

INUWA ABDU IBRAHIM & HALILU BABAJI

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CONTROL AND CONTROL SYSTEMS OF ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

Public officials are required to possess certain values to adequately protect public interest, by being leaders that are servants of the people. The reality in Nigeria is leaders rule as masters of the people rather than servants. The paper looked at control and control systems of administration in Nigeria, its resultant consequences and ways of achieving true control of administrators and administration. Secondary source of data was adopted for the research. It concludes that the keys to administrative efficiency and effectiveness through control are implementation of the already existing procedures and laws, as well as commitment on the part of public officials.

*Keywords: **Accountability, Fraud, Administration, Nigeria.***

INTRODUCTION

THE need for government is based on ensuring the general wellbeing of the people. As such, people who occupy public office are expected to be servants and not masters of the people. They are to be neutral and impartial, accountable to the people, while responding to the needs and aspiration of the people among others. Public servants are lacking in the above areas and thus, irrelevant to the people and their needs. They are simply instruments of suppression and opposition.

Those at the corridors of power and authority in society no matter how humane they may be can sometimes behave irrationally and in the process abuse the power and authority of their office. When that happens, fundamentally human rights of citizens and their welfare would be at stake. It is in realization of the potential for abuses that over the years various administrations in Nigeria have articulated policies and measures designed to control administration to enhance transparency and accountability in the conduct of government affairs. Examples include General Murtala Muhammad's crusade of confiscation of assets

illegally acquired by Nigerians, Shehu Shagari ethnical revolution to combat corruption through the introduction of code of conduct for public servants, General Buhari's operation war against indiscipline, General Ibrahim Babangida's ethnic and social mobilization crusade etcetera. These efforts have largely been cosmetic attempts to address a systemic problem that is deep-rooted in the fabric of the country. In its efforts to fight corruption and create credibility to attract international investments, the Obasanjo Government among other things established the Economic and Financial crimes commission (EFCC) Act 2002. The EFCC is charged with wide-ranging responsibilities within the context of preventing, detecting, investigating and prosecuting all cases of economic and financial crimes in Nigerian.

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)

One can easily argue that corruption and indiscipline are two of the most serious problems, which have confronted the Nigerian political process since independence. According to (EFCC, 2007) the EFCC was created:

...to curb the menace of corruption that constitutes the cog in the wheel of progress; protect national and foreign investments in the country, imbibe the spirit of hard work in the citizenry and discourage ill gotten wealth; identify illegally acquired wealth and confiscate it; build an upright workforce in both public and private sectors of the economy and; contribute to the global war against financial crimes.

According to (Obuah, 2010) the above is the reason for the creation of EFCC in 2002 by the Nigerian government. The creation of EFCC marked a significant shift from rhetorical talks about fighting corruption to actually doing something and fighting corruption. In the past, efforts by previous governments to provide the legal framework to combat corruption included, but is not limited to; the creation of the National Drug Enforcement Agency in 1989, the Money Laundering Act of 1995, the Advance Fee Fraud and Related offences Act of 1995, the Bank and other Financial Institutions Act of 1991, the Miscellaneous Offences Act of 1985; and the Foreign Exchange Miscellaneous Offences Act of 1995.

One of the most persistent problems in Nigeria is corruption. Everyone talks regarding it and condemns it. However, everyone seems to be guilty of it. No doubt, Nigerians are damn intelligent folks who unfortunately use it to the detriment of the system. Most corrupt public servants operate with impunity. They know who to see, settle and how to maneuver their way around the system. Some have turned corruption into a career by competing with other corrupt personalities in their quest to amass public funds illegally.

The way to get a certificate of job completion while not ever knowing the location of the project. They are going to tell you ways to process your papers for payment, with little or no hindrance. It is about knowing how to reflect the settled but unpaid project into the following years' budget; this is the reality in Nigeria. Despite the corrupt practices of these so-called public servants, you still see them as keynote speakers at community functions and church events. The poor masses applauding them with the knowledge that most of them are reason behind the deteriorating situation of the Nigerian state. In cases where they are even successfully tried and jailed they suddenly fall sick which is their get out of jail card, from the hospital the case is miraculously erased from public domain. Cecelia Ibru, who stole from the defunct Oceanic Bank is a good example. She was jailed, however suddenly took ill and was rushed to hospital, it is unclear when her jail term started and when it was completely served.

Hon Farouk Lawan is another example, even after admitting collecting dollars worth millions of naira has had his case silently dispensed with out of public view. Such cases usually receive administrative or executive bail.

Today most of the corrupt public officials are now senators or members of the house of representatives. The key is just to bribe the right people at the right time. Little wonder that today most of the states cannot pay salaries of civil servants. Absence of effective and efficient control and control systems of administration, resulting in the domination of the majority by the minority.

A (Buhari, 1999) observes that over the years Nigeria has established the dubious reputation as a place where nothing ever is done until money changes hands, because of which it has become the country with one of the highest cost of contracts in the world. To him projects executed in the country have often been priced more than 300 percent above what obtains in other comparable developing countries. Similarly, there are no evidences to suggest that wealth and its mode of acquisition was frowned at (Hambagda, 1996). In the view of (Wapmuk, 2001) people holding public office in Nigeria flagrantly abuse and divert funds for personal and family use. Managers of resources become millionaires or billionaires during their tenure as public officers. They erect mansions and purchase different kind of properties, while their salaries are known to be modest.

Ways of Controlling Administrative Powers (Non-Judicial)

In a country like Nigeria, this shares governmental powers (Federalism) between the central, states and Local governments. (Malemi, 2008) asserts that such governments and their agencies exercise great powers. The need to control the powers of public administrators is because of the dangers in the discharge of administrative powers. Such powers affect and do determine the political, economic and social conditions or direction

of lives of the society. The need to properly limit and control the powers of government and public officials thus, becomes pertinent. There are several ways and means of getting government and administrative authorities to change or abandon its stance to reflect public demands. Some of which is through peaceful assembly, rally and protest, and through referendum.

The peaceful assembly, rally and protest are fully recognized as a fundamental right in western democracies. A good example is governments' decision to increase the price of petroleum products from 65 naira to 141 naira, which was later changed to 97 naira by the Jonathan administration due to Nigerian Labour Congress organized protest.

Referendum can be used to decide recall issues of members of the national assembly. A referendum is a vote by the people to decide an issue. The outcome or result of the vote becomes the government's decision on the matter. An instance was when Nigeria was about to achieve independence from the colonial masters, the question before the English speaking Cameroun was whether it should join Nigeria. The issue was subjected to a vote and the northern part of the English speaking Cameroun voted to join Nigeria, while the southern part of the English speaking Cameroun voted to join Cameroun.

Conclusion

From the above, it is apt to assert that successive governments in relation to control and control systems of administration in Nigeria made numerous efforts. This view is supported by (Ribadu, 2004) who asserts that noble and desirable efforts were initiated, either they were strangled due to inadequate enabling laws and regulations or neglected for apparent lack of commitment on the part of stakeholders to fight corruption in high places.

The key to administrative efficiency and effectiveness through control is implementation of the already existing procedures and laws, as well as commitment on the part of public officials. Through the following:

The thorough implementation of laws by successive governments is what was lacking in previous policies and programmes. What is needed but lacking is sincere implementation. Public officials should rededicate themselves to the progress and overall development of the country as only Nigerians can decide the future of their country. Nigeria is the only country that we can call our own.

The non-judicial remedies for controlling administrators and administration should be optimally utilized. This method of control seems to be working in Nigeria. The just concluded protest in the form of strike by the Academic Union of Universities (ASUU) is a clear example.

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The organized pressure groups including the media have a role to play in enlightening the public as to their rights, and the actions and inactions of the administrators and administration. An informed public makes for a better administration. For those in positions of authority abusing the oath of office, the public could utilize such control measures as petition, peaceful assembly, rally and protest etcetera.

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