

## IMPACT OF POOR WORK REMUNERATION ON INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTHERN SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF TARABA STATE, NIGERIA.

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### ABSTRACT

*For any contemporary society to experience meaningful progress, two structures must necessarily be on ground. First, a viable and adequately remunerated work force, and secondly, a strong infrastructural base. The study examined work remuneration among the work force, precisely civil servants, in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria, as well as the infrastructural development in the area, and attempts to establish if a link exists between the work remuneration of these workers and level of infrastructural development in the area. To achieve this objective, the survey type of research design was utilized to select subjects from the civil servants in the district who then formed the samples for the study. Data were obtained from a total of 375 subjects using a carefully designed four point Likert scale questionnaire, while the analytical tool used was the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The result of the analysis revealed that civil servants in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State are poorly remunerated, and arising from this, a number of them take to white-collar crimes just to make ends meet. These white-collar crimes as results further revealed affect the provision of social infrastructure such as potable water, education and health facilities, leading to the conclusion that poor work remuneration significantly affects infrastructural development in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State.*

**Keywords:** Work Remuneration, Social Infrastructure, White-Collar Crime, Incentives, Work Condition.

### INTRODUCTION

There is a wide consensus that low wage among government workers in developing countries causes a decrease in the efficiency and productivity of the public sector, as well as creates opportunities for white-collar crimes ([www.ukessays.com](http://www.ukessays.com), 2014). In the case of Nigeria, Okekeocha (2013) noted that officials holding public offices receive less than their colleagues in the private sector, adding that the minimum wage paid by government in the public sector is insufficient to take care of employees and their families, and as such does not motivate them adequately. The resultant effect has been for many of these public office holders to seek alternative and additional sources of income through different possible means including bribery, embezzlement and other white-collar crimes.

Wendy, (2004) stressed that people who receive very low wages feel that one way out is to ask for bribes so as to live decently. Also, Kaufmann (2005) argued that poor work motivation which can come by way of low remuneration of workers can breed corrupt behaviours such as receiving bribes to supplement their income.

This issue of low wage which creates a breeding ground for bribery, embezzlement and other corrupt practices has the capacity to tell negatively on different aspects of social life including the area of infrastructure. When public office holders whose responsibility it is to

provide social services and infrastructure bring to play their quest to secure additional earnings via bribery and embezzlement, funds set aside for infrastructure may be diverted, thereby thwarting efforts aimed at providing basic infrastructure for the public.

An analysis of the foregoing situation using the welfare view of Titmus and Khan's(1975) Social Provisional Approach provides a theoretical underpinning. According to Titmus and Khan (1975), all society members including workers have a right to societal resources and opportunities. In addition, society must be responsive to the needs of its members, through its various agencies. In the case of workers, one possible way of making sure their needs are taken care of is by ensuring that their work incentives and remuneration are adequately and promptly provided. This implies that when these needs are neglected in any way, antisocial behaviours like bribery and embezzlement should be expected from these

workers, who would want to use such means to make up for any deprivations in the areas of their remunerations and work incentives.

In Taraba South Senatorial District, both civil and public servants are faced with this same challenge of low wage, just like their counterparts in other parts of Nigeria. Still in Taraba South, infrastructural development is noticeably low compared to many parts of Nigeria. This prompts the question: is there any relationship between the infrastructural situation in Taraba South Senatorial District of Taraba State and the low wage condition faced by public sector workers in the area? Finding an answer to this critical question created the need for this investigation.

## METHODOLOGY

The population investigated in this study consisted of civil servants in three out of the five Local Government Councils that make up Taraba South Senatorial District. These three Local Government Councils are Wukari, Takum and Ussa Local Government Councils. Each of these Local Government Councils has six Departments, each of which formed a stratum in this study. Using the simple random sampling technique, 22 respondents were selected from each of the Local Councils (stratum). In total 396 respondents were selected through the hat and draw method. To obtain data, a four-point Likert scale questionnaire, consisting of 29 items was utilized. At the end of the field work, about 21 questionnaires were either badly filled or not returned, leaving the researcher with a total of 375 correctly filled questionnaires.

## RESULTS

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Age</i>		
20-30	55	14.67
31-40	124	33.07
41-50	131	34.93
51 and above	65	17.33
Total	375	100

<i>Gender</i>		
Male	222	59.2
Female	153	40.8
Total	375	100
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	98	26.13
Married	232	61.87
Divorced/Separated	15	4.00
Spouse Deceased	30	8.00
Total	375	100
<i>Educational Level</i>		
SSCE/TC II	33	8.00
OND/NCE	184	49.07
B.Sc./B.A/HND	153	40.80
M.Sc./PhD	5	2.13
Total	375	100
<i>Grade Level</i>		
01-05	26	6.93
06-10	193	51.47
11-15	121	32.27
16 and above	35	9.33
Total	375	100
<i>Years of Service</i>		
Below 1 year	20	5.33
1-6 years	43	11.47
7-12	198	52.80
12 years and above	114	30.40
Total	375	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of respondents. An outstanding feature in the results shown in this Table is the female population of the sampled workforce (40.8%). Although lower than the male population (59.2%), the figure still portrays an encouraging female representation in the workforce in Taraba South Senatorial District, being in the

Northern part of the country where women are still highly marginalized. Secondly, the educational level of respondents also shows a relatively educated work force, with 49.07% having either OND/NCE, while about 40.80% possess either a university degree or a Higher National Diploma (HND).

Regarding the issue of work remuneration, which forms part of the problem under investigation in this study, Table 2 reveals the perception of subjects on the state of things.

**Table 2. Respondents’ Perception of Work Remuneration in Taraba South Senatorial District**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
Minimum wage not fully paid	186	152	12	25
Fringe benefits not properly taken care of	208	124	29	14
Bonuses are not enjoyed	153	189	22	11
Health insurance not provided	204	137	13	21
Social security not reliable (pension)	153	186	23	13

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 2 shows the responses of respondents on work remuneration. The results reveal that in all, as many as 90.13% of respondents in this study either strongly agreed or agreed that their minimum wage is not fully paid. Only a minute proportion(9.87%) had a contrary view. On the issue of fringe benefits, 88.52% indicated that they are no properly taken care of while 11.47% viewed the situation differently. Furthermore, a total of 91.20% of subjects either strongly agreed or agreed that they do not enjoy bonuses while only 8.80% strongly disagreed or disagreed, implying that only an insignificant proportion of the work force in Taraba South Senatorial District enjoy bonuses. Regarding health insurance, 90.93% respondents indicated that this is not provided, while 9.07% indicated otherwise. Lastly, 90.40% of subjects viewed the available social security scheme as one that cannot be relied upon. Only 9.60% of them viewed the situation to the contrary.

The results in Table 2 above clearly paints a picture of poor work remuneration among these workers. Predictably, many of these workers, like their counterparts in other parts of the country would typically device different means of making up for the lapses in their remuneration packages, in order to make ends meet. Such means of making ends meet include bribery and other corrupt practices as their responses in Table 3 reveal.

**Table 3. Respondents’ Perception of the Resultant Effect of Poor Work Remuneration in Taraba South Senatorial District**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
Diversion of public funds for private use	134	169	54	18
Conversion of government property for private use	97	178	86	14
Demanding and receiving of tokens	80	144	99	52
Inflation of contract sums	123	156	74	22
Falsification of financial information	81	194	69	31

Table 3 reveals that a total of 80.08% of subjects agreed or strongly agreed that given the poor remuneration situation, civil servants would divert public funds for private use, while only 19.92% of them responded otherwise. Also, 73.33% responded positively to the suggestion that the poor work remuneration situation also results to the conversion of government property to private use, with just 26.67% being negative in their response. Another consequence of poor work remuneration as this study found is the problem of demanding and receiving of tokens (bribes). 59.73% of respondents accepted that this takes place given the challenge of poor work remuneration, while 40.27% either strongly disagreed or disagreed. Furthermore, 74.40% accepted that the poor work remuneration situation results to the inflation of contract sums, while 25.60% of them either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the view.

Lastly, falsification of financial information to aid misappropriation of funds was also found by this study to be a resultant feature of the poor work remuneration situation Taraba South Senatorial District. 73.33% of respondents alluded to this, while 26.67% opined otherwise. The foregoing makes it clearly evident that poor work remuneration gives rise to white-collar crimes, considering that all the corrupt practices shown in Table 3 are dimensions of white-collar crime.

The question that demands an answer at this point is: to what extent does poor work remuneration affect infrastructural development in Taraba South Senatorial District? Before taking steps in the study to address the above question, attempts were made to examine the infrastructural situation in the study area. Precisely, subjects were asked to indicate their degree of satisfaction with the level of development in three key social infrastructures Taraba South Senatorial District namely: pipe-borne water, education, and health facilities. The results of their responses are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Respondents' Degree of Satisfaction with Infrastructural Development in Taraba South Senatorial District**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>
Pipe-Borne Water	14	42	175	144
Education	23	31	153	168
Healthcare Facilities	16	28	109	222

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 4 indicates that only 14.4% of respondents indicated any form of satisfaction with the level of infrastructural development in the area of pipe-borne water, while the bulk of the subjects(85.07%) expressed dissatisfaction. The same trend is observed in the area of education, where only 14.4% indicated satisfaction with the level of development in this area, while as much as 85.5% expressed dissatisfaction. Similarly, with regards to healthcare, a far greater percentage of respondents (88.27%) expressed dissatisfaction with the state of infrastructure in this area, while an insignificant percentage (11.73) indicated being satisfied with the state of things in this area.

The foregoing results reveal both the deplorable state of infrastructural development in Taraba South Senatorial District, and subjects' perception of the situation. With the poor work remuneration facing the civil servants in this area and the resultant corrupt practices/ white-collar crimes as this study established, it became necessary to find out if these have

implications for the poor state of infrastructure in the area, considering that these civil servants are somewhat directly or indirectly involved in providing these infrastructures.

In order to ascertain the effect of poor work remuneration on infrastructural development in Taraba South Senatorial District, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistical Tool was used to test the following alternate hypothesis: ' **Poor work remuneration significantly affects infrastructural development in Taraba South Senatorial District**'. The analysis of this hypothesis is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis of the Relationship between Poor Work Remuneration and Infrastructural Development in Taraba South Senatorial District. N=375**

Variables	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\frac{\sum x}{\sum y}$	$\frac{\sum x^2}{\sum y^2}$	$\sum xy$	r
Poor Work Remuneration	16.60	3.93	6225	109111	104171	0.922
Infrastructural Development <sup>15</sup>	15.93	3.69	1574	100266		

$P < 0.05$  df = 373      Critical r = 0.098

The result of the data analysis on table 3 showed that the calculated r value of 0.922 is greater than the critical r value of 0.098 at 0.05 level of significance and 373 degree of freedom, implying that poor work remuneration significantly affects infrastructural development in Taraba South Senatorial District.

## DISCUSSION

As this study found, civil servants in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State are faced with the problem of poor work remuneration. Majority of them do not enjoy even the stipulated minimum wage. Also, they scarcely enjoy other fringe benefits and bonuses. Even the existing Pension Scheme is marred with mismanagement. As a consequence a number of these civil servants resort to unwholesome practices just to make up for their low earnings. Unfortunately, these unwholesome practices constitute white collar crimes, which have negative implications for infrastructural development in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State. In other words, the low level of infrastructural development observed in the study area is to a recognizable extent traceable to the white collar crimes resulting from the poor work remuneration faced by the civil servants.

Indeed, white collar crimes like diversion of funds, conversion of government property for personal use, bribery as well as inflation of contract sums can all directly and indirectly affect projects intended to enhance infrastructural development. For instance, if part or all the funds meant for specific infrastructural are diverted by a civil servant who is brought under financial pressure due to his low wage condition, the result will be that such a project will either be completely abandoned or executed in a substandard way. Similarly, if facilities meant for the public are converted for personal use by a poorly paid civil servant, the public will be denied the opportunity of benefiting from such facilities. Furthermore, if bribes are collected from contractors who execute infrastructural projects, the quality of infrastructure



finally provided will not measure up to standard because part of the funds needed to provide such an infrastructure are paid out as bribes, and in order to make profit, the contractors would simply cut down on the amount they put into the project.

The foregoing illustrations are practical ways white collar crimes resulting largely from the poor work remuneration can affect the provision of social infrastructure. It is therefore justifiable to argue that the poor work remuneration facing civil servants in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State shares in the blame for the observed low level of infrastructural development in the area, to the extent that as a result of low wages, some civil servants get involved in white collar crimes, which in turn affect the provision of social infrastructure.

## **CONCLUSION**

Availability of social infrastructure is without doubt one of the major prerequisites for meaningful development in every society in today's fast changing world. Successive Federal, State and Local governments in Nigeria have made concerted efforts to strengthen existing social infrastructure, while also making efforts to provide new ones. However, in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, like many other parts of the country, the state of social infrastructure as this study found has remained noticeably unimpressive despite frantic efforts by successive administration change things for the better. This has certainly affected the pace of development in the area. Data generated and analyzed in this study suggest that the poor state of social infrastructure in the study area is significantly a function of poor work remuneration facing civil servants in the area. This happens because some of these poorly paid workers divert funds meant for the provision of social infrastructures in areas like education, health, water and sanitation for personal use, just to make ends meet. Therefore, there is need for government to come to the understanding that one sure way of making efforts aimed at providing infrastructure both meaningful and successful is to address the problem of low pay facing civil servants not just in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State but also in other parts of the country. Ensuring that civil servants are at least paid the stipulated minimum wage in one step in the right direction. Beyond this, other incentives and allowances due these workers must be adequately taken care of and promptly too. When the issue of remuneration is properly addressed, then laws and policies can be put in place to check corrupt practices and white-collar crimes by civil servants that thwart efforts at improving social infrastructure and consequently low level of infrastructural development in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria.

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