Inventing Participatory Planning and Budgeting for Participatory Local Governance in Nigeria

Ayo A. Adesopo, Ph.D
Department of Public Administration
Obafemi Awolowo University
Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
E-mail: aadesopo@yahoo.com

Abstract

Governance has continued to be something of concern to Nigerians, especially in terms of poor service delivery. This problem of poor service delivery is said to be traceable to a number of factors. These may include lack of social inclusion and probity and accountability underscored as two of the key elements of good governance this paper is relying on.   This paper set out to suggest the invention and institution of participatory governance and particularly Participatory Budgeting (PB) option in Nigeria's local government administration. This is in recognition of the fact that budget process is a powerful tool for participatory governance. The inclusionary character of PB underscores opening up to ordinary citizens, through intermediary organizations, the most basic and formal procedure of governance, particularly the distribution of resources through budgeting if only to foster good governance in terms of service delivery, probity and accountability, transparency, social justice, and spurring the growth of meaningful democracy from the bottom-up, to mention a few. The paper also went further to identify the enabling conditions necessary for PB especially in Nigeria setting which may include political will, nature and organization of political system, desirability of enabling legal framework, and a host of others.

Keywords: Participatory planning, budgeting, participatory local governance, Nigeria

1. Introduction

One major plight of Nigeria, especially since independence, has been governance crisis that has resulted in the country's development problem. Governance in Nigeria is characterized mainly by economic mismanagement, particularly waste, embezzlement or misappropriation of public funds by those in the positions of authority. The situation is becoming more and more pathetic daily even decades after independence. Efficient public service delivery system that is germane to governance has collapsed today to the extent that people are deprived of the basic needs of life. Public office holders have failed to redeem electoral promises which have led to the majority of the people living far below the poverty line because of their inaccessibility to necessities of life. As Adamolekun (2008:18) specifically put it, since the return of civilian rule in 1999, the rhetoric of "dividends of democracy" for the public has been a refrain of political actors in both the executive and legislative arms of government at both the federal and state levels. It was also added that the poor record of services (delivery) today is evident that governments' development performance is below both the promise of the politicians and the expectations of the citizens. The public has also become distrustful of government as a result of widespread and institutionalized corruption capped with arrogant display of ill-gotten wealth by these (political/career) public office holders and party functionaries.

One striking issue today is the role of the civil societies in governance in Nigeria. The situation has been that they are being denied access to public administrative system. This is with particular reference to not able to keep governance structure accountable in addition to not serving as its partners to the maximum in the delivery of services to the public. In this circumstance, the civil societies have not been able to play much/any role in the socio-political and economic spheres to be able to impact positively on the functioning of the public administrative systems. Our intention, in this work, is to determine how civil society organizations can be involved in local governance, particularly in planning and budgeting using on-the-table research method. This has been described either as 'participatory' or 'inclusive' budgeting. This work covers, among others, the discussion of what governance means, the elements of good governance, advocacy for participatory local governance, participatory budgeting option as well as concluding remarks on the option.

2. The Concept of Governance

Governance is not a new concept as it has been a recurrent theme in the literature ever since people began to reflect upon how they are being ruled (Hyden and Court, 2002). However, the concept has carried a variety of definitions since it emerged as a key concept in the international development debate in the recent past. Its definition often takes off from the distinction between it and government. While government usually refers to state structures and institutions, governance is more encompassing as it embraces government. Rhodes (1997) described governance as signifying a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process/method by which a society is governed. Lutz and Linder (2004) described governance basically as about how power is exercised and how important decisions in a society are taken. The emphasis is about the institutions and their performance. Governance is said to be more encompassing as it recognizes the capacity of the citizens to get things done without resting on the power of government to comment or use its authority (Stoker, 2000). Defining governance, The World Bank (1992) distinguishes between governance as an analytic framework and governance as an operational framework and in effect identifying three aspects of governance: the form of political regime; the process by which authority (or power) is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development; and the capacity of governments to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions. In the same vein, agreeing to governance as an activity aimed at steering societies in desired directions, the UNDP (1997) adopted a definition of governance as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. To Newman (2001) also, governance refers to questions about forms of power and authority, patterns of relationship and rights and obligations among the people facing common 'problems'.

 In an ambitious synthesis of the field, Lynn, *et al* (1999) defined governance as configuration of separable but interrelated structural elements:- statutes, policy mandates, organizational, financial, and programmatic structures, administrative rules and guidelines, and institutionalized rules and norms, which in combination establish the ends and means of governmental activity. They further write that any particular configuration within a policy domain (e.g. environmental protection), with respect to a type of government activity (e.g. regulation), within a particular jurisdiction (e.g. a state or a city), or within a particular organization (e.g. a department of human services) or organizational field (e.g. child serving agencies)- is the resultant of a dynamic process which they shall refer to as the "logic of governance". The view of Fofana (1997) about governance is from the economic angle by defining it as the process by which a society makes decision about the production and distribution of scarce resources. Some other scholars introduced the issue of legitimacy in defining governance being a vital element of effective governance. For instance, Hyden (1992:1), while equating governance with regime, he defined it as the conscious management of regime structures with a view to enhancing the legitimacy of the public realm. To Hyden, legitimacy is the dependent variable produced by effective governance. In the same vein, Vengroff (1993) described governance as the effective management of public affairs through the generation of a regime (set of rules) accepted as legitimate, for the purpose of promoting and enhancing societal values sought by individuals and groups.

While discussing the relationship between human rights and human development approaches, UNDP (2002) used governance as a concept when discussing the achievement of various development goals such as poverty reduction, improvement of health and education services and such others. This can be interpreted to mean that governance is about management of a country's affairs, presumably targeting the socio-political and economic well-being of the people and which may originate some fundamental questions like: What has been happening to poverty level? What has been happening to inequality? What has been happening to unemployment level? and a host of others. The focus is somehow shifted from government to the citizens.

From the various definitions, governance is viewed within the narrow context of state; whereas the term governance covers a wider range such as civil society, non-governmental organizations, community affairs, etc (Okotoni, 2006:125), suggesting collaborative relations.   This view is in line with Rhodes (1997) and Pierre and Peters (2000) who saw self-organising and inter-organisational networks as constituting the essential ingredients of the governance process. The fact remains that; common to all definitions of governance is that it is about how power is exercised, and how important decisions in a society are made. Commenting on the problem of perception (in Nigeria), Okotoni emphasized that many (Nigeria) citizens believe that governance is about sharing rather than mobilizing and that they expect government to provide all social services and facilities free of charge.

These can be traced to governance structural failure in Nigeria, particularly failures from the point of view of social inclusion and accountability. The emphasis here is based on the fact that, basically governance is about fostering relationships and accountability among citizens, government institutions and civil societies as these have effects on the efficiency and effectiveness of policy formulation and resource allocation. Where these are lacking, governance crisis looms. The view is in line with Lappe and Du Bois (1994) who narrowly defined governance as a redefinition of the role of the citizen, from passive consumer of government services to active participants of governance. The emphasis here is that there is need to place premium on not only the state actors in governance but also on those individuals/societies outside it for the definition to be adequate and all-encompassing. In other words, the term governance is being seen as a concept that is increasingly encompassing those mechanisms that empower the people, as per the level of their involvement in the course of governing.

3. Good (Local) Governance

Governance is either good or bad and in between these two extremes are situations described by many prefixes such as 'proper' governance, 'sound' governance, 'dilemma' of governance, etc, and suffices like governance 'crisis', governance 'challenges' and so on. However, like governance itself, good governance has been defined in many ways. Common to all such definitions is that it is about how power is exercised and how vital decisions are taken in the course of governance, particularly, decision-making interaction between public institutions, civil societies and the private sector. According to UNDP,

> Governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable. And it promotes the rule of law. Good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources. Government has three legs: economic, political and administrative. Economic governance includes decision-making processes that affect a country's economic activities and its relationships with other economies. It clearly has major implications for equity, poverty and quality of life. Political governance is the process of decision-making to formulate policy. Administrative governance is the system of policy implementation. Encompassing all three, good governance defines the processes and structures that guide political and socio-economic relationships (http://magnet.undp.org/policy/chapter1.htm).

Adedeji (1997:13) equates good governance to building an effective relationship between the people and their governments. This can be described simply as a balanced governance system. According to Garrigue (2004:6), in order to achieve a balanced governance system, all the (so called) three pillars (public institutions, civil society and private sector) are involved in decision making, not obligatorily with equal powers but with a role that fits optimally their mandate and capacities as they all represent vested interests and constituencies, and social capital is needed. According to him, social capital indicates, among other things, mutual trust, reciprocity and collective action.

4. Elements of Good Governance

Several things must be in place for governance or local governance to be "good" and which have been generally referred to as the elements of good governance. These include: legitimacy; social inclusion; respect for human rights, the rule of law and the division of power; responsiveness, accountability and transparency; and conflict resolution and state building. In other words, for governance to be good, first, people must accept and follow the decisions taken by the political authorities (legitimacy); second, it must be inclusive and political decisions are representative of the majority regardless of gender, age, social class, ethnicity or religion (social inclusion); third, basic human rights must be respected, rule of law obeyed and power appropriately divided; fourth, governance must be responsive, transparent and accountable; and lastly be capable of resolving conflicts that are not avoidable in the course of governing.

In the words of Landell-Mills and Serageldin (1991), good governance depends on the extent to which a government is perceived and accepted by the general citizenry to be legitimate; committed to improving general public welfare and responsive to the needs of the citizenry; competent in assuring law and order and in delivering public services; able to create an enabling policy environment for productive activities; and equitable in its conduct, favouring no special interests or groups.

Olowu and Akinola (1995) identified the key elements of good governance in any modern society as including managerial and organizational efficiency; accountability; legitimacy and responsiveness to the public; transparency in decision-making; and pluralism (diversity) in policy options and choices. Akinola (2000) however emphasized that wherever good governance prevails, the government is responsive to popular demand, and that such government is put in a position to mobilize the people to participate effectively in the implementation of government's programmes.

This paper will not make judgment as to which of these elements accurately describes good (local) governance. They are, in fact, all mutually exclusive. This paper will merely rely on two of the elements: social inclusion and accountability, to drive home its points especially now that internal control mechanisms of government can be said to have failed and the need for introduction of external control mechanisms for public institutions realized.

5. Governance and Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is one of such elements of good governance and the emphasis is on the inclusiveness of all and sundry. In other words, it emphasizes 'participatory governance' or simply 'public participation' whereby everyone regardless of wealth, gender, age, race or religion, is given the opportunity to productively and positively participate in public decision making and administration. In the words of Matovu (2006:4), those who are traditionally marginalized break out of the cycle of exclusion. The principle here emerged in Western culture and it holds that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process. This is as part of a "people first" paradigm shift. Social inclusion offers the poor and the marginalized an unprecedented opportunity to participate in local governance without preempting the statutory powers of elected representatives (CUDS, Harvard). However, citizen participation occurs when citizens or their representatives interact with and provide feedback to government at the policy formulation or implementation stage of governance (Moynihan, 2007:56).

The above description of social inclusion in governance can simply be said to be absent today in modern democratic states as inclusiveness is guaranteed merely on paper, especially through "universal suffrage" where the adults have the right to vote and be voted for. In reality, the direct link between the people and government at the local level is often absent, particularly where there are no local elections and the central or provincial government appoints representatives. In such cases, local representatives are directly responsible to the higher levels of government and only indirectly to the local population. Representation and inclusiveness in decision-making at the local level is therefore not guaranteed at the local level through state structures (Lutz and Linder, 2004:22).

Emphasizing the gains of inclusiveness in governance, Garrigue (2004) argued that meaningful participation of the population in local governance not only translate into their inclusion in decision-making processes but as well into their realization that participation is a pre-requisite to the improvement of local governance (especially now that state structures have failed). To him, participation is both a right and a duty and that often, a univocal process whereby the civil society is advocating to a reluctant government for its right to participate. By extension, Barber (1986) and King, *et. al* (1998) argued in support that participation will improve both the performance and accountability of a bureaucracy that is outdated, unrepresentative and underperforming. Apart from this, such participation rests on the normative claim that citizens have a right to a say in decisions that affect their future in any democratic system. It also helps citizens learn about their rights, express their views to representatives, and see these views affect policy and actions (Moynihan, op.cit).

Social equity and inclusion have been recognized globally as preconditions for sustainable global development especially as emphasized by the World Summit on Sustainable Development. This premise has also been upheld as one of the targets of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It has earlier been enshrined in the 1990 African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation recognizing the role of public participation in economic and human development.

6. Governance and Accountability

Accountability is no doubt one of the cornerstones and core elements of good governance because public participation/inclusion is a catalyst for accountability. It is so because it is a means for the participating public or communities to hold public authorities accountable for service delivery. It is then logical to deduce that accountability is an offshoot of social/citizen inclusion in governance. The two are simply reinforcing. It is therefore imperative for us to dwell on the subject "accountability" in addition to social inclusion in this work.

Accountability is an amorphous concept that is somehow difficult to define in precise terms. However, Adamolekun (2008:3) described it basically as holding public officials responsible for their actions. Olowu (1993) specifically defined public accountability as the requirement that those who hold public trust should account for the use of that trust to citizens or their representatives. He went further to say that it signifies the superiority of the public will over private interests and tries to ensure that the former is supreme in every activity and conduct of a public official.

Carrington, *et al* (2008) see accountability and governance as flip sides of the same coin. Generally speaking they believe that holding a government institution accountable means first that the institution's policies and procedures are within the law of the land and reflect the best interests of the people, and second the institution operates in line with the particular and established governance arrangement. According to Stapenhurst and O'Brien (2009), accountability ensures actions and decisions taken by public officials are subject to oversight so as to guarantee that government initiatives meet their stated objectives and respond to the needs of the community they are meant to be benefiting, thereby contributing to better governance and poverty reduction. They went further to say that accountability exists when there is a relationship where an individual or body, and the performance of tasks or functions by that individual or body, are subject to another's oversight, direction or request that they provide information or justification for their actions. The purpose of all these is to ensure that the public officials and bodies are performing to their fullest potential in terms of service delivery to the community they are meant to service. The reason being that, weak accountability is a key explanatory factor of poor development performance of public authority/institution.To Obianyo (2003), in defining public accountability, there are three dimensions. First, the notion of accounting to the public, that is when, how and why certain policies and expenditures were made; second, the notion of transparency or openness; and third, the notion of responsiveness. He went further to state that there cannot be one without the other as one dimension without the others makes the system of public accountability incomplete and incongruous.

"Answerability" and "enforcement" are the two stages in the process of accountability. According to Stapenhurst and O'Brien (op.cit), answerability refers to the obligation of the government, its agencies and public officials to provide information about their decisions and actions and to justify them to the public and those institutions of accountability tasked with providing oversight. He also described enforcement as suggesting that the public or the institution responsible for accountability can sanction the offending party or remedy the contravening behaviour. These two stages are fundamental as they are catalyst for enhancing accountability. It is a common saying in political discourse that weak accountability is a key explanatory factor for poor development performance of any public institution. The performance here may be in terms of service delivery which is the primary purpose of governance. A government that is accountable will always commit itself to developing and nurturing the capability required to ensure efficient and effective performance of the tasks of service delivery.

6.1 Sovereignty and Enforcement of Accountability

Normally, the sovereign people must be able to use their votes to elect officials in free, fair and credible elections rejecting poor performers and rewarding the good ones. In a country like this, accountability can be said to be a *sine-qua-non* for democracy, as democracy rests on the mandate principle (Obianyo, 2003:49). According to him, the mandate principle implies and demands accountability, the absence of which will induce loss of legitimacy of those mandated and necessary moves to have them removed from office. This reminds us of where elections are rigged and fraudulent, the most basic of form of citizen demand for accountability is rendered meaningless and the rulers (political executives as well as legislators) that emerged rarely consider themselves obligated to be accountable to the public. In contrast, where elections are free and fair, leaders take the mandate from the people and their demands seriously (Adamolekun, 2008:11). He cited the Nigerian experience since 1999 as an illustration of rigged and fraudulent elections accompanied by weak accountability and those of Brazil and United Kingdom during the same decade as illustrations of free and fair elections accompanied by strong accountability.

6.2 Public Opinion and Enforcement of Accountability

There is no gainsaying that fact that public opinion is an important factor that can contribute meaningfully to the enforcement of accountability. Such an enforcement is essentially through the activities of the mass media and those of civil society organizations (CSOs) established for such. They do seek to put pressure on the formal institutions of accountability to ensure a higher degree of accountability in countries where the formal institutions are effective while they seek to assure a modicum of accountability in countries where the formal institutions are weak (Adamolekun, ibid). The reality today in Nigeria is that public opinion is not effective in enforcing accountability.

Adamolekun (ibid) went further to highlight two examples of CSOs' efforts aimed at ensuring government accountability that could be adapted for adoption in Nigeria. The first is the Citizen Report Card (CRC) as introduced in Bangalore, South India in the Mid-1990s (citing Paul, 2002 and 2004). According to him, CRC is a tool through which public organizations are provided with feedback on the quality of their services believing that public service providers in most cases take steps to improve their performances when they are confronted with low ratings. The second example is Participatory Budgeting (PB) as pioneered in Porto Alegre in 1989/90 and later adopted by many other Brazilian municipalities. He simply described PB as direct involvement of citizens/communities in making decisions on the spending and priorities in the budget of a local, state or national government, all to ensure that budget allocations respond to citizens' needs. PB will be dwelt upon below as it is the main thrust of this work.

From the foregoing, both social inclusion and accountability emphasize participation, involvement and inclusiveness. This will take us to the next section advocating for participatory local governance as such an arrangement will herald any country into a democratic twenty-first century. More importantly, the internal control mechanisms of government can be said to have failed and the need has arisen to start thinking of how to integrate external control mechanisms that will be outside the entire governmental structure in governance and at the same time making them work. Whatever element of good governance is adopted, the political will of the government in upholding the integrity and effectiveness of the public or governance institutions with respect to service delivery is vital. More importantly the ultimate goal of the citizens is not only to hold public officials accountable for their actions but also to ensure that public institutions fulfil their civic functions and responsibilities. This will take us to Rick Stapenhurst and O'Brien's "Social Accountability". They described it as an approach or set of mechanisms towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, namely a situation whereby ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability and this is sometimes referred to as society driven horizontal accountability. It was added that mechanisms of social accountability can be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both, but very often they are demand-driven and operate from the bottom-up.

7. Advocacy for Participatory Local Governance

There have been several attempts to reform local government system in Nigeria since independence in order to make it effective. Despite these, it has remained ineffective and inefficient in terms of service delivery. It has also not among others been able to facilitate the exercise of democratic self-governance close to the local people, adhere to the principles of accountability, sustain mass-participation (except during elections) as expected, and provide a two-way channel of communication between local communities and government as provided for in the 1976 reform. Others include intrusion by the upper tiers of government and its inability to generate adequate revenue of its own. The advocacy for popular and participatory grassroots organizations and traditional institutions in local governance has been on for a while. This is hinged on the belief that "political awareness and civic responsibility" go hand-in-hand with efficiency and probity which are ingredients for socio-economic development in local communities.

The literature on governance and social development is inclined to the fact that intermediary organizations, such as Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community-based Organizations (CBOs) have a key role to play in encouraging socio-economic development, instituting transparency, and spurring the growth of meaningful democracy from the bottom up especially where there have been serious abuses of office at the local level. Such organizations may include Charities, Church Organizations, Youth Organizations, Women's Organizations, Professional Associations, Advocacy Groups, Student Associations, and Community Development Associations (CDAs) to mention a few. This position must have been maintained with the belief that these organizations will be able to provide citizens and governments with information, act as a conduit for voice, hold government actors to account, and organize collective action (Folscher, 2007).Further to this, Folscher, quoting McGee (2003), asserted that citizen participation can enhance development outcomes in a number of ways. First, that they have best knowledge of their needs, their preferences, and local conditions and thereby delivering the goods and services most needed with the available fund and in essence improving government effectiveness. Second, that vertical and social accountability are improved as citizens are involved in planning, funding, delivering, and monitoring of public goods and services and thereby changing the incentives and pressures on public officials and office holders. The third is that the quality of democracy is improved as such a participation in public decision making is a form of direct democracy that allows for a more meaningful democratic relationship between citizens and government than that provided by representative democracy.

8. Improving the Budget Process

It is no gainsaying the fact that budgeting has gone beyond being an annual ritual. It is today known to be very strategic in nature and all encompassing as it is through it that government's scarce resources are allocated to programmes and services for governmental operations. This makes budget process a powerful tool for participatory governance. According to GFOA (2000), a process that effectively involves all stakeholders – elected officials, governmental administrators, employees and their representatives, citizen groups, and business leaders – and reflects their needs and priorities will serve as a positive force in maintaining good public relations and enhancing citizens' and other stakeholders' overall impression of government. This will also, in a way, provide better financial and programme decisions and lead to improved governmental operations in terms of service delivery.

However, the quality of decision resulting from the budget process and the level of its acceptance depend on the characteristics of the budget process that is in use. This brings the idea of good and bad budget process. One of such characteristics of a good budget process is that it must be inclusive and open (i.e. promoting popular participation of stakeholder groups within and outside the governmental structure) which are germane to participatory governance. By extension, the social inclusion and probity and accountability upon which this work is based as core elements of good governance will be guaranteed. This takes us to Participatory Budgeting (PB) option in the next section with lessons from Brazil. Answers will be provided to a number of questions. These include:

> Will the introduction improve the ability of citizens to participate in government decision making in Nigeria?
> Will it improve the effectiveness of local government in terms of investment in public services, the quality of public services, equitable investment, etc?
> Will it serve as an effective entry point to catalyze change and build good governance systems in Nigeria?

9. Participatory Budgeting (PB) Option

9.1 The Concept of PB

There has been no agreement as to what PB means. Basically, it is an umbrella term describing a variety of mechanisms through which power or influence over public service investment priorities and economic spending can be delegated to common man on the street. Shah (2007:1) described PB as representing a direct-democracy approach to budgeting that offers citizens at large an opportunity to learn about government operations and to deliberate, debate, and influence the allocation of public resources. To Goldfrank (2007), PB is a process by which citizens, either as individuals or through civic associations, can voluntarily and regularly contribute to decision making over at least part of a public budget through an annual series of scheduled meetings with governmental authorities. In the same vein, Wampler (2007) defined PB as a decision-making process through which citizens deliberate and negotiate over the distribution of public resources. In a clearer language Wampler added that PB programs are implemented at the behest of governments, citizens, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs) to allow citizens to play a direct role in deciding how and where resources should be spent. The proponents of PB see it as a way of infusing the values of citizen involvement into the most basic and formal procedure of governance, especially the distribution of resources through budgeting, all in the name of fostering probity, accountability, transparency and effective distribution of resources (Moynihan, 2007).

Wampler (*op.cit*.) emphasized that the PB opens up obscure budgetary procedures to ordinary citizens and helps create a broader public forum in which citizens and governments discuss spending, taxation, and implementation and it is simultaneously a policy process that focuses on the distribution of resources and a democratic institution that enhances accountability, transfers decision-making authority to citizens, and empowers citizens.

> The summary of the goals of PB, according to Wampler (2000 and 2007) is that:
>> The PB programs confront social and political legacies of clientelism, social inclusion, and corruption by making the budgetary process transparent and public. Social and political exclusion are challenged, as low-income and traditionally excluded political actors are given the opportunity to make policy decisions. By moving the locus of decision making from the private offices of politicians and technocrats to public forums, public meetings help foster transparency.

The PB programs also serve as "citizenship schools", as engagement empowers citizens to better understand their rights and duties as citizens as well s the responsibilities of government. Citizens learn to negotiate among themselves and with the government over the distribution of scarce resources and public policy priorities.

9.2 Origin and Spread of PB

PB was first developed and used in the southern-most state of Brazil. Specifically, it was used in the municipality of Porto Alegre, the capital city of Rio Grande do Sul, dated back 1989. It was developed then in the citizens' efforts to extend and deepen actual existing democracy because since the re-establishment of democracy in 1985 the country's politics had remained dominated by traditional patronage practices, social exclusion, and corruption (Wampler, 2000:3). He explained further that PB was introduced by the Workers' Party or PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores) administration that won the election for the Mayor in 1988 as the party, while campaigning, promised the citizens democratic participation and the "inversion of spending priorities". In order to secure legitimacy by fulfilling the promises, the party, on assumption of office, needed a complete reversal of a decade-long trend in which public resources were spent in middle and upper class neighbourhoods to help poorer citizens and neighbourhoods received greater levels of public spending. PB developed after experimenting with different methods and mechanisms directed at tackling the financial constraints, to provide citizens with a direct role in the activities of government, and to invert the social spending priorities of previous administration (ibid). This experimentation was said to be necessary then because, the party, on assumption of office of the Mayor of Porto Alegre in 1989 inherited a municipality that was already bankrupt and even the bureaucratic structures that were in a state of disarray.

By 1992, the number of participants was nearly 8000. The programme took on a life of its own after the Workers' Party was re-elected in 1992 with the number increasing to more than 20,000 people a year having realized that PB was an important decision-making venue (Wampler, 2007). Such an increase was traced, by Nylen (2003), to the fact that most active leaders were affiliated with or at least sympathetic to the Workers' Party and secondly the PB provides opportunities for the participants. Today, the process has empowered several thousands of Brazilian citizens as they are involved in real decisions and moreover empowered to demand probity and accountability, and be opportuned to monitor the results. The PB concepts and mechanisms are being adopted through out Brazil in Latin America and have spread to cities in Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia, Uruguay, Peru, Ecuador and Chile. It is being experimented in many municipalities and states in some other parts of the world where its processes and procedures are being adapted to suit their own governmental system (CUDS, Harvard).

9.3 Elements of Empowerment

These are explained in terms of the types of participation or initiatives of the citizens in public resource decisions and service delivery. These are classified broadly into two based on the degree to which citizens enter the action space of the state in planning for, allocating, using, and monitoring the use of public resources (Folscher, 2007). According to her, the first covers the activities undertaken by citizens in the broader public domain that are mainly targeted at improving the transparency of government's actions and the accountability of state actors. Explaining this further, she emphasized the fact that public decision making is the purview of government agencies and elected office holders, but the fact still remains that the bureaucratic effectiveness of these institutions should not be taken for granted, hence the need to undertake activities to bolster transparency and accountability. To close her discussion, she further emphasized that these activities are usually (and better) initiated by civil societies as they do bring information on citizens' opinions and preferences to the attention of (subnational) government or to initiate dialogue and influence public decision making through budget analysis. According to her, this level of participation relies on the quality of the information needed to persuade decision makers to change development and funding priorities and to improve the quality of services.

The second set/class covers citizens' engagement in the decision-making processes of public agencies. This reflects in the budget process as such an engagement can be interpreted to mean democratization of policy-making process by allowing citizens set their priorities for public policies. This is actively in practice in Bangladesh and Thailand. According to Folscher (2007a), in these two countries, initiatives have achieved significant success. Local development projects are said to be better aligned with citizen preferences; accountability being enhanced through oversight of implementation; infrastructural development is more sustainable with citizens taking interest in maintaining village assets; trust in government has been enhanced; revenue allocation is up; and villagers have a direct say in local development expenditure, she explained.

Citing McGee (2003), Folscher also distinguishes four types of participation and these are: information sharing; consultation; joint decision making; and initiation and control by stakeholders with a rider that the first three often occur together as observed in some case studies carried out. According to her, budget hearings take place in localities where municipalities provide better information on their resource use, and that such hearings are frequently accompanied by other mechanisms that draw citizens into decision making such as capital investment planning committees.

9.4 The Key Actors in PB: Issues and Lessons

Lessons from these countries where PB is being practiced show that there are both political and social actors and according to Wampler (2000 and 2007), these actors have different motivations for promoting and participating in it but with such motivations ranging from an ideological commitment to extending social justice to the promotion of "good government" to wanting to have one's own street paved and create a deliberative public sphere. Some of the actors are Local government, individual citizens, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Business Community. Local government, as an institution, according to Wampler, is motivated to implement PB programmes in order to build a base of political support, increase the distribution of resources to low-income neighbourhoods targeting social justice, provide opportunities to change the people's political and social consciousness, and lastly to promote transparency with the aim of reducing corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies. For individual citizens, they are motivated to be actors for three main reasons, according to Wampler also. The first is that it increases their access to public decision-making activities and in effect reducing the use of overt and clientelistic means to distribute goods and services. The second factor is that they gain access to information to develop a better understanding of their political and administrative environment and in effect budgets and policy making will cease to be a "black box" in which inputs and outputs are unknown to all but a handful of government officials (ibid).

The CSOs, comprising of the social movements or neighbourhood groups, Wampler explained, do participate in PB, first to strengthen their importance and second to provide them with the opportunity to establish and maintain contact with potential allies and increasing opportunities to build broader social and political coalitions. The CSOs also participate to influence policies and this affords them the opportunity to work with government technocrats and other specialists to design development plans and influence funding and planning and even shape neighbourhood's infrastructures (ibid). NGOs, as one of the key actors, according to him, also work with citizens and government to tackle pressing social problems and in some instances playing a direct role in promoting citizen empowerment and transparency in government. They play advisory roles also as they usually have stronger technical and administrative skills than the average participants due to their professionalisation and in some instances also acting as a watchdog as well as an advocate of the PB programme to guarantee that the government is working on behalf of the citizens (ibid).

Business community is the last key actor identified and considered by Wampler with the explanation that the Business Community may support PB programmes because transparency is promoted, corruption reduced and efficiency increased as more attention is given to the budget and which translates to better financial health as an indirect consequence of PB programmes. Within the business community, some contractors and builders benefit directly first as contracts are bided for in an open and fair system, and second they no longer pay kickbacks and bribes before ensuring that their projects are funded and implemented (ibid). This takes us to the policy implications to discuss the social importance or gains of PB with lessons from the countries where PB mechanisms are instituted.

10. Policy Implications

The policy implication of PB shall be discussed by putting side-by-side the inclusionary character of PB already discussed and its social importance or gains. Lessons from the countries where PB is being practiced show that the gains vary a lot and for the purpose of this work, attempt shall be made to itemize and adapt some of such gains as classified by Moynihan (2007). These are: PB fosters good governance; promotes transparency; increases social justice by involving the poor and excluded; and helps individuals become better citizens.

Fostering good governance
i.　　One of the elements of good governance is probity and accountability which can be achieved partly by making the budgetary process inclusive. Pointing to problem of corruption, opaque resource allocation, the failed service delivery system, and a power structure that gives little or no opportunity to a common man to air his views, to mention a few, as being germane to governance especially in developing countries.

The PB process assures accountability in service provision through social audits and monitoring because all its initiatives operate on the execution and audit sides of the budgetary process. This is more so that series of meetings give the less privileged the ample opportunity to hold the administration answerable for false promises or slow progress in executing projects.

ii. Participation can be interpreted to be a movement towards fiscal decentralization, as asserted by Robinson (2004) and cited by Moynihan, which technically reduces central control in favour of the local preferences that foster allocative efficiency. The promise of fiscal decentralization is no doubt a promise of participation and the success of one depends on the other (Moynihan, *op. cit).*

iii. Inclusionary character of PB is also a good aid to government's credibility and acceptability and even re-establishes the legitimacy of government budget decisions. All these are missing today in Nigeria and if only to form consensus within a society and thus to foster stability and social cohesion, a legitimate government is essential (Spahn, 1998:2). As a rider, this can only be possible however by making government representative and by limiting the bureaucratic and political power (possibly through meaningful space for participation in governance processes as emphasized by PB).

iv. Moynihan asserted that it could also strengthen the ability of some stakeholders like the media, interest groups and even the legislative branch of government to check the centralization of power in the executive branch. As a rider, he added that where legislators have little experience, little understanding of the (traditional) budget process or inadequate information upon which to make judgements, NGOs that provide budget analysis (in PB) can strengthen the ability of one branch of government to require accountability of the other to foster good governance.

v. PB process builds trust in government especially where the process delivers real benefits to the common man on the street. According to Folscher (2007), if participation represents mere process without substance, it can entrench poor governance practice and deteriorate the citizen-state relationship.

Promotion of Transparency

Participation of citizens will always serve as additional sources of information which the traditional political/governmental institutions may not be in position to gather/provide in the course of budgeting. This will make governance more transparent with particular reference to citizens' preferences, execution, funds position and constraints. Participation may be necessary in a country like ours where a close budget drafting process is being run and where the legislators are always largely unable to effectively scrutinize budget object heads before passing same due to lack of time and by extension not able to monitor the implementation even in the course of the year.

Increasing Social Justice

(i) The PB empowerment is designed such that the less privileged have a right and the opportunity to a say with respect to their social and political demands and spending priorities in a formal environment and public fora. In other words, every individual, regardless of wealth, gender, age, race or religion, is able to participate actively and productively in the opportunities that the governmental structure has to offer. The opportunity is opened such that where those who are traditionally marginalized break out of the cycle of exclusion (Matovu, 2006).

(ii) Arising from above, the distribution of resources will be affected in favour of the underserviced and poorer areas.

(iii) Social justice may be achieved by means of more efficient and effective service delivery system first because of the inherent community-oriented policies and programmes and second less corruption as fostered by transparent processes. This will be so as more efficient use of public resources most directly affects the poor and low-income citizens.

(iv) The citizens have increased opportunities to engage their representatives directly in the public arena rather than ballot box only which will no doubt make democracy substantive. This is according to Folscher (2007a). The argument here is based on the fact that in addition to voting and respect for election results, protection of individual liberties and freedoms, respect for rule of law and freedom of speech constitute what democracy is. This may explain why scholars refer to democracy as a demanding system.

Helping individuals to become better citizens

(i)Wampler (2000) describes individual participation in the course of budgeting as "citizenship schools" as such programmes open opportunity for them, the NGOs, and government representatives to meet to discuss matters relating to the budget, government authority and responsibility, taxation and citizenship right, among others.

The involvement of individuals and the deeper understanding of the government, especially those that have had little or no knowledge of what the civic life entails, make them better citizens. Such participation also assists in building the skills and awareness of participants/individuals through participation.

(ii) PB can also be a catalyst for civic mobilization, especially in the underserviced and poor areas, and in effect making the individuals better citizens. This may be in terms of regular tax payment and safeguarding public properties in their areas.

11. Concluding Remarks

There is no gainsaying the fact that PB has its social importance as discussed above. However, the fact also remains that it is bound to face some challenges that may reduce its overall impact in those areas. Generally speaking, lessons from the countries practicing PB, as revealed by past studies, show that such challenges include the lack of capacity on the part of the political representatives, career officers and even the citizens; a limited understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all actors; the limited scope of participation; legislative constraints; inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems; a lack of transparency and trust in the use of public funds; a breakdown in communication; lack of financial and physical resources (which restraints the scope of budget programmes); and political and social differences that always affect participation, among others.

Enabling Conditions necessary for PB

Arising from the challenges it has to contend with, the question that follows is "What are the necessary conditions that must be met to run a successful PB?" This sub-section of the concluding remark is devoted to some of such conditions especially with respect to Nigerian situation.

1. Willingness of State Officials: This is the first of all and it otherwise refers to political will which is a necessary condition for any policy. The public/state actors must be willing to open channels to sharing decision-making power with the citizens. Such a commitment on the part of these state actors will aid the civil society initiatives in meaningfully influencing policy making and budgeting. In this sense, a willing government is a progressive government.

2. Nature and Organization of Political System: Goetz and Gaventa (2001) are emphatic on the importance of the nature and organization of the political system in determining the level and quality of participation. Folscher (2007a) however asserted that what drives politics in a country is an important enabling/disabling factor in determining the scope of civil society-driven policy and budget initiatives. She further maintained that if the political system is based on politics of identity, personality and patronage, the risk of government-based participation systems becoming instruments within that system is great, and on the other hand if politics are more closely related to policy issues, there is a greater likelihood the state will be interested in genuine participation. In essence, the political system must be designed such that it is made more vibrant by emphasizing contest for political power/positions rather than the system known for "God fatherism". Political differences will no doubt diminish the cohesiveness of the citizens and communities paramount to their level of participation in planning and budgeting.

3. Political and Functional Decentralization: There are two issues here. The first has to do with the need for political office holders to be democratically elected, underscoring a free and fair election. The second issue relates to clarity of the (local) government's functions and responsibilities as well as policy and fiscal autonomy. This is a major problem in Nigeria because it is difficult for any government for that matter to be held accountable for service delivery it does not have fiscal capacity to provide. There is need for a necessary and regulatory framework and institutional arrangement that will aid the cash-flow-generating capacity of the lower level governments, among others. The present arrangement in Nigeria does not guarantee fiscal autonomy as the lower level governments are dependent almost solely on nationally generated revenues.

4.Sufficient Resources: Closely related to the above point is the need for the (local) government to be able to control its own independent revenue and that will be as sufficient as possible to enable it invest in social and public programmes as desired. This will only be possible in a system where fiscal autonomy is granted as already discussed above.

5. Desirability of enabling Legal Framework: Another major condition is that government should take steps to put in place enabling legal framework to institutionalize and promote civic participation in budget decisions. This will no doubt facilitate civil societies' effective access to public institutions especially when enshrined in the constitution as one of the national values for local development.

It is the legal frameworks that will regulate the terms of actors' engagement and the scope they have for influencing behaviour in the arena of the other (McGee, 2003). The set of rules will provide all interested parties – citizens, government officials, bureaucrats, business people, etc, with the knowledge that policy decisions made in PB's public forums will be translated into actual policy outputs (Wampler, 2007). The legal framework must also make provisions for fiscal and budget transparency especially with respect to availability of specific information that guarantees citizens' rights to access correct information regularly, timely and in the format and/or language that all and sundry can understand.

6. All-encompassing Capacity Building: This point underscores the importance of building local capacity of local government and its structures and processes, local civil societies and such other client groups for successful participatory governance. There is need to improve on the capacity of the local government in terms of the people (human resource), institution and practices as the current structure/arrangement does not encourage civic participation in decision making. The human (or people) component of capacity has to do with the stock of trained, skilled and productive people capable of performing key tasks necessary for achieving developmental objectives. The institutional capacity centres on the structures and processes that will make possible the attainment of developmental objectives. An integral part of these facilitative processes has to do with the adoption of "best practices" in public sector management. "Best practices" in this context relates to possessing the correct attitude and mindset to implement the good governance agenda and achieve the objectives of government (Yahaya, 2000) (cited by Oshionebo, 2004:301). Oshionebo also recognized the fact that the absence of such "best practices" compromises the niceties of good governance, a critical requirement for the development of any society.

Next to this is that of the civil societies and members by developing their awareness, and engaging them in discussions and information gathering. The capacity of all the stakeholders/actors is necessary because if all other enabling factors are present and the capacity to be able to absorb and understand the technical nature of policy making and budgeting is lacking, the programmes may fail. Such capacity building must be targeted at strengthening the key actors' capacity to identify their needs and determine their own values and priorities.

7. The Link between Planning and Budgeting: The link between the two is an important factor that conditions the outcome of PB programmes. According to Folscher (2007a), citizen involvement in the budget process often relates to identification of priorities rather than allocation of resources to those priorities, (and where this situation subsists), budgeting is still the domain of government officials. Further to this, she asserted that where strong mechanisms link planning and budgeting, this is of little consequence but where planning and budgeting are separated however, the impact of citizen participation is much less evident. According to Brilliantes (2005), where planning and budgeting are separated, the impact of participation mechanisms on entrenched systems of patronage and on corruption and abuse of power is limited, because it is through the budget process that these factors come into play. In essence, a necessary condition in this area is the need to narrow the gap between planning and budgeting to make the purposes of the participatory exercise achievable.

8. Administrative Reforms: The reforms of the local administrative (bureaucracy) apparatus is a vital element of PB because it has strong influence on the success or otherwise of the participatory governance process. According to Wampler (2000 and 2007), such a reform should be targeted at decentralization of the (local) administration in a way that decision making power will no longer be monopolized by a small group of politicians and technocrats. Technical information that are traditionally available to the bureaucrats but vital to the implementation of any public programmes and projects become part of public debate for citizens to make informed decisions. Secondly, the reforms must emphasize integrating different bureaucratic units into the policy-making and implementation processes. By this, the administrative agencies (the departments) must work closely with the planning agency and community leaders and other participants in designing policy agenda and projects. The last, according to him, is the creation of a more transparent relationship between the business community (contractors/builders/ suppliers) and the government if only to foster governmental credibility.

9. Accommodating all Stakeholders: The system must also do everything possible to accommodate all stakeholders as this is essential in facilitating and even sustaining the participatory process. A broad-based inclusiveness translates into a meaningful participation and by extension improving the quality of discussion and decision making in civic forums – referendums, society meetings, consultations – and information provision. However, the size of the participants must not be too large so as to be able to take concrete and timely decisions.

10. Obeying the basic Principles of good budgeting: Participatory initiatives must obey the basic principles of good budgeting. A good budget must, for example, recognize and respect economic rights, promote openness (i.e. popular participation), focus on welfare indicators, be realizable, emphasize value-for-money, provide easily accessible information to citizens and be result-oriented (outcome driven), among others. All these and some others are common in literature serving as guide.

11. Giving Citizens enough time to prepare: Apart from the fact that the budgetary process must begin early enough to enable its completion before the beginning of the ensuing year, the citizens and civil societies must be notified of meetings well in advance. This will give them the opportunity to discuss their needs and priorities, and even provide meaningful input into the budget in the way that is most appropriate.

12. Access to Information: This has been partly discussed under enabling legal framework. Basically, the citizens must have access to information to be able to participate actively in the process. Such information must however be specific, regular, timely, available and in format or language understandable to all so as to be able to make informed decisions and possibly monitor and evaluate the success.

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