BUREAUCRACY AS A NECESSARY EVIL TOWARDS ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper has been able to establish the significance of Bureaucracy in the administrative development of Nigeria despite the slow, costly and cumbersome process in practicing it. The paper has looked at the concepts of Bureaucracy and development, the purpose, features and roles of Bureaucracy and what makes it a necessary evil. The source of data used was primarily, secondary data.

KEYWORDS:
Bureaucracy, Development, Necessary Evil, Development, Nigeria.

Introduction

Bureaucracy or the Civil Service constitutes the permanent and professional part of the executive organ of government. It is usually described as the non-political or politically neutral, permanent, and professionally trained civil service. It runs the administration of the state according to the policies and laws of the government political executive. Upon the qualities and efficiency of bureaucracy depends the quality and efficiency of the state administration. It, however, works under the leadership and control of the Political Executive.

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What comes to your mind when you encounter the term "bureaucracy"? More often than not, you would think of slow moving, obstacle filled, and tedious processes that do not get your job done but instead, make you run around from pillar to pillar for your work. Though most of us have negative connotations when we think of bureaucracy and liken it to an appendage or a necessary evil that must be tolerated. However, bureaucracy is more than this and as the famous sociologist Max Weber postulated, it is a form of administrative control over the levers of decision making within an organization.

According to Weber, the organizations can be economic, political, and social or religious organizations. Indeed, Weber did not restrict himself to a particular type of organization nor a particular form of bureaucracy. The definition supplied by Weber is accepted even to this day as and his characterization of the term as to mean the way in which power relations in organizations evolve from the non-specialized forms to the most sophisticated form is relevant even now. The point to be noted is that bureaucracies encompass the whole gamut of organizational Processual and decision-making mechanisms where each successive stage of evolution represents the deepening of expertise and the increasing sophistication of the organizational apparatu**s**.

For any country to develop, it is very imperative for its government to provide goods and services that the private sector sparingly ventures into, especially water, roads, health, education, electricity to mention but a few. These services are those that people cannot afford the price at the given market value (Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, 2006). The delivery of such goods and services is premised on strong bureaucracies and institutions of the country (Ibietan and Oni, 2013). Bureaucracy is a type of formal administration with the characteristics of division of labour, rules and regulation, hierarchy of authority, impersonality of social relationships and technical competence (Reicheld and Sasser, 1990). The essence of bureaucracy is to manage large organisations to achieve efficiency and be more accountable to the people (Olatunji, 2013). Weber (1946) cited in Aluko and Adesopo (2004) refers to bureaucracy as the ideal and rational type of administration useful for

achievement of positive results. Public bureaucracy has become inevitable in any modern society and, as such, much importance is attached to it (Makinde, 2005). This is because; it is the public bureaucracy that determines the course and speed of policy implementation. Technically, it is the public bureaucracy that decides what should be done; how it should be done and who actually benefits (Osawe, 2015).

In an attempt to improve service delivery by government Ministries, Departments and agencies (MDAs) the Nigerian public sector has undergone a process of restructuring in the last two decades (Bureau of Public Service Reforms, 2007).

The justification for the reforms has been to make it more responsive to the needs of the citizen by increasing the levels of accountability, promoting efficiency and effectiveness, introducing participative decision making and adopting pro-active steps and practices in the public sector (Makinde, 2005; Abah, 2010). Njunwa (2007) asserts that the introduction, adoption and implementation of public sector reforms have seen a shift in focus, from the adherence of formalized procedures to an emphasis on resource allocation and goal achievement for improved service delivery to the public.

Despite these efforts at extensive reforms in the public sector for improved service delivery, the results are not so impressive. For instance, the depressing state of public service delivery in Nigeria is noticeable in the collapse of public utilities and educational system, State hospitals which had first degenerated into consulting clinics has now become places to die and the quality of services rendered by government agencies being the subject of continuous lamentation by the citizens (Akume, 2015; Osawe, 2015).

Furthermore, Onah (2003) contended that the general inefficiency, ineffectiveness and poor service delivery in the Nigerian public service result from inadequate recruitment and selection procedures and practices in the employment of manpower and lack of clear human resource objectives. Also, issues such as excessive bureaucracy, political interference, corruption, poor working conditions, poor work ethics, outdated and outmoded systems, procedures and practices among others, conspire to impact adversely on service delivery by public sector

organizations (Ezeani, 2004). The poor performance of public bureaucracy is sometimes blamed on its principle of impersonality, which often creates a gap between the bureaucrats and the citizens.

The Concept of Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy as a term is derived from two words; "bureau"" and "Kratos." The word "bureau" refers to the office, while the Greek suffix "Kratos" means power or rule. Thus the word "Bureaucracy" is used to refer to the power of the office (Hummel, 1998 in Wasim 2011). It was borrowed by public administration in a similar way that practices of business were borrowed from Business Administration and Economics. The term is used by Sociologists in designating a certain type of structure, a specific organisation with unequally coordinated rationality, and rejects bureaucracy as a term which equates red tape, inefficiency and other derogatory synonyms.

Bureaucracy as a concept is subjected to repetitive criticisms among various scholars (Stillman, 1980; Okafor, 2005; Osawe, 2015). Notwithstanding the above, Akindele, Olaopa and Obiyan (2002) perceived that bureaucracy is an ambivalent term that can be taken to mean different things. For instance, it could be taken to mean different organisations used by contemporary governments in conducting its functions and encapsulated in the administrative system of the civil service. He added that bureaucracy could also mean a mechanistic and formal approach used in carrying out the functions of government to the point of indifference towards the effects achieved. Gerth and Wright (1979) in Nwankwo, Ananti and Madubueze (2015) conceives bureaucracy as a hierarchical management that exist in organisations based on a line of authority and division of labour embedded on this arrangement. Gbenga and Ariyo (2006), in their work portrayed the concept as the apparatus which consist of the professionals, workers who are subjected to hierarchical supervision and carrying out their duties in an organized manner backed by rules and regulations from their superiors.

In the light of this, bureaucrats are identified by their activities in formal and public organisations. Bureaucracy also denotes the system of authority

relationships that exist between men, offices and methods that government uses to implement its programmes. It does not cover political appointee such as Ministers and Advisers or members of the judiciary at the federal, state and local government tiers of government (Eme and Onwuka, 2010).

Wallis, (1993) in Eme and Ugwu (2011) sees bureaucracy as a word in which its ordinary use conjures bad images in the mind of the people. Bureaucracy can suggest a slow moving organisation, associated with government which serves the populace with a mixture of intentional obstruction, arrogance and incompetence.

The term is sometimes employed as an insult, whilst bureaucrats are most time seen as figures of laughter. Bureaucracy widely defined, refers to the machinery of government created to execute the decisions and policies of government. Political office holders make policies, while the public bureaucracy implements it.

Bureaucracy is a structure with highly routinised operating tasks that can be achieved through formalised rules, regulations and specialisations of tasks grouped into functional departments, centralised authority, narrow spans of control and decision making that are in line with chain of command (Robbins and Judge, 2007). Coser and Rosenberg (1976) affirm that bureaucracy is a type of hierarchical arrangement that exists in an organization and it is designed rationally to coordinate the work of employees in the pursuit of large-scale administrative tasks, administrative organization based on a hierarchical structure and governed by written rules and established procedures. The authority attached to an official and the position of an official within the hierarchy depends on the office held, rather than the personal attributes and status of the incumbent.

Purpose of Bureaucracy

What comes to your mind when you encounter the term bureaucracy? More often than not, you would think of slow moving, obstacle filled, and tedious processes that do not get your job done but instead, make you run around from pillar to pillar for your work. Though most of us have negative

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Features of Bureaucracy

1. Permanent Character: The civil servants hold permanent jobs in government departments. They mostly join their services during their youths and continue to work as government servants till the age of retirement which is usually 58 to 60 years.

2. Hierarchical Organisation: Bureaucracy is hierarchically organised in several levels. Each official is placed at a particular level of hierarchy and he enjoys the privileges and powers which are available to his co-level officials. He is under his immediate higher level officials and is above his immediately lower level officials. The principle of rule of the higher over the lower governs the inter-relations between various levels of bureaucracy.

3. Non-partisan Character: The members of the Bureaucracy are not directly involved in politics. They cannot join political parties and participate in political movements. They are not affected by the political changes which keep on coming in the political executive. Whichever party may come to power and make the government, the civil servants remain politically

neutral and carry out their assigned departmental roles impartially and faithfully.

4. Professional, Trained and Expert Class: The Bureaucracy constitutes the educated and professionally trained class of persons which helps the political executive in carrying out its functions. The members of civil service are recruited through competitive examinations for appearing in which they have to possess some minimum educational qualifications. Before their appointments, they get special trainings. During the course of their service they attend orientation and refresher courses. They have the knowledge, training and expertise necessary for carrying out their administrative work.

5. Fixed Salaries: Each member of the Bureaucracy receives a fixed salary. Right at the time of appointment he is allotted a scale of pay, which depends upon the nature and level of his job-responsibility. All the civil servants belonging to a particular class of administrative hierarchy are placed in one scale of pay. Each job also entitles them to some allowances.

6. Bound by Rules and Regulations: The Bureaucracy always works in accordance with 'rules and regulations'. 'Strict obedience to rules', 'Through Proper Channel', 'Decision-making after satisfying the rules', are the principles which always guide, direct and regulate the working of bureaucracy. Each official works only within the sphere prescribed for him by the rules of his department.

7. Class Consciousness: The Civil Servants are highly class conscious. They jealously work to protect and promote the interests of their class of civil servants. They are called the white-collar class because of their faith in their 'superior status' as government officials.

8. Public Service Spirit as the Ideal: Modern Bureaucracy identifies itself with public service spirit. It always tries to project itself as the civil servants devoted to the promotion of public welfare through the satisfaction of public needs. They are expected to behave as 'officers' responsible for public welfare, with service as their motto.

9. Bound by a Code of Conduct: The civil servants have to follow a code of conduct. They have to act in a disciplined way. Their rights, duties and privileges stand clearly defined. The procedure of work is definite and

settled. They can be punished for misbehavior, incompetence or negligence or for a violation of their conduct rules. In short, Bureaucracy is characterised by political neutrality, professional competence, permanent/ stable tenure, fixed salaries and strict obedience to rules. Onah (2003)

Role/Functions of Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy or Civil Service plays a key role in running the Public Administration by performing the following functions:

1. Implementation of Governmental Policies and Laws: It is the responsibility of the bureaucracy to carry out and implement the policies of the government. Good policies and laws can really serve their objectives only when these are efficiently implemented by the civil servants.

2. Role in Policy-Formulation: Policy-making is the function of the political executive. However, Bureaucracy plays an active role in this exercise. Civil Servants supply the data needed by the political executive for formulating the policies. In fact, Civil servants formulate several alternative policies and describe the merits and demerits of each. The Political Executive then selects and adopts one such policy alternative as the governmental policy.

3. Running of Administration: To run the day to day administration in accordance with the policies, laws, rules, regulations and decisions of the government is also the key responsibility of the Bureaucracy. The political executive simply exercises guiding, controlling and supervising functions.

4. Advisory Function: One of the important functions of the Bureaucracy is to advise the political executive. The ministers receive all the information and advice regarding the functioning of their respective departments from the civil servants. As amateurs, the ministers have little knowledge about the functions of their departments. They, therefore, depend upon the advice of bureaucracy. As qualified, experienced and expert civil servants working in all government departments, they provide expert and professional advice and information to the ministers.

5. Role in Legislative Work: The civil servants play an important but indirect role in law-making. They draft the bills which the ministers submit to the

legislature for law-making. The ministers provide all the information asked for by the legislature by taking the help of the civil servants.

6. Semi-judicial Work: The emergence of the system of administrative justice, under which several types of the cases and disputes are decided by the executive, has further been a source of increased semi-judicial work of the bureaucracy. The disputes involving the grant of permits, licences, tax concessions, quotas etc. are now settled by the civil servants.

7. Collection of Taxes and Disbursement of Financial Benefits: The civil servants play a vitally important role in financial administration. They advise the political executive in respect of all financial planning, tax-structure, tax-administration and the like. They collect taxes and settle disputes involving recovery of taxes. They play a vital role in preparing the budget and taxation proposals. They carry out the function of granting of legally sanctioned financial benefits, tax reliefs, subsidies and other concessions to the people.

8. Record-Keeping: The Civil Service has the sole responsibility of keeping systematically all government records. They collect, classify and analyse all data pertaining to all activities of the government. They collect and maintain vital socioeconomic statistics which are used for the formulation of Public policies and plans.

9. Role in Public Relations: The era of modern welfare state and democratic politics has made it essential for the government to keep close relations with the people of the state. The need for maintaining active and full public relations is a vital necessity of every state. The civil servants play an active role in this sphere.

They are the main agents who establish direct contacts with the people. They serve as a two-way link. On the one hand, they communicate all government decisions to the people, and on the other hand, they communicate to the government the needs, interests and views of the people. Thus, Bureaucracy plays a vigorously active and highly important role in the working of the government. Weidner (1970)

Control over Bureaucracy:

The rise of modern welfare state and increase in its functions has been a source of big increase in the powers and role of Bureaucracy. It has,

therefore, given rise to an additional need for exercising control over bureaucracy. An effective control system has become essential both for preventing the civil servants from abusing their powers as well as for ensuring their active and positive role. In fact, every state maintains a system of internal and external control over Bureaucracy.

(A) Internal Control: It means control applied from within the organisation i.e. by the administrative machinery. The administrative organisation is hierarchical and is divided into wings, divisions, branches and sections. There are present some internal controls in its every section. The tools of control are budgeting, accounting, auditing, reports, inspections, efficiency surveys, personnel control, code of conduct, and discipline and leadership control.

In particular, regular internal inspections, auditing of accounts and evaluation of the performance of each civil several act as main means of internal control over Bureaucracy Internal control is necessary for keeping the bureaucracy efficient and productive of desired results.

(B) External Control: External control is that which flows from outside agencies. These agencies are the people, the legislature, the executive and the judiciary.

Bureaucracy and Modernism

The notion that modernity and bureaucracy are incompatible is widely shared by many members of society. As pointed out in the introductory lines, the bureaucracy is not received well by the public. However, bureaucracy is a vital and integral part of the modern organizational setup and it is the case that organizations and bureaucracies cannot do without each other. This symbiotic relationship between the bureaucracy and the organizations makes for a creative tension between the two and in the modern context, they are likened to a pair of twins that complement and supplement each other. This relationship can be best explained in terms of how process and structure coexist with agility and speed. Indeed, both are needed as in the modern world, paperwork is as important as just in time solutions and real time processes. This interplay between the processes and

the structure that sustains them along with the need for speedy decision-making is what the contemporary organizations must strive for. Further, bureaucracy is the glue that binds the disparate elements of the organization together and lends it coherence and a sense of purpose.

Bureaucracy in Action

Of course, with time, the organizational arteries tend to get clogged and hence, it is the case that organizational bureaucracies become sclerotic and slow moving. Hence, creative destruction in the way organizations rejuvenate themselves is needed to ensure that bureaucracies do not become entrenched leading to gridlock and policy paralysis.

The other aspect of organizations is that even if the employees are empowered to take decisions on the spot and are enabled to act independently, they still have to go back to the office and file a report stating their actions and justifications for the same. Indeed, as this example shows, the Processual and the procedural aspects of contemporary organizations is still relevant as legal and other regulations dictate and mandate along with necessitate the record keeping. Of course, in recent times, one can always record the decisions on an iPad or send a message on a Blackberry. However, the key term here is that processes have to be followed and whichever mechanism one chooses for recording and communicating them, the basic framework of the bureaucracy is unalterable. Wasim (2011)

Concept of Development

The natural sciences consider three components of development as; Growth, Refinement and Maturation. ***Growth*** refers to the addition of new component or skills. Lucas et al (1979:93) states, "growth is caused by an increase in cells which leads to an increase in size". Development refers to ***refinement***, improvement or expansion of a component or skill. ***Maturation*** is a process of achieving full or optimal development of a component or skill.

Galino (2003), a sociologist and economist says "the failure of the past decade and its turmoil brought us to the realization that the major requirement of

development and its end is not so much the abundance of wealth we produce, but the quality of life that is lived by the poor in our societies, the small farmers and the slum dwellers. It is how well we have met their basic needs that determines whether we have developed or not, how well they eat, clothe, what homes they live in, how strong is their health, what education is available to them and their children, how easily they and their produce can move about, what they can do to amuse or recreate themselves, how they provide for their old age, how fully they participate in the social, economic and political life of the society, how much of its burdens they are capable of helping to bear, how much of share in its benefits they can capture for themselves, and how much of a role they play in its decision making processes, especially in matters that directly affects their lives".

Development should be perceived as a multi-dimensional process involving organization, orientation and re-orientation of the entire social and economic system in addition to improvement of income and output. It involves radical changes in the institutional, social and administrative structures as well changes in the popular attitude, customs and believes.

Development is used to refer to the total transformation of a system; thus when used to describe the transformation of the various aspects of the life of the nation. In fact, development implies a progression from a lower and often undesirable stage to a high and preferred one.

According to Seers (1971) development is a normative concept involving the fulfilment of the necessary conditions for the realization of human personality. He identified several objectives of development, which according to him should be generally applicable as follows: **Reducing Poverty**; by which he means making widely available such physical necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter etc., **Decreasing Unemployment;** by developing skills and creating jobs and employment for the generality of the people and lastly **Decreasing Inequality**; by achieving high quality in income and social life in the society. He also identified certain core values of development namely; Life sustenance, self Esteem and Freedom. These he said are the basic and practical guidelines for the development of a society.

According to Rodney (1972) development is a many sided process. At the individual level, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. At the level of social groups, development implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships.

Rogers (1969) defines development as a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce a higher per capita income and levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organization.

Indicators of development

There are so many indicators that portray development, a few are listed below;

1. **Generalised Occupations**: there should be demonstrable growth in the number and varieties in generalised occupations with corresponding changes in the proportions of labour force involved in various occupational sectors.
2. **Social mobility**: the extent to which people could live anywhere within a country or society in the country is also an element of progress and social development. Here, we refer to increase in social mobility both geographically and vertically.
3. **Merit**: this is to be considered paramount than any other consideration or factor outside a person's capability or competence.
4. **Literacy and Education**: the more educated a society, the higher the chances of its progressing. An illiterate society is a backward society.
5. **Power Generation**: the annual production electric power in terms of megawatts should be high. This is highly necessary because of the quest towards using modern production methods and improved standard in general.
6. **Paper Qualification and Theory**: the degree to which a country relies on paper qualification and theory and the degree to which it encourages the practicability and application of the paper qualification and theory for societal advancement.

Bureaucracy; Necessary Evil for Development

Bureaucracy – it is all around us – wherever we look. We cannot avoid it. No-one likes it, but it is something that is as inevitable in our daily lives as sleeping and eating. So much of our lives battling bureaucracy, it often makes us wonder why on earth so much of it exists! Since the global economic crisis in 2008, we find ourselves pondering over this question more and more – largely because bureaucracy is so expensive!!

Investigations have revealed that there are a variety of meanings associated with the word.

Various 'dictionary' definitions as follows:

1. Government by many bureaus, administrators, and petty officials.
2. The body of officials and administrators, especially of a government or government department.
3. Excessive multiplication of, and concentration of power in, administrative bureaus or administrators.
4. Administration characterized by excessive red tape and routine.

None of the above definitions could be deemed as positive. In fact, Wikipedia states:

Since being coined, the word "bureaucracy" has developed negative connotations. Bureaucracies have been criticized as being too complex, inefficient, or too inflexible. The dehumanizing effects of excessive bureaucracy became a major theme in the work of Franz Kafka, and were central to his novel, The Trial. Despite all of the negativity, some feel that bureaucracy is absolutely necessary. Wikipedia goes on to state:

"*The German sociologist Max Weber argued that bureaucracy constitutes the most efficient and rational way in which one can organize human activity, and that systematic processes and organized hierarchies were necessary to maintain order, maximize efficiency and eliminate favouritism.*"

This is pretty heavy stuff. So what do you believe? Is bureaucracy necessary, or is it a 'way of working' that has integrated its way into our society, steadily 'destroying' the experiences that we have as people. So much of the bureaucracy we experience on a daily basis is completely unnecessary – all it serves to do is to waste the time of the people who create it and the people who are subjected to it. Anything that is unnecessary is what is

commonly referred to as waste! the great thing about waste is that it can and should be eliminated – doing so, has multiple benefits – it saves time; it improves efficiency; it improves morale; it improves citizen's perception of Governance; and perhaps most importantly…….it saves money.

But come to think of it, Development in a typical Nigeria will require discipline and discipline requires rules and regulations, processes and stages and strict obedience to get things done and in the right way. Without these processes in administration, development will not be achieved as there won't be guiding principles to actualize administrative functions. There won't be proper control, order and coordination in carrying out administrative duties. Things will be done anyhow and that will certainly be bad.

Bureaucracy is necessary because we need order to function but its evil because it is slow, cumbersome and in most cases leads to the impossibility of attainment of administrative goals. As such, Bureaucracy is indeed a **"Necessary Evil"**.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Finally, as this paper has pointed out, we cannot do without bureaucracies and they cannot do without us. Hence, it would be better if both come to terms with each other and learn to live together like a couple who have the occasional skirmishes from time to time but at the end of the day, get the work done and keep the institution running. This will go a long way in fostering development in Nigeria. Bureaucracy if properly practiced will enhance development and with time, with the right structure in place, with the issues of corruption and insecurity tackled, Bureaucracy will have a positive ground in Nigeria which will lead to development. Since we cannot do without it, it is also recommended that the processes should be reduced and not totally eliminated so that time and efficiency will be properly managed.

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