

The Epicurean of Government Bridle and Performance in the Abia State Environmental Protection Agency (Asepa) 2012 - 2019

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Abstract: *This paper examined the epicurean of government bridle and performance in the abia state environmental protection agency (ASEPA). . The study was informed by the reality that many public sector organizations have not done well enough due to poor performance occasioned by poor funding and political patronage resulting in the recruitment of staff some of whom are without the requisite competences. The broad objective of this study is to examine how ASEPA as a public service agency can be engaged in efficient service delivery in Abia state. To that extent, two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and primary data were also utilized. The descriptive survey method was adopted while Taro Yameni formula was used to determine the sample size. Data collected were presented in tables by way of descriptive statistics and the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA); a parametric statistical test was used to test the hypotheses. The research found that poor funding and political interference which negates competences of staff limited the performance of ASEPA as appointment of members of staff especially the governing board including the chief executive officer is mostly on political patronage. Consequently, quality of guidance and directions that are required to achieve organizational goals are compromised. Therefore, the study recommends that public sector agencies should be people oriented as to provide solutions to the reason for which it was created in the first instance and thus reduce political interference. In like manner, that the agency should be properly supported financially such that it is adequately funded to enable it meet financial obligations like repairs and acquisition of new equipment apart from remuneration and it further recommended that a feedback, complaint or redress mechanism be instituted such that members of the public who feel aggrieved or dissatisfied by services provided or not rendered can be reported and that way, it becomes a useful management information that will help to improve service delivery.*

Keywords: ASEPA, Bridle, Environment, political Interference, Political Patronage, Protection Agency

Background of the Study

The Abia State Environmental Protection Agency (ASEPA) seem to be one public service organization that has impacted negatively on the citizenry mostly because the people know it for all the wrong reasons such as litters dropping from their old, rickety over filled and open refuse conveying trucks, unevacuated and overflowing refuse buckets lining some major streets, appointment of persons most of whom do not possess requisite skills into the agency etc. this is not surprising as ASEPA has not procured new and modern equipments for refuse evacuation as is generally seen, and does not seem to have the right and proper guidance from its leadership.

The implication of the above is that there is need to reduce government control of public service organizations like ASEPA, otherwise, performance or efficient service delivery will continue to elude the agency and the citizenry will be the net loser. It is this situation that has led the researcher into this attempt to ascertain the effect of government control and the performance of public sector organizations like ASEPA.

It should be noted that the primary purpose of government is to improve quality of life of citizens, to do this; Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) are established to provide services to the people. For the citizen, public institutions have a social obligation to render service; they therefore have a legitimate expectation to be provided with good services without a commercial motive. Often, because of the nature of services that are meant to be provided, public institutions have no real competition and the citizen has no choice but to use government services.

It is probably on this premise that the Nigerian government has recognized that no public sector process can be credible or sustainable without demonstrable performance or service delivery. Indeed, there is no gain saying the fact that service delivery is the object and subject of all reform efforts and initiatives in the public service. It is such disturbing situations that must have prompted other researchers such as Awoyinfa (2011) to believe that the quality of service delivery provided by public institutions has been very poor over the years. For him, the inefficiency which characterized these services has sadly crept into the private sector. Little wonder the average Nigerian citizen is daily assaulted with poor customer service delivery by operators in almost all sectors of the economy.

To properly situate this study, it is pertinent to appreciate what public sector organizations are and the need for it to genuinely improve the lives of the citizenry through service delivery. Accordingly, these organizations are agencies of

government that are quasi or semi permanent organizations responsible for oversight and administration of specific functions. These organizations can also be called organizations of the public service, where public service refers to all public institutions which implement public policy. Public service according to Akpan (1982) is defined as comprising members of all public institutions financed and maintained by the taxpayers, and the emoluments of whose members, regularly authorized by the legislature acting in concert with the executive.

It is important to note that, Okpata (2008), Ojo and Oyedele (2009), Nwankwo (2009), Ikejiani-Clark (2009) and Ademolekun (2011) all agree that the public sector is concerned with governmental administration and management of public affairs. In addition, the public service stand out as a major machinery of government for the formulation and implementation of public policies, it does this by translating the plans and programmes of government into concrete public goods and services for the use and benefit of the citizenry.

The above assertion suggests that the public sector is designed for public management with particular emphasis on the process of change which according to Newton (2002) will also bring out the unique challenges facing public sector organizations as well as resource and performance management, employment and service. It is such disturbing situations that must have prompted other researchers such as Awoyinfa (2011) to believe that the quality of service delivery provided by public institutions has been very poor over the years. For him, the inefficiency which characterized these services has sadly crept into the private sector. Little wonder the average Nigerian citizen is daily assaulted with poor customer service delivery by operators in almost all sectors of the economy.

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The above assertion suggests that the public sector is designed for public management with particular emphasis on the process of change which according to Newton (2002) will also bring out the unique challenges facing public sector organizations as well as resource and performance management, employment and change management in addition to accountability management. Improving service delivery is without doubt a cardinal pillar in the act of governance. Therefore, managerial and corporate governance revolve around how best to engender efficient service delivery by organizations of the public sector.

The ability of the public sector to efficiently manage public affairs especially as it concerns issues of the environment has always been called to question over the years; that these government agencies are usually financially semi-autonomous bodies created by enabling laws as pointed out by Akpan (1982) cannot be denied. They are usually responsible to the general public or citizenry through the Board of Directors (BoD). Interestingly, the BoD of some of these agencies are oftentimes composed of persons who are not knowledgeable or skilled in the art of administration and are sometimes appointed as either chairperson or director irrespective of their administrative skills and technical competence.

According to Awoyinfa (2011), Nigeria is in dire need of quality public services. Good quality public services delivered in cost-effective ways are integral to social and economic development. They have the potential to enhance democratic processes by promoting fairness, civic responsibility and social cohesion. They add public value to a country in terms of its attractiveness as a place to live, work and invest.

Nevertheless, Ademolekun (2011), Ojo and Oyedele (2009) citing decree 45,1988 agree that organizations of the public sector are

usually known to perform or charged with these functions-

- a) attainment of government objectives, aims and policy.
- b) promotion of a better execution of the laws and programmes of the of government.
- c) efficient and expeditious administration of government business.
- d) reduction of expenditure and improvement of the economy to the fullest extent consistent with efficiency in the operation of government.
- e) increased efficiency in the implementation of government policies and programmes to the fullest extent practicable through the encouragement of specialization of personnel and through other measures.

Despite the *vantage* and yet vintage position that the public sector occupy, Adamolekun (1986) opines that it has often come under severe criticism over the years for poor organization, planlessness, over staffing or over-establishment, indiscipline, red tapism, secrecy, insensitivity, rigidity, over centralization, conservatism, apathy, poor and/or lack of imagination, incompetence, favouritism, corruption, rudeness, high-handedness, truancy, laziness etc. this situation simply suggest that the goals and aspirations of the public sector in improving the general welfare of the citizens cannot be achieved.

According to NEST (1992), in Nigeria, it took pressure for the discerning public and the intellectual community before a national policy on the environment was launched. This was so in spite of the prevalence of severe environmental crises such as soil erosion, flooding, health hazards, gas flaring, incidence of oil spillage, deforestation, unsanitary urban conditions, etc.

The need to protect the Nigerian environment now and for the future became apparent after the 1998 dumping of toxic waste at the Koko Port in Delta State a few years after the Earth Summit in Brazil which is the United Nations' Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, in June of 1992. The waves of concern and awareness especially as championed by the press made the Federal Government of Nigeria to realize that the environment belongs to the present and future Nigerians and as such must be protected.

The aftermath of this environmental awareness campaign culminated in the creating or setting up of a Federal Environment Protection Agency (FEPA) in 1988 and its counterparts-the State Environmental Protection Agencies (SEPA) about six (6) years later.

seems to fuel the problems of the agency such as poor funding, poor competences or poor technical skills of staff and political interference. These have made the problems facing the agency to become even more intractable.

Research Questions

In undertaking this research, the following research questions were posed-

1. How has political patronage affected service delivery in ASEPA?
2. In what ways has funding affected service delivery in ASEPA?

The Public Sector and Service Delivery

That Nigeria is in dire need of quality public services cannot be over exaggerated. Good quality public services delivered in cost-effective ways are integral to social and economic development. They have the potential to enhance democratic processes by promoting fairness, civic responsibility and social cohesion. They add public value to a country in terms of its attractiveness as a place to live, work and invest.

Mutahaba and Kiragu (2002) have argued that public service institutions are part of a global phenomenon that has touched all parts of the world- developed, developing, and countries in transition. In like manner, Gboyega and Abubakar (1989) have argued that at independence in 1960, the Nigerian public service was regarded as one of the most important legacies of some sixty years of British colonial rule. Moreover, given the performance of the public service in the first few years of independence, there was great hope that the expectation of Nigerians for rapid socio-economic development would be fulfilled with reasonable efficiency. This was because according to Agagu (2008), giant strides were taken in the provision of social infrastructures and capital investments. It is instructive to note that by the mid

1980's, the Nigerian public service was far from being ideal. As such Adegoroye (2006) avers that it was tradition-bound, somewhat ponderous and showing signs of deterioration. Indeed, at that point in time, the civil service was displaying a patent inability to cope effectively with the challenges of modern, complex and development hungry society.

It must have been on the strength of this that Obasanjo (2003) further noted that public services and offices are the shopping floor for government business. Regrettably, Nigerians have for too long been short-changed by the quality of public service delivery by which decisions are not made without undue outside influence and files do not move without being pushed with inducements, our public offices have for too long been showcases for the combined evils of inefficiency and corruption, whilst being impediments to effective implementation of government policies. Nigerians deserve better and we will ensure they get what is better.

It is pursuant to the objective of getting around the problem of inefficiency and poor service delivery that a diagnostic audit team of experts was commissioned in December 2003 by President Obasanjo to:

- Review the state of service delivery in Nigeria,
- Examine institutional environment for service delivery,
- Reflect on people's views and experiences and
- Draw a road map for service delivery programme.

There is need for a far reaching transformation of Nigerian society through a service delivery programme as a step in the process of moving to a government that is more in touch with the people. It was on this basis in March 2004 that a special Presidential retreat deliberated on the report of the diagnostic audit and ended with a conclusion of entering into a Service Compact with all Nigerians. By this token, a machinery for institutionalizing efficient public service delivery in Nigeria was initiated such that the Nigerian public is provided services as clients, as consumers, as citizens, but most importantly as customers.

In a bid to achieve an effective service delivery output across the country, state governments adopted the initiative of ensuring that their public services deliver on services to the people, hence its adoption in the Abia State Environmental Protection Agency part of whose responsibility it is to maintain a healthy environment for her customers who are the citizens of the state.

Theoretical Framework

The Scientific Management Theory forms the framework for this study. Frederick Taylor (1856-1915), American industrial engineer developed a detailed system intended to gain maximum efficiency from both workers and machines in the factory. These systems relied on time and motion studies, which help determine the best methods for performing a task in the least amount of time. The basis of this theory as put forward by Taylor are its efficiency and economy much the same way that the objective of management is to extract maximum prosperity for both the employer and employee which can only be achieved when management discovers the most efficient method of job performance. Accordingly, this theory emphasizes rationality, predictability, specialization including technical competence. The implication is that organizations can reach greater efficiency by greater specialization actions. Taylor laid great stress on scientific selection and systematic training and development of the individual worker. Although Taylorism is now a universal phenomenon, it did not however take developing areas like Abia state and its cultural affinity into consideration thus issues of political patronage/interference and poor funding of the public service where not taken into account in this theory. It should be noted that the study of public sector performance in Abia state cannot be fully appreciated without these variables. Taylorism as the theory has come to be known according to Armstrong (2006); Robbins and Judge (200?) made significant contributions to public administration in several ways that are not limited to-

- a) This theory contributed to greater specification of activities with proper design of jobs, specialization of methods and set time, motion studies and establishment of standards of job performance. These have in no small measure contributed to greater efficiency in administration.
- b) The theory has led to professionalization in management such that present day management practices have specialized training and management cadre. These owe its origin to Taylorism.
- c) It has led to the optimization of resources by reduction in wastages of human and material resources.

Public Sector in Nigeria

The current drive in Nigeria and elsewhere to improve management in governments through service delivery programmes according to Fatile and Adejuwon (2010) is to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and the delivery of quality service to the public. The reason according to Lawanson and Adeoye (2013) for there to be improvements in the public sector performance is because The Nigerian Public Sector was oversized and poorly remunerated, resulting in poor service delivery.

The public sector has, for long, enjoyed a pride of place, as it has become the major provider of various services, including regulatory and distributive. Generally, all societies have some forms of public service provisions for reasons of economics and moral responsibility. Governments, in many parts of the world as posited by Olagboye, (2005) are structurally and constitutionally tied to the public sector, irrespective of the system of government. This according to Agagu (2008) explains why the relationship between the government and the public sector in Nigeria endured in spite of the various forms of governments the country has been experimenting with since independence.

However, rapid public service recruitment under the military as pointed out by Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaoko (2007) had resulted in an oversized and underskilled work force in which employees often did not have the appropriate technical skills needed for their assignments. Omoyefa (2008) posits that good governance and efficient public administration or performance is regarded as a wishful thought without public sector reform that will result into efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of government to the yearning of its citizens. This could only be gauged through the lenses of its public sector performance.

In Nigeria, for instance, the Public Sector Reform (PSR) has been on the agenda for a number of years. As noted by Obasanjo (2005):

... for without a transparent and effective public service, government business and service delivery to the public will be crippled and mired in dishonesty and graft. I am convinced that an efficient, transparent and accountable public service should be the hallmark of our democratic transformation and development. The Nigerian people deserve nothing less.

Anazodo, Okoye and Chukwuemeka (2012) identified what some of the ills of the Nigerian public service have been at various times. For instance the 1995 Alison Ayida Commission, was instituted to review past public service reforms in Nigeria with a view to proffering measures to further re-invigorating the service, it identified the major ills of the service, which needed to be corrected such that dynamism is improved and effectiveness is entrenched into the civil service. Furthermore, Adegoroye (2006) identified among others, politicization of the top hierarchy of the civil service; lack of financial accountability and probity; perpetual breakdown of discipline; virtual institutionalization of corruption at all levels and segments of the service; disregard for rules and regulations.

Though the Nigerian public service has undergone changes and transformation over the years, unfortunately, successive reforms have not made significant impact to reengineer the public sector. These reforms were tailored towards achieving efficiency and effectiveness of the service because of the belief of successive governments that a thorough-bred public service was necessary for effective delivery of public good, regrettably, the public service has continuously failed to deliver.

Adegoroye (2006) and Anazodo et al (2012) agree that a major reference point in attempting to reposition the public service in Nigeria was the Civil Service Review Commission headed by Jerome Udoji which was the first to discuss the issue of efficiency in the public service. Its main purpose was to conduct a comprehensive review of the standards of service and compensation in the civil service and public corporations. Apart from the preoccupation with wages and salaries, the Commission recommended a unified and integrated administrative structure, the elimination of waste and removal of deadwoods/inefficient departments and the introduction of a results-oriented public service that functioned on the basis of management by objective. Sadly, the goals of the reforms were not achieved. The Commission is better known only for the salary increases it gave to public service workers.

It is on the basis of these that this study proceeds to review efforts in this regard by other researchers in Nigeria and elsewhere.

Political Interference and Service Delivery

As noted earlier, one of the reasons for poor performance of the public service is basically because there is no political autonomy. By this the researcher refers to the ability of the public service organization to take decision on its own without recourse to the executive branch of government which appointed it and to that extent, it thus appears that it serves the interest of a few persons or the elite represented by the executive branch of government. Generally, political interference in the operations of some, if not all the public sector organizations is one factor militating against performance or efficient service delivery. Nwede (2012) opines that the net result of this unwarranted political interference is the reduction in revenue of such organization and increasing cost of production which make them economically unviable to maintain.

The point being made here is that sometimes, the political elite through the executive branch will appoint party members or those close party members that played one role or another during the electioneering period as revenue collectors for public service organizations. This is for them one best way to 'settle' them for their role in getting the incumbent to power thus entrenching clienteles. Under such circumstance, the revenue collection process is contracted out after the party man has made paltry payment to the government and whatever revenue that accrues thereafter is private or personal and it is usually well in excess of what was paid to the government. ASEPA represents an organization where such situation holds true. The implication is that there will be reduction in revenue accruing to the agency.

Furthermore, the Board of Directors of most of these organizations does not possess final authority on issues affecting them as they often await the approval of the authority that appointed them. The effect is that meaningful planning and programme execution is hardly realized as lack of equipments including operational vehicles which are part of such plans that must be made in a bid to achieve performance is negated.

Related to the above is the fact that staff of public service organizations are suppose to acquire skills, knowledge and possess professional competence in the administration of public resources, if efficient services are to be delivered, unfortunately, this is diametrically opposed to the prevailing situation were public sector organizations seem to now be an all comers affair. The issue of leadership within public organizations is assuming a new dimension and now extends to a range of staff with resource management responsibilities. New processes are emerging for leading change and focusing complex organizations. So, preference is given to leadership qualities and structure in the public sector in order to deliver on performance.

In this regard, political patronage plays out in the sense that the appointing authority usually from the executive branch will meddle with appointments of staff most of whom are either their relations or friends and so many of whom are without requisite qualifications. This is usually one way the political class lay claims to being important and relevant to the admiration of their political supporters that they have provided job opportunities for their acolytes. The implication for the public service is that with such calibre of persons, those without requisite qualifications and those who did not make any genuine effort to get the job, their output can only be imagined and in the end, performance is seriously impeded as these are borne absolutely out of political considerations.

Teresa et al (2007) which adopted a historical and exploratory analytical technique in her study observed that public sector agencies are faced with the problem of political patronage, corruption etc. Olowo (2011) posits that the primary responsibility of the public service is to deliver services that the private sector may not deliver at all, or to deliver services to those who cannot afford the market price of the product. He further stated that the ability of government to legitimately levy taxes and govern the people is premised on its capacity to deliver a range of services required by its population which no other player will provide. For Adamolekun (2011), government owes its existence and legitimacy to the fact that there are services in which the possibility of market failure is great.

It should be pointed out according to Olowu (2011) that services are classified in several ways; those that can be financed by user charges are referred to as utilities; those that can only be financed by taxes are referred to as services. Similarly, goods

and services that require exclusion, jointness of use or consumption and not easily divisible are regarded as public goods and services.

Funding of the Public Sector and Service Delivery: The Nexus

Despite the fact that organizations of the public service are designed for effective and efficient service delivery, there is no gain saying the fact that service has cost. It is probably on this premise that Teresa, Ionti and Isabelle (2007) asserted that proper funding and financial incentives could lead to increased performance in the management of government agencies and the overall performance of public sector organizations. Their study thus recommends proper funding among other things to aid government agencies for enhanced performance and service delivery.

Funding is the act of providing resources, usually in form of money i.e. financing of a project or a public institution. Funding here is the process of ensuring that adequate monetary allocations are made available to various agencies that constitutes the public sector. It should be understood that every fund or monetary allocation made to any public sector agency is based on budgetary action. It should be pointed out then, that public sector services are expected to be free or at a minimal cost.

According to the 2009 Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) African Governance Report (AGR) II, the accessibility, reliability and affordability of public services are major indicators of a country's quality of life and welfare. As a matter of fact, a government that fails to deliver the expected public services generates frustration and disillusionment and loses the trust of the people. The public is more likely to feel confident in the government if their expectations for quality and affordable public services are met.

Perhaps the extent to which premium is placed on activities of the environmental protection agency is how much budgetary allocation is assigned to its supervising department which is the Ministry of Environment. As obtainable from the Budget Office of the Federation website, the monetary allocation to the Ministry in 2011 was N17.891 billion; the figure dropped N14.400 billion in 2012. Although, the figure improved in 2013 to N24.455 billion out of the N4.925 trillion national budget, it only represented 0.5% of the budget, the allocation further dwindled to N21.661 billion in 2014 which is also 0.5% of the N4.643 trillion national budget, if the annual budgetary allocation to the environment is less than 1%, then, the AGR II report can only but hold true. In as much as the figures presented here are those of the federal budget, it none the less reflects the position of the State or Regional government budgets since the States usually copy the actions of the federal government as far as public policy and budgetary actions are concern. The question that may arise here will be, how can the environmental protection agency be optimal in its performance if funding is insufficient? Will it be capable of appointing the requisite caliber of personnel to drive its objectives? Will it be capable of acquiring the necessary and needed equipment for the execution of its mandate? These pertinent questions are indeed endless and this is why it is important and yet necessary that the agency should be sufficiently and properly funded.

Assessment of the Public Sector and Service Delivery in Africa

In a study on public sector organizations in the Republic of Ghana, Ayee (2011) noted that most public sector institutions and organizations lack expertise in critical areas such as policy analysis, planning, budgeting and accounting. These have led to bureaucratic attitude and behaviour which are generally unresponsive to the needs of the public. Ayee (2011) further observed that the weak institutional capacity of the public sector is mainly responsible for the inefficiency and incompetence of personnel in the discharge of functions and in the management and use of resources.

Similarly, Ngouo (2011) observes in his study of public sector institutions in Republique du Cameroun (Republic of Cameroon) that a reserve of human resource is available, generally, very qualified but just needing to be optimally used or utilized. This is basically because of undue government interference (politicization) in public sector organizations. Howbeit, Ngouo (2011) noted further that the desired impact might never be seen if there are no positive results, this is because of the low level of behaviour of public officials especially the leaders. This makes other actors to question the sincerity of the speeches they deliver and this further negates the essence of having qualified personnel as they are not optimized.

In like manner, Laleye (2011), in his findings of the study of public service organizations in Benin Republic, noted that part of the weaknesses he found was that there is rigid personnel management practices that brought about weaknesses in governmental administrative actions. He concluded that politicization and inability to be flexible, efficient and proactive shows that public service organizations have not been successfully repositioned for efficiency.

Again, Ayeni and Obasi (2011) in their study of promoting efficiency and effectiveness in the management of public service institutions in the Republic of Botswana, noted that whereas there has been considerable enforcement of public accountability especially with the use of a central public service management agency with overarching policy and executive authority, combined with a more politically sensitive public service commission, it has proved to be a useful institutional arrangement to keep politics at bay in favour of enhanced professionalism. Despite this, the stock of qualified and skilled personnel remains largely inadequate and most acute in the area of health and environmental issues; this situation has constrained and frustrated the implementation of government laudable policies.

In addition, Kiragu and Kariuki (2011) in their review of public service organizations in the Republic of Kenya found out that whereas there have been reforms initiated in the public administration of the Government of Kenya (GoK), there has remained abuse of power, political patronage in public service appointments and rampant corruption. Furthermore, they noted that one long standing problem that epitomizes the weaknesses in public sector organizations is the failure to deliver services efficiently and as a result, public sector service delivery is generally limited in both scope and quality. To worsen the situation, GoK has an over blotted public sector organizations even when the wage bill is comparatively high at 8.5% of GDP thus worsening budget deficits. This continuous intake of personnel is actually undertaken on the basis of existence of authorized vacancies but this is often done without consideration of the real needs and how efficiency and effectiveness can be brought to bear on service delivery in Kenya.

There is no gain saying the fact that service delivery provided or delivered by public service institutions is directly related to good governance which is understood to encapsulate both formal and informal actors involved in the process of arriving at and implementing decisions necessary for the attainment of public prosperity that put well-being within the reach of all. Nwankwo (2009) posits that governance is procedural and purposive^ that is, it is goal oriented. This goal is a situation in which the needs of the community are actually provided for and its growing wants successively met. Furthermore, Nwankwo (2009) notes that there are two dimensions of the concept of governance, namely, administrative and political. For him, the administrative dimension is much older and very technical in nature and it operationally includes a) rule of law b) accountability c) transparency d) efficiency and effectiveness.

Efficiency and effectiveness are two variables in public sector service delivery that are important in securing good governance. Effectiveness here is understood as the ability of a government to meet the needs and expectations of those within its immediate domain. Efficiency, on the other hand require according to Nwankwo (2009) public service agencies not just to meet its responsibilities to the governed in terms of substantive outcomes but that it does so making the best use of the resources at its disposal. This demands minimizing waste and undesirable features in the system. In like manner, Osisioma (2012) opines that good governance is that process by which public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee sustainable human development in an atmosphere of due process and rule of law, free from abuse and corruption. He further stated that the true test of good governance is the degree to which it delivers on the promises of human rights, civil, cultural, economic, political and social right. It is the thinking of this paper that for the public service agencies to properly drive and deliver services efficiently, it must be within the framework of functional public institutions that are desirous of improving the well being of the people especially as it is contained in its objectives.

Apart from the rule of law/, human rights, dignity etc. as constituting the elements of good governance, Ibodje (2012) identifies issues of predictability of institutional performance and behaviour for the general well being of citizens as being part of elements of good governance. At any rate, Okpata (2012) and Ibodje (2012) have observed with dismay that whereas accountability is zero as public resources are steadily stolen by public officials with apparent connivance of the chief executive, institutions of government are no longer predictable as they function only at the pleasure of their principals thus suggesting how much political patronage is perpetrated.

Composition of the Studying Population

DEPARTMENTS IN ASEPA	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Administration	19	16	35
Account & Supply	19	11	30
Sanitation & Health	5	3	8
Industrial Pollution, Control & Inspectorate	20	7	27
Public Relation	4	4	8
Waste Management & Labouratory Services	16	9	25
Planning, Research & Evaluation	11	4	15
Total	94 (64%)	54 (36%)	148 (100%)

Others	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
ASEPA Field Operations (Contract Staff-sweepers and evacuators)	57	40	97
Auto Mechanics/Panel Beaters/Auto Electrician	50	5	55

Barbers/Hair Dressers/Stylists	49	53	102
Motor Bike/Tri-Cycle Operators (Keke)	742	0	742
Market Women/Men	634	547	1*181
Students (Tertiary & Secondary)	110	110	220
Tailors /Fashion Designers/Boutiques	45	23	68
Shopping : Malls/ Supermarkets/Corner Shops	12	11	23
Hoteliers/Restaurant Operators	14	18	32
Bus/Taxi Drivers	403	0	403
Total	2'075 (71%)	848 (29%)	2'923 (100%)
Grand Total	2'169	902	3'071(100%)

Summary of Findings

This study set out to assess the effect of government control on public service institutions such as the Abia State Environmental Protection Agency (ASEPA). Data was collected using responses of the 354 respondents that participated in the study. The following were found

1. That ASEPA has not impacted significantly on the citizens of Abia State because of political patronage. This has been demonstrated by interfering in its activities or the running of the agency by the appointing authority including the appointment of party members who do not possess the requisite knowhow or technical competences into sensitive positions of the organization such as the governing board and top leadership, this waters down the quality of guidance and directions that the staff receives towards achieving organizational goals.
2. That poor funding has significantly limited the efficiency or performance of the agency. This can be seen in the fact that operational equipment are hardly purchased or procured and maintained. Accordingly, there is high frequency of breakdown which ultimately slows down service activities and thus prevents efficiency of services. This ultimately compromises organizational goals.

Conclusion

Public service organizations which are concerned with governmental administration and management of public affairs have become major machinery for the formulation and implementation of public policies; these policies may never be achieved when the government has undue interference or control on such agencies like ASEPA. It should be noted that one of the reasons for lofty government plans and programmes like environmental protection and administration through agencies like ASEPA is to create concrete public good and services to the use and benefit of the citizenry. The citizenry can only benefit when such services are efficiently delivered suggesting that the government is meeting the needs of the people through such agency thereby justifying the reason for establishing the organization.

This study as already pointed out sought to assess the effect of government on organizations of the public service like ASEPA. The results arising from this study show that the Abia State Environmental Protection Agency has not made significant impact on the citizens and yet poor funding and politicization or political patronage have limited the ability to achieve its mandate.

It is the contention of this paper that concerted effort should be made to properly fund the agency by making adequate budgetary allocation to it, employ persons with requisite skills and competences and as much as possible avoid, reduce or even eliminate political patronage so that the agency can successfully deliver on its mandate and thus make the desired impact on the citizens.

Recommendations

In consideration of the findings of this study, there is no gain saying the fact that ASEPA has not fared well in the execution of its

mandate in Abia State. The combined strangulations of poor funding, lack of skilled personnel and political patronage have kept the citizenry out of receiving the maximum positive impact which should be accruable to them. Accordingly, this paper recommends thus-

- a. Public sector agencies should be people oriented and driven by the need to provide solutions to the problems that brought about initiating the programme for which the agencies are created. One such action toward this actualization is to ensure that politicization is avoided to the barest minimum or completely eliminated. This will go a long way to prove that the management and administrative acumen of those appointed into the governing board of these agencies is not in doubt. It will also in no small measure ensure that proper guidance is provided for the organization to reach its mandate, aims or goals.
- b. There is need for organizations of the public sector to be adequately provided for financially especially through budgetary allocations such that there is sufficient fund to meet its obligation that will improve performance. It is only when service is efficiently provided that the people will be happy. That way, the greater good is achieved for the society.
- c. Most importantly, the real test of whether or not there is a commitment to efficient public service delivery is to set up effective avenues or means to provide redress for those who feel that they have a legitimate complaint about the service they have received or the service they have been refused. Complaints systems should be used as a source of management information to quickly and easily identify areas for improving service delivery. These systems should be accessible to customers and or the citizenry, provide timely responses and enable redress where appropriate.

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