Public Sector Reforms in Nigeria: A Critical Review

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Abstract

It is examined here the economic recession of the 1980s which was rooted in the collapse of the oil prices on the international market and the over bloated and inefficient public sector in Nigeria. The inevitability of public sector reforms was occasioned by the recession in order to boost growth of the economy and improve service delivery. Documentary evidence provided the relevant data that institutional theoretical framing undergirded analysis in the study. Series of measures in the context of public sector reform since the 1980s have culminated in the broad based reforms of the early 2000s. The reforms were non-sequential and haphazard and achieved minimally in the area of downsizing. Privatization achieved the curb on waste but failed to improve service delivery. The reforms received scant public support and the lack of political will ensure non commitment to implementation. To achieve sustainable growth and enhanced service delivery, recruitment in the public sector must return to merit based procedures to guarantee quality of personnel in the national bureaucracy.

Key words: Growth, Reforms, Service delivery

Réformes du secteur public au Nigeria: un examen critique

Abstrait

Nous examinons ici la récession économique des années 80 qui s’est enracinée dans l’effondrement des prix du pétrole sur le marché international et dans le secteur public saturé et inefficace du Nigeria. L'inévitabilité des réformes du secteur public a été causée par la récession afin de stimuler la croissance de l'économie et d'améliorer la prestation de services. Les preuves documentaires ont fourni les données pertinentes que l’encadrement théorique institutionnel sous-tendait à l’analyse de l’étude. Une série de mesures dans le contexte de la réforme du secteur public depuis les années 1980 ont abouti aux réformes à base élargie du début des années 2000. Les réformes ont été non séquentielles et aléatoires et peu performantes en matière de réduction des effectifs. La privatisation a permis de limiter les déchets, mais n'a pas réussi à améliorer la prestation de services. Les réformes ont reçu un

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faible soutien de la part du public et le manque de volonté politique a permis de ne pas s'engager dans la mise en œuvre. Pour parvenir à une croissance durable et à une prestation de services améliorée, le recrutement dans le secteur public doit revenir à des procédures fondées sur le mérite afin de garantir la qualité du personnel de la bureaucratie nationale.

Mots clés: Croissance, Réformes, Prestation de services

Introduction

The 1980s economic recession had deleterious consequences on the economies of most countries of the world especially low income and mono-cultural primary commodity economies dominant in the developing world. Oil producing countries were particularly egregiously affected. The sudden collapse of the international oil prices was at the root of the ensuing economic crisis. However, the over bloated public service and structural deficiencies in the public sector of these economies formed the remote and extenuating circumstances for the recession (Olukoshi, 1993). While the oil price shocks of 1973 and 1979/80 have been considered external causes of the economic crisis, mismanagement was internal and considered by many as rather the major cause of the economic slowdown in especially sub-Saharan Africa (Toye, 1993).

What became Nigeria's economic crisis is rooted in the structure of the country's economy. Nigeria's post colonial economy was managed along the structural foundation laid by colonialism. That is an economy that relied on the use of peasant surpluses from agriculture to finance wholesale importation of inputs to support industrialization and growth in the expansion of manufacturing activities. To exacerbate an entrenched unbalanced economy, peasant surplus was also used to import basic products for consumption in Nigeria. For an economy that was surviving on nearly US$1 billion of imports, when the world market price of oil collapsed; a commodity that Nigeria wholly depended on, the shortfall created a catastrophic effect on the economy (World Bank, 2005). The down turn that ensued was more than dramatic.

The result of peasant surpluses of the 1950s and 60s and subsequent oil earnings of the 1970s funded an astronomical expansion in the public sector. The unsystematic growth of the public sector could not cope with the slowdown in the economy. This was essentially due to the nature of the expansion of the public sector which was largely in institutional and numerical quantities. For instance line ministries, departments and agencies assumed a phenomenal rise with corresponding personnel. To add to this was the rise in number of parastatals and agencies or authorities. These were in both service and manufacturing ranging from banks and insurance, hotels, telecommunication and transportation. There were large-scale manufacturing firms spanning cement production, truck and car assembly plants, fertilizer factories, newsprints and paper mills, steel rolling mills, newspapers, oil companies and a host of agro-allied enterprises. By 1988 the federal government owned nearly 900 enterprises ranging from small to medium scale State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) (Zayyad, 1990; Jerome, 2008; Genyi, 2012). Total federal government investments in these enterprises were put at ₦900 billion by 1999. Nearly a decade earlier by 1988, total investment was barely ₦ 23.2 billion with returns amounting to ₦ 933.7 million (Yahaya, 1993, p. 25). Given the prevailing huge subsidies to these SOEs and recurrent expenditure under an economy in crisis, government was forced to introduce an austerity package that meant freezing wages, allowances and fringe benefits. Government also began a borrowing spree to sustain already prevailing high public expenditure. Thus by the mid 1980s this was no longer sustainable in the face of an astronomical rise in public debt that had already become problematic.

Given this background of socio-economic crisis, public sector management reform became inevitable. This was essentially because the public service had long been considered as ‘‘the nerve centre of the machinery of government’’ (ELA, 2010) and having become over bloated, inefficient, corrupt and redundant, the revision of its rules, procedures, structure and orientation had also become ostensibly overdue. This was imperative in order to realign the public service with prevailing circumstances and to reposition the service towards higher level of efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. Thus the era of reforms was born. These reforms were structured in response to external pressures but also in recognition of an indisputable fact that an effective state is a function of an equally effective public service sector.

This paper seeks to address a few critical issues to public sector reform. First it seeks to provide an overview of the trends and challenges in public sector reform in Nigeria. The second part of the paper shall deal with the detail background to the public sector reform which hinged on the economic crisis of the 1980s. The third part shall examine the major trends in public sector reform; public sector management reform with objectives for fiscal stability, managerial efficiency, capacity building and public accountability; and civil service reforms. The fourth part of this paper shall examine the stalled state of reform and the challenges there from relating specifically to fiscal stability and downsizing within the context of expenditure reforms and offer policy suggestions on how to reclaim the reform.

Economic Crisis and Structural Reforms in Nigeria

The idea of reform of public institutions is to reshape an existing structure of governance for better performance. In order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency as well as accountability of public institutions to the advantage of public service delivery, public structures of governance are open to restructuring. Going by whatever nomenclature ‘reform’ or ‘restructuring’ is usually intended for these purposes. Structural reforms become more imperative in the face of dwindling economic resources in contrast to expanding expectations for increase in quantity and quality of public services. No where than Nigeria were the socio-economic conditions for structural reform rife as early as the late 1970s to early 1980s.

By the early 1970s, the Nigerian economy was in good standing especially in terms of revenues accruing to government at both federal and state levels. This was due largely to the oil boom of the period. For instance, oil had quickly become the dominant component of the Nigerian economy accounting for 90 percent of exports and the main source of federal revenue (Faruqee, 1994). Within three years 1972-1974, federal revenue shot up dramatically in a fivefold trend; amounting to an increase of 80 percent in federal revenue. This new found wealth automatically altered the scope and content of public expenditure in investment, production and consumption patterns. Federal expenditure rapidly rose especially in public infrastructure and social services. The phenomenal growth in the public sector through the construction boom and massive public investment was conveniently accommodated by oil revenue to warrant a budget surplus by 1976. By 1978, the share of federal expenditure, an indication of the expansion of the public sector was 54 percent, having risen rapidly from 19 percent in 1973. Public employment had risen from approximately .5 million to 1.5 million from 1973 to 1981 (Forrest, 1995, p. 147). Social expenditure expansion was conspicuous in education and housing while capital expenditure expansion reflected in transport and power infrastructure as well as oil, steel, mining and manufacture.

Graphically, public sector explosion in the education sector saw the establishment of the National Universities Commission (NUC) in the mid 1970s, and it took over the funding of 13 universities in addition to establishing 7 new ones. Capital investments as a major share of public sector corresponding to expansion reflected in large scale oil, mining and manufacturing sectors. Many of these were monopolies. Investments were made in finance capital in commercial and merchant banking. Public corporations and companies or parastatals rose rapidly. These included Nigeria National Oil Corporation (NNOC) in 1971 now (NNPC), the Nigeria Steel Development Authority (1971), the Nigeria Mining Corporation (1972), the Nigerian National Supply Company (1972), the National Freight Company (1976), the National Cargo Handling Company (1977), the Central Water Transportation Company (1977) and the Nigeria Airports Authority (1978)(Forrest, 1995; Hussain and Faruqee, 1984).

The enormous expansion in state revenues in1973/74 period and the corresponding enlargement of state expenditures continued beyond 1976 when expenditures began to exceed revenues. As a proportion of Gross National Product (GNP) public expenditure continued to rise as public sector employment expanded to 14 percent per annum between1977-1984. New agencies and parastatals were introduced in the 1980s in duplication of activities of existing ministries and agencies. Some of these include the Federal Housing Authority, Green Revolution Committee, Federal Capital Territory Administration etc (Forrest, 1995). Federal government deficit financing started in 1976 when federally collected revenue was ₦6.76 million while ₦5.121million was retained. Current expenditure stood at ₦2.896 million while capital expenditure gulped ₦5.092 million leaving a deficit of ₦1.091 million. Factors that accounted for this deficit that ran up to 1982 were the Udoji wages and salaries awards, federal transfers to the states, inflated project expenditures, deficits of public corporations through subsidies and imports of a wide range of consumer goods Olukoshi, 1993; Hussain & Faruqee, 1989 and Forrest, 1995).

The 1977/78 budget indicated a weak response to the rising deficits by introducing restrictions on imports including outright bans and a rise in import duties. Monetary restraints were introduced in capital expenditure cuts on manufacturing and education and general administration. The net effect of these restrictions was a drop in imports by 7 percent in 1979 (Forrest, 1987). These measures coupled with the short oil recovery of 1979-1980 brought a reprieve to federal revenue leaving a foreign reserve of ₦2.9 billion in 1979; when the military handed over power to President Shehu Shagari.

With a new but short lived oil boom, the Shagari government without resolving the contradictions in the economy it inherited from the military yielded to public pressure and began to increase public expenditure. These pressures reflect our brand of democracy in which political elites seek to recoup these investments in party politics and elections. When oil prices fell in 1982, the state continued to fund the existing huge expenditures with external borrowing, depletion of external resources and accumulating arrears in external payments. External borrowings without corresponding improvement in revenue created sustained adverse effects on the economy since public investment brought no returns. The state introduced stabilization measures in 1982 by rationing foreign exchange, restriction of import licences, increases in duties and introduction of import deposit program. Public investments were drastically reduced and price hike in petroleum products were introduced. These measures did not work in the face of continued decline in oil prices that hit their nadir in the 1983/84 fiscal year. The economy was thrown into crisis with a negative growth rate of 6.7 percent in 1983.

Efforts to tame the deficits did not yield appreciable results because public expenditure were still maintained and even kept on the increase. For instance the number and size of public enterprises was on the increase rather than undergoing structural reform. By 1985 when sources of funding had dried up, it was time to rethink a new paradigm in development away from the state driven approach to state managed direction. Thus, the state introduced the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986 with an initial terminal period of 1988. The programme was designed to strengthen demand management through monetary, fiscal and wage policies, stimulate domestic production, reduce public regulation and administrative control, rationalise the bureaucracy through commercialization and privatization of SOEs, and rescheduling of external debts.

It is pertinent to remark here that the elaborate and uncontrolled expansion of the public sector that resulted in the economic crisis of the 1980s was occasioned by the absence of a rigorous analysis of the long term financial viability and requisite efficiency and effectiveness of public projects and new institutions that constituted the structural expansion. No wonder, the public sector was imbued with negative characterisation such as waste and corruption, low professional standard, redundancy, over staffing and weak accountability. With economic crisis that its unguarded expansion created, it was time to introduce market based public sector reforms which began in 1988.

Public Sector Reform: Theoretical and Conceptual Issues

Widespread and deep rooted economic crisis of the 1980s caused the introduction of new methods of public management. The economic crisis coincided with renewal of critical ideological rethinking on the role of the state in economic development. The economic crisis shaped the contours of the new debate that climaxed in the collapsed of the Berlin Wall, a development Fukuyama (2006) referred to as the end of history. It is now clear that he did not imagine September 11th 2001. Even in Western Europe, the UK under Margaret Thatcher initiated the move to reducing the size of the state in an attempt to reinvigorate capitalism. The swing in scholastic thought was to orient new initiatives on development away from the state ownership and control towards the market mechanism, private ownership and to rollback the frontiers of the state (Yahaya, 1995; Bangura, 1998). Many developing states had placed emphasis on the state as the driver of development especially industrialization. The state in the developing world was during the 1960s and 1970s tagged as developmental to be moulded along the Japanese experience that combined state banks, economic planning and steering which represented an alliance between finance, government and business in the pursuit of the ideology of national development (Johnson, 1995). The characteristics of the developmental state related to their political purposes and institutional structures particularly their bureaucracies that were driven by developmental concerns while the developmental objectives were politically driven (Leftwich, 2000). The developmental strategies adopted by developmental states included import substitution industrialization and were pushed through state structures. These strategies were indeed induced by political factors which included nationalism and the tendency to catch up with the West (Castels, 1992; Pempel, 1999). The developmental states therefore expanded beyond effective and efficient management and became authoritarian as their institutions grew corrupt and weak and ineffective (Chabal, 2002).

With economic crisis arising from dwindling revenue that could no longer meet the unplanned expansion in public expenditure without corresponding improvement in the quantity and quality of public service delivery, reforms became inevitable. The reforms introduced the new public management approach that sought to give more weight to market forces in the allocation of resources which the state hitherto had undertaken and ended up creating the state capacity crisis. The crisis of the state capacity refers to the ‘‘fiscal crisis of the state, administrative inefficiency, and erosion of incentive structures for staff motivation, favourable work ethics and state loyalty’’ (Bangura, 1998, p. 5).

The new public management reform sought to address primarily the goal of reducing the size of the state through expenditure controls; withdrawing subsidies from basic goods and services; downsizing the civil service, and privatizing public enterprises. The second element of the new approach related to redefining the role of the state by eliminating its universal approach in service provisioning. In this way, the state was to give up its services provisioning functions to private sector concerns by way of competitive bidding methods and contracting outfits' activities to private sector institutions. The third element dealt with efficiency issues. The state bureaucracy would operate like business concerns by converting large scale bureaucracies into executive agencies. Managers would have large latitude to operate under fix-term contracts with flexibility to hire and dismiss staff as well as introduce performance targets. This would further involve new methods of staff monitoring of performance and links of promotion to performance.

Public sector reform is often erroneously associated with downsizing. The public perceives reform with downsizing as synonymous. But public sector reforms means much more than this. It deals with fiscal stability of the state, managerial efficiency, capacity building of the bureaucracy and public accountability. These reforms were pressed by four key factors: global financial integration and liberalization, dwindling revenues for states (fiscal deficits), structural adjustments and democratization. The World Bank and the IMF through structural loans advances pushed for these reforms to entrench market triumphalism. These global capitalist institutions focused on civil service restructuring, pay and employment reform, privatization, decentralization and marketization of public services and transparent budgetary services.

The reform of the public sector focuses on the improvement of the ways in which government manages resources and delivers services. The process emphasizes effectiveness, efficiency and value for money (ECA, 2010). At the centre of the public sector reform is the civil service considered as the nerve centre of the machinery of government in socio-economic development. Since the late 1980s, the Nigerian state has experimented with public sector reforms with emphasis on civil service reforms. The goal has been to raise the quality of public services delivered to Nigerians and to enhance the capacity of the public service to execute government functions in advancing social economic development. Broadly conceptualised therefore, public sector reforms according to African Development Bank (ADB) (2005, p. 67) is ‘’the processes and practices which are concerned with improving the capacity of institutions to make policy and deliver services in an efficient, effective and accountable manner. In addition, it also involves the strengthening and management of the public sector. Some of the approaches and measures to reform the public bureaucracy include:

i. Civil service reform
ii. Financial and fiscal reform
iii. Decentralization

iv. Legal and judicial reform
v. Privatization and deregulation
vi. Enhancing accountability and improving corporate regulatory frameworks.

These reform measures were about introducing new ideas in public institutions and the civil service in particular to make them more functional, effective and efficient.

Public Sector Reforms in Nigeria: A Historical Overview

The Nigerian public service is a colonial creation from 1861 to 1954. During this period, the public service was responsible for tax collection and maintenance of law and order (Bayo, 2012; Olaopa, 2013; Ayede, 2014). Up to 1954 there were separate public services in Nigeria along regional lines, Eastern, Western and Northern regions as well as the federal public service. The first public service reform was introduced in 1946 known as the Harragin Commission. Its major achievement was the division of the service into junior and senior services. In 1954, the second reform was instituted by the Gorsuch Commission which unified the disparate services and created 5 sections in the national service. These sections include the sub-clerical, clerical, sub-professional/technical, administrative/professional and super-scale (Maikudi, 2012; Bayo, 2012; Olaopa, 2013). Between 1934 and 1954, there were all together seven Commissions and Committees established to reform the emerging public service. All these Commissions were concerned with the critical issues of compensation and remuneration. Colonial authorities not only kept Nigerians out of the service especially at the top most echelon but also stifled wage increases. All the Commissions made extensive recommendations on pay rise. The Commissions include; the Hunt Committee (1934); the Bridges Committee (1942), the Tudor-Davies Commission (1945), the Harragin Commission (1946), the Foot Commission (1948) and the Philip-Adebo Commission (1952).

The rapid Nigerianization of the top posts of the civil service began with the favourable recommendation of the Hugh Foot led Commission in 1948, for non-inclusion of non-Nigerians to government positions and decentralization of civil service operation. These recommendations were implemented hence the creation of the Regional and Central Public Service Boards (Olaopa, 2013). The Philip-Adebo Commission in 1952 accelerated the Nigerianization of the service in the build up to independence. Again between 1954 and 1960, barely a four year period, there were four other commissions for the reform of the service. This spate of commissions was a response to the contending exigencies created by the pressure in the build up to independence. The Commissions were the Lidbury Commission (1954), the Gorsuch Commission (1955), the Mbanefo Commission 1959 and the Newns Commission (1959). These commissions were to accelerate the Nigerianization of the service and also to speed up the resolution of the shortage of the middle executive cadre challenge that should have straddled the senior and junior cadre continuum in the service. Suffice to reiterate that up until 1953, the senior and junior cadre of the service were predominantly filled by expatriates and Nigerians respectively (Olaopa, 2009).

The Gorsuch Commission caused the creation of four cadre division of the service in response to the prevailing general level of education. These divisions were the sub-clerical and sub-technical; clerical and technical, executive and higher technical; and administrative and professional. Each division was to further cater for specific cadres relating to professions like law or engineering. The 1959 Mbanefo Commission addressed the issue of wages and salaries while the Newn Commission integrated the existing departments under Directors into Ministries that were to be headed by a permanent secretary which only one Nigerian civil servant was qualified to serve at that time. This grafting according to Olaopa (2013) was a product of the hasty implementation of the Nigerianization policy. New positions were created such as deputy permanent secretaries and in the absence of qualified personnel in terms of education and experience; lower rank civil servants were raised to fill them. Nigerianization served representation functions but undermined efficiency because it voided merit. This Nigerianization policy elevated representation and inescapably sacrificed merit and efficiency on the altar of representation.

The Morgan Commission of 1963; the Elliot Elwood Grading Team of 1966 and the Adebo Commission of 1971 were three subsequent reforms that again looked into issues of salaries and wages (Adebayo, 2004). The Morgan Commission recommended a minimum wage on geographical basis while the Elwood Team sought to address the discrepancies of the grading past system and recommended uniform salaries for civil servants performing similar tasks. The Adebo Commission of 1971 was to review the issue of wages and salaries but was ambushed by the Fulton report of 1968 which assessed the British oriented Weberian based Nigerian civil service. The Commission found that the service was stuck in tradition and was fast becoming archaic rather than move to embrace the emerging private sector management model. Stucked in bureaucratic norms of hierarchy, impartiality, and anonymity, the continued provision of service as advisors to politicians rather than managers of government programmes was reducing the capacity of the service to deliver quality public services. The Adebo Commission not only reviewed upward salaries and wages but also the reorganization and restructuring of the civil service. In 1974, the Udoji Commission was again instituted to review the public service, and it recommended ‘‘the standardization of conditions of service, an increase in public sector wages, a unified and integrated administrative structure, the elimination of wastes’’ that the service had become and ‘‘the removal of deadwood/inefficient departments’’ (Olaopa, 2013; p. 19). The Commission’s recommendations were to the effect of achieving a result oriented civil service and had set the tone for the establishment in 1975 of the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC). The FCSC was to assume responsibilities for recruitment, appointment, promotion, remuneration, retirement, discipline and dismissal. Recruitment was then to be exercised on the principles of the federal character which Nigerianization had precursed on the grounds of representation and its attendant consequences on merit and efficiency. The service was to undergo a severe purge on grounds of abuse of office, decline in productivity, divided loyalty, old age and corruption which the ‘super permanent secretary’ era of the early 1970s in the service represented (Adebayo, 2004). Despite the purge, the service resumed its expansion due to oil revenue and with the rapid growth; inefficiency, redundancy and corruption ensued logically. By 1988, the service had grown to a phenomenal 213,802 personnel rising from 30,000 at independence in 1960 and climbing to 45,154 in 1970 and then leaping to 98,877 in 1974 (Maikudi 2012; Otobo, 1999; Philips, 1990). Following the introduction of structural reforms in 1986, the public service reforms again were resumed in 1988; this time drawing impetus from global capitalist monitors; the World Bank and the IMF. Neo-liberal driven public sector reforms were a response to a different set of objectives with implications for Nigeria and her engagements with global capitalism and structural reforms of the late 1980s were simply part of the bigger globalization movement.

Public Sector Reforms in the Era of Adjustment

The structural adjustment induced public sector reforms arrived the scene of the public sector re-engineering with the grand idea of re-inventing government that is small and without interest in running businesses. The re-inventing government idea driving public sector reforms caused three phases of restructuring. The first phase was from the decade of the 1980s (1980-1989), in much of Africa. These reforms sought to eliminate widespread subsidies that were believed to be the cause of inefficient public service provisioning due to price distortion through inefficient allocation of resources. Strategies adopted for achieving its aims included reducing the size of the state and costs measures such as retrenchment, cost recovery and privatization. The reforms' goal of macro-economic stability was scarcely achieved; due to the inability of reformers to factor in the root cause of economic crisis of the 1970s, enhance welfare of workers as a motivational strategy and mobilise broad consensus on the reforms. Public apathy and opposition undermined real downsizing.

The mid 1990s-2000 represent the second phase of the reforms. This phase was the revival stage of the new public management paradigm that emphasized reward performance through enhanced compensation, remuneration and promotion. New strategies included enhanced incentives, skills, motivation, contracting out and public private partnerships (Aiyede, 2014). The reforms emphasized the quality of employees and not quantity and sought to attract qualified personnel into the public service. The reduction in government expenditure ensured a reduced state meaning that public salaries and wages were not raised and motivation was therefore low thereby unable to improve service delivery and public sector efficiency.

The third phase of the reforms began in 2000 and has been on-going. This phase of the reforms emphasize effective and efficient service delivery. The reforms hope to improve service delivery in a more responsive and effective way. These reforms have four principal objectives:

i. Removal of central planning and control through the release of markets and enhanced private sector development;
ii. Reduction of government budget deficits through removal of subsidies, privatization of public enterprises and transfer of public services to private institutions;
iii. Modernization of the public sector through increased wage differentiation, decentralization and civil service reform (based on reduction of number and functions);
iv. Liberalization of government controlled regulation over prices and allocations of foreign exchange and essential commodities (Idowu, 2012, p. 51).

The public service reform objectives have remained these and are still evolving. While state centred development planning is on the decline, the Nigerian state is still involved in economic activities through what is termed public private partnership.

To realise the objectives the civil service reform of 1988 were given legal teeth by decree No. 43. The decree emanated from the Philips Civil Service Panel which was instituted to streamline the service in line with the SAP. The review caused the renewal of the politicization of the service by introducing the conversion of Permanent Secretaries position to Director-General as a political appointment making its tenure subject to the government that appointed them. Specialization was restricted to a ministry in which a civil servant was found (Adebayo, 2004). The Panel also caused the implementation of greater ministerial responsibility regarding appointment, promotion, training and discipline of staff; restructuring of ministries along vertical and horizontal lines for managerial effectiveness and efficiency. Civil service appointment meant that civil servants would remain in one ministry without transfer throughout their career. The office of the Head of Service was also abolished along with the pool system (Bayo, 2012; Igbuzor, 1998). The broad definition of professionalism and politicization of the uppermost echelon of the service led to waste of skills and exposure to political vicissitudes such as rabid promotion. The damage to the public service due to the 1988 politicisation has been enormous especially in terms of discipline and corruption.

To reverse the damage done to the service due to the 1988 reforms, the Allison Ayida Panel on civil service reforms in 1994 reviewed the implementation of Decree 43 and the consequences of its implementation and made far reaching recommendations on the service and public service delivery. It caused the abrogation of the Director-General title and restored the permanent secretary nomenclature with their chief function as accounting officers. These early part of the structural adjustment induced reforms started the reclamation of the new public management ideals of efficient and effective service delivery, but achieved pretty very little due largely to the politicization of the service. The Ayida Panel also restored the office of the Head of Service under the presidency to be headed by a career civil servant. The pool system was to be restored for both professional and sub-professional cadres that were common part of MDAs. The Panel also called for the restructuring of ministries according to objectives, functions and sizes in negation of the uniform division under the 1988 reforms. The Federal Civil Service Commission was to regain the function of personnel management with powers to delegate to ministries. Recruitment into the service at entry point was to be based on merit and federal character while subsequent progression was to be based on merit. Retirement age of civil servants was put at 60 years irrespective of length of service and pension rates were to be harmonised for retired civil servants with 1991 as the base year. The Panel recommended for upward review of salaries and adjusted annually by factoring in inflationary pressures in order to reduce the temptation for corruption (Bayo, 2012; Fatile and Adejuwon, 2010; Olaopa, 2009).

Reclaiming the Public Sector: 1999 and Beyond

Public sector reforms since the late 1990s assumed a broader and more visionary trajectory and renewed momentum. Government’s revival of the refrain that it ‘has no business in business’ ignited the indication that the revival of the reform process would be more robust. The state of the public service or federal civil service was such that beggared reform. Decentralization occasioned by the Ayida Panel with the FCSC recruiting from Grade level 07-10 using the federal character principle was thoroughly abused. Progression on merit was also mismanaged and transfer from state civil services to the federal became rampant. Irregular promotions became common occurrences and all of these bred frustration and disillusion and low morale (Aiyede, 2014).

By 1999, the federal civil service had gone full circle from centralization to decentralization and back. The civil service was over centralised by 1999 with institutionalization of mediocrity, low morale, and inappropriate staff training practices. Grand corruption in the service was rampant and skills were grossly in short supply (El Rufai, 2011). The inability to get sound technically efficient personnel to be transferred to the Bureau of Public Enterprises in 1999 from within the service attest to this lack of requisite skills in the service by the late 1990s. The Bureau had to recruit eventually.

To deal with these formidable challenges by reclaiming the service in the re-invention of government and enthronement of the vigorous new public management paradigm, a re-launch of the public sector reforms took several approaches reflecting in policy formulations. These include;

i. Revival of the privatization policy
ii. Deregulation
iii. Pension reforms
iv. Monetisation of fringe benefits
v. Anti-corruption crusade and
vi. Public service reforms

These reform policies were implemented nearly simultaneously. Detailed review of the policies in a somewhat sequential manner is reasonable here.

Privatization: The privatization policy of the federal government was re-launched in 1999 with the passage into law of the Privatization Act of 1999 that established the institutional framework to drive the privatization process. The establishment of the National Council on Privatization was responsible for policy guidelines while the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) was the implementation outfit. BPE had slated 25 and 37 SOEs for full and partial privatization respectively. These covered manufacturing, cement, banks, vehicle assembly, sugar and oil refineries. The overall process was structured in three phases; straddling services, transportation and communication. Between 1999 and 2011, 122 enterprises were successfully privatised. Many of these are functional though the degree of efficiency is still being debated. Controversies have trailed the privatization process including corruption but overall it has achieved the elimination of subsidies and other associated waste with public resources (Genyi, 2012).

Deregulation: Part of the inefficiency associated with the public service related to the monopoly enjoyed SOEs. Telecommunication and public power supply symbolised this monopoly. Nigerian Telecommunication (NITEL) and National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) now Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) were made to face competition in providing telephony services and energy supply. While the privatization of NITEL has suffered many setbacks, the deregulation of the sector has resolved the communication frustrations associated with NITEL following the introduction of General Systems of Mobile (GSM) communication. NEPA has been transformed to Power Holding Company of Nigeria and broken down into several power generation, transmission and distribution companies. The National Independent Power Projects (NIPP) represents the synergy of public private partnerships in investments in power generation companies. The unbundling of NEPA resulted in shedding off staff and subsidies in public funds. Privatization and deregulation represent the downsizing aspect of public sector reforms and has covered the downstream oil sector as well.

Pension Reform: The Pension Reform Act of 2004 was objectivised to decentralise and privatise pension administration. This was another private-public-partnership strategy designed to effect a new public management outcome. The new pension scheme is contributory with a 7.5% contribution by employers. The armed forces however have a 2.5% and 12.5% contribution ratio. It is hoped that with the new scheme retired civil servants would have a better deal with the elimination of the pains and agonies associated with the old scheme that rendered life in retirement a horrible experience. By prompt payment of retirement benefits and regular payment of pension, serving civil servants would have no incentive to tamper with public resources as a way of securing a future life in retirement. The exemption of judiciary staff and skewed contribution by members of the armed forces introduces a systemic discrimination as a potential flaw. It is difficult yet to agree on the reality of the objectives of the scheme especially regarding corruption by serving personnel as the prison pension fraud aptly illustrates.

Monetization of Fringe Benefits: The monetization of fringe benefits policy was instrumentalised by the Certain Political, Public and Judicial Office Holders Act of 2002. Before its passage public servants were entitled to benefits including, a) subsidized residential accommodation, b) transport facilities, c) official cars with drivers for senior civil servants, d) free medical services, and e) subsidizing utilities like electricity, water and telephone.

Over the years, the cost of these services had become enormous due to abuses that made capital investment and provision of other services to citizens difficult. In the argument of Nnebi (2006) and Maikudi (2012), monetization was therefore, designed to:

> Stanch the ever increasing cost of recurrent expenditure, reduce waste, provide resources for investment in social and capital assets for the populace, prepare public officers for affordable life after service, enhance flexibility in use of civil servants personal resources, and possibly push down cost of real estates.

The implementation of this policy has witnessed reversals and outright abandonment due to indemic corruption in the public sector.

Anti-Corruption crusade and transparency and accountability: The question of the pervasiveness of corruption and malfeasance in the public sector has long been answered by the resilience and intensification of graft in the public service. Public sector reforms therefore had to take on a new momentum in the tackling of corruption for the reforms to make meaningful progress. The federal government quickly established the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in 2000 and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2003. While the ICPC was bugged down by bureaucratic procedures the EFCC was to cover new grounds in money laundering and beat the legal obstructions to arrest and prosecution. More than a decade after their operation, corruption in the public sector has assumed greater proportions and dimensions. Put simply, corruption seemed to have acquired new impetus and is on the rise. The selective application of arrest and prosecutorial powers of both bodies, the small corrupt cases of concern to anti-corruption institutions and the compromised nature of the criminal justice system in addition to the politicisation of the anti-corruption crusade have conspired to undermine the fight against corruption hence the relatively very low achievement records of both EFCC and ICPC (Genyi, 2014). By and large the present non independent status of the anti-corruption bodies and the overwhelming political influence on their operation suggest that they in name only but not in actual fact capable of the anticorruption struggle.

In order to promote transparency and accountability in the generation and application of public resources new key institutions were introduced; the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), and the Bureau of Public Procurement. NEITI was responsible for promoting due process and transparency in revenue extraction from extractive resources and accountability in application of extractive revenue which Bureau for Public Procurement (BPP) or due process office was to ensure competitive costing of contracts. The initial phase of BPP seemed to have made a positive dent in the contract process. With increasing level of uncompleted projects and low quality of completed ones, the image of BPP is coming under search light, the initial gains of curbing corruption appear to be slipping away.

Civil Service Reforms: Like the Structural Adjustment Programme that underpinned the reforms of the late 1980s to the 1990s, and thereby qualified the country for structural adjustment loans, the reforms of the 2000s were policy instruments to facilitate and support the claims and justification for the debt relief being sought by Nigeria from the Paris Club. The policy instruments were comprehensively captured in the modified SAP document termed National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) inaugurated in March, 2004. The primary focus of NEEDS was to re-invent government that is small and compact and business friendly and moved to integrate the Nigerian economy in the prevailing globalization mood. The development was firmly anchored on ‘‘macroeconomic and structural reforms, institutional and governance reforms and public service reforms’’ (Omar, 2012). NEEDs wove all existing efforts into a single framework for more effective coordination for national development. Macro-economic and structural reforms dealt with issues of privatization, deregulation and liberalization in order to stanch the drain on state resources to be ploughed back in providing social services; water, electricity, roads etc, for the citizenry. Institutional and governance reforms targeted elimination of corruption and to stem leakages and wastes of public resources. Here anti-corruption agencies were introduced and transparency and accountability measures were to be institutionalized. Public service reforms then targeted right-sizing that were to result in lay off of workers.

In 2001, a service wide study by the Management Service Office in the office of the Head of Service of the Federation revealed that the civil service was ageing rapidly with an average age of 42 and over 60% were over 40 years. The study also showed that less than 12% of the service were university graduates or held equivalent certificates. The service was bottom heavy with over 70% in the 01-06 sub-clerical cadre and without corresponding skills (El-Rufai, 2011). The study also showed that about 20% of its personnel were non-existent (ghost-workers) El-Rufai, 2013; 316). These gory statistics about the service paint a picture of a low morale service imbued with archaic rule-system that stifle individual initiative and obfuscate accountability. No wonder the Obasanjo administration on assumption of duty quickly retired civil servants who had attained 60 years or put in 35 years. Embargo on employment since 1994 was lifted and public service pay was reviewed upward while training programmes at all levels were restored. These measures were to boost morale and rejuvenate the system with new entrants and skills.

These piecemeal reforms were elaborated in the NEEDs document as goals for public sector reforms to include, a) right size the sector and eliminate ghost workers, b) restore the professionalism of the service, c) rationalize, d) restructure and strengthen institutions, e) privatize and liberalize, f) tackle corruption and improve transparency in government accounts, g) reduce wastes and enhance efficiency in government expenditure.

In the context of the NEEDS document, a new service was envisaged to consist of refined technocrats with adequate skills, knowledgeable and highly motivated towards innovation and creativity to improve public service delivery. With ICT, and other relevant technologies, the new service would be performance based.

Armed with the civil service wide study facts, government constituted the Public Service Reform Team and established the Bureau of Public Service Reform (BPSR) in the Presidency. The BPSR recommended the restructuring of MDAs with 4-8 departments and 2-4 divisions per departments. These recommendations were approved by government. The right sizing of the service commenced with the recommendation of 45,000 personnel out of which 37,500 officers were retrenched after being properly prepared through retirement seminars and disengagement benefits paid to 30,000 of them. To deal with the ghost workers syndrome, the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) were introduced in 2006 to pilot MDAs. In the FCT, the IPPIS was used to detect 3000 ghost workers out of an initial headcount of 26,000 workers. By the time the biometric system was introduced and payroll computerized, about 2500 workers failed to appear for documentation (El-Rufai, 2013). By 2011, 41,926 officers considered redundant were retrenched across MDAs. IPPIS had helped to save ₦12 billion of public resources (Aiyede, 2014, p.32).

The launched of the Vision 20:2020 has integrated the National Strategy for Public Service Reforms (NSPSR). The vision is to drive service policy to achieve economic greatness for the country through a transparent and accountable government. The vision also seeks to institutionalize appropriate legal frameworks that would improve the business environment to attract investments and the reform of the civil service. Prior to the launch of Vision 20:2020, the civil service reform process witnessed a set back with the reinstatement of 3000 officers earlier retrenched for a variety of reasons hardly justifying reinstatement. What appeared palpably more convincing is political consideration.

The contemporary public service reform in the civil service consists of three phases. Phase one is the rebuilding phase of (2009-2011) which aims at professionalising the service through a merit and client focus based system. Here the service would be enhanced through the introduction of new work based equipment, technology and infrastructure. Recruitment and promotion would be based on merit. Ministries and Agencies would be assessed on their performance.

The second phase 2012-2015 is value based. This reflects a normative trajectory for the service and would mean a new orientation and transformation of the serve to be based on a strong value system. A value based system suggests the introduction of a code of ethics and practices based on established standards in line with performance management principles.

The third phase 2016-2020 would achieve the world class service era. It is hoped that by 2020 the Nigerian economy would have achieved growth and productive levels of global standard and the civil service would have also attained this level of high effectiveness and efficiency.

In the spirit of the Vision 20:2020 reforms, the tenure of federal government Permanent Secretaries and Directors were fixed effective 2010. Under this dispensation Permanent Secretaries are appointed for a fix term of four years renewable once and then retirement. For Directors, once a public servant spends eight years on that position, they retire irrespective of years in service or whether ones retirement age is reached (60 years or 35 years in service). In strengthening the merit based system, promotion would be based on training and examination including promotion to the position of Permanent Secretary.

To check waste and fraud, the second phase of the IPPIS was expanded. It caused the discovery of further 43,000 nonexistent workers in 2010 when applied in 11 MDAs. The third phase is expected to cover 18 MDAs (Aiyede, 2014; Ogidan, 2011). The Steven Oronsaye Committee inaugurated by President Yar' Adua in 2010 to review the organizational structure in the civil service in 2010 found that the top echelon of the service was heavy with senior officers without room for progression. To deal with that, Permanent Secretaries and Directors were henceforth to serve for four years subject to renewal once and then retire irrespective of the 60 years retirement age or 35 years of service. In 2011, the Committee was renamed 'Presidential Committee on the Rationalization and Restructuring of Federal Parastatals, Commissions, and Agencies'. According to Bayo (2012) the Committee had the mandate to:

> a).Study and review all previous reports/records on the restructuring of Federal Government Parastatals and advise on whether they are relevant, b),To examine the enabling Acts of all the Federal agencies, Parastatals and Commissions and classify them into various sectors; c) Examine critically, the mandates of the existing federal agencies, parastatals and Commissions and d), determine areas of overlap or duplication of functions and make appropriate recommendations to restructure, merge or scrap to eliminate such overlaps, duplication or redundancies.

The Oronsaye report recommended that of the country's 541 MDAs, only 163 are relevant. The report justifies its position on widespread duplications of functions. It cited the Federal Road Safety Commission as replicating the work of the Public and the Highway Department of the Ministry of Works. For same reason of replication, it called for the scrapping of the EFCC and ICPC, for performing the duties of the police. The committee recommended the reduction of government statutory agencies from 263 to 161 and the abolition of 38 agencies while merging 52 and then reverting 14 agencies to departments in relevant ministries. To check fraud and waste of public resources, 89 agencies were to be audited by means of biometric capturing of personnel. By abolition of 38 agencies, government was expected to save ₦124.8 billion, ₦100.6 billion from agencies to be merged and ₦6.6 billion from funding professional bodies. Reforms affecting universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and elimination of Boards of Federal Medical Centres would save ₦489.9 billion; ₦50.9 billion and ₦616 million respectively (Bayo, 2012).

The white paper released on the report rejected many of the far reaching recommendations that were at the heart of the civil service reforms that were in line with the broader framework of NEEDs such as right sizing, elimination of wastes and enhancing accountability and transparency. Major decisions of the white paper include the rejection of the recommendation for the merger of the anti-corruption agencies – EFCC, ICPC and Code of Conduct Bureau. It rejected the scrapping of NECO, FRSC and the merger of NTA with FRCN. It also rejected the subsuming of Infrastructure Commission and Regulatory Commission under the BPE. The white paper accepted the scrapping of NAPEP and Fiscal Responsibilities Commission. It also accepted the merger of Nigeria Airspace Management Agency, (NAMA), Nigeria Meteorological Agency (NMA) and Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA). This merger challenged an international practice which allows separate performance of these functions by separate bodies (Editor, 2014; Adebayo, 2014). The recommendation for the scrapping of the Federal Character Commission was also rejected. This rejection touches on the critical question of merit versus representation that has undermined competency in the service giving room for sentiments and mediocrity. In the estimation of the committee total public resource savings would have been ₦862 billion in mergers and scrapings. By implication the white paper publicly endorsed extensive and deep seated public waste and malfeasance symbolised by public institutions duplicating functions and the promotion of inefficiency. For a democratic government of the kind in Nigeria accepting the recommendations of the Oronsaye Committee would have amounted to class suicide by eliminating sources of accumulation by political elites and their bureaucratic counterparts. In the face of dwindling public service delivery government demonstrated that it lacked the political will to resuscitate and reclaim the public service.

Challenges to public sector reforms in Nigeria

That Nigeria has implemented public sector reforms dating back to the colonial era is not in doubt. The first sets of reforms were designed to boost the morale of the service for maximum performance in the enhancement of national development. The reforms were also geared towards accelerating capacity building needs of the service consequent upon the departure of British personnel and to rapidly bridge the skills gap. Reforms also periodically addressed compensation and remuneration issues and Nigerianization of the service. In the 1970s civil service reforms that resulted in the purge were to address ethical issues which had began to undermine the integrity of the service and over all development of the country. Since the 1980s, reforms have sought to reduce public sector expenditure, enhance effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery and reclaim the service in ethical context. New Public Management with performance targets became both new mechanism and goal targets to achieve efficient allocation and utilization of resources to realize good results in service delivery. Closely related to enhanced service delivery was the desire to accelerate economic growth and development through private sector investment and management of critical sectors of the economy.

The overall results of public sector reforms along these measures have been low and far from envisaged targets. The public sector whatever has remained of it after privatization can be indisputably described as still inefficient, corrupt and ineffective. The public service has largely proved incapable of self reformation. The inefficiencies associated with the services in the 1980s and the growth of unethical practices and attitudes acknowledged during the period are several decades and still counting same stubborn features of the service. They appear to be exacerbating (Uzo Amah, 2014).

Public sector reforms have largely failed to achieve their set targets due to a variety of factors many of which have reinforcing consequences. Reforms in Nigeria appear to have been formulated without consideration for economic, social, cultural and constitutional and political context of the Nigerian state in which they were to be implemented. That reforms were successful in parts of Europe could not have been assumed that they would be successful in Nigeria. The different settings do not warrant that assumption. Nigeria is a complex plural society; religious, social and cultural. The country's politics and governance policies are underpinned by this plurality. The first step to any reform must seek is to generate political consensus on the desirability of the reform and the underlying factors that necessitate such policy options. Over the years various governments assumed that reforms were necessary because they knew that so and did not bother about generating consensus across the various levels of stakeholders including the civil service. For instance foreign donors and experts, be they retired civil servants and academics crafted reform measures without the buy in of the service. The service waited for reforms to come to them and when they did they resisted or frustrated them.

Various governments have demonstrated the clear lack of political will to push through consensus building on reforms and implementation of reforms they started. General Ibrahim Babangida's reforms for instance were suspended by the General Sani Abacha's regime only to be resumed by President Olusegun Obansanjo but again under different governance systems. Inter-regime policy instability has virulently affected reform implementation. Political considerations again largely accounted for lull in the reform process in the latter days of President Obasanjo's. Upon coming to power, President Yar'Adua reversed key areas of the reforms or smeared on-going reforms with too-much politics including anti-corruption measures, privatization of some refineries and reversal of downsizing pruning concluded under President Obasanjo (El-Rufai, 2011). Reforms need a committed, political leadership that will rise above sentiments and mediocrity and lead the reform implementation.

The predominance of the patronage based personnel management which include recruitment on representative rather than merit based approaches that is pretentiously predicated on compliance with the constitutionally provided federal character principle has significantly undermined the progress of reforms. The grand objectives of social and political stability as cohesive mechanisms for nation building which federal character principle underscores in representation and recruitment are fundamental in a plural society like Nigeria. But the manner in which recruitment is done as a means of patronage negates merit (Omotola, 2012). Federal character is implemented in a manner that favours mediocrity thereby undermining capacity development of the service. Competitive recruitment can still accommodate representation but by ignoring such approaches federal character invokes feelings of marginalization in order to perpetuate patronage. Recruitment exercise since the reforms have failed to resonate with the spirit of the reform hence less progress has been achieved. The service is heavily staffed but with irrelevant or no skills.

Closely related to lack of political will by the political leadership is its inability to raise the bar of integrity by dealing decisively with corruption in the public sector. Reform measures such as privatization, restructuring or deregulation have been tainted by grand corruption. This rubs off every vestige of integrity left of public authorities and reignite public skepticism against reforms. That the privatization process had been widely tainted with corruption is a well known fact (Genyi, 2010; Omotola, 2012; Bayo, 2012).

The reforms have suffered from policy inability to dismantle the hierarchical principle of the civil service and in its stead introduce capacity and results. Reforms have also failed to focus on performance evaluation by orienting personnel towards the accomplished of set goals with time lines. Reliance on old fashioned form of accountability that leans on internal and outward structures has proved insufficient as superiors and subordinates are too familiar with and subscribed to unethical values that tolerate collusion or collaboration.

Reforms have been slow and largely ineffective due again to the denial by the civil service that it is due for reforms (El-Rufai, 2011). The inglorious state of the service that reflect in preponderant corruption, mediocrity, indiscipline, underperformance, redundancy seem not to bother the civil service. Often the denial is expressed in the state of the service is a reflection of the wider social and political context. This has made the implementation of reforms more difficult. Closely related to this is the paucity of relevant data on the totality of the federal civil service in terms of numerical and proportional strength, professional and technical capacity and technology adoptability. Competence and hard work must matter and should matter to discard the existing arrangement of too many civil servants doing nothing, or too many doing little, and too few doing too much (Uzo-Amah, 2014).

Conclusion: Policy Options

The reform of the public sector has reached its peak and reversed several times. Its greatest moment was from 2001-2006. Since then it has been stood on its head. Several factors account for this. In broad terms policy environment and implementation constitute the yardsticks for assessing the degree of success or failure of PSR. The policy environment consists of two main issues: the nature and character of government and the perception of the civil service of the reforms given the polity in which it functions. Democratic governments are naturally consensus based and seek to build coordinated approach to public issues. The reforms dealt with issues of tracking staff numbers through the computerization of the payroll and human resources data bases which are critical to reforms. The retrenchment and layoffs have often been reversed. This area has been controversial. Reforms have also affected pay structure and pensions. Human resource management aspect of reforms related to cadre issues and favourably inclined to senior civil servants. Attempts to introduce merit based recruitment; promotion and discipline have been slow and minimally parastatal specific than civil service wide. Training and capacity building as well as demand side reforms that focus on end users have been painfully slow and employment has been difficult to generate and have impacted on programme design and implementation. Reform measures have also involved retrenchment and layoff, early retirements and employment bans.

At every stage of the reforms government had been unable to build huge coalitions to support reforms. Public confidence in government has waned and refused to return for a long time and this has continued to undermine public support for government policies with positive goals but short term pains. Nigerians have been generally opposed to upsetting prevailing conditions no matter how terrible including the state of the civil service. Since reforms have started, government has demonstrated weak political will to drive the reform process. Without this demonstrable commitment, no matter how well structured blue prints like that prepared by the PSRT in 2003, they will not be implemented and where they are, the outcome would be compromised. The second component of the policy environment is the perception of the reforms by the civil service. The civil service is in a state of self denial about its state, capacity and quality of its service delivery. The civil service has no pride left. While the service has decayed due to political and governmental factors, the service sees nothing wrong with the clumsy, chaotic and indecent way it operates. The service has lost its sense of decency of ethics, standards and discipline. In a state of denial it has resisted public sector reforms. Thus, reforms since the late 1980s have been unable to vigorously pursue rebuilding processes that are anchored on merit and performance based recruitment and progression approaches.

The third component of policy environment relates to the Nigerian society. The social environment leans strongly on primordial sentiments and values of kinship and interpersonal connections over and above systematic interest. This is the root of patronage arrangements that is literally opposed to the merit based system. The return of democratic politics has unfortunately refused to steer clear of the resurgence of primordial sentiments of ethnicity resurrected since the annulment of the June 12 presidential election. The civil service as part of the broader polity and with overt involvement in party politics explains again in part its resistance to reforms by invoking ethnic sentiments.

Policy options for reforms going forward would deal with the comprehensive review of areas so far covered to determine what has worked or not worked and why. The Oronsaye Committee report is a good takeoff point and to align outcomes with contemporary reality of Nigerian society and economy. A firm decision by Nigeria's political leaders to pursue reforms based on strong convictions that would sustain and drive the vision through coalition building of winning teams at various levels with interested parties is critical. In particular, the civil service would be made to own the process of the reforms and see itself as a critical partner in the reform agenda. Over the years, the civil service was made to run after the reforms or sit back to wait for the reforms. This measure would check resistance.

Ongoing reforms would need to be restructured and prioritised in segmentation and sequencing. First, to ascertain the skills' needs of the civil service. Second complete the biometric computerization of the service to ascertain the numerical strength of the force. Third, eliminate redundancies and duplications in service functions. Fourth, recruit based on merit and train existing staff on a sustainable basis. Fifth introduce performance targets linked to promotion and discipline. These integrated approach and sequence is open to evaluation and assessment and adjustment. Public sector reform is inevitable because without it the preponderant decay of the service will soon consume the public service and the entire country.

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