

## The Impact of Rules and Regulations on Personnel Performance in the Unified Local Government Service of Nigeria

Akpomuvire Mukoro

*Department of Local Government Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Nigeria*

**KEY WORDS** Nigeria; unified local government; rules and regulations; personnel services

**ABSTRACT** Local government in Nigeria occupies the third level of government. It is saddled with the responsibilities of rural transformation, the delivery of social services and the exercise of democratic self-government. The personnel employed in this level of government have to perform with bodies of rules and regulations for it to be able to achieve its corporate objective and for productivity to be positively impacted upon. But, because of the cumbersome atmosphere under which civil servants operate in Nigeria, rules appear not to work. This greatly affect productivity. The elements that serve as rules and regulations will be critically examined against the backdrop of the impact of these rules and regulations on personnel performance. This would be done by adopting the classical school of analysis to examine the various stages that this level of government have undergone in the history of governance in Nigeria. The bottomline is to recognize that rules and regulations that they have their jobs to protect. Therefore the type of rules and regulations that will guarantee efficiency in performance should derive from the environment rather than for it to be imposed by the central government.

### INTRODUCTION

The present status of local government in Nigeria has gone through several changes. From its rudimentary state of native authority system (Okafor, 1981), local governments have metamorphosed into a separate level (third tier) of government with numerous functions and considerable autonomy (Adamolekun, 1979: 3-8). This tier of government is now widely acknowledged as a viable instrument for grassroots or rural transformation, the delivery of social services, exercise of democratic self-government and ensuring egalitarianism for the citizenry.

Local government, like any other organisation depends upon the effective use of its available resources. These resources, if they are to be effectively utilized to yield fruitful result, should be obtained in the right quantity, the right quality and at the right time. The human resources (amongst the other resources) are the most important, most valuable, most complex and least

predictable of all the resources available in an organisation. It is they that process or utilize the other resources in order to achieve the goals of the organisation. Thus, an organisation which does not have a well tailored and structured human resources (personnel) risks poor performance and failure. The calibre of personnel in an organisation together with the rules with which they function is very important right through the entire life span of that organisation. This is the reason why the rules and performance of personnel in an organisation has to be well structured in such a way as to be able to cope with the numerous challenges of a fluid society like Nigeria.

However, it is not only personnel that need to obey applicable rules operating in their work environment, societies, nations and organisations are also guided by rules and regulations which constitute standards that assure reasonable uniformity in the performance of task. In essence, since organisations are living bodies, it follows that rules and regulations, which provide for continuity of operations regardless of changes in personnel ought to be put in place. Emmet (1966: 11), contended that no human society can exist without rules. According to him "a society of spontaneous co-operators might exist without rules: are there rules in heaven, or for that matter in a beehive? In order words, a spontaneously harmonious society might, as Aristotle would say, be one either of gods or beasts. It would not be human society as we know it! He went further to state that to study human society is then to take account of conduct which is partly at least rule directed. It is to observe not just regularities in conduct, but regulated conduct.

Local governments, as part of the public service of Nigeria, have written duties, responsibilities, code of ethics, rules and regulation for career officers, with which they are expected to be conversant, comply with and get rewarded or sanctioned if violated. These rules and regula-

tions are contained in a number of documents including the local government unified (staff) regulations, financial memoranda etc., all of which serve as daily guide for employees. A critical examination of existing rules and regulations shows that while providing for controlled decision-making, continuity, stability and uniformity in the service, certain rules and regulations have caused organizational rigidity and inflexibility. Employees have to work within an environment of rules and controls, which have been more or less imposed on them. Under this kind of condition, junior workers cannot display initiative in the absence of the superior officer and people avoid responsibility for achieving organizational objectives by hiding behind regulations.

There is no gain saying the fact that the constitutionally assigned roles of the local government can not be fulfilled without human resources and the extent to which these duties are carried out would determine the level of performance. Meanwhile, personnel performance are appraised continuously to evaluate an employee's worth to the organization, which then implies that all rules of conduct that would be used to determine and judge performance must be guided by those factors that are distinctly peculiar to the environment, the goals, and objectives of the organization and the degree of expectation from the public or primary beneficiaries.

### CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Wherever there is an establishment, be it private or public, and there are personnel working in that establishment, it becomes very important that it should operate with bodies of rules and regulations for it to be able to achieve its corporate objectives and for its personnel to improve on their job performance. Rules and regulations are meant to control behaviour, ensure orderliness and achieve organizational goals. But the cumbersome and bureaucratic atmosphere under which civil servants operate in Nigeria has made it become often very difficult to institute sanctions and disciplinary procedures for the breaching of work ethics and existing rules and regulations in the system.

The civil service plays a very vital role in shaping the social, economic and political development of the nation. To discharge these

responsibilities in the best interest of the nation, it is demanded of the civil servant – courage, integrity and dedication to public duty. These requirements are seriously hampered in Nigeria because of the fact that power and wealth have become the trade mark of the ruling elite (Oyinloye 1992:111).

Some of the critical problems, which can be posed as questions are highlighted below:

- (1) What are the operational rules and regulations currently being applied to run the affairs of local governments in Nigeria
- (2) To what extent have the existing rules and regulations aided or hindered the performance of personnel in the services of the local government?
- (3) Why is general productivity in the local government low in spite of the existing work rules put into place.
- (4) Why are most of the rules and regulations for local government service articulated and designed by the central government for the local government?
- (5) Are there sufficient sanctions in the existing code of conduct and rules for public officers to enforce compliance and ensure total submission to the laws as prescribed?

### OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

Arising from the above questions, this paper would strive to provide these objectives.

- (1) To examine the rules and regulations guiding employees at the local government level.
- (2) To examine the effects of rules and regulations on personnel performance
- (3) To identify inherent problems with existing rules and regulations and proffer solutions on ways of improving personnel performance in the services of local government.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this paper; rules, regulations and personnel performance as concepts will be provided with a theoretical framework, in which "the regulative principle must take cognisance of and be compatible with the constitutive principles" with the regulative principles in this regard being the rules, regulations, laws, reforms etc. while the constitutive principles being the personnel, the structures or institution and the goals to be achieved or attained through personnel perform-

ance. For this point to be well articulated, it has to be understood that the functions, structure and composition of local government in Nigeria, are influenced by the political beliefs of those who have the authority and the responsibility for determining the main features of the local government system whether it is under a civilian or a military regime.

This paper adopts a pattern in which the structure, procedural and cultural aspects of the innovations (several) introduced in local authorities are each shown to draw on specific areas of the classical organisation theory.

The classification of organisation and administrative theory into the classical and the modern schools of thought is mainly concerned with the structure and functioning of human organisations and the interrelationship and behaviour of individuals and groups within them. When considering local government in Nigeria and indeed several other places, one becomes struck with the observations of Garrett (1972: 82) and that of Baker (1975: 21-22). Garrett for instance, observed that "Though, the focus of present day organisation theory is on the construction and evaluation of models of the sub-structures and integrating mechanisms of complex organisations ... the principles of the classicists still determine the form of most organisations in public administration". In the context of local government, Baker asserts that: "until very recently, all discussions of management and organisation in local government... implicitly assumed frameworks of thinking identical with those of classical theorists"

Indeed, Gboyega's view (1987: 175) on the 1976 reforms attests to this when he said "the return to civilian administration meant that the centralised coordination which was evident in the planning and implementation of the 1976 reform would give way to greater autonomy".

The management of local government in Nigeria is centrist in approach and tailored to achieve machine-like efficiency, through the imposition of rigid, hierarchical structures and authoritarian practices and procedures which are the features of the classicists. The logic in the thinking is that since the military has for too long occupied and dominated the machineries and instrumentalities of governance, their actions and legacies would reflect the command structure that is authoritarian, centralized,

hierarchical and rigid even when the stage has now been cleared for politicians and for democracy.

Amongst some of the notable classicists are Taylor (1911), Fayol (1916) Urwick (1943) and Mooney (1954).

Taylor's scientific management school sought for the "best way" method of solving organisational problems through the classicist principles. Fayol's standpoint favoured the value of strong centralized authority, discipline and obedience expressed in his classical principles of administration (Fayol: 20). The highpoint of Fayol's scholarship is his treatise that responsibility must be matched with authority, in the sense that personnel given responsibilities to execute should not be made hamstrung by creating impediments or obstacles on the way by the leadership in the Nigerian situation.

Max Weber (1947: 328) on his part argued for a classification of organisation by reference to their type of internal authority system and in particular the basis upon which authority within an organisation establishes a claim to legitimacy. This is better attested to by the predominance of rules and regulations operating within the local government system being manufactured by higher authorities in the mould of the federal and state governments, respectively.

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND DECENTRALIZATION**

Reviewing the experiences of public sector management in Nigeria, one is struck by the fact that local governments and other institutions of local administration have been one of the major concerns of leaders (during civilian and military eras). Given that local government as the third tier of government, play important roles in the social, economic and political development of the nation, one would be tempted to explain the interest of the governments with the fact that social services or national development occupy an important place in policy making and the politics of Nigeria. But as these developmental initiatives remain very unsatisfactory, we are no doubt confronted by the reality that there is a blatant contrast between the willingness to decentralize the machinery of government on the one hand and the reality of excessive centralization on the other hand. Objectively, Laleye (1984: 8-9) summarized the goals of

decentralization as it affects local government in relation to performance and services delivery as follows:

- (1) Provide for popular participation through the implementation of the democratic principles of elective representativeness in the public decision making process.
- (2) Encourage local initiatives and sacrifice and mobilize the human and financial resources that are available in the locality for the purpose of local development.
- (3) Ensure adequate provision of social services necessary for a decent life.
- (4) Establish a functioning communication channel between the central authority and the local institutions within and outside the councils, with a view to ensuring the effectiveness of the central government's action.

The attainment of these goals in the chronology of local government administration in Nigeria has often been a far cry from desired results. Governance has often been centralized while governments arrogate to themselves the role of absolute social caretaker as is presently evident in the difficulty experienced by all governmental levels to decentralize their operations or to grant the necessary latitude of autonomy to institutions which were created primarily to promote institutional decentralization like the parastatals and local governments. Consequent upon this thinking, the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD), observed that excessive governmental control leads to the stifling of initiative and ultimately defeating the very purpose for which the institutions were created in the first place (CAFRAD) 1983:20)

#### **RULES AND REGULATIONS AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL EXPLAINED**

Rules have been in existence from time immemorial. According to Biblical tradition, God formulated the first rule for man in the Garden of Eden (Bible).

According to Yakubu (1985: 130), rules and regulations are designed in organizations to ensure a uniform and controlled standard of directing or managing worker's affairs. "They are laid down as to how every member of the

society or class or group is expected to conduct himself". These rules are written when laid down by the National or State Assembly or professional body in a codified form. It is unwritten when the rules and the principles are conventionally or customarily embedded into the practice of the people and have received the force of law.

To ensure that organizations are moving in the right direction in accordance with laid down goals and objectives, rules and regulations are established in order to ensure reasonable predictability of employee behaviour beyond that provided by groups norms so that the organisation can function without undue disturbance and also to protect employees from hazardous conditions (French 1998:188). Based on this understanding, the organisation (local government) would want to achieve its corporate objectives of being service oriented. To this end, targets are set for the personnel. In designing duties for council workers, there are job specifications, job descriptions and schedules of duties based on the scheme of service. This allows everyone to know what is expected of him and the consequences, which follows upon his compliance or non-compliance.

The irony however of examining administration at this level of government, shows that policy makers and most of their policies emanate more from the hope and aspirations of the wielders of political power at the centre, than from a realistic appreciation of the kind of organisational management conditions that the socio-economic and cultural make-up of the country can sustain.

In the view of Adedeji, the 1976 local government reform broke with the observance of the federal principle of shared responsibilities and decentralization. This policy of reform making launched the federal government into taking over the field of local government administration by introducing a uniform system of local government nation-wide (Adedeji, 1997:7). Aside from the 1976 reform, the federal government have come out with the Dasuki report (1984), the reform of 1988, the handbook on local government administration of 1991, the operational guidelines for local government councils of 1997, amidst other documents like the financial memoranda, the approved scheme of service, regulation and other circulars that specifically prescribes the rules and regulations for employees at the local level.

The system as it is, is viewed by many scholars as rather centrist and undemocratic in nature. Said Adedeji; "a uniform local government makes the attainment of these objectives extremely difficult, if not impossible". In another medium, an advise was proffered by Adedeji and Otite when they said government should get involved with creating structures and designing policies and programmes that serve the interest of all and contribute optimally to the development process (Adedeji and Otite: 7). This becomes necessary because the situation as it presently operates is stifling in the sense that "the centralisation of the formal institutions of government has been futile as well as destructive" (Wunsch and Olowu, 1995).

One of the universally accepted characteristics of any organization is the ability to maintain a strict code of ethics, rules, values and norms. Every worker is expected to conform with these standard codes of ethics, rules and regulations, while performing their assigned roles and responsibilities. By so doing, it is expected that the worker's performance and productivity will be bolstered. However the nigeria situation is such that rules and regulations and work ethics have become ineffective and sometimes, missing components of the public service (Maduabum, 2000). President Olusegun Obasanjo had to complain about the situation in the public service when he lamented that "A substantial number of public officers behave as if there are no rules and regulations that govern their conduct". The president (2000:1) was even more specific when he lamented that:

*The past decade and a half has seen the systematic destruction of public institution and the promotion of a total disregard for time tested procedure in the conduct of government business. The need to revise and enforce the rules contained in the civil service rules has never been greater than at the moment, when there is a strong desire in the nation to stamp out the cynical contempt for integrity within the public service, and general laxity in the observance of rules and regulations in official and government acts and replace them with integrity in public life, transparency and accountability in the conduct of government business.*

It is important to point out that the palpable presence of this decay in the system has been a thing of concern for a very long time. In the

approved scheme of service for local government employees in Nigeria, government acknowledged the fact that local government is a service-oriented organisation and its effectiveness depends on the calibre of its personnel and the laws governing them. In this wise, staff input in the management of local government is very vital for the success of programmes or projects at that level of government (Scheme of Service 1999). A productive and result-oriented service depends on the performance of its personnel who are in turn guided by the existing rules, regulations and work ethics in the system.

Membership of the public service arise from a voluntary choice and not from compulsion and the public service is evaluated on the basis of performance, services provision and the presence of the good life. But there seems to be no reduction in the scale of unethical practices in the system. The end result according to Shellnkindo (1993: 25) is that this will affect "the efficiency levels of the services, but even more seriously has brought the public service into discredit with the publiclosing faith in their government".

Although, the nigerian situation is such that the system has lost value and esteem, the major problem and cause is that the public which is being served and the state which embodies it does not quite seem like a concrete universal but a disorderly aggregation of particularities. And it has been kept so in the opinion of Ake (1993) by. "a state which has turned society into its enemy, politics into warfare, and by doing so, thrown up political formations which have displaced it as the primary focus of political allegiance". The interpretation one may be tempted to draw is that in the public realm, behaviour of public officer/servants does not conform to the upholding of public good, there is the abuse of office and disregard for administrative laws. These are attributes which are antithetical to meaningful growth and development. And this is allowed to fester in spite of the existence of the code of conduct bureau charged with the responsibilities of enforcing the laws whenever there is a breach or misconduct on the part of public officers. The code of conduct bureau was set up by Decree 1 of 1989 and it is entrenched in the third schedule of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (1999 constitution).

### THE PURPOSE FOR RULES AND REGULATIONS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE

The Bendel State Office Manual of 1978 together with that of Ogun State enjoin that *“EVERY-ONE HAS A DESIRE TO KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED OF HIM AND WHAT CONSEQUENCE WILL FOLLOW UPON HIS COMPLIANCE OR NON COMPLIANCE. THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF THIS IS FOUND IN THE PRINTED REGULATIONS AND RULES; THE POSITIVE SIDE MUST BE COMMUNICATED BY THE SUPERVISOR IN EACH INDIVIDUAL CASE”* (OGUN STATE MANUAL 1978: 15).

It is evident that without rules and regulations, chaos is bound to exist in any establishment, the local government inclusive. The Chief general of staff – Admiral Augustus Aikhomu in his foreword to the handbook (1992: 1) on local government administration stated that *“following the introduction of the executive presidential system of government and its logic at the local government level, it has become imperative to put in place appropriate guidelines to define the scope and limits of the functions and responsibilities of each arm of government at the local level in order to smoothen the raw edges of the reform and reduce areas of possible tension and conflict”*.

Aside from protecting the interest of workers and that of the organization, all the moral and ethical manner of directing or managing the affairs of the particular organisation and those of its personnel are regulated by laid down rules and regulations. Adamolekun was specific when he said that the rules and regulations in organisations help to provide control over staff in all ramifications (Adamolekun, 1983: 177). He asserted that rules and regulations “refer to measures aimed at retaining and checking the behaviour of administrators with a view to preventing the abuse of administrative power”.

In the local government system where hierarchy is used to depict positions and duties to be performed, workers become aware of where to direct their demands as a result of the existing rules and regulations. They also act as guide to personnel performance and therefore allow personnel to grow or improve along their cadre or transfer to another cadre.

Existing rules instill discipline amongst personnel for the improvement of the organisation. The staff regulation is clear on this especial-

ly in matters of absenteeism and misconduct (Obadiah, 1992). Also, it is expected that senior officers and management itself should not break rules (Appleby, 1987: 128), by obeying all regulations and rules to the latter.

### RULES AND REGULATIONS GUIDING PERFORMANCE AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL.

A very close look at the definition given local government by the federal government of Nigeria expresses the mind of the higher tiers of government, over their desire and expectations from the other units of administration.

The 1976 reform can be said to illustrate the mindset of government if the opinion of policy analyst (Bozeman) is taken into consideration. Said Bozeman (1979:61) “A policy exposes the thinking and the mind-set of a government or more appropriately put; the most desirable means of achieving purposes”. The 1976 guidelines for local government reform define local government as

*“Government at local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific power within defined areas. These powers should give the council substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutions and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal government in their areas, and to ensure through devolution of functions to these councils and through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized”*.

This definition shows that local governments are created by and they derive their power from the federal government. That is that they are derivative rather than sovereign. Since they are not totally independent of the federal and state governments, it follows logically that some of its affairs are still being regulated by these tiers of government. Local government functionaries are guided by decrees, the constitution, the financial memoranda, the staff regulations, the Annual estimates and the scheme of service. Lasisi (1993:7-10) classified these legal documents as

- (a) The Constitution

- (b) The Local Government Edict (or law)
- (c) Financial Memoranda
- (d) Staff Regulation
- (e) Scheme of Service for Local Government
- (f) Staff Pension Regulation
- (g) Circulars from federal, state governments and their agencies
- (h) Other decrees, edicts, laws that may be applicable to the functions of the local governments such as those regulating such matters as education, health, public order, social services, public work, tenement rating etc.
- (i) Local government bye-laws
- (j) Annual budgets or estimates
- (k) Development Plans or Rolling Plans.

All the above are currently the instruments of control over the activities of local government in Nigeria.

However, some of them would be considered here:

#### **(A) The Constitution**

This document ensures the sanctity of the existence of local government all around the federation. It lays the foundation for the sharing of statutory funds from the federation accounts, and recommends for local governments to be under the control of the states.

#### **(B) The Local Government Edict (LAW)**

This document is issued by each state government but amplifies the provision of the constitution, lays down the basic foundation for

- (i) The making of financial memoranda
- (ii) The making of staff regulations
- (iii) The need for taking proper steps when awarding contract
- (iv) The collection of adequate revenue for local government
- (v) The proper utilization of funds to the benefit of the citizens and
- (vi) The need for proper auditing of the local government accounts.

The operational guideline issued by the federal government from time to time speaks on this.

#### **(C) The Financial Memoranda**

The financial memoranda spells out not only

the sources of revenue a local government can collect, it also shows how the money should be spent. It shows what authority should be obtained before spending the money. It spells out what is the financial responsibility of every officer, committee or employee. It also provides for detailed accounting records to keep for all revenue and expenditure of the local government. The financial memoranda according to the document is "to provide detailed guidance and instruction on the financial and accounting procedures to be followed" (F.M., 1991:1). The beauty of the financial memoranda is that it ensures that within their field of operation and responsibility, all council staff must as a requirement ensure that proper value is obtained for money spent.

#### **(D) Staff Regulation**

The staff regulation is the rule and regulation guiding all the member of staff (both senior and junior) in all the local governments in the federation. The present situation is that the necessary portions of approved scheme of service, guidelines for local government operations and the various reforms issued by the federal government are extracted to form the staff regulation for each state of the federation.

The regulation lays down the procedure for staff appointment, posting, transfers, promotion and discipline. It also deals with what an employee should do or should not do in connection with his official duties when in service. The staff regulation is one of the major instruments use by the local government service commission in each state as the agency for manpower management at the local government level (Sule 1992:11).

#### **(E) The Scheme of Service**

As part of the general local government reforms of the federal government in 1988, the first National Scheme of Service for local government staff was established. This has since witnessed so many reviews. The book contains minimum qualifications for all categories of employees that may be employed in all the departments of the local government. It also shows procedures and requirements for promotion of these employees including conditions to be fulfilled for lateral transfers (i.e.

movement of an officer from one type of job to another).

The scheme of service also indicates the salary grade levels of all employees of the local government. This is however subject to various federal and or state government periodic reviews and fringe benefits which eventually also affect the local government staff.

The present scheme of service arose from the review exercise carried out by the Allison Ayida (1997) committee on the review of the civil service and the federal government white paper on it. The highpoints of the scheme of service is to “attract, retain and motivate the vast majority of local government employees to maximum efficiency, creativity and productivity” (Scheme of Service, 2000:11). The major areas of the service that the scheme poised itself to handle are:

- (1) The job description which outlines clearly the scope and nature of work which the employee is to perform.
- (2) The entry qualifications and experience required for appointment.
- (3) The salary scale and
- (4) The condition for career progression.

#### **(F) The Local Government (Staff) Pension Regulations**

According to item 44 of the second schedule of 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria, pension matters are exclusive to the federal government. In exercise of its exclusive legislative authority, the federal government made laws and regulations establishing a pension fund for the various local governments in the federation and prescribed the formula for the contribution of money to the fund by the three (3) tiers of government as follows:

- (1) Federal government 5%
- (2) State governments 2.5%
- (3) Local governments 15%

The staff pension regulations indicate conditions upon which a local government staff can be granted gratuity and pension. It contains details of documents to be presented, the workings of pensions and gratuities, the procedure for approval and payment. The provisions of these regulations are however modified by federal government circulars and pension law, which now takes over issues relating to gratuities and pension and supercedes all regulations.

#### **(G) Local Government Circulars**

The purpose of these circulars is to ensure that local governments comply with the provisions of the constitution and laws, as well as to ensure financial prudence.

Before the introduction of the Presidential system of government, the ministry of local government and later department of local government after 1988 reform, usually sent instructions to local government on various issues in the form of circulars. These instructions were expected to be complied with by every local government (1988 Reform), and the issuing authority usually monitored compliance, such that payments of grants were often withheld.

After May 29 1999, most of the instructions to local governments in the form of circulars are now from the office of the vice-president of the federation mostly channeled through the state Deputy Governor’s office. Circular also emanate from the office of the auditor general for local government as well as local government service commission on staff matters.

#### **(H) Decrees, Edicts or Laws**

When functions are given to the local government by the federal or state government, they are usually spelt out by decrees (under military regime), edicts or laws which are binding on them.

#### **(I) Bye-Laws**

Local Government operates by making bye-laws. The legislature is responsible for the making of bye-laws on subjects permitted by the constitution and the local government Edicts/Laws. The Handbook on Local Government (1992) was specific when it said “The legislative powers vested in the local government council shall be exercised by bye-laws duly passed by the local government council”.

### **RULES AND REGULATIONS AND THE PATTERN OF ADMINISTRATION BEFORE AND AFTER INDEPENDENCE**

A proper examination of the structure of local government during these two periods of time is



necessary when trying to understand personnel performance in the local government. During colonial rule, local government was known as Native Administration System, which comprised four main independent parts as illustrated by Gboyega (1987: 14). These are:

- (1) The residents who provided direction and control
- (2) The Native Authority, usually headed by a chief who enjoyed legitimacy under the indigenous political system, often supported by a council of elders.
- (3) The Native Treasury and
- (4) The Native Court composed of representatives of the native administration.

During this period, the personal touch of traditional rulers was very evident in matters of administration through indirect rule, because they became pawns in the hands of the colonialists.

While carrying out a personnel audit in Lagos state in 1988, NISER noted that *"...During the colonial era, only persons favoured by the ruling elite were appointed to work in the local governments and most of them were over-zealous in the discharge of their duties. They executed all obnoxious rules designed by the colonialist and were perceived as ineffective, inefficient and corrupt. They were ill-equipped, uneducated and by extension unsuitable for the functions for which they were recruited"*.

There is no doubt that the situation has changed progressively. Local governments now parade a crop of well qualified, sound and articulate staff who came into the service as a result of the 1976 reform that prescribed for staffing the services of local governments with qualified personnel. However, the prevailing rules and regulations did not change much even after independence. It was Tamuno that observed that attainment of independence in Nigeria did not translate to fundamental restructuring of the prevailing rules and laws in the country (Tamuno, 1970:73).

Jordan (1985: 162) on the other hand posited that the principles of government by an impersonal bureaucracy has had a direct effect on local government even after attaining independence. This was what Adamolekun queried when he asserted that with regard to policy implementation, the performance of the civil service between 1975 and 1979 was more or

less the same as had been the case since the early 1960's (Adamolekun, 1986: 128-129). On at least one occasion, they were rebuked for poor performance by the head of state. This situation then led to the military introducing reforms through the establishment of the code of conduct bureau before the second Republic was inaugurated. The code of conduct bureau is still in existence till this present dispensation together with the corrupt practice investigation commission inaugurated as recently as year 2000. These are all legal mechanisms meant to enthrone probity, accountability and good governance in our body polity and public service. But how much efficiency it has bought to Nigeria's administrative system remains a subject for conjecture.

Rosenblatt, Bonnington and Needles (1977: 206) argued that the "personnel overall objective, in fact its reason for existence is to contribute to the achievement of organisation and employees effectiveness. This is accomplished by addressing society's expectations, meeting enterprises objectives and satisfying employee's needs".

It should be stressed that it is the role of local government officials to help in the initiation and execution of policies and programmes that will promote the well-being of the people at the grassroots level, assist in the general administration of the local government and also facilitate the process of making the executive accountable to the people. In discharging these responsibilities, efforts should be made to ensure that existing rules and guidelines, financial regulation and laws guiding the receipt and disbursement of funds together with general conduct within the local government system are fully complied with.

#### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT**

According to Fowler (1988:43), *"the performance of employees can be much more variable than that of plant or equipment. Over time, it can also improve or deteriorate. People learn by experience, and even if no positive action is taken to help new employees improve, most will raise their performance levels as they become more knowledgeable and discover for themselves ways of getting their jobs done more efficiently"*.

Fowler however listed the shortcomings of

leaving performance to chance thus:

- (1) Employees may eventually reach an acceptable standard but will take far longer to do.
- (2) The standard, which becomes the norms, may well be below the level, which could be achieved, given positive action.
- (3) Employees response to changes in organisation's need may be very slow.
- (4) The performance of some employees will deteriorate as they lose interest or fail to adjust to changing circumstances.

It is therefore obvious that employees standards of performance need be improved and maintained. Balogun equates performance with efficiency and he opines that one of the ways of measuring performance is by "combining technical efficiency and economic efficiency" (Balogun, 1972:26).

It is expedient to point out that government business is different in many ways from private business organisations in respect of their aims, objectives and methods of pursuing their goals. Therefore, private organisations can not be used as a frame of reference in assessing performance in public bureaucracies (Edokpa, 1989: 158). The measurement of performance in public organisation or civil service involves a lot of socio-political, economic and environmental considerations which have no parallel in private organisations. But it has to be established according to Edokpa that "performance is a value-loaded concept and that it can mean different things to different people because of its value orientation".

Performance enhancement in the civil service according to Ubeku (1975) requires a lot of training. Said he; "An employee should be helped to grow into more responsibility by systematic training and development. It is only then that he will feel confident to carry out the responsibilities of his job".

It becomes arguable from the opinions expressed above that even though there are rules and regulations in an establishment, the employee needs to be trained to be able to appreciate these rules and then to comply with them. Equally, the employee should be allowed to display initiatives given the dynamic nature of establishments (local governments), and since each employee is better placed to perform

assigned roles based on available work schedule.

In all of these, we have to agree that performance is measured in terms of results. Rue and Byars (1979: 375) assert that to attain an acceptable standard of performance, a minimum level of proficiency must exist in each of the performance components or effort (physical and/or mental energy), ability (knowledge and skill), and traits and role perception (behaviours and attitude). Similarly, Lyman Porter and Edward Lawler (1968: 28) regard the end product of performance as the totality of a persons effort as modified by his abilities and traits and his role perception in the organisation .

Flowing from the foregoing, performance could be viewed as the results which arise from the skills, knowledge and attitudes deployed by a worker in executing his job tasks, barring the intervention of environmental obstacles and the advent of their activities. Of course, results produced by a worker would only be acceptable if they effectively and efficiently contribute to the attainment of organizational goals. Accordingly, effectiveness and efficiency constitute the component elements by which performance could be determined, Etzioni (1964:8) has succinctly defined effectiveness as the degree to which set goals are realized. On the other hand, he describes efficiency as the amount of resources used to produce a unit of output. The totality of Etzionis contention is that efficiency and effectiveness are certainly distinct elements. The fact however is that both terms go together and they are fundamental to organizational success.

## SUMMARY

This paper mainly highlighted the prevailing rules and regulations at the Local Government as well as examined their impact on personnel performance. A summary of the assumptions are stated below:

- a. Most employees in the Local Government service are ignorant of existing rules and regulations that could guide their performance.
- b. Most Local Governments do not have the essential documents containing the rules and regulations. Where such exist, they are personal copies of either the Director, General services and Adminis-

- tration or Secretary to Local Government.
- c. Some of the rules and regulations still in operation at the Local Government Level are quite obsolete, yet staff are compelled to comply with them
  - d. Most public officers, under the guise of complying with rules and regulations, perpetuate corruption, become lazy and unproductive, inefficient and unaccountable.
  - e. Problems arise where unilateral, rather than complementary, actions are adopted in the management of financial matters. Where certain officials are unduly marginalized, distrust and disorderliness often occur.
  - f. Evidence of low performance abound in Local Governments where the spirit of teamwork is lacking and where employees are inadequately motivated.
  - g. Even though the Local Governments Service is endowed with a crop of suitable calibre officials, there is little or no room for display of initiative because of the regimented set up.
  - h. Rules and regulations are sometimes bent in order to favour certain individuals nepotism and godfatherism comes into play.
  - i. The more work rules are supported by group attitude and norms, the more enforcement becomes a responsibility shared by all employees.
  - j. If work rules are too restrictive or confining, they can frustrate the fulfillment of human needs and interfere with organisational effectiveness.
  - k. There are adequate instruments to ensure that rules are enforceable but environmental factors at times inhibit this ideal.

### CONCLUSION

The need for rules and regulations especially during the present political dispensation cannot be over-emphasized. While the politicians are always in a hurry to satisfy their electorates who vote them to power as well as amass wealth within their "limited" tenure of office, the career civil servants have their jobs to protect and should only ensure loyalty to the political bosses within the limits of the law. Therefore,

rules and regulations serves as important tools of checks and balances in the Local Government.

Much as the current rules and regulations at the Local Government level are not considered out of place, what is required is a faithful implementation of the various guidelines. It therefore behooves both political and career officials of the Local Governments to acquaint themselves with the relevant documents relating to their duties and responsibilities so that orderliness would continue to be maintained, performances improved and productivity enhanced towards a more virile Local Government.

The impact that the various rules and regulations have on personnel performance varies according to the perception of the officials and their readiness to ensure compliance. Meanwhile, certain bottlenecks do hinder the effective realization of the intention of some rules put in place.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the position adopted by this paper, the following recommendations are made:

- 1 All Local Government staffs should be provided with relevant handbooks and documents containing rules and regulations guiding their performance. Where such would be too expensive to produce for every member of service, adequate copies should be given to Heads of Department /Units for consultation by staff under them.
- 1 Regular orientation and refresher training courses should be organized for new and old employees alike, to acquaint them with duties and responsibilities expected of them.
- 1 Employees should form good work habit, learn the rules (written and unwritten) which apply to them in the office and obey them.
- 1 Employees who are full of initiatives should be encouraged to display such as long as it has positive impact on the establishment.
- 1 Portions of the scheme of service and staff regulations which are inimical to performance should be reviewed in line with prevailing circumstances.
- 1 For improved performance, management in each Local Government should provide adequate motivation and reward for competent and result-oriented staff, while erring

- ones should be sanctioned accordingly.
- 1 Teamwork should be encouraged at the Local Government level.
  - 1 The Code of Conduct Bureau and the Code of Conduct Tribunal must be seen to exercise the power and authority given them in the constitution.
  - 1 Employee participation in developing performance standards should be encouraged as a means of motivating them for high performance.

### REFERENCES

- Adamolekun, L. 1979. "The idea of Local Government as a third level of Government" in L. Adamolekun and L. Rowland (eds.) *The New Local Government System in Nigeria: Problem and Prospects for Implementation*. Ibadan: Heinemann.
- Adamolekun, Ladipo. 1983. *Public Administration: A Nigerian and Comparative Perspective*. Lagos: Longman Group Limited.
- Adedeji, A. and O. Otite. 1997. *Nigeria, Renewal from the Roots*. Ijebu-Ode: Zed-books and ACDESS.
- Adedeji, Adebayo. 1997. "Searching for Alternative Systems of Governance at the grassroots". *The Guardian*, Wednesday, September 3.
- Africa Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) Work Programme, 1983-1985, Morocco.
- Ake, Claude. 1993. "Deeper into Original Sin: the Context of the Ethical Crisis in Africa's Public Services" in Sadiq Rasheed and Dele Olowu (eds.), *Ethics and Accountability in African Public Services*, UNECA/AAPAM.
- Balogun, M.J. 1972. "A framework of Measurement of Government Efficiency" *Quarterly Journal of Administration*. Vol. 7 (1). October.
- Bozeman, Barry. 1979. *Public Management and Policy Analysis*. New York: St. Martins Press.
- Development CAFRAD/UN Project on Administrative reforms in Africa.
- Edokpa, J.I. 1989. "Performance in the Civil Service: The case of Bendel State" in A.O. Sanda, D. L. and Olowu Ojo Sola (eds.), *Managing Performance in Nigeria's Public Sector*. Ile-Ife; Faculty of Administration Publication Series.
- Emmet, D. 1966. *Rules, Roles and Relations*. New York: St. Martins Press.
- Etzioni, Amitai. 1964. *Modern Organisation*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.
- Fayol, Henri. 1971. *General and Industrial Management*. London: Pitman Publishers.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. 1991. *Model Financial Memoranda for Local Government*. Vice-President's Office, Abuja.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. 1999. *The Constitution*. Federal Republic of Nigeria. 1988. *Implementation Guidelines on the Application of the Civil Service Reforms in the Local Government Service*. Lagos: Government Printer.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. 1992. *Handbook on Local Government Administration*. Abuja: office of the Vice-President.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. 1999. *Approved Scheme of Service for Local Government Employees in Nigeria*. Abuja: State and Local Government Affairs Office.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. 1976. *Guidelines for Local Government Reform*. Kaduna: Government Printer.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Public Service Rules, revised to 1st January, 2000*. Abuja: The Presidency, Abuja.
- Fowler, A. 1988. *Human Resources Management in Local Government*. U.K: Longman Group.
- Gboyega, Alex. 1987. *Political Values and Local Government in Nigeria*, Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd.
- Holy Bible, Genesis 2, V 16 and 17. King James Version.
- Laleye O.M. 1984. "The dilemma of decentralization in West Africa". *A paper presented to the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development. CAFRAD/UN Project on Administrative Reforms in Africa*.
- NISER. 1988. "Comprehensive staff audit of all the local governments in Lagos State" in a report prepared for the Ministry of Local Governments and Chieftaincy Affairs, Lagos.
- Obadiah, Gbeja. 1992. "Staff Performance Evaluation" in A.D. Yahaya and C.I. Akinleye (eds.) *New Trends in Personnel Management*. Lagos: ASCON/Spectrum books.
- Ogun State of Nigeria. 1978. *Official Manual*. Abeokuta: Ministry of Establishment and Training.
- Okafor, S.O. 1981. *Indirect Rule- The Development of Central Legislature in Nigeria*. Lagos: Thomas Nelson Press.
- Olatunji Oyinloye. 1992. "Ethics for the civil service" in A.D. Yahaya and C.L. Akinyele (eds.), *Effective leadership*, Lagos: ASCON.
- Porter, L.W and E.E. Lawler. 1968. *Managerial Attitudes and Performance*. Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin Inc and the Dorsey Press.
- Rosenblatt, Bonnington and Needless. 1977. *What is Personnel Management in Modern Business*, New Jersey: Houghton Mifflin.
- Rue, L.W. and L.L. Byars. 1979. *Management: Theory and Application* England: George Allan and Unwin.
- Sule, J.Y. 1992. *Recruitment Policy and Selection Tools*. Lagos: ASCON Publication.
- Tamuno, T.N. 1970. *The Police in Modern Nigeria 1861-1965*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Wendell, L. French. 1998. *Human Resources Management*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, p. 188
- Wunsch, S.J and D. Olowu. 1995 *The Failure of the Centralized State*. San Francisco, California: I.C.S. Press.
- Yakubu, M. 1985. "Code of Conduct" in Haslim Isa, (ed.), *Issues in Public Sector Management in Nigeria*. Zaria, Centre for Management Development (CMD) in collaboration with Nigeria Association of Schools of Management Education and Training (NASMET).