

**ROBERT A. DIBIE (2014). PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: THEORY, ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION. ILISHAN-REMO: BABCOCK UNIVERSITY PRESS. 424 PAGES AND 18 PRELIMINARY PAGES**

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Professor Robert Dibie's *PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION Theory, Analysis and Application* is a very audacious attempt to put across to both practitioners and students, fresh insight into the intricacies of public administration in the continually changing world. It provides practical guide to having clearer understanding of Public administration with greater significance being accorded to governance, democratic ideals, and delivery of policies and programs that target society's needs. The book targets governance from different orientations and perspectives, with a view to providing the type of all round knowledge that is needed to deliver services that meet global standards at all levels of government, federal, state and local.

The book tackles public administration issues covering several major sub-topics in the field of public administration that would meet the yearnings of both bureaucrats and students alike. The author in the thirteen chapters of book covers most of the usual topics of study in public administration, thereby covering some of the shortcomings of earlier publications in the field such as *Public Administration: A Nigerian and Comparative Perspective* by Ladipo Adamolekun and *Public Administration in Nigeria* edited by Oladimeji Aborisade and Isiaka Aransi. Among the subjects ignored by the afore-mentioned authors which Dibie's book addressed, are Development administration and Strategic Management, which are key issues in Public Administration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria. Quite unlike regular public administration books in Nigeria, Dibie, uses case studies from researches he conducted in the country and other countries to enrich the work. The importance of the public sector in solving the emerging societal problems, are highlighted, and the enabling tools that would empower the bureaucrat to undertake proper analysis before adopting a particular policy option are provided. A major positive for this book is that it is published by a University Press, which distinguishes its quality in comparison to the many self – published books across the country, that are usually not subjected to independent review and editing. Dibie is not new to the terrain, as he has authored over 100 peer-reviewed journal articles, majority of which have been on public management/administration, public policy, development administration and environmental policies. His mastery of the field is evident in the presentation of the contents of the book.

The book is divided into thirteen chapters, with each chapter addressing a major topic in Public Administration. The chapters are: public administration as a discipline; public administration and organizational theories; management approach to public administration; ethics and public administration; managing human resources; public finance and budgeting; intergovernmental administration; public policy, bureaucracy and democracy; strategic management in public sector; development administration; the evolution of public administration in Nigeria; local government in Nigeria; and globalisation and public administration in Nigeria.

Professor Dibia opens the book with an exposition of what public administration is and involves. Providing sixteen solid definitions of public administration from various scholars, the author posits that public administration is concerned with the management of public resources, programmes, activities, and the implementation of public policies. In discussing organizational theories, he focuses on organizational behaviour, using the three levels of analysis: individual, groups and organisations to highlight government methods of regulating business operations through various monetary and fiscal policies. The author goes further to show the relevance of managerial behaviour in achieving government policies through efficient and effective use of public resources. Professor Dibia sees managerial approach as the precursor for the adoption of new public management, which emerged from two different traditions: the American and British perspectives. Moral problems are ubiquitous in public management, extending beyond the commonly discussed issues of bribery, theft, mismanagement, and waste of public resources. Three case studies on international analysis of public administration ethics are provided; Ghana and Nigeria, India and United Kingdom and South Korea.

In discussing human resources management in the public sector, Professor Dibia, emphasizes contemporary changes that the subject has undergone. Components of the subject such as recruitment, training and development, compensation, workplace safety, job security, as well as collective bargaining are dealt with in detail. Government intervention in the economy becomes necessary in cases of market failure, need for redistribution of resources among different groups in the society, and provision of public good is emphasized in the discussion public finance and budgeting. Intergovernmental relation is vital to achieving effective and responsible execution of public programmes. The different systems of government, adopted by different countries of the world are briefly highlighted, before the reasons why a country would opt for federalism is dealt with. The author proposes that fiscal federalism in Nigeria is remarkably different from those of the USA and Canada; as Nigeria operates a quasi-federal political system with the federal government dominating of the state governments.

Professor Dibia explains public policy as what the government chooses to do or not do. There is confusion in Nigeria over the meaning of public policy and the processes of policy making, execution and analysis, as a result the author engages in detailed discussion of the nature and scope of policy citing various scholars who had previously worked on policy across the world. Furthermore, Dibia sees strategic management in the public sector as the amalgamation of organizational functions and responsive culture that blends strategic government planning, issue monitoring, best practices of government responsibilities, including dialogic communication needed to foster a supportive climate between each ministry or public agency and those people who affect its success and who are affected by its operations. Among the identified problems associated with Nigeria's public sector, namely; legitimacy of regimes; political conflicts; corruption; mismanagement of public resources; lack of resources to effectively implement health policies; fragmented policies or agency mandates; incoherent overall approach; a lack of

citizens' participation in policy formulation and subsequent ownership of policies; and lack of appropriate monetary and fiscal policies.

Professor Dibia sees development administration as describing the processes of establishing an effective public administration system that could consistently and pragmatically deliver goods and services to the citizens in developing nations in an efficient and equitable manner. Among the challenges facing development administration in some developing countries (including Nigeria) as observed by the author are; monetary and fiscal crises, high population density, lack of adequate trained public administrators to implement development policies, as well as growing influence of religion and traditional values in politics and administration. The factors that foster good governance and development, include development-oriented and highly ethical leadership; adherence to rule of law; building administrative capacities; environmental awareness; citizen participation; decentralization; social transformation; responsiveness, transparency and accountability; equity and justice; freedom of expression and association; electoral legitimacy, amongst others. Professor Dibia writes that the shortcomings and inadequacies of public administration in Nigeria like other African countries have their roots in the country's colonial experience. The author observes that Nigeria's civil service has experienced nine (9) reform programmes, starting with the Harragin Commission of 1946 and ending with the Ayida panel of 1994. Careful examination of regional and national civil service of African nations, portray their public administration as relatively weak, especially in the application of management principles and economic development.

Furthermore, Professor Dibia traces the formation of local government in Nigeria to the early nineteenth century, observing that it has been through several episodes of trial and error. The first reform of local government, the author notes took place in 1945. The author provides the report of survey research that was carried out to assess the training needs of public administrators at the local government level in Nigeria. Among the findings of the study were that most of the local governments do not train their public administrators; and none of the 1350 respondents had received training in public ethics, even in the face of the fact that Nigeria has been regarded as one of the most corrupt countries of the world since the year 2000. The author writes that the impact of globalisation on public administration directly impacts the government's policy-making process in terms of expanding the arena of issues to be addressed and addition of constraints, variables, and people to the process and analysis. According to Dibia, the relationship between globalisation and public administration in Nigeria also conveys a legacy of a process that requires Nigerians to manage all their assets that can contribute to improving the well-being of its citizens. The author goes further to provide the findings of a research on the teaching of public administration and views of public administrators about public administration education in the country.

At the end of each chapter, Professor Dibia provides genuine recall guide, to help the reader appraise what is gleaned from each chapter in the form of exercises which follow the author's concluding observations. The perspectives of public administration presented by the author in the book include normative foundations, public administration as management, public administration as organization and management theory, public administration as planned change, public administration as politics, public administration as involvement of non – state actors, including Non-governmental organizations. Linkages are made with other perspectives to provide a wholistic coverage of the discipline.

The book has some typographic and grammatical errors which are evidence of sloppy editing, as well as some printer's errors. The errors however, do not remove anything from the fact that Prof

Robert Dible has succeeded in producing an exceptional work, which will leave his imprint on the sands of the study and practice of public administration in Nigeria. Written in very reader friendly language, the practical approach and insertion of various researches conducted by the author is a welcome development to book writing in this discipline in the country. This book is a must have for all lecturers and students of public administration at all levels, as well as practitioners (public administrators and even politicians) at all levels of government in Nigeria.