

Cost of Governance and Infrastructural Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper examines the cost of governance and infrastructural development in Nigeria. This is with a view to determining whether the cost of running government in Nigeria has negatively affected the attainment of infrastructural development in the country since the return of democracy in 1999 to date. Qualitative method was adopted where books, journal and internet materials were used as a means of data collection for the study. Prebendalism theory was adopted for the analysis of this paper. The findings from this study established that the cost of governance has negatively impacted on the infrastructural development in Nigeria since 1999 as money is spent on recurrent matters. During this period, it was established that government spent her scarce resources on recurrent items covering personnel and overhead cost to the detriment of capital projects. In view of the findings the study recommends that for any meaningful development to be achieved government must cut down consumption rate (recurrent expenditure) but instead spend the bulk of her resources on capital-based projects and programmes that would positively turn around the fortunes of the Nigerian state.

Keyword; Cost of Governance, Infrastructural Development, Democracy, Leadership, Corruption.

Introduction

Infrastructure remains the basic physical and organisational structures needed for the operation, growth and development of a society like industries, buildings, roads, bridges, health services, electricity, schools and so on. It is the enterprise or the products, services and facilities necessary for an economy to function (Sullivan and Sheffrin, 2003). Many states in Nigeria are faced with the problem of infrastructural development that can improve the living standard of the people. However, it's in realization of this noble objective that the idea of government and state evolved. Government and the state evolved by way of the people willingly and consciously surrendering themselves to state rule, and in turn for the state to provide them with security, infrastructure and social welfare services (Zakaa, 2016; Asirvathan and Misra, 2000 and Appadorai, 2004). It is in view of this assumption that the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides that;

The state shall harness the resources of the nation and promote national prosperity and an efficient, dynamic and self-reliant economy, manage and control the national economy in such manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness

of every citizen on the basis of social justice, equality of status and opportunity...the state shall direct its policy towards ensuring the promotion of a planned economic development including the diversification of industries and dispersal of industrial projects and infrastructural facilities throughout the federation (Constitution of FRN, 1979:20).

This provision is repeated in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria in section 14(2) a & b and section 16 (1) a-b and section 16(2) a-d (Constitution of the FRN, 1999).

However, the return of Nigeria to democratic rule in 1999 was thus greeted with high hopes and jubilation by Nigerians owing to what the country had gone through during the long days of the military in power. It was however, the expectation of Nigerians that the new era of democracy will bring about improvement in the management of the nation's resource so as to reduce the rate of unemployment, insecurity of lives and property, hunger and disease and in turn fast-track Nigeria's infrastructural development through good governance and quality policies and programmes that have direct bearing on the lives of all Nigerians. This is because the authoritarianism experienced during military rule led to political repression and bad governance that greatly undermined the provision of infrastructural development (Ikoni, 2010).

Since the Nigerian state returned to democratic governance in 1999 during the era of what Samuel Huntington (1991) called the "third wave of democratization", the nature and character of governance in the country has been the subject of intense debate by scholars of all divides. Admittedly, the rising concern about the governance project in Nigeria cannot be explained outside the country's historical experience, a history that has laid the "solid" foundation for the current wave of infrastructural deficit occasioned by cost of governance. This state of affairs importantly raises some serious concerns about the question of good governance in Nigeria where the politics of deprivation and mismanagement of resources appears to be taking over the principles of accountability, transparency and responsibility which are the tenets of good governance (George-Genyi, 2013). This has thrown up security and development challenges in the poverty-ridden society like Nigeria.

After twenty years of un-interrupted democratic rule, Nigeria is faced with the worst infrastructural development despite the state's abundant human and mineral resources. However, this ugly situation is exhibited by the exorbitant life style of our politicians by prioritising jumbo allowances to themselves, acquisition of expensive cars, foreign travels, setting of committees which their recommendations has never been implemented among others to the detriment of road constructions, provision of water, electricity, and building of hospitals. The cost of governance has not only affected infrastructural development but has also affected employment opportunities as the little resource available has been spent for the fuelling of cars in convoy of highly placed political office holders. The cost of governance in Nigeria is one problem policy makers have refused to address. Those who have done so did it half-heartedly and the country is gradually grinding to a halt. If only we could address this, Nigeria would be saving billions of naira that could be pumped into other productive ventures. A governor with close to a thousand aides cannot honestly tell us his state problems

will be solved in his four-year term because the states resources are being used in the course of governance instead of providing the much-needed infrastructure to jump-start the economy. We agree that some of these aides are useful to the running of governance but the sheer number of them is a great cause for concern. If a member of the National Assembly earns more than what the American President takes home, then we know things are not right.

Paradoxically, while these negative indicators continue to broaden on a yearly basis, Nigeria's budgets have continued swelling up yearly with trillions of naira allocated to different sectors of the economy with nothing to smile home about. This ugly scenario prompt the researcher to interrogate the cost of governance and its impact on infrastructural development in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Governance: Governance means making and managing public policy, organizing people controlling subordinates to exercise skill and commitment to achieve excellence in a given set of assignments. It is concerned with ensuring that constituents follow established process while instruments of governance provide means to maintain accountability. In the realm of public affairs, governance refers to the range of policies public officials enact and actions they take to manage the affairs of society (Ukaegbu, 2010). In view of the above therefore, governance in the context of this paper can be defined as an act or process of ruling or leading the people. That is the task of providing qualitative leadership and direction to the people who are being governed, which transcends to quality policies and programmes that have direct bearing on the lives of the people.

Cost of Governance: Cost of governance is the money spent on running administrative processes. It is known as administrative expenditure. Adewole and Osabuohien (2007) divided cost of governance into two: recurrent administrative expenses and capital administrative expenses. They defined cost of governance as costs associated with the running of government. In other words, these are costs incurred by the government in running its affairs. The government helps to sustain the social contract that binds every member of the state. Similarly, Fluvian (2006) defined cost of governance as any expenditure in maintaining government administrative structures. He also equates cost of governance to total administrative expenditure, which is a part of total federal government expenditure in Nigeria. He said that the justification for using total administrative expenditure as cost of governance stems from the fact that administrative expenditures are incurred in governing processes.

According to Drucker (2007), cost of governance is government budget allocated to both capital and recurrent expenditures on maintaining government administrative structures, which appears to be very enormous in Africa the question of efficiency in governance is, therefore, to ensure that public funds are spent judiciously, while public goods and services are sufficiently provided. For this study, cost of governance therefore is the cost incurred in running the government. It is the cost of performing political, security, welfare duties, provision of infrastructural facilities and for the payment of remuneration to both civil and public servants.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts Richard Joseph's theory of "Prebendalism" as a framework of analysis. The theory has been offered by Richard Joseph in his book titled "Democracy and Prebendal politics in Nigeria: The rise and fall of the Second Republic" published in 1987. Richard Joseph first invented and used the theory as his theoretical contribution to the study of corruption, clientelism and political instability in Africa. He used the term "Prebendalism" to define "patterns of political behavior which rests on the justifying principle that state offices should be competed for and then utilized for the personal benefit of the office holders, as well as for their reference or support group(s)" (Joseph, 1987). He drew the idea of this concept and the theory from the catholic Encyclopedia which defines prebends as the "right of a member of chapter to his share in revenue of a cathedral. He however drew inspiration from the works of Marx Weber.

The theory posits the centrality in the Nigeria polity of the struggle to control and exploit the public office and argues that state power is usually viewed by Nigerians as an array of prebends, the appropriation of which provides access to the state treasury and the control over the issuing of remunerative licenses and contracts. This therefore makes democracy to become synonyms with austerity, lack of probity, lack of transparency and accountability, insecurity, corruption and greed. The above development, he argues, makes it easy for the adaptation of traditional patron – client relationship to the pursuit of modern material goods. So, to obtain and keep clients, one must gain a prebendal office and make sure his political "entrepreneurs" individuals or kinsmen have a fair share in the distribution of prebendal office. A prebend, Richard Joseph describes as "an office of state, typical of feudal Europe and China, which an individual possesses either through examination or as a reward for loyal services to a lord or ruler (Joseph, 1987:56).

The prevalence of the above political behavior in the country he urges is largely because the country was created by foreign conquest and domination, and not through a gradual process of aggregation and expansion of indigenous societies. This is because the colonial power and the economic processes it fostered, defined the essential elements of the future for the subjugated people. This is made worse by the continued foreign penetration and domination of the economy after political independence together with constraints to peripheral capitalist industrialization in the world economy. This therefore, means that access to the state remains disproportionately important in the struggle for resources for upward mobility in the society. Equally, the post-colonial world has entrenched a form of state organization and attitudes regarding the use of state offices, which are pre-modern and antithetical to the constitutional and legal system of modern time.

Thus, the introduction of electoral politics revitalizes and promotes clientelistic networks since there appears to be any real change in the socio-economic system of the Nigerian state and economy, even with the intervention of the military in politics at various times, therefore he argues that;

A competitive electoral system, with its vast array of ministerial and sub-ministerial appointments with legislative offices and their private staff positions to be filled, is a veritable boom to prebendal politics. Opportunities are multiplied as political parties compete for votes and minor patrons (or brokers) enjoy new leverage to procure preferential treatment, since it is the aggregating of votes which determines success,

and the only route to such votes is via the recruitment of presumed influential mediators (Joseph, 1987:57).

All these have accounted for the high number of political appointments and duplication of government functions in Nigeria.

The theory is relevant to this work because it goes to explain the rationale behind the struggle and control of state power and public office, which is often competed for and utilized for the personal benefits of the office holders, as well as their reference or support group such as ethical groups, political associates, in-laws, etc. at the detriment of public good. This explain to a very large why politics and public office have become associated at almost every level with graft, and why multiple political offices are created to settle their “prebends” by those in authority, evident in the fixing of jumbo salaries and allowances for these groups, duplication of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to accommodate as many as possible in government and above all, the inflation of contracts sums and other unwholesome practices leading to unnecessary and increasing cost of governance in Nigeria which do adversely affect the provision of infrastructure.

It is also relevant in the sense that, it provides a deep and well documented appreciation of the pressures and the norms from below or the society which helps to propel the agitation for the sharing of the dividends of democracy, which auger well for the rising cost of governance experienced in Nigeria. It has also indicated that a fruitful discussion about Nigeria’s present and future depends upon a certain mode of political behavior, and of its social and economic ramifications. The theory was, criticized for placing patron-client or neopatrimonialism over and above the base (economy) in explaining the basis for the organization and usage of political power in Nigeria and indeed either aspects of national life.

The Nature of Infrastructure in Nigeria

The state of infrastructure of any state is directly related with the quality of life of the people. “According to recent statistics, the quality of life for most people in Africa appears to have either not improved or only done so marginally. This situation arose from the misrule of early leaders most of whom spearheaded the struggle for independence” (Eregha, 2007).

The horrible state of affairs in Africa led to untold devastation of economies in the continent; people had to live below the poverty line with food insecurity, no shelter to accommodate them and no medical or educational facilities to give them some hope for the future. In each case, the oppressive conditions in which they lived with no basic infrastructure led these people to evolve gradually into a class of disgruntled citizens desperate for change. In almost all cases, the military provided the answer by way of coup d’état that toppled these political classes. Usually, such military governments professed to have come in as corrective regimes that would stay for only brief periods within which they would right the wrongs before handing over to democratic governments. These military governments often ended up entrenching themselves in power. In fact, most of them exhibited all the traits of the earlier toppled civilian leaders and even more (Ikpi, 1997).

The civil wars have led to the neglect of provision of infrastructure such as educational facilities and health centers, and in some cases, agricultural services and transport facilities are destroyed. School buildings have been converted to military use. Civil wars in Africa undermine the continent’s productive capacity, destroy or severely weaken social structures, distort economic policy, pollute the value-systems of the people and perpetuate

prolong poverty (Elu, 2000: 60). It is evident that Africa is the poorest continent in the world and the present situation shows backward movement in terms of infrastructural provision especially, technology-based infrastructure. “It has now become clear, even to obstinate and recalcitrant policy makers, that unless drastic measures are taken, living conditions for most people in this continent will continue to fall” (Elu, 2000).

There are many theories of development: they are classified into modernisation and dependency. The modernisation theorists based their argument on economic, psychology and diffusion. The economic approach of Rostow (1962: 6) identified five stages in the process of a nation’s economic development. Rostow’s postulation is that underdevelopment was an original position from which traditional societies could move through (stages) to development without a recourse to social revolution.

Weber (1930: 60), McClelland (1968: 20) and Everret (1983: 31) explained development in terms of presence (or absence) of (i) some individual personalistic traits or (ii) the general psychological state characterising a society. McClelland argued that the need for achievement encourages the individual to meet challenges to take risks and to succeed in the face of difficulties. Western industrialized nations contained individuals with high level of achievement motivation, which led to high rate of national growth. Hagen (1962: 16) argued that traditional developing nations produced authoritarian personalities who lacked self-confidence, exhibited a high level of anxiety when faced with new situations and who were content to preserve the status quo.

Developed societies have more innovative personalities who display self-confidence, derived satisfaction in solving problems and who are achievers. He argued further that for development to occur, individual personalities had to change. More innovative personalities could be encouraged by improving literacy, expanding the mass media, urbanising and promoting nationalism (Eregha, 2000: 30).

Edari (1976:19) utilises diffusion theory to explain the process of less privilege societies’ development. Diffusion is a process by which a third world country adopts capital, technology, and social structure from western industrialised countries. He argued that the developing countries would develop to the extent that: (a) Western industrialised countries provide capital programmes. (b) They adopt modern methods of agricultural and industrial production and (c) They adopt those values, attitudes and behaviour patterns that are exhibited by western industrialised nations. The people centred approach to development views an individual not as a subject- ’but an actor who defines the goals, controls the resources, and directs processes affecting his/her life (Korten, 1984).

The key elements in this approach are provision of infrastructure through: (a) empowerment of people, (b) development of an administrative process, which responds to the needs of the people, (c) human growth and wellbeing, (d) equality, (e) self-reliance, (f) participation and (g) Sustainability. White (1987: 60) argued that sustainability is a measure of lasting quality in development programme. An infrastructural development programme can be sustained by creating a felt need among beneficiaries about the efficacy of the programme, developing institutions which continually adapt, providing (or self-generating) resources and building support among political elite and community groups.

Modernisation theories provoked a great deal of criticisms from radical scholars such as Andre Gunder Frank, Claude Ake, Bode Onimode, Segun Osoba, Zwingina Silas and

others who argued that colonialism and Western capitalism were the two major factors responsible for the underdeveloped nature of Third World countries. The Western industrialised countries developed by exploiting human and natural resources of their colonies and by making them economically dependent on their colonial powers after independence. However, since the demise of the colonialists, the African leaders ought to have found their feet.

Infrastructure development is one of the bases of assessing the achievements of democratic leaders and it is the foundation of good democratic governance. Agitation for infrastructural development is higher in democratic government than in military dictatorship or compared to developed countries. This is because the resources for provision of infrastructure are always scarce. Ethnic-interest agitation and lobbying are common things in democratic governance in developing countries. This is why the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) in United Kingdom, advised that infrastructure project initiation should be done by an office specifically established to do this job. (P3O, 2008). The Infrastructural report of Nigeria just like any other Third World country is nothing to write home about.

The housing situation is in a sorry state both quantitatively and qualitatively (Agbola, 1998; Ajanlekoko, 2001; Nubi, 2000; Onibokun, 1996 Oyedele, 2006). Most infrastructures are now decayed and need repair, rehabilitation or replacement. Government is the system that plans, organizes, controls and supervises the people who are resident in an area in other for all to have conducive-environment for living and a sense of belonging. Governments have the power to put in place all measures that it deems fit will make an environment beneficial for living for everybody.

Infrastructure development in democratic governance is more challenging because of the accessibility of people to government and involves identifying the right project, carrying out feasibility and viability studies and embarking out physical development of the project. The challenges are numerous and include finance, technology for development, maintenance and design. The challenges also include quality requirements of projects to meet international standard and to be sustainably developed. Projects must meet the carbon emission standard set by international organizations like International Standard Organisation. Air capture and analysis are done in communities to ensure that they emit as little greenhouse gases (GHGs) as possible, human settlements must be bio-diversified with co-habitation of other animals and plants and natural environment must be conserved for sustainable development and so on.

Tradesmen and other technical human resources needed for infrastructural development are scarce because of lack of training and motivation. “As a result, many professional people, tradesmen and senior managers are immigrating to other countries” (Robbins et al, 2009). Because of fast money, most youths that supposed to learn a trade are now “commercial motorcycle riders” popularly known as “Okada” and some of the youth become internet fraudsters popularly known as “yahoo boys”.

The numerous challenges have not been tackled as they should. Nigeria's lack of basic infrastructure to facilitate sustainable development and trade – both regionally and globally – and to ensure competitiveness is already known by all. In particular, for the large number of local governments, especially the rural ones, the dwellers produce have no access to markets and are not stored, hampered by weak transport and energy infrastructure.

Cost of Governance and Infrastructural Deficit in Nigeria

Since the return of democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999, political activities across the country have assumed different dimensions. This is why politics has virtually become the most lucrative business in Nigeria. It is therefore not surprising that in some sections of the Nigerian society, politics has become a do-or-die affair. It is no longer unusual to see aspirants and candidates assassinated over tussles for political positions; in numerous cases property and building are destroyed in clashes between two opposing camps. These are pointers to the level

of desperation that accompanies the desire to get to public office to earn enormous salaries.

The outcry over high cost of governance in Nigeria has reached a new height recently. It is with this renewed angst that the former Governor of Bauchi State Mallam Isa Yuguda; appointed 1,070 political aides to assist him in running the affairs of the State. These political aides are in addition to members of the Bauchi state Executive Council, members of various boards and statutory corporations and governing councils of institutions of higher learning. Governor Yuguda was not alone in this decision to appoint a large number of aides purportedly to run state affairs. His counterparts in Adamawa and Imo State, former Governors Murtala Nyako and Rochas Okorocha also appointed a larger retinue of aides which included special assistants and special advisers.

Commenting on this phenomenon Aliegba (2004) argued that, one of the major problems of our democracy today that has enormous effect on infrastructural development is the cost of this democracy. This cost can be seen in the number of institutions and the representations that it attracts. The presidential system reproduces virtually everything at the federal to the states and local governments. The size of the Senate, House of Representatives and the cost of maintaining these are much. At the state level the number of commissioners and special assistants have rather increased from what had operated in the past. In fact, the Local Government Chairmen now have advisers. Of course, all these are with attendant rise in cost of governance. This is even worse when each political head of the various units has to have paraphernalia of office e.g. a car, maintenance allowances for all kinds of things; sometimes the wives too have similar offices with their own armies of advisers, assistants etc.

But one major worrying fact here is the rising phenomenon of personal assistants. The phenomena of personal assistants have been overstretched by politicians particularly in this Fourth Republic to a point that there are “personal assistants to special assistants or personal assistants”. This has reached a point that prospective office holders already have personal assistants. The implication for this on development is that this is coming from a new breed of young men who do not want to have career jobs but hang around political offices or office holders where they think resources will accrue to them better rather taking formal jobs. This is detrimental to professional and youth development and also tends to breed a vast group of professional unemployed youths who in turn constitute the first major critics of the government they contributed in bringing to power once their personal expectations have not been met (Aliegba, 2004).

Also, the former Governor of Anambra State, Peter Obi, and the Bishop of Anglican Diocese of Lagos Mainland, Rt. Rev. Adebayo Akinde, had decried the huge cost of governance in the country. They spoke at the Third Session of the Second Synod of the church in Lagos. Obi said there was need for government at all levels to reduce the cost of

governance and redirect the funds to socio-economic development. Obi posited that, “we cannot continue to spend our scarce resources to finance unnecessary consumption and pile up huge national debts. We must increase savings and generate resources to provide public amenities”.

Also, the manifestation of mis-governance is everywhere in Nigeria and on infrastructure in particular. For instance, power sector privatization did not follow due process and it became obvious with the inability of the buyers of national energy assets to revamp the sector as expected. Their inadequacy has largely contributed to the epileptic electricity supply in Nigeria. According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Nigeria has the potential to generate 12,522 megawatts (MW) of electric power from existing plants but most days, is only able to generate around 4,000 MW (USAID, 2019) because necessary equipments to aid production are not in place. This challenge of power supply has hindered the industrialization process in the country and can be largely attributed to defective governance. The reason for energy deficit can also be used to explain the pitiable conditions of some other infrastructures that would have positively contributed to our socio-economic development.

To Rafindadi (2019) obviously, there have been gross underfunding of infrastructure in Nigeria. Equally, FERMA boss, Nurudeen Rafindadi has blamed the bad state of Nigeria roads to poor funding which has hindered the agency’s capacity for proper road maintenance nationwide (Punch news, 2019). This statement further confirms the big issue of infrastructure funding in Nigeria.

It is bad enough that the amount budgeted for capital projects is inadequate (averagely 27% over the last 12 years), the amount that finally gets into actual project implementation equally faces huge challenges. These includes delay in fund release or outright insufficient release, fund diversion, loopholes in the procurement processes, failure of citizens to involve themselves in project execution process, etc. In the end, the actual spending on capital projects is barely 17-20% of budgeted amount.

Beyond the issue of poor funding, there are other indicators of how defective governance has affected Nigeria’s capability to build relevant infrastructure to enhance socio-economic development. The case of corruption is visible in the prevalence of inflated government contracts for capital projects which end up poorly executed and funds allocated for human capital development diverted as reported by the ICPC boss, Prof. Bolaji Owasanoye at the National Summit on Diminishing Corruption in the Public Service held in November 2019. Another indicator is the lack of due process in privatising government enterprises. One good example of this is the privatization process of the energy distribution companies (DISCOs) that has stalled progress in energy distribution as mentioned earlier. Even after privatization, the Discos were still put on tariff subsidies from the government, and about 11 distribution firms out of 19 declared technically insolvent as at August 2019 ahead of the December 31, 2019 performance review timeline, due to their operational incapability (Punch, 2019).

However, it is not too late for them to reconsider their actions by reducing to the barest minimum, the number political aids. This is in the interest of their states and ultimately the people. Our yearly financing gap has been estimated at \$10 billion. Most of this will have

to be generated internally. More financial resources will be released for capital expenditure as a result of these cost cutting measures.

Causes of High Cost of Governance in Nigeria.

Salaries and Allowances of Public Office Holders: It is evident that, so much money is spent on maintaining the legislators at the national, state and local government levels. Similarly, the large cabinet maintained by the Federal, State and Local governments has also been identified as a factor to increasing cost of governance in Nigeria. This is while EI-Rufai identified government spending on the public office holders as the major cause of the problem. He put this succinctly when he argued that, ...the entire oil earnings for the year cannot pay the salaries and allowances of politicians and public-sector workers and their overheads, their teas, coffee, travels and Estacode, while the federal government spends over N381 million on behalf of Nigerians on its staff, offices, vehicles and the like, and none of this goes to build power plants, roads or railways (EI-Rufai, 2011).

Generally political office holders in Nigeria at all levels constitute less than 5% of the entire population of the country. They are just about 17,500 persons but they corner and pocket close to 80% of our public finances on annual basis in the areas of allowances and overheads (Nigeria Master web News, 2020). Unfortunately, elected representatives at all tiers of government in Nigeria have failed to implement policies that are directed towards infrastructural development at all levels. Instead, they have succeeded in instituting a Kleptocratic government at all levels (Adejumo, 2009:2). Therefore, rather than use the instruments of the state to improve the conditions of living of the masses in Nigeria, the Nigerian legislators and members of the Executive and their collaborating friends now explore the same instruments of the state to enrich themselves, their friends and family members.

The maintenance of large number of Aides by Government officials: By the provision of the Federal Constitution of 1999, it is only the position of Special Adviser for the Governor, the President and their deputies that are recognized by the constitution. But in practice there are Special Advisers for Legislators, Ministers, Commissioners, Chairmen and Heads of some key Parastatals, Departments and Agencies of Government etc. There is also motley of "Senior Special Assistants", "Special Assistants", "Executive Assistants", "Personal Assistants" and so on. The salaries and allowances of these people somehow find its way into the budget of LGAs, States and the Federal Government which invariably increases the cost of general administration.

The conduct of elections: It should be stated that the conduct of open, free, fair and competitive election is sine qua non in a democratic society. Democracy as a form of government is costly to run as it demands the commitment of huge financial resources for successful operation whether in Nigeria or elsewhere. Most of the cost of democracy as a governing phenomenon occurs in the area of the conduct of elections. For example, the system demands the conduct of periodic elections as prescribed by the country's constitution. In Nigeria, general elections are conducted in every four years for State Governors, State Assemblies, National Assembly members and the President of the Federal Republic. Therefore, the conduct and management of elections in a vast country like Nigeria requires huge sums of money.

Election Litigations: The conduct of election and the resultant litigations in tribunals and courts constitute high cost of governance. The failure of the umpire body INEC for instance, to conduct credible elections have given rise to series of election litigations by aggrieved candidates and parties. Judges and other members of election tribunals jettisoned “natural justice” based on point of law for “jungle justice” based on the highest bidder. Many tribunal members saw it as an opportunity to join the millionaire or billionaire club. They are ready to collect bribe from parties and candidates who are desperate to win petitions in courts.

Federal Government Grants: The Federal Government usually gives out grants to regulatory bodies such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and also gives grants to the various political parties during elections. The idea of government grants to political parties in a democratic system is meant to prevent the emergent of the control of political parties by few wealthy people “money bags” in society.

The reason is that when political parties are owned and sponsored by an individual or a few persons, mass participation becomes difficult as the individual or the few who controls the machinery of the party decides who becomes a candidate on the platform of the party to contest election. In this regards, many political parties in Nigeria and elsewhere, usually resort to undemocratic methods of selecting candidates to contest elections on the platforms of their parties. However, it should be noted that in spite of government grants to political parties in Nigeria, parties are still been controlled by very powerful and influential persons (godfathers)(EI-Rufai, 2011). Thus, the reason for financial support to political parties has not achieved the purpose in Nigeria. However, this phenomenon has contributed to high cost of political administration in the country. What need to be known is that government grants to INEC, and party spending as well as individuals who invest their money on election campaigns and litigations goes into the non-productive sector of the economy. Thus, it increases the cost of governance.

High Level of Corruption: Successive governments in Nigeria have been corruption friendly. And corruption is one of the major factors or causes of high cost of governance. Since the country’s returned to democratic governance in 1999, every successor government has proved more corrupt and has become a greater financial burden to the nation than its predecessor. This is worsened once a particular administration is given a second chance (second term) in office. The over \$400 billion that has accrued to the country through the sale of crude oil and gas from the 1960s to date Nigeria remains one of the poorest in the world and indebted to multilateral financial agencies such as the world Bank and International Monetary Fund. The First and Second Republics collapsed essentially do to corruption. The various military regimes have not fared better and the current civilian dispensation is also bedevilled and infested by the same virus of corruption(EI-Rufai, 2011). The effects the huge financial spending on non-productive activities is lack of infrastructural development and underdevelopment of the entire Nigerian society, in politics and socioeconomic spheres.

Issues in the Cost of Governance

There are number of fundamental issues in the cost of governance in Nigeria despite constitutional mechanisms, in actual practice, annually, we as a nation have been unable or unwilling to tame the high cost of governance.

Ladan (2012), carefully identified four issues for examination. These four issues include;

- i. The paradox of Nigeria; as a land of plenty inhabited by the poor,

- ii. Lack of financial discipline on the part of political office holders at all levels of governance;
- iii. De-prioritization of investments in core social welfare sectors; and
- iv. Lack of due compliance with constitutional obligations

a) The paradox of Nigeria; as a land of plenty inhabited by the poor:

According to the 2007 Human Right Watch Report, the endemic corruption in Nigeria has led to the loss of US\$380 billion between 1960 and 1999. A Global Financial Integrity Initiative Report in January, 2011 estimated that US\$130 billion worth of illicit financial dollars to the fuel subsidy racket alone brings our national loss due to corruption to \$500b between 1960 till date. Hence, corruption diverts resources into graft-rich public projects, at a cost to education and health services. Corruption destroys a nation's social and human capital, obviously corruption is even more damaging than terrorism/insurgency, perhaps, it is the single greatest obstacle to both human and national development (Ladan, 2012).

Income inequality is another problem. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), in 2020 65% of Nigeria's wealth were owned by just 20% of the population (i.e. 32 million out of 160 million). Thus, 80% of the population share between them only about (1/3) of the nation's wealth (NBS, 2020).

Nigeria is no doubt richly endowed with human and natural resources particularly oil and gas as well as 34 solid mineral resources such as gold, coal and sulphur. With a nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$360 in 2020, Nigeria is the second largest economy in Africa; the six fastest growing economy in Africa with a real GDP economic growth rate of 12.10% in 2020, the largest oil producer in Africa and the seventh largest in the world in 2011. With a population of about 200 million in 2020, Nigeria is by far the most populous nation in Africa accounting for 47% and 2% of West Africa and global population respectively.

Despite this rich human and natural resources endowment, Nigeria's GDP per capita is only \$2250, average life expectancy 54.81%, average years of schooling, at 0.58% rate and poverty is widespread, with about 40.1% of the population living below poverty line in 2020. Hence, Nigeria was ranked by the UNDP 2011 Report on UN quality of life/Human Development Index as the 156 out of 187, among the least human development countries globally in terms of income, education and life expectancy. It is important to note that Nigerian legislators earned higher remunerations and allowances than the USA president. Despite these jumbo salaries and allowances by the Nigerian law makers, the country has remained poor and underdeveloped since 1960-date.

Despite the plethora of development policies and programmes, Nigeria's level of economic development over the past five decades has been disappointing. The country's economy is dominated by primary production sector, with agriculture which is predominantly practiced by peasantry with low and declining productivity, accounting for 10% of GDP, while oil sector account for 90% in 2020, the secondary sector, especially manufacturing has stagnated at 3.7% to 3.9% of GDP in the same year. Nigeria is one of the least industrialised countries in Africa.

b) Lack of Financial Discipline; Nigeria's presidential democracy is said to be one of the most expensive in the world. This is justified by the country's soaring recurrent spending in

its successive budgets and the rising debt profile prompting deep concerns and warnings about the high cost of governance and the health of the economy.

c) De-prioritization of Investment in Core Social Welfare Sectors; A cursory look at the 2020 budget proposal and other sundry matters, reveal the fact of de-prioritization of investment in core social welfare sectors such as water resources, agriculture and rural development and health. For instance, despite the revelation contained in the January 2020, Nigeria Water Sector Roadmap, that water sustain life and alleviate food poverty and about half of Nigerian population are without access to portable water supply, and the relatively low development of our water resources placed Nigeria among the groups of countries within the Sub-Saharan Africa that lose about 5% of GDP (or US dollars 28.4b annually), the budgetary allocation in 2020 for water resources sectors is N100b nearly half of the what it got in 2019 budget.

Also, the alarming rate of maternal mortality and the high prevalence rate of communicable diseases and HIV/AIDs among others, the health sector only got N282.77b, while Agricultural and Rural Development Sectors got N78.99b. in a sharp contrast with the above figure, Defence and Security sector alone got N921.9b (a staggering US\$5.947billion) or about 20% of the total budget. The figure is more than 3 times the health sector allocation, about 22 times bigger than that of the water resource; and more than 10 times the vote earmarked for agricultural and rural development.

d) Lack of Due Compliance with Constitutional Obligations by Political Office Holders; From the perspective of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended in 2011, any cost of governance that does not promote the progressive realization of the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principle of State Policy under chapter 2 of the constitution, is nothing but a clear manifestation of constitutional irresponsibility on the part of those who govern the country. Setting out the fundamental obligations of the government, Section 13 of the constitution places the duty and responsibility on all organs of governments and on all authorities and persons exercising legislative, executive or judicial powers to conform to the provisions of chapter 2 of the constitution.

The above proposition by Ladan brings to the fore the contradiction in the financial readiness by the executive, legislature and judiciary as against their responsibilities embedded in chapter 2 of the constitution as discussed above. Every year in Nigeria, we hear of increasing budgetary allocation at all levels of government across the country without any tangible result to show for this yearly fabulous and bogus budget due to lack of financial discipline on the part of politicians and other public office holders in the country.

Conclusion

The challenges of infrastructure development in Nigeria are many. The demand surpasses the supply and finance that will stimulate rapid provision is not there. Due to the wide gap between provision and needs, the leadership classes are in arrears in all sectors. The political situation is not encouraging to foreign investors. Governments do not set the priority right in infrastructure development. Projects are supposed to meet objectives, but in most cases, projects embarked upon are white elephant projects. Good governance will be the only antidote that can bridge the wide gap since it promotes accountability, reduces corruption and therefore minimises resource wastage through inefficiency.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made for the study:

1. There is urgent need to embrace faithfully the paradigm shift from the high cost of governance and state security investment approach to prioritized investment in human security and welfare consistent with the constitutional obligations place on all levels of organ and arms of government
2. It also becomes pertinent that all the constitutional mechanisms on legal control of budgeting and actual expenditure must be diligently and conscientiously attended to if only to ensure transparency, accountability and ultimately good governance.
3. Government should as a matter of sincerity be transparent in the formulation and implementation of budget to get higher percentage of execution, and the procurement process should be followed to be able to track government spending.
4. Nigerian leaders at all level should reduce the recurrent expenditure to a sustainable level through reducing waste, inefficiency, corruption and duplication of contracts in government as well as making capital expenditure more effective.
5. Citizens' participation in governance should be encourage to ensure prudence, transparency and accountability in the budgeting process.
6. The national assembly should merge, restructure and even repeal the enabling laws to ensure that nonessential agencies ceased to exist to prune down unnecessary expenditure.
7. Government should continue with the implementation of the monetization of benefits by ensuring that the practice of purchasing fleet of cars for public officers is discouraged, except ambulances, Black Maria, Hilux vans. The continued implementation of the monetization programme will save resources and cut down expenditure.
8. The number of commissioners in the State Executive Councils as well as special advisers and personal assistants to Nigerian Governors should be streamlined to optimum. Similarly, none of the appointed officials should have more than one official vehicle.
9. Regulatory agencies and authorities in Nigeria should ensure that all salaries and allowances of civil servants, public servants including political office holders conform to due process, constitutional provisions and existing financial rules and regulations. This will no doubt reduce friction and instability within the entire system.

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