THE STATE LEGISLATURE AND DEMOCRATIC DIVIDENDS FOR RURAL AREAS: A STUDY OF JIGAWA STATE, 2015-2023

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KEYWORDS
Democracy, State legislature, dividends of democracy, rural areas

ABSTRACT
This study appraised the role of the State Legislature in the delivery of dividends of democracy to rural areas in Jigawa State, Nigeria; the study sought to assess the extent to which the State Legislature has effectively translated the principles of democracy into tangible benefits for rural communities to have access to basic services, infrastructure development, and socio - economic well-being; Data was generated through both primary and secondary sources, the research utilized the qualitative and quantitative technique while explanatory and expository approach was used in the analysis of data. The findings revealed that Jigawa State legislature has made strides in the delivery of dividends of democracy to rural areas through efforts to promote economic empowerment in rural areas through initiatives such as agricultural support programs, small business development, and empowerment. The research contributes to the understanding of the dynamics of democracy and development and highlights the importance of effective legislative representation in ensuring that rural communities benefit from the dividends of democracy. The study recommends that for Jigawa State Legislature to succeed in delivering dividends of democracy to the people living in the rural areas, it must improve the allocation of resources towards rural development, strengthen legislative oversight functions by fostering community engagement, promote transparency and accountability in legislative processes in order to ensure meaningful development to the people living in the rural areas.

Introduction

Democratic practices gave opportunity for the enthronement of good governance and rule of law in Nigeria. Different methods were often taken by politicians at all levels of governance to deliver dividends of democracy to the public. The term dividend of democracy is a regular political term used by the Nigerian political elites. It has become so common among politicians such that it has lost its real meaning, proper usage, and application. It is seen today by the ordinary Nigerian to mean benefits for the political elite who used it quite often, while the ordinary Nigerian is yet to realize and benefit from it (Ikelegbe (2005). Dividend of democracy supposed to mean the gains or profits realized from democracy. Jamo (2013) stated that democracy is fast spreading due to its ability to provide good governance and development, this development often ends the struggle for supremacy over hegemonic emergent government. Nigeria is not an exception because the process of democratic change that occurred in the Nigerian state was largely the product of internal and external pressures exerted because it is believed that democracy should encourage and stimulate development.

The 1999 Constitution as amended implicitly gave a framework for rule of law, separation of powers, checks and balances among the organs of government but one of the areas spelt out in the Constitution is the delivery of dividends of democracy. Projects executed in the legislative constituencies by legislators are often associated with the delivery of dividends of democracy, but the implementation of these dividends is expected to be on the principles of accountability to the rural areas.

Majority of the Nigerian population reside in the rural areas, the development of rural areas thus, became imperative because the development of rural areas tend to impact positively on the nation's economy. The development of the rural areas is supposed to be the concern of every responsible and responsive government. Yusuf (2017) stated that rural development is the product of a progressive quantitative and qualitative transformation taking place among a given rural population, where the effect indicate improvement in the standard of living and positive changes in the way of life of the people concerned.

The need by legislators to provide visible evidence of dividends of democracy to the rural areas has resulted in the implementation of constituency projects in one form or the other in Nigeria. The operation or implementation of these projects has often led to some controversies, sometimes resulting in delays in the passage of budgets and appropriation bills into law.

The reason why people prefer democratic governance was in anticipation that it will bring about dividends of democracy, but the expectation of most Nigerians have failed because the expected development have not been experienced. Many people still doubt whether development is achievable or not under democratic dispensation. The doubts became evident because of insecurity, poverty, corruption, ethnic disturbances, Boko haram insurgences, kidnapping, abduction, and underdevelopment (Abga & Aide, 2020).

The concept of constituency projects in Nigeria, constitutionally, legally and practicability meant providing socio-economic transformation to every stratum of the Nigerian society. The constitutional privileges vested in legislature is very important in the provision of goods and services in the form of dividends of democracy to the populace (NDI, 2000).

In spite of the huge resources committed to rural development in Nigeria, rural development still remains a mere illusion because the authorities which are saddled with the responsibilities have not been able to perform up to expectation to bring about rapid and sustained development at the grassroots level. Successive governments have grossly underperformed in almost all the areas of development because the resources available which otherwise should be used for development programmes at the grassroots are being used to service the already overfed elected officials and unproductive bureaucracies (Obasanjo, 2003).

Instead of dividend of democracy what we see now is democratic failures and divide and rule policy of those in government because of negligence to deliver the dividend of democracy (Adebayo 2014). It is based on the foregoing observed problems that this paper consider it imperative to appraise the role of state legislature in delivery of dividends of democracy to the rural areas in Jigawa state Nigeria from 2015 – 2023 by finding out:

i. What is the role of the state legislature in the delivery of dividend of democracy to rural areas of Jigawa state between 2015 and 2023?

ii. How did the state legislatures deliver dividend of democracy to rural areas in Jigawa state?

iii. What factors influence the performance of the state legislature in the delivery of dividend of democracy to rural area in Jigawa state?

iv. Howcan thestate legislature improve the delivery of dividend of democracy to rural area in Jigawa state?

Literature Review

The term legislature has different names across nations of the world, itis referred to as Parliament in Britain, National Assembly in Nigeria, Congress in United States etc. (Abonyi, 2006) Lafenwa, (2009) noted that there is no serious contention about its definition, the legislature is seen as occupying a key position in the machinery of government (Heywood, 2007) with the singular purpose of articulating and expressing the collective will of the people (Okoosi-Simbine,2010). As an organ of government, it is the forum for the representation of the electorate, functional branch of government made up of elected representatives or a constitutionally constituted assembly of people whose responsibilities are to make laws, control the executive and safeguard the interest of the people and having the role of making, revising, amending and repealing laws for the advancement and wellbeing of the citizenry that it represents (Anyaegbunam 2000).

The legislature is an official body usually selected by election and given the power to make, change, and repeal laws and represent the constituent units and control government, a law-making, deliberative and policy making body working for the furtherance of democratic political system (Okoosi Simbine 2010). It is described as the First Estate of the Realm, the realm of representation and the site of sovereignty, the only expression of the will of the people, this suggest that the authority of the legislature is derived from the people and should be exercise according to the will of the people whom they represent. This is supported by Pereira, (2010) who assert that the authority of the legislature as a political institution whose members are representative of the community and decisions are collectively made according to complex procedures. Smith (2010) postulates legislature as the symbol of power and legitimacy because its decision is based on the collective wisdom of men and women who enjoy the confidence of the electorate.

Jigawa State House of Assembly (2012) identifies two features that distinguish the legislature from other branches of government. The first feature is that the legislature possesses formal authority to make laws, and secondly, members are normally elected to represent various elements in the population while Davies (2004) avers that representative liberal democracy cannot exist without a healthy, lively and credible legislature and that the establishment of the legislature rests on the assumption that political power still resides in the people and that the people can if they choose, delegate the exercise of their sovereignty to elected representatives. Ukudolo, Emmanuel and Wale Akinola (2011) and Okoosi-Simbine (2010) perceived the legislature as the people's representative and assemblies of elected representatives from geographically defined constituencies and the fact that the legislature is an assembly of people elected to represent the citizens suggest that they are ambassadors who serve their constituencies in various ways as intermediaries between the citizens and the government.

Renno & Lucio (2010) see the legislatures as differing in size, composition, operation, role, tenure of office and internal rules from one democracy to the other. Nwabuzor and Muller (1985) averred that such factors as the role of the presiding officer, the establishment of the order of business, legislation process, number and power of legislative committee, degree of intra-party discipline expected and manner of terminating debate on questions under consideration account for the differences among countries, the size of the legislature in some African countries are relatively small though the longer term tenure is however to ensure the stability of national interests which do not have to be bent to constantly changing public opinion.

Theoretical Framework

Situating a study within a theoretical framework thus bridges the range of facts that are to be investigated. The structural Functionalist theory is reviewed and adopted as the best theory to explain the topic under consideration in this discourse (Oluwaseun, Anofi& Dele 2012) .Erturk, et al (2011) held that the structural-functionalist approach provides a more comprehensive theoretical framework for the analysis of legislative performance in the delivery of dividends of democracy to electorates. The theory provided a consistent and integrated framework from which can be derived explanatory hypotheses relevant to all aspects of a political system Oarhe, Osumah (2010). The structural -functional model was associated with Carlos (2011) whose work was greatly influenced by structural-functional analysis where all political systems must perform certain requisite functions and by comparison, one must identify which structure performs the tasks (Peter 2005). Thus, the structural-functional theory describes societal reality largely in terms of structures, processes, mechanisms, and functions.

The theory postulates that social systems meet certain needs and suggests that there are functional imperatives that must be met for a group to survive Orimogunje, Olusesan Olugbenga (2015) defined function as the satisfaction of a need. He further asserts that the rules of conduct within a society often leads to a social structure consisting of defined roles that are coordinated by these rules and as these roles are enacted, they contribute to maintaining the social structure. This alignment of social relations is critical for the survival of the society; the society can therefore be viewed as a system of mutually interdependent parts. Sakyi, Kojo E. (2010) was of the view that a change in one segment of the culture of a society results in corresponding changes in other segments off that society.

Structural functionalism provides a framework for the analysis of the performance of the state legislature in the delivery of dividends of democracy in the society and in this study, the rural areas in Jigawa state. By this frame work, the government is conceived as a social system and the performance, and the legislature are political institutions viewed as structural parts or units of the political system or government. Each of these political institutions performs explicitly specified requisite functions that contribute to the stability, continuity, and survival of the political system (Ray, 2004).

The legislature maybe constitutionally or structurally delineated by their personnel's and functions; they however, necessarily collaborate through their shared functions as institutions of governance for the maintenance of the state. Since the legislature is influenced by internal and external environments, the structural-functional political systems must perform certain requisite functions (Peter 2005). These functions in this regard, include policy making policy implementation and rule adjudication which is carried out by the legislature. Thus, structural functionalism, as a framework for this study, provides an effective measure for assessing the different functions performed by the separate but interdependent organs of government in a democratic set up.

As emphasized by the structural-functional proponents, a study of the functions of these structural institutions is necessary for the understanding of the workings of the political system's structural-functional approach, therefore legislature-performance in the delivery of dividends of democracy to the rural areas described largely in terms of structure, personality, processes, mechanisms and functions which contribute to maintaining and stabilizing the social structure hence the role of the state legislature in delivery of dividends of democracy to the rural areas in Jigawa state were based these social relations, their mutual interactions and collaboration in the policy process which had been critical for the stability and survival of the society.

Dividends of Democracy

Dividends of democracy refer to the benefits and outcomes that citizens expect and receive from a democratic system of government. Dividends can simply be called the gains or profits realized from democracy. Many policies, programmes and plans have been termed dividends of democracy by politicians and people have include the introduction of new salary scale for civil servants, multi-party system, deregulation, introduction of social intervention programmes, and traderMoni as dividends of democracy. In the context of this paper, the dividends of democracy can include:

Political rights and freedoms: Citizen's right to participate in political processes, such as voting,

running for office, and expressing their opinions freely.

Rule of law and justice: Democracy upholds the principle of the rule of law regardless of social or economic status people are subjected to the same set of laws and regulations.

Protection of the fundamental human rights: Demanding and securing the rights of citizens is an essential aspect of democratic dividends which the state legislatures seek to provide to the rural areas.

Accountability and transparency: Dividends of democracy include transparency in decision-making, public access to information, and mechanisms to hold elected representatives and public officials accountable for their actions.

Economic development and prosperity: Dividends of democracy in economic terms include policies that promote entrepreneurship, fair competition, innovation, and economic opportunities for all citizens.

Social welfare and public services: Dividends of democracy include the provision of social services to improve the well-being and quality of life for all citizens.

Peace and stability: Democracy reduces the likelihood of political violence and promotes cooperation and dialogue among diverse groups.

Functions of the Legislature in a Democratic Society

Democracy is a system of government in which power is vested in the people, who have the right to participate in decision-making processes and elect their representatives. The importance of democracy cannot be overstated. It ensures that all citizens, regardless of their geographic location or socioeconomic background, have equal representation in making policies and decisions that affect their lives.

There are a wide range of the status, powers, and functions of the legislature among states. For example, the United States Congress assumes wide powers and exercises real power with respect to various decision-making processes. In some other political systems especially the former Soviet Union), the legislature exists as a mere rubber stamp for decisions made elsewhere, an assembly whose main role was to legitimize the policy of government. A similar observation is made on Africa's legislature by Nijzink, Mozaffar &Azevedo (2006) where such variables as colonial legacies, the appointment and dismissal powers of governing parties, executivecontrol of state resources and roles of the legislators has contributed to the institutional and policy-making weakness of the legislature by limiting their capacity to represent citizens, make laws and perform their oversight role. While the functions performed by the legislature may vary from country to country some fundamental similarities exist among parliament.

The legislative branch plays a crucial role in the delivery of dividends of democracy. Here are some key roles of the legislative branch in ensuring the dividends of democracy reached the people at the grassroots.

Legislation: Legislation functions are said to be the basic, primary and the most important role of the legislature (Abonyi, 2006). According to Cheibub, Jose Antonio and Limongi, Fernado (2010), laws made by the legislature must be in the interest of the general populace with the expectation of modifying people's behaviour and response towards a given situation. Heywood (2007) stated that the twentieth century witnesses a progressive weakening of legislation power and that this situation had reduced many legislative assemblies to mere talking shops that do little more than rubber-stamp decisions.

Oversight: According to NDI (2000) oversight is perhaps the most important function of any legislature. The importance stems from the continuous wielding of enormous powers by the leaders. Saliu and Muhammad (2010) define legislative oversight as a process by which the legislative body takes active role in understanding and monitoring the performance the executive arm and its agencies. The oversight function enables the legislature to monitor the policy implementation process to uncover any defects and act to correct misinterpretation or maladministration.

Representation: Roberts (2002) declared that the legislature plays dual representational roles. First, they represent their people to government and second, they represent government in their constituencies. Political representation according to Saliu and Muhammad (2010) is a central component of democratic governance, it is a key institution, machinery and process of a democratic

government because the fulcrum of legislative activity is expected to be the articulation and aggregation of diverse interests of the represented constituencies in the policy process and enhances the legitimacy of public policy, reduces alienation, estrangement between the government and the governed and it enhances the stability of the system (Edosa & Azelama, 1995).

Financial Function: The legislature has the responsibility of authorizing the expenditure of the government, Sanyal (2009) states that all government expenditure except a few items specified in the Constitution need to be approved by the legislature as part of the annual budgetary process and any otherexpenditure may also be allowed through supplementary demands

Committee function: Fashagba (2010) describe committees as task-oriented bodieswith clearly defined purpose and direction. Heywood (2007) sees committee functions as the nucleus of the legislative process and the power houses of the legislature because they examine legislative measures in detail;for example, bills and financial demands of the government and other important issues related to ministries and oversee the financial functioning of the government based on audits done by the Controller and Auditor-General (Edigheji, 2006).

State Legislature and the Delivery of Democratic Dividends in Jigawa State 2015-2023

The Jigawa State Legislature delivers dividends of democracy to the public through various mechanisms and initiatives; some of the ways in which they contribute to the welfare and development of the state include:

Legislation: The state legislature is responsible for enacting laws that address the needs and concerns of the public. They create legislation that promotes good governance, protects citizens' rights, and enhances socio-economic development. These laws serve as a framework for delivering dividends of democracy.

Budgetary allocation: The state legislature plays a crucial role in the budgeting process; they analyze and review the annual budget proposed by the executive branch, ensuring that funds are allocated to the various sectors and programs that directly benefit the public, this includes prioritizing investments in infrastructural development, education, healthcare, agriculture, and other areas that impact citizens' lives (Omodia, 2010)

Oversight function: The Jigawa state legislature exercises oversight over the executive branch to ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of government programs and policies through committee hearings, legislative inquiries, and investigations, they monitor the performance of government agencies and hold officials accountable for their actions. The oversight function helps in delivering effective governance and preventing waste or misuse of public resources.

Representation and constituency projects: Members of the Jigawa state legislature represent the interests and concerns of their constituents; they always consult with the public through regular interactions, town hall meetings, and constituency visits, through these engagements the Legislators identify the needs

of their constituents and initiate projects that address those needs. These constituency projects can include the construction of schools, hospitals, roads, markets, construction of places of worship, provision of water supply systems, provision of agricultural inputs and other development initiatives.

Public outreach and advocacy: The legislature organizes public enlightenment programs to educate citizens on their rights, responsibilities, and the workings of government; this helps to enhance civic education and awareness, empowering the public to actively participate in the democratic process through workshops, seminars, and public campaigns, the legislature promotes citizen engagement and participation in governance.

Decentralization of power: The Jigawa State Legislature ensures that there is decentralization of power from the state capital to various local government areas; this allows for more inclusive representation, decision-making, and development at the grassroots level. By fostering participation and involvement of local communities, the legislature enables citizens to have a voice in the governance process and ensures the delivery of dividends of democracy to all segments of the society.

Overall, the Jigawa State Legislature contributes to the delivery of dividends of democracy by enacting laws, overseeing the government, representing constituents, and promoting citizens' participation and engagement. Through these efforts, the state legislature always works to improve the quality of life, economic development, and welfare of the people of Jigawa State both in the urban and rural areas.

Challenges of State Legislators in the Delivery of Democratic Dividends to Rural Areas of Jigawa State.

The state legislatures in Jigawa State tend to encounter various challenges when it comes to delivering dividends of democracy to rural areas. Some of these challenges include:

Infrastructure: Rural areas often lack proper infrastructure, including roads, electricity, and communication networks; these poses a serious challenge in delivering essential services and development projects to these areas. The state legislature often face difficulties in providing basic amenities such as schools, healthcare facilities and clean water as the lack of infrastructure hampers accessibility and implementation.

Limited resources: Rural areas generally have limited resources and economic opportunities; this makes it challenging for the state legislature to allocate funds and invest in rural development projects, the limited financial tend to restrict the full implementation of initiatives that can deliver dividends of democracy to the rural areas

especially agricultural programs, rural electrification, or small-scale industries.

Low education and awareness levels: The rural areas in Jigawa state has lower educational attainment levels and limited awareness of citizens' rights, responsibilities, and the functioning of government; this often hinder effective citizen engagement, participation, and demand for dividends of democracy, the state legislature usually makes great effort to create awareness to educate the rural residents about their rights, how to access public services and how to be acquainted with the legislative processes in the state about their welfare.

Inadequate representation and outreach: Rural areas may not have adequate representation in the state legislature, leading to limited advocacy for their specific needs and concerns. Lack of accessibility and connectivity can also make it difficult for legislators to reach rural constituents and hold meaningful interactions. This can result in a limited understanding of the issues faced by rural communities and hinder the delivery of dividends of democracy tailored to their needs.

Traditional and cultural practices: One of the challenges often encountered by the Jigawa state legislature in the delivery of dividends of democracy is that some traditional and cultural practices prevalent in rural areas often influences decision-making and hinder the implementation of democratic processes, programmes and projects. Constraints such as gender inequalities, hierarchical structures, and traditional leadership impacts on the ability of the state legislature to effectively deliver dividends of democracy; overcoming such hurdles often requires dialogue, community sensitization, and engagement to bridge the gap between cultural practices and democratic values.

Limited access to information: Rural areas frequently have limited access to media, internet, and information sources; the lack of access to information has the propensity to inhibit the dissemination of information about government policies, programs, and projects to rural communities, the state legislature usually encounters challenges in effectively communicating with rural residents resulting in reduced or even complete lack of awareness on participation in democratic processes.

Addressing these challenges requires the state legislature to actively strategize and tailor their initiatives to the specific needs in the context of rural areas in Jigawa state which can include investing in rural infrastructure, enhancing educational and awareness campaigns, promoting inclusive representation, and facilitating access to information and communication technologies. Collaboration

between the executive and the legislature, local communities and other stakeholders is vital to overcome these challenges and ensure the delivery of dividends of democracy to rural areas in Jigawa state.

Conclusion

The focus of this study is the appraisal of the performance of the state legislature in the delivery of dividends of democracy to the rural areas in Jigawa state from 2015 - 2023. The study appraised the extent to which the state legislature in Jigawa States were able to perform their constitutional functions especially in the formulation of policies and programmes geared towards the delivery of the dividends of democracy to the people at the grassroots level. The empirical study showed a gap in knowledge on the intrigues and dynamics of legislative performance in relation to how those dividends of democracy affect the lives of the rural dwellers emanating from the political and socio-cultural environments in which the state legislators operate.

The paper concludes that the success of the democratic system, depends on healthy legislative performance predicated upon democratic ethos. While institutional designs and legal frameworks for democracy make legislative performance inevitable when the state legislature assert its functions and position within the constitutional framework of government. Findings from the study further reveal that delivery of dividends of democracy is determined by the extent to which the legislature independently performs its role of citizens representation through legislation and oversight functions so there is the need for capacity for the legislature to effectively influence policy implementation in relation to the delivery of dividends of democracy to the rural areas in Jigawa state. The paper recommends the following.

i. The Jigawa State Legislature must enact laws that will promote citizens' participation and engagement in the political process.

ii. There must be collaboration between the executive and the legislature, local communities and other stakeholders to ensure the delivery of dividends of democracy to rural areas in Jigawa state.

iii. The House Committees with direct responsibility for oversight functions and accountability should be strengthened in term of capacity building in order to enable the state legislature deliver dividends of democracy to the rural communities in the state effectively and efficiently.

iv. Town Hall Meetings which will serve as an avenue for public participation in law making process by way of public hearing should be encouraged.

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