



Original Contribution

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN NIGERIA: A CASE OF WATER AND SANITATION

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ABSTRACT

The principles of democracy and social justice demand that the legitimacy of a popularly elected government, rest on a claim to represent the desires of its citizens; to guarantee the majority of the citizens decent living standard. In line with the above principles, the policy directions and documents were produced such as the NEEDS, SEEDS and LEEDS to ensure good governance, which is expected to enhance water supply and sanitation. Taking cognizance of the above fact, the Nigerian democratic government articulated, "National rural water supply and sanitation programme" to cater for the needs of rural communities. This programme is composed of key components of hygiene promotion and education, sanitation and water supply encompassing: Government; ESAs, and private sector/NGO programmes. However, it has been observed that departs government effort at providing adequate water supply, the water coverage in the country appears to be decreasing and deteriorating. This is a result of enormous socio-economic rate of development, which far outstrips the level of water supply development, low investment level in operation and maintenance, which accounts for frequent break down of the production facilities and the lack of the proper management of the nation's water resources to improve livelihood. This raise the question of, what government at all levels are doing or failed to do to alleviate the situation of about 71% of those living in rural communities that have no access to safe water supply or adequate sanitation. Consequently, the lack of clean water and poor sanitation contributes to poverty because of the resultant disease burden, negative impact on human capital development and ultimately restriction on production. Five decades since independence in 1960, rural water supply and sanitation development in Nigeria has proceeded inconsistently. It suffered from poor coordination, lack of clear policy direction, lack of focus in terms of the rural population with safe water and improved sanitation services. In all, inadequate drinking water and sanitation services rob poor families of opportunities to comfortable life. In spite of the fact that Nigeria is one of the signatories to the United Nations International drinking water to all citizen of the country between 2000 and 2015 the road ahead to achieve the target is elusive.

Key words: Democracy, water supply, sanitation, programme, policy

INTRODUCTION

The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states in section 14 (1) that "the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a state based on the principle of democracy and social justice. It further states in section 14 (26) that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government (1).

The notion is that a welfare state under a

liberal democracy is a sine qua non to guarantee the majority of the Nigeria people decent living standards, which any political leadership that derives its mandate from the people ought to subscribe and preserve (2). The British council (1993) regards democracy as a symbol of that "good government" or political leadership. Like people in other part of the world, Nigerians have come to accept democracy as a liberating political option. Democracy is predicated on the wishes of the people since they elect those who should govern them.

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The legitimacy of a popularly elected government, therefore, rest on a claim to represent the desires of its citizens. Thus, as a consequence democratic government must be seen to be doing what the people want it to do (3)

In line with the above principles, the policy directions and documents were produced such as the NEEDS, SEEDS and LEEDS. Power sector reforms were enacted laws. This is to ensure good governance, which ultimately is expected to deliver better, and more social services; in education and health, power supply, physical infrastructures such as roads and the promise to enhance water supply and sanitation (4).

It is evidently clear that, after ten (10) years of democratic governance at both three tiers of governments; namely federal, states and local governments, there is the needs to evaluate the performance of governments at all levels as water supply and sanitation services are essential to life and human development, without which democracy and good governance makes no meaning to the citizenry.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Structural-functionalism is a compound of two broad social theories, or theory sets "structural" and "functional." These theories, which attempt to show how society is structured (or organized) and how it's identified parts, relate to one another in actual (real-life) social interactions and processes. Structural-functionalism is two sides of the same coin. You cannot have structures without functions neither functions without the structures which consequences complement one another.

Structure refers to the inter-related, and inter-relatedness of, parts constitutive of a given type of social organization, which are required for its effective and sustained operation (5). Indeed, a discrete social organization (or system) which we may give a more specific label (such as state, society, or family or community), is the "social fact" that embodies the more abstract idea of structure, and structure is what enables us to see the shape and form of a generalized or particular kind of social organization. Social structure and social organization are thus, in effect, also one and the same idea. It is important to add that, in this sameness, structure represents what, and

only what, we may call the static of social organization where societal goals are achieved.

However, the functional side is the dynamic side of the social organization. It is functional not simply by virtue of the motion we observe in the moving parts, but of something more fundamental to society in general. It is functional in the sense of the consequences of the motion(s) that may at first attract attention. Both Durkheim and Merton saw "function" in those terms; the consequences being the "solidarity" which the parts generate for and among themselves, and the adaptive capacity which the parts, in their motion and solidarity, confer upon the whole. It is line with this thinking that the federal government put various structures on ground to facilitate the provision of water for the survival of the Nigerian citizens

THE STATUS OF WATER SUPPLY BEFORE 1999:

The management of public water supply in Nigeria started early this century in few towns under the management of the lowest administrative level. Among the early beneficiaries of these facilities were Lagos, Calabar, Kano, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Ijebu Ode, and Enugu. The schemes were maintained with revenue from water rate collection with virtually no operational subvention from government. With the creation of regional government in the early 1950s, the water supply undertakings continued to maintain the schemes but the finance and technical responsibilities for developing new water schemes were taken over by the regional governments who also assigned supervisory high level of work force (water engineers and superintendents) to the water supply undertaking. All allowances and part of the salaries of the officers were paid from revenue generated from water rate, while others still retained their employment and seniority in the regional service (5). With growing demand and increasing cost, it became necessary for the regional government to secure loans. The regions were requested to set up independent bodies. That is water corporations/boards to develop, operate and manage the water supply. Hence, the first water corporation was formed in 1966 by then Western region with all the public water supply including staff and liabilities taken over by the corporation. Staffs of the water division of the ministry of works were also transferred to the new corporations.

The federal government in 1976 got involved in water supply when the federal ministry of water resources, and eleven (11) River Basin Authorities (RBDAS) were created to manage the water resources of the country and provide adequate supply for the learning population primarily for irrigation and water supply. The federal ministry also undertakes basic hydrological data collection and storage for national planning purposes. Other agencies involved in the public water supply as aid and loan programmes are the United Nations Children's Education Funds (NICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and a number of other bilateral and multilateral and external support agencies. Today all the thirty-six (36) states of the federation and the federal capital territory have water Boards/Corporation or public utilities boards managing their public water supply undertakings. These efforts are supplemented in many cases by local governments who supply water to small villages in their areas of jurisdictions.

In spite of the considerable investments of government in Nigeria over the years in this essential human requirements a large population still does not have access to water in adequate quality and quantity. The national water supply and sanitation policy (5) has reported thus:

only 48% of the inhabitants of urban and semi-urban areas of Nigeria and 39% of rural areas have access to portable water and sanitation. The average delivery to the urban population is only 32 litres per capital per day (IPCD) and that of rural areas is 10 IPCD. The quality in most cases is suspected.

CURRENT GOVERNMENT POLICY ON WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION IN NIGERIA

Serious effort at addressing rural water supply and sanitation issues began with the onset of the international drinking water supply and sanitation Decade (DWSSD, 1981-1990), which established target of universal coverage. This was followed immediately by the world summit for children in 1990, which established goals of universal access to safe water and sanitation and complete eradication of Dracunculiasis (Guinea worm). Following this, the National Programme of Action (NPA) for the survival, protection and development of the Nigeria child envisaged achievement of 100%

coverage in water supply and sanitation by the year 2000.

However, water for life remains an issue. It symbolizes not just that no society or an individual can survive without safe drinking water but that in different ways and at different ages, access to inadequate water and sanitation services influences everybody's health, education, life expectancy, well-being and social development.

Taking cognizance of the above fact, the Nigerian democratic government articulated, "National rural water supply and sanitation programme" to cater for the needs of rural communities. This programme is composed of key components of hygiene promotion and education, sanitation and water supply (6). This policy is structured to include three types of programmes: Government; ESAs, and private sector/NGO programmes. This composition and structure of the National policy is aimed at:

Hygiene education to promote improved hygiene and sanitation practice by applying appropriate participatory and social marketing method, and techniques that will lead to demand for household and community sanitary facilities.

To support, strengthen and enhance community management resulting in sustainability of water supply and sanitation services:

- To increase the capacity of local, state, and federal government to assist communities to obtain the basic water supply and sanitation services that the communities themselves can maintain.
- To support the poverty reduction programme by reducing diseases and work load burden so that the poor and disadvantaged, especially women in rural areas can lead a more productive and fulfilling life.
- To supplement the universal basic education programme through the provision of water and sanitation to make primary schools, secondary school child, and especially girl friendly.

However, the National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme involved several interrelated interventions, projects and programmes. To deliver the programme,

participants of the three tiers of government, NGOs; CSOs, the private sector, external support agencies [donors and lending institution] at all levels and rural communities themselves where involved. Although, these project and programmes have specific goals and objectives of its own, its design and implementation need to be guided by National Programme Framework. None of the programmes have the summation of the inputs processes, outputs, outcomes and impact of these project and programmes that result in the achievement of the goal and objectives of the national policy (6).

In line with the governments desire to have communities take the lead in determining their development activities and stressing on building a maintenance culture to ensure thrust infrastructure is sustained.

The main thrust of the programme strategies was based on community management and promoting improved services. the private sector supplying goods and services Under this strategy, individual communities made all decisions about their water supply and sanitation facilities including local government personnel, state government and private sector (6). As part of the empowerment process, each community is supposed to established a water and sanitation committee [or have its functions incorporated within an existing community development committee preferred by the community] with adequate representation of women and youths and reflecting the socio-cultural/religions constitution of the community. The programme strategies include:

- (i) Community ownership and management
- (ii) Demand Responsive approach
- (iii) Demonstrating and piloting
- (iv) Partnership and collaboration
- (v) Cost sharing

The above strategy is being implement at the community, L.G.A., state and national level which must be guided by the provision of the framework but require a well defined action plan which is phased out inline with the strategy of starting small and scaling up. The L.G.A., state and federal government need to developed investment plans taking into cognizance their plans of actions to realize the targets for the programme (6).

According to federal NRWSS the set coverage targets for safe water supply and sanitation baseline of 40% coverage, it envisage 60% coverage 2003, 80% by 2007 and 100% by 2011 at sustained full coverage. However, at each of the phase of the programme implementation action plans is developed. This is developed by the FMWR. These entails that the federal, state and LG have interrelated plans of actions taking cognizance peculiarities and culture of the diversities of the environment. The programme management process involving the use of resources and planning, organizing, coordinating, directing and controlling of both human and material and financial resources has several arrangement, monitoring and evaluation documentation and communication.

THE CHANLLENGES SO FAR

The challenges of water supply and sanitation in Nigeria are threefold. To maintain the gains already made; to push ahead quickly to provide drinking water and sanitation services to millions of people living in rural areas who have no such services, and to accelerate the successful efforts in urban areas to keep pace with the rising urban population and rural communities' particularly low income and disadvantage group (6).

In Nigeria, the inadequacy of safe water and improved sanitation services is manifested in the prevalence of water and sanitation related diseases. Diarrhea is the second main cause of infant mortality, after malaria, and the third main cause of under-five mortality. The prevalence of diarrhea is higher in the rural than urban areas and in the northern zones than the south. An estimated 150, 000 to 200, 000 diarrhea-related deaths occur among children below 5 each year.

Dracunculosis (Guinea worm), which causes morbidity more than mortality, remains an important health concern with multiple adverse effects on health, education and economic activities especially in the rural areas. Although success has been recorded in reducing cases of the disease, form about 650, 000 cases in the mid 80's to slightly less than 1500 cases in 2003. Total eradication is yet to be achieved. In addition, River Blindness caused by the fly commonly found around fast moving streams of the Savannah and forest zones, is highly endemic in Nigeria with 40 million people exposed to the disease. Of this

number, 22 million are infected and about 120,000 are estimated to be blind from the disease. Schistosomiasis, a parasitic disease transmitted through active penetration of the human skin by the snail vector, which lives in slow moving and stagnant water, is also endemic in the country causing mainly morbidity especially in the rural areas.

The high morbidity and mortality rates and the impact of these diseases are due to a combination of inadequate health care, water supply and sanitation services and unhygienic practices.

The drive for poverty reduction in Nigeria recognizes water supply and sanitation as an important component. The National Poverty Elimination Programme (NAPEP) views the elimination of absolute poverty and the reduction or alleviation of relative poverty. Water supply and sanitation cuts across and affects several sectors including agriculture, rural infrastructure development, education, industrial development, and indeed all the sectors of development that require the use of water and the management of sanitation for the benefit and welfare of human beings.

Thus, the Water Supply and Sanitation sector in Nigeria has come under increasing focus since independence, but particularly during the last 20 years when the country had been participated in the global efforts and initiatives aimed at addressing the problem of low access to safe water and sanitary means of excreta disposal. Many entities are involved in rural water supply and sanitation, including: FMWR, FMARD, FMOH, SWAs, ADPs, RBDAs, LGs, and external support agencies including: UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank, DFID, JICA, CIDA Global 2000, Water Aid Concern Universal and ZONTA International. These institutions employed their own implementation strategies and involve individual communities and LGAs to varying degrees. Because of the inadequacy of the approach to maintenance adopted by these, about half of the pumps in the country are out of service at any one time. To resolve this problem, most sector agencies are moving toward community management of maintenance, where individual communities maintain their pumps themselves or hire the services of a private mechanic or State water agency.

One major problem that affects the balance of the sector is the wide disparity between the demand for water and sanitation. Knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) studies reveal a wide disparity in the priority ranking of water supply and sanitation by communities where water is considered the topmost priority of most communities and latrines (as an indicator for sanitation demand) is viewed as the least problem (**Figure 1**). The major problems identified by rural households in Nigeria were:

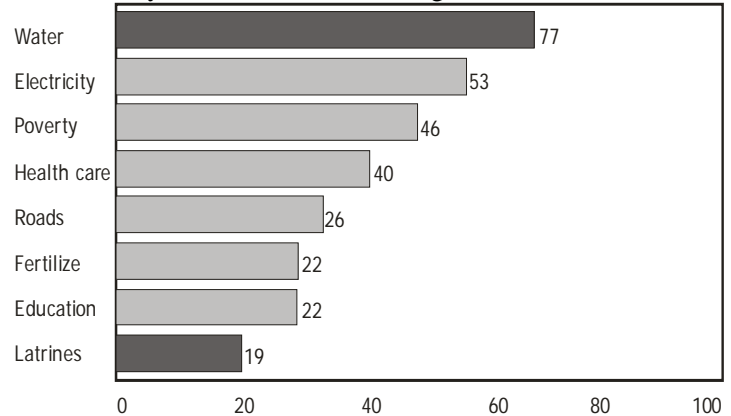


Fig. 1 Source: UNICEF's Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Study, 1999

In a similar vein, the development of the sanitation component of the sector has significantly lagged behind water supply. Generally, this is due to several factors including the following:

- There are several government agencies clamoring for the ownership of sanitation but not the responsibility for funding it.
- There is generally inadequate sector capacity at all levels for managing the sanitation development.
- Policy development in the sector is more advanced for water supply than for sanitation.
- The water supply coverage in the country appears to be decreasing and deteriorating. One of the reasons for this deterioration is the enormous socio-economic rate of development, which far outstrips the level of water supply development. Other reasons include low investment level in operation and maintenance, which accounts for frequent break down of the production facilities and lack proper management of the nation's water resources to improve their livelihood.(7)

Consequences on National Development

Lack of good and adequate drinking water and sanitation kills about 4500 children a day and sentences their siblings, parents and neighbors

to sickness, squalor and enduring poverty when compared with developed regions, where most mother and babies benefits from safe drinking water in quantities that make hygiene behaviour easy. Of 50 million children under 5 years old in Nigeria, about 15 million succumbed to diarrhea diseases (8). In Nigeria, infants and young children are the innocent victims of state failure to make safe drinking water and basic sanitation services available to impoverish people. The filthy living environment means that people are exposed to multitude of health threats without physical or economic means to combat them, stunted growth, impair cognitive development and crucially, lower people's resistance to a wide range of infections including water-related diarrhea diseases and malaria (7).

Furthermore, the burden borne by women of hauling water from (stream) distance source is often share by daughters leaving them with neither the time nor energy for schooling. This implies that children from poor families miss schooling more frequently than those whose families benefited from improved drinking water and sanitation services (9).

The combination of poverty, poor health and lack of hygiene means that, children from unsaved homes miss school more frequently than those whose families do benefit from improved drinking water do. The resulting lack of education and social development further marginalized the children and reduces their future chances of self-improvement. For girls, it is not just sickness that cost them their schooling but the burden borne by women of hauling water from distant sources which often shared by her young daughters, leaving them with neither the time nor the energy for schooling (10).

The inadequacies outlined above in the Nigerian water supply and sanitation situation raise the question of what government at all levels are doing or failed to do to alleviate the situation of about 71% of those living in rural communities that have no access to safe water supply or adequate sanitation. Lack of clean water and poor sanitation contributes to poverty because of the resultant disease burden, negative impact on human capital development and ultimately restriction on production. Five decades since independence in 1960, rural water supply and sanitation development in Nigeria has proceeded

inconsistently (11). It suffered from poor coordination, lack of clear policy direction, lack of focus in terms of the rural population with safe water and improved sanitation services. In all, inadequate drinking water and sanitation services rob poor families of opportunities to comfortable life. In spite of the fact that Nigeria is one of the signatories to the United Nations International drinking water to all citizen of the country between 2000 and 2015.

CONCLUSION

The fundamental challenge posed by the natural gift of Good water supply to the rural communities are multifarious. Lack of clean water and poor sanitation has contributed to poverty because of the resultant disease burden and restriction production. It also places a heavy load on children who collect water from distant sources and who often have to wait for hours in queues. This practice results in children especially, the girl-child, missing school, having limited time for productive tasks. In most rural areas, the average water use per capita is usually less than the minimum recommended amount for drinking, cooking and adequate hygiene. Water handling and storage is often unhygienic, resulting in water from a safe source becoming contaminated by the time it is consumed, which limits the achievements of the intended health benefits. Poor sanitation has led to proliferation of contagious diseases making lives more bleak and precarious to rural communities. The structures put on ground (FMWR & SWB) have articulated good policy on this essential commodity (water) but lack of implementation becomes the fundamental problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research the following recommendations are made:

- Government should uphold the provision of this essential commodity water as democratic governance entails. This can be done through providing a policy that is people oriented at the same time involve the participation of local communities.
- There should be proper funding of water project by the government at both federal and state level. Such funds must go directly to local communities with strict supervision by water board and communities leaders.

- Adequate medical facilities should be provided to rural communities who have already affected by water borne diseases.
- An agency should be created with the function of organizing awareness campaign to the rural community as regard to important of hygienic water and sanitation; the enlightenment campaign must inculcate the habit of purifying water for safe drinking.
- There should be partnership between government and the rural communities on the best way to improve the condition of rural dwellers.
- Corruption in all the agencies that are saddle with provision of good water supply and sanitation must be dealt with as most of the funds meant for this programme are siphoned to personal uses.

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