

AN OVERVIEW OF BUREAUCRACY AND TREASURY SINGLE ACCOUNT IN AN ERA OF ECONOMIC CHANGE.

Chioke, S. Chinedu

Email: Eruditescholar001@gmail.com

Abstract

Bureaucracy is an organization where rules are observed or followed rigidly and where there is hierarchical arrangement of authority. Treasury Single Account is a unified or integrated account of the government meant to serve the need of checkmating excess loss, leakages, and manipulation of revenue, receipts and expenditures of the government. The paper noted that, the world is a global village and there is no doubt that this global village/family is change driven. By this, we have in abundance, interplays of forces that negate latencies, coldness, and allied matters. The paper sets out to portray the meaning of Bureaucracy, Treasury Single Account, the challenges confronting Bureaucracy in an era of economic change, and to aver possible remedial measures to be adopted. The paper noted that the bureaucratic system should receive a super overhaul. The paper concluded that, Government intervention would go a long way in ameliorating the more rigidity installed in the administrative system of Nigeria. The paper recommended inter alia that, there should flexible government policy to remove bureaucratic bottlenecks in the execution of TSA and government programs.

Keywords: *Bureaucracy, Change, and Treasury Single Account (TSA).*

Introduction

The world is a global village and there is no doubt that this global village/family is change driven. By this, we have in abundance, interplays of forces that negate latencies, coldness, and allied matters. These forces more often than not, enthrone varied positive cum/or negative reactions within the system and these reactions are better described as *change*. Change is a replacement or shift from the status quo. Hornby (2010) defined change as, “To replace one thing, person, service, e.t.c. with something new or different.” Hence, it becomes imperative to

ever within the purview of this course that change has remained constant over the years and will ever remain constant especially the issues of bureaucracy and economic policies.

Bureaucracy according to Hornby (2010) is the system of official rules and ways of doing things that a government or an organization has, especially when these seem to be too complicated. Hence; bureaucracy is also change driven, because new policies and complicated rules are being given birth to everyday and the era of change mantra of the Buhari's led federal government of Nigeria is not an exception.

Bureaucracy and economic change are more often than not introduced through public administration processes. But then, it should be added that, "Public administration deals with the management of all sectors of human endeavours excluding the private sector. Based on this, the main thrust of public administration is to effectively manage all public enterprises (bureaucracies) in a manner that includes the management of man, material, and money; and create major impact on public organizations and its environment (Chioke, 2016)." Bearing this in mind, government via its administrative arm had over the years made good and frantic efforts to introduce measures in form of structural changes and microeconomic changes. By microeconomics, we mean the branch of economics that helps in understanding the working of the economy, provides analytical tools for evaluating economic policies of the government and other decision making, which TSA is an integral part. Therefore, amongst these microeconomic changes that have been incorporated into the economic and administrative systems of Nigeria in recent times is, Treasury Single Account. To add to the foregoing, "...microeconomics is concerned with the specific economic units or parts that make up an economic system and the relationships between those parts (Udabah, 2004)." Udabah (2004) went further to posit that, "Microeconomics studies:

- (a) the allocation of resources to the production of particular goods and services;
- (b) the distribution of such goods and services to the people and
- (c) how efficiently they are distributed to the people."

It should be noted that, microeconomics is also called, 'value theory' or 'price theory.' On macroeconomics, Udabah (2004) noted that, "macroeconomics entails discussions of such

magnitudes as total employment, national income, national output, total expenditures, the general level of prices, total consumption, total savings, aggregate supply, aggregate demand, the general wage level and cost structure and so forth. In short, macroeconomics examines the forest, not the trees.”

Suffice it to say that the very unprecedented odoriferous saga that has saturated and permeated the federal government, political thoughts, political lifestyle, game and social engineering in the ever dynamic sovereign entity, Nigeria is one that is obviously and intricately enigmatic in its totality even when the economic and political policies of the State has been transfigured by the change in the bureaucratic template of Nigeria. This change in the bureaucratic blueprint in Nigeria is simply the, Treasury Single Account (TSA) of the Buhari’s led administration, which some say that, it is enigmatic. No doubt, change has significantly occurred and it is no longer business as usual. For instance, TSA checkmates corruption by blocking financial leakages. This was corroborated by Okwe *et al*, (2015:58) when they stated that, “With TSA, government can easily quarantine its revenues...” This being the case, TSA directly or indirectly leads to the development of bureaucratic organizations. Again, TSA significantly promotes transparency and accountability in existing bureaucracies (public enterprises).

In a varied dimension; it is believed that, the nascent development here in Nigeria in the aspect of sectionalism and associated aspects are quite enigmatic when narrowly viewed and compared to the democratic principles and the tenets of 21st century governance at the global level. Why? This is because corruption and allied vices have been allowed to linger in the scheme of things as they pertain to the governance of this country. Just as Opara Chidi James (2014) is of the view that, Nigeria judicial system must be overhauled, it is herein stated that the

bureaucratic system should also receive a super overhaul. Therefore, the paper sets to portray how to enhance the administration of bureaucratic institutions via its recommendations.

Concept of Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy is one of the commonest concepts in social science parlance but it is difficult to define as it does not mean one thing to everyone Onwuka (2008). According to National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN, 2009), “It was Max Weber in 1864 who first founded the sociological study of bureaucracy which has become most familiar with social scientists. What Weber was concerned most was to discover the canons of social behavior of democracy. In effect, the focus was not to depict and suggest goodness or badness but to suggest a standard model. Max Weber has its structural characteristics. The above mentioned attributes portray a kind of organization which is impersonal, where authority is exercised by administrators only by virtue of the office they hold, and what is more, in accordance with the clearly defined rules and regulations. In other words, bureaucracy emerges as a unique impersonal, neutral passive, and instrumental with behavioural characteristics that bother on objectivity, precision and consistency.” As a result, we herein take the a look at the following: “The bureaucracy as used today in the study of Public Administration is attributed to a German Sociologist known as Max Weber. ...bureaucracy is an organization where rules are observed or followed rigidly and where there is hierarchical arrangement of authority. Following rules rigidly is what depicts a bureaucratic organization. Bureaucracy is the basic form for public sector in any society (Chioke, 2012). But then, Onah (2005) in Chioke (2012) says, “bureaucracy also refers to a government by paid officials not elected by people, officials who keep their positions irrespective of the political party in power.” From this, one can rightly say that bureaucracy connotes civil service of any State, as civil service is ran by officials who keep their positions

irrespective of the political party in power. They do not just keep their position; they contribute rigidly and efficiently to daily routine of the government. Again; they are expected not to be partisan in order to ensure unalloyed rendering of services to the political party in power and entire citizens.

Bureaucracy represents the hierarchical arrangement of authorities in the political and administrative terrains of any polity (Chioke, 2016). Ugwu and Okonkwo (2015) were of the view that, “Bureaucratization offers above all the optimum possibility for carrying through the principle of specializing administrative functions according to purely objective considerations. Individual performances are allocated to functionaries who have specialized training and who by constant practice learn more and more.”

Concept of Treasury Single Account (TSA)

The notion of Treasury Single Account (TSA) is one enveloped in controversy within the sociopolitical terrain of this great country. In this regard, while very few in both the elite class and intelligentsia class have heard and wield the knowledge of the workings and benefits of TSA, majority of the population were hitherto ignorant of the meaning, benefits and workings of TSA. To this end, it should be noted that, “Treasury Single Account is a public accounting system under which all government revenue, receipts and income are collected into one single account, usually maintained by the country’s Central Bank and all payments done through this account as well (Adeolu, 2015).” According to Sailendra and Israel (2011), “A TSA can be defined as a unified structure of government bank accounts enabling consolidation and optimum utilization of government cash resources. It separates transaction level control from overall cash management. In other words, a TSA is a bank account or a set of linked bank accounts through

which the government transacts all its receipts and payments and gets a consolidated view of its cash position at the end of each day.”

“Single,” in the above terminology shows that it connotes one. Treasury Single Account is a unified and integrated account of the government meant to serve the need of checkmating excess loss and supplement/leakage and manipulation of revenue, receipts and expenditure of the government. It could be deduced from the aforesaid that TSA serves as an objective purpose of reducing fraudulent receipts and manipulation of expenditure figures in a way that profits the comprador bourgeoisies in all capitalist economies of the world and porous polities at large. The implication is that the tendency of borrowing by the government from external and internal sources is significantly reduced (Chioke, 2016). In the same vein, Sailendra and Israel (2010) corroborated the just stated implication when they opined as follows: “A treasury Single Account (TSA) is an essential tool for consolidating and managing government’s cash resources, thus minimizing borrowing costs.”

The Environment of Bureaucracy and Treasury Single Account

In any democracy; there exist sub-systems of the general system, because the system itself is an organization. *Ipso facto*, the system and/or organization is an embodiment of parts/subsystems/units. It is however on this premise, that we suffice it to note that bureaucracy or civil service and Treasury Single Account live and thrive in both the economic and the political environment. It is on this note that we glean from the following: Public Service, civil service and/or bureaucracy is considered to be sub-system of the political system in which it operates. The nature of the political system invariably, shapes the behavior of the sub-system. Bureaucracy and/or civil servants play more predominant role in policy making functions in a Parliamentary system of government than in a Presidential system (Presthus, 1977). On the other

hand, Treasury Single Account is not an island. Therefore, it exists more in the economic environment of the polity.

To start with, it is useful to suggest that the public service and civil service are important members of the bureaucratic family. Having said this; we hasten to add that, public service and civil service connote and underscore bureaucracy, because there are traits and features in them (civil service and public service) analogous to bureaucracy and vice versa. However, as a useful impulse we align our perspectives with that of Pfiffner who defined bureaucracy thus, “where large-scale enterprises exist, there bureaucracy will be found.” What does this innovation inform us? Of course, this is a pointer that civil service, public service and bureaucracy are indivisible and as such, are one. No wonder scholars and Laymen use the terms interchangeably. Therefore, the truth is that bureaucracy entails the public and/or civil service of the country. In another parallax, bureaucracy is the entirety of formal organizations.

Having laid this foundation and consequently cleared the seemingly insurmountable doubt as to the very nature and relationship of the phenomena (bureaucracy, civil service and public service), we continue with the revelations of the very nexus between bureaucracy and the political system. According to Olewe (2009), “Bureaucratic organizations have made interaction with the political system than with the social, economic or cultural system.” But then, what do we say regarding Olewe’s argument above? As for me, the argument is true as it clearly captures the situation/reality on ground with regards to the very association that exists between formal organization (bureaucracy) and other environmental typologies like: the social environment, economic environment, cultural environment, legal environment and allied forces other than the ecologies of the organizations. However, the politicking in bureaucracies is largely determined by the legal environment of such bureaucracy and it attendantly controls the Political system.

Truly; this is where Administrative law comes in to play herein. Significantly, the political system controls and determines the internal politics of the bureaucracy.

Also, Olewe (2009) went on to say, “The enclosure of the administrative sub-system by the political system subjects the bureaucracy or civil servants as its element. The ensuing argument, has given rise to many typologies. Prominent among them is the one given by Marle Fainsod (n.d) in his five (5) patterns of bureaucracies:

- i. Representative bureaucracies
- ii. Party – State bureaucracies
- iii. Military dominated bureaucracies
- iv. Rural dominated bureaucracies and
- v. Ruling bureaucracies (see also Chowdhury, 1999).”

“This reflects to character of the political role of the bureaucracy in different political systems. The different types of bureaucracies perform different types of functions in the social system. The role of the bureaucracy recruited through merit system differs from that of the bureaucracy recruited on the basis of ascriptive and particularistic criteria as it happens in most cases in Nigeria, which invariably, plays vital role in the country’s socio-politico-economic development. The bureaucracies produced as a result of ascriptive and particularistic criteria, in the absence of strong political institution, due to long period of military rule with military dominated bureaucracy, will husband varieties of resources where greater percentage of the citizenry are estranged and alienated. Estrangement leads to loss of creativity and dehumanization. Besides the present President Umaru Musa Yar’ Adua’s belief on the “Rule of Law,” bureaucratic powers has perpetrated the existence of:

- i. formalistic Laws
- ii. increasing rate of poverty and the widening gap between the “Affordables” and Unaffordables.

The consequence, therefore, are conflicts which divided the elites along ethnic lines, with centralization of powers and policy making (Olewe, 2009).”

Challenges

The following challenges are presently confronting bureaucratic institutions in the era of TSA policy implementation:

- **Corruption:** Eze (2009) says, “Corruption is aimed at intentionally changing the normal course of events for personal gains of the corruptee or to the advantage of the corrupter.” Simply, corruption is the abuse of public office for private gain (Chioke, 2016). Public Administrators in several bureaucracies here and there have diverted and looted public treasury to enrich themselves. It should be noted that, in spite of the implementation of TSA, public officials have devised other means of siphoning public fund. To this end, corruption has remained a perennial issue in Nigeria. To demonstrate the need to check corruption, Sen. Babafemi Ojudu in a plenary session on 20 Dec. 2012 warned that, “If you don’t kill corruption in this country, corruption will kill all of us.”

This evil trend has left Nigeria with untold hardship, economic quagmire and allied negativities. But then again, the sole reason is the dearth of a strong and sustainable policy that would sideline and overthrow all factors that have over the years encouraged and enthroned conducive economic as well as political atmospheres for the business as usual – corrupt practices (Chioke, 2016). In light of this, Achebe (1983) in Udentia (2007) says, “Nigerians are corrupt because the system under which they live today makes corruption easy and profitable; they will cease to be corrupt when corruption is made difficult and inconvenient.”

- **Rigidity:** This is one of the problems of bureaucratic organization in Nigeria. TSA promotes unnecessary protocol in government establishment – that is, bureaucratic organization. TSA has given rise to the development of a more rigid (bureaucratic) approach toward the management public finance.
- **Lack of Initiative** – Bureaucracy in this regard makes or reduces employees to mere robots (machines to be remote controlled and tossed around). It was probably against this backdrop that Ugwu and Okonkwo (2015) emphasize that, “Officials and employees in an organization have little or no control over the situation of their working environment or the policies of the agencies.” The negative implication of this economic change/trend is that it makes vibrant employees to be redundant, as they do not properly understand the need, rudiments and workings of TSA. Also, employees do not use their initiative apart from the prescriptions of TSA policy blueprint. This is where the matter lies, as employees of several bureaucracies lack initiative except that which has already been injected into the system by policy makers. Sequel to this, the polity has suffered derailment in the developmental process of the polity.
- **Inefficiency** – Bureaucratic organizations in Nigeria are largely and grossly inefficient. It has been argued that TSA has enthroned inefficiency and ineffectiveness. This is largely because of the super rigidity enthroned in the bureaucratic system through the application of TSA. However, NOUN (2009) posits that, “Most public organizations in Nigeria manifest low productivity as a result of administrative inefficiency.” But the question is: What causes administrative inefficiency? “Administrative inefficiency is a product of low morale and inadequate motivation which in turn results in the manifestation of adaptive behaviors by public Servants (NOUN, 2009).”

- **Unwholesome Practices** – By unwholesome practices, we mean the unethical behaviors that have plagued the myriad of bureaucratic institutions/organizations in Nigeria. In this regard, NOUN put the matter thus: “Unethical behavior negates administrative responsibility. Unethical behavior is an administrative act which even though not against the letter of the law, is morally wrong as its intent is in exploiting the loopholes in the law. It is an act that lacks administrative integrity (2009).” Now; for the examples of unethical behaviours, we look at the following: “When an official places order for an interior goods and services instead of the most superior ones, jobs orders for reports of office equipment, machineries and vehicles are issued not to the best machineries that put in tenders but to friends and relation who are known to be inferior in standard, are numerous cases of such unethical behaviors in Nigeria (NOUN, 2009).

Conclusion

Government intervention would go a long way in ameliorating the more rigidity installed in the administrative system of Nigeria. This would curtail the unnecessary protocol injected into the system as a result of the implementation of TSA. However, while curbing this very threat (rigidity) to the administration, performance, effectiveness and service delivery of bureaucracies, government should make sure that the doors of corruption are not reopened to flourish again.

Recommendations

In keeping with the foregoing discussions, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should flexible government policy to remove bureaucratic bottlenecks in the execution of TSA and government programs.
2. Authority concerned should ensure enlightenment programs for state bureaucracies through regular workshops, seminars and conferences.
3. Skilled technocrats should be used to enhance the administration of bureaucratic institutions in the era of TSA.
4. There should be wide spread consultations of stakeholders regarding TSA operations.
5. As a corollary to the fourth problem stated above, it is therefore recommended that as a panacea, public servants' morale should be boosted via adequate remuneration and other incentives.

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