Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.5 No.1 March, 2021; p.g. 285 – 299; ISSN: 2695-2319 (Print); ISSN: 2695-2327 (Online)

LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL SERVICE PROVISION IN NIGERIA

PROF ANTHONY MAYOWA OLADOYIN
Department of Public Administration
Obafemi Awolowo University
Ile-Ife

&

LEKE KAYODE ONABANJO
PhD Research Student
Department of Public Administration
Obafemi Awolowo University
Ile-Ife

Abstract

Local governance entails formulation and execution of collective actions at the local level. Social service is an essential amenity expected to improve standard of living of the citizens. This paper examines the changing nature of social service and factors that influence its provision in Nigeria. It attempted to consider several ways by which social services are provided with a view to improving wellbeing of the people. This paper also identifies basic infrastructures that are important to the sustenance of public welfare, as well as the enhancement of growth. The method of descriptive survey was adopted in gathering secondary data for critical and interpretative analysis. This paper found that the development of any society where the state withdraws from the provision of social welfare service ultimately leads toinfrastructural degradation and underdevelopment. Corruption was identified as the bane of social service provision in the country. The paper concluded that civil harmony will be restored if the government puts public opinion into consideration while formulating and implementing its policies, particularly on social services delivery in Nigeria.

Keywords: Governance, Social Service, Social Programmes, Infrastructure, Corruption.

Introduction

The history of Nigeria's negative credentials in governance is a manifestation of its poor resource management and political corruption reflected in the poor state of welfare and general slow development. Oshelowo and Oniemola, (2011) submit that the capacity to effectively provide for the welfare and security of citizens is a critical responsibility of the state and its decision-making machinery, the government. They further point out that effective service delivery and security is sequel to developmental aspiration of any country. Recently, there have been rising awareness on the important role governments must play in social service delivery for the enhancement of public welfare, particularly in societies with high level of poverty because of its implications for political and economic stability. This underlies the clamour for state intervention in welfare provision and social development as recognized in

the Washington Consensus, the Copenhagen Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (Oshelowo and Oniemola, 2011: 1). This awareness underlines the identification of globally critical social policy agenda for governments' intervention through the 2015 MDGs with particular focus to high third world and poverty shrinking countries across the globe.

The advocacy for democratization as a political imperative rests on the importance of society-responsive policies that attends to the people's needs and aspirations (Onakuse and Eamon, 2007). In spite of democracy (self rule) in Nigeria since 1999, disconnections between public policy and public aspirations persisted, and have resulted into protests against government policies. The state has seen, and continues to witness disruptions of varying degrees in public social and economic activities expressed through strike actions, protests and street demonstrations that have become regular strategies for the expression of discontent against government policies perceived as illegitimate and antithetic to public welfare (Umezurike, 2010). Protests against public policy have always led to protracted deadlock in national economic and social activities at huge costs to the economy apart from accompanying violence, vandalism and deaths as witnessed in the January2012 fuel subsidy removal protest in the country. Corroborating this, Echezona, (2012), submits that over one trillion naira lost to the ensuing economy paralysis as a result of fuel subsidy removal protest in January 2012. These hostilities pose crucial challenges to democracy, public opinion and social welfare in Nigeria, as they present new approaches to development planning. They portend problems of policy legitimacy which criss-cross important areas of decision making in a democratic state. The questions of what, when, where and how to optimize choices and administration of public policies for effectiveness and efficiency at the least cost, to the welfare of the citizenry. This highlights the importance of the public policy environment namely, social, economic or political, in which policies are domesticated to acceptance or resistance in Nigeria.

The prevailing socio-economic conditions in Nigerian in terms of public service delivery and social welfare have impacted negatively on the legitimacy of government policies. Etieyebo averred that the prerequisite for state divestment from social service obligations is lacking in Nigeria (Etieyebo, 2011: 87). It is important to state that, nothing is more fundamental than the ability of the government to listen to people´s demands for policy formation and service delivery in terms of what they see as important, how and whether they access those services, and what would improve them (Thomson, 2005:5). Unfortunately, while Nigeria bows to the competition of international comparative development guides, its societies are replete with unique and peculiar social ills: decadent infrastructure, rising youth unemployment and poverty, expanding portfolio of crime, a collapse human security system and a dangerous trend in social inequality itself reflecting the impaired distributive system of capitalism (Amzat and Olutayo, 2009: 239).

"No government can satisfy me if it does not address the food poverty of Nigerians, the health poverty of Nigerians, education poverty of Nigerians, the infrastructure poverty of Nigerians, the energy poverty of Nigerians…"Gani Fawehinmi (cited in Anagwonye,2009:184)

Nigeria operates a federal system of government with a Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), 36 states and 774 local governments. As a creation of the federal government, local governments are constitutionally mandated to perform four basic functions: to provide a machinery for the discussion of local needs and for the provisions of corresponding services within the

competence and capability of the local area; to provide machinery for the execution at the local level of regional or federal government policy; to provide a consensus mechanism for the resolution of conflicts of interest at the local level; and to provide a training ground for political participation and articulation (Okoli,2000).This implies that Nigerian local governments are to render cutting edge services that will foster socio-economic development of the rural people. If properly managed, local governments are viable instrument for rural transformation, development and the delivery of social services to rural communities in their jurisdiction.

Local Governance

Local governance can be taken to mean the replacement of the view of local government with its attendant structures and procedures by a plethora if not a plurality of providers (Caroline and Andrew, 1998). To Anwar Shah and Sana Shah (2006), local governance is a broader concept, which in summary means the formulation and execution of collective action at the local level. Its broadness encompasses the direct and indirect roles of formal institutions of local government and government hierarchies, as well as the roles of informal norms, network, community organisations, and neighbourhood associations in pursuing collective action. Local governance defines the framework for citizen-citizen and citizen-state interactions, collective decision making, and delivery of local public services.

Local governance does not make reference to local government or local populations alone. It refers to a situation where whatever governance actor (an international NGO, a central government institution, a local government agency, or a private sector enterprise) does is planned, implemented, maintained, evaluated, and controlled with the needs, priorities, interests, participation, and well-being of the local population as the central and guiding consideration. When it comes to local governance, there are many stakeholders and players. They are in the public sector, in the private sector, in civil society, among donors and development partners, at local community, national, regional and international levels (Briggs, 2007).

Public goods like the concept of the public interest, is normative and elusive, ambiguous and difficult to define. There are various definitions of public goods given by scholars. The concept of public goods was developed in economics by Samuelson in 1954. Samuelson's definition shaped the direction of the debate - what constitutes public goods? He defined public goods as one "which we all enjoy in common in the sense that each individual's consumption of such a good leads to no subtraction from any other individual's consumption of that good". Successively, there has been a proliferation of public goods analyses in all areas of political science, comparative politics and development economics.

Public goods have two defining characteristics: non-excludability and non-rivalry. Non-excludability of public goods connotes that it is impossible to prevent anyone from consuming the good. By non-rivalry, a person's consumption of the good does not hinder or diminish another person's benefit from consuming such good. Public goods are social outputs (or value realizations) that people in a community wish to obtain for the common good, such as a liveable environment, clean water, good education, health care, security, and so on. A concept of the public good helps our understanding and our actions in policymaking and policy

implementation, by acknowledging what is important to the people and the action to be taken to realize this (Jung, 1997).

Local government in Nigeria like elsewhere around the world has been undergoing a process of change. Much of this process is the result of external changes over which individual local governments have had little influence. Around the world, according to Andrew and Goldsmith (1998) where increasing economic interdependence, the process of globalization, changing technologies, has had tremendous effects on local government system. Some other external changes in local government administration would be the consequence of changes taking place within the nation-state: the privatization of state services; restructuring the local government system; and changing inter-governmental relations. Some changes could be political or social. Others might be social: widening social segregation in cities; growth in drug related crime, increasing corrupt practices, for example. Some will be generated from within local governments themselves, be they processes or delayering, privatization, and contracting out of services; attempts at improving customer care and citizen relationships (Andrew & Goldsmith, 1998).

The changing nature of the modern state and of the society it serves has had inevitable consequences for elected governments. Among the appropriate questions that need to be asked at this point are: how efficient are locally elected governments for the delivery of local public goods? What is the impact of intergovernmental fiscal relations on local public goods delivery? These questions are particularly of increasing importance as many developing countries are beginning to decentralize responsibility for local public services to local institutions. Nigeria is one of the few countries in the developing world to have significantly decentralized both resources and responsibilities for the purpose of delivering public goods. In the social-economic and political milieu in which these changes are taking place, where the local government is also operating has placed pressure on the local government. Therefore, the local government faces the scathing criticism of development failure that has led to what Caroline and Andrew refer to as the 'crisis of legitimacy', in which there is gap between promise and performance (Briggs, 2007).

This crisis of legitimacy of the local government has generated polemical debates about the continued relevance of this third tier of government in Nigeria. These problems of the local government in Nigeria arose from certain Constitutional contradictions. For example Section 7(1) of the 1999 constitution states that "the system of local government by democratically elected local government councils is under this constitution guaranteed; and accordingly, the government of every state shall subject to section 8 of this constitution, ensure their existence under a Law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions of such councils". Yet, section 7 (6a) submits that "the National Assembly shall make provisions for statutory allocation of public revenue to Local Government councils in the federation. The contradiction is extended further by section 7 (6b) which states that "the House of Assembly of a state shall make provisions for statutory allocation of public revenue to local government councils within the state".

The Constitution in section 162 (6) established the State Joint Local Government Account for the purpose of payment of "all allocations to the Local Government councils of the State from the Federal account and from the Government of the State". In Section 162(7) it directs State Government to pay to Local Government councils its total revenue on the terms prescribed

by the National Assembly. At the same time it gives the same power and functions to the State House of Assembly in section 162(8). Further, section 8 (subsections 5 and 6) saddles the National Assembly with some functions before creation of a local government can become legal. The implication of all these identified contradictions and ambiguities is that it becomes difficult to practically locate constitutionally the locus of power on local government creation. These contradictions in the 1999 Constitution has become a ready-made tools in the hands of some state Governors to control, subjugate and cripple the operations of the Local Government system in Nigeria. What are therefore the implications of this crisis of legitimacy for the local government in Nigeria? This crisis of legitimacy have brought again to the fore the relevance of the local government system. The debates have centred on these perspectives (1) those who agitate for the scrapping of the local government.

For example, Jubril (2003) cited the rising cost of governance as reason for the agitation, while Nnanna (2013) lent his voice to this agitation insisting that the present local government system is antithetical and not beneficial to the communities of the South East Political Zone of Nigeria which he described as republican in outlook, which the present local government system has failed in meeting the needs of the people.(2) retaining but reforming the local government system and granting of full autonomy to the local government (3)transforming from local government to local governance. The pertinent question now is how will the present local government system respond to the mounting challenges confronting it and meeting the demands of providing and delivering basic public goods to the people? In this era of persistent global economic problems and adjustments, and the globalized nature and consequences of natural disasters many national governments the world over including Nigeria are been forced by circumstances to fail in their delivery of certain activities or even reduce the services they provide.

As central government shrinks from the performance of these duties, local governments also do. For the local government, there are many reasons why this should happen: reduction in financial allocation to the local government, undemocratic revenue sharing process, and excessive politicization of service provision. With this prevailing decline in governance capacity and consequent decline in the delivery of social services, community people are using their organisational capability to evolve strategies of meeting their own basic needs. Since there has been increasing realization that government appears unable to deliver and maintain social services for the people on a sustainable basis, people in various communities of the country, especially at the local level, have been organizing themselves into town/village unions and community development associations with the intent of delivering social services to their communities (Popoola, 2011).

These individual community efforts at developing rural areas and in providing certain public goods and services have been hampered by certain factors. Among these is shortage of adequate funds to carry out projects. Apart from insufficient funds, such initiatives usually lack official government approval and are therefore seen as competing with the local government in service provision. The acceptable solution and option often lies in the adaptive ability of the local government system to change its modes of service delivery, device acceptable means to curb the ever-rising cost of administration and of service provision. This therefore, demands a shift from local government to local governance.

Infrastructure and Social Service Delivery in Nigeria: The Dynamics

Existence of basic infrastructure is crucial to the provision and sustenance of public welfare, as well as the enhancement of growth and development of any society. Although this responsibility has in recent times, become a diffused one with the increasing involvement of the private sector, overall delivery capacity of public oriented infrastructure constitutes one of the major criterion for the assessment of governments performance across the globe. In Nigeria, capacity building has become a major challenge, remaining at a declining state since the 1980s, and therefore complicating the nation's problems that ranges from infrastructural decay to insecurity, economic instability, rising ethnic suspicion and corruption, religious violence, environmental threats and disasters, political violence and resource agitations to militancy, piracy and kidnapping. The effect of this on public welfare is consequentially dire. This has made the poor state of national security in Nigeria to be documented in the Failed State Index. In the 2011 report, Nigeria ranked 14th among the most failed states, rating as a failure alert state in a rating of 177 countries of the world (Fund for Peace, 2011: 6).

The availability of adequate and functional infrastructural encourages productive enterprise, employment generation, the capacity of the economy to be self-sustained, attract and retain Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) among others. In the same assessment, McNeil submits that adequate infrastructure reduces the costs of production, which affects profitability, levels of output, and employment. When infrastructure works, productivity and labour increases. When it does not work, citizens suffer, particularly the poor. Thus, economic renewal and societal welfare become postponed or halted (McNeil, 1993:1-5).

With the abysmal level of infrastructure in Nigeria, it is not surprising that the country performed woefully over the years in basic economic productivity performance indicators across the globe. In the World Economic Forum Report for Global Competitiveness, between year 2002 – 2003, Nigeria was ranked 76 out of a total of 82 countries on the infrastructure sub-index. Moreover, in the GCI Report for 2006 - 2007, Nigeria ranked 101 out of125 countries signalling a worse performance compared with the 83 recorded for the previous year (Eboh&Igbokwe 2006: 20).

There is a notable recurrent relationship between access to infrastructure and poverty. The absence of infrastructure stymies the prospects of poverty reduction efforts by making small and large scale productive engagements difficult to run. In the same vein, the inequality in income and wealth distribution, thereby widening further the gap between the Haves and the Have-nots. This has far-reaching effects on social stratification, security of live and properties in Nigeria. As a result of this, Nigeria has been one of the most unequal societies in the world. According to the UN Development Programme report, inequality has been on the increase in the country, rising from 0.43 to 0.49 on the index between 1985 and 2004. It points out that inequality in access to basic infrastructure and services are key drivers of poverty, vulnerability and inequality in the Nigeria (UNDP, 2000).

On a wider economic scale, there is the issue of brain drain and capital or investment flight. Several firms like PZ Cussons, Michelin, Peugeot, Dunlop, among others that were involved in manufacturing and production in Nigeria have move to better infrastructure environments

while countless numbers of able and qualified youths have travelled abroad in search of greener pasture after many years of unemployment. The few companies that continue to operate under the harsh infrastructural condition only do so at great cost to the consumer. These few have remained because of the huge cost of relocation which involves high set up cost and huge capital and other requirements (Eboh&Igbokwe, 2006: 22). Hence, the decision to stay and transfer the additional cost to product pricing by most companies.

Statistics indicate that the Nigerian state has been experiencing developmental reverse in spite of claims to the contrary by most government pronouncements and records. According to the MO Ibrahim Index of African Governance which ranks for the year 2012, Nigeria dropped from the 42nd position to 43, pitching its tenth in the group of 10 worst performers. The index for 2012 puts it thus: Angola, Liberia and Togo have left the Insurance Internal Audit Group (IIAG) of the ten worst performers. They have been replaced by Eritrea, Guinea Bissau and Nigeria… Nigeria, West Africa's powerhouse, has for the first time in the year 2012 fallen into the bottom ten governance performers on the continent (IIAG, 2012: 2), While the state has often maintained a reactionary stance to statistics and rankings, it considered unedifying, majority of Nigerians seem to maintain a convergence on the harsh realities of near-absent social infrastructure or its horrible inadequacy.

More statistical evidences from varied sources highlight the poor state of infrastructure and social service in Nigeria. Although government data have been under classified document in the recent times due to the tendencies for state manipulation and influence which produces conservative reportage, several indicators from these institutions still indicate terrible pictures of the situation of infrastructure and welfare delivery in the country. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics is used here to illustrate the social infrastructure and welfare gap.

Interrogating social welfare in Nigeria is contrary to popular portrayals of welfare as a modern western policy innovation (Miller, 2006: 3, Adejumobi, 1999: 88).The preoccupation of governance with people's welfare is not alien to governance in Africa. Indeed, it is a historic cultural disposition, which has become redefined over the years through exposure to political modernization in Africa. Contrary to her predominantly communitarian traditional orientation, the continent's economy has been shaped and re-shaped along its politics through experiences from slavery to colonialism. This erosion was completed by the global advance of capitalism dressed in the apparels of democratization, westernization, modernization, and aids.

Since social welfare has become narrowly understood as initiatives of the state (in the modern sense of it), in support of the poor and crisis-affected such as emergency relief interventions, pension, health insurance and so on, most literatures have ignored the historical relevance of welfare to governance in pre-colonial Africa albeit without formal structures. Social services in traditional societies in Africa included: provision and maintenance of security (community policing), creating and maintenance of roads, establishing and maintenance of markets, and maintenance of public arenas among other things. Africa's experience may be summed up as the overthrow of traditional social welfarism by liberal welfarism in Africa (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2006: 1). Before the erosion of African traditional culture, wealth was not measure in monetary term but land, wisdom, age, chieftaincy titles, livestock, social class, kingship

among others. Therefore, money and capital accumulation were not at all in the structure of traditional perception of wealth in the pre-colonial Africa.

According to Bennel (1982: 127–154), historical phases such as colonialism had led to the reconstruction of phenomenon of poverty and wealth which became an increasingly monetary occurrence, particularly with the gradual domination of Western monetary exchange system. The continent of the black man, in its historical traditional segmented coloration, exhibited a strong culture of communitarian living before the territory fell to European and colonial institutional and cultural erosions, destroying the social and community connection as well as the extended family system which existed in Africa in the pre-colonial era. Rodney put this displacement thus:

> In general terms, where communalism came into contact with the money economy, the latter imposed its self. Cash-crop farming and wage labour led away from the extended family as the basis of production and distribution. One South African saying put forward that 'the white man has no kin, his kin is money'. That is a profound revelation of the difference between capitalist and pre-capitalist societies; and when capitalism came into contact with the still largely communal African societies, it introduced money relations at the expense of kinship ties (Rodney, 1973: 337-338).

Illife(1987: 3) also observes that "…only with the coming of colonial rule, market economies, and urbanization, so it is often claimed did things start to fall apart". In fact, it is a popular belief and practice in Africa that, Africans live communal lifestyle and are brothers' keeper. Illife(1987: 3) aptly puts this in perspective that: "…there were no poor and rich; the haves helped those who were in want. No man starved because he had no food; no child cried for milk because its parents did not have milk cows; no orphan or old person starved because there was nobody to look after them. No these things were unknown in ancient Bantu society". The encroachment and erosion of Africa's traditional communal live by the Europeans helped slavery as traditional rulers and kinsmen began to exchange their fellow kinsmen and subjects for ostentatious commodities brought in by the European that disguised the traders during the slave trade era.

Infrastructure and Social Service Delivery in Nigeria

Existence of basic infrastructure is crucial to the provision and sustenance of public welfare, as well as the enhancement of growth and development of any society. Although this responsibility has in recent times, become a diffused one with the increasing involvement of the private sector, overall delivery capacity of public oriented infrastructure constitutes one of the major criteria for the assessment of governments performance across the globe.

In Nigeria, capacity building has been a major challenge, remaining at a declining state since the 1980s, and therefore complicating the nation's problems that ranges from infrastructural decay to insecurity, economic instability, rising ethnic suspicion and corruption, religious violence, environmental threats and disasters, political violence and resource agitations to militancy, piracy and kidnapping. The effect of this on public welfare is prevalent. This has made the poor state of national security in Nigeria to be documented in the Failed State Index. In the 2011 report, Nigeria ranked 14th among the most failed states of 177 countries of the world (Fund for Peace, 2011: 6).The availability of adequate and functional infrastructural

encourages productive enterprise, employment generation and the capacity of the economy to be self-sustained, attract and retain foreign direct investment(FDI). In the same assessment McNeil submits that:

Adequate infrastructure reduces the costs of production, which affects profitability, levels of output, and employment. When infrastructure works, productivity and labour increases. When it does not work, citizens suffer, particularly the poor. Thus, economic renewal and societal welfare become postponed or halted (McNeil, 1993:1-5).

With the abysmal level of infrastructure in Nigeria, it is not surprising that the country performed woefully over the years in basic economic productivity performance indicators across the globe. In the World Economic Forum Report for Global Competitiveness, from 2002—2003, Nigeria was ranked 76 out of a total of 82countries on the infrastructure sub-index. Moreover, in the GCI Report for 2006—2007, Nigeria ranked 101 out of125 countries signaling a worse performance compared with the 83 recorded for the previous year (Eboh&Igbokwe, 2006).

There is a notable recurrent relationship between access to infrastructure and poverty. The absence of infrastructure stifles the prospects of poverty reduction efforts by making small and large scale productive engagements difficult to run. In the same vein, the inequality in income and wealth distribution, thereby widening further the gap between the Haves and the Have-nots. This has far-reaching effects on social stratification, security of live and properties in Nigeria. As a result of this, Nigeria has been one of the most unequal societies in the world. According to the UN Development Programme report, inequality has been on the increase in the country, rising from 0.43 to 0.49 on the index between 1985 and 2004. It points out that "inequality in access to basic infrastructure and services are key drivers of poverty, vulnerability and in equality in the Nigeria" (UNDP, 2000).

On a wider economic scale, there is the issue of brain drain and capital or investment flight. Several firms like PZ Cussons, Michelin, Peugeot, Dunlop, among others that were involved in manufacturing and production in Nigeria have moved to better infrastructure environments while countless numbers of able and qualified youths have travelled abroad in search of greener pasture after many years of unemployment. The few companies that continue to operate under the harsh infrastructural condition only do so at great cost to the consumers. These few have remained because of the huge cost of relocation which involves high set up cost and huge capital and other requirements (Eboh&Igbokwe, 2006). Hence the decision to stay and transfer the additional cost to product pricing by most companies. Statistics indicate that the Nigerian state has been experiencing developmental reverse in spite of claims to the contrary by most government pronouncements and records. According to the MO Ibrahim Index of African Governance which ranks for the year 2012, Nigeria dropped from the 42nd position to 43, pitching its tenth in the group of 10 worst performers. The index for 2012 puts it thus: Angola, Liberia and Togo have left the IIAG's group of the ten worst performers. They have been replaced by Eritrea, Guinea Bissau and Nigeria. Nigeria, West Africa's powerhouse, has for the first time this year fallen into the bottom ten governance performers on the continent (IIAG, 2012: 2).

While the state has often maintained a reactionary stance to statistics and rankings it considered unedifying. Majority of Nigerians seem to maintain a convergence on the harsh realities of near-absent social infrastructure or its horrible inadequacy. More statistical evidences from varied sources highlight the poor state of infrastructure and social service in Nigeria. Although government data have been under classified document in the recent times due to the tendencies for state manipulation and influence which produces conservative reportage, several indicators from these institutions still indicate terrible pictures of the situation of infrastructure and welfare delivery in the country. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics is used here to illustrate the social infrastructure and welfare gap.

State Withdrawal from the Provision of Social Welfare Service in Nigeria: Influence of Public or Private Interest

Acceptably, a decision is said to be in the public interest if it meets the needs of the whole public rather than those of some fraction of the society. While we agree that common needs are likely to be very general or vague in their formulation, we should also note that the greatest happiness of the greatest number of those who constitute the public is paramount. The principle of utilitarianism, suggests that for one to decide whether or not a decision is in the public or private interest, the gains and losses in utility that are likely to be caused by the issue are properly identified.

Having established this, it is noteworthy that diverse arguments have been made on state withdrawal from the provision of social welfare services in Nigeria. One school of thought states that there are more benefits from the state withdrawal from the provision of social services. Ajomale (2004), argued that a shift from state provision of social service to private provision of social service would stimulate the delivery of reliable and more efficient services, promote financial self-sustenance by those enterprises, and generate revenue for government as reward for its investments in Nigeria. This school of thought holds that in order to promote efficiency and economic rationality in the provision of social welfare services, such activities must be transferred to the private sector or at least have a high infusion of private capital (The World Bank, 1994). The underlying assumption is that the public sector is an inefficient economic manager and producer, and for there to be a change in the quality of service delivery, the private sector must be called forth to carry out its duties.

However this argument focuses on the economic consideration and negates the social contract theory. On this argument, Let us examine the issue of health facilities. If the state withdraws from the provision of health services, the cost of health services will be high. If health services are not within the reach of the poor (over 70% of the country's population), a number of health related issues will be unavoidable. This will range from high morbidity rate, high maternal mortality rate, high under 5 mortality rate and poor health condition of the citizenry.

An obvious consequence of these would be low productivity and a general retardation of development. Other schools of thought disagree that private firms are more efficient than the state. It need be pointed out that the issue here borders on the maximization of profits by a few people who constitute less than five percent of the society. The aforementioned suggests that state withdrawal will amount to special interest and not public interest.

Another strong argument is the notion that social welfare services are mostly private goods for which the principle of exclusion could be applied and economic rents charged on those services. The fact is that it is not usually true as some of the social services that hitherto are regarded as private goods are essentially public goods in terms of their social essence and national value and importance. Adejumobi (1995) noted that pipe-borne water may be a private good, its consumption of which people could be excluded from, based on their ability to pay; however, the importance of pipe-borne water to the good health and vitality of the population makes it essentially a public good, which merits the attention of the state in its provision. Another case example is that of solid waste management which could appear to be a private good to which the principle of exclusion can be applied, but when examined holistically, it is a public good. Karanja (2005) noted that private provision of waste facilities in return for a charge would be perfectly feasible though unusual but, in such cases, the cost of excluding those who are not prepared to pay are held to be excessive. This is the crux of the argument. Another argument often put forward to support state withdrawal is resource recovery which also negates the social contract theory. Given these divergent positions it is pertinent to ask in whose interest is the resource recovery. The issue is that sovereignty belongs to the people for willingly surrendering their rights and privileges to a few who in turn guarantee their social welfare amongst others. If the state decides to recover cost for government from the provision of social welfare services, it follows that the interest of a few and not the public is being served.

Let us examine lastly the argument on greater choices which the state withdrawal on the provision of social services will stimulate. That is, by deregulating the provision of social services, uniformity in service delivery will be broken and consumers will have more choices on display. The variety of public choices will improve the quality of service delivery and afford better distributional benefits to various social classes and groups with different income levels and tastes (Adesina, 2004). For example, with services like water supply, and health care, education, and transport, consumers could determine what kind of service they prefer, given the resources available to them. This argument also borders on economic consideration, efficiency and resource recovery. However, Adejumobi (1995) noted that if efficiency is conceived in distributional terms or what is referred to as allocative efficiency; private firms cannot be a panacea in this regard. This is because in justifying the superiority of private ownership and enterprise management, three variants of neo-classical theory have been developed and consequently disproved (Petelis& Clarke, 1993; Rowthorn& Chang, 1993). Therefore, it will be spurious and highly misleading to equate "public" with inefficiency and non-performance and "private" with efficiency and performance. Be that asit may, it can be reiterated that economic consideration, efficiency and distributional mechanismnegate the social contract theory and the principle of utilitarianism. It goes further to show that the argument on economic consideration, efficiency and distributional mechanism favoursspecial interest to the detriment of the public interest which in turn serves as the greatest influence in the provision of social services in Nigeria.

Domestic Factors, Dynamics and Nigeria's Neoliberal Reforms

The Nigeria's policy environment has been shaped and re-shaped by a number of factors influencing the provision of social services, some of which includes:

a. National Size: Nigeria is not only the most populous country in Africa; it is also the most ethnically diverse country in the continent. One can equally submit that its public enterprise is also the largest in Sub-Saharan Africa, because of the establishment many enterprises that are performing similar functions. Examplesare: Nigeria Police Force, Economic and Financial Crime Commission, Independent Corrupt Practice Commission; this is just one of the many duplications. The huge size implies larger and more complicated administrative structures that require greater funding and duplication of effort by personnel.

b. Ethno-religious Rivalry: Nigeria is ethnically divided into over 400 ethnic groups, each agitating for itsshare in the nation's resources and also struggling to outdo other ethnic groups because of fearand suspicious. Hence, attempts at socio-economic and political reforms have often been interpreted against ethno-religious competitive backgrounds of what and how groups are involved in the provision of social services.

c. Low Public Participation in Policy Process: Nigeria's long exposure to centralization of power during military rule has bred dictatorial 'democrats' who even when they enjoys popular mandates are uncomfortable with dialogue and consensus in policy making. The military dictatorial cumulative impact shows in the texture of state-society relations especially considering the executive arms of government's reactions to public opinion. The worst are now the branded pro-democracy activist that occupies political offices, they take decisions without recourse to rules governing the state and in other to justified their actions legislative arm of government is induced to hurriedly pass laws which are later ruled against in the law court as self- serving laws that are capable of misleading the state. Examples of this are cases that judgments were given against government in Imo state, Ekiti state, Osun state among others.

d. Prevalent Corruption: corruption has become a household name in a way that it has permeated allsectors of national life in Nigeria. The leadershipof the country seems helpless as it maintains a hypocritically passive posture to anticorruption campaign with daily loss of huge sums at the expense of economic growth and development. The worst is the newly introduced policy of plea bargaining. This is a process by which the government and looter will negotiate on what he/she can refund from what was stolen from the public treasury. This is nothing but a means of encouraging public servants to loot government treasury, hence it is national cake for everybody that has opportunity to take theirs.

e. Past Policy Failures: the history of resource management in Nigeria is replete with policy summersaults and failures which constrain the integrity and legitimacy of government projections. In most cases the policy failure is as a result policy importation, self-serving policy by the leaders, bad policy implementation when good policies are formulated. In all, the governed are the victim. Nigeria experiences a conspicuous crisis of governance in which the ruling elites and public institutions perpetrate corruption and fail to provide essential social services, such as physical infrastructure, the rule of law, or legitimate symbols of state authority and political stability.

This paper has shown the demonstrative nature of governance at the local level and the Nigerian case. The pervasive corruption and the penchant to subvert rules and divert public resources as the bane of developmentare clearly evident in the approach to local governance

and dynamics of social service provisions. It is significant that only a few notable Nigerians have received courtsentences or severe punishment for corruption, rather many of them turn out to be heroes after looting public fund that ought to go into service delivery to serve the masses. It is apparent that while neoliberalism as a development policy template may not be generically deficient, the leadership attitude and nature of the domestic environment is critical to its projections in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The delivery of social welfare service is the prerogative of the government in line with social contract theory. In Nigeria however, many attempts have been made to allow the forces of demand and supply to be the major determinant of price for social welfare service. The major argument among others being that social welfare service is essentially private goods to which the principle of exclusion can be applied and cost recovered appropriately. However the issue goes beyond cost recovery for a developing country like Nigeria which cannot do without an efficient and functional social sector. It is of great conviction that state withdrawal from the provision of social welfare service will favour a special interest to the detriments of the public interest in Nigeria. The state should continue to play a crucial role in the provision of social welfare services in Nigeria. The challenge therefore is on how to restructure the state, to make it more efficient and socially responsible in the provision of social welfare services. In conclusion, lethargy and passivism of the governments at all levels in confronting the menace of corruption decisively remains an impediment to government's and public policy legitimacy thereby projecting state reforms efforts as attempts to shift the cost of state-condoned corruption to the masses, and benefit the cronies of the policy makers while the fundamental issues of corruption in public domain remains ignored as the people who bear the brunt of tough economic policy hardship are the poor. Civil harmony will be restored if the government puts public opinion into consideration while formulating and implementing its policies; put in place measures to effectively halt elite corruption which constrains infrastructural development and maintenance thereby enabling the state deliver welfare effectively and efficiently.

To advance social service provision in Nigeria, this paper, suggests the following recommendations:

Governments at all levels should develop basic infrastructural facilities that translate into provision of services to the people as social protection from the punitive effects of privatization on the rural dweller and the poor. There is need for economic diversification to create more jobs and detached from amono-economic to shield the nation from external stringent oil policy impositions. It is essential to restructure the state and its agencies to make it more efficient and socially responsible in the provision of social welfare services, rather than privatize it for economic benefit at the cost of the citizens. There is the need forgood leadership. With the prevailing economic and political situations in the country, elections of good and committed leaders with credentials have become necessary in other to have a government that is committed to development and wellbeing of its citizens. There is urgent need to campaign against and criminalizeany act of corruption. To have a just society where everybody can realize his/her potentials, there is need for the various institutions (government, civil society groups, religious bodies, educational institution and others) in the country to begin aggressive campaign against corruption and corrupt leaders. The citizens are to be properly engaged in the formulation and implementation of policies that affectsthem.

This will to allow the citizens to have input in matters that affect them, rather than forcing an imported policy through their troth.

Successive governments in the country have sought to enhance economic growth at the expense of citizen's welfare through monetizing, commercializing and privatizing of basic infrastructure by transferring the ownership and control of essential social service such as education, transportation, health, and power to the private hands thereby leading to service disarticulation and social class inequalities particularly for the poor people.

The effort at forcing cost on the people in an elite circle of corruption points to attempts at class preservation and inability of political leadership to challenge elite sabotage and corruption which impedes infrastructural improvement. This situation amounts to failure to perform its duty of social welfare provision. The fundamental problem remains the leadership and institutional and failure, and lack of political will from government, to enforce proper and prudent resource management. In Nigeria, if welfare is prioritized, a restructuring and management of government institutions; aggressive action taken against public service indiscipline andcorruption,the trend of infrastructural decadence will be savaged, and correct several declines in both political and economic sectors across the country.

References

Action Aid Nigeria, (2007). Civil Society in Nigeria: Contribution to Positive Social Change, Civicus Civil Society Index, *A Publication of Action Aid Nigeria and Development Information Network* (DEVNET) and the UNDP.

www.civicus.org/news/media/csi_nigeria_country_report.pdf. (accessed, 10/10/2012).

Adejumobi, S. (1995). Structural Adjustment and Multinational Corporations in Nigeria; Impact and Implications: *Development and Socioeconomic Progress*, No 64, October – December.

Adejumobi, S. (1996). Structural Adjustment, Privatization Policy and Infrastructural Services in Africa; With Examples for Nigeria and Ghana, a Research Report Submitted to the *Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA),* Dakar, Senegal on the Project 'Africa Perspectives on the Structural Adjustment Programme.

Adésínà, J. O. (2004). From Development Crisis to Development Tragedy: Africa's Encounter with Neoliberalism:*Paper for the International Conference on the Economics of The New Imperialism,* New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Agbola, T. (2002).*The Privatization and Management of Urban Space: A Critical Assessment of Neighborhood Vigilante groups in Ibadan*. Ibadan: IFRA.

Akinola, S.R. (2007). Coping with Infrastructural Deprivation Through Collective Action Among Rural People in Nigeria, *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 16, No 1.

Amzat, J. &Olutayo, A. O. (2009).Nigeria, Capitalism and the Question of Equity: *Anthropologist*, Kamla- Raj, Vol. 11, N0 4.

Anomaly, O. O. (2004).*Socio-Economic factors that determine the Health and Social Well-Being of the Elderly in Ibadan in Nigeria:*The need for Social Work Intervention. Ibadan: DPC

Ariyo, A. & Jerome, A. (2004).Utility Privatization and the Poor: Nigeria in Focus: *Global Issue Papers*, N0 12, Heinrich Boll Stiftung Foundation.

Auty, R. M. (1993). Sustaining Development in the Mineral Economies: *The Resource Curse Thesis*, London: Routledge.

Ayodele, O. (2002). Improving and Sustaining Power Supply for Socio-economic development In Nigeria'. *Working paper* no. 2 DPC, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Bennel, P. (1982). The Colonial Legacy of Salary Structures in Anglophone Africa", *TheJournal of Modern African Studies,* Vol. 20, N0 1, March.

Boreham, N. (2004). A Theory of Collective Competence: Challenging the Neo-Liberal Individualization of Performance at Work.' *Bri. J. Edu. Stud*., 52(1), 5–17.

Eboh, E. &Igbokwe, E. (2006).Economic Competitiveness Across Nigerian States: the Challenge of Infrastructure and Utilities", *BECANS Working Papers 2, African Institute of Applied Economics*, Enugu, Nigeria.

Galai, A., Jones, L., Tandon, P. &Vogelsang, I. (1994). Welfare Consequences of Selling Public Enterprises, An Empirical Analysis. New York: Oxford University Press and the World Bank. *International Bureau of Education* (2009).Educational Data Bank, Enugu State of Nigeria.

IIAG (2012). 2012 Ibrahim Index of African Governance, *The MO Ibrahim Foundation*, October.

Illife, J. (1987).*The African Poor: A History*.Cambridge University Press.

Karanja, A. (2005). *Solid Waste Management in Nairobi: Actors, Institutional arrangements and Contributions to Sustainable Development.* Netherlands: Shaker Publishing.

Thompson, W. (2005).Delivering Service in Nigeria: A Roadmap,*A Report Prepared for the Office for Public Service Reform* (OPSR), UK