

The Effect of Government Regulatory Agencies on National Development: A Case Study of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency of Nigeria – Edo State

S.O. Uhunmwangho, Ph.D
Department of Political Science and Public Administration
Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Nigeria
email: uhunmwangho4you@yahoo.com

Kayode Ihaza
Department of Public Administration,
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria
email: kayoed.ihaza@uniben.edu

Abstract

This paper examines the Effect of *Government Regulatory Agencies on National Development*: A case study of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency of Nigeria, Edo State as a democratic sustainability. It evaluates how effective the agency policy have been able to restructure the political economy of Nigeria by exterminating illicit drug trafficking and consumption in Nigeria society and utilization for the benefits of the citizenry. The establishment of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) by the promulgation of Decree No. 48 of 1989, now Act of Parliament was aimed solely that any involvement in drugs, especially their importation, sale, transfer, purchase, cultivation, manufacture, extraction and possession is universally unacceptable. Over the last decade however, Public Sector, especially National Drug Law Enforcement Agency of Nigeria (NDLEA) has not been able to convince Nigeria masses of their performance, if they must continue to exist. In the course of this study, the Effect of Government Regulatory Agencies on National Development: A Case Study of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency of Nigeria, Edo State were brought to the fore while the objectives of the study are well spelt out. Hypotheses were postulated and the Structural Functionalism Theory was used to explicate the works. Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. From the primary sources, the survey method, that is, the use of questionnaire were designed and adopted. Data obtained from this method were analyzed with the aid of Simple Percentage. Thereafter, the five researchable hypotheses were tested and accepted while the null hypotheses were rejected. The implication is that there was relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Generally, the paper brought to focus that the Effect of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency is a collective effort in reaching a compromise in the management of Public Sector in Nigeria and it has contributed immensely to the growth and development of public sectors elsewhere. Finally, it suggests policy prescription and recommendation which are aimed at repositioning Public Sector like NDLEA not only in Edo State in particular, but also in Nigeria in general.

Keywords: State, Drug, Illicit, Nigeria, Law, Agency

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Introduction

Nigeria nation, more than anything else, the greatest obstacle to the nascent democracy is the pervasive insecurity of lives and property, as evidenced by the spate of armed robbery attacks, political assassinations, power distribution coupled with the seeming helplessness of security agencies to handle criminal acts. The situation is worsened by the increasing number of unemployed Nigerians some of whom are ready recruits for criminal activities. The above statement from an editorial comment by a national daily in Nigeria indeed, epitomizes the central focus of this paper, the aim of which is to analyze the nexus between democratic nurturing, sustenance and eventually consolidation via-a-vis the battles with one of the major ills of Nigeria nation. Sixty one years after Independence, Nigeria still battles with one of the major fall-outs of democratic dispensation, the battle for drug trafficking seems to be endless as the situation continues to surge with no concrete action in sight. However, Governments all over the world play important roles in the distribution of goods and services to the citizens. This role performance comes in form of decisions taken to give direction to the day to day running of state affairs (Uhunmwangho and Epelle, 2021). When seen as policy, a government decision could be distributive, re-distributive, regulatory or even symbolic depending on the effects it has on the lives of the citizens. These effects are particularly pronounced in Africa where small changes in resource allocation by the central government affect the ability of other levels of government to provide public services (Uhunmwangho and Epelle, 2021).

In Nigeria as elsewhere in the world, contributing to national development remains the fundamental goals of

public sectors. A nation development is usually expressed in terms of economic advancement. As Nwanwene has noted, the root, the base of a country's development is economy advancement (Nwanwene, 2020).

There are several Government Regulatory Agencies in Nigeria performing various functions. However, not all agencies are regulatory, some have only executive tasks, others are simply consultative organizations for policy makers. Regulatory Agencies are divided into two main groups: social regulations and economic regulations. Social regulations addresses issues related to health, environment and safety, while economic regulations deal with industry, specifically energy. In this light, (Foss, 2018) postulated that the production, distribution and consumption of illicit drugs are one of the greatest modern plights. Also, (Klantsching, 2021) observed that "drugs are tearing apart our societies, spawning crime, spreading diseases such as AIDS and killing our youths and future". Furthermore, Olusegun Obasanjo, one-time Chairman of West African Commission on Drugs stated that the emergence in the region of a billion – dollar illicit drug transit hub, severely impacts on institutions that are undermined by drug. money and corruption, violence on the streets, exposure to diseases and epidemics that compromise decades of development efforts.

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) as a government regulatory agency, was established by the promulgation of Decree Number 4 of the 1989, now act of parliament, with the aim of exterminating illicit drug trafficking and consumption in Nigeria. It is also a well – known fact that any involvement in drugs, especially their importation, exportation, sale, transfer, purchase, cultivation, manufacture , extraction and possession is universally unacceptable. According to Isiodore (2017), "Government Regulatory Agencies creation is driven by perceived necessity". That is, regulatory agencies are created to solve specific societal problems that impact the developmental processes of a nation. There is no gain saying therefore, that NDLEA as a government regulatory agency is fundamental to the progress of national development.

In a nutshell, for effective conduction of the business of government and to achieve its goals, the tasks of government are broken down into different parts such as agencies, departments, among several others. These organizations are the instruments through which major social services such as hospital, schools, security, among several others are provided. Government Regulatory agencies are defined as governmental entities that possesses and exercises some grant of specialized public authority, separate from that of other instructions, but neither directly elected by the people, nor directly managed by selected officials (Christopher, 2018) . Statutorily, a regulatory agency is an independent body, with the autonomous authority to exercise authority over some area of human activity in a supervisory capacity. Indeed, in Nigeria, there are existing regulations and regulators which include the Bureau of public Enterprise (BPE), National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Standard Organization of Nigeria, (SON), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and several others.

In any public sector people's efforts or behaviour are co-ordinated in order to attain the set objectives of the organization.

Problems

In Nigeria, the problem of drugs trafficking began to assume very worrisome dimension at the end of the Second World War, following the return of some Nigerian Soldiers from mainly, Burma, India, where they had fought. One of the negative consequences of the War was the return of the soldiers with some seeds of Cannabis Sativa, also known as Indian Hemp which they in turn experimented and discovered that the illicit plant could do well in some parts of the country. With time, the cultivation of Cannabis Sativa began to grow and so was the trafficking and abuse of the Cannabis plant. Drug barons soon discovered that the geographical location of Nigeria its thick population bustling commerce and vibrant air transportation gold so much attraction for a thriving drug business (Marshal, 2018).

Policies and programmes that aims to control or eradicate illicit drug consumption and trafficking have been justified by the real and potential harm associated with the illicit drugs. These harms include health problems, crime, decreased productivity, unemployment and poverty. Drug abuse and other associated problems constitute a major threat to the survival and effective functioning of several societies. Isiodore (2017) reported that lives are lost daily, through drug dependence and the activities of drug addicts due to the fact that a significant number of deaths from accidents, violent crimes and cultism were traced to the activities of persons under the influence of drugs. According to Marshal (2018), narcotics consumption and trafficking generate and aggravate crime. Indeed, many of the audacious crimes, including vicious robberies, murders, raiding of banks, prisons, churches and kidnappings are said to be aided by drug addiction, going by the confession of culprits.

According to Uko (2021) , in Nigeria, drug trafficking came into official prominence in 1983-84 following the arrest, trial, conviction and execution of two couriers . Since then, drug trafficking has become a major cause for worry to the country. Nigeria trafficking organizations are reported to control the drug markets of Sub-Saharan Africa and operate drug distribution networks from strategic locations throughout the world. In the United States, Nigeria drug traffickers are important distributors of heroin, from importing it into the country to distribution level and selling it to lower-level street gangs.

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) was established in 1989 with the statutory responsibility to control and manage the growing menace of illicit drug activities. Despite counter narcotic efforts by NDLEA, the incidents of illicit drug production and distribution are on the increase daily and their consumptions rate widespread. Also, increasingly large quantities of drugs pour through Nigeria's land, air and sea borders. Nigeria's extensive land borders are poorly patrolled and relevant law enforcement agencies are rife with corruption. Andrew (2021) averred that very often, reports of illicit drugs seizures are recorded by the NDLEA officials who apprehended several drug traffickers that are using its International Airports to push drugs to America and Europe and certain officials have been accused of collusion to facilitate the process. Lanre Ipinmsho, a former Director General of NDLEA, affirmed that illicit drugs have been trickling across Nigerian borders since the 1980s but over the years, the trickling has become a torrent, and that the arrest made is just grazing the surface of a booming trade in Nigeria. As with the old order and the contagion of past wrongs, Nigerian continue to suffer when regulatory agencies under-perform or fail. This failure has made development elusive in Nigeria.

Consequently, this paper would therefore seek to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Does drug abuse and trafficking impede National Development?
2. Is there a nexus between NDLEA and National Development?
3. Is strategies a factor affecting the performance of NDLEA?
4. Would improve welfare packages result in improved performance?
5. Has NDLEA been able to meet its obligation from its operations?

Objectives

The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the relationship between drug trafficking and abuse on crime rate.
2. To ascertain the nexus between NDLEA and crime rate.
3. To determine the relationship between strategies and effective performance of NDLEA.
4. To examine the relationship between improved welfare and job performance of NDLEA
5. To determine if NDLEA has been able to meet its obligation from its operations?

Hypotheses

In order to achieve these objectives, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant relationship between drug trafficking and abuse on crime rate.
2. There is no significant relationship between NDLEA nexus and crime rate in Nigeria.
3. There is no significant relationship between strategies and effective performance of NDLEA
4. There is no significant relationship between improved welfare and job performance of NDLEA staff.
5. There is no significant relationship between NDLEA and being able to meet its obligation from its operations?

Theoretical Exposition

The particular theory that can sufficiently act as guide for the analysis of issues in this paper is the Structural Functionalism Theory. The origins of functionalism in the social sciences are linked most directly to organism, and specifically to homeostatic physiology (Flanigan, 2021:76). Talcot Parsons is perhaps the most frequently mentioned writer in a systematic arrangement of the structural functional analysis. According to the theory, one important approach which can be adopted in the study of the society and the political system is the structural functional approach. The theory emphasizes that if a system is to be maintained adequately there are requisite structures which must perform indispensable functions. So if a political system is to be maintained adequately, or attain its goals efficiently there are certain functions that must be performed (Azelama, 2021:31). These functions could be regarded as interest articulation, interest aggregation, political recruitment, political education, political socialization, system maintenance, order, political development, law making, law implementation, adjudication, international relation et-cetera (Azelama, 2021:31). This theory recognizes the need for structures to be put in place to perform these functions adequately.

The premise of functional analysis is to provide a consistent and integrated theory from which can be derived explanatory hypotheses relevant to all aspects of a given system. The functional approach is characterized by certain common features:

- (i) an emphasis is on the whole system as the unit of analysis;
- (ii) postulation of particular functions as requisite to the maintenance of the whole system;
- (iii) concern to demonstrate functional inter-dependence of diverse structures within the whole system (Radcliffe-Brown, 1957:25).

The major objective of functional analysis is to determine the contribution which a social item (a structure or process) makes to the persistence of the system in which it occurs, that is, the role it plays in maintaining the

system within specified limits. Among the early proponents of the functional analysis are Radcliffe-Brown and Mallinowaki who were anthropologists. They represented the classic functional analysts who view functionalism from the role of the individual human beings and the anthropological facts in the development of the society (Radcliffe-Brown, 1957:35).

One important aspect of the structural functional analysis is the emphasis on adequate maintenance of the system. So where the system is seen not be adequately maintained, you can identify the structures which are not performed adequately and then detect the structures which are not performing their functions adequately (Radcliffe-Brown, 1957:37). Here lies the utility of the structural functional model as a tool for comparative political analysis. It can therefore be adopted for a comparative study of political systems, aspects of a political system, different periods of a political system et-cetera.

Structural functionalism can be adopted for Public Administrative system which is made up of structures that perform various functions. These functions are stimulation, identification and communication of policy demand. They also concludes, advising the political actors, policy formulation, policy implementation and monitoring policy output. If the public administrative system is to be maintained adequately, there must be structures performing these functions adequately (Radcliffe-Brown, 1957:35). Furthermore, it may be observed that the public administrative system is to the political system what blood circulatory system is to the human biological system. This is because the public administrative system serves every facet of the political system and even the society (Azelama, 2021:31). Public servants serve in the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. They also minister to the press, political parties, interest groups, families etc. Structural functionalism can be adopted as a tool for a comparative study of public administration. This is done when it serves as an analytical tool for the study of administrative functions and the structures that perform them.

In the view of these scholars, the concept of integration is problematic as no society or social system can be perfectly integrated. Also, the concepts of adjustment and adaptation involve similar problems of specification. In the absence of empirical criteria, the concepts have no definite meaning. However, the functional approach from the foregoing facts falls short in some aspects. Its failure to lend the main features on which the system survives to empirical specification is a major drawback of the theory as one of the demerits as application to every organization. Furthermore, explanation of system maintenance and survival without corresponding appeal to change and innovation underscores this view. The Effect of Government Regulatory Agencies on National Development: A Case Study of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency of Nigeria, Edo State as institutions established to render services to the systems are dynamic and are programmed in approach and operation to be able to match the innovations and growth in the systems and the public sector in Edo State in particular and Nigeria in general.

Literature:

National Development

Development is the primary goal of every well-meaning government and it is essentially dependent on the level of economic activities in a country; the level of economic activities is in turn enhanced by peaceful co-existence by people. It is people who interact to carry out economic activities through their businesses. Businesses are the vehicle for economic activities that would lead to national economic development. It therefore follows that businesses play a great role in the process of development and such role can be hampered in the absence of adequate security as we now find in Nigeria. Development is the process of raising peoples' standard of living from undesirable state to desirable state through application of relevant growth processes in generating favourable condition for the purpose of increasing peoples' self-esteem and freedom to lead quality life, and to overcome certain developmental barriers in order to transcend into comfortable and desirable existence (Sharma, 2021).

Cockayne (2021) is of the opinion that "development is realistically seen as a multi-dimensional process involving the totality of man in his political, economic, psychological and social realities among others". Development is a holistic phenomenon not a concept to be summarized in application or classified and approached as a uni-dimensional process. Essentially it should be man-oriented and not institutional-oriented. Development, more importantly must be conceived in the context of a particular social system. In other words, it is wrong to consider development in terms of system or system suited for a different cultural background.

According to Amadi (2021) policing in Nigeria, like what obtains in other countries of the world, is a strenuous and risky task.

The Nigeria Police cannot be ignored in all aspects of law and order. The Policeman occupies a strategic position in the administration of justice. According to Nwannennaya (2021), as the policeman discharges his responsibility for crime control, he is the overt symbol of the law. He makes decisions that determine whether or not the machinery of the justice system works, because he holds the key to igniting the criminal justice system. He starts it by arrest, thereby, determining the criminals to be punished. Oku (2020) observed that: usually the first on the scene (of crime) after an offence has been committed; they are the first to be called, the first to investigate, and they usually have the first official contact with both of the victim and the offender. Their interpretations, their

biases and omissions are critical to all subsequent phases of their administration of justice.

This statement explains the role of the police towards crime control in the society. The Police are responsible for ensuring that the rate of crime in the society, is drastically reduced by exposing offenders of the law. Nigeria police performed conventional police functions and was responsible for internal security generally, for supporting the prison, immigration and custom services; and for performing military duties within or outside Nigeria as directed.

Methodology

This paper adopted a descriptive survey method. The survey was based on selected Local Government Areas in Edo State, Nigeria political system. The Local Government Areas are Akoko-Edo, Etsako Central, Egor, Igueben, Oredo, Owan West, Esan West and Uhunmwonde. The scope of the study is therefore restricted to years 2010 to 2020. The population of the study consist of 250 base on two categories (Senior and Junior) members of staff Public Service (See Table One Below). Out of this number, one hundred and seventy of them met our criteria and therefore form our sample size as can be seen in table one below:

TABLE 1: POPULATION OF THE STUDY OF THE EIGHT LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS IN THE THREE SENATORIAL DISTRICTS

S/No	Local Government Areas	Category of Respondents	No. of Returned Questionnaires	No. of Not Returned/Invalid Questionnaires	Total No. of Sampled Respondents
1.	Akoko-Edo	Senior Staff	16	6	31
		Junior Staff	5	4	
2.	Etsako Central	Senior Staff	17	8	31
		Junior Staff	4	2	
3.	Egor	Senior Staff	18	7	32
		Junior Staff	4	3	
4.	Igueben	Senior Staff	15	7	31
		Junior Staff	6	3	
5.	Oredo	Senior Staff	17	6	32
		Junior Staff	5	4	
6.	Owan West	Senior Staff	17	8	31
		Junior Staff	4	2	
7.	Esan West	Senior Staff	18	7	31
		Junior Staff	4	3	
8.	Uhunmwonde	Senior Staff	16	6	31
		Junior Staff	5	4	
TOTAL	(EIGHT)		170	80	250

Source: Field Survey 2023.

Result: Table 1 above represents the population of the study in which the sample size of 250 respondents were interviewed through administration of questionnaire. Within the Local Government workforce of a capacity of 250, 170 respondents (both Senior and Junior staff) validly returned their questionnaire for analysis.

Demographic Data

Of all the one hundred and seventy respondents, eighty (47%) of them are married; fifty (29%) are single while twenty one (13%) are divorced and the remaining nineteen (11%) are either widow or widowers. Thirty (18%) of them are within the age bracket of 18 – 25, Fifty (29%) are between the age bracket of 26-35; while eighty (47%) are within the age bracket of 36-45 and the remaining forty six years and above are ten (6%).

TABLE 2: Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between drug trafficking and abuse on crime rate.

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	110	65
No	60	35
Total	170	100

Source: Statistical Analysis

Table 2 shows that 110 (65%) of the total respondents agreed that drug trafficking and abuse on crime rate have viable tools for addressing injustice in the Nigeria Society and have more relevance and impacted negatively on people enjoying the dividends of democracy in Nigerian's political system in particular and conversely responsible for the lack of poor performance of our NDLEA and fragrant disregard for rules and regulations.

Therefore, the hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between drug trafficking

and abuse on crime rate the Nigeria System is therefore accepted.

TABLE 3: Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between NDLEA nexus and crime rate in Nigeria..

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	105	62
No	65	38
Total	170	100

Source: Statistical Analysis

Table 3 shows that 105 (62%) of the respondents agreed that there is correlation between NDLEA nexus and crime rate in Nigeria political system which led to slow developmental and suffering of masses in the midst of plenty, while 65 (38%) were not satisfied or disagreed.

TABLE 4: Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between strategies and effective performance of NDLEA

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	120	71
No	50	29
Total	170	100

Source: Statistical Analysis

Table 4 shows that 120 (71%) of the respondents agreed that the strategies of NDLEA has not been good enough in addressing the effective performance of the Agency and which are likely to bring unimaginable crises which will stall continuous democracy to the citizenry while 50 (29%) disagreed with the opinion.

Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the strategies and effective performance of NDLEA which conversely will lead to lack of dividends of democracy to the citizenry in Nigeria is accepted.

Findings Based On Hypotheses

Based on the analysis of the hypotheses, all the research hypotheses were positive which implies that (H_r) 1-3 were accepted.

More so, the study revealed that there is correlation between NDLEA nexus and crime rate in Nigeria political system which led to slow developmental and suffering of masses in the midst of plenty, conversely led to lack of dividends of democracy in Nigeria.

1. Furthermore, this paper have highlighted several challenges and solutions as per the findings in the hypothesis carried out in the research. However, again, it was found that the welfare of workers is most paramount in every organization, and as such, the only way to keep and improve workers productivity is to ensure frequent welfare of workers (Alabi, 2021).
2. It was revealed that the developments in recent times have whittled down. The NDLEA should be adequately funded by both government and concerned citizens including non-governmental organizations, NDLEA operatives also have to be routinely trained to enable them keep up with the ever changing war. If necessary, adequate legislation should be put in place to further punish those involved in the sale of these drugs.
3. The majority of those associated with illicit drugs both with respect to abuse and trafficking are youths, this means that if the youths are kept away from drug, the entire problem is almost solved. NDLEA needs to aggressively educate and orient the youths on the dangers involved with engaging in trafficking and abuse of drugs not see it as a means of livelihood. parents and guardians should also be made to understand the roles they can play in ending this drug war. NDLEA should make frequent use of the mass media in passing across this message. And prioritize investigations of high level dealers rather than individual drug abusers and street dealers.
4. Alabi (2021), contended that the inability of some Judges to appropriate punishment for drug offenders usually send a wrong signals to the public that indulging in the illicit drug activities would only attract mild punishment and is obviously one of the reasons for the upsurge in the increasing number of people that are being apprehended almost on daily basis in Nigeria. He further noted that trafficking in hard drugs is on the rise despite the efforts by NDLEA because of the country weak justice system. Hence, NDLEA should advocate for special courts and tribunals to fasten the prosecution of those caught for illegal drug trafficking.

. See below the political map of Nigeria.

. See figure 1 below for more details of Nigeria Political map.



Figure 1: Political map of Nigeria
 Source: Wikipedia caught 20 November, 2021

Conclusion And Recommendations

In conclusion, the Nigeria sovereign nation, more than anything else, the greatest obstacle to the nascent democracy and illicit drug trafficking is the pervasive insecurity of lives and property, as evidenced by the spate of armed robbery attacks, political assassinations, religious conflicts and ethnicity of politics of state creation coupled with the seeming helplessness of security agencies to handle criminal acts (Uhunmwuango and Epelle, 2021). The situation is worsened by the increasing number of unemployed Nigerians some of whom are ready recruits for criminal activities (Nigerian Tribune, 2020). The above statement from an editorial comment by a national daily in Nigeria indeed, epitomises the central focus of this paper; the aim of which is to analyze the nexus between democratic nurturing and to sustain the current debate on sustainable democratic dispensation and illicit drug trafficking in the 21st century, which is a topical issues in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular.

The NDLEA should devote additional resources to drug treatment facilities for drug abusers that include; vocational training, counseling and follow-up outpatient care. Ensure that these facilities are affordable by the poor and that these facilities are efficiently managed by experts. Also, conflict resolution mechanisms for street gangs, which includes forums for dialogue that promote non-violent means to resolve conflicts should be established. NDLEA must establish internal mechanisms through which operatives can report malfeasance by their peers and mechanism to also investigate such reports and levy appropriate penalties on offenders.

Therefore, NDLEA as the sole government regulatory agency charged with the extermination of illicit drug trafficking and consumption in Nigeria has an enormous task that will better position in Nigeria to achieve her national developmental goals. However, due to the numerous challenges the agency face such as inadequate staffing and funding, the agency’s impact on national development has been largely been insignificant. Hence, government has to ensure that these challenges are adequately overcome by way of recruitment, adequate funding, training etc (Alabi, 2021).

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