

The Effects of Corruption in the Successful Implementation of Constituency Projects in Nigeria: A Critical Review

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Abstract: *Despite the weighty and loftiness of the letter and spirit that entrenched constituency projects in the scheme of governance, wherein the Nigerian lawmakers argues that as representative of the people, legislators are constantly in touch with their constituents and are therefore in best position to appreciate their peculiar priority needs which they can then articulate in the budget annually; regrettably, the funds meant for these projects have been grossly abused and diverted by the law makers. This study reveals that funds appropriated for the execution of projects across the country has been used as a tool for self-enrichment by the law makers. Also, it explicated how some members of the National and state Assemblies corner the funds of the constituency projects into their personal pockets without actually executing any projects they scramble to put in the budget every fiscal year. Hence, serving as the conduit pipe through which lawmakers embezzled money. The theory used for the explanation of this study is the Elite theory, employed secondary sources of data. The study holds that these projects serve largely as bait for corruption in the budgeting process. Accordingly, it recommended among others that Allocation/approval of constituency fund annually should be premised on hundred percent outing of the previous constituency projects approved in the budgeting documents yearly, citizen-driven template for constituency projects generation should be employed*

Keywords: *Corruption, Transparency, Constituency Projects, Representative, Implementation.*

I. Introduction

The introduction and implementation of constituency projects in national and state assemblies in Nigeria has generated controversial debate among scholars, policy analysts and other critical stakeholders across the country (Awofeso & Irabor, 2020). The debate has always cantered on its constitutionality and the manner through which the projects are handled or implemented by both the executive arm and the legislators themselves (Olaoye, 2014). Allegations abound about how some members of the legislators corner the funds of the constituency projects into their personal pockets without actually executing any project, they scramble to put constituency projects in the budget every fiscal year, as an avenue to embezzle and divert funds meant for the provision of boreholes and public health services, renovations of roads and parking facilities, lighting of public spaces and roadways, among others in our rural communities, hence, serving as the conduit pipe through which lawmakers embezzled money (Niyi, 2016; Gbajabiamila, 2014; Yakubu, 2016; Abdulrazak, 2016; Awofeso & Irabor, 2020).

The idea of constituency project came to the fore because of the dire need to ensure equitable distribution of infrastructure and empowerment in every part of the country. This is due to the fact that there will be lopsided development in the country, if governors and president are allowed to decide where projects should be sited; as a result, all the representatives usually come up with what their constituents needs (Omorotionwa, 2010; Anyanate, 2014; Orimogunje, 2015; Namadas, 2016; Mudashir and Adbulahi 2018). The quest has resulted in the implementation of constituency projects in one form or the other in Nigeria (Orimogunje, 2015; Albert, 2015; Lasun, 2015; Olaoye, 2014; Udefuna, 2013).

However, since the idea of constituency projects was first introduced during the early administration of former President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 till date, over 2 trillion naira has been spent on designing, construction

and or implementation of constituency projects across the country, yet, Nigerians are grossly starved of basic infrastructural amenities, dearth of utility facilities or infrastructural development to meet the needs and demands of the people living in the rural areas (**Tunji, 2010; Gaska, 2018; Awofeso&Irabor, 2020**).

Against this backdrop, the study was propelled to interrogate how corruption affect the successful implementation of constituency projects and the best alternative option for the implementation of constituency projects in Nigeria.

II. Literature Review

The literature review section of the study is split into three. The conceptual, theoretical and the empirical literature review. Therefore, the following themes shall be discussed under the literature review.

1. Conceptualization of Constituency Projects.
2. Implementation of Constituency Projects in Nigeria- Corruption and Godfatherism.
3. Local Government and Infrastructural Development
4. International Best Practice in Constituency Projects

Constituency projects:

Nigeria operates bi-cameral Parliamentary/ Legislative system, which consists of two houses: The Senate and the House of Representatives. However, unicameral system is in place at the state and local government levels. Elections into national and state assemblies are held every four years to elect a total of 360 members of the House of Representatives, who represent the Nation's 360 Federal Constituencies and 109 Senators (**Okon, 2004**). The concept of constituency projects has variously been conceptualized by different scholars, career and non-career politicians, and even those who are in other disciplines other than political science. This was why Fisher et al (**2000**) posits that "difference in viewpoints about a particular social phenomenon like constituency projects could be enriching if new perspectives are introduced to the subject matter". The interpretations of the phenomenon by pundits have always reflected the background in which they operate from or in some case their scholarship orientations. Therefore, the phenomenon of constituency projects in this study shall be conceptualized based on views of various scholars and political actors.

According to **Odua, A (2017)**, a Constituency project is one of the unique features of Nigerian Democratic System which enables the legislators to attract democratic dividends to the people at the grass root. **Bashiru (2017)** states that the concept of Constituency projects means "any project that is nominated into a budget by a particular legislator for Socio and economic development of the community/or constituency where they represent. He pointed out that any similar project articulated by an agency or ministry for similar community is not seen as a constituency project but a "budget project" This means that Constituency project is peculiar to legislators and could be regarded as one of the bench marks for measurement of effective representation of a legislator by his constituents. constituency project implies projects like roads, schools, electricity, water among others propelled by the yearnings for democracy and its dividends for the greater number of people' In the case of Nigeria, the people were hungry for democratic dividends after long years of military rule and demanded same from their elected representatives (**Udefuna, Jumare and Adebayo 2013**).

Constituency projects refer to an initiative conceived to empower the legislators with a view to ensure visible and even spread of democratic dividends across their constituencies (**Udefuna et al 2013; and Okuronmu, 2009**). **Udefuna et al (2013)** posited that Constituency projects was created to ensure a minimum government presence in every constituency by having some grass-roots projects sited in each constituency, during the budgeting process. Constituency Projects is purely a legislative affair alone as Legislators are merely required to identify projects which they wished to be sited in their constituencies for inclusion in the budget, with a financial ceiling for the budgetary provisions for such projects in each constituency. The award of contracts for, and the supervision and payments for such contracts are left completely in the hands of the appropriate executive agencies of government (**Okuronmu, 2009**). The concept of constituency project came up as a result of the need to guarantee equitable distribution of infrastructure and ensure that every part of the country has proper representation, in the House of Representatives and Senate respectively. This is due to the fact that there will be rope sided development in the country, if governors and senators are allowed to decide where projects should be cited. In essence, all the representatives usually come up with what their constituents want (Anyanate, E. 2009).

In the same vein, Odua (2017), averred that the rationale behind constituency project is because legislators are best positioned to know what their constituencies really desire. That every community belong to one State and Federal constituencies as well as Senatorial district. What this implies is that the need(s) of a particular community could be accessed by a representative from the state Assembly, House of Representative and the house of Senate or both. She further argued that outside the Councilors of various wards if anyone by virtue of proximity to the rural terrain were to be considered most appropriate to nominate projects that the common people yearn for, is the State Legislator. From the fore going, the rationale behind Constituency project being savored by Nigeria can be summarized as follows: redistribution of national resources to the community to improve rural economy, alleviate poverty, create employment and improve the standard of living. It also ensures that services and facilities are closer to the people as a means of reducing poverty.

III. Implementation of constituency projects in Nigeria- corruption And godfatherism

Orji, (2016:4) posits that Constituency project and its implementations is perhaps the most talked about issue in the relationship between the executive and legislative arms of government in Nigeria. Critics particularly see the concept as an avenue of corruption and a tool used regularly by the legislators to blackmail the executive arm of government. Some analysts say that usually when the executive wants anything from the legislature and the latter is not forthcoming, the former dangles the constituency project carrot. Orji's view on the controversy surrounding the implementation of constituency project is summarized thus

‘‘On a yearly basis, billions of naira is appropriated to enable legislators in the National Assembly and across the 36 states of the country to carry out interventionist projects in their respective constituencies. In the 2016 national budget for example, N100 billion was voted for the constituency projects of the 360 members of the House of Representatives and 109 senators. But this is one issue that has attracted diverse reactions from the different segments of the society. While legislators see constituency projects as avenues to bring developmental projects to their respective constituencies, critics think otherwise. Besides, one of the accusations against the legislators regarding constituency projects is that apart from thereafter getting paid, the contractors settles the legislator and abandons the project’’ Orji, (2016:4).

In the same light, Obasanjo, (2016) states that ‘‘the so-called constituency projects is a veritable source of corruption. These constituency projects are spread over the budget by the National Assembly for which they are the initiators and the contractors, directly or by proxy, and money would be fully drawn, with the project only partially executed or not executed at all’’

He went to suggest that Nigeria as a country should not continue to live with the impunity and corruption of the National Assembly.

‘‘Yes, I believe that something can and should be done. The president should ride on the crest of the popularity of what is happening in the judiciary to set up a highly technical team of incorruptible investigators to look into the so-called constituency projects of the past and the present and bring culprits to book’’ Obasanjo, (2016)

The idea of constituency project and everything behind it is corrupt, when you budget for an amount that is not going to be used for the issue it is meant for. ‘‘It is an inducement for them to approve the budget. It is corruption. The best thing is to scrap it’’(Musa 2016).The issue of inducement as raised here is line with Obasanjo *inter alia* who observed that the recurrent budget of the National Assembly, with the so-called constituency projects, has ballooned since the inception of this democratic dispensation with unjustifiable increase from the year 2000 till 2018. Also, the doctrine of separation of power as espoused by Montesquieu was being compromised as a result of legislators' involvement in the execution of constituency projects (Nation 2016). However, above claim was swiftly refuted by Yarkubu Dogara that it is far from the truth because members of the National Assembly are neither given money nor awarded contracts to execute any constituency project. He buttresses his argument thus:

‘‘ prior to 1999 and indeed until 2003, the phenomenon of constituency project was alien to Nigeria's budgeting system. However, with return to democracy in 1999 and the chronic failure of the executive to ensure even distribution of projects across the 36 states, 774 local governments and indeed all the electoral wards and the resultant disquiet from aggrieved Nigerians in the rural areas, lawmakers were left with no option but to begin the agitation for equitable allocation and distribution of federal projects nationwide.Dogara (2016:2)

He went on to say that what each member or Senator does is to identify the peculiar needs of his/her people, select location and type of the project and strive to ensure that it is implemented. All monies budgeted for constituency projects are domiciled in respective ministries, departments and agencies. It is the executive that award the contracts and execute them in the same manner as all other projects.

It would be recalled that the Federal Government released N100billion for constituency projects in 2016 to appease the National Assembly after it refused to consider N180billion for President Muhammadu Buhari. Across the country assessment reveal a feeling of dissatisfaction both with the utilization of the huge funds associated with this project in areas where no project could be identified and the quality and level of completion of the few identifiable projects. Only 40.3 percent of constituency projects approved for lawmakers across the country for 2016 have been completed as at last July, 2017. Therefore, the low execution rate implies that close to N60 billion of the released allocation have not been deployed or may have diverted by lawmakers. So, if you consider the whole scenario, what ended up in the private pockets of lawmakers is more than N70billion of public fund (Egburonu, Ojiabor, Anofi, Oguntola, Nwisi, and Okungbowa 2017:2). According to Iredia (2016), not many are persuaded by the claim that lawmakers do not meddle in issues that relate to the implementations of constituency projects. That some legislators are also the contractors selected to execute their nominated constituency projects. He summarized as thus;

“Although constituency projects are advertised as required by law, lawmakers have devised dubious ways of ensuring that only companies fronting for them or those belonging to their cronies are pre-qualified”. Perhaps this explains why there is more interest in what is called constituency project. This should not be so as every project in the budget is located in Nigeria and every part of Nigeria belongs to a constituency which means that every project is a constituency project. Whether or not a project is nominated by a legislator, once it is in the budget, the legislator in whose constituency it is located ought to show the same patriotic interest in every such project. Indeed, with a proactive oversight strategy, legislators are better positioned to act as a check on the execution of projects. But if they get too involved in the execution, they can easily be compromised and become incapable of calling government officials to order.” Iredia (2016)

Egburonu et al (2017) averred that In another development, what most of these lawmakers do is to identify those stakeholders, party chieftains and money bag politicians who can give them troubles in the communities and buy them over with an understanding that they will have some percent from the approved projects. “Once they offer the agreed amount, the identified leaders look away or refuse to report them. They keep quiet and allow the lawmakers to get away with the diversion or non-delivery.” “For most of these communities, that is the only governmental attention they receive. So, when some lawmakers get their allocations and refuse to execute the projects, the communities become dismayed. They are disillusioned and left to wait for another four years to even react. It is a terrible thing communities, especially the rural ones are going through.

From the fore going, it could be observed that there are perceived sharp practices in the implementation of the constituency projects. The argument was sharply divided into two opinion lines (those that are of the view that the concept has been marred with corruption and Godfatherism and those who are of the contrary view). In all, one could add that giving the concept an institutional frame work for its implementation may not be a bad idea. That will in no small measure settle the controversies surrounding the implementations of the project.

IV. Local Government and Infrastructural Development in Nigeria

Infrastructure development is at crucial stage in the world today. Countries of the world ensure the provision of infrastructure to improve the livelihoods of their citizen and their quality of life (Khoza, 2009, in Lawal, 2014:139). Also, Infrastructure plays a key role in both socio-economic and political development and enrichment of living standard. According to (Lawal, 2014:141), infrastructure is seen as umbrella term for many activities and basic structure and facilities necessary for a country to function efficiently. (African Development Bank, 1999; and Geet, 2007), described infrastructure as the totality of basic physical facilities upon which all other economic activities in a system depend. It comprises the assets needed to provide people with access to economic and social facilities and services such as roads, water and drainage.

Lawal, (2014) brought to the fore that the shift from focus on construction of infrastructure to the delivery of infrastructure drew the attention of so many countries in Africa, particularly, Nigeria to focus on the provision and delivery of infrastructure, especially at the local level. This is because over two thirds of Nigeria’s population resides in local areas, where poverty prevails. No wonder, Udoh, (2005) averred that over 100 million Nigerians still lack access to electricity, and less than 40% of the population has access to safe drinking

water. He went ahead to point out that infrastructure are mostly concentrated in urban areas. The lack of infrastructure such as; safe water supply, electricity and roads that are necessary for improved standard of living makes the rural populace in Nigeria vulnerable to poverty. Local government as a government at the grassroots level of administration is designed to meet the peculiar needs of the rural people. Again, being a tier of government that is closest to the citizenry, it is saddled with responsibility of guaranteeing the political, social and economic development of its area and its people (Agagu, 1997; Enero, Dadoyin and Elumilade, 2004).

There are problems that are local in nature and such problems are better handled by local government because they are better understood by the local people themselves. Based on the 1976 blueprint for local government reform, it is expected that local government should engage in rural infrastructural provision to engender development and good governance and improved standard of living at the grassroots. Unfortunately, the state of infrastructure at local government still leaves much to be desired. This ugly trend is particularly greater in the area of water and sanitation, rural road access and electricity among others (Appadorai 1975 in Lawal 2014). According to World Bank (2004) Nigeria's infrastructure in terms of quality and quantity is grossly inadequate and inferior to that existing in other parts of the world. Out of the 102 countries assessed in the global competitiveness report in 2004, the Nigeria's quality of infrastructure was ranked 3rd to the last, this is consistent with the World Bank survey results where manufacturing firms listed infrastructure as their most severe business constraint. Nigerian roads were described as the lowest in density in Africa, where only 31% of the roads are paved as compared to 50% in the middle income countries, and even where roads are provided, only 40% of these roads can be said to be in good condition. Currently only 20% of Nigeria's rural population have access to electricity'' (Alabi and Ocholi, 2010). In the same light, Ipmgbemi (2001) observed that in most part of the rural communities in the country, passengers pay 3 times for kilometer on rural roads compared to tarred roads. A nation-wide survey was conducted by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) on the state of roads in the country; the survey revealed that the road network, as at December 2002, was estimated at 194,000 kilometers, with the Federal Government being responsible for 17%, state government 16% and local government 67%. It was also shown that most of the roads were in bad condition, especially those in rural areas. Some of the roads constructed over 30 years ago had not been rehabilitated even once, resulting in major cracks and numerous potholes that make road unsafe. (CBN, 2002).

Odoh (2004) argued that the principal causes that stunts infrastructural development in Nigeria are corruption, poor management, misappropriation and misapplication of the funds accruable to local government for infrastructure delivery at the grassroots. In the same token, Lawal, (2014) agreed that the infrastructural development at Local Government level is not free from corruption. He stated further, that those who are in charge of fund meant for infrastructural provision tend to do away with substantial portions of the fund, thereby leaving the project uncompleted and abandoned. Ekpe, (2006) averred that local government in Nigeria are engulfed with poor agricultural productivity; gross infrastructural deficit; rapid population increase; unemployment; lack of social amenities among others.

It was against these backdrops that Etiaba (2014), in Orji (2016) holds that constituency projects will immensely help to bridge the gaps of developmental projects in the hinterlands. That in several parts of the country, especially at the hinterland, the only developmental projects the people enjoy are the constituency project. Constituency projects fund can come to their rescue if given the necessary frame work of operation. Orji, (2014) moved that Critics of Constituency projects which would have served as interventionist measure instead see the concept as an avenue of corruption. Therefore, passing vote of no confidence to the concept in terms of its ability and credibility to salvage the sorry situation of infrastructure at the local government levels is very vital.

V. Legislative Constituency Project Cross Countries

Parliamentary involvement in grassroots projects and in community development has been growing in many developing countries, including Kenya, Pakistan, India, Uganda, Bhutan, Jamaica and Papua New Guinea and Nigeria. One policy tool for this involvement is Constituency Development Funds (CDFs), which dedicate public fund to benefit specific political subdivisions through allocations and/or spending decisions influenced by their representatives in the national parliament (Baskin, et al 2010). The management of CDFs includes goals and size of the funds; the structure of decision making on the use of the funds at all stages of implementation; oversight of CDF operations; and the relative influence of different individuals and groups in making policy. According to Baskin, et al (2010) Constituency Development Funds are akin to the venerable U.S. congressional allocations generally known as "pork barrel," "earmarks" or "member items" in national and state-level policy making. The management of CDFs has sometimes been controversial because they raise fundamental questions about the efficacy of government service delivery. It indicates the extent to which such service delivery can be made accountable, the role of legislators in selecting development priorities, and how public participation in

policy making can be made more meaningful. The major aim of the CDF is redistributing national resources to the community to improve rural economy, alleviate poverty, create employment and improve the standard of living of Kenyans. It also ensures that services and facilities are closer to the people as a means of reducing poverty. It is a complementary effort aimed at boosting existing funds (such as the Local Authorities' Transfer Fund, Bursary Fund, Fuel Level Funds and Roads Maintenance Fund) directed at the rural/ community level. In Kenya, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is a strategy for the devolution of resources and attaining of even development. It was also a strategy for attaining enhanced people's participation and power in decision-making processes; promote good governance, transparency and accountability. However, various issues and concerns have been raised regarding the CDF processes and structures and community participation in decision-making in the administration, management, monitoring and evaluation of the fund in various Constituencies. Some Constituencies have been termed as good Constituencies while others bad constituencies based on Constituency Development Fund implementation level. It is however, of great importance to note that Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was established through the Constituency Development Fund Act of 2003. Analysts see it as one of the laudable contributions of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) Government of Kenya to democratic growth in the country. In Kenya, for example the CDF is an annual budgetary allocation by the Central Government to each of the country's parliamentary constituencies Kimani, F. et al (2009). While there are several rules that govern the utilization of the Fund to ensure transparency and accountability, decisions over the utilization of the funds are supposed to be mainly by the Constituents. Efforts to anchor the CDF on a legal foundation were initiated in 1999 when the first motion on Constituency Development Fund was moved in parliament. The motion prayed the government to devote 5% of government revenue to community-based projects. The motion was passed but then the government did not implement it. According to Mwangi S. K. (2005) in 2001/2, a caucus of Members Parliament (MPs) was constituted to lobby the Minister for Finance to allocate the 5% to community based projects. The initial 5% captured in motion was further amended/ reviewed downwards to 2.5% through the collaborative effort of Parliament and the Ministry of Finance. In furtherance of giving every legal backing to the CDF, the Constituency Development Fund Bill was drafted and presented to Parliament in April 2003. The bill was passed in November 2003, thus establishing the Constituencies Development Fund (CDF) through an Act of parliament. As such, 2.5% of all the government ordinary revenue collected every year is paid into the fund (Kimani, F. et al 2009; and Mwangi, S. K. 2005). Kimani, F. et al (2009) further argued that the CDF has four management organs, namely: (a) The Constituencies Fund Committee: This is a committee made up of 11 selected Parliamentarians and the Clerks of the Kenyan National Assembly, charged with the responsibility of Considering and recommending to Parliament any matter requiring action by the National Assembly; Considering referenced project proposals submitted from various Constituencies through the Board; Considering and reporting to Parliament names of persons required to be approved under the Act; The link between the CDF Board and National Assembly; Overseeing the implementation of the CDF Act, 2003 and its subsequent amendments (CDF Amendment Act 2007); Overseeing the policy frame work and legislative matters that may arise in relation to the Fund; Continuously review the frame work set out for the efficient delivery of development programmes financed through the Fund (Kimani, F. et al, 2009). (b) The Constituency Development Fund Board: This is the national organ to oversee CDF implementation. Specifically the Board mandate according to Kimani, F. et al, (2009) include to: Ensure allocation and disbursement of funds to every Constituency; Ensure prudent management of the Fund; Receive and discuss annual reports and returns from the Constituencies; Ensure the compilation of proper records, returns and reports from the Constituencies; Receive and address complaints and disputes and take any appropriate action; Ensure timely submission to Parliament of various returns, reports and information as required; Review, scrutinize and approve Project Proposals from the Constituencies that are consistent with the Act; Refer Disapproved Project Proposals or any other policy issue, from the Constituencies with adequate reasons, to the Constituency Fund Committee for direction and consideration. (c) The District Project Committees: This organ coordinates the implementation of projects financed through the Fund. It ensures that no duplication of projects occur particularly where it is prudent to combine efforts on projects designed to benefit a large section or sector of a community traversing several constituencies in each parliamentary district. (d) The Constituencies Development Fund Committees: It is constituency based and comprises of a minimum of 12 people and a maximum of 15 people. The membership consists the following; $\frac{3}{4}$ An elected member of Parliament; $\frac{3}{4}$ Two councilors in the constituency; $\frac{3}{4}$ One district officer in the constituency; $\frac{3}{4}$ Two persons representing religious organizations in the constituency; $\frac{3}{4}$ Two men representatives from the constituency; $\frac{3}{4}$ Two women representatives from the constituency; $\frac{3}{4}$ One person representing the youth from the constituency; $\frac{3}{4}$ One person nominated from among the active NGOs in the area if any; $\frac{3}{4}$ A maximum of three other persons from the constituency such that the total number does not exceed fifteen; $\frac{3}{4}$ An officer of the Board seconded to the Constituency Development Fund Committee by the Board, who shall be ex-officio. The CDF places high premium projects from the locations. The list of priority projects is then submitted to parliament by the legislator representing affected district. This committee is also saddled with the management and

implementation of CDF projects at the constituency level. Constituency Development Fund members enjoy a three year term of office. This term is renewable or upon the appointment of a new committee in a manner provided for in the CDF Act, whichever comes first. Approved proportions of funding include; administration – 3%, education bursary – 15%, emergency reserve – 5% and operation and maintenance of vehicles, equipment and machinery - 3%. Others are sports activities – 2%, monitoring and evaluation – 2% and environmental – 2% In Uganda, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is an outcome of series of meetings between the Presidency and Members of the Ugandan 7th Parliament (MPs). The Presidential pledge made to Members of the National Assembly, which was intended to relieve Parliamentarians of the pressures of their Constituents in regard to the promised and other development projects. Like in Kenya, Constituency Development Fund in Uganda involves a sum of money mapped out annually for the development of each legislative district. The concept of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was first used in Uganda during the budget proposals for the Financial Year 2005/ 2006. After a presentation of a Ministerial Statement before the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee, a plenary session of Parliament on 9th September 2005 adopted the proposal for a CDF (UDN, Briefing Paper on the Constituency Development Fund, May 2007). The sum of 2.95 billion shilling was recommended by the Ugandan national Parliament to be earmarked for MPs and that the said sum should be released expeditiously. Unlike Kenya, there is no comprehensive law governing the management of CDF in Uganda. The Constituency development fund implementation committee ensures the following: $\frac{3}{4}$ That every MP has to establish a Committee of 5 people composed of him/ herself as the Chairperson, a Secretary, a Treasurer and two other members for the purpose of handling this money; $\frac{3}{4}$ That the money would be released to the individual MP and the responsibility of accountability to the Accounting Officer (Clerk to Parliament) would lie with the MP; $\frac{3}{4}$ That the money for each Financial Year is accounted for within one year; $\frac{3}{4}$ That the funds are invested on activities that directly increase household incomes and productivity; on interventions that can trigger rapid rural transformation and economic development; and on agro-processing and marketing of produce in the respective constituencies; $\frac{3}{4}$ That the money is not spent on development of infrastructure projects already under the Local Government initiatives or Central Government programmes or projects; and on political and/or religious activities. The Clerk to Parliament releases the constituency development money to the personal accounts of the parliamentarians and holds MPs accountable for every fund released. India has two CDF-style schemes: the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) at the national level and the Member of Legislative Assembly Local Area Development Fund (MLA-LAD) for the Legislative Assembly of each of India's 28 States. The MPLADS scheme was instituted in India in 1993 under the dominant national party, the Congress Party. Under the MPLADS, an equal amount is allocated annually to each single-member parliamentary constituency; the funds are to be used for "works of developmental nature with emphasis on the creation of durable community assets based on the locally felt needs." The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has overall responsibility for managing the funds. Each State government must designate a Nodal Department which is responsible for coordination with the Ministry and effective supervision (including physical inspection) of the work on site. The MPs recommend projects which are sanctioned by the District Authority who is directly responsible for implementation. The District Authority identifies the agency to be used to execute the project; this may be a local government, government agency or NGO. The District Authority is also responsible for enforcing the provisions of the guidelines with regard to admissible expenditure Tanzania took the Kenyan practice of allocating 25% of the fund according to the poverty index and went further to include factors of geographical size and population in their allocation formula. According to Section 3 of the Act, 25% of the total amount will be divided equally between all constituencies (IBP, 2010). The remaining 75% will be split between the constituencies as follows: $\frac{3}{4}$ 45% in relation to the constituency's population $\frac{3}{4}$ 20% in relation to the poverty margin, and; $\frac{3}{4}$ 10% in relation to the geographical size of the constituency. Similar to Kenya, the Constituency Development Catalyst Committee (CDCC) for each constituency is convened and chaired by the MP. However it is limited to 6 members, including the District Planning Officer who serves as Secretary.

Table 1:below, shows the great National variation in the amount of money allocated to each MP in a CDF.

Country	Average Amount Allocated per MP (USD)
Philippines	\$ 4,270,001
Bhutan	\$ 43,000
Solomon Islands	\$ 140,000
Kenya	\$ 794,464
Malaysia	\$ 577,951

Jamaica	\$ 456,361
India	\$ 420, 790
Sudan	\$ 317,543
Pakistan	\$ 240,000
Malawi	\$ 21, 352
Tanzania	\$ 13,761
Uganda	\$ 5,187

Source :

However, in Nigeria it has been established that monies meant for the execution of Constituency projects in the country are not routed through the members of the National Assembly as being speculated (Iredia, 2016). The Presidency and all finance and appropriation implementation related agencies was challenged to come out with documents and facts to prove that money for Constituency projects are routed through members of the National Assembly. (Turaki, 2010). The former Attorney General of Zamfara State defended Constituency Project, by stating that no member of the National Assembly was involved in the handling of the funds for projects or the award of contracts and its execution and challenged the MDG office and the Ministry of Finance to prove him wrong(Turaki, 2010; Udefuna et al,2013:652).

VI. Empirical Review

Several studies have been carried out on constituency project in Nigeria and in other climes. Some of these studies which are here reviewed empirically are UdefunaI,Jumare, andAdebayo (2013); Chesan,Okello and Kimitei (2016);Orimogunje (2015) andOladipupo (2014).

UdefunaI,Jumare, and Adebayo (2013); carried out a study on Legislative Constituency Project in Nigeria: Implicationfor National Development.The study employed qualitative method in carrying out its investigations. Hence, a documentary method of data collections was adopted while content analysis was used to analyse the study. Findings from the study unveilsthat constituency project is an idle move towards the devolution ofresources and development. That it will no doubt bring about even development and encourage popular participation inpolitics. That the misconception about management of the Constituency project holds no water any more since it is now adefinite fact that Nigerian Parliamentarians merely attract Government's attention and presence to their districts byrecommending the Societal needs of their Constituents to the Government during budgeting. Various relevant MDAsoversee the award of contracts and their implementation as against the general misconception that the NationalAssembly members have been feeding fat on the Constituency project funds.That the Constituency project is not peculiar to Nigeria. There are similar mechanisms in other developing Countries. The study among other things recommends that Constituency needs assessment prior to awarding contracts should be adopted. That Constituency ought to getwhat they need and not what the representative wants or what a few influential constituents request. Since these projectsare intended to alleviate poverty, provide and/ or improve on already existing infrastructure, therefore, provision of thesefacilities and relief packages should sincerely serve its purpose unselfishly. However, the study was not rested on any theoretical framework of analysis. Also, study appears to be taken sides because it glossed over the sharp practices of parliamentarians in the lobbying for the projects.

Also, Chesan, Okello and Kimitei (2016) investigated onThe Role of Constituency Development Fund in Achieving EquitableDistribution of Resources to Constituencies in Kenya:A Case Study of Baringo Central Constituency.Thestudy was guided by; participatory theory, public sector capital budgeting decision theory and public sector fiscaldecentralization theory. The study adopted descriptive survey design.The target population was; the CDF project management committees, CDF committee members, ward representatives, chiefs,assistant chiefs, youth leaders, and staff working in CDF office including the fund manager. The researcher used census methodto select 22 chiefs, 44 assistant chiefs, 15 ward administrators, 110 project management committee, 5 youth leaders, 1 DEO, 1District water officer, 1 medical service officer, 1 public works officer, and 1 Sub-County commissioner. Questionnaires,interviews and documents analysis was used to collect data. The data was examined using descriptive statistics; frequencies,percentages and means. Multiple regression models were used to measure the role of CDF in distribution of resources. Thefindings of this study are; that theConstituency Development Funds has contributed significantly in the distribution of resources to educational projects through: payment ofschool fees to needy students, construction of class rooms, construction of dormitories, latrines and /teachers' quarters, and provisionof electricity supply to schools.Again, findings point out that CDF has contributed significantly to distribution of resources to the health projects. The study establishedthat CDF has been used to construct dispensaries in various wards, construction houses for the medical personnel, and purchase ofambulance.study established that CDF has significantly influenced distribution of resources to water

project. The recommended thus: that more resources should be allocated to school projects to meet the increasing demands of school facilities as results of increased enrolment due to Free Primary Education (FPE) and Tuition Free Secondary Education (TFSE) and there should be a clear policy on the projects that are covered by CDF, to avoid duplication of work, since there are funds allocated for roads maintenance at the constituency level. It is crucial to note that this study was unable to evaluate projects on ground before the introduction constituency development fund.

Orimogunje (2015) appraised Legislative Constituency Projects in Nigeria: A Matter of Constitutionality or Political Expediency.

VII. Theoretical Framework

The theory used for the explanation of this study is the Elite theory. Elite theory's origins lie most clearly in the writings of Gaetano Mosca (1858- 1941), Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), and Robert Michels (1876-1936) at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth century (Alexander, 2002:45). Other leading exponents who further developed this theory under varying political systems includes; Robert Michaels, Harold Lasswell, James Burnham, C. Wright Mills and Ortega Gasset, Karl Mannheim, Anthony Downs and Joseph Schumpeter (Gaub, 2004).

This theory holds that "Elites are the power holders of a body politic" They are the holders of a high position in a given society. By this, elites are the most powerful group in a society who hold highest position of power in a political system. A person who gets least power is mid-elite and the least one as masses and the highest one as elite. There may be several types of elites in a society. The concept of elite is classificatory and descriptive designating the holders of high positions in a given society (Jayapalan N, 2000:63).

Again, elite theorists argue that the elite's decision making power and action need masses back up and support if they need to be effective. Elite may take authoritative decision backed by force but its fate depends on the support of masses. If the masses disobey elite's power or decision, he may have to lose the position, and then the counter elite with backup and support of the people usurp the position (Campbell, J. 2014). In the same vein, the proponents of this theory averred that people choose elites on the basis of their outstanding abilities. They select their leaders by pouring their vast store of vital enthusiasm, belief and trust that they may guide and lead the masses in better way. They remain in power as long as they enjoy the trust and confidence of masses. The rule and the ruled, capacity to lead and capacity to be lead is natural and common in human phenomena. Masses render support and repose faith in their administration as long as they are satisfied and feel safe. The masses revolt when elites become corrupt and inefficient, and the motive behind the revolt is not that they have objection of being ruled by elites but would like to be ruled by more competent ones (Agarwal R.C, 2005:440).

In making the above lengthy extract, we have profoundly accepted that the elite factor is inseparable from the socio-economic and socio-political settings of nation-states. Hence, according to Arowolo and Aluko (2012:799), the elite theory is a philosophical explanation of the role of the leadership in governance as it affects public policy including all socio-economic and political matters. Elites accordingly, dominate the formal institutions of government and are a determining factor in governance and decision-making processes. Elites are the decision makers in the society whose power is not subject to control by any other body in the society (Arowolo and Aluko 2012:799). The elite consist of those few individuals who wield powers and hold leading positions in the strategic aspects of society. The majority, the masses, only obey and are guided, controlled and governed by the few. Many of the elites do not hold formal or legal authoritative powers but are rather behind the scene, teleguiding and manipulating overt political and policy actions. It is on the basis of presumptions that the masses are contented and are incapable of challenging the authoritative position of the elite that the elites dominate public policy and its processes (Arowolo and Aluko, 2012:800).

VIII. Application of the Theory

The theory is very apt for the study as it graphically captures the essence and focus of the study. Elites dominate the formal institutions of government and are a determining factor in governance and decision-making processes (legislators, ministers, governors, president, heads of MDAs, among others). In a representative democracy like ours, the states and national assembly's members are the direct leaders of electoral wards and by extension the elites of their various constituencies. They determine what is to be shared, who gets what, how and when. And for them to earn and enjoy masses support, infrastructures that impacts positively to their constituents must be attracted. Hence, the rationale that gave birth to constituency projects.

IX. Conclusion and Recommendation

Despite the lofty ideas that propagated the introduction and implementation of constituency projects since the return to democratic rule in 1999, Nigerians in the rural areas are grossly starved of basic infrastructural amenities viz-a-vis health facilities, water, functional classrooms, accessible roads among others.

There has been little or no government presence in most rural communities in the country despite a whopping budgetary allocation of billions of naira annually for the construction of a Primary Health Centre in every constituency. Most constituency projects are abandoned, poorly executed and in some cases not executed as there are only signposts at the site as epitomized in the construction of a pavilion at UmuonaNnobiIdemili south LGA (Attah&Ugbudu, 2020).

In the same vein, lawmakers use these projects as means to reward party supporters and to recover election expenses as most of the projects and items are not delivered to their constituents, even when delivered the constituents are short- changed as the exact quantity is not supplied and the items are labeled 'donation' as if it is not public funds. Paradoxically, the arm of government that is supposed to enforce public accountability is busy siphoning public funds under constituency projects that are characterized by poor delivery, non-execution, abandonment and inflated contract cost (Attah&Ugbudu, 2020). This negates accountability and undermines good governance as the projects serve to enhance the economic potentials of lawmakers.

In the light of the above, the following recommendations will suffice in tracking the manifestation corruption in the allocation and implementation of constituency projects.

1. There should be a periodic assessment of constituency projects approved or allocated annually across the country by an independent body with a view to tracking the level of implementation and ensuring that standard and specifications are not compromised.
2. Allocation/approval of constituency fund annually should be premised on hundred percent outing of the previous constituency projects approved in the budgeting documents yearly. This will make the legislators to effectively utilize their oversight tool knowing that the next approval of their constituency projects rests on the evidenced based recommendations adduced by the independent constituency projects assessment commission.
3. Citizen-driven template for constituency projects generation should be employed. What we are saying here is that every constituency projects should evolve from the wards. This will not ensure that these constituency projects reflect the demands of the rural dwellers and promotion of inclusiveness in governance but guarantees transparency and accountability in the constituency projects scheme.

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