

CIVIL SERVICE REFORMS AND PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines civil service reforms and productivity in Nigeria with focus on the reforms impact on productivity. Productivity is measured in terms of service delivery. The paper employed secondary source of data collection. It adopted the ‘bureaucratic theory’ as the theoretical framework of analysis. In the context of Max Weber’s analysis, bureaucratic theory makes public institutions the “most efficient form of organization”. However, as revealed in this work, most of the civil service reforms in Nigeria failed to meet not only the efficiency test of Max Weber but also the expected aims and objectives of the reforms. The challenges to meeting the reforms objectives include both bureaucratic red-tapism and political hindrances. In order to address these challenges, the suggested among others, pragmatic reforms that will ensure that the welfare of civil servants are given priority, the avoidance of unnecessary duplication of government ministries, departments, and agencies; as well as professionalization of the civil service.

Keywords: Bureaucratic theory, Civil Service, Productivity, Professionalization, Reforms

ABSTRAIT

Cette étude examine les réformes de la fonction publique et la productivité au Nigéria en mettant l'accent sur l'impact des réformes sur la productivité. La productivité se mesure en termes de prestation de services. Le document utilisai une source secondaire de collecte de données. Il a adopté la «théorie bureaucratique» comme cadre théoriqued’analyse. Dans le cadre de l'analyse de Max Weber, la théoriebureaucratique fait des institutions publiques la «forme d'organisation la plus efficace». Cependant, comme l'arévélécé travail, la plupart des réformes de la fonction publique au Nigérian'ont pas satisfait non seulement au test d'efficacité de Max Weber, mais aussi aux buts et objectifs attendus des réformes. Les défis à relever pour atteindre les objectifs des réformes comprennent à la fois les lourdeurs bureaucratiques et les obstacles politiques. Afin de relever ces défis, il a suggéré, entre autres, des réformespragmatiques qui garantiront que le bien-être des fonctionnaires soit prioritaire, en évitant les doubles emplois inutiles des ministères, départements et agences du gouvernement; ainsi que la professionnalisation de la fonction publique.

Mots-clés: Théorie bureaucratique, Fonction publique, Productivité, Professionnalisation, Réformes

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INTRODUCTION

Administrative reform is a process that can be broken down into distinct phases from the perception of problems to their implementation and evaluation. It seeks to remove organizational pathologies as well as accelerate productivity and enhance efficiency. An overhaul of the administrative system becomes necessary when it is proved that introducing an intervention agenda can help to solve the problems that hindered productivity, and hence anticipated development (Eneanya, 2010). In the context of system theory, institutions are established to handle specialized aspects of government services. The institutions and/or departments work independently to provide the expected services, but for the overall stability (equilibrium) of the system (the society). The Civil Service as an institution remains as one of such functional arms, which services are needed for the day-to-day running of government, and the stability of the country.

The first administrative institutions established in Nigeria by the colonial administration were departments (Ujo, 2015). The colonial departments were all-purpose administrative institutions. Indeed, the principle of specialization was not strictly adhered to. However, by 1951, some constitutional changes were introduced that made it necessary to reform the administrative institutions. The reforms led to the conversion of some departments into ministries. During the exercise, it was discovered that some departments could not be converted into a pure ministerial organization due to the nature of their functions. Some of the institutions, therefore, retained their former names as departments – Immigration department, Audit department, Customs department, etc.

At the head of the Ministries were appointed political heads who were not only responsible for the day-to-day activities of the Ministry but also responsible to the people through the Parliament for all matters in their Ministry. Below the political heads, were career civil servants who were expected to operate in accordance with the principles of “impartial selection, permanency, neutrality and anonymity” (Ujo, 2015, p.149). This arrangement still remains today as Ministers appointed by the government are the heads of the different Ministries. The Permanent Secretaries and the Directors work in the different Departments and Units, with the career civil servants.

Changes in practice and institutional reorganizations are part of the dynamic process of every government in the world. Reforms are therefore undertaken by government after realizing the fact that “an existing system or institution is incapable of meeting the demands of current socio-political and economic development”. Such reforms might also result from “new ideas and factors that have emerged”, which could make the system more effective and efficient or provide better alternatives (Dagana, 2005, p.50). In the Civil Service, reforms are very essential for the functioning of government since it is regarded as the engine room of the administration and the heart of the attainment of governmental goals, aims and objectives. The Nigerian Public Service, more particularly the civil service, plays a very fundamental function in government’s nation-building activities because of its inbuilt qualities of professionalism, technocracy, accountability, transparency, neutrality, experience, knowledge of governmental affairs, continuity and representation among others.

Over the years, international development has tended to impact on the economy and governance. These developments often require not only changes in the way government carried out its functions but also efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. These demands require not only continuous training in terms of refresher training but in many instances overhauling the system to create room for new strategies in service delivery. In response to these developments, Civil Service reforms in Nigeria have witnessed commercialization of some of its Departments and

Parastatals as well as outright privatizations. There has also been emphasis on service delivery (SERVICOM) as well as requirement for certain qualification to be promoted to certain cadre as opposed to growing from the rank with minimum qualification. In all these the expectation was to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery, and enhance the productivity of the workers. Given this background one research question guided this study: To what extent has the public service reforms affect the productivity of the Nigerian civil service?

The paper is organized in themes. Following this introduction is the conceptual clarifications. Thereafter, the theoretical framework and literature review are presented. As part of the review the problems of the civil service are discussed as a prelude to the overview of the civil service reforms that are presented in synopsis. Following the synopsis is the discussion of the outcome of the reforms, conclusion and recommendation.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Certain concepts or terms that influence the topic of this paper need clarification to enhance the understanding of the readers. These concepts and/or key terms include civil service, reforms, administrative reforms, and performance. This sub-section is therefore dedicated to providing explanation for them.

According to Anazodo et al (2012, p.1), the words, civil service refers to “administrative bureaucracy”. It is related to government’s bureaucratic practices with formalities in rules and guideline on the way of running administrative procedure in government. In a definition that is closely related to Anazodo’s (2012) own, Kwaghga (2010, p.105) defined the civil service as a “body of men and women employed in a civil capacity and non-political career basis by the federal and state governments”, primarily to render services in forms of advice, as well as a formulation and implementation of policies of the government. Although the civil servants are expected to follow laid down procedure, there come a time when changes (reforms) are introduced such procedures are also changed. For instance, one who becomes a permanent secretary was supposed to remain so till retirement. However, current reforms has changed all that; requiring that permanent secretaries should not stay more than eight years notwithstanding whether their time of retirement is due or not. This is an aspect of reforms.

Reforms, therefor refers to a deliberate attempt to reinvigorate a system or institutions that is near collapse or facing serious decadence, inefficiency, ineffectiveness and low or poor performance, that is preventing it or slowing it down in the achievement of its major and minor objectives (Olaleye, 2001). Reforms is expected to transform the system to serve as an engine of growth and development. Olaleye (2001, p.105) therefore referred to reforms as “an attempt to reconstruct administrative structures and revamp operational machinery and techniques capable of improving organizational effectiveness and efficiency”.

Following the concept of reforms is administrative reforms. Since administrative involves carrying out of duties and responsibilities, administrative reform refers to a periodic review in part or whole of the machinery of government in carrying out responsibilities in order to improve performance in achieving the desired goals. It could be turnaround maintenance to reengineer the administrative structure, its management and functions with improved skills of the civil servants and an effective service delivery as its overall objective. In all these (reforms and administrative reforms), performance become very central to the development progress and survival of organization, which is why it is accorded with a special place in all reforms of the organization. The various elements of “performance” include effectiveness, efficiency, economy, productivity, and behavioural performance.

Performance can therefore be tangible or behavioural. Performance is centred on achievements of an organization and individual workers in their output of work. It is measured in order to improve its level. Reforms are therefore made in order to improve the level of performance of both the individual worker and the organization.

THEORETICAL AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The 'bureaucratic theory' of Max Weber (1864-1920) was adopted for this study. In the context of the theory, bureaucracy is the key part of the rational - legal authority, which provide the foundation for ideal-type bureaucracy. The features of the ideal-type bureaucracy provided by Akrani (2011, p. 2) include

a high degree of division of labour and specialization; a well-defined hierarchy of authority, which ensures the supervision of the lower offices by the higher ones; It follows the principles of rationality, objectivity and consistency; a formal and personal relation among the members of the organization; Inter-personal relations are based on positions and not on personalities; There are well-defined rules and regulations. These rules cover all the duties and rights of the employees. These rules must be strictly followed. There are well-defined methods for all types of work. Selection and promotion is based on technical qualification, and thorough and expert training is a condition in the bureaucracy.

In the argument of Max Weber, bureaucracy remains the "most efficient form of organization" because of the provision of a defined line of authority with clear rules and regulations which should be strictly followed. Akrani (2011) believed that the theory if properly adhered to will make an organization efficient, effective, rational and successful in its control of workers and performance.

The Nigeria Civil Service, whether at the state or local government level observe the principle of bureaucracy. The general term for officials of the public service and other government departments and units is public servants (Eneanya, 2010). The Civil Service is therefore seen as a body of public organizations made up of ministries and local government councils, responsible for planning and implementing government policies and programmes. The employees who work in these public organizations are referred to as civil servants. In the views of Obikeze and Anthony (2004, p.140), though people often see the civil service and the public service as the same thing, they are technically, not the same. The term "public service as a term is broader in scope than civil service". It includes not only those who work in the regular government ministries and department but also statutory corporations, boards and the armed forces.

Obikeze and Anthony (2004, p.140), further posited that every modern state has three arms of government. These are the legislature, judiciary and executive. While the legislature makes the law, the judiciary interprets it and the executive implements it. In the duty of law implementation, the political office holders or the elected representatives of the people "do not exercise their power directly. They exercise it through the instrumentality of the civil service". The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), Chapter VI, Section D, Sub-section 169 stipulates the establishment of the Civil Service of the Federation and the Federal Civil Service Commission. It states expressly that "there shall be a civil service of the Federation". It further stated in Chapter VI, Section D, and Sub-section 170 that

Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Federal Civil Service Commission may, with the approval of the President and subject to such conditions as it may deem fit, delegate any of the powers conferred upon it by this

Constitution to any of its members or to any officer in the civil service of the Federation.

Section 171 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution further stated that

The President of the Federation has the power to appoint persons to hold or act in the offices to which the section applied and to remove persons so appointed from any such offices. One of such officers is the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation.

In the same vein, Part II, Section C, Sub-section 206 of the Constitution also stipulates “that there shall be for each state of the Federation a Civil Service”. The Constitution also established the State Civil Service Commission and the Head of the Civil Service of the State in Sub-sections 207 and 208.

The Nigerian civil service has since its inception remained a major instrument used by government to implement its policies and programmes. The civil service has continued to increase in its importance so much so that other bodies such as the Military and parastatals, which were also set up to implement specific aspects of government policies, have continued to look up to the civil service as a model (Obi, et al, 2008). Thus the attainment of good governance in any society depends on the effective and efficient provision of services for its citizens. Such service delivery is better performed by an arm of the executive called the civil service. Civil Service is the administrative bureaucracy of any country that is saddled with the responsibility of implementing and enforcing the policies and programmes of government. It therefore means that for policy objectives of the state to be achieved, the civil service must be alive to its responsibilities (Solomon, 2015).

The principles of the Nigeria civil service is guided by the triple maxims of anonymity, neutrality and impartiality. The principle of permanence is also seen as part of the maxims. Obikeze & Anthony (2004, p.140) explained these maxims as:

Anonymity: The principle of anonymity states that civil servants should be seen and not heard. Though they advise political office holders on issues relating to government, they neither take the blames nor the glory of such policies. They are not expected to be seen defending such policies. That job is better left for political office holders and not the career office holders. Civil servants as far as possible, are anonymous, and should not be seen as craving for publicity.

Neutrality: The civil servant must be politically neutral. His job is to serve the government of the day with full dedication irrespective of what he feels about the particular government. He ought not to allow his personal prejudices to colour his dedication to his duty. He is not expected to be a card-carrying member of a political party.

Impartiality: Civil servants are paid from taxpayers’ money which does not belong to anybody or group in particular. They are therefore expected to discharge their duties without fear or favour. Since the Constitution emphasizes the equality of all citizens, they are supposed to be treated equally by the Civil Servants. In rendering services to the public, the civil servants are expected to treat everybody with a high degree of impartiality.

Permanence: The civil service is often defined as a permanent body of officials that carry out government decisions. It is permanent and its life is not tied to any particular government. Government come and goes but the service remains (Obikeze & Anthony (2004, p.141).

THE PROBLEMS OF THE NIGERIA CIVIL SERVICE

The principles of the Nigeria civil service as provided by the triple maxims of anonymity, neutrality and impartiality do not suggest in anywhere that all is well with bureaucratic practices in the country. In many instances the principles themselves, especially that of “permanence” tends to constitute red tapism, and thwart efficiency and effectiveness aimed at service delivery. Beside these, each government that come to power would set up manifestos guided with targets of expected achievement. When bureaucracy work to thwart such expectation, it becomes necessary to set up task force to review the performance of the whole civil service. In this context many reviews have been done in Nigeria based on the problems that can be summarized as structural, institutional, and operational factor.

As explained by Dagana(2005), such structural, institutional and operational problem are observed where the where the Minister or Commissioner remain only as the political head of the Ministry and is not really accountable to the service; and therefore has no such responsibility. Any attempt to try and enforce certain decisions could be frustrated by the administration (bureaucracy) headed by the Permanent Secretary. In order to reduce such structural problems that the 1988 civil service reforms were ordered.

SYNOPSIS OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORMS IN NIGERIA

Since 1988, there have been several reforms of the civil service in Nigeria. According to Anazodo (2008, p.204), apart from the efforts to improve the civil service in terms of efficient and effective service delivery, the civil service had undergone several structural changes. In the last count, about 18 reports of commissions, committees and panels had been set up. The table 1 (about here) present a summary of the different reforms carried out in the Nigerian civil service.

Table 1: Name of Reforms Commission/Committees and Panel on Civil Service

| S/N | Name of The Reform Commission/Committees/Panels | Year |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 1. | The Hint Committee | 1934 |
| 2. | The Bridges Committee | 1942 |
| 3. | The Tudor Davis Committee. | 1945 |
| 4. | The Harragan Commission | 1945-1946 |
| 5. | The Miller Commission | 1946 |
| 6. | The Huge Foot (Nigerianization) Commission | 1948 |
| 7. | The Phillipson Adebo Commission | 1953-1954 |
| 8. | The Lidbury Commission | 1954 |
| 9. | The Gorsuch Commission | 1954-1955 |
| 10. | The Mbanefo Commission | 1959 |
| 11. | Newns Commission | 1959 |
| 12. | The Morgan Commission | 1963-1964 |
| 13. | The Elwood Grading Team Commission | 1966 |
| 14. | Wey Panel | 1968 |
| 15. | The Adebo Commission | 1970-1971 |
| 15. | The Udoji Public Service Review Commission | 1972-1974 |
| 10. | The Dotun Phillips Review Panel | 1985 |
| 11. | The Decree No. 43 | 1988 |
| 12. | The Ayida Review Panel on Civil Service Reforms | 1994 |
| 13. | Musa Ahmed Reforms | 2003 |

| | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 13. | The Civil Service Reform under President Olusegun Obasanjo | 1999-2007 |
| 14. | Steven Orosanye Panel | 2010-2012 |

Source:Obi, E. A. (2008). Readings on comparative public administration: Theory and select country studies. Onitsha: Bookpoint Educational Limited.

THE MORGAN COMMISSION (1963) AND ELWOOD GRADING TEAM (1966)

According to Anazodo (2008, p.206), this was the first civil service reform commission to be established after Nigeria's independence. The commission was set up in 1963 to review the wages, salaries and conditions of service of junior employees in public and private sectors of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The nationalist movement that ushered independence in 1960 used indigenization of civil service as part of its campaign. Shortly after the colonial rule, the government had introduced the Nigerianization policy whereby British officials in the civil service were replaced with Nigerians.

According to Obikeze & Anthony (2004, pp.145-146), the Nigerianization policy moved with considerable speed in the Eastern and Western regions because of the availability of qualified personnel. However, the Northern region presented a different picture altogether due to the educational backwardness of the region. Early in the administration a Nigerianization Officer was appointed in 1937, and by 1960, the Officer had reported that the proportion of Nigerians in senior posts at the federal public service was about 60%; the majority of expatriates were on short-term contracts. Table 2 (about here) is a summary of percentage of Nigerian who occupy higher ranks in the federal public service between 1958-1963.

Table 2: Percentage of Nigerians occupying higher rank in the Federal Public Service 1958 - 1963

| S/N | Year | % Posts held By Nigerians |
|-----|------|---------------------------|
| 1. | 1958 | 48.1 |
| 2. | 1959 | 49.3 |
| 3. | 1960 | 64.0 |
| 4. | 1961 | 74.0 |
| 5. | 1962 | 78.0 |
| 6. | 1963 | 87.0 |

Source:A. Kirk Greene, "the Higher Public Service" in Frank Blitz, ed, the politics and Administration of Nigerian Government, London, Sweet and Maxwell 1965, cited in Nwosu, H.N. Political Authority and the Nigeria civil service, Enugu, Fourth Dimension, 1977, p. 55.

The fallout of this policy came with attendant problems such as shortage of skilled manpower, inefficiency, politicization and complaint about wages. The general strike of September 27, 1963 put intensive pressure on the government and was forced to set up the Morgan commission to look into the agitations of trade unions for increases in wages. Morgan commission not only revised salaries and wages of junior staff of the Federal government but introduced for the first time a minimum wage for each region of the country (El-Rufai, 2008). The outcome of the Morgan Report metamorphosed into the Elwood Grading Team. The Elwood commission was appointed to identify and investigate anomalies in the grading and other conditions relating to all posts in the Public Service of the Federation, with a view to determining an appropriate grading system and achieving uniformity in the salaries of officers performing identical duties (Collins, 1980, p.324).

THE ADEBO COMMISSION (1971)

The Adebo Commission was set up to find out whether low remuneration package was responsible for extreme shortage of senior civil servants in the federal civil service. Based on his findings, the Commission 'recommended the setting up of a Public Service Review Commission to exhaustively examine several fundamental issues, such as the role of the Public Service Commission, the structure of the Civil Service, and its conditions of service and training arrangements'. The acceptance of the recommendations of the Commission led to the setting up of the Udoji Public Service Review Commission.

UDOJI COMMISSION OF 1974

The Udoji Public Service Review Commission of 1974 was set up during the tenure of General Yakubu Gowon to review and over-haul the entire public service, and to ensure development and optimum utilization of manpower for efficiency and effectiveness in the service (Anazodo et al, 2012, p.22). The major thrust of the commission was to carry out holistic reform of the civil service in terms of 'organization, structure and management of the public service; investigate and evaluate methods of recruitment and conditions of employment; examine all legislation relating to pension, as regarding all post; establish scale of salaries corresponding to each grade as a result of job evaluation.

The Commission recommended a coordinated salary structure that would be universally applicable to the Federal and State Civil Services, the Local Government Services, the Armed Forces, the Nigeria Police, the Judiciary, the Universities, the Teaching Services and Parastatals. The Commission further recommended the introduction of an open reporting system for performance evaluation, and suggested the creation of a senior management group, comprising administrative and professional cadres (Salisu 2001, p.3).

DOTUN PHILLIPS COMMISSION (1985)

The Dotun Philips Civil Service Reform of 1988 was set up by the Military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida to review the structure, composition and methods of operation to cope with the demands of government in the 1980s and beyond, (Omoruyi, 1991). The commission looked into the problems of inefficiency, lapses and inadequacies in the civil service and attempt to introduce structural changes that could ensure swiftness in administrative practices and eliminate rigour of red-tapism. Based on its findings, the commission recommended that the position of permanent secretary be replaced by more politically-oriented position of Director-General (Jain, 2004, p.127). The overview of the commission report, as Anazodo et al (2012) observed, suggested that 'the Ministers be made both the chief executive and the accounting officer of the ministry.

Before the reform the permanent secretaries were the accounting officers of the ministries. The permanent secretary's appointment was made political as its duration/tenure was left at the pleasure of the president or governor by making their position non-permanent any longer. The Dotun Philips reforms properly and correctly aligned the civil service structure with the constitution and presidential system of government, designating permanent secretaries as directors-general and deputy ministers. They were meant to retire with the president or governor. The permanent secretary had a choice whether or not to accept the post. The review commission professionalized the Civil Service, because every officer whether a specialist or generalist made his career entirely in the ministry or department of his choice.

THE CIVIL SERVICE REFORM DECREE NO. 43 OF 1988

The Civil Service Reform Decree No. 43 was implemented under the Military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida in 1988. The reform which was widely termed 'Decree No. 43' was a military fiat that aimed at repositioning civil service without input and democratic discussion from the public. The 1988 reforms formally recognized the politicization of the upper echelons of the civil service and brought about major changes in other areas.

The main highlights of 1998 reforms were: (a) the merging of ministerial responsibilities and administrative controls and their investment in the Minister as Chief Executive and Accounting Officers; (b) replacement of the designation of Permanent Secretary with 'Director-General' whose tenure will terminate with the Government that appointed him/her and who will serve as Deputy Minister; (c) greater ministerial responsibility in the appointment, promotion, training and discipline of staff; (d) vertical and horizontal restructuring of ministries to ensure overall management efficiency and effectiveness; (e) permanency of appointment, as every officer, was to make his/her career entirely in one Ministry; (f) abolition of the Office of the Head of Civil Service; and (g) abolition of the pool system (Igbuzor, 1998, p.8).

The reform also established new administrative department called - the Presidency with retinue of top government officials, purposely to coordinate the formulation of policies and monitor their execution, and serve as the bridge between the government and the civil service (all federal ministries and departments). However, the 1988 Civil Service Reforms despite its lofty ideals of efficiency, professionalism, accountability, and checks and balances, did not achieve its desired objectives.

ALISON AYIDA PANEL OF 1994

The Ayida Review Panel on the Civil Service Reforms was inaugurated on 10th November 1994 to, amongst others, re-examine the 1988 Reforms. The Report of the Panel was highly and constructively critical of the 1988 Reforms. It reversed most of the reforms of 1988, namely, that the: civil service should revert to the system that is guided by the relevant provisions of the Constitution, the Civil Service Rules, the Financial Regulations and Circulars; the Ministers should continue to be the Head of the Ministry and should be responsible for its general direction but he/she should not be the Accounting Officer. Instead, the Permanent Secretary should be the Accounting Officer of the Ministry; the title of Permanent Secretary should be restored.

The permanent secretary should be a career officer and should not be asked to retire with the regime that appointed him/her; the post of Office of the Head of Civil Service should be re-established as a separate office under the President and a career civil servant should be appointed to head the office; the pool system be restored for those professional and sub-professional cadres that commonly exist in ministries/extra ministerial departments; ministries/extra-ministerial departments should be structured according to their objectives, functions and sizes and not according to a uniform pattern as prescribed by the 1988 Reforms.

Each could have between two (2) to six (6) departments; personnel management functions in the Civil Service should be left to the Federal Civil Service Commission with delegated powers to ministries; financial accountability in the Civil Service should be enhanced through strict observance of financial rules and regulations; recruitment into the Federal Civil Service at the entry point should be based on a combination of merit and federal character, but further progression should be based on merit; Decree 17 of 1984 which empowers government to retire civil servants arbitrarily should be abrogated; the retirement age in the Civil Service should be sixty (60) years irrespective of the length of service; Government should harmonize the pension rates of those who

retired before 1991 and those who retired after 1991; and salaries, allowances and welfare packages of civil servants should be substantially reviewed upwards and should be adjusted annually to ameliorate the effects of inflation, and discourage corruption (Anazodo et al, 2012; Emma & Eme, 2011; Fatile & Adejuwon, 2010).

PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO CIVIL SERVICE REFORMS (1999-2007)

The inception of transition to civilian rule that ushered in the emergence of President Olusegun Obasanjo as the Nigerian Head of state came with fulfilling 'electioneering' promise of reforming the civil service and other public institutions with a view to expunging extant rules, procedures and regulations that frustrate effective service delivery consistent with modern systems in the Civil Service. The economic philosophy under which civil service reform under Obasanjo regime hinge was on market: 'that government has no business in business'. Therefore, all the existing government projects, plants, enterprises, refineries and shareholdings in industries, trade, banking, finance and agriculture must be privatized and sold, so that government, particularly the Federal Government, can concentrate on governance. The Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) was strengthened to handle the selling off enterprises, including houses and other landed properties owned by the Government. Several aspect of the Obasanjo reforms include pension, monetization policy, restructuring, etc.

PENSION REFORM

In 2004, a law to decentralize and privatize pension administration in Nigeria through the Pension Reform Act 2004 was enacted. By this Act, the National Pension Commission (PENCOM) was constituted as a regulatory authority to oversee and check the activities of 25 registered Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs). This new pension scheme is in line with the regime's neo-liberal policies in all areas of life. Before the 2004 new scheme, there had been in existence the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) and in 1962 the creation of National Provident Fund as compulsory savings for workers in both public and private sectors. This old pension scheme was inherited from British colonialism, which purposely designed it for expatriates. It later accommodated local public sector workers and was in operation until the 2004 decentralised and privatised scheme.

The Contributory Pension Reform which is one of the key elements in the Public Service Reforms is to ensure that persons who have worked in the public and private sectors receive their retirement benefits as and when due. Under this new scheme, a compulsory contribution of 7.5% of workers' basic salary and 7.5% of same from employers of labour will now become pension of workers after retirement. The scheme accommodates workers in both public and private sectors with minimum of five employees, and only pensioners and those with 3 years to retirement as from 2004 are exempted (Salami & Odeyemi 2012, p.3). The new scheme, therefore applies only to the workers from 2008. The analysis of the Pension reform act suggests that the new pension scheme is not uniform to all categories of workers. While 7.5% of every worker salary is deducted as his/her contribution to pension with the employers remitting 7.5%, totaling 15%, only 2.5% is deducted from armed forces workers while their employer – government – remits 12.5%, totaling 15%. Again, judiciary workers under Section 8 (2) of the 2004 Pension Reform Act are exempted from the new scheme entirely.

MONETIZATION POLICY

The new monetization policy which is one of the key elements in the Public Service Reforms that will help to ascertain the true cost of spending that government officials used in maintaining governmental positions. The fundamental aim of the policy is to prevent and thwart government officials from using the Public or tax-payers money for personal gain. Prior to the implementation of this policy, public office holders and civil servants had numerous fringe benefits attached to the condition of service and remuneration of package. For instance, for most civil servants and public officials, residential quarters were provided, furnished and maintained by Government. Utility bills for these quarters, including electricity, water and telephone services, were also picked up by Government at minimal cost to the Officers.

In a similar manner, Government facilitated procurement of vehicles by these Officers at generous rates that could be conveniently deducted from their salaries. Domestic Servants were hired for them at Government expense while their medical bills as well as those of their spouses and children were also defrayed from public purse. However, with the new monetization policy that was passed into law vis-à-vis passage of certain Political and Judicial Office Holders Acts 2002, it is legally stated that monetization of the salaries and allowances of all categories of Federal Public Servants that were formally paid in kinds be converted to cash by the salary and wage commission (Stephen, 2011, p. 61).

RESTRUCTURING OF PILOT MINISTRIES, DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES (MDAS)

One of the cardinal policies in the public service reform is the re-organisation of MDAs for effective service delivery. Obasanjo regime observed that the federal bureaucracies have considerable number of duplicating and overlapping functions between agencies, and between tiers and arms of government. In doing this, the Federal government established the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR) in September 2003 as an independent agency in the Presidency to ensure the re-organisation and re-assigning of all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of all arms and branches of the federal government.

DOWN-SIZING AND PAYROLL REFORM

One of the complaints about Nigerian civil service then was its over-bloated size, with many workers performing a duty that should have been done by few people. In correcting this, Obasanjo regime began down-sizing of staff across all MDAs following the review of three critical questions: how many people do we need to do the job and what type and with what skills? And, what is the best way to get this work done? (Eme&Ugwu, 2011, p.48). During the down-sizing process, it was observed that ‘the civil service was rapidly ageing, mostly untrained and largely under-educated. Their average age then was 42 years, and over 60% were over 40 years. Less than 12% of the public servants held university degrees or equivalent. Over 70% of the services were of the junior grades 01-06, of sub-clerical and equivalent skills’ (El-Rufai, 2011).

STEVEN ORONSAYE PANEL (2010-2011)

In order to deepening the neo-liberal reform process of his predecessor, President Umaru Musa Yar’adua inaugurated Steven Oronsaye Committee for reform of Federal civil service in 2010. Mr. Steven Oronsaye who was a new Head of Civil Service of the Federation at that time was mandated to review the organisational structure of the service in line with the previous reform exercise. In its findings, the Committee observed that the Federal Civil Service as presently constituted in a pyramid structure was massively overcrowded and clogged up at the top with so

many senior persons not about to retire soon, if the old rules were followed. On the other hand, just below the top echelon, there were bright and competent officers with no room for advancement. The committee claimed that this was responsible for the lack of speedy progression at the top band. To correct this anomaly, the Committee recommended that permanent secretaries and directors (but not assistant directors) will serve for an initial period of four years extendable, subject to good performance, to eight years, irrespective of their ages and years in service.

DISCUSSION OF REFORMS OUTCOME

The summary of the achievements of the several reforms have been documented by scholars. It includes the observations that:

i). The old Permanent Secretary can no longer hide under the tenure to frustrate the action of government. The political role of the office has been emphasized and as the Chief Administrative Officer, who should assist the Minister/ Commissioner, thus working together as a team, to ensure efficient prosecution of government policies.

ii). The organizational structure of each ministry has been rationalized with the result that three department of the Personnel Management, Finance and Supplies, Planning, Research and Statistics are common to all ministries. Apart from this, no ministry can have more than eight operational departments. This arrangement makes for effective coordination, reduce cost and minimize waste.

iii). The service has been professionalized by ensuring that every officer whether a specialist or generalist makes his career entirely in the Ministry or Department of his choice, and thereby acquire the necessary expertise and experience through relevant specialized training and uninterrupted involvement with the work of the Ministry or Department;

iv). The Civil Service Commission now acts more as an appellate body because the new arrangement involves the ministry more in the appointment, discipline and promotion of staff that would work under each Ministry (Dagana, 2005, pp.127-130).

v). There is still the problem of redtapism, inefficiency and lack of commitment to service delivery in the civil service.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The researcher of this paper will tend to agree with Obikeze and Anthony (2004, p.159) that irrespective of the different orientations of the various civil service reforms, in Nigeria at both pre- and post-independence, the basic fact remains that the main aim of all of them had always been to make the civil service more productive, effective and efficient in the delivery of services to the populace. However, the researcher has found out that it is quite appalling that despite all the resources sunk into the civil service in Nigeria, it has failed to live up to the expectation of the people as the engine of growth and development. The various reforms of the service have not helped in any significant way in bringing about the desired state. Based on these findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

- a) The hydra-headed monster called political and economic corruption should be tackled by the government;
- b) Enhance the professionalization of the civil service;
- c) Rationalization of authority and responsibility at the top level of a ministry by making the minister the Chief executive and Accounting Officer;

- d) Re-designate the permanent secretary as Director-General who will now serve as the minister's deputy;
- e) Installation of a strong scheme of checks and balances to prevent misuse or abuse of power especially on the part of the minister; and
- f) Enhancement and strengthening of the economic and financial management apparatus of the of the Presidency by placing the Central Bank of Nigeria and the planning and budget office directly under the President.

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