in administration, extensive executive discretion; to save cost of parliament; to bring governance closer to the people; quick response to a state of emergency (Okany, 2007; Malemi, 2008). However, some of the criticisms against delegated legislature include its contradiction to the doctrine of separation of powers; reduction of the supremacy of parliament; possibility of being abused and its undemocratic nature (Malemi, 2008). The National Assembly as noted earlier performs important extra-legislative functions as evident in the democratic experience of Nigeria from 1999-2012. These functions as discussed by Agi (2003) are:

- (i) Control of National expenditure and Taxation: Section 80 (4) provides that no moneys shall be withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund or any other public fund of the Federation, except in the manner prescribed by the National Assembly. In fact, Section 81 (1) states that the President of Nigeria shall cause to be prepared and laid before each House of the National Assembly at any time in each financial year estimates of the revenues and expenditure of the Federation for the next financial year.
- (ii) Oversight functions of the legislature which involves watching and controlling the activities of government through general debates; questioning of Ministers or other public officers; impeachments; and committees of investigation.

Section (1) (a-b) provides that each House of the National Assembly shall have power to direct or cause to be directed an investigation into any matter or thing with respect to which it has the power to make laws, and the conduct of affairs of any person, authority, ministry or government department charged or intended to be charged, with the duty of or responsibility for executing or

administering laws enacted by the National Assembly. This is done to expose corruption, inefficiency or waste in the execution of public programmes.

Other extra-legislative functions of the legislature include *interest articulation*, system maintenance and stability through the mobilization of support for government programmes; regularization of appointments made by the executive; control of members and organizations (Agi, 2003; Sisson, 1973). According to Appadorai (1975:548), legislature

Everywhere... pass laws, determine the ways of raising and spending public revenue, and discuss matters of public importance. Almost everywhere, they have some part in the process of amending the constitution. They control the Executive....

The business of government is a collective effort of the three arms of the government – the legislature, executive and the judiciary. The executive arm of government headed by the President is responsible for implementing the public programmes and policies decided by the legislature and interpreted by the judiciary. As provided by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the executive powers of the Federation:

shall be vested in the President and may, subject as aforesaid and to the provisions of any law made by the National Assembly, be exercised by him either directly or through the Vice-President and Ministers of the Government of the Federation or officers in the public service of the Federation (Section 5 Subsection 1 (a)).

In this paper, executive responsibility is used in a broad perspective to denote the aggregation or sum total of the duties of all the functionaries and agencies which are concerned with the execution of the will of the state as that will has been formulated and expressed in terms of law (Garner, 1930:677).

Assessment of Legislative Mandate Performance and Executive Implementation of Public Programmes in Nigeria (1999-2012)

The overall performance of Nigeria's practice of constitutional democracy in terms of legislative mandate performance and executive implementation of public programmes from 1999 to 2012 falls short of national and international expectations. According to Anyaebunam (2012:54, 55):

No doubt laws have been enacted on the federal and state tiers as provided by the constitution, but the infrastructural facilities in virtually all the tiers have dilapidated. The social and economic wellbeing of the citizenry, has also taken downward slide....constitutional projection of good governance via federal and state legislations, have not been attained in Nigeria due to clumsy legislative processes and procedure, as well as lack of vibrant legal framework.

Critics of the present democratic experiment in Nigeria tend to agree with the rating of a systematic failure and poor performance of democratic institutions. As Lewis and Alemika (2005) succinctly note, at the time of the transition from military rule, Nigerians expected a democratic dividends in the form of governance, an improved economy and rising personal welfare and wellbeing. In their study, which covered 29 out of the 36 States in Nigeria, it was discovered that:

- (i) Nigerians are deeply dissatisfied with the performance of democracy since 1999;
- (ii) The masses are unhappy with the government handling of key issues and problems like corruption, unemployment, economic inequalities, and basic services;

- (iii) Nigerians are also dissatisfied with the performance of elected office holders. Only a limited proportion of Nigerians currently approve of the performance of the National Assembly representatives (32%); of other Local Government Chairmen (39%);
- (iv) Approval for the President of the country has dropped substantially;
- (v) Trust in major institutions of the country has also diminished;
- (vi) Nigerians are much more critical of the integrity of electoral processes;
- (vii) Despite (i) to (vi) above, Nigerians continue to prefer democracy as the best system for the country;
- (viii) Public resistance to non-democratic options is still strong, though somewhat reduced;
- (ix) There is still a large gap between average citizens and elected leaders;
- (x) Crime and personal security remain general concerns; and
- (xi) Nigerians are increasingly discouraged by the incidence of corruption.

Corroborating the above findings, Great nation (May, 2009), notes that, after 10 years of democratic resurgence in Nigeria, there is nothing to show as democratic dividend except total darkness, collapse of the educational sector, lack of security resulting in the destruction of lives and property worth millions of Nigerians, teeming number of unemployed youths (about 36 million youths are jobless from the statistical estimates of Ola and Agagu, 2004), and above all, incessant bribery and corruption among leaders which has left millions in abject poverty.

On the positive score card of legislative mandate performance, both Houses of the National Assembly in Nigeria – the Senate and House of Representatives have established specialized committees to aid legislation in key areas that affect the wellbeing of Nigerians and the country in general. For instance, there are about 56 Senate Committees and 90 Committees established by the House of Representatives. Some of the House Committees are: Agriculture; Aids, Loans and Debt Management; Air Force, Anti-corruption, National Ethics and Values; Appropriations; Army; Aviation; Banking and Currency; Civil Society and Donor Agencies; Climate Change; Sports; States and Local Government Affairs; Steel; Treaties and Agreements; Urban Development; Water Resources; Women Affairs; Works; Youths and Social Development; Communications; Culture and Tourism; Defence; Diaspora; Drugs; Narcotics and Financial Crimes; Education; Electoral Matters, etc.

On the other hand, some of the specialized Senate Committees are: Senate Committee on Air Force; Appropriation; Aviation; Communications; Cooperation and Integration in Africa and NAPED; Defence and Army; Drugs; Narcotics and Financial Crimes; Education; Employment, Labour and Productivity; Health; Housing and Urban Development; Land Transport; Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); National Planning, Economic Affairs and Poverty Alleviation; National Population and Identity Card; Navy; Police Affairs; Public Accounts; Rules and Business; Selection Committee; Environment and Ecology; Establishment and Public Service; Federal and Capital Territory; Federal Character and Inter-Government Affairs; Foreign Affairs, Gas, etc.

The above committees are established to facilitate law making, decision-making and policy formulation by the legislative arm of government. These committees provide a mechanism for deciding policy goals and objectives from a competing array of choices and interests articulated from the political system. Members of these committees are to act as the

eyes, ears and voice of the National Assembly and as representatives of the people, they are to promote and effectively represent the interests of the masses. As it has been noted:

Individual legislators simplify complicated issues and define policy choices. They use their resources and expertise to filter information from many sources and to resolve conflicting ideological positions, ultimately presenting their constituents with clear-cut options. This educational function has become incessantly important, societies have become more complex, as the scope of government activity has become more extensive, and as the public has gained increased access to legislative proceedings, particularly via television (*Freedom paper No.3, www.ait.org.tiv/.../freedom3.htm*).

Generally, committees as the case of legislative practice in the Nigerian National Assembly since 1999 are structural arrangement within the National Assembly or State House Assembly that allow groups of legislators to review policy matters or proposed bills more closely than would be possible by the entire chamber (<http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/Docs/Parliaments/legislative%20committee%20system.htm>). Basically, legislative committees help to initiate and shape proposed bills; conduct investigations and facilitate budgetary and administrative reviews fundamental in promoting good governance and national development. For instance, the Senate Committee on Public Accounts could serve as a vital tool for checking the excesses of the executive arm of government thereby serve as a medium of promoting accountability and good governance in the country. The report of the Senate Committee on Public Accounts disclosed that about 1.518 trillion voted into the Special Fund Accounts (SFA) between 2002 and 2012 was alleged to have been misapplied. The report indicated that rather than use the funds for the purpose it was meant, it was mainly used for loans to government agencies, states and local governments, as well as private companies. This may have occurred due to the failure of the National Assembly to provide the required guidelines for the operations of such accounts by the executive arm of government (Falade, 2013). Be that as it may, such report if properly utilized could assist in promoting good governance and accountability, a necessary path for national development.

For a legislative committee to be effective and play a fundamental role in shaping policy outcome and legislative decisions, it must possess some of the following attributes (<http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/Docs/Parliaments/legislative%20committee%20system.htm>):

- (i) It must have developed a degree of expertise in a given policy area made possible through continuing involvement and stable memberships, and this expertise is both recognised and valued by the legislatures;
- (ii) Members of the committee and the legislature in general are able to represent diversity and reconcile enough differences to sustain recommendations for action; and
- (iii) Committee arenas are important enough so that people inside and outside the legislative arm seek to influence outcomes by supplying information about what they want and what they will accept.

In terms of budgetary performance, the National Assembly has passed a total of about fourteen Appropriation Bills from 2000 to 2013. The annual budget of the government (at the Federal, State and Local Government Levels) plays a significant role in driving economic activities with multifarious implications for governance, politics, security and business opportunities (www.myfinancialintelligence.com/ban...). Within the period under consideration,

Supplementary Appropriation Bills (SABs) were also submitted by the executive for consideration by the National Assembly. Early passage of Appropriation Bills by the National Assembly has been a major challenge because of the politics surrounding budgetary process in the Nigerian Public Sector. Budgetary process has remained a difficult exercise because of the competitive interests involved in the exercise. For instance, the 2013 Appropriation Act has not been completely resolved seven months into the year. One would have thought that the passage of the 2013 Budget of the Federal Government by the National Assembly on the 20th of December, 2012 would end the impasse surrounding budgetary process in Nigeria. It would be recalled that the December 2012 passage is historic because it was the first time the National Assembly passed the budget before the end of the year since the commencement of the current democracy in 1999 (www.myfinancialintelligence.com/ban).

On March 14, 2013, the executive through the President of Nigeria sent a request to the National Assembly for amending the 4.9 trillion 2013 Appropriation Act. The bill sought to amend the 2013 Appropriation Act to make provisions for some sectors whose allocations were reduced by the National Assembly. The request, which was earlier rejected by the National Assembly on the grounds of being ambiguous and failing to indicate the sections the new bills, seeks to amend or repeal (NAN, 2013) has been passed by the senate.

From May 1999 to 2012, the National Assembly facilitated the performance of the executive arm of government by discharging its constitutional duty of confirmation of nominations of ministers, ambassadors and other appointments made by the executive. Section 171 (1) (a-e) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria empowers the National Assembly to confirm appointments made by the President of Nigeria into the following offices: Secretary to the Government of the Federation; Head of the Civil Service of the Federation; Ambassador, High Commissioner or other Principal Representatives of Nigeria abroad; Permanent Secretary in any Ministry or Head of any Extra-Ministerial Department of the Government of the Federation howsoever designated; and any office on the Personal Staff of the President. Such confirmation and regularization by the National Assembly is to ensure that due process of appointing public officials has been followed and to ensure that men and women of competence and integrity are appointed into public offices designated above.

As an assessment of democratic governance in Nigeria from May 1999 to December 2012 shows a system that is very expensive in terms of cost, but less impactful in reducing poverty, unemployment, solving energy crisis and poverty; protecting lives and property, and improving the standard of living of Nigerians. The very social problems for which policies, laws and programmes are designed and implemented still remain despite billions/millions of Naira being voted into their implementation. Wages and allowances in Nigerian public sector are highly skewed in favour of the political class. Nigerian form of democratic governance feed fat on public resources at the expense of the development of the country. This tends to justify the campaign of some Nigerians for a downward review of the wages and allowances of politicians to reflect the prevailing socio-economic reality of the country of about 140 million people and endowed with abundant mineral resources, and yet less than 10 million of the population could boast of having a decent standard of living (Agba, Achimugu, Chukwurah & Agboni, 2012).

Writing on the financial cost of democratic governance in Nigeria, Chukwulaka, Ojo and Anumihe (2011) note that it will take about ₦338 billion of public resources to keep the 469 members of the seventh National Assembly in office for the next four years. The above cost as

they maintained, did not factor in the deferential pays and other perquisites that go to the principal officers of the two chambers of the federation of the federal legislature. It is important to note that the estimate above excluded the financial cost of keeping in office members of the House of Assembly in the 36 States of the Federation for four years that their tenure will last. According to the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC, 2009), between 2006 and 2007, workers' salaries increased by less than 40 percent while those of political office holders increased by over 800 percent. From every indication, Nigerian politics and government is prebendalistic and wrongly conceived as a commercial and business enterprise where millions of Naira are invested by politicians and their godfathers in the electoral process and billions of Naira through inflated contracts and other fraudulent means are reaped as profit and interest.

Emphasizing the cost of democratic governance in Nigeria, former President of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) observed aptly in *The Nation*, August, 2013 that the National Assembly and some executive members are paid jumbo salaries but when it comes to education funding the government has no money.

The above observation was made with regards to the position of the Federal Government on the 2013 ASUU strike embarked upon to press for the implementation of the 2009 Federal Government and ASUU Agreement. The Federal Government through its negotiating team had argued that it lacks the funding ability to implement the demands of ASUU in the aforementioned 2009 agreement.

From the foregoing, it is apt to say that there is a general public dissatisfaction with the performance of the Nigerian legislative arm of government. According to Adamolekun (2013), all the oversight missions or functions of the National Assembly in respect of the different sectors, including education, are tales of corrupt practices without a single MDA being made to account for implementation failure and poor performance.

The above assessment of legislative and executive mandate performance in Nigeria is not different from an earlier evaluation made by scholars and commentators on Nigerian Government and Politics since 1999. For instance, Lewis (2006:42) writes that:

As the author observes, Nigeria's democracy is truly at a crossroads. Although there has been much progress in the years since the 1999 political transition, there are also deep-seated problems of structure and performance that may jeopardize this fragile political experiment. There has been a general improvement of rights and liberties, increasing accountability and some commendable initiatives toward better economic management and the control of rampant corruption. Yet, Nigeria's political class is fragmented and contentions, its executive impervious and arbitrary, and its institutions largely feeble or dysfunctional. Basic public goods are lacking, the vast majority of the population is impoverished, and an epidemic of social violence has undermined security throughout the federation. Ethnic, religious, and regional polarization has arguably worsened in recent years, creating further uncertainties about a fragile national impact.

A critical analysis of the implementation of public programmes in Nigeria shows epileptic performance in addressing social challenges like infrastructural decay, poverty, unemployment, insecurity of lives and property, communal conflicts, injustice, natural disasters, etc. The executive arm of government through institutional agencies like the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC); National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP); Ministries and Parastatals have been accused of poor performance despite huge government spending. For instance, the House of Representative Committee on Work raised an unmistakable alarm over

the very degree of distress and bad state of infrastructural facilities like roads, despite over 1.414 trillion Naira appropriated by the National Assembly for the road sector from 1999-2012 (Odemwingie, 2012). Statistics shows that 80% of injuries in Nigeria are road traffic accident related. Statistical data also show that Nigeria has the second highest road traffic accident fatalities among 193 countries in the world (<http://www.informationng.com.2012/12>).

Painting the critical state of road conditions in Nigeria, the Chairman, House of Representative Committee on Works, Honourable Ogbuefi Ozomgbachi aptly observed:

...the truth must be told, the condition of our roads is alarming and statistics attests to that. Between 1999 and 2012, the National Assembly had appropriated about ₦1.414 trillion for the road sector.... And yet out of about 34,400km of federal road network, only 35 percent is paved and substantial percentage of it is varying degree of distress and or potholes.... In a country of about 160 million people with an approximate land area of 910,768 square kilometers in which over 90% of the passengers and freight movement are done by road due to almost non-functional waterways and rail transportation, the situation assumes even a status of natural emergency (<http://www.informationng.com/2012/12/only-30-of-our-roads...house.html>).

Economically, the implication of the “sorry, state of Nigerian roads” is that the country loses ₦80 billion naira annually. With ₦80 billion naira saved through effective implementation of road projects across the country, 92% of the Academic Earned Allowances in the current (2013) strike of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) would be addressed. By this, industrial harmony and peace can be promoted in the public sector through effective implementation of public programmes by the executive arm of government at federal and state levels.

Despite agitations and advocacy for public – private sector partnership in the construction and management of Nigerian roads, it is the position of this paper that Nigeria has adequate and sufficient financial resources and ability to give Nigerians good road networks and dividends of democracy provided public projects are executed in an atmosphere characterized by service to the people, transparency, accountability, prudent management of public resources, periodic and honest evaluation of public programmes, effective campaign against corruption at all levels and foresighted leadership.

At the heart of epileptic legislative mandate performance and executive implementation of public programmes in Nigeria from 1999 to 2012, is the challenge of monitoring corruption. For instance, the World Bank from newspaper reports in August 2012 estimated that about 400 billion Dollars were stolen or mismanaged in Nigeria between 1960 and mid-2012 of which over 250 billion Dollars is between 1999 and mid-2012. A more frightening statistical data states that between 2006 and 2009, Federal Government Ministry, Departments and Agencies (FGMDAs) (including law enforcement units) failed in their responsibility of remitting about ₦4 trillion to the Federation Account (Adamolekun, 2013).

The subsidy scandal of 2011 shows that the Federal Government spent ₦1.42 trillion between January and August of that year on subsidizing the cost of fuel for Nigerians. Many Nigerians are of the view that a large amount of the money was pocketed by the operators of the system. Frank led committee on fuel subsidy observed that the chunk of the expenditure paid out of subsidy is a result of corruption, deceit and other inefficiency by the regulatory bodies (Sunday, 2012:77).

Corruption is the major bane of sustainable development and public programme implementation in Nigeria. As Egonmwan (2000:140) corroborated:

Public policy implementation has been described as one major problem confronting the developing countries (Nigeria inclusive)... stripped of all technicalities, implementation problem of a widening gap between intention and results.

This implies that outcomes if most public policies and programmes implemented in the Nigerian public sector are at variance with their objectives and goals. At this point, it is imperative to understand what public policy and programme implementation mean. It is simply a process which involves the translation of the objectives, goals and targets of public policies and programmes into reality through converting input resources (like; finance, information, materials, human, land, technical, capital, labour, demands, support, etc) into outputs (like; goods and services) for the benefits of the citizens. Peter (1980) agrees with the above definition when he notes that the implementation is a process, which involves the process of moving forward a policy objective by means of administrative and political steps. Peter's definition suggests that some of the factors militating against successful and effective implementation of public policy and programmes in Nigeria are political and administrative in nature. According to Egonmwan (2000), the intentions and objectives of public policies are often undermined by a combination of constellation of powerful forces of politics and administration in cooperation with people. Thus, he concludes that the responsibility for failure of implementation in Nigeria (and Developing Countries at large) should be shared between implementors (the executives and bureaucrats) and designers (legislators and other political office holders).

Underlying the seemingly poor performance of the legislative and executive arms of government in Nigeria is the challenge of financial corruption. Adesofe and Abimbola (2012) presented major revealing cases of financial corrupt practices in the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government. For instance, James Ibori (Ex-Governor of Delta State from 29 May 1999 – 29 May 2007) was arraigned on a 170 count charge (tell, 2012 cited in Adesote and Abimbola) of money laundering of over ₦9.1 Billion (Kofarmata, 2005). From the international angle, Ibori's assets valued at 35 Million US Dollars were frozen by United Kingdom Courts (see en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James-Ibori). Other cases of financial corruption involving ex-governors include among others Rev Jolly Nyame of Taraba (29 May 1999 – 29 May 2007); Peter Odili of River State; Ayo Fayose of Ekiti State; Lucky Igbinedion of Edo State; Diepreye Alamieyeseigha of Bayelsa State. The legal battles of some of these cases are still on.

Concluding Remarks

The task of legislating for a populous and likewise complex country as Nigeria is indeed onerous, and one that demands an appreciable degree of focus, collective engagement, experience, expertise and the requisite resources. Thus, building the capacity of the legislative arms of government to address injustice, natural disasters, insecurity of lives and property, decay in infrastructural facilities, unemployment, poverty, corruption, energy crisis and communal conflicts through policies and programmes that are effectively implemented by the executive is the key for building a sustainable society and development. Furthermore, the National Assembly through its appropriate committees should supervise the implementation of the national budget and public programmes by the executive arm of the government. Importantly also, there is an urgent need to work toward altering the mindset of Nigerian politicians to see politics and

governance as a hallowed trust and mechanisms for aggregating and pursuing the collective wishes of the people and thereby transform their lives and environment. This, in addition to other measures will, enhance the delivery of democratic dividends in an atmosphere characterised by transparency, accountability, prudent management of resources, periodic and honest evaluation of government programmes.

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