

Bringing Justice Closer to the People: An Assessment of the Lagos State (Nigeria) Office of the Public Defender (OPD)

S. Banji Fajonyomi¹ and A. Dabiri²

*1. Department of Public Administration, Lagos State, University, Ojo, Lagos, P.O.BOX 13511,
IKEJA, Lagos, Nigeria*

E-mail: fajonyomib@yahoo.co.uk

2. Lagos State High Courts. Ministry of Justice, Lagos, Nigeria

KEYWORDS Public defender; access to justice; Nigeria

ABSTRACT Access to justice should not be a privilege of the rich alone. In a country where more than 70% of its inhabitants live below the poverty line, getting justice to the poor has been a matter of concern. However, there was no visible effort at either the federal or state level until the creation of the Lagos State Office of the Public Defender by the civilian government of Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu. The Public Defender model that is adopted in Lagos State is patterned after what operates in the United States. The Lagos State OPD, as it is often called, has taken giant steps in making the poor have a feeling of justice at no cost. Despite its achievements, there still exists some pockets of problems that need to be given serious attention if the OPD intends to achieve more.