

Review

Management of urban water for domestic and industrial uses and sustainability in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Received 6 September 2013; Accepted 27 June, 2014

Nigeria has abundant water resources. This natural endowment is evident in the yearly rainfall and large surface bodies of water-rivers, streams as well as abundant reservoirs of underground water. However, because of lack of good developmental policy, the rational use of the water resources still poses problems and challenges in most states of the country. For some time now these water problems have been left with the River Basin development authorities with little success, primarily because of lack of good management and best practices, despite huge sum of money spent. Although there are surplus surface and underground water resources within the Anambra basin, basic water supply for domestic and industrial use have been in very short supply for the teeming 5 million population despite the fact that government through international programmes like the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), UNICEF, EU has done a lot to aid water supply. This paper is timely because of a recent introduction of a major regional water supply project earmarked to take off in Onitsha, the industrial and commercial hub of Anambra. It is expected that the quantity and quality of water would improve with this project to be financed by the government in urban areas of Onitsha, Awka and Nnewi. Published as well as unpublished secondary sources were used to present the access to drinking water in Anambra State. Reform efforts are currently going on in the state and a review of the reform reveals the effects of political and economic challenges on the existing strategies.

Key words: Urban water, water reforms, sustainability, sectors.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has not been able to guarantee the most important need of safe drinking water for its citizens and small population of industries. Every part of Anambra State is battling with insufficiency of this basic necessity. The local government headquarters of Nnewi, Awka, Ekwulobia, Ihiala, Ogidi, Abagana and Onitsha have

been without sufficient domestic and industrial water for the past forty years since after the Nigeria Civil war. Major sources of water were rivers and stream for the first twenty years while the development of private water for individual homes and industries by the private sector, local governments and international agencies have

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recently impacted on the provision of water. The problem of raising the level of drinking water from low to medium term and in cost effective ways is imperative in the state. The objective of the paper is to assess the ongoing water sector reform in Anambra State of Nigeria, to determine the key barriers to more effective reform for urban water provision with respect to water quality and water sector efficiency. Ongoing attempts by government including those of private sectors, to reform the water sector and other necessary recommendations are included in this review.

In the Urban areas of Anambra State piped water supplies does not exist in the seven (7) major cities of Onitsha, Awka and Nnewi, Abagana, Ihiala, Ogidi Ekwulobia. Virtually 95% of the population and industries receive their required water from water boreholes. It is only the rich that can afford the luxury of providing personal water boreholes for personal uses and industries. The present Administration in the state is planning major water schemes for Nnewi, Awka and Onitsha which is presently being executed. Other small town water scheme is either completed or ongoing.

THE CURRENT STATE OF URBAN WATER SUPPLY

Water availability and quality

The water supply in the urban cities was only available sparingly and the water is of questionable quality. Private and Public water borehole are common sites and supply most of the rected water. Intermittent water supply, and unpredictable service from boreholes and vendors impose both financial and health costs on the three major cities of Nnewi, Onitsha and Awka.

Many households within the urban cities were found to have undertaken long-term investments in the form of water tanks, handpumps or boreholes. Households with water tanks install booster pumps and pump water directly to water tanks. This increases the risks of contamination of the general water supply. Water tanks though popular are sources of various biological contaminants. Water pump (submersible) fixed to elevated water tanks as well. The WHO Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality (WHO 1998, 1997, 1993) are assessing the health risks posed by contaminants in drinking water. This provides a primary health requirement for a sufficient water supply, which the Government of Nigeria takes to mean about 40 L per person per day. The second requirement is that the water be microbiologically safe (FMoWR, 2006).

In most developing countries, the primary contaminant of surface and ground waters is human and animal waste (McKenzie, 2007). The WHO guidelines suggest that *Escherichia coli* should not be detectable in a 100-ml sample of water for the water to be considered to be of moderate good quality. The Government of Nigeria accepts these guidelines but has been unable to ensure that they

are met. Water-borne diseases from faecal contamination are some of the biggest public health risks in the country. The incidence of typhoid fever diagnosed rightly or wrongly remains contentious till now. Monitoring of water quality in Nigeria cities is haphazard or nonexistent. Standards for drinking water that are actually enforced could have enormous positive impacts on public health, but for this to occur, the procedures for water testing and data sharing have to be made regular, standardized and public.

Water resources

Anambra State is drained principally by a number of rivers which include River Niger, Anambra River, Idemili and Mamu River Nkisi Obizi etc (Figure 1). In some areas the formation have confined aquifers and their depths depend on the nature of the formation relative high rainfall which occurs within 7 months of the year ensures the sustenance of perennial streams and rivers traversing the state including effective re-charge of groundwater aquifers (Muoghalu and Okonkwo, 1998). The majority of small water supply systems in the state are ground water based while the big water supply schemes are surface water based. The Nkissi stream is the main source of raw water for the existing Greater Onisha Water Supply Scheme, but for Awka and Nnewi, there is no scheme yet in existence. The greater Onitsha water scheme presently not functional is being considered as a major concession for the private sector. Before this when the public sector was responsible for the water works, epileptic water supply is available as provided by the state water cooperation, the water corporation was highly subsidized by the Anambra State government but was finally starved of the subsidy, between 1999 and 2003 when its activities collapsed (AWSSP, 2009).

AREAS FOR URBAN REFORM

Pricing reform

Recovering at least part of the cost of a new water system or of upgrading and maintaining an existing water system is the primary rationale for pricing reform everywhere. Several studies have argued that poor people will pay for water if it is conveniently and reliably supplied and that appropriate pricing reform can promote both efficiency and equity (Boland and Dale, 2000; McIntosh, 2003). Existing evidence suggests that many low-income households in Nigeria can afford to pay more for water, particularly if the increase in prices is accompanied by better service.

One might question whether metering in very low-income areas is cost-effective for the water utilities. In general, piped connections to homes in slums were not metered; therefore we do not have the data. Metering is

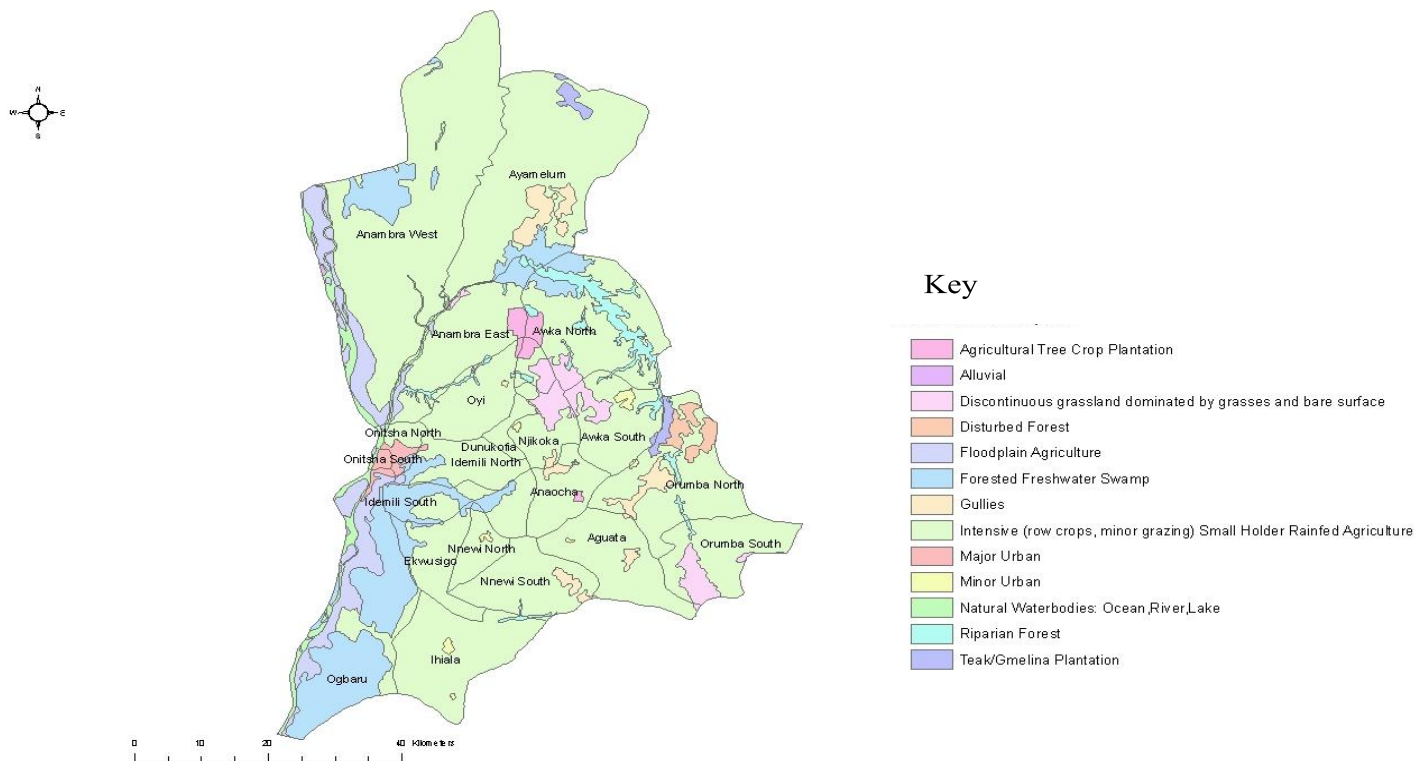


Figure 1. Anambra State Local Governments.

arbitrary done and the public does not have the ability to check the excesses of the water corporation.

However, even among low-income households there may be scope for metering with some adaptation in the future. Provision of metering devices and its functionality programme implementation in the state would likely improve with the modern water works that are envisaged for the future.

Financial reforms

A traditional mechanism for raising the capital needed for water and sewerage system expansions and upgrades is the bond, usually issued without guarantees from the federal government. Through such bonds, private credit markets lend money to state governments for a fixed period of time and at predetermined interest rates. These best practices in the developing countries have not worked well in Nigeria where state and Federal governments had been into direct participation. This practice has been variously abused in the rare instance where it was permitted by legislation in the states and the local governments especially between 1999 and 2007.

Private sector participation in urban water delivery

Over the last decade, privatization to a greater or less

degree has been seen as one of the primary ways to infuse capital into the urban water sector and to overcome some of the inefficiencies of management. It has been urged upon developing countries by international lending agencies as an essential component of water sector reform.

However, the 2002 National Water Policy of the Government of Nigeria for the first time called for the encouragement of private sectors participation (PSP) in water resources. Private sector participation should be encouraged in planning, development and management of water resource projects for diverse uses, wherever feasible. Private sector participation incorporates a wide range of private sector involvement. The method of participation is coming on new in the state and would be in adapted forms. At one end lies contracting out of services to the private sector, such as mains repair, billing and collecting. Such arrangements are relatively straightforward and involve short-term (5 years) renewable contracts. More private involvement occurs under longer-term (20 to 35 years) concession and Build-own-transfer (BOT) contracts. This entails that under a concession, a private firm manages and operates the whole utility at its own commercial risk. BOT contracts are used for major investment in new facilities. At the other end of the public-private spectrum lies full divestiture, whereby the Government sells the assets of the water supply company to a private firm, who runs it on a permanent basis subject to government regulation.

Evaluation of the effects of PSP on urban water supplies has been constrained by the overall poor quality of data available and the small number of cases from which to draw conclusions. As in India, in many parts of the world the public utility does not release regular information on costs, water quality, the size of the network, etc., making it difficult to measure the pre-privatization trends in access, costs, and quality, and thus to determine what would have happened in the absence of private involvement. However, much of the criticism regarding privatization is that it will result in large increases in water tariffs, making water unaffordable to the poor (Sridhar, 2003b). But it is argued that it is better to have costly potable water than none. Overall, the experience of other countries suggests that PSP in the urban water sector may or may not, improve efficiency and provide better service to the poor. While it is too soon to evaluate the effects of private involvement in urban water in Anambra State, several projects are now underway. We comment here on three ongoing efforts. Nigeria's furthest step towards full privatization of water supply is the Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) contract which is planned to be carried out by the Government at Onitsha.

Further private sector engagement such as concessions and leasing agreements will be difficult without prior pricing reform. Successful PSP therefore requires public awareness campaigns of the true costs of the current policies. It is equally important not to oversell the reforms possibly under private sector involvement through unrealistic goals and exaggerated public statements.

With the unattractiveness of peri-urban areas to the formal private sector (Cairncross, 2003), more city governments should consider recognizing, contracting with, and regulating local water entrepreneurs as mainstream rather than interim delivery mechanisms. In the absence of official recognition, water vendors will continue operating anyway, but without quality controls, price monitoring or accountability.

Political economy of reform

In light of the widespread inefficiencies in the water sector in developing countries, there is clearly ample scope for reform. However, as in most democratic nations, any major reform needs to survive the political process, while even small changes in prices require public approval. As Noll et al. (2000) argued, several features of urban water systems make reform difficult.

The political benefits of water reform are often low, as reform may affect employment and investment in the public enterprise. Changes in prices and staff layoffs are more visible to the public than improved operating efficiency, reductions in state subsidies, and small improvements in quality.

The longer reform is delayed, the more difficult it becomes. In particular, critics viewed the price rises as laying the ground for privatization of water, with little apparent recognition that even an efficient public utility would require prices substantially higher than those prevailing pre-reform.

Promoting changes in the water sector therefore requires finding a way to raise the political benefits of reform efforts. Public awareness could be further increased by reporting the results of water quality tests, along with information on hours of service. This information could be coupled with accessible data on how much water subsidies take from the state budget, and price increases could be explicitly linked to targeted improvements in key sectors. This would work for the informed members of the society and those with different positive political inclination.

EXISTING SITUATION OF THE WATER SUPPLY AND ENVIRONMENT IN ANAMBRA STATE

Access to water supply services

There is very little data available to inform the drafting of the policy and its implementation strategy. However, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (FMAWR) appointed a consultant to carry out a baseline survey of Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) in the state. The findings of these study shows that access to safe water from public water supply in all the Local government of the state ranges from as low 0.2% to above 40%. It is estimated that on the average, access to potable water is not more than 20% across the state.

Condition of the existing government water supply infrastructures in Anambra State

Recent study by Water Supply and Sanitation Program (WSSP) shows that the State water supply infrastructures are in a very poor state. Out of 62 systems owned by the State Water Corporation only three of them are functional. Water supply infrastructure identified under the Federal Government baseline survey for Anambra State comprised 497 motorized boreholes, 72 hand pump boreholes and 7 surface water schemes. The total installed capacity excluding the Nkissi surface Water Scheme Which Serve Onitsha North, Onitsha South, Idemili North, Idemili South and Ogbaru LGAs is 30,795 m³/day.

Greater Onitsha Water Supply Scheme (Nkissi Water Works) which was destroyed by massive siltation of the intake facilities is being considered for concession and rehabilitation. The State Government had entered into concession with a Jordanian Firm for the provision of water and an independent power distribution at Onitsha.

The take off is still awaited. This was abandoned for a South African firm with the mode of procurement changing to the traditional procurement route. The Greater Onitsha Water Scheme was the live wire of Anambra State Water Corporation generating over 90% of its revenue. The corporation has been out of operation since the past 15 years due to inefficient operation, corruption and other ills associated with public installations in Nigeria.

Capital funding and development of the sector

The sector has been poorly funded. According to the Anambra State Economic Empowerment Strategy (SEEDS) document, it was estimated that over N8.0 billion was required to improve the state water supply between the year 2004 and 2007. In reality less than 20% of that was actually spent in the sector during the period. Meanwhile water demand continued to increase annually due to increase in population and economic activities in the state, thus the water coverage has actually continued to decline during the period.

Supply-demand gap

It has been estimated that the demand for water in Anambra State in the year 2005 was 213,952 m³ per day. This will rise to 27,313 m³/day in 2015. The percentage of water available for the state or the theoretical percentage of water supply against demand was also found to be 7.2% (Anambra State WSSSP, 2009). This means that on a state wide basis only 7.2% of safe water requirement is met in 2005 or is available in Anambra State and this is very poor. Clearly then, extensive work would have to be embarked upon to find new water supply sources and establish new water schemes to close up the demand gap. This has been done and is found in the greater Onitsha water scheme, proposed greater Nnewi and Awka water scheme, the small town water schemes and water boreholes projects scattered over the state.

Water supply promoters in the Anambra State

According to the recent baseline survey on WSS conducted by the Federal Government under the Urban Water Sector Reform, Anambra State has 102 small water scheme or 17.7% of the federal government promoted water. And 28 of these schemes or 27.5% are functional. The State Government promotes 52 of the schemes which is 9% of the total and only 13 of them or 25% are functional. Local Governments in Anambra State promoted 8 or 1.4% of all the schemes in the state and 3 of these or 37.5% are functional. Donors promoted 148 schemes or 25.6% of the total number of schemes of

which 122 or 82.4% are functional. Members of the various communities promote 257 schemes or 44.5% of all schemes out of which 131 or 89.9% are functional. Together Donors and members of the various communities provided 405 schemes or 70.2% of all schemes out of which 353 or 87.2% are functional. Donors and Communities constitute the backbone of potable water supply in Anambra State and the functionality of these schemes is superior to other providers (AWSSR, 2009; WSP, 2001).

The Local Government Areas (LGAs) appear now to be stepping up involvement in water supply in this state. Clearly then, the most sustainable way forward is for the government to take the path of developing water supply in the state through community managed systems, this will best be done through government strong financial support to community water supply projects.

Private sector participation on water supply

Over 80% of water supply services provision in the State is in private hands and the service providers charge more than ten times the expected public sector charging rates.

Water pricing challenges

Bottled water: Prices for bottled water are set in the market. Retail prices vary widely between countries, brands, bottle sizes and place of sale (supermarket, restaurant). They can be as high as ₦600 per cubic meter.

Tanker trucks: Prices for water sold by tanker trucks in bulk, which is common in cities, for households without access to piped water supply. Prices for trucked water vary between about ₦1, 500,000 per cubic meter.

Utility tariffs: Prices for piped water supply provided by utilities, be they publicly or privately managed, are determined administratively. They vary from ₦100 when it was available per cubic meter.

Irrigation: Prices for irrigation water that is being provided by a public agency are also typically determined administratively.

The water rate charges by the water corporation were for the following:

1. Metered Supply: M₁ -domestic; M₂ - industrial/commercial.
2. Big Hotels; Bakeries, breweries; block moulding, car washing; laundry services, banks, filling stations.
3. Small hospitals; maternities.

One does not foresee what the new rate would come to and the success of selling these rates to the public since some individual and community schemes have made some organization forget the public water works.

Cost recovery and sustainability

From the tariff approved for the state water corporation, it is evident that the domestic connection charges are lower than the production cost by almost 50% while the Anambra State Government is required to produce and sell water in a way as to cover its operational cost. When a utility earns less revenue than its expenses in a particular year, it runs short of funds to properly run its services in the following year and this leads to lower water production with the resultant low sales due to the low quality of service. The resultant effect is the dearth of the consumer's willingness to pay. The utility will then have even less revenue to operate in the following year. The vicious cycle will continue leading to the continued deterioration or service delay. This policy is addressing this by suggesting sweeping reforms.

Subsidy and access to WSS services

Common argument usually attributed to the application of flat subsidy to domestic consumers is to say that water is being made affordable as part of the government commitment to its citizens. Unfortunately the opposite is being achieved in this case. The reality is that majority of people in urban areas of Anambra State do not have water connections in their houses. Those connected are mostly those that can afford to pay higher price. Instead, they are benefiting from government subvention originally intended to assist the poor gain access to service. Furthermore the poor are the ones that purchase water from vendors and tanker operators at the exorbitant rates. The alternative is for them to get water from contaminated sources that are unhealthy. Sickness leads to low human productivity which in turn increases poverty.

Public/private sector participation

The private water supply operators are in business because the consumers are ready to pay for their services. This leads to the conclusion that in spite of the reported high level of poverty, large section of the population is willing and ready to pay higher prices for water supply if the service is reliable. This finding opens a whole new opportunity to carry out two sweeping reforms; the first is to produce a level playing field for both government and private companies. This would release latent potentials to compete favourably so that both can generate sufficient revenue to expand the services.

The second is the opportunity to redefine roles of all the actors in the provision of services especially in separating policy, service delivery and regulations. Experience has shown that reforms like this brought tremendous improvement in water supply in both developed and developing countries.

Design and application of appropriate tariff in Anambra State

Sufficient data on the production cost of water supply for urban areas is not available to enable proper costing of water production. This is perhaps because the major water treatment plant has been out of operation for a number of years. It is not clear what the guiding principles for setting tariff lower than production cost without giving details on how the shortfall in the revenue will be financed. The tariff structure should take into account the following:

1. To allow the water supply system to have resource and liquidity maintenance that consumers are able and willing to pay as failure to do so will mean to them spending more money to get potable water from other sources.
2. Put into consideration the poor who may be denied access to clean water if the rates are too high.
3. Be assured that it will not cause social unrest and is politically acceptable to the Government.

Unaccounted-for water

Unaccounted for water refers to water losses in the form of system leakages in the distribution network (which includes physical losses due to pipe bursts and leakage, and water theft through illegal connection) and losses in revenue due to poor billing and collection system and weak tariff structure. Unaccounted for water has not been assessed due non-availability of water in the network. Unaccounted for water can be taken as the difference between the account of water produced or purchased and the amount of water sold to all customers. Unaccounted for water includes underground leakage, unauthorized use, unavailable leakages, inaccurate meter, industrial, commercial and domestic water and unusual causes. Underground leakage is caused by age of the pipe, soil conditions, traffic loading, pipe movement, poor installation practices and electrolysis.

Listening surveys and water audit was used in checking this in the past. Improved various types of the surveys and audit processes are imperative for the new water works scheme expected.

Other problems facing the state WSS sector in urban areas

The following problems are found to be the major causes of inadequate water supply and sanitation in the state:

1. There is no coordination and focus and because of this, planning, activities were "reactive" rather than "proactive" until the setting up of the new Ministry of Public Utilities, Water Resources and Community Development in August 2008, there was no central agency

to develop policy direction of Government.”

2. There is lack of a philosophy, objectives and strategy guiding government activities in this sector.
3. Approach to plans for service delivery were “top bottom supply driven” rather than “bottom up demand driven.”
4. The very strong community structure and vibrant private sectors, for which the state is well known, was not exploited in developing an efficient water delivery system for the people.

ANAMBRA STATE WATER CORPORATION (ANSWC)

Anambra State Water Corporation (ANSWC) established by Edict No 3 of 7th May 1999 has as its main function; to supply and manage water supply in the whole of the State (including urban, semi-urban and rural water supply). It was established to develop, manage, control, provide, conserve and distribute water in the state for public, domestic and industrial purposes. It had power to enter into contract or other agreements for the purpose of expedient performance of its function.

As at the year 2006, ANSWC had 12 Zonal Offices covering the twenty one LGAs of Anambra State for managing their water scheme of the 62 water schemes operated by ANSWC, 58 (93.5%) were non functional while only 4 (6.5%) are functional. The record is indeed an issue of great concern. Even more disastrous for ANSWC is the collapse of the Greater Onitsha Water Supply Scheme since 2001. When operational, the scheme provided 90% of ANSWC’s internally generated funds. With so many public water boreholes and private ones in private building the people of the state would not be said to be short of water supply but the portability remains the question.

Water policy

The existing level of service of water supply and sanitation in the state is far from satisfactorily improving priorities of Anambra State Government. There was need for a comprehensive WSS services in a sustainable way. The institutional arrangement for Water Supply and Sanitation were not properly streamlined to have proper focus in a coherent and sustainable way. In a situation like this, one finds gaps and overlaps and lack of clarity on the responsibilities of the state actors. An institutional framework defines strategies and programmes that the sector must implement the organizations to implement these policies, and regulatory framework needed to support the policies as well as the institutional actions. The institutional framework looks beyond organizations and their functioning and takes into account the policy, legal and regulatory environment that supports the delivery of effective and efficient services which is the

ultimate objective of any reform process. One of the primary impacts of the policy is the creation of the enabling environment for the implementation of the principles of the policy. This conducive working environment is created by the policy, legislature and financing structure. Policy development gives an opportunity for setting objectives for managing water resources and water service delivery within a framework of overall development objectives.

Legislative framework sets the rules to follow in order to active policy objectives and goals. One of the main duty here is the development of the Water Law. The law covers the ownership of water schemes, the use of permit operation and maintenance and the regulatory norms. Also necessary is the need to repeal and reform the existing legislatures, edicts with the development of the State Water and Sanitation Policy. A component of the enabling environment is the financing and incentive structures that deals with the allocation of financial resources to meet the water needs. The financing needs of the water sectors are huge, and water projects tend to be capital intensive and require investment policy with financing options.

The fundamental objective of the policy is to bring reform to institutional roles and responsibilities for better water governance. The policy document defines the roles of resource managers, service providers, regulators, the roles of private sector, local authorities, civil society organization (CSOs) community based organizations (CBOs) and other water sector stakeholders. This forms part of the overall institutional framework.

Capacity building or human resources development involves the upgrading of the skills and understanding of all levels of capacities: Public decision makers, water professionals, regulatory bodies and other bodies like civil society groups.

An important aspect in the policy development is the overall application of management instruments. A primary aspect of this is a good understanding of resources and the needs in water resources assessment. This assessment starts with the collection of hydrological, physiological, demographic, and social-economic data. This will enable development in the sector to be modeled in line with the integrated water resources management (IWRM) principles. A very important concept here is the demand management. It is a process of using water more efficiently by balancing supply and demand and requires the following:

1. Improved efficiency of use.
2. Recycling and use.
3. Improved efficiency of supply.

Demand management application will work with good social change supply and sanitation systems as a matter of priority, the government is already planning for subsequent challenges with regards to expansion of the

water supply throughout the state, there is a need to accompany any rehabilitation works with a good structure of operation and maintenance system. This is strongly emphasized in the policy. Lack of operation and maintenance was the bane of the dysfunctional water schemes. This aspect of the reform and indeed all aspect of the policy are necessary to ensure sustainable growth and development of the service delivery in the State.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The literature on drinking water in Nigeria is characterized by an overall sense of policy failure and barriers to access, private sector participation, of fiscal reform, willingness to pay, of civil society participation. It remains a challenge to answer the key question for designing an affordable and sustainable urban drinking water program. With respect to private sector participation, relative to the efficiency or prices, analyses of the kinds of contracts, regulatory regimes and citizen oversight that can ensure accountability and the inclusion of low-income communities, are less common. It is agreed that governments should not be in the water provision business, but should ensure that private providers are regulated with respect to price structures and water quality, and should provide incentives for these providers to serve the poor. This new role for government translates to developing partnerships with the private sector and with civil society for water delivery.

A major barrier to the design of appropriate policies is the lack of reliable, up-to-date and publicly accessible information on many aspects of the Anambra water system. Baseline information is necessary in order to evaluate various reforms in progress, and in order to allow for benchmarking against government targets, that is, other states and nearby countries. A lack of transparency over the true costs of under-priced and inefficient municipal systems dampens public support for major reforms that may be needed.

Scanty information on groundwater withdrawals make urban and Semi-Urban drinking water interventions unsustainable. While efforts are underway to carry out some benchmarking of financial performance of several large utilities, regular and comparable data need to be made available on, water quality, subsidization, metering, groundwater levels, and infrastructure maintenance. The abundance of groundwater resources in Anambra State remains a big boast to solving the problems of domestic and industrial water with ease since exploration and exploitation is easily feasible through the state.

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