

# An Overview of the Bane of Remuneration and Service Delivery to Government Workers in Nigeria.

## A Case Study of Ekiti State Civil Servants

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The security and development of any nation depend critically on the adequacy of its social service delivery to the populace (Nnamani and Chilaka, 2012). It is a global trend and a response to social needs and social problems of the people. (Iloh and Bahir, 2013) opine thus: “Social service encompasses programmes aimed at achieving some objectives and it relates to the social system in the goals of social policies. The efficiency and effectiveness of social services provisioning has been viewed to be critical in the overall development of a nation. Social service programmes contribute to development in such areas as job creation, economic growth, poverty reduction, mortality, rural-urban migration, diversification of the economy, citizen empowerment, self actualization and happiness among others (Nwofia, 2010). The following research questions are considered very germane to the study and are raised to guide the study. How significant is the relationship between effective wages administration in Civil service and employee’s performance? What are the constraints to regular payment of salaries by some states in Nigeria? What is the implications non-payment of salaries on public service delivery?

The study is guided by the following major objectives which are to: Identify significant relationship between effective wages administration in Civil service and employee’s performance; examine the constraints to regular payment of salaries by some states in Nigeria; and ascertain implications non-payment of salaries on public service delivery

The following assumptions are formulated to guide the study: the relationship between remuneration in civil service and service delivery is not significant; there is no significant difference in the opinion of the respondents regarding what constitutes constraints to regular payment of salaries wage by some state governments in Nigeria; the effect of non-payment of salaries on public service delivery is not significant.

The study is very apt due to its contribution to existing literature on remuneration and service delivery and provides a platform for further research. Its relevance lies on its capacity to extend the frontier of knowledge on the government in remuneration and service delivery. Lecturers, students, teachers, and the public will find the work useful. The study would expand the policy maker and to narrow their view by encourage active participation of all towards ensuring an effective and efficient remuneration and service delivery system.

In Nigeria, it is the duty of government to deliver social services, efficiently and effectively to the people. However, with the complexity of modern government and inevitable diverse and multiplicity of responsibilities, the local government was created to meet the social needs and problems at the grassroots in order to ensure even development. Hence, Egberi and Madubueze (2014:1) assert that, “One of the ways of bringing government closer to the people at the grassroots is through the delivery of social services in a satisfactory, timely, effective and adequate manner” The local government in Nigeria is the third tier of government, primarily established to deliver effective and efficient service at the local level. Hence, social service delivery has become a tool for governance at the local level to ensure sustainable development at the grassroots. These social service provisions by the local government which includes; basic infrastructural facilities, health, education, agriculture, regulatory services and other developmental activities is not limited to Nigeria, but are also obtained in other countries of the world adopting the local government system like the United States of America (U.S.A), United Kingdom (U.K), India, France among others.

Erondu and Oladejo (2015:2) are of the view that, “Social service provision has not been met in rural societies of most developing economies of the world, especially in Africa”. In supporting this assertion, Kofi Annan in Erondu and Oladejo (2015:2) is of the opinion that; “We tended to take for granted some of the essential services, like health, education, infrastructure, and others. But now, of course, everybody realizes that without good health, without basic education, and others, you are not going to move forward”.

There is a deplorable condition of infrastructural facilities, education, health, and agriculture in Osun State. Although not exclusive to other social services, the provision of infrastructural facilities from 2007-2014 have not been encouraging. In the report of Chukwu (2014), there has been no meaningful development with regards to infrastructural facilities in Osun state of 22 years existence. On the issue of water supply, few people have access to safe drinking water. In the view of an article in This Day Live (2015), "it is clearly evident that the country has failed the Millennium Development Goals' (MDG) target of 75 percent coverage of access to safe drinking water by the citizens. Indeed, according to Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (NOI) Polls Limited conducted mid last year, 47 percent of Nigerians still cannot access clean drinking water with 83 percent of Nigerians sourcing their water privately, while only about 9 percent are connected to the public sewage system. The effect of the lack or insufficiency of this primary need is devastating on Osunns. Bad roads have become a means of identification of the state. According to Eze (2015) in the Nation News, The fact that roads in Nigeria have erroneously remained on the front burner is not only troubling but calls for immediate concern and attention by appropriate authorities. In a comment made by Olughu in Eze (2015), Most of the roads in Aba and Umuahia are littered with potholes, Aba the commercial nerve center has only two pedestrian crossings, and Umuahia one". This is very disheartening in a state where the 'Japan of Nigeria' is located. The epileptic power supply bordering the country is particularly outstanding in the state. There is unstable and patchy supply of electricity. It slows down businesses, discourages economic growth and concomitantly, the overall development of the country (Nzekwe, 2011). Social service delivery in education is yet to be seen; schools are now based on the ability of an individual to pay for the services rendered; the health sector has witnessed a gross malfunction. Hospital facilities and equipments are no longer accessible to the common man; and Agriculture, which remains the mainstay of the states economy, has made little contribution to the states GDP. Lack or insufficiency of the modern government in providing welfare services to promising farmers, makes it a subsistence, rather than a commercial venture. (Lassell Mbah, 2011). Of course, infrastructural decay and poor maintenance culture of the few existing social services is still the norm in social services provisioning in the state.

The provision of social services by the government may be carried out exclusively or in partnership with other tiers of government or other agencies. The local government function alongside the federal government, state government, local communities, NGOs as well as profit based enterprises in delivery of social services for the upliftment and well-being of the society. Obi, E.A (2010). But in most situations in Nigeria, the onus of social service delivery lies on the federal government alone, without support from the local communities and other agencies. The result becomes dire for the people leading to a high rate of poverty, unemployment,

rural-urban migration, high crime rate, high mortality rate, and other forms of social ills. The diverse nature of social service delivery calls for more attention in other sectors of the economy in meeting up with the diverse social needs of the people. The data enumerated so far about the deplorable state of social service delivery at all levels of government in Nigeria are mere tips of the iceberg. It exposes us to the fact that social services are not effectively and efficiently delivered.

People who administer wage and salary face challenges which often necessitate adjustments to a remuneration plan. The more important of the challenges are skills-based pay, salary reviews, pay secrecy, comparable worth, and international pay. Skill-based pay: In the traditional job-based pay, employees are paid on the bases of jobs they do. In the skill-based system, workers are paid on the basis of number of jobs they are capable of doing, or on the depth of their knowledge. The purpose of this system is to motivate employees to acquire additional skills so that they become more useful to the organization (Ogonu & Ikeanyibe, 2010).

To Egbo and Okeke (2009), salaries and wages of civil servants are not left to the discretion of employers. They are usually backed by a legal instrument stating the minimum pay for workers. For instance, the Obasanjo led government in 2003 pegged the minimum wage rate for federal workers at N7,500.00. It was initiated through rigorous consultations between worker's representatives and the government, before the wages and fiscal commission forwarded the agreement to the National Assembly for necessary legal backing. Nigeria being a federal structure, it was expected that the federating states should fix the salaries and wages of their workers. However, what has happened over the years is that the state workers representatives (labour unions) through the joint public service Negotiating council (JPSNC), usually adopt the Federal Government's rate of federal workers to engage their respective state governments in negotiating for their workers and this has always created problems in the system. However, some states, especially those from the oil producing area often adopt the federal rate as soon as it is announced, many other states often allege that their allocations from the federation Account cannot sustain such rates and this becomes a good reason for the state workforce to embark on an indefinite strike action (Cole, 2000)).

For instance, in Ekiti State like many other states of the federation, the problems caused by federal government's 2011 minimum wage pronouncement are still being felt very strongly as the prolonged industrial dispute over the minimum wage pitched the workers against the government thereby making the work environment very un-conducive with negative implications for productivity and output in the sector (Ikpefan, O.A 2003). According to Nwokolo (2011), such poor labour-management relations affects productivity severely as workers assume that the government does not appreciate their efforts by refusing to pay them federal

government rate after all, everybody buy from the same market.

Trade dispute is an evil wind that blows nobody any good. Therefore, every effort must be made always to avoid it. It must however be understood that when workers are not properly treated as ought to, they will not only be demoralized but will also exhibit some negative behaviours in the workplace. Such corrupt practices manifesting in embezzlement, misappropriation of public funds as the feeling of insecurity overwhelms them (Ikpefan, O.A 2003). They start to steal public funds to take care of the present and also ensure that during retirement, they have enough to fall back on.

There is no doubt that an effective and efficient state civil/public service makes every other sector of the state economy vibrant by facilitating the desired development that will impact positively on the quality of life of the citizenry. Wages and salary administration in Nigeria is as old as the civil service itself (Olaleye 2012). Nigeria operates a federal structure in which the states constitute the federal units. On issues of salaries and wages, the minimum wage is on the exclusive list of the federal government. The implication of this is that when the federal government fixes the minimum wage, the federating states are expected to take a queue from that and do likewise for the state civil servants (Nwokolo, 2011). Contrary to this expectation, many state governments including Ekiti State have always claimed that they don't have the financial capacity to pay the minimum wage fixed by the federal government. The consequence of such actions has always been industrial actions of large proportion by the workers with negative implications for productivity and output (Olaleye, 2012). In the light of the above, it has become necessary to investigate the impact of the effective wage administration in the productivity of civil service and also to examine the constraints to full implementation of minimum wage by state governments in Nigeria. The

inefficiency and ineffectiveness of remuneration and service delivery in Nigeria is the problem that triggered this study. Over the years, remuneration and service delivery has been relegated to the background in the issues of overall development in Nigeria.

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