

Poor Public Management and Public Governance Failure: Nigerian Experience on Oil Resource Curse or Blessing Debate

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria is regarded as the giant of Africa because of its huge oil resource wealth. For years the country has been restoring peace in troubled countries. It also has the support of world leaders because of its strong advocacy against corruption and terrorism. This achievement in the global governance agenda is a blessing. However, the problem of corruption and mismanagement is a curse. In the context of the curse or blessing debate in oil-rich countries, it is clear from evidence that the experience of Nigeria is a mixed blend of blessing and curse. Exploratory research design was used for the study, and data analyses showed positive association between poor public management and public governance failure, as a result of the gross negative effect. To mitigate such a negative trend, it was recommended that government should institute management teams in government, departments, agencies, and parastatals to monitor the use of public resources for public good.

KEYWORDS

Corruption, Good Public Management, Malabu Oil Block, Natural Resource Wealth, Political Will, Public Good, Sustainability, Unemployment

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INTRODUCTION

It takes good management of public resources for the entrenchment of good public governance architecture in the polity of any country. Good public management focuses on the sound management of public resources to reduce incentives and opportunities for public corruption and mismanagement. The direct opposite of good public management is poor public management which is a reflection of impropriety, inefficiency, misallocation and misdirection of public resources. Poor public management is notorious for lack of transparency in public financial management practices, and putting of pressure on public administration by the diversion of public wealth for personal gains by public officials. This in effect results to poor governance. Poor governance contrasts with good public governance which ensures the enactment and execution of public development policies that create an efficient, effective and responsible government. It also seeks to address the problems of accountability, probity and transparency and equally promotes an *environment* that accelerates national sustainability. Richardson (2010) asserts that good governance which opposes poor governance is mainly concerned with the good and progress of society and the people. Poor public management and poor governance are noticeable in Nigeria largely as the result of the inability of successive governments to implement reforms. For example, the Babangida government is reputed to have introduced the highest number of reform programmes unprecedented in the Nigerian political history, but it is also on record that over 50 percent of such programmes failed to achieve the intended results (Anifowose, and Aiyede, 2004). A reform is meant to remove faults in the system, strengthening good qualities and making necessary corrections to avoid abuse. In view of the fact that corruption is a universal phenomenon and that there will always be people and groups in any society that will always attempt to enrich themselves unjustly, government needs a well co-ordinate strategy and to implement reforms so as to minimize the incidence of poor governance. To this extent, Pope (1999) suggests that to bring integrity to government, appropriate attitudes and conducts must be taught and reinforced at all levels of government to ensure the success of reforms. He posits that reform is a long-term process, involving a series of carefully formulated programmes. Also, reforms can reduce poor public management and government must therefore, address core political and administrative goals that are not only integral to management functions but also regular reports should be made and evaluated. Reducing reform failures requires good public leadership, because it is a vital ingredient in national progress, starting from the corporate, community, state, and to national level. The challenge of leadership is the inability to craft appropriate visions and goals and to align people behind them to achieve common objectives. Also, in a changing world environment, national progress and improvements in the quality of life of the average citizen, comes to those able to efficiently use human and material resources for growth and sustainability. Nigeria since the 1960s has had leaders noted for misrule, misleadership, corruption, abandonment of projects that constitute poor public management and ultimately influencing poor governance in an

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