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A REVIEW OF SOCIAL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
IN NIGERIA WITH EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION

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October 1996

UNU World Institute for
Development Economics Research
(UNU/WIDER)

Research in Progress 7

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A research and training centre of the United Nations University

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a brief history of social services provision in Nigeria with special reference to education. It argues that the problems of implementation of social policies are due to state monopolies; the negative effects of structural adjustment conditionalities; central government bureaucracy; the neo-patrimonial nature of the state; and, the neglect of the possible contributions from the civil society.

The paper concludes with a call for the encouragement of a viable civil society that will not only help to mitigate the present problem of a top-down approach to policy implementation, but will also help in generating additional resources for social services.

1. INTRODUCTION

The state is the great fictitious entity by which everyone seeks to live at the expense of everyone else (F. Bastiat).

Even the author of these cynical words, a French 19th century anti-socialist and free-trader would have been astounded by how far developing countries, especially in Africa have proved his words to be true. In most developing countries there has always been the pressure due to historical reasons to use the public sector to provide public services on an efficient basis, free of charge or at the least, at low cost. Following from this, arranging for and financing of public goods became an important duty and responsibility of the state.

> Both for historical and social ideological reasons, the feeling is now strongly rooted in the underdeveloped countries that it is the primary responsibility of any government to provide education, health and social welfare services for its citizens, and not to charge directly the consumers of those services. Indeed, most people now see that responsibility as an elementary human right and as a social contract that binds a government with its citizens. The costs of developing and running social services are regarded almost axiomatically as a charge on the country's exchequer. For many, such a financing arrangement is the very legitimacy to rule (Aboyade 1983: 355-6).

An important example in this regard is educational provision. Recognising the key role of education in the development process and the knowledge that only an educated people can command the skills necessary for sustainable economic growth, African governments have placed heavy emphasis on expanding educational opportunities from primary school through university in the two decades since their independence. Since 1960, the number of students enrolled in African institutions at all levels has more than quintupled. Indeed, the single most significant indicator of development achievement of Africa is the spread of educational access (World Bank 1988).

Even so, there is looming crisis in the educational sector throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. In many of the African countries economic growth has been too slow to keep pace with the rapid growth of population and the explosive demand for social services. This has been exacerbated by the mounting burden of external debt and high debt service ratios. The debt distressed economies are consequently forced to radically compromise their national expenditure by introducing drastic cuts and sweeping policy reforms. Inevitably, this squeeze has also had its toll on education and the human resources development and other social sectors (Abraham 1995).

Further, the ability of governments in these countries to live up to expectation as regards the provision of these goods has been severely hampered by the combination of the macro-economic crisis of the 1980s (which has contributed immensely to the collapse of the welfare state that was instituted at the early years of independence), and rapid

population growth that has resulted in more children than ever seeking places in schools already pressed for resources because of financial crises. The result is a drastic reduction in available places in educational institutions, overcrowded classrooms, and scarcity of teaching materials. This has led to a drop in the quality of education and persistent mass illiteracy.

The challenge, therefore facing Africa today is two-pronged. It is one of resources and ideology. However, the two are inseparable. Due to the critical shortage of resources coupled with the domestic pressure imposed by the growing number of school-age children and the accelerating pace of social consciousness which makes the demand for improved social services imperative, these governments are also experiencing increasing external pressure. There is a call for improvement of the methods of delivery of the educational system. This is related to the demand to make education cost effective and efficient. (Abraham 1995). Considering the scale of the current crisis, it is doubtful whether this is enough to do the job.

Given the above-mentioned political demands and economic conditions, the question is, how should public goods, like education, both as part of the process of human capital formation and as a social end in its own right be provided efficiently and equitably. The question is not so much the aims and objectives of educational policy but the best process of achieving this aim. This then requires that these countries need:

i)   to strike a balance between demands for education and the scarcity of resources;

ii)   A diversification of the sources of financing education. This diversification can be achieved through increased cost sharing and increased official reinvolvement of civil society that were active in the provision of educational services before independence. Communities have to be gradually involved in sharing the growing education expenditure through contribution, in cash or kind, to self-help schemes of building classrooms; and,

iii)   an improvement in management practices.

This brings us to the problem of implementation. This aspect is especially of importance in Africa under the current atmosphere of economic waste, mismanagement, structural adjustment and corruption.

The intent of this paper is to go beyond the privatization and marketization issues, and one hand to focus on the enormous problems of designing a meaningful policy within the organizational and statistical contexts of the African economies and on the other, to focus on important implementation and regulation problems associated with particular reference to the provision of education in Nigeria. Although an educational plan policy package can have substantially beneficial effects on efficiency and equity, but a plan per se does not make sense. It becomes meaningful when its implementation is successfully done. And in some countries the implementation of educational plan and policy is not easy for three main reasons. First, the suggested policy may go against a long-established tradition of free education. Second, some of the policies may conflict with a country's political regime. Third, the institutional limitations in a country may mean that

administering some of the proposed policies, such as launching a student loan scheme, would be difficult (The World Bank, July 1986).

The paper looks at the problems of plan or policy implementation from the perspective of public policy failure, the effects of structural adjustment conditionalities on the provision of public goods, the centralization/decentralization dichotomy debate, incoherent set of policies, neo-patrimonial structure of the Nigerian society, and the implications of the weakening of civil society in the provision of educational services.

The attempt is to study educational provision and development in Nigeria in chronological order with the aim of showing the contribution, if any, either through partnership or separately by the various elements within the society, e.g., the private sector, civil society or the state.

The first section of the paper, after the introduction, presents an analysis of the justification of the public sector/market role in the provision of social services; the next section provides a history of educational provision in Nigeria; the third section presents an analysis of the issues of implementation and their implications for the provision of educational services; and finally, summary and policy implications.

2. GOVERNMENT AND MARKET IN EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

Education being both a private and social investment its cost is shared by individual students, their families, government and other groups, including elements within civil society and international agencies. Both in the proportion of public and private funds allocated and in the mechanisms by which the costs of education are financed, the sharing arrangements vary considerably from country to country. During the 1960s and 1970s, most of the expansion of education was financed by increased public expenditure on education, which rose in relation to national income and public expenditure as a whole (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall 1985). The World Bank (1980) has estimated that the proportion of GNP devoted to education in developing countries rose on average from 2.3 per cent in 1960 to 4.5 per cent in 1984, and the proportion of the national government budget rose from 11.7 per cent in 1960 to 16.1 per cent in 1984.

Since Independence the education system in Nigeria has expanded beyond recognition and come to depend overwhelmingly upon state provision and finance. From the 1970s upwards, there is visible evidence that massive expansion has taken place in the education sector. The expansion has affected all educational levels. Primary school enrolment since 1971 has grown by an annual average rate of about ten per cent, to about 10.1 million pupils recorded for the 1977-78 school year and to over 14.7 million in 1982. Available data also show that enrolment in secondary schools also doubled from a base of about 489,000 students in 1973-4 to about 800,000 students in 1977-78. During the same period the number of students in the universities rose from a level of 23,228 in 1973-74 to 39,888 in 1976-77 and an estimated figure of 47,000 for the 1977-78 year implying an annual growth rate of about 10 per cent.

As one would expect, the costs of this system have been substantial: For example, in the 1970-71 fiscal year, the total actual federal government budgetary recurrent and capital expenditure was N350 million out of which N16 million or 3 per cent was spent by the ministry of education. In 1975-76 total actual expenditure rose to N5,412 billion out of which the education sector spent N1,037 billion or 19 per cent (see Guidelines for The Fourth National Development Plan, 1981-85).

Not surprisingly, in a period of general economic recession, costs of this magnitude have drawn attention to the methods of provision, finance and implementation of education.

Given these increasing demands of education on public finance at a time when government funds are stagnant, the question is, how far can the present system of provision be expected to realise the particular aims set for the system. Is the present system of state dominance satisfactory?

Now there are two dominant methods of performing the tasks of allocation and provision of social services in the world today. In fact, in his introductory essay for the symposium on *Government Action, Social Capital and Development: Creating Synergy across the Public-Private Divide*, Peter Evans, (Evans 1995b) identified a strong divide between 'a market-based logic of development and traditional theories of public administration'. There are those in which primary emphasis is placed upon the administrative planning of provision and production by the state. Within these societies, decisions about what and how these services are provided and to whom they should be allocated, are made via a government bureaucracy. Though it is obvious that the particular systems of individual countries vary quite considerably, especially in the amount of decentralization of power they display, but they all share a common reliance upon government decision-making as a means of providing these services. In contrast, there are those who employ a system of economic organization in which majority of allocation decisions are made through the ostensibly uncoordinated actions of large numbers of individuals and private firms. Again, the systems of particular countries display considerable variation. But the central feature common to these countries is the dependence upon the price or *market* system as a dominant form of allocation and provision (Le Grand and Robinson 1985).

The excessive role of governments has also been strongly questioned by the emerging practitioners of new political economy, who see governments as mainly concerned with staying in power and rewarding the interest groups upon which they depend. The NPE calls for a restriction on the role of the state because of the inefficiencies associated with public provision; because of government unwillingness or inability to put things right; resources for expansion are not available from the public sector; and because existing resources are misallocated. They share with other 'neoliberal economists the view that resource allocation is best determined by the market, particularly under the sharply constrained financial circumstances which have recently faced most governments in the poorer countries (Colclough, World Development 1996).In this context, the quantity of education provided, its form and the people who receive it is best determined by a free

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market. Two main reasons are usually cited in support of this. First, emphasis is laid on the consumer's freedom of choice. Through this freedom, consumers are able to express their preferences in their decisions about the type and quantity of education they purchase and through this the socially efficient quantity of each type of education will be indicated. The second inference is that under the market system since educational institutions will be in competition for students and will need to respond to those types of education that are in demand this will ensure that the required education is, in fact, made available. In this way an efficient system responsive to consumer needs will be established (Le Grant and Robinson 1985). In a nutshell, according to this view, society runs itself. As long as a system of property rights protects and gives meaning to people's right to be left in peace, the elements of human flourishing will be produced through individual initiative (Schmidtz 1991).

The above criticisms are powerful, and provide the basis for the involvement of market for the provision of social services. However, as few societies have left the provision of education exclusively to the market, there are strong reasons for some form of government intervention. For one thing, the above insight presupposes the efficacy of markets, but markets can and do fail. On the other hand, the assumption that the fabric of social harmony could be woven by markets from self-interested action ignores the possibility that this may be too delicate when it comes to producing public goods. Therein lies a role for government. According to Mancur Olson (1965), 'A state is first of all an organization that provides public goods for its members, the citizens'. A public good is a good that can be produced only by collective action, but its production benefits people regardless of whether they join in the collective effort (Schmdtz 1991).

Therefore, leaving the provision of education to the market may result in a misallocation of the service to society for a number of reasons, among which are:

i) *Merit Good*: Education like some other social services is regarded as a merit good.

> On the basis of the principle of citizen sovereignty and inviolability and that social choice is a procedure for the summation or aggregation of individual preferences, it becomes vital to ascertain the extent to which market choice or public policy is in agreement with the preferences of a majority of citizens. A quite different argument is to demand that social choice be normative, that is, that it satisfies ethical requirements whatever the preferences of the citizens may be. According to this, public policy must be employed to assure the allocation of merit goods, goods that are meritorious according to some standard set by public policy (Musgrave 1959).

> Merit goods are goods that are normally both rival and in the main excludable but are frequently provided as if they were public goods even though they could be provided through the market or price mechanism. Government may consider such goods as goods of sufficient significance to the community that the people should be encouraged to consume it. Though such goods could be supplied through the market mechanism, they are not consumed equally by all and they might be undersupplied without government intervention. The use of some of these services by one person increases the welfare of others.

Education in this assumption is regarded as a merit good because although it is provided for individuals and its benefits are for recipients yet some of the benefits derivable from it are also for the general good of society. The distinguishing feature here is not that third parties benefit from their provision, but that direct recipients benefit to a greater extent than they themselves are aware. The likely impact upon wages may be known. But the effects of education upon agricultural productivity, upon earnings in the informal sector, or upon family health and nutrition are much less likely to be anticipated by purchasers of education (Colclough 1996).

ii) *Externalities, free-riders and equity*

In principle, the market accomplishes a number of things. It coordinates the activities of a multitude of economic units, signals supply conditions, provides incentives for responding to changing demand and supply situations and channels resources required for such response. Regardless, it also allocates income in disregard of prevalent notions of equity, leaving some needs unmet; problems that do not make themselves felt to the individual economic units as costs are left untouched or, if it is to individual advantage, magnified; collective goods, such as public roads and ports or the national armed forces, cannot be supplied by the market mechanism except under very specific conditions, even if they are urgently needed; and rational, profit-oriented actors will not opt to contribute to such collective or public goods, they will opt to be 'free-riders' (Putterman and Rueschemeyer 1992). This is a problem of the rationality of an action. In a sense, the collective action that is necessary to provide public goods is collectively rational. But it is often not individually rational for people voluntarily to do their part to secure a collective rational outcome, because assuming that people typically do what is individually rational, what stops them from taking the advantage of enjoying the benefits of other people's efforts for free. After all, we all want public goods, but we also know perfectly well that many of us will not voluntarily contribute to their production.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider the paternalism involved in this argument, but suffice it to say that the above elements form the basis for the moral justification for coercive provision of public goods. As a consequence of its monopoly of legitimate coercion and the associated claim to make and implement binding collective decisions, only the state can guarantee the institutional infrastructures, like securing property rights, guaranteeing contracts, establishing the legal foundations for the incorporation of collective enterprises, etc., required for functioning competitive markets. It follows that for the sake of equity, externalities associated with public goods and the problem of the free-rider, arranging and financing public goods must be taken over by the state and some binding rule requiring payment must be enforced.

Having stated this, the over-emphasis on the state versus market variable in economic policy and development overlooks a crucial element in development: civil society. A mobilized community can be a catalyst for development. Norms of cooperation and networks of civic engagement among ordinary citizens can be promoted by public agencies and used for developmental ends (Evans 1996). A strong participation from

civil society would avoid the usual inefficiencies associated with public supply and the exclusion and fragmentation typical of the market or price mechanism.

3. HISTORY OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN NIGERIA

Historically, the objective of education in Nigeria has always been diffused and has changed from time to time. I will briefly discuss these changes, and objectives under three headings: Traditional/Indigenous Education; 'Bush Schools' under the Missionaries and Colonial administration; and, the period immediately before independence to the present.

A cursory glance at the history of education in Nigeria will show that the provision and control of education was the business of three groups: the voluntary agencies (mostly religious groups), the state and some individuals in the private sector.
However, as noted by Fafunwa (1974: 17)

> No study of the history of education in Nigeria is complete without adequate knowledge of the traditional or indigenous educational system prevalent in Africa before the arrival of Islam and Christianity. In Nigeria, Islam pre-dated Christianity by well over 300 years. But these two important religions which have influenced Nigerian education in no small measure are of recent development compared with indigenous system of education which is as old *Man* himself in Africa.

3.1 Traditional/indigenous education

Though the goal and approach to education may differ from place to place, every society has its own system for training and educating its youth. In traditional African society, functionalism was the guiding principle of education. Children and adults engaged in participatory education through ceremonies, rituals, initiations, recitations and demonstrations. In short, in Old Africa, the warrior, the hunter, the nobleman, the man or woman who combined good character with a specific skill was adjudged a well-educated and well-integrated citizen of his community (Fafunwa, in Adejumobi 1990).

The role of the family in traditional African society was paramount as it was considered as the primary and indispensable cell of the society. What is this traditional education? Above everything else, African traditional or indigenous educational system refers to the system of education that was prevalent in Africa before the advent of colonialism, Islam and Christianity (Uchendu 1993).

In the words of Fafunwa (1974), traditional education was generally for induction into society and a preparation for adulthood. Consequently, traditional African education emphasized social responsibility, job orientation, spiritual and moral values.

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Unlike the compartmentalized Western system of education, the aim, content and method of traditional African education were interwoven. Apart from the general aspect of traditional education, it was also vocationally oriented.

The context in which traditional or indigenous education took place included the family, the kin groups, age groups, craft apprenticeship, and other community assemblages. In this traditional setting the family and peer groups were very important agents in the education of youth whose end objective was to produce people who are honest, respectable, skilled, and who would conform to the social norms of the society. For instance:

i)   Agricultural education involving farming, fishing, animal care and animal rearing;

ii)   Trades and crafts including training in weaving, sculpting drumming, smithing, soap-making, carpentry, singing, wine-tapping pottery-making, dyeing, hair-plaiting, etc.;

iii)   Professional trainings in priesthood, medicine, justice (policemen, messengers, judges) hunting, military, chieftancy, kingship, etc. (Fafunwa, in Adejumobi and Ivowi 1990).

Of importance in this context was the roles different groups played in this process.The education of a child started in the immediate family and extended to the society, where both parents, elders, members of the extended family and age-group or age-grade associations were involved. In the immediate family, children were taught by both parents what to do and what not to do. As the child grew up, responsibility for his education gradually involved the input of elders within the family. Elders, in the context of the African traditional society played, as they still do to a considerable extent, very important roles within the community. Elders were regarded as symbols of wisdom and experience and they were the chief advisers and directors of family education as they were seen as the custodians of tradition. Father John Daly (1975), observes this when he stated in his article 'Caught Between Cultures', that African youths were trained by their elders to submit to the traditional norms of behaviour. The method of this education was most often through stories that emphasised wisdom, morality and good living.

The extended family unit was another arena where traditional education took place. Okere (1975) provides a definition in the words of S.N.C Obi, 'as a social institution consisting of all the persons who descend through the same line from a common ancestor and who still owe allegiance to or recognize the overall authority of one of their members as head and legal successor to the said ancestral founder, together with any persons who though not blood descendants of the founder are for some reason attached to the household of the persons so descended or have otherwise been absorbed into the lineage as a whole'. In such a structure all were related and they were bound to help each other. One can risk the assumption that this was a way for sowing the seed of community life. The subsumption of members of the extended family helped children within this structure from childhood to imbibe the traditional requirements to control oneself, to help one another, to be obliging, and ready to make sacrifices for the sake of

others. These sacrifices and self-denials imparted on the children translates in adult life to a sense of obligation towards the extended family.

In traditional African educational system, educational aims and objectives found expression in the age-group or age-grade association. The introduction and initiation into this age-group quickly assumes a role in helping in the education of its members. It was not uncommon for age-groups to have statutory laws for its members, have meetings regularly at which they reviewed the progress of their members, instructions to its members not to incur any bad name in the community as that would reflect on the whole group. 'In Igboland the peers really act as a wedge or check and prop to their respective members one to another. No sooner do they notice a departing member than they call him to order either by cautioning, thrashing up or by fine' (Uchendu 1993).

I will point out here that any attempt to evaluate educational system should be predicated on the extent to which it is meeting the needs of a particular society at any given time. As Fafunwa (1974) puts it, 'traditional African education must therefore be judged not by any extraneous considerations or some foreign yard-stick but by its performance within a given social context'. Indeed, indigenous education was offered by all ethnic and linguistic groups and served as an important transmitter of cultural identity from one generation to another. The aim of traditional education was to instill in children the attitudes and skills appropriate for male and female social roles emphasizing the duties and privileges derived from cultural values. It was imparted through language and example at home as well as in formal lessons and rituals outside the home. This indigenous education responded to the concrete problems of local communities. It prepared political leaders and ordinary farmers, and it engendered a sense of citizenship in the people in the community (The World Bank 1988).

In short, irrespective of the level of training, the apprenticeship system was the method of teaching and each social institution and level had a role in providing the moral and practical teaching of the youths in the community.

I will argue later that as the responsibility for the upbringing of the youths was shared by the entire social group, a strong sense of community developed as a result of this. The fact that one identified one's interest with that of this community, saw oneself through their eyes and judged oneself as they would judge one, learnt one's attitudes and aspirations from the community, meant that the need for coercion in eliciting duties, obligations and contributions to community endeavours were considerably reduced.

The above historical and social analysis of African culture shows that the unique feature of this system of education was that the community saw it as its duty to educate its youths. Cooperation was highly valued and was present in many forms in indigenous African education. Traditional education, therefore, under the contemporary social context, contributed immensely to educational provision.

It will become clear later that although there was cooperation between the Missionaries and the local community in terms of provision, the advance of Western colonialism marked a turning point in Nigerian indigenous education in that the colonizers did not

see anything good in the indigenous way of life and because indigenous education failed to conform to the ways of Western system of education, it was branded primitive.

The nationalist regimes that took over power after independence did not care much better about the inherent value of the informal traditional education. Apart from the obvious benefit of informal education, the cooperative, community-based nature of traditional education was either belittled or totally ignored. In fact, most aspects of this educational system which could have been incorporated into the present system of education were neglected. These historical events were to later prevent and exclude the natural development not only of traditional teaching methods but of cooperation as a core element in traditional Africa in the provision of education.

3.2 'Bush schools'

Beginning in the nineteenth century, following attempts to convert the continent to Christianity, the spread of European trade and, subsequently, the imposition of European rule, Western education began to seriously penetrate Africa. Even after this penetration, educational provision and practice lacked a coherent policy. This was due in part to the fact that educational provision and practice could not escape the colonial masters' economic and political considerations. For example, in those parts of tropical Africa which were taken over by the British, the administration adopted a *laissez faire* approach to government, sanctified under the name 'indirect rule'. It was the traditional hands-off approach in Britain, where much responsibility was left to local authorities. The fact that in Britain there was little interest in the colonies and, in the absence of an effective lobby for a specific policy combined with the expectation that colonial territories were to be self-financing, education was left to local officials. As a result of this hands-off approach, provision of schooling was left to missionary societies of different sects, which were in competition with one another and with native beliefs. This meant that communities or missionaries decided their own practices within the severely restricted resources at their disposal.

An authentic history of education (for that matter, social services) in Nigeria is, therefore, incomplete without reference to the role played by the Christian and Islamic missionaries. Now, the British Colonial administration superimposed new modes of economic organization on both the Nigerian rural and urban traditional forms which were oriented towards developing Britain. Colonial administration saw education as a means of achieving this objective. Thus, under Colonial system, education was developed for both political and economic considerations. The educational system had to produce graduates who had skills needed by the colonial administration, by mission schools and by British commercial interests. In this period the provision of education was mostly through Islam in the North and Christian Missions in the South.

Another major antecedent to the colonial period is the influence of Islam on African Education. Islam has a long history as part of the religious culture of Northern Nigeria. Centuries before the advent of colonialism, people in what later became known as Northern Nigeria had embraced Islam and the system of education associated with it through Koranic schools, erudite teachers, books, manuscripts and codes of conduct

expected of the devout. Both formal and non-formal school systems were established to teach the ethics and theology of Islam. These were designed to impart skills and knowledge within the religious realm, emphasizing reading and recitation of Arabic. As stated earlier, the British colonial administration introduced the system of indirect rule and in this case, colonial administrators ruled through emirs and emirs ruled their people. In this way the highly centralized theocratic Fulani-Hausa system in the North was left intact and Muslim leaders achieved concessions with respect to exercising control over the penetration of Western influences in the area. Because pan-Islamic values served to legitimate resistance to western education, Christian missions and schools were limited and education continued to centre in Koranic schools and to reflect Arabic teachings. The result has been disparity between North and South; adverse effect on the willingness to accept changes in other areas important to development, such as the adoption of innovations in farming, fishing, water provision, and birth control and basic hygiene. These teachings left intact Islamic traditions that put women in positions subordinate to males, and religious customs in major sectors of the Muslim community severely restricting their participation.

As we have seen, education in the South for most of the precolonial period, was enmeshed in indigenous social and cultural systems. Though Indirect Rule was also established to some extent to fit the patterns of authority of traditional local situations, contemporary education in the South cannot be separated from the history of Christian missionary activity as they were responsible for creating schools in the first half of the nineteenth century. Early Christian heritage represents a very significant element of education in Africa. In the early colonial period up to the end of the Second World War in 1945, the colonial government did not concern itself much with education. The responsibility of providing education in this period fell on the missionaries of different sects, which were in competition with one another and with native beliefs. 'Historically, the development of primary and secondary education, including teacher training, has been an activity of the church missions, much the largest Voluntary Agencies (the principal other V.A. are individual proprietors)' (World Bank 1965).

The objective of education in this era was, first, as seen by the Christian an Islamic Missionaries, to use education as an instrument of propagating and spreading the Christian religion. Thus, catechists, missionaries, and teachers in mission schools and seminaries were trained. In light of this, education and religion were complementary, for the early church buildings were also the early school buildings. Schools were erected in the premises of the missionaries and some of the pupils lived there either as boarders or as houseboys to the missionaries. The first missionary school in Nigeria was built in Badagry in September 1843, and by 1843 the Christian Mission Society (CMS) had established four main stations at Badagry, Lagos, Ibadan and Abeokuta (see Fafunwa 1974). Secondly, the products of these missionary schools and colleges were utilized by the colonial administration as clerks and junior staff to help in running the administration in the country. In the earliest days the educational activities of the missions provided a system of education that was not only almost exclusively financed with private funds but funds that came from overseas (World Bank 1965). Granted that the missionaries were heavily involved in this provision, note should be made of their cooperation with the local communities. Very early on, the Missionaries made sure of

the involvement of the communities in the administration of their schools. Based on the Missionaries' policies that schools should only be built in places where the people expressed the desire of getting and supporting their schools, the first step towards the establishment of a school was a community delegating people to the Missionaries, requesting for a school and church. 'Atani people were again coming to ask for a teacher. We told them to wait a bit. The towns along the riverbanks are giving no good returns' (Ekechi 1971: 17-19).

Given the opposition that the missionaries must have encountered due to entrenched traditional values, the question arises as to how they were able to record gains which they did. The Missionaries recorded this significant progress because of their readiness to cooperate with and the involvement of the natives in their educational administration (no wonder that in recognition of their immense contribution to the development of education, of recent there has been several calls on the State governments which took over schools after the civil war in 1970 to give them back to their former proprietors). Although the Missionaries were the prominent school builders, the colonial government, wielding full political power, early concerned itself with education and it was not long before the government began to participate in the educational system, regulating the activities of missionaries (see Isichei 1983). The policy that the people should contribute to the development of education in their locality was well entrenched during the colonial/missionary period.

In fact, it is Monsignor Leon Lejeune who laid down this policy, which he called self-help. He declared that chiefs and people must be trained from the beginning to pay for their teachers and schools. 'The secret of Catholic success in her school system in Eastern Nigeria was the Church-community partnership. In the same way the Catholic Church co-operated with the government in the running of schools. They asked and received government grant-in-aid for education and welcomed government inspection of their schools' (see Uchendu 1993: 19-20).

Schools were normally constructed by local villagers and run by a religious organization. Housing and food for the teachers at a local school were frequently provided by the villagers who considered these as 'their' schools. They were also frequently consulted on decisions regarding the hiring, retention and effectiveness of teachers (Ostrom, World Development Vol. 24 1996).

The educational structure and its financing so far described can be seen not only as a partnership between the Missionaries and the local communities, but also the involvement of the colonial administration through inspection and grants-in-aid is clearly noticeable. All these cooperation ended during the 1970s, the era of centralized military rule, when all mission schools throughout the country became public schools. I will argue later on that the take-over, disregard or neglect of the valuable inputs from these units of civil society has contributed in no small measure to the under-funding of educational ventures in present-day Nigeria.

3.3 Independent Nigeria and educational provision

Heralding the end of colonial rule in the 1960s was the so-called winds of change. In the period leading to independence, with growing nationalism as a corollary of the independence struggle, there was greater pressure for the educational institutions to expand. In primary education the period of rapid expansion occurred in the mid-1950s. This resulted from the Federal, Western, and Eastern Government all adopting Universal Primary Education (U.P.E.) on a fee-free basis in the mid-1950s. Since 1960, overall primary enrolments have expanded, and in secondary and higher education, rapid growth has also occurred. The reasons for these initial rapid expansion were; first, after independence, significant changes occurred. Decolonization meant that many of the structural limitations to wider participation in the society were removed. Second, decolonization also meant that colonial-centred objectives were to give place to national objectives for nation-building. Third, when Nigeria became independent the goals of a democratic state-sponsored educational system were already part of the national consensus and strong political pressures called for their implementation as rapidly as possible. In the immediate period after independence up until 1970, the voluntary agencies still continued to play prominent roles in providing primary school, post primary school and teacher education. Communities, cultural unions and educational entrepreneurs supplemented their efforts by building and running a number of post primary schools and the various ministries of education continued to exercise control and supervision over educational institutions (Agóm 1983).

From the 1970s upwards, new elements have come in which have fundamentally changed the arena of educational provision and finance. Administratively, Nigeria has moved progressively from a federation of 3 large regions in 1960 to a federation of 30 states and a federal capital territory in 1991. It operates 3 clearly defined tiers of government, namely, the federal, state, and local levels. In 1992, there were 589 local governments. Government business is run through ministries at federal and state levels and through supervisory councillors at local government level.

An analysis of educational policy in Nigeria is incomplete without reference to the Second National Development Plan 1970-74 and the National Policy on Education first promulgated in 1977 and revised in 1981. The political objectives of the Second National Development (Yoloye, International Encyclopaedia of Education 1994), which forms the bedrock of the national policy on education were the building of:

i)   a free and democratic society;

ii)   a just and egalitarian society;

iii)   a united, strong, and self-reliant nation;

iv)   a great and dynamic economy;

v)   a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

These objectives are reflected in the content of the curricula, as well as the planning and administration of education at all levels.

The starting point is the *National Policy on Education* (Federal Ministry of Information 1977) Earlier in September 1976 the former Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, had launched the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Scheme whereby no fees were payable for pupils in primary schools. This all important document is an attempt at articulating a national objective in education. It focuses attention on primary, post-primary, and post-secondary education - Universities, polytechnics, colleges of technology, colleges of Education/Advanced Teacher Training Colleges, and institutions that may be allied to them. The cornerstone of this policy is the 6-3-3-4 structure. This structure will be later elaborated upon in my consideration of the contribution of civil society to educational provision.

The policy itself highlights a set of values which education should seek to inculcate (Guidelines for the Fourth National Development Plan 1981-85):

i)   respect for the worth and dignity of the individual;

ii)   faith in man's ability to make rational decision;

iii)   moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations;

iv)   shared responsibility for the common good of society;

v)   respect for the dignity of labour; and

vi)   promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children.

The radical expansion and improvement of educational facilities was recognized as the crucial aim of educational policy under this important document. In short the stated objectives of this policy (Guidelines for the Fourth National Development Plan 1981-85), were:

i)   to expand facilities for education aimed at equalising individual access to education throughout the country;

ii)   to reform the content of general education to make it more responsive to the socio-economic needs of the country;

iii)   to consolidate and develop the nation's system of higher education in response to the economy's manpower needs;

iv)   to streamline and strengthen the machinery of educational development in the country;

v)   to rationalize the financing of education with a view to making the educational system more adequate and efficient; and

vi)   to make an impact in the area of technological education so as to meet the growing needs of the economy.

It will be necessary to present briefly the specific policies and programmes that were worked out to concretize these general policy objectives because this period marks a

point of departure in the degree of government intervention in the education sector in the nation's history.

At the level of primary education, the document emphasized the objective which among others include the permanent eradication of illiteracy; the need to inculcate moral education, as well as vocational and technical education; and the need to achieve the important objective of equalization of educational opportunities. In order to achieve this objective reliance on the free and universal primary education scheme (UPE) that was introduced in the country starting from September 1976. was emphasized.

At the secondary school level a Federal government grant was specifically earmarked for the states to assist in the rapid expansion of facilities through new schools programmes and the expansion and modernization of older schools. Tuition and boarding fees were pegged at levels obtaining in Federal Government Colleges in order to encourage a rapid increase in enrolment. These measures were reinforced by the award of more government scholarships and bursaries at the secondary school level. The major decision of note here was the take-over of all private and voluntary Agency secondary schools as a means of creating uniform standards in the content and quality of education provided and fees charged in these institutions.

The policy objective at the level of higher institutions focused on the expansion of existing universities and the building of new ones. From the 1976-77 session onwards, tuition fees were abolished in all universities and boarding and lodging fees were lowered in order to increase access to education at this level.

From the foregoing we can observe the trend in educational provision in Nigeria. Now the responsibility for education is shared out between the three tiers of government to the exclusion of civil society. All primary schools are under the control of local government education authorities. Secondary schools are predominantly under control of state governments, although there are federal government secondary schools called 'Unity Schools' controlled by the federal government. Tertiary and higher education are owned and controlled partly by the federal government and partly by the state government.

Administratively, each state ministry of education and local government education authority has an inspectorate for supervision and quality control of its institutions. Above this is a federal inspectorate with branches in all states of the federation. There are also a number of other federal organs of coordination:

i)   the National Universities Commission (NUC) for universities;

ii)   the National Board for Technical Education(NBTE) for polytechnics and colleges of technology;

iii)   the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) for colleges of education.

At the policy level, to ensure regular consultation, there are two powerful federal government organs: (a) the Joint Consultative Commit on Education (JCC), and (b) the

National Council on Education (NCE). It is the National Council on Education which makes the decisions that become education policies after the approval by the federal executive council.

With regard to educational finance, it is clear that after the take-over of secondary schools and other subsequent measures, the responsibility for educational finance is mainly borne by the state and the parents. Of recent with the subsequent economic recession, more and more of the financial burden of education has devolved onto parents as government subsidies for accommodation, meals and textbooks have been gradually withdrawn.

A careful analysis of the above discussion will show that the educational structure and its financing described above is strikingly similar to that which existed in England in the nineteenth century. A major theme of British educational history during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been the progressive conversion of what was originally a private organized, privately administered, and privately financed system of education, largely presided over by church groups, into a system of state-run education in which almost all initiative, authority, finance, and responsibility lies with various levels of government (Maclure 1965).

It can be easily stated that many of the recent developments in educational arrangement in Nigeria are to be interpreted as the repetition of an evolution which parallels what has happened earlier in the United Kingdom. But a crucial point usually overlooked is the fact that there is one great difference: in Great Britain the process of nationalizing and secularising the educational system was spread over more than a century. 'The evolution of Britain's educational goals and of a political concensus supporting these goals was a slow process' (World Bank 1965: 4). In Nigeria the opposite is the case. For political and historical reasons, when Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the goals of a democratic state-sponsored educational system were already part of the national consensus and strong political pressures demanded their implementation as rapidly as possible. For our purposes therefore, the question is what has been the impact of the various policies: state monopolization of educational provision and administration; over-centralization of educational administration; the exclusion of civil society in the provision of education, on educational provision in Nigeria. The attempt to answer these questions will throw some light on some of the problems of implementation that has bedeviled educational provision in Nigeria.

4. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

The concept of implementation deals with the identification of a policy, a set of outcomes and the relationships between these two entities. The concept of an implementation process refers to how policies are carried out in an environment conducive to policy accomplishment or failure (Mazmanian and Sabatier 1983). The impossibility or difficulty associated with implementation may not be due to an inadequate concept of implementation, it may be due to a discrepancy between policy

and action such that processes of implementation have properties that are not conducive to the occurrence of successful implementation.

The environment, structure and process of implementation is of paramount importance in an understanding of the nature of public policy implementation. An example is under a democratic environment, implementation rests upon the public power entrusted to politicians and public officials. Under such a system, the basic restrictions on the degrees of freedom on decision-makers and implementors in relation to the citizens is the requirement that politicians and officials are supposed to deliver on policies. Here, accountability and autonomy are vital because without space for independent action, politicians and administrators cannot make use of their capacity to make judgements about what means are conducive to the ends and adapt in relation to environmental exigencies securing flexibility but on the other hand, complete autonomy on the part of the politicians and administrators would mean total absence of restrictions on their behaviour, negating the fundamental accountability nature of the interaction between citizens and implementors (Lane 1985).

This leads to an analysis of the process and method of implementation, whether it is *top-down*, *bottom-up* or a kind of *coalition model*. The analysis of these processes will be incomplete without reference to trust and responsibility because an implementation process is a combination of responsibility and trust both in the relations between citizens and the public sector in general and in the relations between politicians and officials (Lane 1985).

Policy making and implementation in Nigeria has always been a risky affair as a result of the uncertainty characteristic of the environment within which these policies had been made and implemented. These uncertainties have manifested themselves in several ways. There is the uncertainty arising out of the civil war, frequent changes of government and leaders, coups, the uncompleted democratic experimentation and above all the corruption pervading the whole corridor of officialdom. This corruption has not only affected the responsibility of officials, it has also eroded the public's trust in these officials making a mockery of policy implementation.

5. PUBLIC POLICY FAILURE

Few people dispute the view that, in the great majority of developing countries during the initial decades after independence, the state was given an immoderately broad and ramified role at the expense of the market, the private sector - and the civil society, yet it is clear that no society can develop without an effective state that considers not only the market but also the ultimate objective of development i.e., human welfare (SIDA,1994). Therefore, public policy and the provision of public goods in the developing countries will be meaningless without reference to the role of the state, its weaknesses or failure (as in Somalia, Zaire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone in the early 1990s) in carrying out basic functions of: a legal framework for land tenure, corporations, banking, commercial transactions, and other economic activities; police and fire protection; public

expenditures for health, education, sewage disposal, transport, communication, power, and other infrastructure; revenue collection; and monetary and budgetary management (Nafziger 1996). And any discussion of the role of the state in policy making, let alone, policy implementation involves a major, but typically implicit premise that a state exists.

However, in some developing countries, especially in Africa, a number of countries are now without governments capable of formulating or implementing coherent policy or providing basic services as a result of political disorder; in some cases, the geographical writ of governments is so limited that they are unable to implement national policies in a meaningful sense; and in a number of other countries extended and unresolved political crises have rendered government increasingly ineffective. In the face of such political stalemate or political transitions of uncertain outcome, the scope for coherent policy is severely constrained. According to Zartman (1995), a state collapses in a situation where the structure, legitimate power and authority, law, and political order have fallen apart. This is the situation in many of the countries in Africa where a military regime destroyed a poorly functioning regime, concentrating power that the replacement regime cannot use effectively or legitimately, leading to an implosion of the state. A case in point is Nigeria.

Nigeria's political situation puts great strain on the public sector's capacity for policymaking and management at all levels. The failed Nigerian political transition is a case in point because it has certainly been more consequential for popular welfare and public good provision. In the course of 1993, Nigeria experienced its gravest political and economic upheavals since the 1960s. An abortive political transition gave rise to two abrupt règime changes, amidst growing popular restiveness, ethno-regional tensions, and stagnation in domestic markets. The growing cost and contention of the political transition distracted attention from economic policy, while senior military officials, anticipating a withdrawal from power, were increasingly preoccupied with bolstering their own assets and securing perks for the middle ranks. The pretence of macro-economic management was largely abandoned as policy levers shifted among venal officers and ineffectual civilians (Lewis 1996).

The transition crisis plunged the country into political uncertainty and economic paralysis from June 1993 to the present as a result of the cancellation of the Presidential elections held during the same time.

6. STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT CONDITIONALITIES

The situation leading to the adoption of a structural adjustment programme in Nigeria and the timing of this adjustment will provide an indication of the pain of adjustment as a major factor accounting for implementation difficulties. The social consequences of adjustment manifest themselves most clearly in the political realm (UNU Report, 1 Oct. 1993). The quest for national economic stabilization and recovery through the simultaneous liberalization of the market and the retrenchment of the state was at the

heart of the adjustment programme. This entailed the drastic and repeated devaluation of the naira as well as floating of the currency, the liberalisation of prices, the liberalisation of interest rates, the abolition of commodity boards, the withdrawal of subsidies, the liberalisation of trade, the privatisation and commercialisation of public enterprises, the rationalisation and reform of the civil service, the introduction of user charges, among others (Olukoshi 1993b).

Historically, in contrast to the welfare benefit system and the dole queue that obtains in the West, African social welfare system has tended to be based on a strong family social security system that relies on the time tested system of the employed members catering for the educational, nutritional and health needs of the young and elderly. The advent of SAP and mass sackings of workers disrupted it, thereby severing the cord that held society together. And at the time of the introduction of structural adjustment, the problem was made more difficult by the fact that Nigeria was undertaking double reforms - political transition as well as economic adjustment. In the period leading to the structural adjustment programme Nigeria was experiencing declining terms of trade and economic growth which was exacerbating its political vulnerability. Nigeria's GNP per capita (in constant prices), fell by 72 per cent from 1980 to 1990, and from 1990 to 1994, an additional 15 per cent (76 per cent cumulative) (World Bank 1996a). After 1973, petroleum has accounted for more than 90 per cent of Nigeria's export revenue. Nigeria's terms of trade during the 1980s followed closely the pattern of world crude oil prices, which fell steadily from 1981 to 1988. Nigeria's export purchasing power which fell 72 per cent in 1982 and 60 per cent in 1983 placed unbearable burden on the then newly re-elected, but corrupt, government of President Shehu Shagari, which was later to be overthrown by the military. In Nigeria in 1985, during the depression at the peak of resource transfer (negative net transfer of 12.5 of exports), the then military regime of Mohammed Buhari was overthrown by Major-General Ibrahim Babangida (Nafziger 1993).

These changes in terms of trade, net resource transfer, and other economic variables had a substantial impact on policy implementation, especially with regard to social services. Political and economic reforms imply painful processes, and the fact that SAPs is necessarily 'politics-blind', structural adjustment conditionalities did not take into consideration the specific requirements and conditions of Nigeria at the time as regards the conduciveness of the political environment for effective economic adjustment. The result of this was that the government while preparing a transition and election was asked to reduce drastically the number of civil servants and reduce significantly the subsidy to petrol. This led to philosophic differences between the neo-classical market-determined policies of SAPs and the prevailing centrally controlled and regulated system in Nigeria.

The legitimacy of the post-colonial Nigerian state, closely interwoven with the anti-colonial nationalist project, rested in part on the promise of the delivery of core social services to the generality of the people (Ihonvbere 1993). And through most of the 1970s, Nigeria was able to live up to this expectation as it rode the crest of a bounteous petroleum boom. Like all good things, this boom was not going to last forever. The Nigerian economic crisis which began in the early 1980s was by far the most serious and

its most direct manifestation was to take the form of a drastic fall in federal receipts from oil exports, from an average of some 10 billion dollars annually in the 1970s to about five billion dollars annually in the 1980s and 1990s. As we have seen, given that this drop in receipts happened at a time when the country had become a virtual monocultural economy, it was no wonder that this not only created a major fiscal crisis for the state, it also severely disrupted all sectors of public and private economic activity in the country. This resulted in 1986 in the adoption by the military government of General Babangida of an International Monetary Fund (IMF) / World Bank structural adjustment programme (SAP). Very quickly, the social expenditure of the state which increased dramatically during the oil boom years came under severe attack during the 1980s both before and especially after the adoption of SAP and this was accompanied with the introduction of all manner of cost recovery measures even as the country's social infrastructure declined (Ihonvbere 1993).

Given the preoccupation of orthodox adjustment policies with the rapid reduction of macro-economic imbalances and institutional reforms aimed at reducing the size and scope of public sector, the immediate consequence of the combined effect of this macro-economic decline and adjustment policies was: many public services suffered irreparable damage. For instance, the school system in many states of the federation faced imminent collapse with non-payment of teachers salaries, the protracted strikes by teachers unions and closure of schools by the authorities (Bangura, Mustapha, and Adamu in Africa Development 1984).

Indeed 1987 was the first year that structural adjustment policies had been felt when expenditures on public education fell from $848 million in 1986 to $680 million (World Bank 1988). The educational system, from the elementary school to the university suffered irreparable damage. The institutions were virtually neglected and grossly underfunded, resulting in frequent strikes, violent demonstrations and prolonged closures. The few months of the year when the schools are in session, they lack practically every facility. These are all part of the casualties of the structural adjustment programme recommended by the IMF which has been religiously implemented by the various Nigerian governments after General Babangida. 'The Structural Adjustment Programme and the attendant withdrawal of petroleum subsidies and the devaluation of the national currency, Naira (recommended by IMF) put many Nigerians on the death row and created for others a situation of emergency' (National Concord, Feb. 28 1996: 19).

According to the *Independent Commission on Population and Quality of Life (1993)*, 'The structural adjustment process thus intruded into the caring social services. Services crucial to the quality of life were not protected against cuts, and they thus make easy economic targets. Regulation and subsidies, sometimes indispensable to ensure equity, were scuttled, sometimes indiscriminately... These programmes required deep cuts in public spending: public employment itself, and reduced access to public health care, education, family planning, food and housing' (see West Africa, 8-14 July 1996: 1098).
In the light of this, one cannot but agree with the assertion in the *Economic Justice Update* of August 1993, that 'structural adjustment undermines the ability of States to

allocate resources towards either health care or self-reliant development, and instead turns these resources towards the export sector and debt servicing.'

In conclusion, it is unfortunate to state that the legacy of SAP will be felt by the generation of youths and children that will have the misfortune of growing up under it. Its most tragic and calamitous consequences are in the implementation of educational and health policies. Through the erosion of the health care system, through generalized immiserization of the people and the direct and indirect impact of such a process on health and education, by imposing severe cuts on government spending and on the infrastructure that supports health, nutrition and education, SAPs have exacerbated rather than solved the problems of health care and education created by Africa's persistent economic crisis (UNU International Symposium, October 1993).

7. ISSUES OF DECENTRALIZATION VERSUS CENTRALIZATION

It has been recently observed that 'the twentieth century is ending, as it began, with great aspirations for extending the benefits of democratic self-government to ever larger numbers of men and women' (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993). The evolution of centralism in Nigeria can be analysed through a consideration of the historical and political experience since independence.

As noted earlier, Nigeria is a federal state, consisting of the federal government, the state governments and the local governments. At present, Nigeria has 30 state governments, a federal capital territory and 595 local governments. There are plans to increase the number of states and local governments towards the end of the year.

Nigeria attained independence in 1960 as a fairly loose federal system. The independence constitution provided for three strong regional governments with wide economic and social powers, which consequently endowed the country with a substantial degree of regional autonomy. This autonomy was backed-up by substantial revenue-generating sources in each of the regions, amounting to almost 50 per cent of fiscal outlays (Hyden and Bratton 1992). The only areas of exclusive jurisdiction reserved for the federal government were defence, the printing and circulation of a national currency, and the conduct of foreign policy. However, from 1967 onwards, this division of responsibility and powers between the federal government and the other units of the federal was gradually eroded until all effective power became centralized and concentrated in the federal centre. Nigeria centralized power during its 1967-70 civil war with the break-up of the four regions into thirteen states, and in the 1970s, as the oil boom enhanced the centre's fiscal strength. This process of concentration and centralization with the state creation exercise in 1967 was repeated in 1976 1987, and 1991 (Olukoshi and Laakso 1995). This continuous exercise in state creation has not only become a self-multiplying exercise that gradually negate the basis for an effective federal system, it has in addition promoted the centralization/concentration of power. This centralization and concentration of power in the federal centre was partly an attempt first, to weaken the secessionist pressures that eventually led to the Nigerian

Civil War of 1966 and the political imperatives to prevent the re-emergence of powerful regional centres that could challenge the federal state. The logic of centralization and concentration was also advanced by the oil economy that emerged and boomed in the 1970s, because under a re-constructed revenue allocation formula, it favoured the federal government with the resources required to finance the ever-growing scope of responsibility and the increasing pressures for federal patronage.

Another factor that has had an important impact on Nigerian federalism is the fact of prolonged military rule in Nigeria. The Nigerian military has wielded power for 21 out of the 25 years since the end of the Civil War in 1970. The numerous attempts to re-model Nigerian federalism has been hampered by the peculiar nature and longevity in the political life of the nation. All these factors have led to a system of top-down administrative command as the style for all decision making. Under this system the relationship between the authorities and their constituencies was conducted through the government or the military, both hierarchical organizations. Information flowed into the bureaucracies, and favours and services flowed out of them. Information and services hardly reached the lower levels of the population. This has resulted in discouraging villages that had demonstrated their capabilities to engage in collective action in the education of village children.

> Like the military in most parts of the world, the Nigerian armed forces operate a centralized command structure which their years of involvement in the political arena has transferred into the administration of the country. The structure of governance which they have encouraged is one which is based on a hierarchy of tiers of government in which the federal government is pre-eminent and the state and local governments are subordinate. The chain of command in the federal arrangement they promoted assumed the flow of instructions and mandates from the top to the bottom (Olukoshi and Laakso 1995)

The combination of macroeconomic crisis of the 1980s, structural adjustment conditionalities that resulted in acute fiscal crisis, prolonged authoritarian rule by both Babangida and Abacha and the diminishing capacity of the federal government to meet its economic and social obligations, over-concentration of power and responsibility in the federal government and the high centralization of the federal system led to a suffocating and dysfunctional relationship between the three levels of government which in turn had negative impacts on the implementation of various policies including health and education. The major consequence of this centralization meant that the social institutions that prevailed under this model encouraged individuals to pursue careers in government, the church, or the army, and to forgo other, potentially more productive activities beyond the reach of the state (North 1981, 1990). This centralization also inhibited the development of community-based civic institutions because it created communities that were dependent on the central government and its institutions, both formal (bureaucracy) and informal (patronage) (Hommes 1995).

Take the example of *The National Policy On Education* (National Policy on Education, 1977). This policy resulted in centralization. This was defined by assigning various

responsibilities to the federal, state and local governments: the Federal Government sets policy and oversee development, including curriculum, which is placed in the hands of a National Committee that advises on the production of suitable textbooks, and instructional materials for the whole Federation; state government's responsibility is over coordination, planning, financing, and direction of educational effort within the State Ministry; and the Local Education Authorities and School Boards are supposed to be involved in the 'administration and management of local school'. The Policy also states that selection and appointment of members of the Education Authorities and School Boards will be made from among the local people who represent the communities, but the truth is that these local representatives, as well as school administrators, teachers, voluntary agencies, and other community groups have very little authority over the curriculum and teaching methods. This loss of community and local control due to centralization has led to strained community-government relations (McDowell 1980).

The greater participation of local citizens in government decisionmaking is the central concern of decentralization and there are a number of ways to achieve decentralization. Fiscal and political federalism is probably the most common form. In some countries decentralization is achieved through the transfer of power to local units, coupled with revenue sharing or other forms of transfers from the centre to regional and local governments (Hommes 1995).

In Nigeria, the attempts at decentralization through the creation of more states and local governments amount to what Dillinger, (1994), refers to as a 'reluctant and disorderly series of concessions by central governments attempting to maintain political stability'. In other words, a neo-Sicilian ruse to change some things in order to keep other things the same.

The ultimate success of decentralization in Nigeria will require that formal and informal civic institutions be strengthened alongside the self-multiplying local governments. This is of particular importance in the context of promoting more active local participation to increase the accountability of decentralized government systems (Winkler 1994). I will show in another section that local communities like the 'home-town associations', are demonstrating an ability to develop local capacity autonomously. Therefore, the attempt by the Babangida and Abacha government to intervene through duplication or cooptation is only likely to stunt the home-grown capacity.

I argue for a move from this highly centralized government because it will improve government services in order to solve what North (1990) calls a gridlock crisis in the provision of basic social services and to increase community participation in the decisionmaking process.

7.1   Service decentralization/fiscal or administrative centralization

Decentralization of fiscal activities is an approach to intergovernmental finance that should improve the allocation of public spending by making it more consistent with the wishes of citizens. In an analysis of decentralization, it is useful to distinguish between

fiscal and *administrative* decentralization. Fiscal decentralization exists when subnational governments have the power, given to them by the constitution or by particular laws, to raise (some) taxes and carry out spending activities within clearly established legal criteria. Examples cited include fiscal federations in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, Germany, Nigeria, Switzerland, and the United States. Administrative decentralization exists when most taxes are raised centrally, but funds are allocated to decentralized entities that carry out their spending activities as agents of the central government and according to the guidelines or controls imposed by the central government. An example of administrative decentralization is Italy (Tanzi 1996).

In his classic 1972 book, *Fiscal federalism*, Wallace Oates presented a very strong argument on the economic justification for decentralization. This rests largely on allocative or efficiency grounds. Oates basis of argumentation is the realization that not all public goods have similar spatial characteristics. His theoretical argumentation is that since public goods such as defense benefit the entire country, and others, such as regional transportation systems or forestry services benefit regions, and still others, such as street lighting or cleaning, benefit only the municipalities or particular districts, a centralized government might ignore these spatial characteristics and this diversity of preferences, or it might not be well informed about them and thus might supply a uniform package to all citizens. Thus, the supply of such goods must be fitted to the different requirements of different groups.

The argument is that centralization is costly if it leads the government to provide a bundle of public goods different from the preferences of the citizens of particular regions, provinces, or municipalities. Oates's conclusion is that,

> for a public good - the consumption of which is defined over geographical subsets of the total population, and for which the costs of providing each level of output of the good in each jurisdiction are the same for the central or the respective local government - it will always be more efficient (or at least as efficient) for local governments to provide the Pareto-efficient levels of output for their respective jurisdictions than for the central government to provide *any* specified and uniformed level of output across all jurisdictions (Oates 1972, p. 35).

In addition to Oates's theoretical argumentation, decentralization has been defended on the basis of other considerations. Israel (1992, and see also Tanzi 1996) have argued that a decentralized system can become a surrogate for competition, bringing to the public sector some of the allocative benefits that a competitive market brings to the private sector.

Another example cited as an advantage of decentralization is that it allows experimentation in the provision of the output. For example, when the provision of education is the responsibility of local jurisdictions and when these jurisdictions are free to provide the service in any way they see appropriate, some jurisdictions will discover better ways of providing the service, and other jurisdictions will emulate the successful ones. If such a service is imposed by the central government, there will be little or no

experimentation because of the uniform approach that arises out of central monopoly (Tanzi 1996).

A final argument in favour of decentralization relates to the emphasis that when individuals are responsible for the results of their actions, thus acquiring ownership rights over the outcome, they are likely to have stronger incentives to perform better. It therefore follows that when local officials are directly responsible for providing a public service, they will have a greater interest in succeeding. In this way, the community develops a sense of pride in successful service delivery. Added to this, when the cost of providing a service is borne by the local jurisdiction, the service is more likely to be provided cost-efficiently. Much of the support for the decentralization of various functions stems from this view that accountability brings responsibility (Shar and Qureshi 1994).

It is important to make the observation that in the case of Nigeria, the composition of local jurisdictions is based on past political, rather than economic, considerations, which means that sizes of the states and local governments are fixed and largely the result of historical considerations. This makes it problematic that these subnational governments to which decentralization should allocate fiscal responsibilities can be influenced by knowledge about the spatial characteristics of important public goods.

However, considering the fact that under Nigeria's federal structure, state governments have major responsibility for health, education and social services, the concentration/centralization within the federal centre bodes ill for proper implementation of national policies. The thirteen years of military rule between the First and Second Republics led to many changes in the federal structure of Nigeria. The most significant change was the increasing subordination of the state governments to federal control. After overturning the provisions of the 1963 Constitution, the then federal military government completely restructured the federal system, adding to its exclusive control such important areas as education, university administration, petroleum production, and the coordination and direction of development plans (Ukwu 1980). This was made possible by the progressive concentration of financial power in the federal government. Federal outlays rose almost twenty times from 548.2 million naira (N) to N18.5 billion from 1969 to 1979. Illustrative of the federal government's superiority over fiscal policy in relation to the state governments is the fact that federal spending rose from 60 per cent of all outlays in 1968/69 to approximately 87 per cent by 1980/81 (Hyden and Bratton 1992). This situation symbolizes what has been called 'the constitutional hegemony of the federal government' by equipping this tier with an equally substantial number of exclusive powers (Ayoade & Suberu 1990). The result of this has been a wide scope for the federal government to legislate on matters considered incidental or supplementary to the constitutional list, as well as to promote 'fundamental objectives and directive principles' of enumerated policy (Nigeria 1989). Similar language was used in the past to justify direct federal intervention in areas of authority considered to be residual matters under the direct authority of the states.

Today the state governments that replaced the regional structures are a miserable shadow of their predecessors. They enjoy no effective autonomy and are almost all

totally dependent on federal budgetary handouts for their operations. For example, attempts were made during the 1980s to pass back some responsibilities to state and local governments by the federal authorities. However, these attempts were driven more by the desire of the federal authorities to lessen the financial burden which they had to carry and less by the need for far-reaching reform of the federal system. The consequence of such attempts has been to shift spending responsibilities to the subnational governments without providing them with adequate resources. It is needless to say that present day Nigeria has in effect become a unitary state or, at least, a federal state more in appellation and less in essence. It is also needless to say that in this situation, there is a confusion as to the respective roles and responsibilities of different levels of government. For an effective implementation of national policies, coordination and planning management is necessary between the federal, state and local governments and within each level of government, but the weakness and dependency of both the state governments and the local governments makes coordination in planning and management of education difficult.

From the above analysis we notice that even in the case where there has been some semblance of decentralization, the determination of spending responsibilities of the subnational governments precedes the question of how resources will be generated to pay for the spending. Yet for decentralization to be successful, it must include the decentralization of both spending and revenue and this decision must be made at the same time (Tanzi 1996).

For political reasons, due to the fact that Nigeria's population is not homogeneous and the fact that ethnic, cultural and other relevant characteristics are regionally distributed, there is ground for decentralization. But the administrative or service decentralization that exist in Nigeria, without the corresponding fiscal muscles within the lower levels of the administrative hierarchy makes a mockery of the whole idea of decentralization. Decentralization should mean devolving both spending responsibilities and revenue sources. It is therefore important not to create and maintain an imbalance between expenditure responsibilities and the means available to local jurisdictions to carry them out.

8. INCOHERENT POLICIES

As stated earlier, the Nigerian government recognizes the importance of the social sectors to economic growth and human capacity building and has developed and published, for example, comprehensive national policies on education, health and population. These policy statements all embrace sound objectives, but tend to put forward over-ambitious targets that are difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. The *National Policy on Education* covers all educational activities and functions and calls for universal, free and compulsory primary education. The *National Health Policy* emphasizes that primary health care is the way to help Nigerians lead socially and economically productive lives. The *National Policy on Population* focuses on strategies for reducing the fertility and mortality of mothers and children, including the need for

increased family planning. However, generally lacking are viable implementation plans based on realistic assessments of the resources required. This is due to the fact that in recent years, Nigeria's leadership, institutions, and policies have been subject to abrupt and unpredictable change, making any planning and implementation difficult (World Bank 1995).

Several examples can be cited in connection with these incoherent government policies. In the 1976-77 session when the government decided to abolish tuition fees in all university and lower the boarding and lodging fees, costs were rising and available facilities were falling short of requirements. The result of this policy was to generate an explosion in the demand for university education and build up pressure on enrolment which had already exceeded the plan target of 53,000 in the 1978-79 academic year.

Again in 1988, the federal government took over the responsibility for funding a portion of expenditures on primary education but in a turn-around in 1991, it announced a decentralization program making local governments fully responsible for financing and managing local schools. The claims were that neither local nor state governments were capable of providing and producing adequate levels of education and therefore a massive infusion of funds from the national level was essential. However, as the costs of carrying out such policies became apparent, diverse strategies for shifting the costs through funding formula were adopted. As the financial responsibility for this provision changed, it was also accompanied by other changes, like: who hired teachers; what standards were to be used in retaining, transferring, or promoting teachers; and exactly how teachers were to be paid. At several junctures, teachers had to endure the anguish of unpaid backlog of salaries. At one point, parents were told that they should not have to pay for education only to have school fees imposed a short while later. Free books were provided in one period but not in the next. Thus, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, turbulent change characterised national, state, and local government policies related to the organization of primary education. Further, apart from the fact that few parents were able to purchase books for their children, the problem of unavailable text books is greatly exacerbated by the fact that the list of textbooks authorized by the Ministry of Education changed every year. Therefore, students from one class cannot pass books onto the next class to allow for a slow accumulation of books for each class. Furthermore, teachers are confronted with new books to master every year (Ostrom 1996).

According to the Nation magazine (Oct. 24 1994), the problem with primary education began when Decree 3 of 1991 annulled the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) and transferred the funding and management of primary education to local government councils. The paper contends that according to teachers, the era in which the local government councils managed the primary schools marred the bedrock of Nigeria's educational system. For several months teachers were on strike to protest the non-payment of their salaries, thereby crippling academic activities. The resultant effect was that teachers abandoned the classrooms, students were frustrated and the whole system nearly crumbled.

9. NEO-PATRIMONIAL STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

9.1   Models of government

The political system operative in Africa is considered as a particular type, distinct from both the modern and the traditional type, but combining the characteristics of both. This calls for an analysis of the functional aspects of the political practices that prevail in these countries. This helps us to consider those practices, such as corruption, nepotism, etc., and their effects on the efficiency and the functioning of the state.

For a state to function it must adhere to some logic of operation, in other words, a model of government should be designable by a keen observer. Any effort to understand the logic of government in Africa must start with a brief review of the conditions in which these models were developed. First, the strong nationalistic and anticolonial sentiments that naturally accompanied the attainment of independence. The desire for 'development' as a way of achieving 'equality' with industrialized countries was a powerful political imperative. Second, for this rapid development, the political imperative had as its basis the assumption that there would be a public entity committed to achieving the common good. (Kruger 1994). This premise of course disregarded the administrative difficulties, or other barriers to identifying and implementing policy toward those ends. Third, it is often asserted that politics is fundamentally about the struggle over scarce resources. In some countries, that struggle is not focused in a continuous and insistent way on the state itself. Through a variety of paths and from a multiplicity of sources, power, status, and the other major economic goods can often be procured without capturing the state and its apparatuses. This is in contrast to what obtains in Nigeria where the state has increasingly become a magnet for all facets of political and economic life, consuming the attention of traders, contractors, builders, farmers, traditional rulers, teachers, as much as that of politicians and public servants (Joseph 1987). An important aim of this section is therefore, to elaborate a conceptual notion - *neo-patrimonialism* - which seems most appropriate for explaining the centrality in the Nigerian polity of the intensive and persistent struggle to capture and exploit the offices of the state and the implications of this for policy implementation.

To assist in conceptualizing the African (Nigerian) state as a patrimonialized state, it is necessary to analyse various typologies or models of government.

9.2   Government as benevolent social guardian

The assumption is that, government as a benevolent social guardian would be directing resources and activities to achieve the goals of economic growth and other social objectives. The underlying assumption is that governments and civil servants in some sense are 'above the system'. That they selflessly seek the welfare of the people. Anne Krueger has presented the various criticism of the benevolent social guardian view but of particular relevance to our present analysis are:

i) Economic theory has long been based on the premise that most individuals are pursuing their own self-interest in the private sector. A logical question and criticism of the benevolent social guardian rationale for policy prescription is that, given the consistency of the assumption of self-interest with observed behaviour in private economic activity, why should it be assumed that those in the public sector will not also seek their own self-interest. After all, although some civil servants may be selflessly pursuing the public good, there are others interested in pursuing their own careers and economic gains.

ii) Government institutions implement controls in an attempt to prevent private individuals from carrying out profitable transactions or from conveying valuable property rights without charging for them, it follows that there is bound to be incentives for people to profit from receiving the property rights or to capture the profits legally or extra-legally at some cost. These activities she considers as 'rent-seeking' in the sense that the resources devoted to obtaining the item of value do not create value and constitute a dead-weight cost. Furthermore, the fact that rent-seeking will normally arise in response to government controls over economic activity has a number of consequences, some of which affect the behaviour of the government and some of which affect the administrative costs of implementing policies.

iii) Her final criticism of the benevolent social guardian model of government has focused on the inherent uncertainties and informational asymmetries in economic activity. The view is that the essence of economic activity is the information held only by individuals who will not be willing to reveal it to others. A corollary of this is that government officials may be in a poorer position than private agents with respect to information.

9.3   'Factional and autonomous' models.

The experience of the developing countries has made it evident that governmental behaviour is far more complex than that assumed in the benevolent social guardian model of the state. In response, Deepak Lal and Hla Myint (1990) have suggested models in which the state is 'autonomous' and models in which the state is 'factional'. The autonomous model is one in which the state is pursuing objectives of its own, and the factional model is one which reflects collective decision making subject to a variety of constraints.

According to Lal and Myint an autonomous state is one in which those in power are sufficiently entrenched so that within a fairly wide range of latitude they may pursue their objectives without paying very much regard to any political opposition to the policies undertaken. They subdivide autonomous states into the guardian state and two types of predatory states. The first type of predator is the absolutist, while the second is 'bureaucratic authoritarian'.

The predatory state is one in which those in power are viewed as 'predators', whose concern for the welfare of their citizens is important only to the extent that this permits a greater gain for them, those in the governing class. Predatory states are of two basic

types. The first is a state run by a single ruler: The ruler might be a monarch, a colonial government in a colony, a charismatic leader, or a dictator. The objective of the ruler in this case is to maximize net revenue. The second type of predatory state is what Lal and Myint call the 'bureaucratic-authoritarian' state, in which the objective is to maximize the number of bureaucrats, or public employment.

The factional state is characterised by a coalition of different interest groups. The factional state can be democratic, or it can be authoritarian. When it is democratic, a coalition of interests must maintain power, and resources are allocated to buying support of different members of the coalition. When it is authoritarian, the factional state is seeking the interests of those in the ruling coalition.

A strong case can be made that many of the African countries during the course of their history have succumbed to one or other models or have governed through a combination of these models. For example, it could be argued that immediately after independence, some of the African leaders had (or thought they had) the interest of their people at heart and wanted to be benevolent social guardians As Bates notes (see Krueger 1994), in Ghana Kwame Nkrumah's coalition excluded all significant rural interests and governed with little regard to their well-being. By contrast, he notes, in Kenya, the ruling coalition had strong ties with rural interests, and agriculture fared much better.

The problems associated with the various models of government is closely linked to the problem of implementation and will be discussed further under the model of the patrimonialization of the state.

9.4   The neo-patrimonial model

The authors of Nigeria's draft constitution in 1976 defined political power as: 'The opportunity to acquire riches and prestige, to be in a position to hand out benefits in the form of jobs, contracts, gifts of money etc. to relations and political allies'

This, in essence, is the institutional representation of neo-patrimonialism in Nigeria. This model of administration created institutions that have directly contributed to excessive bureaucracy and corrupt bureaucratic structures that have borne negative implications for policy implementation.

Under the influence of modernization theory a number of writers had assumed that the governmental structures of the industrialized nations conformed closely to the rational-legal model of Max Weber. Along with western-style democracy, 'clean' public administration, and this model became the destination that lay at the end of the road to modernity. Unfortunately, during the first development decade of the 1960s, events in newly-independent Africa (for example, the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-70), was to prove all this wrong. Instead of 'modernization', there was a 'breakdown of modernization'; 'political decay' replaced 'political development' (Theobald 1990).

With few exceptions, (see Leys 1965; McMullan 1961; Wraith and Simpkins 1963), the overwhelming concentration on *formal* political arrangements, constitutions, parties, voting behaviour and the like had prevented a significant attention being paid to corruption in Africa.

In relation to developmentalist and dependency theory, the neo-patrimonial model has been proposed to explain the politics of underdevelopment in Africa so that by the beginning of the 1970s corruption and the related theme of patrimonialism began to move to the forefront of the analysis of politics in Africa. However, the explanations of this phenomenon have tended to be socio-cultural in character. In this wise, the alleged high incidence of corruption is understood mainly in terms of the survival of traditional patterns of behaviour - familism, communalism, clientelism, friendship, gift-giving and the like - into the modern politics and administration (Theobald 1990). Further, the notion of patrimonialism started to be widely used in the 1980s, under various names, such as patrimonialism, neo-patrimonialism, corruption, prebendalism, rent-seeking, predatory state, or 'belly politics', due the failure of development policies and the failure of the state.

It is difficult to discount the significance of these kinds of practices as they are very real and can be a millstone around the necks of individuals in all walks of life, especially those dealing with the public sectors. Though it will further be useful to locate such practices within a broader economic and political perspective which would require an extended review of the literature on patrimonialism, the scope of this paper will not permit this. I will, instead, explore neo-patrimonialism in Nigeria with the aim of clarifying the relationship between patrimonialism and corruption and its implications for policy implementation.

To develop the concept of neo-patrimonialism, I will rely heavily on the work of Jean-Francois Médard as background material. According to Médard (1995), the neo-patrimonial state is a kind of contradictory and variable combination of patrimonial and legal rational dominations. 'The African state is not a patrimonial state, it is a patrimonialized state, and this is why it is better to call it neo-patrimonial'.

An understanding of patrimonialism is of paramount relevance to the study of the African state both because of the confusion between the private and the public sectors which is the main characteristic of African political life and the fact that the very generality of the concept makes it a useful analytical tool of observing and interpreting concrete and empirical reality as it relates to Africa. The concept has the advantage of subsuming a variety of different, but related practices such as nepotism, clientelism, patronage, prebendalism, friendship ties, tribalism, ethno-regionalism and corruption, which in various degrees, are part of African political life.

According to Max Weber (Weber 1968), there are three different types of domination: legal-rational, charismatic and traditional. The idea of domination combines legitimacy and a specific mode of exercising authority. Legal rational domination is based on an impersonal rule, charismatic domination refers to the prestige of a person because of his extraordinary qualities, while the legitimacy of traditional domination is based on the belief in the sacred character of immemorial traditions. Weber further distinguishes three different but strongly related forms of traditional domination: patriarchal, patrimonial and feudal.

Of interest to this research is the development of patrimonialism out of the patriarchal mode of traditional domination. In fact, patrimonialism is a development out of what for Weber was the most basic form of traditional authority - patriarchalism. The patriarchal domination is based on a strictly personal loyalty, and not on the obedience to abstract and impersonal rules, as in the case of legal rational domination. In patriarchalism, the head of the household dominates over the other members of the household. The authority and domination of the head of the household is based upon the filial respect of members of the family and other dependants for the patriarchal head. Within the household, domination is entrenched in the master's authority over his household. With patriarchalism, authority is exercised by the master as the head of the household, so that in securing compliance the patriarch does not need administrative or military machine, being solely dependent upon the authority tradition gives to him augmented by his control over key resources such as land, grazing rights, cattle and women (Weber 1968 and see also Theobald 1990).

Patrimonialism first appears along with political differentiation when patriarchalism must extend its authority to meet the needs of an expanding political community and when a patrimonial chief exercises his authority beyond his own domestic group over people who are no longer relatives or servants, which is ultimately the state. With this expanded sphere of administrative activities, authority can no longer be exercised directly and must be mediated by administrative officers, personal retainers, like servants, relatives, and slaves. In a nutshell, Max Weber characterises the patrimonial system in these terms:

> The object of obedience is the personal authority of the individual which he enjoys by virtue of his traditional status. The organized group exercising authority is, in the simplest case, primarily based on relations of personal loyalty, cultivated through a common process of education. The person exercising authority is not a superior but a personal chief. His administrative staff does not consist primarily of officials, but of personal retainers. Those subject to authority are not members of any associations, but are either his traditional comrades or his subjects. What determines the relations of the administrative staff to the chief is not the impersonal obligations of office, but personal loyalty to the chief (Weber 1968 and see also Médard 1995).

Patrimonialism signifies a particular type of administration, one that differs very markedly from the rational-legal bureaucracy. Among the essential features of rational-legal bureaucracy are - hierarchy of graded authority, fixed jurisdictional areas with clear-cut procedures, salaried officials who are recruited and promoted according to objective qualifications and experience and the strict separation between incumbent and office, between the private and the public spheres. In contrast, under patrimonialism, office holders are the personal dependants of the ruler, appointed at his whim on the basis of criteria that are subjective and non-standardized. In patrimonial administration office-holding is at the pleasure of the ruler and any patrimonial bureaucrat may be moved or dismissed by the ruler when it is expedient. Throughout the administration

there are no clear-cut procedures for taking decisions and decision-making tends to have an *ad hoc* character (Theobald 1990).

Consequently, the defining characteristic of patrimonialism is the absence of a distinction between the public and the private domain. This implies a confusion between the public and the private, the private servant and the public officer, the public purse and the private purse. The very confusion (the ability or willingness to make that distinction) between the private and the public sector, which is at the heart of patrimonialism is precisely the main characteristic of African political life.

The application of patrimonialism which is a mode of traditional domination to modern political systems is at the origin of the use of the notion of neo-patrimonialism instead of the one of patrimonialism. It is important to distinguish contemporary African political systems and traditional political systems. Within the African states, two mixed dual forms coexist and are articulated together in the same system. This dual form combines the logic of bureaucracy and patrimonialism, the product of a radically different historical trajectory. In the present western states, the legal rationality that characterize their bureaucracies have been developed from an overlapping of feudal and patrimonial kingdoms which transformed through the centuries into approximations of the legal rational and bureaucratic model. In contrast, in Africa, an approximation of a legal rational state was exported to Africa through colonization. It was through colonization that Africa became a modern bureaucratic and territorial state. (Médard 1995). But before this, the African state to the extent that it existed then was already partly patrimonialized. After independence, at the same time the bureaucratic administrations were multiplying, they were also being patrimonialized, that is, they were being privately and informally appropriated by the agents of the state. This patrimonialization of the state has brought about a 'neo-patrimonial' state, a hybrid of patrimonialism and bureaucracy. The formal structure of the state is bureaucratic, a written law exists, the civil servants are recruited through examinations, but there is no real state of law and the functioning of the state is largely patrimonialized (Médard 1995). Many developing countries continue to be characterized by the appearance of Weberian 'legal-rational' administration, but beneath the trappings of formal bureaucracy, procedural rules, and law, their regimes are based upon networks of personal loyalty and patron-client ties. The concentration of power in a single ruler or a narrow oligarchy at the apex of a clientelist pyramid. Public and private resources are melded, as state assets come under the discretionary control of political élites, and public office serves as a conduit for private accumulation (See Lewis 1996, Jackson and Rosberg 1982).

The use of the term neo-patrimonialism, therefore, has the advantage of pointing out the radical historical differences between the past and the present. Consequently, the African state is defined not only by the lack of distinction between the public and the private domains, but also the non respect of this distinction when it is made. Of note here is that in the pure patrimonial situation, the distinction does not exist, while in this African neo-patrimonial situation, the distinction is made, but rarely internalized, and even if it is, it is not respected.

Two consequences arise out of the definition of patrimonialism as the confusion between the public and the private sector. The first one is the personalization of power - private means personal. The second one is the lack of differentiation between what is political and what is economic. An observation of the behaviour of the African *big man* will show that economic and political resources, wealth and political power are directly related.

From the lack of distinction between the office and the person in charge of the office, power is personalized instead of being institutionalized. In the sense that the public officer uses his office as a private possession, the public is thus privatized. The office and the officeholder are formally and structurally differented, but not functionally. The state as an abstraction that is characteristic of Western states is absent in the African context. Every agent of the state uses his public position to extract resources from the state or from the people. According to Jean-Francois Bayart, (1993: XV11) in Cameroon, they talk of the politics of the belly. 'They know that 'the goat eats where it is tethered' and that those in power intend to 'eat'. When a presidential decree relieves a manager of his post, his friends and family explain it to the villagers by saying 'they have taken his meal ticket". In Nigeria they talk of 'sharing the national cake'. This term 'eating' or 'sharing the national cake' conveys desires and practices far removed from gastronomy. It refers to the idea of accumulation, opening up of possibilities of social mobility and enabling the holder of power to 'set himself up'. For example, a policeman will extort money from the taxi drivers, a school teacher will ask for a bribe of a goat to register the children in school or to sign a school-leaving testimonial, and if he is the head of a parastatal, he will steal the money from the corporation.

Due to the low degree of differentiation between what is economic, political and social, the search for power, and the search for wealth and prestige tends to overlap.
In the end, according to Médard:

> In a patrimonialized state, the access to the state becomes the main way of acquiring economic goods and wealth... The state becomes a pie or a cake to share. Because of this the nature of political competition changes. The stake of political competition is not only power as such but direct access to wealth.

A predictable by-product of such a model of state administration has disastrous effect on policy implementation. As a result of the patrimonialization of the state, one can speak of the failure of the African state in the sense that since patrimonialism is inversely proportional to the degree of institutionalization of the state, patrimonialism illustrates the failure of one of the projects of the African founding fathers, who basically shared two aims, building a nation-state and promoting development (Médard 1995).

A distinctive pattern of economic management, including arbitrary change, deficit financing, capital flight, and the chronic, unrecorded leakage of funds is the direct consequence of a neo-patrimonial model of administration. The premium on transitory rent-seeking in such economies reinforces an orientation towards political rather than market allocation (See Lewis 1996, Sandbrookm 1985 and Boone 1990).

Nigeria' political economy reflects the central hallmarks of neo-patrimonial rule. Post independent Nigeria has been characterized by numerous writers as a 'prebendal' order. In Richard Joseph's formulation, (Joseph 1987), three salient aspects portray this system. First, nominally 'public' resources are widely appropriated for personal or parochial gain. Second, such allocations are patterned by ethnically-delineated patron-client networks. Third, the distributive arena are largely decentralized, and clientelist relations are diffuse.

Though neo-patrimonialism has been sustained in Nigeria by a relatively narrow civil-military élite, but, in contrast to many other neo-patrimonial states, Nigeria has never been controlled by an exclusive oligarchy because there had always been countervailing influences such as civilian institutions and military affinities which hindered the tendency towards the concentration of personal power.

However, Lewis (1996), has identified three essential features of the emergent predatory system within the neo-patrimonial order in Nigeria. These are: First, the concentration of personal power under coercive auspices through a variety of institutional and informal means. For example, under the Babangida administration, an array of state security forces acquired growing latitude, encouraging increasing surveillance and repression against dissidents or putative rivals. Organizations of civil society, notably labour unions, university associations, human rights and professional groups, were prosecuted and subverted. The consequence of this was that Babangida succeeded in removing potential restraints on presidential power, whether in the military, the political élite, or the broader society. The present regime of Sani Abacha has also fully availed itself of these instruments of control.

Second, in both regimes, repression has been augmented by material inducement, requiring close discretion over public resources as well as a ready pool of available funds. Compelling evidence of massive corruption under the two leaders has been documented, like the $12,200 million in petroleum revenues sidelined to off-budget accounts which represented an enormous diversion of public resources for discretionary and personal use.

The third aspect identified by Lewis has been the conscious erosion of central public institutions, and the corresponding hegemony of a close circle of ethnic and personal loyalists.

In conclusion, the neo-patrimonial nature of administration in Nigeria has meant that political exigencies, personal consideration, the manipulation of benefits and liabilities have consistently dominated the implementation of policies. This has resulted in the military leadership and a small circle of civilian cronies largely circumventing the formal economy through unprecedented corruption, including large diversions of oil stock, revenues, and systematic commercial fraud.

The combination of personal calculations and clientelist pressures within the system which has led to a more personalistic and predatory control of the state, makes a mockery of public policies. In the words of Lewis (1996: 103),

> Nigeria's political economy increasingly embodied the characteristics of such autocratic régimes as Mobutu Sese Seko's Zaïre, Haiti under Jean-Claude Duvalier, or the Somoza dynasty's Nicaragua... The decline of state institutions, the fragmentation of private sector élites, and the availability of selective exit from the system encouraged a perpetuation of predatory rule.

Indeed, the exacerbation of patrimonialism in Nigeria has become self destructive because the private appropriation of the state by various Nigerian leaders and bureaucrats has destroyed the very economic base of the state. Patrimonialism by definition presupposes the existence of public resources to exploit, but with the way various Nigerian leaders have plundered the national coffers, there will soon hardly be any left 'to eat'. To put it more bluntly, Nigeria now illustrates a general truism: that it is not possible for a few ruling elites or cliques, in the long term, simply to bleed a nation financially dry to the point that it leads to political instability and economic immizeration without damage to itself. The damage, in this case, is more in policy implementation as cost-benefit considerations, questions of equity and efficiency take a back seat.

The neo-patrimonial model of administration in Nigeria therefore, approximates to what has been called by J-F Bayart, the 'criminalization of the State'.

10. THE WEAKENING OF CIVIL SOCIETY

In questions relating to civil society in Nigeria, one is often reminded of the article '*The Coming Anarchy*' by Robert Kaplan, which appeared in the February 1994 *Atlantic Monthly*. Kaplan's thesis is that economic and environmental degradation which is a product of underdevelopment, tribalism, unchecked disease, over-population, war and corruption, threatens to create a category of 'failed states' which would prove impossible to govern by anything resembling a democratic government. One of Kaplan's major case studies was Nigeria.

One does not share this pessimistic view that the course toward anarchy in Nigeria, or for that matter, Africa is inevitable. The painful course of events in Nigeria over the recent past is well documented. Indeed, the history of Nigeria since its independence has been fraught with missed opportunities and crushed expectations for democracy and economic prosperity. No one would deny that for too long Nigeria's potential has been stalled due to domestic political turbulence and economic mismanagement by both military and civilian regimes. However, the problem is substantially more profound than these considerations.

Civil society holds the key to understanding and addressing effectively the political and socioeconomic crises in Africa and particularly in Nigeria. Related to the bulk of studies centred around civil society and its suitability to African conditions, is the increasing criticism of the post-colonial state. While the state has been understood as a dynamic entity where different interests are and can be promoted, the issue of the interactions between the state and civil society and the implication of that interaction for policy implementation seems to have been left aside. The history of colonialism and its implications for the institutional evolution of the state makes questions of the state/civil society relationship relevant to any discussion of the role of civil society in the delivery of social services in Africa.

According to Michael Bratton, although the post-colonial state is weak '...by any conventional measure of institutional capacity, ...it remains the most prominent landmark on the African institutional landscape' (1989, 410). This, according to him is so because of an absence of other institutions in the political space between the family and the state with an outlook beyond parochial environment.

Although the post-colonial state in Nigeria can indeed be said to have been weak, unlike the scenario drawn by Bratton, pre independence and post-independence Nigeria was once characterised by a particularly dense, vibrant and complex civil society with strong civil institutions. Some of the most important civil institutions in Nigeria directly after independence were trade unions, professional associations, farmers' associations, Christian missionaries, and a strong independent press. Some of these institutions were involved alongside nationalist movements in the struggle for political independence in Nigeria.

Historically, a host of these private and voluntary associations have had a profound impact upon individual and collective behaviour in Africa. These were the intermediary and autonomous organisations which functioned between the state and the household. They not only provided the link between the state and societal interests, but also performed the important mediating role of adjusting the macro-policy objectives of the state and the particularistic interests of society's groups through a process of bargaining (Barkan, McNulty and Ayeni 1991).

In today's Africa, one of the fundamental problems is the absence, erosion or weakening of civil society. This can be traced to the period immediately after 1960 (when most African countries attained independence). Then, the primacy of politics was regarded as a prerequisite for development. It was taken that the state, once captured from alien hands by nationalist forces, would be a beneficent, disinterested architect of change. It was also taken for granted that through reform of the structural legacies inherited from colonial powers, as well as through the mobilization of the masses, politics would serve national development. This conceptualization of politics only served as an invitation for leaders to concentrate powers. Politics not only increasingly became an activity confined to a small clique of people, but development policies also became a top-down affair. Indeed, this conceptualization led to the struggle between state and society, which is the reality in Africa today. In this struggle the state has had the upper hand. The historical antecedents of the victory of the state over society can again be traced back to the

argument, after independence in the 1960s, for greater state autonomy to promote rapid economic development. However, once nationalists parties took power, ethnic unrest, military take-overs, civil wars, and elusive economic development derailed their progress toward the proclaimed goals of political liberation and socioeconomic improvement. Further, the aforementioned state autonomy was realized through the concentration of powers in the executive arm of state leaving very little or no space for alternative challenges/questions or control from below (IDS Bulletin 1993).

Consequently, towards the last quarter of the sixties and throughout the seventies, the aforementioned complex civil society shrank as the state seized control of some of the most vibrant institutions, such as the take-over of missionary schools.

The core challenge facing Nigeria is the creation of a civil society capable of effectively governing the country, and an economic infrastructure capable of providing the means for Nigerians to avoid a fate as a 'failed state' (Nigeria TODAY, July 1996).

To grasp the concept of civil society, the definition of what is political is important with regards to the access of social sectors to the centres of power and between them and the state. Now the conventional idea of the state is that it exists to protect the rights of individuals. Accordingly, individuals voluntarily surrender their sovereignty to governments on the assumption that government will use it correctly. In theory this relationship is sustained and reinforced by a viable constitutional democracy that institutionalizes forms of interactions and exchange that can prevent the monopolization of power and resources. This it does by allowing citizens to engage in joint action, to deal effectively with power relations, and to share a broad commitment to the fostering of public judgement, civil responsibility and problem solving capabilities. However, considering what has been discussed so far with regard to the gradual demobilization of civil society in Nigeria, Nigeria typifies such societies that defy the logic of constitutional democratic legality and it further exhibits a gap between the formal aspects of public life and the 'real' workings of the sociopolitical arena. It is a state where individual rights and liberties are challenged and in the extreme, abused daily. This is where a strong civil society is of paramount importance.

The concept of civil society refers to the existence of organized public life and free associations beyond the sphere of the state and free of its tutelage yet oriented toward the public sphere and public policies. This includes voluntary associations, social movements, and intermediary institutions. The state being the political organization of society, the concept of civil society envisages the existence of a public space that is not merely structured politically 'from above' but a space that is visibly 'open' (Roniger & Gúnes-Ayata 1994). The emergence of a viable civil society creates a sphere of interaction and communication in which the public organizes and expresses itself and comes up with political codes that oversteps the traditional boundaries of moral conduct. This leads to a widening of political participation, and a crystalization of citizenship ideals, civil freedoms, and legal frameworks aimed at subjecting traditional authority to the scrutiny of representative forms of government (Habermas. 1989).

Alfred Stepan defines civil society as an arena '...where manifold social movements... and civic organizations from all classes... attempt to constitute themselves in an ensemble of arrangements so that they can express themselves and advance their interests' (1988, 3-4). Civil society is therefore that set of non-governmental popular organizations, institutions, associations (formal or informal), authority structures, and collective activities which group the mass of the population together in different way (Ngunyi and Gathiaka in Gibbon 1993).

A brief exploration of the modern idea of civil society in the history of political philosophy can be traced to classical political theorists, liberal philosophers and historicists. While in classical political thought and in theories based on natural law, civil society was indistinguishable from the state; for liberal philosophers civil society was seen as a means of defense against potential abuse by political leaders, especially given the unprecedented concentration of power at the apex of the modern polity; and for the historicists (Hegel), civil society from being located between the family and the state contained not only economic transactions but also their voluntary forms of organizations, such as corporations, professional associations, and trade unions (Bratton, in Harbeson, Rothchild and Chazan 1994).

For the purpose of this paper, I base my analysis on the liberal and historicist formulae because of their common ground and convergence. The focus is on how various groups and sectors in society organized their lives beyond or at the margin of state action, influence and civil society's response to such action and alternatives to state channels. What is this civil society?

The most dominant approaches in academic circles today are those that regard civil society as a certain area of society, the public space between the household and the state, where groups constituted at a level beyond family, interact with each other and with the state to pursue their interest (Azarya, in Harbeson, Rothchild and Chazan 1994). Apart from the neutrality of this definition, it does not also say much about what gives that arena its 'civil' nature. A more relevant definition for our purposes, is the comprehensive formulations of civil society by Edward Shils.

Shils (1991), identifies three main components. First, civil society is seen as a set of autonomous institutions that are distinct from the family, the class, the locality, and the state. Second, it conducts a particular set of relationships between itself and the state, maintains the separation of state and civil society through some safeguard mechanisms. Third, 'civility': a widespread pattern of refined and civil manners.

This third component is of interest here as it explains the basis of civil society. Shils contends that this 'civility' which is a characteristic of civil society goes much deeper than simple courtesy and good manners. The defining characteristic of such manners is respect for the dignity of fellow members of society. It is an acknowledgement of consideration of others outside and beyond one's family. It is the collective responsibility to the common good. The positive value of activities meant to safeguard this common good are at the core of civility and form what Shils calls the fundamental virtue of civil society.

In this context, civil society is regarded as an arena or social space - public - that which is of common concern. To see oneself as part of a collectivity and to be willing to give precedence to its interests, there must be the recognition of the common good. However, significant differences exist in the extent to which organized action promotes or safeguards the precedence of collective over parochial interests. A more civil society would be one in which people attributed greater legitimacy to activities in the public sphere and a willingness to give precedence to its interests. The sense of reciprocal obligations and expectations that prevail among groups in society, a commitment to take part in the establishment of a common order and a voluntary compliance to abide by its rules is the essence of civil society (Azarya, in Harbeson, Rothchild and Charzan 1994).

To extend our understanding of the significance of civil society in the process of local development, in the provision of social services, its evolution and state-society relations in Nigeria, I will examine one 'hometown' association in Western Nigeria and one Federal government initiative aimed at mobilising rural community action.

10.1   Hometown associations

In his discussion of the importance of association life, N. A. Fadipe (Fadipe 1970) identified four principal types of association: political, religious, occupational, mutual and convivial.

> The tendency to form associations and corporations is very strong among the Yoruba. To a large extent it derives from the organization of the people into compounds. They are formed for the purpose of promoting and protecting common interests in the field of politics, economics, religion, recreation and enjoyment... One interesting result of this tradition of associations is that wherever there is an appreciable community of Yoruba, either outside Yorubaland or even only outside their own particular communities, an organization will spring up complete with officers. This organization will certainly have judicial functions, and will have its convivial and mutual help features strongly developed (Fadipe, P.243).

10.2   The Otan-Ayegbaju Progressive Union

Materials for this association are based on the work of Barkan, McNulty, and Ayeni (1991). Most communities in Western Nigeria have hometown associations that have functioned for more than 50 years, often beginning in the colonial era. The most successful of these have provided a wide array of basic services to residents of local communities - primary and especially secondary schools; medical services through the construction and staffing of health clinics and even hospitals; electricity and telephone lines through the installation of utility poles; water, roads, public-meeting halls, and postal services through the construction of necessary infrastructures. These initial efforts at self-help development and provision were a a response to the unwillingness of the colonial state to provide welfare services widely.

The Otan-Ayegbaju Progressive Union, situated in the town of Otan-Ayegbaju (approximately 125,000 residents), was founded in 1930. By the 1930s, it was a relatively underdeveloped community and the primary purpose of the Union was therefore the development of the 'hometown'. Early efforts at development by the union consisted mainly of attempts to persuade the British to locate selected infrastructure in Otan-Ayegbaju. These efforts resulted in the construction of a catering rest-house for British officers. The construction of an Anglican secondary school in the late 1940s, built through a combination of self-help organised by the union and material assistance provided by the missionaries, was the first significant project to benefit the 'hometown'. In 1955 a Catholic secondary school was opened after being constructed on a similar basis. Also, through the efforts of the union, Otan-Ayegbaju was one of the first rural communities to obtain electricity.

After the construction of a large meeting hall in 1962, interest then shifted to a more complicated series of road projects and from the 1980s, new ambitious projects, such as new post office, built at a cost of N250,000 ('Naira' is Nigeria's official currency); conversion of the old building into a police station; a ring road around the town; the renovation and expansion of the town hall; the erection and operation of public toilet; the employment of town watchmen to reduce theft; and the construction of a 25-bed hospital at a cost of N1.6 million, have been started.

With regard to finance, the union has a highly routinized process by which local developments are organised. Ideas for specific projects arise informally among the leadership and/or the members, and are then discussed at a monthly meeting of delegates from the roughly 25 active branches which function in Nigeria's principal cities. Each sends two to three delegates to the monthly meetings. In the meetings, votes are rarely taken as decisions are by consensus.

After estimating the total labour and material costs, two principles are followed by the union. First, contributions from the residents of the town and its urban branches are requested on a project-by-project basis. The requirement is that each member pays an annual due, though most money raised is in response to requests for support of a specific project. Local residents are assessed on an individual basis in the expectation that many will pay by contributing their labour, while those residing outside Otan-Ayegbaju are assessed via the branch to which they belong in the expectation that they will pay in cash. This system avoids the possibility of local residents pleading inability to pay and urban members are pressured by branch officers to give in the knowledge that contributions will be publicised.

The construction of the 25-bed town hospital illustrates how a well functioning hometown association can serve as an intermediary between individual residents of the rural and urban societies, and between local communities and the state. Through a four-way partnership involving the union, the WHO (World Health Organization), the Oyo State Ministry of Health, and the teaching hospital of the University of Benin, the hospital was completed and staffed.

For an association like this to run so efficiently and effectively, without the benefit of coercive powers of the state, needs more an effective leadership, as important as this might be. In this case the success story has to do with the attachment to their place of origin. Though the motivating factor may be the simple altruism of enlightened self-interest, this should not be confused with this 'place of origin' sentiment. Hometown associations, civil associations and other associations that qualify as belonging to civil society succeed to the extent that they mobilize migrants, as well as those who have remained in the town, around this theme.

10.3   Government organized civil associations

To emulate the accomplishments of established civil organization like the one described above, efforts have been made by government to try to produce organizations in all of the over 500 local government areas. Attempts have been made to promote the development of civil organizations having the same general geography as the local government areas.

Towards this end, the Federal government introduced three programmes which seek to build an informal, albeit lower-level system of governance. These are the Directorate of Food, Roads, Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) and the Directorate for Social Mobilization (MAMSER), and The Better Life Program.

Whatever the political motivation, whether it is related to government's desire to consolidating access not only to the majority of the population in general or to encourage organisations that are Nigerian enough to depend on and influence, these programmes were initiated by the government to promote local participation and to strengthen the capacity for direct action at the grassroots (Barkan, McNulty, and Ayeni 1991).

The role of the Directorate for Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure is to register a development association in each of Nigeria's local community to contribute to the building of and maintenance of roads in the locality, help in the construction of food storage facilities and the provision of other rural infrastructures.

The Directorate of Social Mobilization seeks to inform citizens of their rights and obligations, especially the standard of performance they should expect from local councils. In fact, the Directorate's political education manual states: 'popular organizations cut across narrow interests and are run on the basis of democratic principles.... Democracy and social justice can only be achieved when people participate in decisions affecting their lives through democratically elected bodies at all levels of society' (MAMSER 1989).

The Better Life Program is intended for rural women and is aimed at developing women's association all over the country.

With regard to finance and implementation, the development funds programs are allocated through the local government areas. Both Directorate of Food, Roads, and

Rural Infrastructure have encouraged the development of local associations to receive funds and link them to government programs. Towards this end, a new initiative of developing community banks with matching funds for locally raised capital from the federal government was formed.

It is noticeable here, that the philosophy of these policy efforts is not only a program and a process structured to correspond to the government's administrative structure, it also corresponds to a classic liberal civil society argumentation: opposing feudalism and traditional rulers, promoting voluntary associations, linking democratic participation in government with comparable participation in associations, and encouraging engagement with the state (Jane Guyer, in Harbeson, Rothchild and Chazan 1994). By encouraging the proliferation of these community development assistance, the government attempts to create civil society at the grassroots.

They would really be counted as belonging to civil society if they succeed, but the extent to which the government can succeed in nurturing the spirit of 'civility', the sense of belonging, 'hometown' feeling and effectiveness of autonomous civil organisation is uncertain given the aforementioned problems of neo-patrimonialism associated with all government endeavours and the fundamental problem of engineering the emergence of grassroots associations from above. In an indictment of some of the activities of these government-funded associations, Newswatch magazine (December, 7 1987: 14) wrote:

> From Lagos to Maiduguri and from Sokoto to Calabar, various projects of high economic and social values, worth billions of Naira, lie fallow. Rotting, rusting and crumbling under rain and shine are abandoned hospitals, clinics, markets, dams, airports, office-blocks, housing projects, school buildings, libraries....

The paper goes on to comment on the fact that such well-intentioned projects have failed to see the light of day for reasons of fraud, mismanagement, politics, lack of continuity of government policies, planlessness and failure to involve the local communities where these projects are cited. Officials simply turn themselves or their relations into emergency contractors or align themselves with contractors, thereby sabotaging policy implementation.

In contrast to the government initiated civil society associations, the hometown associations are built upon a strong attachment to community and place felt by the 'sons and daughters of the soil' who ventured to the urban areas and abroad. The great sense of 'civic pride' in the communities is the potent force for mobilising these local resources to meet specific needs. It is this attachment to community and place that the 'right' and 'obligation' to support one's hometown is borne and internalized. Failure to do so is seen as an abrogation of responsibility and at times a denial of one's identity (Barkan, McNulty, and Ayeni 1991). It is this spirit of 'sons and daughters of the soil' that makes these associations contribute to the process of economic development by providing needed infrastructure, as well as an array of social welfare services which the state is unwilling or unable to deliver, especially to small towns and rural areas. Typically, because the state lacks the capacity and because it is unprofitable for individual

suppliers in the market, these 'public goods' are not provided. This is where these hometown associations come in handy. Typical examples are the provision of primary and secondary schools, basic health services, water, and cattle dips by Harambee self-help groups in Kenya (Barkan and Holmquist, in Holmquist 1984), the provision of loans to small farmers by rural credit unions in Zimbabwe (Bratton 1986) and the activities of market women's associations, farmers' unions, local improvement societies, cultural organizations, and 'old boy' associations in West Africa (Barkan, McNulty, and Ayeni 1991).

Indeed, civil associations thrive in Nigeria because of the persistence of ties to localities of origin, and the complex network of social relations which cross-cut rural and urban locales (Berry 1985). Ostrom (1996) has reported that in the fieldwork conducted in 1991 in Nigeria, the team found that in all the villages visited, informal associations of villagers were actively engaged in community projects such as the maintenance of a road, the repair of a school building, and/or the construction of a community centre. The team also found that in many cases, the successful 'sons and daughters' of the village returned each year to participate in general planning of improvements that could be made and they sent funds to purchase supplies that were needed to undertake the project. 'In all of the villages, therefore, it was possible to mobilize citizen effort for community affairs and the co-production of goods and services' (Ostrom 1996).

From the above analysis I will venture a definition of civil society as

> those voluntary associations created by nonstate interests within society sharing a notion of the common good and willing to contribute to the realisation of that common good for their community.

A corollary of this is that the analysis of state/civil society relationship goes beyond the notions of confrontation and collaboration and takes account of organized attempts, such as those of the hometown associations to provide social welfare services which the state and the market fails to provide.

11. SUMMARY AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It takes a village to raise a child

This is an African proverb that properly epitomizes the role of community in the provision of a social service like education in Africa. This proverb has recently gained popularity with children's advocate from Mrs. Hillary Clinton's usage of this African proverb as the title of her book on issues relating to children. It is a part of the African heritage and the most clear understanding of it is that a community that refuses to share responsibility for its members has no right to expect accountability.
Although the concept of civil society does not transmogrify into community, in the cryptic style of proverbs, 'it takes a village to raise a child' makes a similar point for the role of civil society in the provision of educational services.

In attempting to deal with implementation issues in the provision of social services in Nigeria, a number of issues were raised. This enquiry began with the proposition (though not explicitly stated) that the implementation problems with regard to social service provision in Africa are directly related to state monopoly in the attempt to provide these services. The combination of structural adjustment conditionalities and incoherent policies were shown to have negative implications for policy implementation.

The neo-patrimonial nature of the state in a wider context of social and cultural fluidity accompanied by the spectacular economic growth as a result of the oil boom, made the emergence of an essentially opportunistic view of public office virtually inevitable. After independence in 1960, we witness a gradual descent under Obasanjo/Shagari to be followed under Babangida by a precipitous fall into the chasm of venality which is now characteristic of Nigerian public life. Under these circumstances, any attempt at reform always run up against the dominant patrimonial ethos which makes any objective and systematic application and implementation of rules, laws and policies impossible.

Further, this study has emphasized that decentralization is necessary but that it should not end at service decentralization alone. To be more effective, any transfer of responsibility must go hand in hand with the strengthening of local institutions and freedom for other elements of civil society to operate. Appropriate decentralization mechanisms could include revenue generation, decentralization of the decisionmaking process and other mechanisms to induce community involvement. This would lead to the promotion of active community accountability that could enhance the equity and efficiency of social service delivery.

Furthermore, it was pointed out that even though civil society had been active in educational provision in the years before most of these countries became independent, and even though the principle of societal responsibility which generates this participation from civil society has been clearly articulated, there is still a great sense of ambiguity on the part of the state as to the role of civil society. This has led to the relegation of civil society to a position of utmost irrelevance which has contributed greatly to the present crises and under-provision of educational services in Nigeria.

As the state had assumed more responsibility for assuring the provision of basic social services, the traditional responsibility of civil society to provide or to contribute to the needs of its members diminished and consequently its role became less important. But the *harambee* school in Kenya exemplifies Africa's voluntary and community endeavour (Fafunwa 1974).

Therefore, the time has come for the rediscovery of the idea of cooperation in educational provision in Nigeria with the incorporation of strong participation from civil society which would avoid the usual inefficiencies of public supply and the exclusion and fragmentation typical of the neoliberal approach.

The existence of a viable civil society will not only help to solve the present problem of a top-down approach to administration, it will also help generate additional resources for projects. Local and community schools with minimal regulations to ensure national standards are one visible way of eliciting more resource contribution from communities towards primary, secondary and vocational education.

In the end,

> when co-production is discouraged by taking over schools that villagers had perceived as being 'their' schools, by creating chaotic changes in who is responsible for funding and running primary school system, and by top-down administrative command as the style for all decision making, only the determined citizens will persist in co-productive activities... in Nigeria, villages that had demonstrated their capabilities to engage in collective action were discouraged by government officials from active engagement in the education of village children (Ostrom 1996)

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