

THE NIGERIA PUBLIC SERVICE AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE CIVIL SERVICE IN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Socio-economic indicators such as poverty level, life expectancy, infrastructure facilities, availability of jobs, and standard of living, among others, have shown that Nigeria is lagging. Low socio-economic development has brought about untold hardship to the citizenry. This problem is attributed to the poor performance of the civil service as the primary instrument saddled with the task of development policy and programme formulation as well as implementation. It is based on the above that this study became imperative. This study explored the developmental roles of the civil service in Nigeria and the challenges to effective and efficient socio-economic policy and programme implementation. Secondary sources of data were used to generate data from the internet, journals and textbooks. Content analytical technique was employed to analyze the data and materials generated for the study. It was observed that the civil service plans for the nation's economic life and engages explicitly in the formulation and implementation of development policies and programmes of the state for the overall welfare of the people. Civil service plays a role in nation-building. On the other hand, some challenges that truncate the contributions of the civil service in socio-economic development in Nigeria include politicization of recruitment and selection of persons into the service, corruption, and poor administrative reforms, among others. The paper recommended that recruitment into the service should be based on the principle of qualification and experience. The qualification should not only be a paper qualification but also be based on a competitive examination and aptitude test organized by an unbiased panel of examiners. There is a need for regular training based on training needs in the Nigerian civil service and not based on other considerations. The paper also recommended an improved condition of service for the civil servants in Nigeria as this will serve as motivation for higher performance.

Keywords: Public service, civil service, socio-economic development, policy implementation, merit system

Introduction

Globally, the public service of every nation plays a critical role in developing its policy and programme choices, as well as its implementation to achieve the desired socio-economic development. Ezeani (2005) in Ndukwe, Nwakamma, Edeh, Nwokwu & Nwuzor (2023) defined public service as service within government departments and ministries, parastatals, police force and the armed forces. According to Onah (2017), public services are all organisations that exist as part of government machinery for implementing policy decisions and delivering valuable services to citizens. According to him, it is a mandatory institution of the state under the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as outlined in Chapter vi of the Constitution under the title the Executive Part I (2) and Part II (D), which provides for public service at the federal and state levels of government.

The service in Nigeria comprises the following: the civil service, often referred to as the core service

consisting of line ministries and extra-ministerial agencies; the public bureaucracy or the enlarged public service made up of the following: services of the state and national assemblies; the judiciary; the armed forces; the police and other security agencies; paramilitary services (immigration, customs, correction service, etc); parastatals and agencies-including social services. Commercially-oriented agencies, educational institutions, research institutes. From all indications, public service is the whole gamut of services and activities that the government organises to ensure effective and efficient public administration in a given state.

Indeed, as Macogonor and Okodudu (2007) in Ita & David (2018) opined, “In every nation or state, the legitimate organ for the valid public interest of the state is the bureaucracies and public service institutions”. This function is performed by implementing government policies and programmes effectively and professionally. Whether the citizens of a state can live happily and orderly, devoid of much conflicts and confusion, may be determined to a large extent by good governance exemplified by the public service to the people (Ita & David, 2018).

Civil service is an integral part of public service and is the life wire of every administration. Yamma (2017) and Muhammad (2020) defined civil service as a term used to cover those public servants who are employees of the federal and state governments, other than the police, armed forces personnel, judicial personnel and teachers. Its usage also excludes employees of statutory corporations and boards. Okechukwu, Ukeje, and Abumchukwu (2016) maintained that without civil service, government policies would remain in a state of stillbirth. The civil service is the governmental operational arm charged with analysing, formulating, and implementing public policy. Among the functions of the civil service include policy formulation, policy advisory role, and policy implementation, among others, all aimed at the socio-economic development of the Nigerian state.

The history of civil service in Nigeria can be traced to the colonial civil service established by the British to govern Nigeria as a colonial territory. Since then, several reforms were introduced to strategically position the service as an instrument for the nation's socio-economic development. These reforms were christened pre and post-independence, and they include the Tudor Davies Commission (1945), the Harragan Commission (1947), the Huge Foot Commission (1948), the Gorsuch Commission (1954), and the Mbanefo Commission of 1959. Others include the Morgan Commission (1964), the Adebo Commission (1971), the Udoji Commission (1974), the Dotun Philips Commission (1988), the Ayida Panel (1994), and Steve Oronsaye's report (2014).

Socio-economic development is a process that improves the welfare and living conditions of the people through deliberate policy design and programme implementation. Components of the government's socio-economic roles include but are not limited to basic social and infrastructure facilities such as pipe-borne water, constant electricity, quality road networks, recreation centres, hospitals, clinics and social services such as education, human capital development, and poverty reduction. Socio-economic development focuses on poverty reduction, job creation, the welfare of people in need, the aged and the needy, looking after those in remand homes, and so many governments' roles in all sectors of the economy.

Over the years, socio-economic indicators have suggested that Nigeria lags in most known measurable indices. For instance, in Nigeria, according to World Poverty Clock (2019), 71 million people live in extreme poverty in Nigeria and a total of 133 million people are classified as multi-dimensionally poor. Nigeria currently has a 53% rate of youth unemployment and the second-highest number of unemployed youths. Nigeria's infant and under-five mortality have remained steady at 74 and 117 deaths per 1,000 live

births, respectively. 70% of Nigeria's citizens have access to essential water supply but little access to clean drinking water. In rural Nigeria, 39% of the households lack access to at least an essential water supply, and 77.3% of the Nigerian household drinking water is contaminated by bacteria (International Maternal New-Born Conference, 2023; Nigeria Water Statistics, 2023). Many Nigerian children are out of school. Cases of child labour occur at massive and geometrical levels in Nigeria. Many children in Nigeria are subjected to the worst forms of child labour, including commercial activities, sexual exploitation and use in conflicts. Current statistics revealed that over 16 million are involved in child labour in Nigeria, while over 18.5 million were out of school in 2022 (Tribune Online, 2022; Nwakamma, Taiwo, Nwigwe & Eze, 2023). With the removal of fuel subsidy in May 2023 and the consequent hyperinflation that it brought, Nigeria is currently grappling with the worst hardship since the return of democracy in 1999, hence this question of the capacity of government institutions to bring about the desired socio-economic development.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigeria civil service has come of age as the instrument of development. It is the responsibility of the civil service and the government in power to draft and implement development policies and programmes to improve the living conditions of the people. Implementation of development programmes is about ensuring that the intention and goals of government development programmes are realized, and this requires effective human resource mobilization. Government development goals cut across poverty reduction, education, health, human capital development, job creation and reduction of unemployment, construction of roads, provision of pipe-borne water, rural and urban electrification, environmental sanitation, free maternal health, and the civil service is expected to implement development policies and programmes in these areas. Performance of the foregoing tasks is a function of well-trained and committed civil servants.

Unfortunately, rather than discipline, punctuality to duty, commitment to the organizational goals and objectives, dedication to duty, accountability, loyalty, honesty, courage, courtesy, cooperation, and tact, the reverse appears to be the case as civil servants seemingly exhibit unhealthy and unruly behaviour in the workplace such as delays in the accomplishment of the task, truancy, absenteeism, disloyalty, lack of dedication and other acts that constitute employee misconducts. Oyedele (2015) lamented that the Nigeria public service had been characterized by negative attitudes and traits such as insensitivity towards citizens and their complaints, lateness, palpable negligence, inexcusable incompetence, unbridled corruption, favouritism, lacklustre performance and a general lackadaisical attitude to work. This, however, has not been achieved. Adegore (2006) and Ukeje et al. (2019) lamented that despite several reforms instituted by successive governments to improve the overall performance of the public sector in Nigeria in terms of productivity, efficiency and effectiveness, the public service is still tradition-bound, operating within a centralized structure and inadequate staff development practices because of the nature of administrative and political leadership ideology. Public service delivery in Nigeria is hardly based on the articulated and shared interests of the citizens. This is the outcome of the inability of successive administrations in Nigeria to genuinely involve the citizens in the design and implementation of policies and programmes aimed at improving their socioeconomic well-being. In the face of this problem, the government seems to face a legitimacy crisis and condemnations from the people, leading to a lack of public confidence in the constituted authorities (Ndema, 2022). Based on the above, Nigeria's civil service appears to have failed as the institution was set up to drive development. The seeming failure of the civil service has manifested in the poor economic conditions under which people live in Nigeria.

Civil Service

The civil service constitutes all government departments of a state and the people who work in them. Civil Service Handbook (2009) describes civil service as a body or organ which enjoys continuity of existence. Its members are not lowered to a short-term office. According to the Handbook, civil servants command a pool of experience and know-how for implementing government policies. It recognises that civil service is the instrument of the government of the day, and the service and its members are not permitted under the law to be partisan of any political party. The civil servant is also required to assist in formulating the policies approved by the government irrespective of its personal or private opinion or attitudes towards such policies. Yamma (2017) and Muhammad (2020) defined civil service as a term used to cover those public servants who are employees of the federal and state governments, other than the police, armed forces personnel, judicial personnel and teachers. Its usage also excludes employees of statutory corporations and boards. Okechukwu, Ukeje, and Abumchukwu (2016) maintained that without civil service, government policies would remain in a state of stillbirth. The civil service is the governmental operational arm charged with analysing, formulating, and implementing public policy. Similarly, civil service includes all government departments, except the Navy, Army and Air Force, whose salaries and allowances are paid from the money voted by the legislature. The Civil Service is an integral and key part of the government and its public service (Dhikru & Adeoye, 2019). The civil service refers to either a branch of governmental service in which individuals are employed based on professional or merit, as proven by competitive examinations or the body of employees in any government agency apart from the military. The civil service is the synonym for government machinery in Britain and most commonwealth countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. Spicker (2019) posits that in Britain, civil service refers to the body of permanent officials appointed to assist the decision-makers.

Marshall and Murtala (2017) described it as the totality of the bureaucratic structures within which government work is carried out, mainly as it concerns formulating and implementing public policies. Thus, civil service consists of civil servants who implement the assigned functions and decisions political heads make. In other words, it is a system of civil servants who perform the assigned functions of public administration. According to Nwizu (2002), civil service refers to a group of people employed to perform government functions. It is described as government officials who are employed on professional expertise and whose appointment is permanent and on a career basis and not based on the tenure of office of a political leader.

Ayandele and Etim (2020) affirm that the civil service represents the entire organisation of employees of various ranks, talents and training in the services of government permanently in all government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) employed to handle civil matters in a non-political capacity. The scope of civil service functions in a particular country depends on the legal framework that defines the areas of public and private sectors and their relationship. Hence, Section 227 of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as amended, described it as the federation and the federating states in a civil capacity; as staff of the office of the president/governor, the vice president/deputy governor, ministry or department of government of the federation/states assigned with the responsibility for business of the government of the federation/states.

The Constitution, under this section, detailed the crop of personnel considered core civil servants and the role they are meant to perform, ensuring that any government business, at the national and state levels, succeeds (Nwokwu, 2016). Perhaps this is why scholars avow that the civil service is an invaluable part of all modern governments, which plays a particular important role in politics and governance.

Socio-Economic Development

This constitutes the core priorities of most governments in both developed and developing countries. Hence, different administrations at both national and state levels pursue vigorously their socio-economic task through agencies and programmes designed to better the living conditions of people in the society. One major instrument of delivering socio-economic development to the people in contemporary period is the civil service. The civil service assists the government of the day in both drafting of socio-economic development policies and programmes. Norton (2016) maintained that state development agency may be a government agency that reports directly to the governor or a quasi-public agency that is overseen by appointed boards. According to Mountford (2009), the decision by a wide range of local, regional, and national governments in different countries, to place some or most of their economic development activities under the operational control of appropriately regulated and supervised agency structures, rather than to manage them from a municipal platform, is widespread. This may have resulted from the critical role development agencies play in the area of promotion of economic activities such as entrepreneur development, expanding and retaining of businesses, coordinating economic development activity among others (Norton, 2016). The overall goal of state development agencies is usually tailored towards socio-economic development of the state.

Socio-economic development is a deliberate change to improve the socio-economic wellbeing of the people through provision of basic social and infrastructure facilities such as pipe borne water, constant supply of electricity, quality road networks, recreation centres, hospitals, clinics and social services and structures such as education, human capital development, poverty reduction among others. It cuts across diverse sectors namely; educational sector, health sector, water sector, transport sector, rural electrification sector, natural resources/environmental sector and it is driven at different levels by both governmental and non-governmental agencies (Edeh & Nwakamma, 2021). Social-economic development is a process that improves the social economic wellbeing of the people through deliberate policies and programmes designed by the government and other key development actors. It focuses on job creation, poverty reduction, improving the health care system, education; provision of infrastructure facilities such quality road network, electricity, pipe-borne water among others. It is a process by which the economic- wellbeing and quality of life of a nation, region, local community, or an individual are improved according to targeted goals and objectives. Socio-economic development incorporates public concerns in developing social policy and economic initiatives. It is a process of investing in people. It requires removing of barriers to peoples means of livelihood and creating an enabling environment to enable people meet their needs.

Evolution of Civil Service in Nigeria

Historically, Nwosu (1977), cited in Edeh and Nwakamma (2018), traced the emergence and growth of the civil service in Nigeria to 1900, when Britain formally established her authority in Nigeria. In order to be able to administer the territory, Britain imposed a unified alien civil service without giving much thought to its impact on Nigerian traditional communities with their conflicting values, interests, norms and authority structure. The primary function of the civil service then was mainly the maintenance of law and order and raising enough revenue to sustain the colonial authorities. Contributing to the history of the civil service in Nigeria, Okoli and Onah (2002) observed that during the period under review, the service was geared towards the hostile policy of preventing trouble in the areas under its administration.

The contemporary civil service system in Nigeria originated from British colonial administration. Under

Lord Lugard's leadership, British colonialists administratively unified the then northern and southern protectorates, including the Lagos colony, in 1914 as a part of colonial service. The Europeans vested themselves with all the executive, judicial, and legislative powers and later incorporated traditional rulers into the power structure through indirect rule (Okoli, 1980; Ademolekun, 1986; Akinola, 2017).

The three regional revenue commissions were established to solve the problems of implementing a centralised budgetary system. These regions, in turn, created their civil services following adopting a federal system in 1954 and creating a public service commission at the centre. At independence in 1960, the federal and regional services coalesced in advancing the establishment of a career civil service within their jurisdictions (Anazodo et al., 2012).

In October 1963, Nigeria adopted a new constitution and proclaimed itself a republic. Moreover, it altered the British sphere of influence in the country and, in the same year, created a fourth region, the mid-west. Although the civil service that emerged after independence became more involved in the formulating and executing of public programmes and economic development policies, the unequal distribution of political power on the basis of ethnicity and regional composition resulted in uneven socio-economic development. This is because both the elected and appointed government officials were more interested in bringing home the bacon of their respective regions. The politics of regional affiliation has deprived Nigeria of a national character and a sense of national interest and brought other issues such as zoning, federal character and quota system into the lexicon of Nigerian Civil Service (Mukoro, 2005).

The socio-economic problems of Nigeria in the 1960s may be seen as the consequences of weak federal and strong regional governments (Ademolekun & Ayo, 1989). The regional civil services provided better opportunities for development than the national governments. Since post-independence, these issues have compelled every regime to experiment with different civil service reforms or government organisational restructuring measures. Omitola (2012), citing the 2010 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), acknowledge that the Nigerian civil service system has experienced three political influences, the colonial, military and civilian, each providing distinct legacies.

For instance, political neutrality, anonymity, and impartiality are attributes transmitted by colonial rule. Some of these attributes were not retained under the military governments. For example, there was an apparent absence of the colonial legacy because higher civil servants as confidential advisers to ministers dominated the public policy-making process between 1967 and 1975, whereas the role of civil servants became irrelevant between 1975 and 1979 (Ademolekun, 1986; Adebayo, 1985; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2010 & Akinola, 2017).

Moreover, between 1979 and 1983, the government experienced shifts from military to civilian rule, and between 1984 and 1999, the Nigerian civil service system operated within military regimes. This culminated in the civil service reform, which affected the structure and operation of civil service in Nigeria in recent times.

Role of the Civil Service in Socio-Economic Development

The civil service plays critical roles in socio-economic development, and some of these roles include:

1. **Public policy implementation:** Without the public service, the actual implementation of government work will come to a halt because it is the public service that provides the necessary machinery for effectuating government activities, actions and decisions (Obikeze & Obi, 2004).

2. The traditional function of the civil service is to initiate public policy and advise the government on the full implications of policy options.
3. In a dynamic and unstable situation with sudden and abrupt or frequent changes in government, the public service, especially the civil servant, plays a vital role in providing continuity and serves as the store of knowledge of past government decisions and procedures. This was the case in Nigeria between 1966 and 1979 when the military came into power.
4. While contributing to nation-building, public administration identifies the resources available to the government from within its territory to exploit and manage these resources.
5. Civil service is also crucial in organising and providing social welfare services to the population, e.g., water, electricity, educational facilities, and health facilities. It is responsible for public work such as urban and rural road construction, the dredging of rivers, the building of port facilities, irrigation facilities, sanitation, drainage facilities, the control of erosion and other natural disasters, the payment of pension and other labour benefits and in some countries it organizes the provision of housing, day-care facilities for pre-school children and public transportation.
6. The civil service also plans for the nation's economic life. It does so in both the short term and the long term, taking care of society's finances, especially the balance between what it earns from abroad and what it spends abroad—the balance of payment function or the foreign exchange task.
7. Public administration ensures that the courts function smoothly and are not overloaded, that the prisons are not congested or run inhumanly, and that the law enforcement agencies do not act arbitrarily. In addition, the civil service must coordinate all the multifarious activities of its various departments and agencies to ensure they are not working at cross purposes.
8. In international affairs, public administration must win friends and influence people and nations for the country. To do this, it must portray the country in as favourable a light as possible, learn as much as possible about other countries, and negotiate with them to gain the best possible advantage in the procurement of external resources and the procurement of its internal resources by foreign countries.
9. The civil service ensures continuity in governance through its instrumentality. According to Nwizu (2002), the civil service is a great stabilizing force in societies. The government often changes, but the administration seldom experiences violent changes. The civil service provides an element of continuity between old and new orders. It is an embodiment of government in the day-to-day lives of the people.

During nation-building, public administration is an excellent instrument of social change and improvement (Nwizu, 2002). While implementing the government's policies, civil service serves as a great instrument of social force that follows the people's will and leads them. According to him, in the country today, the government has undertaken the stupendous task of levelling down the economic inequalities, building up a socialist pattern of a society free from poverty and starvation, spreading education among all, and securing all-around economic and industrial development. The burden of carrying out these tremendous social changes in a planned and orderly way rests upon the civil service, which implements policies in these areas of government operation.

Challenges of Civil Service Role in Socio-Economic Development

Poor Development Policy Implementation: Over the years, the Nigerian public Service system has been poor and inefficient, characterised by corruption, undue outside influences, individual and group selfish interests, and other impediments plaguing the effective implementation of government policies through various public service administrative systems and establishments in Nigeria. The health sector is not an exception. It has been the opinion of researchers that the work behaviour of some public servants in Nigeria has contributed to the low performance of the Nigerian public service. Okechukwu, Ekwunife, and Abumchukwu (2016) lamented that the state of public infrastructure and the standard of living in Nigeria in recent times mirrors the country's public service performance. For instance, they argued that the public school system in Nigeria has deteriorated to the point where some students learn in classrooms without a roof. In some schools, students sit on the floor to receive lectures. The roads in Nigeria have become death traps, resulting in a high rate of road accidents and fatalities. Successive Nigerian Administrations have introduced reform policies to enhance the performance of public sector organisations. In support of the above submissions, Adejuwon (2017) opined that files, cards, and letters hardly move in most public offices without follow-ups and bargaining, to the extent that services got from most public offices are as if someone is doing somebody a favour, or at a particular price tag. These days, applicants no longer get jobs quickly but buy jobs from employers positioned to give them jobs. Also, missing files can only re-appear after someone has been settled. Therefore, most Nigerians have been accustomed to regard public service as something you battle for. Citizens no longer have the right to be served unless the public officer/ administrator collects a toll. Good services are also only meant for some privileged individuals and groups. This situation damages the trust the citizens have in the public service administration and other social institutions in Nigeria.

Politicisation of Activities of the Service: The recruitment and appointment of persons into the civil service and other activities of the institution undermine integrity and the core values of the civil service. Political influence in recruitment and selection results in divided loyalty and lack of commitment among the civil service personnel in Nigeria. The politicisation of civil service in the form of political patronage, or what is often referred to as the spoils system, undermines the merit system. This ugly and unconventional practice fills the service with unqualified persons, a factor which affects efficient service delivery as the loyalty of most civil servants goes to those who influenced their recruitment rather than a commitment to service delivery to people. It is not uncommon to see civil servants display unruly behaviour because they are never qualified or trained for the job. Political patronage seems to cause over-bloated bureaucracy in developing countries, whereby appointments/recruitment are made not necessarily because of the need but seen as compensating party loyalists. Coupled with the above is the issue of training and promotion, which has often been influenced and conditioned by top political leaders. As it were, the political class shares positions without recourse to merit but on the notion of equal representation, which downplays merit. This is often done in recognition of the federal character principle.

Mutiullah (2014) and Akinola(2017) documented that the Nigerian civil service over the years had been politicised so that most top officials openly supported the government of the day. Therefore, the introduction of the quota system of recruitment and promotion adherence to the federal-character principle and the constant interference of the government in the day-to-day operation of the civil service, primarily through frequent changes in top officials and massive purges, meant that political factors rather than merit alone played a significant role in the civil service. Eme and Ugwu, (2011) noted that the entronement of federal character principle of recruitment and other spoils system techniques have

sacrificed efficiency and effectiveness in the Nigerian civil service. Subsequent observations by Salisu (2001) posit that considerable political interference in personnel administration has led to improper delegation of power, ineffective supervision, and recent corruption in Nigeria's civil service. Hence, according to him, this results in official apathy, culminating in unauthorised and unreasonable absenteeism, lateness and idleness and inferior workmanship in the Nigerian civil service. Moreover, strong institutions cannot emerge from the current situation of Nigerian civil service, where the top echelons of these bureaucracies are handpicked based on ethnicity, religion and class. The undesirable elements within and outside the civil service tend to politicise the activities of the state by reading meanings and prejudice on government policies and programmes based on primordial, religious, ethnic and regional sentiments. For instance, the recent government policy that limits permanent secretaries' tenure to eight years regardless of age as a person or in service has generated much controversy as the affected officials used religious, ethnic and parochial sentiments to fight back. Also, Nigeria's civil service during the Fourth Republic faced many problems that made it difficult for the system to function effectively as an agent of development.

Misconducts: Misconducts negate the very essence of the civil service. Civil servants are meant to live above board by maintaining high ethical standards while discharging duties. However, this has not been the case in Nigeria due to acts of misconduct. The Public Service Rules (2009) defined misconduct as a specific act of wrong-doing or improper behaviour that is inimical to the service's image and can be investigated and proved. It can also lead to termination and retirement. It includes:

1. Scandalous conduct such as: Immoral behavior; Unruly behavior; Drunkenness; Assault; Battery;
2. Refusal to proceed on transfer or to accept posting; Habitual lateness to work; Deliberate delay in treating official documents; Failure to keep records; Unauthorised removal of public records; Dishonesty; Negligence; Membership of cults; Sleeping on duty.

There are others regarded as serious misconducts, which include falsification of records, suppression of records, withholding of files, conviction on a criminal charge (other than a minor traffic and sanitary offence or the like), absence from duty without leave, false claims against government officials; engaging in partisan political activities; bankruptcy/serious financial embarrassment; unauthorised disclosure of official information; bribery; corruption; embezzlement.

Contributing to the discourse, Oyedele (2015) lamented that the Nigeria public service had been characterised by negative attitudes and traits such as insensitivity towards citizens and their complaints, lateness, palpable negligence, inexcusable incompetence, unbridled corruption, favouritism, lacklustre performance and a general lackadaisical attitude to work. In the face of poor service performance, indicators of civil servants, such as the timely implementation of public policy, efficient policy advisory role, and punctuality to duty, may be impeded. In the long run, the overall performance of the service is hindered.

Conflictual Relationship between Politicians and Administrators: Ezeani (2005) observed that the administrators, particularly the top civil servants, tend to assume an air of superiority and self-importance and often look down on the politicians, many of whom they perceive as uneducated and ignorant of public service procedures. They also regard politicians as selfish people who mainly use government power to enrich themselves against the public interest. On the other hand, politicians have always felt threatened by the amount of influence and power wielded by administrators in power. A certain amount of confidence must exist between politicians and administrators if the latter is to make valuable contributions to national development. Arguing similarly, Akinrinade (2021) notes that the power relationship between the

bureaucrats and the politicians has not ended yet because members of the public continue to regard their elected officials as responsible for the conduct of public business, which cannot be carried out without harmonious interface between the two principal actors. These two actors (the bureaucrats and the elected officials/political appointees) interact through information sharing, powers, influences, and finance in policy-making. This suggests that what Wilson witnessed in the past 19th century still exists and is even worse. Problem initiation as the starting point of policy formulation may come from diverse stakeholders: community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, members of academia, political party manifestoes, concerned individuals, etc. The overriding concern at this stage, especially in a democracy, is that the problems identified should directly reflect the wishes and aspirations of the citizenry.

Poor Implementation of Administrative Reforms: Policy making is never a problem for government institutions in Nigeria. The problem lies with the implementation, especially the implementation of the government's policy and programme choices. Lending credence to the forgoing, Okunkuade (2016) regretted that the various administrative reforms showed that the Nigerian Civil Service had acquired the image of a sick bay of the various governments since independence. These maladies range from gross inefficiency to lack of commitment from the workforce, which has made the institution somewhat moribund and unresponsive. Thus, despite these various reforms, it is still evident that this crucial arm of government remains in the wheel of national development. Okoroma (2016), cited by Ugochukwu (2020), notes that policies are formulated and often with good intentions, but at the implementation stage, the policies tend to be rendered less effective. To this extent, policy implementation efforts are often inadequate, and consequently, objectives are challenging to realise. Despite the great importance of translating policy statements into practice, policy implementation in Nigeria is still bedevilled with an "implementation gap"; the inability to implement a policy effectively is a huge problem. Weaver's (2010) position supports this view when he argues that "problems that arise in the implementation process make it less likely that policy objectives will be achieved in many government programmes". Therefore, every organisation is set forth to achieve specific goals and objectives through policy statements. The policy needs to be implemented adequately by employing specific techniques. It is based on this to strengthen the effective implementation of organisational policy in the 21st century in university institutions that this paper seeks to explore. The age-long questions of how the system could be made to play its objective role in the country's socio-economic transformation remain problematic. These administrative reforms and policies needed to be studied to review them.

Corruption: bane of the Nigerian Civil Service. Public officials who engage in financial corruption divert public resources from public to private purses, thereby hindering the government from meeting its goals and targets for the people. Oru and Odumsor (2019:49), in support of the foregoing, document that:

Until the introduction of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) in Nigeria, ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) that generate revenue had multiple accounts in commercial banks, and commercial banks used part of the amount deposited to transact with businesses and earn interest. As a result, agencies paid into government accounts what they dim fit as loopholes kept proliferating within the public sector; the result of this situation included leakages of funds and the inability of the government to know her account balances at a glimpse, budgets were prepared using unrealistic projections leading to poor implementation. However, the greatest beneficiaries of this situation were banks that relied on deposits from other sectors of the economy as the balances of government accounts were idle in the banks. All these stunted the growth of the economy.

Drawing from the above, Obasanjo (2003) in Ukeje, Ndukwe, Chukwuemeka, Ogbulu and Onele (2019)

observed that Nigerians have for too long left short-changed by the quality of public services which are not delivered without undue influence or inducement. Bello (2001) lamented a near-total absence of ethics and accountability in the conduct of public affairs in Nigeria. According to him, this has facilitated and sustained corrupt practices that have been the bane of public sector financial management in Nigeria. Nigerian society is unfortunately faced with wrong practices such as ghost workers in the payroll of Ministries, the Extra-Ministerial Department and Parastatals, fraud and embezzlement of public funds (Okwori, 2004). Even though section 80(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended states that “All revenues or other monies raised or received by the Federation (not being revenues or other monies payable under this Constitution or any Act of the National Assembly into any other public fund of the Federation established for a specific purpose) shall be paid into and form one Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation”. Successive governments and her agencies have continued to operate multiple accounts for the collection and spending of government revenue in flagrant disregard to the provisions of the Constitution, which requires that all government revenues be remitted into a single account.

The Way Forward

Possible measures should be taken to address the challenges hindering the civil service from practical contributions to socio-economic development in Nigeria. It is also to be noted that Nigeria's civil service cannot rise more than its environment, which impedes its success.

Scholars have recommended a merit system in recruitment and selection as one of the solutions to the poor delivery of services by the Nigerian civil service. The appointment and selection of staff of the Nigeria civil service is often politicised, leading to the appointment of unqualified candidates for the civil service due to political connections and primordial sentiments other than merit. The political environment of the civil service in Nigeria does not support the implementation of genuine development policy. The politicisation of recruitment and selection of candidates into the service results in putting square pegs in round holes; a mismatch resulting in poor performance. Recruitment into the service should be based on the principles of qualification and experience. The qualification should not only be a paper qualification but also be based on a competitive examination and aptitude test organised by an unbiased panel of examiners. The political class should de-emphasise the patronage system in appointing people to the civil service as the success of every administration depends on the civil service, which is the main instrument that drives government development policy and programme process.

Political patronage often called the spoils system, manifests in the recruitment and appointment of persons into the service based on party affiliation. This ugly and unconventional practice fills the service with unqualified persons. This factor affects efficient service delivery as most civil servants' loyalty goes to those who influenced their recruitment into the service rather than a commitment to service delivery. It is not uncommon to see civil servants display unruly behaviour because they are never qualified or trained for the job. Political patronage is the cause of over-bloated bureaucracy in developing countries, including Nigeria, whereby appointments/recruitment are made not necessarily because of the need but seen as a way of compensating party loyalists.

There is a need for regular training based on training needs in the Nigerian civil service. Development is a complex and multiple-dimensional concept. It is also a dynamic phenomenon and therefore requires regular training of civil servants on the dynamics of contemporary policy process. Unfortunately, training and promotion of persons into higher service positions are influenced without consideration for those who

need the training. Nwachukwu (1988) in Onah (2015) contends that indicators that workers in any organisation require training and development are the following factors: (i) lack of interest in one's job, (ii) negative attitude towards work, (iii) low productivity; (iv) tardiness (v) excessive absenteeism rate (vi) excessive complaints; (vii) high rejects or low-quality output (viii) high incidence of accident and insubordination. Rather than being guided by these indicators, training and workforce development in the service sometimes favour those in the management “good book” without paying attention to the training needs.

Another area that needs improvement in the service is the performance appraisal pattern. Daniel and Ibrahim (2019) note, in simple terms, that performance appraisal may be the assessment of an individual's performance being measured against job knowledge, quality and abilities, supervision, dependability, cooperation, judgement, versatilities, health and the like. Onah (2015) views performance appraisal as any procedure that involves (a) setting work standards, (b) assessing the employee's standards, and (c) providing feedback to the employee to motivate that person to eliminate performance deficiencies or to continue to perform at the required level. It systematically evaluates a person's performance for further growth and development. Based on the above, management can make critical decisions regarding career development, reward packages, and steps towards the organisation's overall productivity. The essence of performance appraisal is to provide systematic judgments to back up salary increases, transfers, promotions, demotions or terminations; identify training needs; motivate subordinates through recognition and support; and help managers counsel and coach subordinates so that they will improve their performance and develop their future potentials; and guides management in organisations decision making. Unfortunately, performance appraisal has not been objectively carried out, which constitutes the challenge of civil service roles in socio-economic development.

There is also the issue of poor service conditions. A motivated worker is a happy worker, and a happy worker contributes significantly to the growth and development of the organisation. The Federal Government of Nigeria should review the condition of service of the Nigeria civil service. A better service condition improves workers' welfare and, by extension, their performance. Salary administration, conditions for promotion, training patterns/procedures, allowances, and fringe benefits should be accorded the desired attention. Effective management of these conditions in the workplace improves performance. Adequately paid employees will tend to commit their energy towards achieving the intended goals and objectives. Organisational managers can achieve higher productivity by removing hygiene factors called dissatisfies. The central issues are pay and conditions of service, which can be improved. The above will provide the necessary background and environment for satisfiers such as Achievement, Recognition, and Advancement.

Conclusion

The Nigeria civil service has come a long way as an integral part of the state's public service, saddled with the responsibility of drafting and implementing development policies and programmes for socio-economic development and the welfare of the citizenry. An attempt was made in this study to explore the roles and challenges of civil service and to propose possible solutions. It was observed that the civil service plans for the nation's economic life and engages explicitly in the formulation and implementation of development policies and programmes of the state for the overall welfare of the people. Civil service plays a role in nation-building. Some challenges that truncate the contributions of the civil service in socio-economic development in Nigeria include the politicisation of recruitment and selection of persons into the service, corruption, and poor administrative reforms, among others.

The paper recommended that recruitment into the service should be based on the principle of qualification and experience. The qualification should not only be a paper qualification but also a competitive examination and aptitude test organised by an unbiased panel of examiners. Regular training is needed based on the training needs of the Nigerian civil service and not based on other considerations. The paper also recommends improved service conditions for civil servants in Nigeria as this will motivate higher performance, among other things.

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