

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PUBLIC SERVICE ACCOUNTABILITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Generally, public service is designed as an agent of fruitful change and development in the state. Recently, most developing states have fashioned their public service in a style to drive and invigorate their backward economies. Successive scholars have noted that the public service in Nigeria failed to measure- up with their counterparts across the globe because it lacks in transparency and accountability. This study interrogates the root cause(s) of the Nigeria's economic woes, persistent unethical comportment, erosion of values and poor accountability in the contemporary public service in Nigeria. We consciously fused the social contract, public/common good, good governance theoretical slants to explain our thesis. We averred that accountability of public officials is inevitable to boost and sustain both developed and developing economies. We illustrated that, the success and/or failure of any country are largely attributable to its public service. However, we observed that to ensure sanity, progress and development in the public service, code of ethics, values and accountability are tripartite essentiality and that the institution of enforcement mechanisms is always crucial in achieving this. Nevertheless, the manifestations of deepening attitudinal decay, mindful abuse of official codes and principles and hysterical stealing riddles the public service of today. Many of the over-dozed reforms and the enforcement of multifarious disciplinary regimes have not appreciably shielded public servants from the vagaries of its own undoing.

Keywords: Ethics, Values, Accountability, Public Service, Nigeria.

Introduction

The public service consists of the civil service, parastatals and agencies. This tripartite structure is systematically patterned to serve as a lasting instrument through which the government drives, regulates and manages all aspect of the society. However, the magnitude of attitudinal decay, corruption and lack of accountability in the public service of developing nations in contemporary times is terribly shocking and dismaying. Thus, Rasheed, succinctly remarked that "lack of accountability, unethical behaviours and corrupt practices has become so pervasive and even institutionalized norms of behaviours, hallmarking to a crises of ethics in the Nigerian public service".¹ He also noted that apart from outright bribery and corruption, patronage, nepotism, embezzlement, influence peddling, use of one's position for self-enrichment, bestowing of favours on relations and friends, moonlighting, partiality, absenteeism, late coming to work, abuse of public property, leaking and/ or abuse of government information are also rampant.

This truth aptly manifested in 2002 when Nigeria ingloriously bagged the second most corrupt country in the world; in 2006, the country was rated sixth, all bestowed by the Transparency International. However, to interrogate this unwanted situation, this work has been sequentially divided in sections to holistically capture and explore among others; the ideal ethical standards and values expected of a healthy public service (chief among which is accountability); the continental input so far towards maintaining the standards; the realities on ground; why the various unethical containment approaches has been failing (patching and leaking); and how best to mend the fences. This paper interrogates the nexus between public service accountability and service delivery in Nigeria.

Accountability Explained

The concept of accountability connotes a sense of responsibility. It enjoins a given expectation out of a stewardship from time to time. Hence, accountability informs a state of answerability, and entreats a fellow entrusted with certain official responsibilities to always make clean records for the day of reckoning. That is, being able to make an unambiguous explanation at any time so demanded to render the details of stewardship.

According to Stewart, “Public accountability rests both on giving an account and on being held to account”.² Therefore, a public officer may not only be required to present his ‘doctored’ account but may face the challenges of a certain compelling expectable stewardship from the authorities whose office he manages, or enjoys. In this thinking, a public servant is mostly maintained with both the tax payer’s monies and the proceeds of their natural gifting. Thus, he can only be responsible to the people who are his lawful masters.

Primarily, accountability is the fundamental prerequisite for preventing the abuse of power and for ensuring that power is directed towards the achievement of efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness and transparency in the business of the government. Open, transparent and accountable government is an imperative prerequisite for community-oriented public service delivery because without it covert unethical behaviour will result.³ However, ethic standards, values and accountability in the public service could be measured and evaluated. Table 1 below compares the expected values, attitudes and basic aptitudes of a public servant.

Table 1. Comparison of Normative Values, Attitudes and Aptitudes of a Public Servant

VALUES	ATTITUDES	APTITUDES
*Integrity *Transparency *Publicity *Accountability *Equity *Non-discrimination *Quality *Professionalism *Reliability *General interest	*Transparency *Responsibility *Quality awareness *Legibility *Clarity *Simplicity *Inquisitiveness *Adaptability *Listening ability *Involvement *Speed *Effectiveness *Efficiency	*Knowledge *Acceptance & comprehension of the goals & functioning of the administrative institutions *Leadership qualities *Communication skills *Social skills *Independence *Ability to use experience *Ability to further education & training *Analytical capability *Sense of renewal

Source: Raga and Taylor (2007).

Theoretical Perspective

There are not a handful of assumptions that can readily give vent to the ideal purpose and call of a public servant. Hence, scholars have more often than not, predicated their investigations and analysis on the assumptions of the social contract, public/common good and good governance. But we have adopted a medley of human needs and frustration-aggression theory in order to fully appreciate the chronic reasons for the incurable decay in the Nigerian public service. Human needs theory is premised upon the assumptions that all human beings have some basic needs which they desire to attain and if the activities of other social forces vitiate the attainment of these needs frustration sets in. While different aspects of needs suffice, most needs theorists have not largely deviated from those enunciated by Abraham Maslow which includes; physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs.

On the other hand, Dollard et al. posited that “the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression”.⁴ Frustration in this context is specified as the thwarting of a goal response, and a goal

response, in turn, is taken to mean the reinforcing final operation in an ongoing behavioural sequence. At times, however, the term 'frustration' is used to refer not only to the process of blocking a person's attainment of a re-enforcer (needs) but also to the reaction to such blocking. Consequently, 'being frustrated' means both that one's access to re-enforcers is being thwarted by another party (or possibly by particular circumstances) and that one's reaction to this thwarting is one of serious annoyance.

However, Miller recognized that the initial claims – (a) that aggression is *always* based on frustration and (b) that frustration *always* leads to aggression – were far too general. These blames made frustration both a necessary and sufficient condition for aggression. As such, frustrations do not cause hostile or aggressive outbursts by necessity. Potential outbursts may be effectively inhibited or may result in alternative actions, such as the pursuit of other, more readily available re-enforcers. Miller therefore rephrased the second part of his hypothesis to read: "Frustration produces instigations to a number of different types of response, one of which is an instigation to some form of aggression".⁵

According to this reformulation, frustration actuates motivational forces that are *diffuse* rather than specific to 'wild' aggression. It is assigned the properties of a *general* drive. Such apparent moderation has not been applied to the first part of the original F-A hypothesis. Miller found the generality of this claim both defensible and useful. The revised F-A hypothesis thus maintains the following: (a) Frustration instigates behaviour that may or may not be hostile or aggressive. (b) Any hostile or aggressive behaviour that occurs is caused by frustration. In other words, frustration is not a sufficient, but a necessary, condition for hostility and aggression.⁶ Indeed, the strength of a hostile or aggressive reaction depends in part on the "amount of residual instigation from previous or simultaneous frustrations". Dollard et al "Minor frustrations" suggested, "add together to produce an aggressive response of greater strength than would normally be expected from the frustrating situation that appears to be the immediate antecedent of the aggression.

Altogether, an undiluted application of this theorem to the persistent crises of unethical behaviours, negation of values and unaccountability which undoes the Nigerian public service, will avail us the grounds to appreciate the truth that the basic challenges of socio-economic hardship which public servants face, certain unmet 'needs', some numerous 'family/social group/villages responsibilities'(of poverty alleviation and cash donations), constant expectations from too many unemployed relations, and the philosophy of 'opportunity comes but once' may actually amount to frustration on the part of a public servant (especially when in custody of public funds) and then the actual aggression (manifested by a calculated attack on public funds, unethical behaviours, violation of rules) in order to summarily satisfy these challenging needs.

Institutional Mechanisms for Promotion of Ethical Conduct, Values and Accountability in the Public Service

Importantly, Part III of the Charter on the Public Service in Africa on Rules Governing Relation between the Public Service and the citizens contain many provisions which make it obligatory for the Public Service to render services to the public efficiently and effectively with due diligence to the rights of the customers. This service charter forms the basis for measuring effectiveness in terms of quality and timely delivery of services in the public service. The Charter also spells out the mandate areas of the organization, its range of customers, the range of services provided, quality expectations, schedules and time of delivery, avenues for lodging complaints and of seeking redress, among others. Particularly, Article 21 of the Charter deals on the behavioural conduct of a public servant. It states that professionalism resides in how skillfully and how well a public service employee performs his/her functions and duties and that it also manifests itself in employee's behaviour at work and in her/her constant effort to improve, reinforce and update his/her knowledge, refine the skills that are necessary for carrying out his/her tasks and enhancing his/her output and productivity.⁷ The relevant criteria which are being applied for staff severance as it relates to professionalism are:

- Officers adjudged grossly inefficient in the performance of their duties
- Officers with unsatisfactory character
- Officers without entry qualifications
- Officers without mandatory skills to enter into their cadres and who have not improved themselves since joining the Service
- Officers who failed promotion examination on three consecutive occasions.

Other important efforts taken at strengthening ethics, moral values and proper accountability in the public service in Nigeria include:

(a) Creation and Strengthening of Anti-Corruption Agencies

According to Ribadu, as at August 2004, Nigeria had over 500,000 law enforcement personnel working in various law enforcement agencies.⁸ The annual national expenditure on law enforcement was estimated at N250 billion. The major anti-corruption agencies created so far are the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences. The Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). The third Agency, the Code of Conduct Bureau and the Code of Conduct Tribunal were set-up by the Federal Government as extra-Ministerial Departments under the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, Cap 56, LFN 1990. The Code of Conduct Bureau was set up to assist public officers to be accountable and to adopt transparent practices in carrying out their duties. The establishment of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) through the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000, which was signed into law on 13 June 2000, and the formal take off in 2003, of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), through the enactment of the Economic and Financial Crimes Act in 2002, particularly boosted and sustained war on corruption.⁹ The great impact the EFCC has made since its establishment is reflected in the common saying in Nigeria today that 'the fear of EFCC is the beginning of wisdom'. In 2011 budget, the EFCC was allocated over N660 million to fight corruption.¹⁰ Through the strict enforcement of these laws, the EFCC was able to declare an Armageddon on corruption and sustaining it beyond Nigeria's borders.

(b) The Creation of other Institutional Platforms for Maintaining Ethical Standards such as the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU) and African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

The board was created to enforce standards in the area of public sector procurement. It provides among others, for open and competitive tender arrangement for government contracts, to detect and punish over-invoicing of government contracts. This mechanism aims at ensuring that tenders are made open to all bidders and that contract awards also undergo a process of rigorous review, oversight and certification by the BMPIU. This is targeted at curtailing 'looting' of public funds and ensuring value-for-money in all government transactions. The creation of the Bureau of Public Service Reforms in 2003 and its formal establishment in 2004 has also provided an institutional platform for addressing issues of professionalism and ethical standards in the Public Service as key concerns of the on-going Public Service Reforms.¹¹ Again, In recognition of the Role of the Public Service in the achievement of the goals and objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, (NEPAD), African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Desks are being set up in all Federal Ministries, Department and Agencies to, among others, promote the values of transparency, accountability and anti-corruption for the achievement of the larger aims of good governance, sustainable democracy and economic emancipation.

(c) Initiating Complementary Reforms to Combat Corruption, Promote Transparency and Accountability

The key initiatives in this area include reforming the bureaucracy to reduce the incentive for corrupt practices, monetization of fringe benefits to eliminate wasteful public expenditure practices to bring all hitherto hidden costs of maintaining government and public officers within the annual budget, instituting mechanisms for ensuring flatter administrative structures in MDAs and redesigning work processes to reduce avoidable delays which fuel unethical practices .

(d) Maintaining Appropriate Balance between the Oversight Functions of the Federal Civil Service Commission and MDAs in Staff Discipline

This reform is endeavors to strike a balance between the rights of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to discipline erring staff while also recognizing the jurisdictional rights of the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) as the apex body on discipline. Modalities for achieving synergy between the duos

are being worked out to ensure appropriate roles for MDAs and FCSC on the issue of discipline. This according to Adegoroye, is to ensure that erring officers are disciplined promptly, so as to serve as deterrence to others.

(e) Empowerment of the Top Hierarchy of the Public Service

The top hierarchy of the public service comprising Permanent Secretaries, Directors-General and Chief Executives of Federal Agencies are constantly being challenged to set the moral tone in order to build a sound ethical culture in their respective organizations. In this regard, several retreats and workshops were organized for them to be empowered to face this challenge. One of the significant retreats held so far was an Executive Training Workshop on Organizational Integrity and Strategic Corruption Control which was jointly organized by the Bureau of Public Service Reforms and the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU) from 10th – 13th September, 2004, in partnership with Transparency International. At the end of the Workshop, the participants, comprising all Federal Permanent Secretaries, select Directors-General, Chief Executives of Parastatals and Directors of Key Agencies, renewed their commitment to fight corruption more vigorously. The other was a two-week Commonwealth Secretariat Facilitated Study Programme with the theme 'Purpose and Propriety in the Public Service' organized for all Federal Permanent Secretaries in London, the United Kingdom among others.

The Case of the Public Service in Nigeria

Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has battled integrity, transparency and accountability problems within its public service. The crisis of Governance over the past decades in Nigeria has been associated with the collapse of ethical and professional standards in virtually every aspect of our national life. Particularly, the inability to maintain professional and ethical standards in the Armed Forces resulted in various military coups which adversely affected every stratum of the Nigerian society. For instance, the announced motive behind the 1966 coup led by Major Chuckwuma Nzogwu was a desire to "rid the country of irresponsible politicians, incompetent and corrupt bureaucrats, restore respectability and accountability to the Nigerian public service".¹² Years later and by 1983, a third coup masterminded by Brigadier Sani Abacha and his colleagues claimed they were compelled to seize power from the President Shagari government to save Nigeria from rampant corruption, ineptitude and profligacy that had characterized both the federal and state governments of the country. Yet, by 2009 and over a period of thirty years, the conservative estimate of the cost of integrity, transparency and accountability quagmire in Nigeria was \$380 billion and climbing.

The Nigerian public service has undergone changes and transformation over the years. However, successive reforms aimed at achieving efficiency and effectiveness has failed to make significant impact in terms of reengineering the public sector. For example, the Udoji Commission's recommendation of a "unified and integrated administrative structure, the elimination of waste and removal of deadwoods/ inefficient departments and the introduction of a results-oriented public sector that functioned on the basis of management by objective" failed to achieve its goal. Central to the failure of this reform and the root of consistent inefficiency within the public service are what the Director-General, Bureau of Public Service Reforms, Dr. Goke Adegoroye aptly described as the many ills of the public service. The Ayida Panel, which was instituted to review past public service reforms in Nigeria with a view to proffering measures of further reinvigorating the bedridden service identified the major ills of the service which needed urgent correction to improve the dynamism and effectiveness of the public service as follows:

- (i) Politicization of the top hierarchy of the Civil Service
- (ii) Lack of financial accountability and probity
- (iii) Perpetual breakdown of discipline
- (iv) Virtual institutionalization of corruption at all levels and segments of the Service
- (v) Disregard for rules and regulations
- (vi) Loss of direction
- (vii) General decline of efficiency and effectiveness.

Remarkably, this revelations and many more has continued to necessitate a compulsory birth and rebirth of uncountable mechanisms, apparatuses, broadened checks, intensive monitoring units and overall securitization of the activities of the service through the channels of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and other guards as enunciated earlier, yet the incidence of bureaucratic indiscipline, unruliness, concentrated greed, financial rascality among others has continued to escalate in geometric

quantum. While there is an identifiable element of unethical attitudes in most public servants, the infection seems to have mostly infected the Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs). That is, those political office holders that have the keys to the national coffer on top of their desks and the access pin-codes to the national accounts hidden in their files.

The Nigeria's anti-corruption commission, the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), recently provided dramatic evidence, which put the total amount of money stolen by past and present Nigerian rulers and laundered mainly in anti-corruption-preaching Western banks at US\$521 billion.¹³ The total amount of Nigeria's funds squandered by the military rulers alone and laundered in various erring Western banks over the past 40 years stood at US\$400 billion.¹⁴ This situation clearly illuminates the persistent shrinking up and nosedive of the economy. And its harsh effects have been the lack of adequate shelter, potable water, proper sanitation or even regular supply of electricity since the independence.¹⁵ The entire infrastructure is in deplorable condition,¹⁶ the educational system is in disarray,¹⁷ and the health system has totally collapsed. Below is a thematic overview of the incidences of corrupt practices by public servants, especially the Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) in Nigeria;

- Okigbo Panel, 1994, revealed that between September 1988 and June 1994, a total sum of US\$12.4 billion, found in six illegally opened accounts and maintained by former Military President, Ibrahim Babangida was unaccounted for.¹⁸
- A Military dictator, Gen. Sani Abacha gave a standing order instruction to the Accountants at the Central Bank of Nigeria to transfer US\$15 million to be laundered into his Swiss private bank account every day.¹⁹
- Between 2003 and 2006, a total sum of US\$13.2 billion was squandered from three special escrow accounts illegally opened and maintained by President, Obasanjo, in connivance with top officials of the CBN, some NNPC Executives and professional assistance of the accountants at the CBN and NNPC.²⁰
- The former Vice President, Abubakar Atiku, shockingly released nine cheques and bank drafts totaling N432million (US\$3,085,710) allegedly paid from the controversial MOFAS Account at Trans International Bank Plc, Abuja, on behalf, and personal use of the Obasanjo.^{21,22}
- The NNPC that was under the personal control of President, Obasanjo, for 8 years, could not account for the sum of N555 billion (US\$4.4 billion) from the Federation Account from December, 2004 to April, 2007.²³ Also, another N502 billion (US\$4 billion) realized through the production of crude oil in excess of assigned OPEC quota and cornered part of the proceeds to political electioneering and laundering balance into private bank accounts abroad.²⁴
- A sum of US\$22 million was discovered in the USA in the account of Gbenga Obasanjo, one of the former President's sons who has also been implicated in numerous government contract scandals in Nigeria.^{25,26,27} Another son, Olumuyiwa Obasanjo, who was just called to the bar in July 2005 and has not even started his law practice also bought a property worth US\$530,000 in Brooklyn, New York.²⁸
- The sum of US\$170,000 was smuggled into New York on September 22, 2003, by an aide to the former President Obasanjo, Senator Andy Uba, aboard the Nigerian presidential plane, without a report to U.S customs and border protection only to be detected in the United States by the US secret service.²⁹
- The sum of £80,000 found on former Governor of Plateau State Joshua Dariye in London. Also investigated are other unspecified amounts of money in various currencies and about £2,000,000, which was discovered in his bank account in London, as well as a huge and well furnished mansion worth more than £600,000 – his residence in London.³⁰
- A former Governor Alamiyeseigha of Bayelsa State was imprisoned in London and later jumped bail for allegedly laundering between £10 million to £20 million into an account with HSBC in London, through a lady supposedly acting as his agent. Upon his arrest by the British police and subsequent investigations, £1.8 million were discovered in cash and in his private bank accounts.³¹ In the hearing of his case at a Federal High Court in Lagos on July 26, 2007, Alamiyeseigha pleaded guilty to the offence and was convicted and sentenced to 12 years imprisonment for fraud and false declaration of assets.³²
- Former Governor James Onanefe Ibori of Delta State, under the cover of his British born wife, Tessi Ibori, siphoned Delta State money to acquire two mansions, one at number 10 Westover Hill, London, which was purchased on October 18, 2003 for £1.7 million, and the other at number 14, which was also purchased on May 31, 2001 for £2.3 million.³³ James Ibori and another ex-governor, Lucky Igbinedion of Edo State, have been asked to refund N60billion (US\$4.80 billion) worth of assets and cash to the EFCC.³⁴

- On April 3, 2009, the ex-governor of Ondo state Chief Olusegun Agagu was arrested by the EFCC over alleged mismanagement of N25 billion voted for Ondo State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (OSOPADEC).³⁵
- The sum of N15 billion disappeared from PHCN account and came back after two months about which the Auditor-General sent a report to PHCN but they failed to respond. Also loans totaling about N6.68 billion out of which N543 million was withheld by parent ministry and NEPA was paying interest at an annual interest of N81 million on the loan.³⁶
- Former Speaker Dimeji Bankole was tried for alleged complicity in the alleged N9 billion Capital Project fraud. EFCC also investigated Bankole over the sourcing of N10 billion bank loan to service the recurrent expenses of the Reps. On how the N10B was shared among the Lawmakers, Bankole claimed he got monthly allocations of N100 million for two quarters amounting to N600 million while his deputy, Alhaji Usman Bayero Nafada, received N80 million monthly for the same period totaling N480 million. Other principal officers who benefitted from the loan for eight months were said to include; House leader, Tunde Akogun N60 million monthly (360 million); Chief Whip, Emeka Ihedioha (now Deputy Speaker) N55 million monthly (N330 million); Deputy House leader, Baba Shehu Agae N57 million monthly (N342 million); and Deputy Chief whip Aminu Waziri Tambuwal (now Speaker) N54.5 million monthly (N327 million).³⁷

As at 2005, the EFCC investigations have further revealed that as much as \$120 billion has been looted from the Nigerian treasury and moved into coded bank accounts offshore by dishonest politicians since 1960.³⁸ By October 2005, the Presidency, in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police in London, had submitted the names of 14 governors to the British Authorities for investigation over alleged money laundering and other corrupt practices (<http://www.independentng.com/saturday/nnoct080htm>). Mr Ribadu has further alleged that the value of Nigerian governors' overseas property and illegally held cash could be as much as \$17 billion (http://www.efccnigeria.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view).

Inevitably, government corruption is linked to money laundering as corrupt PEPs and other public officials seek to distance their takings from the source. One methodology is to transfer the stolen naira into pound sterling or dollars in Nigeria and export it for investment. On the other spectrum, corrupt practices and unethical conducts are not limited to the Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) alone. Every other public servant is potentially incorporated into this deleterious attitude. Hence, Adegoroye quite noted that unethical behaviours occur in the rank and file as follows;

- (i) Every time a Police Officer receives a bribe to cover up an issue, it encourages disobedience to law which ultimately fuels the breakdown of law and order;
- (ii) Health professionals who divert medical supplies from public institutions where they are to be administered to the sick may benefit from the ill-gotten wealth but their actions increase health-related problems in the society and impacts negatively on national productivity; and
- (iii) Public Service officers who engage in over-invoicing in connivance with contractors to loot public treasury are diverting resources which should have been deployed to provide physical and social infrastructure to improve the living standards of the people.
- (viii) Corrupt staff demanding more than the prescribed fee from prospective customers for service delivery and other procurement.

Explanatory Analysis of the Persistent Cases of Unethical Behaviours, Corruption and Lack of Accountability in the Contemporary Public Service

It is now apparent that while the numerous restraining mechanisms, as explored elsewhere in this chapter, put in place so far in addressing the many failures of public service conducts remains a functional channel towards progressive containment, large cases of bulldozing of public funds, sharp corrupt practices and other related attitudinal crises has skyrocketed in the contemporary public service. Yet, it is stunning and highly embarrassing to note that the reality on ground has proven that something inwardly disarticulating, distracting or inherently dysfunctional in the developing countries and is at the base, in the background, a sort of cankerworm, downplaying and watering down the varieties of efforts put together in sustaining ethics, good values, and accountability in the public service.

This insidious and destructive element is the realities of excruciating poverty, severe hardship and unbearable sufferings replete in all developing geographical units. For instance, the Core Welfare Indicator (CWI) survey of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicated that the Household Economic situation in

2006 compared with 2005 showed that 32% and 30% of households in rural and urban Nigeria respectively can hardly satisfy their basic food needs. Further studies conducted in 1990's by the Federal Office of Statistics, and the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), clearly showed that 87% of urban Nigerian households live in single rooms with about four to twelve persons per room. In the rural areas, 72.2% live in single rooms. Using toilet facilities as a measure of standard of living condition, only 14.6% of those in the urban areas use water closet to dismiss their stools while 74.8% use the pit system to shoot off. In the rural areas, 52.11% use bush method.³⁸

In all, the conduciveness and comfortableness of the living place of many of the people of Nigeria is seriously in doubt. In fact, there can never be any edifying explanation to that than to say that people rot in hell called houses in Nigeria. Worst still, to always afford the "big" rent and pay it at when due is another kettle of fish. Hence, with this poor living condition in Nigerian and other developing countries where one may not be completely sure of where his next meal may come from and where too many people live in less than two dollars per day; the pressure for financial succor on the part of a public servant is also increased. For this reason, thus, it may not be totally unexpected if a public servant who is usually confronted with too many responsibilities from family relatives, friends, neighbors, social organizations belonged to, the church, including a number of unemployed dependants, falls into the temptation of pen robbery in order to live up to his necessary expectations. Again, the meagerness of the daily income that accrues to an average person living in Nigeria is worst than other developing states.³⁹

Another important truth is that more than half of the Nigerian populace does nothing for a living. If indeed as the National Bureau of Statistics (2010) summated, that the percentage of the employable age but unemployed persons in Nigeria alone are well over 20% in 2009, of the estimated 149 million population, and that the number of dependable/unemployable persons up to 24% of the population, that is ages (15-24) 25%; (65-70) 9%, then there is a serious trouble in the country and the public purse is in danger as the unemployment rate surged from 13.1percent in the year 2000 to 19.7 percent in 2009.⁴⁰

The figures displayed in the table above is enough to demonstrate that the bulk of the wellbeing of this disadvantaged percentage of the population who are desperately thinking of survival must be taken care of by several relatives lucky enough to be involved in the benevolent government job where unethical conduct can easily fetch a pay. This claim can easily be substantiated knowing full well that in the private sector, strictness is the watch word. And not many individuals have flourished so well in private business considering the harsh economic realities. Logically too, those few that excelled are directly or indirectly linked to receiving boosts from public funds.

By this calculation, however, as the earlier cited philosophical divides on the natural disposition of man towards morality and do-goodness argued; if such a public servant who is constantly battling with many financial pressures from home is naturally inclined to good conscience and inherently virtuous, as Rousseau believed, he may first of all exert some sense of self control but at the long run, when many of such financial requests and pressures from relatives and other social groups whom he thinks he owes some level of responsibility heightens; a consequent experience of serious internal frustration and uncomfortableness may result, especially knowing full well that large chunks of money could be written off in a matter of seconds. This situation normally develops into a full-blown aggressive behavior targeted against the public fund/public good. Therefore, it is not uncommon to see public servants falsifying their age certificates (another dangerous unethical act) in order to maintain a perpetual job security to extend social security.

On the obverse, if the individual is naturally infested with greed and obsessed with materialism, as Aristotle insisted, then once the frustration set in, he may not really need to think twice before he can act quickly. Either way, The PEPs are most culpable. Paradoxically, the PEPs even experiences more frustrations and are more threatened by the devastating hardship and poverty in the land than the rank and file. Though, it is actually true that the looters of the economy is responsible for the pitiable socio-economic situation in poor countries, yet it is very important to be consciously aware too that on the reverse, the PEPs who glaringly loot the public wealth are doing so in the fear of wealth insecurity. The shortness of the term in office which may not fully allow the PEPs to steal enough compounds this frustration. Thus, the need to confront the public purse in the present for the security of the future. As an Igbo philosophical saying goes 'firewood gathered in the dry season serves for the rainy season'.

For instance, a PEP may not want his/her children, grand children and so on, including the unborn ones up to the fourth generation to be exposed to the pervading poverty and sweeping hardship existing in most poor countries. Hence, they easily become very fearful, frustrated, aggressive and confrontational arising from an

unbridled bid to frog-leap hardship. This cumulated fear and distress soon develops into a boiling unconscious anger and becomes unleashed on the public fund which they appropriate daily. The magnitude of the frustration/aggression and/or anger can only be measured by the level of what is stolen, as instinctively controlled by the individual's gluttony/greed. Those with average greed limiting their loots in national banks (using numerous ghost names), and other big-eyed PEPs displaying their 'stolen money managerial ability' by patronizing foreign accounts. The trickling down effect of this illicit act on the junior officer is that he is quickly encouraged to do the same as much as his pen can carry him no matter how little he achieves.

One of the undoing of the public service is the unethical manner in which the national income is quickly deleted in the euphoria of emolument jamboree. The jumbo amount in which the PEPs go home with is very terrible. For instance, *The Nation*, February 27, 2011, provided the details of the 2011 national budget in Nigeria showing how the oil revenue is being squandered in overhead expenditure of the state house (residences and offices of the President and Vice President) which was allocated the sum of N21,159,867,112 billion for the year alone. President Goodluck had wanted to extend this 'kind' gesture to the civil servants in June 2010 when he hastily proposed a 62 percent salary increase to the workers which later became unrealistic and remained only on newspapers. A situation whereby a Nigerian law maker fixes wages for himself, taking home over N24 million naira per month (which is the least); receiving an equivalent of Obama's annual salary in just a quarter; and on the whole chopping off 25 percent of the overhead expenditure of the national government is not funny at all.⁴¹ This outrageous emolument is an unclassified regime through which great inequality in distribution of wealth is perpetrated in developing countries.

This general implication of this unsystematic emolument leap is constant high prices of goods and services; high school fees, cement hikes, fuel hikes, kerosene hikes, and so on. The more an average income earner, the unemployed, the village men and women, the tomato seller etc, is unable to eke out a living, the more a relative in public office is being expected to eke out the living 'somehow' on their behalf. As a reverse effect, this perpetrates corruption and lack of accountability in contemporary public service. At the end of the day everybody is somehow happy. Thus, a foreign rating organization sometime in mid 2010 adjudged the Nigerian people as the happiest people in the world. Indeed it is true. The PEPs who loots are quite comfortable and happy that they are able to maximize the little opportunity at hand to save for the current and future family generations; the ordinary public servant who can collect little 'tips' and 'kickbacks' (as even 'tips' and 'kickbacks' in public offices has appreciated too) to carter for his own dependants is happy; likewise the relatives and other beneficiaries who are grateful for at least surviving 'somehow' through the kindhearted benefactor.

Conclusion

Besides the enforcement of laws and legislations which is most welcomed, one of a workable strategy to be taken in revamping ethical standard, values and accountability in the contemporary public service should be more of an approach that will wholesomely address the questions of excruciating poverty and hardship in developing countries. Of course, none of the restraining strategies operated so far elsewhere have the potency of regulating "the regular incoming of 'tips' and 'kickbacks' or 'brown envelopes' in public offices. To stop the PEPs from stealing which in the end makes poverty more pervasive in nature; and to give an average public servant reasons to refrain from unethical conducts; a healthy 'ethical infrastructure' or ethical environment must be provided. Particularly, the reduction of emoluments of the PEPs will go a long way in achieving this. The moment the gross income/wealth disparity is considerably abridged in developing countries, and an average citizen is able to buy items from the same market with the PEPs, the less the hardship becomes. This will in turn lessen expectations and pressures mounted on public servants from their dependants. Thus, aggressive behaviours and thoughts of unethical conducts are largely averted in the minds of public servants.

Another important stringent measure to be adopted is that of mentoring. Trusted priests, pastors, imams and other preachers of holiness and righteousness should be assigned to conduct life-changing moral instructions for public servants in their various departments from time to time. This idea will work better than the frivolous workshops and seminars usually organized abroad for Permanent Secretaries, Director-Generals, Chief Executives of agencies etc. where the scarce resources are further languished. In addition to this, the introduction of a social security law which will enable unemployed persons to earn a monthly token will be helpful by reducing the pressure mounted on public servants by many unemployed relatives in developing countries.

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