

Application of Representative Bureaucracy in Nigeria: Implications for Development and National Cohesion

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Abstract

Bureaucracy plays very crucial role in the development of every nation. A representative bureaucracy is a much more veritable tool in fastening development and national cohesion. This work focused on analysis of the gains of the application of representative bureaucracy. From the statistics and formulae available, these gains are far-ranging from economic and social development to national cohesion as well as cultural integration. The return of liberal democracy has and is still hastening these developments.

“Every Nigerian has a right to share in the resources of our country, just like we all must collectively shoulder the responsibility other development and progress. The effective management of the economy call for the application of the sensibilities and aspirations of the various groups in the country and an acceptance of the dire need for balanced development and equitable access to socio-economic opportunities”.

- Late Gen. Sanni Abacha.

Introduction

My interest to do this work arose out of the genuine concern to examine in details the contribution of the Nigerian bureaucracy to the actualization of the developmental needs of this country as well as the urgent need to cause cohesion and stability in the polity which would in turn engender rapid development. This concern informed the choice of the subject-matter “the application of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria. It is indisputable that the nature of public administration everywhere is central to the stability and development of nation and its people. Thus, no understanding of the history and politics of any nation will be complete without a proper examination of the character of its bureaucratic set up.

Since independence in 1960, the Nigeria nation-state has been grappling with the problem of setting up a public service that would be development oriented and responding to the yearnings and aspirations of the people. This effort is evidenced in the several civil service reforms it has witnessed over the years. In contribution to the body of knowledge that already exist in the area; this work would take a look at the general definition of bureaucracy and representative b urea the basic assumption and argument in four of the concepts of representative bureaucracy as well as the Marxian perspective of this assumption. A brief example of representative bureaucracy in United States would be done. The paper shall dwell more on the application in Nigeria and the implication for development. This shall be explained with statistic or data information.

Definition and the Origin of Bureaucracy

For the purpose of this work, bureaucracy is defined as the administration of government through departments and sub-divisions managed by sets of officials, following an inflexible routine". Webster (1980) simply put public bureaucracy is that organ through which public interest and values are articulated, programmed into policies and implemented. Some of the characteristics of a bureaucracy are specialization, hierarchy, impersonality and security.

The development of the concept and the quest for a representative bureaucracy may be seen as part and parcel of the historical revolutionary process of continuous public demand for reforms, increasing democratization, redistribution of socio-economic resources, class conflict and a reaction against pervasive inequalities in society. The concept came with the European left-wing critics of a middle and upper class, dominated civil service who were disappointed with the simultaneous and apparently unconscious evolution of representative democratic political institutions and unrepresentative civil services in the course of last 150 years (Subramanian, 1967). The term was first used by Donald Kingsley in his book "Representative Bureaucracy" in 1944 and popularized by American and British social scientist. Kingsley had shown, that British civil service of his time was dominated by the upper and middle class citizen especially at the highest elections while the working class was under-represented. On the basis of the above, representative bureaucracy may therefore be defined as a bureaucracy in which a wide range of social and demographic categories of the people are represented according to their proportion in the population. These categories may be economic, geographical (region or states), social (castes) or religion. A less liberal interpretation of the term is more popular particularly in the United States where it is taken to connote in practice a bureaucracy "drawn from all social, racial, economic and religious groups on the basis of ability but not necessarily in exact numerical proportion to produce a copy of the total society". (Subramanian, 1967).

Assumptions and Argument for Representative Bureaucracy

The basic assumption of the concept of a representative bureaucracy is that if the attitude of administrators is similar to the attitudes held by the general public, the decisions administrators make would in general be responsible to the desires of the public (Meirerkan, 1976). Relfiiss (1986) observed that representativeness links the government with the citizens and clients through simply mirroring range of views, influence the decision-making process. He identified the former as "passive" representation and the latter as "active" representation, (Relfuss, 1986), Generally, the proponents have argued that a bureaucracy, which includes members of all social groups, ensures that all their different values and interest are articulated and this is brought to bear upon decisions taken and policies formulated. Advocates have also argued that any civil service that comprises of a cross section of the society in terms of occupation, class, geography and so on must be in tune with the ethos and attitudes of the society of which it is apart with the effect that a representative bureaucracy is bound to be more responsive to the needs of the public and more effective in giving and heeding public advice.

Thirdly, it is believed that a bureaucracy drawn from all classes provide the subordinate classes agents from their fold who act as checks against the conspiracy of the dominant classes who often pursue their class interest, entrenching and perpetuating themselves in the process. In this regard, the thinking is that deliberate government policies and bureaucracy actions can be taken to prevent the concentration of the national wealth in the hands of a few irrespective of the character of the

economic system in existence (CFRN, 1979). Fourthly, proponents assume that a representative bureaucracy is achieved by a system of recruitment, that is, performance oriented rather than ascription (or patronage) oriented. The Marxian analysis of representative bureaucracy is expectedly class based and emphasized the conflict in society. To Marxists, bureaucrats represent the class from which they are drawn. There are two strands of analyst here; the instrumentalists and the structuralists. The instrumentalists see the state and its bureaucracy as the "executive committee of the bourgeoisie". They argue that bureaucrats carry their class attitudes and prejudices into official life; and that most functionaries drawn from the bourgeois class tend to prevent the subordinate classes from having any meaningful influence in the society. For the structuralists, the argument is that the state is relatively autonomous, but because of the structure of the capitalist society, official functionaries would do nothing but serve the interest of the dominant class irrespective of their own class background.

In spite of their differences in that perception of the state both the structuralist and the instrumentalist believe that the state in either case serves the interest of the dominant class and the character of the state does not necessarily affect the basic function of the capitalist state which is managing class conflicts and ensuring the continued existence of the status quo. It is necessary that a brief look at the representative bureaucracy in other clime be taken, particularly the United States. The Americans are perhaps the foremost in the practice of representative bureaucracy. Here, they see it as a bureaucracy drawn from all social, racial and religious groups on the basis of ability- but not necessarily on exact proportion to produce a copy of the total society. The assumption here is that such a bureaucracy composed of individual with commitment to varied group interests, occupation and classes assured that internal bureaucratic struggles will produce broadly representative policies (Reinhard, 1949). The United States representative political institutions and representative civil services developed simultaneously. It is evident that the rapid development and profound national cohesion that America has witnessed over the decades are without dispute attributable to the representativeness of its institutions.

The Application in Nigeria

The need to adopt representative bureaucracy in Nigeria has a historical essence. In the first instance, the disparate development of the different geographical zones of the northern and southern parts of Nigeria particularly as it affected the education of their people during the colonial era and the need to balance the administrative and social as well as political structures for integrated national development of post-colonial Nigeria, made it very imperative from the on-set to adopt deliberate policies aimed at establishing a representative civil service for Nigeria. As Nwosu (1977), pointed out, "with a heterogeneous social environment characterized by powerful contenders of state authority, Nigeria perhaps more than any other African Country faces greater challenges to development and rational allocation of societal resources".

Given these contenders to state authority, a deliberate policy has always been pursued in the staffing of the Nigerian Federal Civil Service. This policy is enshrined in the Nigeria constitution of 1979 which provided *inter alia* that composition of the government of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the "federal character" of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and command national loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states few ethnic or sectional group in the government or any of its agencies". (NFC, 1979). The constitution further provided that the composition of a state, local government council or any of the agencies of such government or

council shall recognize the diversity of the peoples within the area of authority and the need to promote a sense of belonging and loyalty among the people of the federation” (CSR, 1988).

This constitution provisions demonstrates clearly Nigeria’s recognition of the need for a representative bureaucracy (one perceived to be a civil service consisting of people from every geographical, ethnic, religious and other sectional groupings).

It is envisaged that such a bureaucracy will ensure not only adequate representation of the differing interest in the country, but also secure maximum welfare and happiness of every citizen. The concept of representative bureaucracy is further pursued by the civil service reforms and establishment of federal character commission through the provision that make it imperative for recruitment in posts within grades levels 01-06 and 07 - 10, to take cognizance of the geographical spread of the applicants. A new dimension which Nigeria is reaping today is the coming of liberal democracy. Democracy has a tendency of protecting the interest of the minority and redistributing the national resources fairly equitably. Sectional and group rights can only be protected under democracy. The challenge, therefore, is to deepen democracy and make it more meaningful beyond rhetoric to the people. Bureaucratic capacity-building that reflects all the character of the country transforms governance and makes democracy dividends available to the people (Onoge, 2002). The state and the civil service (Administrative Machinery) are increasingly looked upon by the wider society to implement developmental goals such as the creation of new economic and political structures and infusing them with values and purposes, adaptation and reconstruction of old ones, and the acceleration of economic and social changes that will reduce unemployment, increase social products and ensure a more equitable redistribution of income. “Where sharing cannot be made on local government basis, it shall be done on the basis of senatorial districts such that no district shall have less than 30% or more than 35%” National level career post;

1. The indigenes of any state should not constitute less than 2.5% or more than 3% of all officers including junior staff at head offices. In the case of branches, a higher percentage of these categories of staff should be indigenes of the catchment area,
2. Where the number of vacancies is not large enough to go round the 36 states and FCT, they should be shared among the zones such that the indigenes of any zone should not constitute less than 15% or more than 18%,
3. Within a zone, the indigenes of any state in that zone should not constitute:
 - (i) Less than 12% or more than 15% in the case of North Central and North West, (ii) Not less than 15% or more than 18% in the case of north east, South-south and South-west and; (iii) Not less than 18% or more than 22% in the case of south-east and (iv) Appointment into the leadership of all ministries departments, full time commissions. Public corporations and tertiary institutions, the armed forces, police and other security agencies should be done such that each state or zone be represented equitably in accordance with appropriate formula.

Schedule of Formulae for Sharing and Distribution Posts State Level (Career Post)

State	No of L.G. A.	Average % Per L.G.A	Lower and Upper % Limit
Abia	17	5.88	4-7
Adamawa	21	4.76	4-7
Akwa Ibom	31	3.23	2-4

Anambra	21	4.76	4-7
Bauchi	20	5.00	4-6
Bayelsa	8	12.50	10-14
Benue	23	3.70	3-5
Borno	27	3.70	2-4
Cross River	18	5.55	4-7
Delta	25	4.00	3-5
Ebonyi	13	7.69	6-9
Edo	18	5.55	4-7
Ekiti	16	5.25	5-7
Enugu	17	5.88	4-7
Gombe	11	9.10	8-10
Imo	27	3.70	2-4
Jigawa	27	3.70	2-4
Kaduna	23	4.34	3-5
Kano	44	2.27	1-3
Kastina	34	2.29	2-5
Kebbi	21	4.76	4-7
Kogi	21	4.75	4-7
Kwara	16	6.25	5-7
Lagos	20	5.00	4-6
Nassarawa	13	7.69	6-9
Niger	25	4.00	3-5
Ogun	20	5.00	4-6
Ondo	18	5.55	4-7
Osun	30	3.33	2-4
Oyo	33	3.03	2-4
Plateau	17	5.88	4-7
Rivers	23	4.34	3-5
Sokoto	24	4.76	3-5
Taraba	16	5.25	5-7
Yobe	17	5.88	7-7
Zamfara	13	7.69	6-9
FCT	6	16.67	15-18

Source: Federal Character Commission, Port Harcourt.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL CAREER POSTS

No of Wards	Average % Per Ward	Lower and Upper % Limit
8	12.5	10-14
9	11.1	9-13

10	10.00	8-12
11	9.1	7-11
12	8.3	6-10
13	7.7	6-10
14	7.1	5-9
15	6.7	4-8

Source: Federal Character Commission, Port Harcourt.

Police Recruitment

Month	No of Constables
April 2003	88
May 2003	91
June 2003	88

Source: Recruitment Office, Police HQ, Port Harcourt.

NB: Data available for Rivers State alone.

The federal character principle was applied in allocating the above to Rivers and other States may have received similar number of new recruits depending on the range of percentage considered and due to that state. In general, recruitment of other ranks in the force at any point in time reflects appropriate formula and every state is equitably represented. Also, in told the recruitment of officer corps, the of uniformity is strictly observed, so that if at any given time, a nation-wide recruitment is conducted for this corps, the number recruited in one state is what goes round to others. The representation is on equality of state.

Implication for National Development

The gains of representative bureaucracy in a federal state like Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. One major reason why Nigeria has existed together particularly since its civil war experience cannot be far from the balancing effect of bureaucracy and the formulation of policies that by and large reflect the views and opinions of the several groups that constitute the federation. In concrete terms the implication for Nigeria shall be considered in the following area:

- (i) **Social Development:** Police have been formulated to be representative of the various geographical and social groups essentially because of the involvement of the group in bureaucratic decision-making. The resultant effect is that communities, local government areas and the states where these groups are drawn witness increase in social development programmes. The people are therefore linked with government and its activities. Areas such as peace-building, gender equality, empowerment of the local populace and minority groups have been receiving urgent attention through policy-making.
- (ii) **National Consciousness:** A bringing together of people from different social groups, religious and ethnic background as well as the minorities create a bond that is national in outlook. These national bonds raise national consciousness. These groups see themselves as people of one country, working together for the development of the nation.

(iii) **Cultural Integration:** The echos and attitudes of the society are integrated to produce cultural unity. There is a wide range of understanding and appreciation of different culture of different groups in the polity. This understanding unifies the people and fosters unity in diversity.

(iv) **Economic Development:** The operation of representative bureaucracy offers opportunity of all parts of the federation in task of nation building by promoting them from their various position of disadvantages to positions of competitiveness in all aspects of the economy and national life. This corroborates the views of Late General Sanni Abacha when he opined "that every Nigerian has a right to share in the resources of our country" and that the effective management of the economy call for the appreciation of the sensibilities and aspiration of the various groups, in the country.

(v) **Achievement of a Balance Federation:** The application of representative bureaucracy has the critical function of establishing a balanced federation through the active participation of all component units of Nigeria where no section shall be deprived or neglected. In fact, this view is canvassed in the guidelines, for distribution of posts in the public service of the federation, of the federal character commission.

(vi) **Creation of Bureaucratic Ideology:** This generates a binding force among all the bureaucrats and they hold to these ideals. This manifest at the national and state level bureaucracy unifies the thought and perception of public sector managers from the bureaucratic class perspectives. This unity of thought and ideals generates centripetal force in the country that make the federation persists and grows enhanced capacity for development. Flowing from the above, is also the fact that it is a machinery for increasing the influence of minorities in governance and policy-making, creating a sense of belonging and engender national loyalty among all the people of Nigeria.

Conclusion

This work has presented the merits of the application of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria. A genuine application of the formulae by all bureaucratic organization and all armed forces would definitely establish equity in the federation. The implication of these, are the fostering of national unity and loyalty, enhancement of social development, cultural integration, balanced federation, etc.

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