

# Electricity Service Delivery Privatisation: Factor of Socio-Spatial Disparity in Nigeria

Olamide Eniola Victor<sup>1</sup>, Akeju E. A<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Urban and Regional Planning Department School of Environmental Studies

<sup>2</sup>Mechanical Engineering Department, The Federal Polytechnic Ado Ekiti, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The desire for the people's welfare and alleviation of poverty that reflect the eighth agenda of the Millennium Development Goals should be of utmost concern of good governance. As nations of the world are transiting from the vision 20:2020 to 2030, as a matter of vital consideration, for any economic development policy, planning or scheme adopted like privatisation policy, the nations' economic activities must not lead to socio-spatial disparity of the public socio-economy and welfare. In the developed countries adoption of privatisation is for improvement on the quality of life of the public. The public utility service delivery was for the betterment of the generality of any public service users. The government of those nations put in place an enabling environment for the successful implementation of privatisation of their public utilities. However, the problem statement of the paper emanates as the outcomes of electricity service delivery privatisation in Nigeria were far below the people's expectation, giving the recorded failure of electricity service delivery. As a reviewed study, information from extant literature and excerpt of the newspaper formed the methodology adopted in this paper. The paper seeks to discuss the social disparity and poor condition of the masses as directly and indirectly being the consequences of electricity service delivery privatisation in Nigeria. The issue is that electricity service delivery privatisation has been claimed having adverse effect on the welfare of the populace in Nigeria. This is a situation where poor masses are becoming poorer. Centered on this identified policy lag of non-harmonisation of electricity service delivery privatisation with the actual situation of electric facilities on ground, this paper recognizes the inadequacies of privatisation policy to electricity service delivery. This study finally in its recommendations suggested imperative of taking the enabling environment of the adequacy of electricity service delivery components into consideration before embarking on electricity service delivery privatisation in order to forestall likely causes of failure in its implementation.

**Keywords:** Electricity public utility, Service delivery, Privatisation, Spatial, Socio-disparity, Poverty, Nigeria.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The subject of spatial disparity in social life resulted from the cognizance of socio-spatial structure including the understanding of the influence of spatial evaluation on social qualities of life of different group of people and furthermore the consequences and aftereffects of policy-making and strategic-planning without socio-spatial consideration. The form, arrangement and distribution of resources that are basic to social wellbeing of the people is basically stressed of physical planning professionals, seeking to understanding those well benefited, the benefit, there location and the process of getting the benefits. This led to the question of, who, what, where, how and when, to answer how resources basic to social wellbeing and quality of life of people are being directly and indirectly being influenced by the nation's economic strategies they usually embarked upon. Individuals and groups well benefitted within the society all refer to "who", while the type of benefit in term of good and services reachable among individuals regardless of the peoples' background and socio-cultural status are amassed under 'what'. The location question which is 'where' answers the configuration of the peoples' environmental setting in terms of proximity and opportunity to source and flow of the resource benefits. And

vice versa the opposite externalities they suffer. Question on "how" is the procedures, the coordination or structure by which the benefits of the outcomes of the government economic policy are fair-mindedly, sufficiently and genuinely shared among people regardless of spots confined by different socio-cultural and etymological affiliations [1].

The issue of disparities in resource distribution stressed that, areal differential emphatically impacts odds on the distribution of public utilities. Someone's homebirth and dwelling place enduring effects on their accessibility to certain benefits in life. These sorts of differentials in human arrangement in space to the benefits from the proceeds of government strategic policies are common occurrence in sub-Sahara Africa generally and particularly in Nigeria [2]. An indicator from extant literatures of late, for example, demonstrates that, "the poorest geographical regions of middle-income countries are, on average, are as poor as low-income countries" [3]. Essence of livelihood and development relies upon the extent of accessibility to discover the necessities of life, like, three square meal, pipe-borne-water, clothes, and housing. Nevertheless, accessibility to the basics of life necessities requires their equitable provision of such basic facility. Hence, the distribution of public utility of the sort of power supply which is basic to social wellbeing necessitate adherence to the principle of spatial planning. The physical facilities of this public utility are skewed spatially distributed, [4, 5]. Similarly the skewed arrangement of service delivery amidst the general public has been upheld in the literature [6, 7]. Essential services like power supply and its viable efficient distribution becomes vital, central to the general welfare of people [8, 9, 10, 11]. Distribution of basic public utilities like electricity service delivery, its adherence to physical planning arranging standards, would overtly and covertly serve as panacea to the matter of disparity in social space particularly in Nigeria, a rising and developing economy [12, 13, 14, 15].

Nonetheless, ineffective supply of power reflects has negative effect on the manufacturing segment of the nation's economy [16], labours are relieved off their work and people lose their job resulting from the effect of power reform [17], these climaxed to more reasons for prevalence of disparity in social space in terms of deficiency among the people, [18, 19, 20], lapse among social group were created, causing occurrence of spatially segregation of socially deprived societies, [21]. Thus necessitates the physical planning, of the space [22, 23], and availability spatial data, as advocated by [24] in order to prevent lop-sidedness in the public service delivery and guarantee growth sustainability.

## II. THEORETICAL BCKGROUND

### *A. Privatisation Concept and electricity service delivery:*

The practice of transferring the control of State Owned Enterprise (SOE), and publicly managed agency, goods and service into privately owned business is Privatisation [25, 26, 27, 28, 29]. The privatisation policy gained credence form its adoption by the British government in 1980s resulting from Adam Smith the proponent of an economic theorist with economic liberalisation idea [30]. Following this, the adoption of the policy had embraced almost all the developed countries across the globe. Its adoption ranges from North America, South America, Europe, and Australia. Similarly some of the developing countries in the continent of Asia and in Africa had also adopted the policy of privatisation for some reasons best known to them and the economic objectives they wish to achieve [31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38]. Some of these countries had socialistic inclusiveness in the privatisation of public utility like the in case of electricity being discussed in this study while some were some were indifference to social welfare in their privatisation policy.

### *B. Socio-spatial Disparity of Public Service in Nigeria:*

Social disparity reflects in the skewedness of the availability of resources obtainable among the people in the community. Disparity in the society system set in as some basic needs and services such as electricity only available for a particular set of people in the community [39]. Generally, disparity in the distribution of resources is attributable to the system of British administration in Nigeria. Their long period of colonialism fostered differences in the social settings in the country. This is reflected in their system of organisation in the space and the layout of the residential neighbourhood which are directly to their own convenience with no regard to the indigenes of the land [40, 41, and 42]. Our following leaders after the colonial era did not deviate from this kind of skewedness in the social setting but was furthered since the nation gained independence and the current wave of privatisation driven economy that is not socially friendly in Nigeria.

### *C. Social Disparity as Indicators of Marginalisation and Social Exclusion:*

The concept of Marginalisation gained credence in the researches on sociology, [43], portrays disparity in the social

setting, social deprivation, inaccessible to influence and involvement, [44, 45, 46]. They also averred the disparity in the electricity service delivery to the city centers and rural areas in Nigeria [47]. In the United Kingdom [48], the Poverty and Social Exclusion (PSE) advanced the concept of Social exclusion. It's described as being deprived of basic need of life [49], accessibility to goods and services, needed socio-economic resources, privileges, and contribution in the normal simple social interactions and obtainable social activities to the general public [50, 51, 52, 53].

#### ***D. The Gap between electricity service delivery Privatisation and Spatial Planning Principles:***

The significance of electricity physical facility and delivery of service as fundamental to socio-economic advancement cannot be underrated. [54] Averred the accessibility of these resources as fundamental to socio-economic growth, [55, 56, 57] buttressed the submission as possible way of restoring the economy and transform the nation through diversification.

The imperative physical planning principles in the impartial distribution of electricity cannot be overemphasised. [58] Suggest adequate distribution of electric physical facilities, [59] posit the imperative of physical planning to check haphazard circulation of social resources to guarantee justifiable economic growth, [60] support the accessibility to data on spatial issue is fundamental and directory to effectiveness of the decision making either by the public or private sector in the quest for electricity service delivery. Although [61], notices the lack of proper due diligence process in the choice of unqualified investors, also [62] observed inadequate statistical data of the people's socio-economic related issues, as well as insufficient spatial information are factors responsible for impediment of electricity service delivery privatisation in non-consideration of socio-spatial disparity, [63, 64, 65]. This lapse was supported by the American Society of Civil Engineer [66], stressed the need for proper placement of public utility physical infrastructure of the like of electricity service delivery through the collaboration of all the relevant participants. This move would serve as solid background for growing, sustainable socio-economic development of a nation devoid of any trace of socio-spatial disparity. [67] and [68] in their respective contribution supported the filling of this conceptual gap as panacea to the statement of problem earlier explained in this paper.

#### ***E. Extant Review of Literature:***

Existing literatures reviewed, averred that electricity service delivery privatisation has deprived the ruralites and the urban poor [69]. Here lies the background for disparity in the Nigeria Social setting where the less privileged were denied accessibility to service delivery of electricity, According to [70] Privatising electricity service delivery had negative effect on the entire masses in the nation contrary to its expectations. The failure of electricity service delivery privatisation further contributes to the poor condition of the national economic development [71] and [72]. It has also hindered the development local economy to improve accordingly [74, 75].

#### ***F. Social-disparities outcomes of Electricity service delivery Privatisation in Nigeria:***

The deplorable condition of electricity service delivery in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. The adverse situation had almost affected all aspects of people live. This is so as the state of economy of any nation is a reflection of the effective delivery of its electricity service [76, 77, 78, 79, 80]. In support of this majority of the manufacturing industries, big and small organisations are not supplied with constant power in the course of their production but depending on other source of power in their daily production activities [81, 82, 83]. The imports of this is a reflection of increase in cost of production, increase in the price of good and services, reduction in their workforce, total lay-off leading to rise rate of unemployment, developing pauperisation and poverty ridden social setting which eventually widening disparity the social setting [84].

Observations from various quarter pointed to adverse effects of privatisation of electricity service delivery. It was stressed the policy further deprived the poor and widened disparity in the delivery of the basics of life and in the living standard of life of masses in the country [85, 86]. Deprivation and social exclusion, [86] of certain section of people from accessibility to some publicly or privately supply of utilities like, electricity, among others are pointers of poverty cited by [87], was perceived as part of the consequences of privatisation leading to disparity social accessibility in the nation. Figure 1.1 showed the trickle-down effect of socio spatial-disparity of electricity service delivery privatisation poor outcomes.

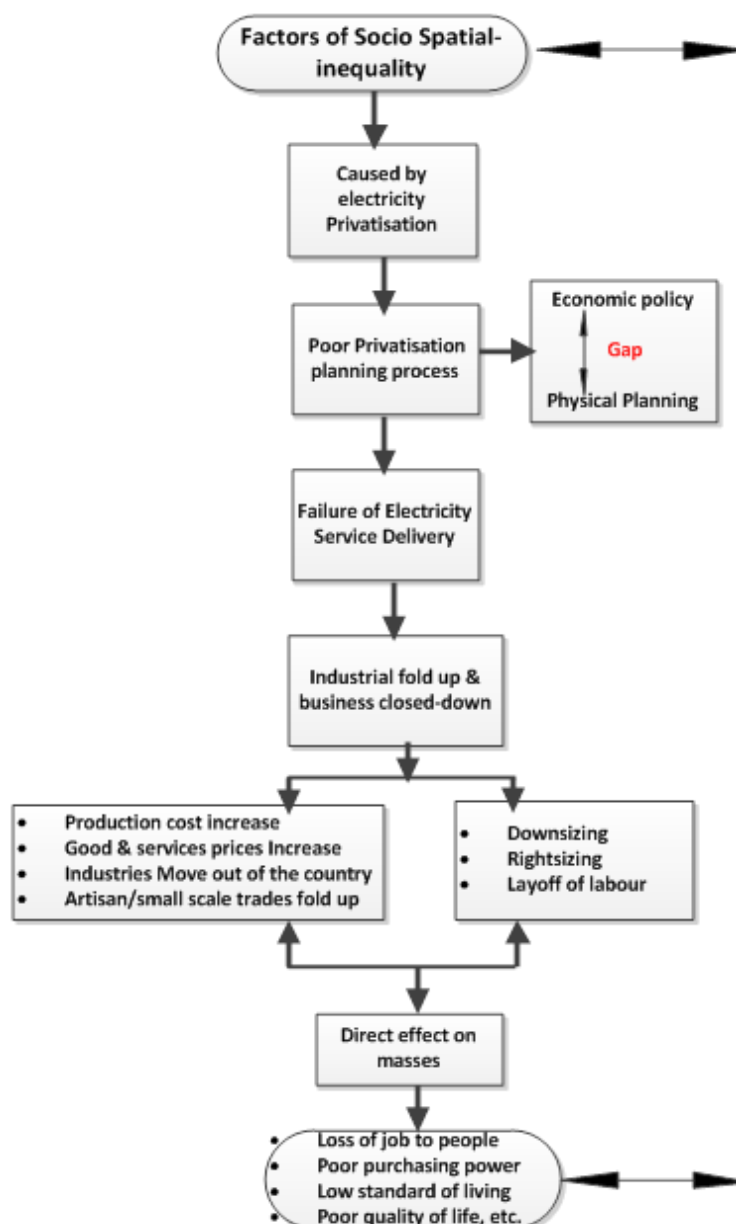


Figure 1.1 Factors of Socio Spatial-disparity Electricity service delivery Privatisation outcomes

### III. CONCLUSION

The socio-spatial implications of electricity supply privatisation in the case of Nigerian based its shortcomings on the fact that it is not social centered that seeks to pursue the requirement of people's welfare. This occurred as a result of non-reconciliation of privatisation policy with actual situation of electric facilities distribution over the space. Non-consideration of the electric facilities functional condition and the deterioration of electric facilities due to long time disinvestment in electric facilities were among other responsible factors in this discourse. Furthermore, the situation of the electric facilities were not in relation to the neighbourhood layout and also do not match up with development growth and population expansion. The consequence of this is led to overstretched, deteriorated and eventual total breakdown of the facilities. Privatisation approach to electricity service delivery without initial consideration of the deplorable condition of the facilitating facilities has been identified as background for its recording failure. Government failure to realise the foregoing is policy making lapse. The Investors who are profit minded cannot be expected to have interest in the social implications of their operations as they are only concerned with how to recoup their money back within the time frame of their investment.

Hence, the government has the responsibility to find initial solution to the proper arrangement of electric facilities for effective service delivery in order to bridge the gap between the different social groups that are consequent of electricity service delivery privatisation. The resultant effect of this is that, large scale enterprise and manufacturing industries would thrive well to give room for employment, there would be opportunity for cottage and small scale industries to spring up. Bridging the gap between economic policy of electricity service delivery privatisation with spatial planning principles would not only witness extraordinary improvement in the nations' economic development and growth but would also have the gap between the rich and the poor drastically narrowed down as an eventual solution to socio-spatial disparity in socio-economic benefits.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Economic policy cum implementation of the like of electricity service delivery privatisation of must be mindful of the public equity, having social face to improvement of public standard of living.
- Holistic and all-inclusive approach that will incorporate arrangement of electric physical infrastructure facilities distribution that embraces diverse societal settings is needed.
- It becomes imperative that, equal right, opportunities and consideration be given to every individual both to the poor and the richest individual in the community while considering electricity service delivery as part of public utility.
- Adequate due diligence process of the generality of SOEs especially those that are publicly related like electricity service deliveries privatisation should be carried out as opposed to haphazard manner of electricity service delivery. This would form the background for equal consideration of every fabrics of the society.
- Socio-spatial disparity would thrive, in a situation where policies are married with realities, where the entire populace and their welfare are prioritised in the pursuit of the national economic gain as in the case of electricity service delivery privatisation.

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