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AN OVERVIEW OF THE NIGERIA CIVIL SERVICE AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The Nigerian Civil Service is an institution that has not only developed since the colonial period but has been the institution that is more matured and equipped to perform creditable role in the development of Nigeria. The paper was an attempt to ex-ray the major contributions of the civil service in the development effort of Nigeria for that period. The study relied primarily on the available secondary data in order to unearth by way of pointing out its major contributions in Nigeria. Such secondary sources, are books, journals, publications, seminar papers, research works published and unpublished, magazines, reports etc. and the personal experience of the researcher. The study found that although there are pejorative roles of the civil service in general, the Nigerian civil service played an important role in the development of Nigeria. However inspite of the identified weaknesses it is recommended amongst others that the civil service should be reconsidered as an agent of development by the political elite and give it back its freedom to serve as a partner in the Nigeria's march to development and bring back the veritable values it is well known for. Such as values of neutrality, anonymity, impartiality, continuity and representations of the people and government interest.

Key "words: Civil service, Neutrality, Impartiality, Representation, National development.

Introduction

The historical experiences of countries that have undergone colonial rule has made it a mandatory desire by all their progressive people to undertake development activities, guard their independence and manage the resources of their nations at all costs. Nigeria which gained its independence in 1960 is not left behind in this race. The Nigerian people with their lofty ideals and desire to get all the goodies of life such as electricity, pipe borne water, industries, health facilities, education, roads etc. looked at independence as an opportunity to get all these services from the government which is indigenous and manned by fellow Nigerians who are well verse din the problems

confronting the Nigerian people. The civil service, which was then highly developed more than the conciliatory structure of government was looked upon as the veritable institution that would bring about unity and integration of the Nigerian people and the provision of infrastructural facilities and other services desired by these Nigerian people.

Adu (1972:5) asserts that "the immediate post independence was concerned with nation building and the welding together of the various people, tribes and in some cases races into a nation with its identity and integrity. It (the civil service) became an object of policy to pursue programmes of integration to discourage sectional loyalties and interests and to ensure the national development programmes and state services were more equitably distributed to all part of the state – making nation building the top priority". This view was further supported by Tukur (1999:405) where he saw the emergence of civil service from colonial service as institution charged with maintenance of law, order and public safety and also in charge of formulation and execution of socio-economic development policies.

In describing the post independence civil service of Nigeria, Anyebe (2007) also pointed out that the government is required to embark on broad socio-economic development objectives requiring the expansion of the existing bureaucracies and the creation of new agencies.

All this has shown that the Nigerian civil service is the centre of attraction as it was the only institution that has the capability to transform the wishes of the Nigerian people into reality. As it developed and became powerful and versatile especially in the 1970s it was considered to be the guarantor of such development desired by all Nigerians. Trained in the colonial tradition the civil service functioned as a bridge between the dependent indigenous people and the ruling power from Britain. It offered better and quality services having had the qualified staff visibly capable, energetic, efficient, technocratic, knowledgeable, neutral, impartial and non-partisan.

The issue of whether the civil service played or is playing the role of serving as development agent in Nigeria from 1960 to 2010 is what this paper intends to discuss.

The paper therefore will ex-ray the meaning of development, and the civil service, functions of the civil service, its role in development in Nigeria, consider the relevance of reforms to that role and the major achievements which are development oriented. The problems or impediments to developmental role of the civil service will also be highlighted. The paper will then be concluded by pointing out the findings of the paper and then proffer some recommendations which if followed will make the Nigerian civil service a big contributor to the development of the nation.

Statement of the problem

The civil service has been playing a dominant developmental role in the Nigerian history since before independence, particularly after independence when all its services, actions and in-actions are directed to the Nigerian nation, its people and environments. By 1970 it was believed that the civil service as an institution with such arrays of knowledge, experience, technocracy, professionalism can be the major partner that will guarantee the development of Nigeria. Since that period it is considered that every reforms undertaken in the service was directed to making the civil service more efficient, effective, professional and administratively dynamic enough to face the new challenges in nation building and development. It in fact demonstrated a remarkable ability in backing up the political executive and adopting heir machineries and strategies to cope with the rapidly changing situations and demands of the Nigerian people. Though the role it has significantly been playing has not seriously been studied or researched upon, it is obvious that whatever development that takes place in Nigeria since independence the Nigerian civil service has a significant contribution into it. Though in most studies undertaken the civil service has been considered as inefficient, inept, weak, corrupt and even a problem in the development of the nation. It behooves one to admit that despite all these problems the civil service has a fundamental role in the nation building efforts.

It must be pointed out that the general change in political climates in Nigeria, moving from civilian to military and from military to civilians, the changing alignments of power and pressure groups and the emergence of new institutional and administrative patterns raised in their wake a series of complex problems for the civil service. In consequence it had to make significant adjustments in its role and adopt itself to the changing situation squarely as it symbolizes *continuity in the Nigerian affairs*. Therefore there is need to understand its character, culture, values, orientations, achievements etc. This is very essential for all those who are concerned with the programmes of economic growth, social change, nation building and development. The question therefore is has the Nigerian civil service played a role in the development of Nigeria since independence? This is the main focus of this study.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this study consist of the following:

- i) To clearly know the civil service and the role it is supposed to play in the development of Nigeria.
- ii) To understand the origin and development of the Nigerian civil service.

- iii) To examine the effects/achievements of the civil service in the development drives of the Nigerian nation.
- iv) To identify some of the major weaknesses of the civil service which might have slowed it down in the role of the development of Nigeria?
- v) To suggest ways of mitigating these identified weaknesses towards ensuring more positive role in development of Nigeria.

Significance of the study

The study is significant in many respects. However some of the major ones are as follows:

- i) This study will enable us appreciate what the Nigerian civil service stands for as against the pejorative assessments that is meted against it.
- ii) This study will also enable policy makers have more insight about the role Nigerian civil service can play in the development of Nigeria.
- iii) It will assist scholars and researchers in reshaping their position of the civil service in their teaching, learning and research in the study of Nigerian civil service and its contributions to development.
- iv) The study will also serve as a reference point to the public and those who are interested in the workings and contributions of the Nigerian civil service.

Methodology

The methodology for data collection in this study is essentially derived from secondary source materials consisting of journal papers, magazines, books, articles, publications from the civil service commission and Office of the Head of Service of the Federation and the States and the researcher's personal/official experience.

Theoretical Classification

In order to fully analyze the role of the civil service in the development of Nigeria since independence many theoretical frameworks are available which focused more on the contribution of the civil service in national development. Some of which ranged from the model of bureaucracy which is going to be used as synonymous with the civil service, propounded by Max Weber and Neo Weberian theorists. Others range on development such as Walter Rodney, Denis Goulet, Duddy Seers, Samir Amin etc. Rather the international – structuralist model is adopted because it deals with a third world country which suffered from the travails of colonialism and neo-colonialism.

This model is a component of dependency theory, essentially views third world countries as being beset by a variety of institutional and structural economic rigidities and caught up in a dependence and dominance relationship

to rich countries. The model, in pursuing its applications composed of two streams of thoughts; the 'neo-colonial dependence model' and the 'false paradigm model' which can be used in assessing the developmental efforts of Nigerian nation.

The 'neo colonial dependence model' o the international structuralist model component attributes the existence and maintenance of third world underdevelopment primarily to the historical evolution of the highly unequal international capitalist system of 'rich country' – 'poor country' relationship whether intentionally exploitative or unintentionally neglectful. The co-existence of rich and poor nation in an international system dominated by such unequal power relationships between the 'centre' and the 'periphery' renders attempts by poor societies (the 'periphery') to the self-reliant and independent in their development efforts difficult and sometimes even impossible (Todaro 1980:90).

This model reveals that certain groups in the developing countries such as (landlords, entrepreneurs, merchants, public officials and trade unions – leaders) who enjoy high incomes, social status and political power, constitute small elite, ruling class whose principal interests whether knowingly or unknowingly is in the perpetuation of the internationalist capitalist system of inequality and conformity by which they are rewarded by special interest groups in the rich nations (e.g Multi-national corporations, national bilateral aid agencies, and multi-bilateral donor organizations such as the World Bank and other specialized United Nations agencies). Their activities or viewpoints often serve to inhibit any genuine reform efforts which might benefit the wider population (Todaro 1980:91).

The second model of the international structuralist model is the 'false paradigm model'. This model according to Todaro (1980:91) attributes third world underdevelopment to *primarily faulty and inappropriate advice* provided by well-meaning but often unformed international 'expert' advisers from both developed countries assistance agencies and multinational donor organizations such as the World Bank, United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). These 'experts' offer sophisticated concepts, elegant models, and complex technical methods of economic and other social science (such as the stages constraints approach) which can lead to inappropriate policies. Because of institutional and structural factors. These policies often merely serve the vested interests of existing power structures, both domestic and *international*.

The relevance of this theory to this study is that, Nigeria; is among the countries that is suffering from the activities of few elites and their eternal collaborators who using the two models confuse Nigerians and their governments to understand the relevance of anything that is useful to the majority of Nigerians or that will develop the country to be self-reliant, independent and economically buoyant. It also confuses the Nigerian people from understanding and recognizing the vital roles some institutions such as the Nigerian civil service can play in national development. That is why in any study of these institutions the Nigerian government is pushed to adopt one policy or the other from them. This was the main reasons behind the innumerable reforms of the Nigerian civil service. This is glaringly shown in the way the weaknesses of the Nigerian civil service (NCS) have been the centre of emphasis by these people and organizations, so as to further confuse the Nigerian people from appreciating the institution they once loved and cherished. In fact we can cite the 1988 reforms of the civil service as an example where the Nigerian government was instigated to rock the civil service into pieces and make it incapable of concentrating on nation building and development which the majority people or the masses of Nigeria need. This fact was recognized by the National Political Reforms Conference where it stated that "most of the reforms of the civil service have been initiated from external sources, resulting in the imposition of foreign practices largely inapplicable to the Nigerian situation". Main Report (2005).

In fact those elites and their collaborators know fully well the significance of the civil service in the national economic development. This fact is testified by Abdulsalami (1984) where he pointed out that, the contention is that of the ability of government to cope with the challenges of national economic development and revitalization depends on the vitality and ingenuity of the civil service and the quality of individual civil servants. This forms the background against which this paper is based.

Definition of some concepts

The art of communication has been very significant in understanding the behaviour and other activities of societies since time immemorial. The ability to understand the wordings and concepts used in communication has seriously led to avoidance of conflicts and misunderstanding between people and societies. It has served as a basis that I feel no one can confidently appreciate the role of the civil service in the development of societies without grasping what civil service and development really mean. It is from this that one can consider what it does and what it does not which will serve as a guide to consider its activities in relation to the progress of Nigerian society.

The Civil Service

The term or concept the civil service has been defined by many authors and workers of public issues and organizations. Some of these definitions are straight forward, and some are complicated and pejorative. As we are not after the pejorative meaning it will be important to pint them out so that the real and positive meanings can easily be grasped.

In the pejorative meaning, Ferrell heady (1959:394) said the civil service as bureaucracy and he defined bureaucracy as ‘red tape; rigidity and inflexibility with excessive impersonality, over secretiveness, unwillingness to delegate and reluctant to exercise discretion’. Herold Lashi in Sayne (341-342) describes bureaucracy as representing a passion for the routine in administration, the sacrifice of flexibility to rule, delay in the making of decisions and a refusal to embark upon experiment”.

Von Mises in Sayre (342) in his book called “Bureaucracy” has argued that bureaucracy cannot be efficient, primarily because the profit and loss criterion is absent from the work of governmental; bureaucracies.

In the more rational meanings authors like Max Weber, the father of bureaucracy, argued that bureaucracy is capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency and the most rational form of administration – because it represents the exercise of control through knowledge.

Considering the meaning of the civil service in the context of Nigeria Abdulsalami (1984:7) says “by the term civil service we mean the administrate structure employed in the fulfillment of government policies and development programmes, it is used to refer to public servants who are direct employee of the federal (and state) governments, other than the police, the armed forces, the judiciary, the teachers and the statutory corporation personnel”.

The significance of this definition to this study is that it solves the problem *of interchangeability of the concept with police service. People often called public servants as civil servants which is very wrong because the two do not mean the same thing.*

Later in 2000 Abdulasalami reshaped his definition by showing the dynamism and applicability of the civil service. He said that the term civil service means, “the system of man, authority, offices, methods, rules and regulations represented by a complex organization which government uses to carry out its policies, and development programmes. It is the central executive instrument employed by government notably for public management i.e maintaining law and order, but also for the management of the general economic, social climate. In this definition the civil service is considered as a valuable institution to be relied on by governments in executing its activities right from policy making to policy implementation. It also pointed out the

close and career values of the civil service also the new roles it assumes in socio-economic, political and administrative development of nations. It therefore serves as an instrument to achieve developmental goals.

Ayida (1972:217) looking at the civil service and nation building in Nigeria at the time when the civil service was waxing stronger in Nigerian affairs and development efforts he says:

“The term civil service is normally used when referring to the body of men, including women, employed in a civil capacity and non-political career basis by the federal and state governments primarily to render advice and faithfully give effect to their decisions. Such career officers normally derive their appointment from the relevant Public Service Commission (PSC) which also exercises powers of discipline in accordance with laid down rules and regulations”.

It can be seen from this definition, the civil service as a concept was not only defined but some of its roles have been highlighted in order to show its strong position in governance. To that extent the civil service was considered as vital to any form of government. Referring to Nigeria the effectiveness of the government is to a large extent determined by the efficiency and competence of the civil service”, Ayida (1972:219). This has further shown the demarcation between civil service (servant) and public servants who are not employed by the Civil Service Commission.

In another meaning, civil service is used synonymously with public bureaucracy, representing the administrative organization arm of the state expected to operate by certain guiding principles, norms and standard of professionalisms, neutrality and with constitutional boundaries, Pinto (1994:12).

From the above definitions, the concept civil service, will be used in this paper to refer to an institution which composed of working men and women governed by certain rules and regulation in discharging their major functions of assisting the government impartially to carry out its policies and programmes that will assist in the realization of its goals and aspirations, which are public centred, without involving itself into partisans politics or unnecessary involvement into some pecuniary interests of the leaders in government. These workers are called civil servants and are expected to be neutral and at the same time representing the interest of the public through its traditional and modern functions. The traditional functions are the maintenance of law and order, collection of revenues and their administration etc. While what we may term the modern role in the management of the general economic and social objectives of the nation.

Development

The concept of development is multidimensional and normative. It has various meanings depending on who is defining it, from where and from which discipline. Despite the differences, there is a common ground reached by some scholars which could be used as a yardstick to measure whether a country, society or institution is developed or not. Some of these meanings are used in this paper.

Walter Rodney defined the concept development at two levels, at the individual level and at societal level. Both try to show that development is not just an economic affair. For convenience of this paper I merged the two levels in order to further clarify Walter Rodney definition. Development, according to him involves creativity, self discipline, innovation, freedom and responsibility and material wellbeing of the people which are essentially used to shape the internal and external relationships of the people, their society and their nation.

Duddly Seers, looked at development in a narrower sense to mean the ability of a society to get rid of poverty, unemployment and inequality and the safeguarding of their independence in absolute term.

Denis Goulet and others, on the other hand, looked at development as the sustained elevation of the entire society and social system towards a better or more humane life. He identified three co-values which if met, the society can be termed as developed. The core values are life, sustenance, self esteem and freedom from servitude, alienation and dogmatic belief.

Michael Todaro (1980:90) perceives the concept of development as a multidimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of entire economic and social system. In addition to improvement of income and output, it typically involves radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitude and sometimes even customs and beliefs.

Looking at these definitions above one can easily see that they all aimed at the betterment of people and their ways of life in such a way that all major problems confronting the people are solved and the society and its nation become self sustaining, independent and democratic.

We can therefore say that a society is developed or an institution is developed by measuring its performance and productivity and how it moves progressively from the less desirable state to a more desired one, in such a way that the benefits of growth and development are distributed to all segments of the society or institutions. Development in that society or institutions involve structural changes that would gear up the society or institution in such a way that it liberates itself from domination, alienation and exploitation meted to it

by the international capitalist bourgeoisie and their internal collaborators. The people in the society or institutions must be seen to be creative, disciplined, innovative and experts in organizational arrangement and management processes, in relation to their history, culture and political arrangements that engineers and sustains its economic growth and technological and other scientific activities that continuously increase the level of income that will over time be used in solving economic, socio-cultural, political and administrative problems sustainably, so as its future generations will not have to face those problems, El-Makki (2006). All these values are summed up by Michael Todaro in his definition of development.

If development is looked at in this direction, it cannot be said to be equated with economic growth, economic development, modernization, westernization as some authors of capitalist inclination tend to show. Neither will it be based on the strategies theories of people like W. W. Rostow.

Origin and Development of the Nigerian Civil Service

The Nigerian civil service, as an institution, has its origin from the colonial period under the British authority, as the administrative machinery for governing Nigeria. The amalgamation of 1914 which unified the then northern and southern protectorates under Lord Fredrick Lugard, led to the establishment for the first time, of what seemed like a unified service, particularly more so from 1920. It was since then the civil service started to play important role through changes in its structure, the constitutions of Nigeria and numerous reforms. Initially it was charged by the European occupying higher and responsible positions in the service. Thus the upper echelon of the colonial service was dominated by the Europeans on whom were concentrated executive, judicial and legislative powers. The traditional rulers in the spirit of 'indirect rule' were also co-opted into the colonial power structure. However through the periodic agitation of the Nigerians saw the systematic increase in the number of the Nigerians occupying senior or higher and responsible positions.

For example, in 1948, 245 of 2,541 and in 1952, 685 of 3,679 senior posts are held by Nigerians. In June 1960 it had increased to 2,308 out of 4,057, Olawu et al., (1997:3).

With the creation of three regions, north, east and west in 1954, increased the number of the civil servants with the creation of three regional civil services. In addition to this a public service commission was also established at the centre in each of the three regions within the same period. The Federal and Regional Services thereafter nurtured a career civil service within their domains, making it more professional, responsible and responsive. It started

on a British footing of neutrality, anonymity and impartiality emphasizing merit, productivity and achievements. At independence in 1960 the role of the civil service was noticed to have shifted from maintaining law and order and collection of revenue to that of 'facilitating the realization of the nation's development, aspirations'. Consequently, the civil service became more visible and active both in the formulation and execution of development policies and programmes, Adegroya (2006:3). Since then the civil service became stronger in the helm of affairs of Nigeria, particularly between 1967 – 1975 or from the beginning an aftermath of the Nigerian civil war. From 1975 its influence started to wane down as a result of the great purge of 1975 and 1984 leading to contraction in its size. Another blow to the service was from 1988 – 1994. During the 1988 reforms and consequent politicization of the civil service where all its glorious qualities were greatly abused. However the civil service vitality and strength picked up again in the 1990s expanding in its areas of operations. In fact by 2003 it has, despite the privatization and commercialization policies maintained and even improved in its size. This is as a result of the desire of many graduates and other technical officers to join the federal service. In 2003 alone more than 200,000 applications were received for employment into the federal service, according to Babura (2003) despite of the federal character or quota system.

As pointed out by Anyebe (2004:2-3) "the size of the federal service grew from less than 30,000 at independence in 1960 to 45,154 in 1970, leaping to 98,877 in 1974 and 213,802 in 1988, and peaking in 1990 to 273,392. Adegroya (2006) in assessing the Nigerian public service as at 2005 said Nigeria had a total of 2,267,492 including the federal civil service, the state and local governments.

However, a more accurate figure was given by Sani (1999:182) who shows the civil service growth was 63,734 in 1970, 133,906 in 1975, 231,802 in 1980, 225,892 in 1985, 287,533 in 1990, 197,200 in 1993.

Looking at these figures above, one can say that the issue of bloated size of the civil service considering the population of Nigeria and the functions of the (civil service) ministries and departments is merely a fare and a style used by consultants to 'chop' Nigerian resources. Whatever the case is the figures quoted above shows that the civil service is even understaffed. Sani (1999:183) has aptly shown that, his research shows that "contrary to the outcry of bloated civil service by officials Nigeria has been grossly under-served by civil servants who have been over-stretched beyond what their numerical strength can cope with".

Whatever the case is the civil service of Nigerian witnessed growth more with the creation of states and local governments from 1963 to 1996. This

also added to the total number of civil servants in Nigeria. According to Anyeba (2004) and Adegroya (2006) from 3 regions in 1960 the Nigerian civil service developed to 4 regions in 1963, 12 states in 1967, 19 states plus the FCT in 1976, 21 states plus the FCT in 1987, 30 states plus FCT in 1991 and 36 states plus the FCT in 1996. There are also as at 1996 and today 774 local government councils in Nigeria. This necessitated the establishment of independent services for the new states and local government councils. This has, therefore, brought a phenomenal increase in the size and number of the civil services.

The wide ranging role of the governments also helped in the size and number of the civil services due to the establishment of extra-ministerial departments and agencies.

What should be noted is that the size of the civil service is critical to the role and functions of the executive arm of government in policy formulation and its implementation. So also ethno-regional political competition and the patronage system are a major influence on the civil service size. The resources availability to pay have also significantly influence the size, cost and growth. That the existence of unhealthy incidence of faceless 'ghost workers' added its own strain on size and cost of the civil service, Sani (1999).

In terms of structure, the civil service, until recently, does not differ fundamentally from that left behind by the British colonial administration in Nigeria. This was revealed by the Udoji Public Service Review Commission in 1974; Anyebe (2004). "The classes and cadres remain sub-clerical and manipulative, clerical and technical, executive and higher technical and administrative and professional classes. Each class was further divided into many cadres". Anyebe (2004:3) with this division professionalism started to be exhibited in the service and made it the largest employer of service in Nigeria. There was unity or purpose in the cadres until the 1970s when serious conflict emanated between the professionals and the 'administrative' (who too must be called professionals in management). The issue of the conflict was nothing more than the amiable position administrators occupy, and also "because of the superior status, greater opportunity for advances and other privileges enjoyed by the administrative cadre" Anyebe (2004:3). It can be said that his conflict and others within the civil servants was as a result of the same conflict bedeviling the British Civil Service at that time which led to Fulton Reforms there.

Reforms of the Nigerian Civil Service

In order to appreciate the role or contributions of the Nigerian Civil Service in the development of Nigeria one has to consider the reforms undertaken

and their consequences on the role the civil service is playing in Nigeria. The various reforms undertaken were offshoot of the reforms made during the colonial period and also as a reflection of the reforms being undertaken in British civil service particularly the Trevelyan and Fulton Commissions.

During the colonial period i.e before 1960 a number of reforms were undertaken in order to improve the quality, structure and functions of the civil service. Some of these reforms are the Tudor Commission of 1945, Harragin Salary review Commission of 1948, Gorsuch Commission of 1951, Hewn Commission of 1959, Adegroya (2006). The major significance of these reforms, then, was to improve the wages and general conditions of service, division of the civil service into cadres and defining the role and functions of permanent secretaries. It can be said that these reforms in one way or the other have helped the colonial civil service to play a significant role in the development of the nation. Particularly the role it played in the colonial welfare and development plan of the 1940s and 50s. If successfully executed, its traditional function of maintaining law and order and collection of revenue and also the development of the few infrastructural facilities. The success recorded at that time was due to the agitation of the Nigerian people or as a result of the changes in the political, social, economic and administrative affairs of Nigeria.

This historical background and the influence of the British civil service led to more reforms as from the independence in 1960 to 2008; some of these reforms were among others, the Morgan Commission of 1963, Elwood Grading Team, Adebo Salaries and Wages Commission, the Udoji Commission of 1974, the Cookey Commission of 1981, the 1988 reforms, the Ayida Panel of 1994 and post 1994 reforms most of which were undertaken without instituting any panel or commission of the traditions of reforms. The impact of these reforms served a significant role in the performance or function of the civil service in Nigeria.

These reforms except the 1988, helped tremendously in reshaping the civil service in its developmental roles because all these reforms were after efficient and effective civil service, caring for the welfare of the civil servants in order to be more productive, disciplined, responsible and responsive in their conducts and performance in order to ensure accountability and transparency. So also the structure of the civil service and the accompanying relationship within the hierarchy is also one area that all these commissions touched. All of these reforms recommended similar or related issues that will reinvigorate the civil service.

It is the desire of this paper to discuss the 1988 reforms of the military in order to show how confusion was brought into the service which coloured

its developmental efforts, the impact of which is still being felt.

The objectives of the 1988 reforms, according to Babura (2003:11-12) aimed at:

- a) Enhancing professionalism, decentralization and delegation functions;
- b) Instituting checks and balances;
- c) Promoting of general modernization;
- d) To enhance the combination of responsibility with authority;
- e) To align the civil service with the spirit of executive presidentialism and
- f) To enhance efficiency, effectiveness speed and speed of operations.

Despite these lofty ideals, the 1988 civil service reforms though considered with euphoria of success has in reality failed to realize the objectives and instead introduced more problems to the service, which is telling in the civil servants and the general public up to today. In fact, it is believed that the harms does during the reforms was so much and so deep that it would take time, patience and determination to restore the lost glory of the service. Some of the deleterious effects of these reforms on the civil service are:

- a) Conscious and deliberate politicization of the civil service;
- b) Misuse and abuse of power by ministers, director generals who saw their ministries and departments as a separate entity and run them as personal properties.
- c) Absence of a coherent and systematic training policy throughout the civil service;
- d) Institutionalization of corruption, disregard for the rules, regulations and procedures, resulting in arbitrary decision;
- e) Unnecessary interference in the civil service matters by the politicians;
- f) Complete emasculation of the federal civil service commission (and its sister at state and local government levels) regulatory role in the appointment; promotion and discipline in the civil servants;
- g) Abolishing of the office of the head of civil service.

In 1994 the Abacha led government constituted a review of the civil service reform in order to save the civil service. The Ayida panel, as it was called, was very critical of the 1988 reforms and therefore reversed most of the changes made in the service. It brought back the Office of the Head of Service, the title and functions of the permanent secretary as the accounting officer, revert all the powers of the civil service commission etc.

Despite these weaknesses, the 1988 reforms had certain qualities which could have helped the civil service in its new roles in the development of Nigeria, if it had been implemented in Toto because of its emphasis on new

management styles.

It is noteworthy to point out that most of these reforms of the civil service were initiated from external sources, resulting in the imposition of foreign practices largely inapplicable to the Nigerian situation. This is the evidence of the 'false paradigm' theory propounded by the external forces and their internal collaborators which culminated in jeopardizations and negation of the traditional neutrality of the civil service, which always make the service effective in development of the Nigerian society.

The Role of the Nigerian Civil Service

The role of the Nigerian Civil Service is just like any other civil service particularly that of a developing country or countries that experience colonialism. The role is fundamental to some issues in the development of the nation. In Nigeria, it is fundamental to the development of the nation. It is more so if the civil service is allowed to perform these roles because of its quality, sophistication, maturity and professionalism. At independence the Nigerian Civil Service, in addition to its traditional role, it was considered as an agent of development and nation building. This was so because of the mounting ambitions and desires of the Nigerian people right from the onset the civil service was looked upon as a veritable institution that would bring about unity and integration of the Nigerian society and the provision of infrastructural facilities that would lead to nation building. As Adu (1972:5) observed:

"The immediate post independence was concerned with nation building and the welding together of the various people, tribes and in some cases races into a nation with its identity and integrity. It (the civil service) because an object of policy to pursue programme of integration, to discourage sectorial loyalties and interests and to ensure that the national development programmes and state services were more equitably distributed to all parts of the state ... making nation building the top priority".

Tukur (1999:405) also saw the emergence of the civil service from colonial service as institution charged with maintenance of law, order and public safety and also in-charge of formulation and execution of socio-economic development policies. Adu (1972:6) also said "the Nigerian civil service from that period assumed the role of an agent of development and has been playing significant role in the changes and development that is taking place in Nigeria and in the Nigerian people. It has demonstrated a remarkable ability in backing up the political executive and adopting their machineries and strategies to cope with the rapidly changing situations and demands of the Nigerian people".

Specifically the following as the major roles of the Nigerian civil service from 1960 to 2008 and even beyond.

Policy Advice Giving Role: The civil service gives veritable advice to the political class in its day to day activities. Advice which in most cases are far more tangible than the ones provided by the so called consultants of today. It is the initiator of policies and also the defender of such policies at the executive council meetings. That is why permanent secretaries accompany their chief executive to the council meeting. At whatever level, new policy measures may emanate whether from the political head, the higher civil servants, civil organization or the general public, it is the civil service that studies it, weigh it and its alternative and condensed it into s memoranda to be submitted by the Minister or Commissioner as the case may be to the executive council for deliberation and enactment.

Implementation of policies: Implementation or execution of policies is the traditional role of the civil service. The significance of this in government affairs is recognized early by top government officials. Ayida (1979:219) said, "No matter how soundly conceived a government policy is, is absolutely of no consequence unless it is implemented". The president of Nigeria in the second republic Alhaji Shehu Shagari, in his budget speech of 1982 remarked, that, no matter how articulate a policy is, it will not have any meaningful effect to the people unless it is implemented by the civil service the embodiment of *programme/policy implementation*. It is also no exaggeration for the Adebo salary review commission to have asserted "that the effectiveness of the government is to a large extent determined by the efficiency and competence of the civil service", Ayida (1979:219).

Weighing and Balancing of Competing Interests: The civil service also plays an important role of weighing and balancing of competing interests before the government. This is because it is responsible to the government and at the same time representing the public.

Carrying out Routine Tasks of Government: The civil service also plays an important role in carrying out the routine tasks of government. As Abdulsalami (2000:6) pointed out, on day to day basis, the civil service is preoccupied with the regulatory and other routine duties of government. "These include issuance of license, permits to authorize activities ranging from economic activities (e.g oil exploration/exploitation) through political to socio-cultural, the regulation of individual and group behaviour, maintenance of various public utilities and services (such as electricity, water resources, highways education, health services etc.) tax administration and so on. As

routine as these operations may be they are very significant because they keep the nation alive and going”.

Discussing about the role of the civil service Ayida (1979:220) observed that “in a dynamic and unstable situation with sudden and abrupt or frequent changes in government, the civil service plays a vital role in providing continuity and serves as the store of knowledge of past governments discussions and procedures. The service also plays an educative role in assisting new ministers or commissioner sin adapting themselves to the realities of power”. This is what Abdulsalami (2000) calls information organ of government. The civil service also serves as a unifying factor of all differences visible in the nation. It is also a source of stability and continuity.

Before discussing the achievements of the civil service in playing these roles in the development of Nigeria, it is worth pointing out that, in order to fully appreciate the role of the civil service one has to look a the nature of the political structure, or specifically the political elites who wield the executive power and also the general environment outside the civil service. By the external environment it is referring to the sum total of factors outside the immediate confines of the civil service that has a significant bearing on it, such as, cultural values particularly the perception of people on the civil service. The relationship with these factors in one way or the other affect the working of the civil service, its strength and vitality, its neutrality and dynamism, its efficiency and effectiveness.

The performance of the civil service therefore is not just what it does and how but also the level of the complementary roles these external factors play. As Pinto (1994:14) observed, “the nature of the environment has a direct impact on the institution of state and at the same time deeply affects the functioning or performance of the civil service. In Nigeria today we can count among the external factors, the free press independent judiciary and good functioning of courts in (speedy) adjudicating cases, the vibrant civil society made up of local and urban communities, non-governmental organization, professional and labour associations, academic and legal circles and the role of opposition political parties so on.

From the ongoing, it can be seen that the civil service functions in nation building and development though enormous can be so little if these complementary factors are not playing the supportive role they are expected, because in their relationships they not only affect the institution of the civil service but the civil servants themselves who are the agents of growth and development of the service functions. It is in this purview that the civil service in Nigeria can be judged as development oriented or not.

The economic strategies adopted, also play a most important role in the service delivery of the civil service, including the macro-economic policies, regulatory framework, resource allocation, debt servicing etc. In addition to this the internal factions of the civil service have to be weighed on the observance of rules of the game, particularly in the procedure of employment, compensation, motivation, career building and development, training and development, the application of the civil service rules, regulations and statutes, the code of ethics of the civil servants and the overall working conditions of the civil servant. Apart from these personnel functions, there is also the financial system which determines the levels of budget preparation and making, accounting and auditing, the procurement and general internal regulatory framework. It is against all these that you will look at the performance of the civil service in Nigeria whether it is development oriented or not.

Finally, the role of the civil service (bureaucracy) as pointed out is very critical to all areas of development process in Nigeria. Public bureaucracy according to Okafor (2005:67) is a very vital element of the development process. The greater the capacity of the bureaucracy to implement complex economic and social development plans, the highest the development potential of that society. Though the immediate pointed out that "this is not to suggest that bureaucracy is the only fore in the development process ... but in most assuredly a necessary condition.

Contribution of the Nigerian Civil Service Towards Development

The public bureaucracy or the civil service has certain elements and characteristics which make the institution a viable and development oriented. Max Weber the father of bureaucracy has shown that the more it develops the faster the growth and development of the society, particularly if all its attributes and structures are adopted and fully utilized. History has shown how in olden and modern times bureaucracy has led to great achievements in countries like China, the Middle East, Egypt, England, France etc. These successes recorded in these nations were in accordance with the levels of culture, politics, education and its maturity in public relations. It follows therefore that bureaucracy in any society can be an agent of development. The Nigerian civil service, right from the onset has shown all the classical characteristics of bureaucracies. It is formally organized, articulate with clearly defined goals, efficient and equipped with the required knowledge, well versed in formal rules or procedures, impartial, impersonal anonymous and great training procedures, with a good structure and hierarchy of authority. Due to its knowledge and capacity, the bureaucracy is professional, technical, with good sense of judgment and prudence. It is very critical, all these

qualities are the civil service have a vital place in the overall political, social and administrative structures and affairs of the Nigerian nation. Thus, becomes the major agent of change in all spheres of life, it is a generator of new types of interests and activities which help in the functions of governments, particularly in the aggregation and articulation of political issues and interests. In discussing the role of the civil service or bureaucracy in nation building and development in Nigeria it is imperative to point out some certain special features which could be seen as elements that are very critical in the overall functions of the civil service. Some of these features are:

- i) The Nigerian civil service is a special sub-culture segment of the prestigious strata of the society. Entrance into its competitive requiring high education skills and training. It symbolizes achievement rather than ascription.
- ii) It is characterized by a dual identification of tradition and modernity. That is why it is capable of choosing the most progressive elements form the two.
- iii) Even though the civil service is traditionally the agent of providing peace, order, security, collection of revenue, the general administrator enjoys supremacy which makes him the supervisor of nation building and specialized departments.
- iv) *Civil servants are carefully trained in formal administrative procedures and routine administration with adequate management styles and knowledge.*
- v) Civil service generally resists and resents unnecessary innovation having the knowledge of culture and tradition and vital elements of development.

These, and many other features make the civil service a very strong, durable, reliable and continuous which made the civil servants more patriotic than the politicians and so called nationalists, because these people involved themselves more in the politics of agitation than in the politics of nation building the success of the civil service could be noticed in the early and middle period of the existence of Nigeria as an independent nation suffice it to say that the changing position of the civil service and the civil servants, culturally, is what made the politicians, today, to take away the prestige and powers of the civil service. The civil servants are now considered second class of the political class and this affected the roles and function it used to give to the government in the nation building and development efforts. Though administration for nation building requires a different approach involving new values, attitudes and orientation, and modified institutional approach, the civil service which has the qualities of these attitudes and desirable changes is looked down upon

as corrupt and inefficient. This made people more ignorant on the real roles the bureaucracy performs in nation building and development. As Dube (2013) says, it must be recognized that "far from being written off it (bureaucracy) cannot be ignored in nation building efforts ... it must be conceded that it has played an important part in the process of economic and social growth and has been willing to go part of the way at least to adjust to the new situation". The bureaucracy therefore has great influence on the direction and temp of the country's economic and administrative development.

At this juncture it is imperative to point out some specific contributions the civil service has made in the development of Nigeria. Some of them are as follows:

- i) The role of the civil servants played right from the nationalist movements to independence and immediately after was enormous because they have acquired a progressive orientation and had definite ideas regarding the *programmes of economic and social growth to be adopted by their country* at the attainment of national independence. Referring to this quality Dube (2013:212) asserts that "in many countries they (the civil servants) were the only organised body of natives with considerable training and experience in administration, they naturally found themselves called upon to assume major responsibilities in the formulation and implementation of national plans for economic development and social change". It is this role they played which led to smooth transition from colonial to independence Nigeria.
- ii) Another effective contribution of the civil service can be discerned from the type of projects designed and implemented by the government in its nation building efforts.
- iii) The civil service in Nigeria helps very much in the Africanization of positions in the civil service and also uniting the Nigerian people in such a way that they speak and act with one voice. At federal level it started with nationalization and later in the application of quota system and the federal character. This further helped in unifying the service as every tribe and religions are represented. This therefore forged unity of purpose in Nigeria.
- iv) It played a significant role in actualizing all the development plans adopted in Nigeria right from the colonial welfare plan of 1946. Planning for economic change we all know is an extremely complicated business which involves highly specialized knowledge and developed manipulative skills; the implementation of these plans also presupposes deep administrative insights and a keen evaluate perspective. All these necessary indices are found in the civil service and therefore become a reliable partner to the political leaders in government. The first, second and third development

plans in Nigeria and the subsequent rolling plans adopted have shown the nature of nation building efforts and the strength of the Nigerian civil service.

- v) The civil service is very critical to nation building, because of the numerous clients I deal with in the development of projects and other utilities in Nigeria. This is so in the implementation of projects and programmes of government. *It is from the government bureaucracy that all the other institutions obtain various types of approvals, licenses, and permits etc. which is critical to their existence and operations. Also government allocation of resources pass through the bureaucracy to all other areas of the society directly or indirectly. Therefore, all other institutions performance have to deal with the civil service at one point or another in their existence and operations, even where consultants are involved.*
- vi) Another area of the civil service's contribution to development in Nigeria is in the appointment, promotion, discipline and training of the Nigeria people. The civil service commission has been playing the central role in this area. It is the one that is mandated by the Nigerian constitution to recommend amongst other duties to the government, *personnel policies* aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the service and ensuring that personnel decisions reflect the stated policies and interests of the government. To ensure proper discharge of these responsibilities the civil service commission at any level delegates some of its powers and functions to ministries and extra-ministerial departments in accordance with section 170 of the 1999 constitution which empowers the federal service commission to delegate any of its power on appointments, promotions and discipline of the civil servants. The contribution of this to development is to ensure personnel development across the nation which was hitherto dominated by some sections of the Nigerian society. *It also regulates the behaviour and conducts of the Nigerian society. It also regulates the behaviour and conducts of the civil servants to ensure transparency, justice, loyalty, honesty, commitment etc. in discharging their development function. In fact adequate contribution in manpower development to nation building in Nigeria needs to be further studied and known.*
- vii) The civil service provided the administrative framework of government to achieve for the nation a remarkable degree of unity, stability, continuity and steady influence on a rapidly changing situations. During crises, it merged as untied and neutral and solid; for e.g during the civil war of 1967 – 1970 it secured the survival of the country and the prosecution of the war itself. Thereafter it continued to provide the necessary peace,

order and services which attracted the attention of investors. Moreover when the powers of the military thinned down some of the top civil servants as observed by Tukur (1999:504) "appeared to have abandoned the role of silent advisers and to have become much more vocal on national affairs. Thus becoming powerful and visible. As the role of government widened the civil service was recognized as the embodiment of knowledge, skills and expertise".

- viii) Following the above, how the civil service provided continuity in the service particularly through peaceful change of governments, because of its position and knowledge of past, present and future issue of developments and nation building efforts.
- ix) Another vital contribution of the civil service in national development is how it succeeds at all stage in reducing the specter of unemployment because it has since been the largest employer of labour in Nigeria through continuous recruitment, transfer of service, secondment and special postings.
- x) The civil service in its positive and negative roles helped in the springing of financial institutions such as the Central Bank of Nigeria, commercial and investment banks, insurance corporations, printing and mining, NIPOST, NITEL, NEPA now KEDCO, ICPC, EFCC. the railways and construction of different types of roads throughout the nock and crannies of the nation etc.
- xi) Competition between states and within the federal, state and local government civil services led to the creation of a number of infrastructural facilities such as schools, health clinics, centres and hospitals, roads, agriculture, pipe-borne water, housing and industrial projects among others. As a follow up, it helped very much in the spread of urbanization in all the corners of the nation.

Whatever successful achievements recorded by the government in any sphere of life, the civil service has played a significant role in it even where consultants are involved, it serves as the basis of information and knowledge. Moreover if contractors are involved in projects, it not only supplies the necessary information but serves as the custodian of maintaining the projects, because after completion of the project by the contractor the civil service takes over the maintenance. Despite the massive purges of the Nigerian civil service in 1975 and 1984 and the retirements of many during the SAP period, privatization, commercialization and the monetization policies of the Obasanjo regime, the civil service continued to perform its major functions of partner in the progress and development of Nigeria. In fact this made the civil service looked upon

as the guarantor of bringing about speedy realization of governments economics and social programmes.

Some problems of the Nigerian Civil Service which serves as impediment to Development

Right from the beginning, the Nigerian civil service at all levels (federal, state and local government) have certain features in its role and structure which serves as impediments to development which must be reconsidered if at all the serious performance it has been contributing to nation building and development can be improved upon and fully appreciated. Some of these impediments were pointed out in all the reforms undertaken from 1960 to 2008. Some of which are constantly being pointed out as the undoing of the civil service are the conception of the ordinary people about the civil service and the civil servants. They tend to be object of doubt and suspicion, the attitudes and behaviour of the civil servants especially in their day to day activities and their lifestyles further aggravated this mistrust and suspicions. Others are:

- i) That the civil service at one time is too bureaucratic, rigid, conservative, inefficient, red tapist (delay) and generally ineffective;
- ii) Political interference and politicization of the top civil servants jeopardize and negates the traditional neutrality and anonymity of the civil service.
- iii) The discarding of programmes and projects which were initiated by previous governments is wasteful and slows down the pace of development;
- iv) The principle of federal character is being misapplied in some cases for purely selfish reasons or for fear of domination has a demoralizing effect on the civil service/servants;
- v) That the service has been subjected to so many reforms, as a result of changes in government and government systems and policies that the civil service has just had time to settle down to make itself more relevant and effective.
- vi) The confusion brought to the service by these reforms because most of them were initiated by external sources and bodies, resulting in the imposition of foreign practices largely inapplicable to the Nigerian situation, culture and history;
- vii) Indiscriminate retrenchment at various stages since 1970 has destroyed the ethic of tenure of the civil servants, the ethics of continuity and impartial services;
- viii) The low pay of the civil servants today has destroyed the loyalty and

commitment of the service because the remuneration is not linked with *productivity nor does it reflect the economic realities in different geographical locations of the nations*. The salaries and allowances of civil servants are very poor in relation to the rising cost of living and the amount required for a reasonable subsistence. Babura (2003:21) pointed out that *“in mid 2000 senior level offices were earning less than US \$200. Also it is revealed that the gap in salaries between public and private sector is 300 – 500%. Even within the public sector, the salary of the civil servants is worse. For instance the least paid staff of the Central Bank of Nigeria earns higher than a GL 13 officer in the civil service. Also the pay package of a Director in the civil service is only about 20% of that of his/her counterpart in the NNPC.*

- ix) The problem of indiscipline and corruption as a result fo the rottenness of the social values has greatly affected the performance of the civil service.
- x) *The sidelining of the civil servants by political actors on certain programmes and projects. So also the sitting of projects, the choice of projects etc. have serious impact on the civil service.*

Findings

The major findings of this study are as follows:

- (i) It has been found out that the civil service as an institution in the developing countries such as Nigeria is a strong partner in government which should be relied on by the political leaders and their elites in bringing about development in the nation.
- (ii) That the civil service is more developed and can be an agent of development more than the councilor structures of government.
- (iii) The positive roles of the civil service in development has not adequately been studied or exposed to the public so as to change their perception on it.
- (iv) That the multi nationals and gents of capitalism and imperialism with their internal collaborators, have deliberately confused the Nigerian governments and its people on what role the civil service could be playing in development. That is why they encourage constant reviews and reforms without allowing the civil service to use its own dynamism in rectifying what should be corrected.
- (v) That the Nigerian public has a wrong perception of the civil service/ servant and the role they could play in development.
- (vi) The politicians in government help to aggravate the false image off

the civil service as inefficient cumbersome, red tapist, and ineffective because of their selfish interest and the desire to use the civil service in achieving those selfish interest.

- (viii) The neutrality and security of tenure of the civil service which could be the main basis of its contribution to development have been eroded over the years and civil servants are forced to be a political.

Conclusion

From the ongoing discussion, it can be said that the civil service is development oriented and has actually been playing a vital role in the development of Nigeria right from 1960 to 2008, despite the downsizing, privatization and commercialization of government companies and organizations, which are indirectly forced on the Nigerian governments by the international capitalist nations and organizations and their local collaborators. Using the international structuralist theory, it is evident that the capitalist bourgeoisie will not allow the developing nations such as Nigeria to succeed in their nation building and development efforts. That is why they are determined not only to confuse the Nigerian governments and people but also to force them adopt certain incompatible policies which is de facto way are aimed at subjugating the government, their agencies and the Nigerian people. In fact the attitude and thinking of the Nigerian people have to be liberated if at all we want them to appreciate the role of government and the civil service in their determination to bring about a durable national development.

In addition, the position of the civil service should be recognized and (appreciated) and all the pejorative meanings attach to it should be revisited. Our people, whether intellectuals or ordinary citizens emphasize these negative aspects of our civil service just because the World Bank and its sister agencies say so. Very little literature is bound which the virtues of the civil service are highlighted nor on its achievements, contributions and progress even in the nation building and development desire of the country. Where success are recorded, only the government or the politicians are hailed and where failure are found the blame will be attributed to the civil service and therefore starts to emphasize its weakness.

Finally, every nation is aspiring for development in all its institutions the civil service inclusive. All the reforms made in Nigeria did not consider the inner dynamics of the civil service, rather they look at its problems and inactions as its totality of its functions. Not disregarding the positive contributions of these reforms, some of them created more problems to the civil service. For e.g the 1988 reforms corrupted the civil service because of the way it was

drawn to appease governments in an attempt to solve the so called conflicts between the professional and the generalists. Most of the civil servants appointed as *Director Generals* became busy enriching themselves as they know they would go together with the government that appointed them, instead of working towards solving what is believed to be the problems of the civil service.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered which if implemented will make the civil service was stronger in its role as an agent of development in Nigeria.

- (i) The civil service should be considered as an agent of development by the political elite and give it back its freedom to serve as partner in the march to development and nation building, particularly now when new approaches and theories such as the millennium goals and the international structuralist model respectively, are being postulated which consider the inner dynamics of organizations, institutions and nations. Thus according to recognition and respect to the civil service/ servants at all levels;
- (ii) The security of tenure of civil servants and the neutrality of the civil service which have been eroded be immediately restored to insulate it from political interference;
- (iii) The ethics, values and norms of the civil service should be reestablished to enable the civil servants enjoy once again, the respect and confidence of the public;
- (vi) That the rules and regulations of the civil service be allowed to take precedent in all matters of service, as such rules could be adjusted internally by the civil service to reflect the changing times and situations in economic, political, socio-economic and administrative affairs.
- (v) More research and studies should be sponsored on the role the civil service is playing in development and the major outcomes be publicized so as people to know the immense contributions, it has been given in the development of the Nigerian nation and its people and territory.

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