

Productivity In The Nigerian Public Service: Imperative For National Development

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Abstract

The history of productivity in the modern world dates back to the period of industrial revolution of 1789. This resulted in the mechanization of industry and the consequent changes in the social and economic organization, beginning with British and ultimately the world over. Productivity and sustainability of the public service in Nigeria has become a serious concern to both the private and the public sector ‘ ‘productivity in the Nigerian public service: imperative for national development’ ’ has a broad objective: to evaluate the productivity of the Nigerian Public Service and to specifically assess the impact of resources on productivity, sustenance of the service, the contribution of the public service to National development and the effect of management strategies on productivity. The study adopted survey design and content analysis. The major findings of the study showed that: the government is not using a well established criterion for making appointments in the public service; there is undue interference in making appointments inadequate in-service trainings, workshops, resources and poor implementation of government programmes. The position of this paper is that resources impact on productivity and consequently National development and that productivity is a function many variables such as appointments, motivation, resources and management strategies. There is the need to address the problems of the public service including the expansions, rules and reinvigorating service.

Introduction

Many literatures now exist in development studies. Productivity and service delivery for overall development dates back to era of industrial revolution of 1789 in Britain. This resulted in the mechanization of existing industries and the resultant changes in the social and economic organizations. Development can be defined as a tri-dimensional concept. Also, development connotes an increase in the quantity of usable items available to man in the society. At the individual level, development implies increase in skills, the capacity to earn income, greater freedom of action, creativity, self discipline, responsibility, general material and the psychological wellbeing. It is good to note that underdevelopment is not absence of development in the society. The indices of the development of any country include the capacity to regulate both the internal and external relations, guide its own national independence, attainment of self sufficiency in the various sectorial productions, attainment of full employment both in the private and the public sector, equity in the distribution of social services and self reliance. It include, but

not restricted to independence in the control of the national economy, equalization of economic opportunities, the ability to provide solution to internal problems. National development also include the ability of a nation to have a fair share in international trade and have an educational system that is functional; provides experts in different fields who will initiate and pursue developmental programmes.

Productivity, will translate to improvement, progress, change for better, higher income, better living standards, the quantity of goods and services available to the people; quality of their life-social, material advancement, greater control of their environment etc.

Productivity is measured by performance which is measured by results. The tendency is to determine productivity or output. Therefore, what has been the factors responsible for the promotion or that militate against productivity in the Nigerian public service? What are the losses or gains in terms of productivity; what efforts have been made for the improvement of productivity since there is no end to perfection? The attention to the public sector, has been necessitated by the decline in productivity. Since the Nigerian independence, there has been one problem or the other ranging from allegations and established cases of inefficiency, ineffectiveness, low productivity against public functionaries. These allegations are further compounded by the poor and inadequate training facilities, staff motivation, faulty approvals, promotion and irregular process. In spite of various interventions by various regimes to reverse the ugly trend in area of productivity, the situation has continued to degenerate. There is no gain saying that this has worsened the public frustration. Such state of affairs is not healthy if the public service is to move forward; if productivity is to be enhanced and expected services are to be delivered. Accordingly, the problem of low productivity has necessitated this research.

Productivity And National Development

The cardinal objective of productivity in the Nigerian Public Service is to enhance national development etc. the public enterprises, organizations, agencies and the departments are always involved in productive ventures, whether tangible products or intangible.

Ezeani (2005:211). Referring to national development through the establishment of public enterprises and state-owned companies had this to say:

One of the ways through which the government intervened in the economics of these countries was by establishing public enterprises (PEs) state-owned companies (SOC), public enterprises were seen as veritable tools for achieving national socio-economic development.

He further asserted that the issue was eloquently stated in the Nigerian Second National Development Plan (1970-74). Many public enterprises are always involved in productivity in the developing countries. They are active in key sectors such as manufacturing, construction, finance, services, utilities, transportation, agriculture and other natural resources.

The presence of indigenous private sectors implies that it is not only the public sectors that can undertake to provide certain infrastructural facilities, particularly in the services requiring heavy capital investments, such as railways, ports, electricity and labour.

Ezeani (2005:2011), further contributed by saying that:

The establishment of public enterprises by the state enables it to pursue objectives relating to social equity which the market would ignore; notable among which is preventing the concentration of wealth and means of production and exchange in the hands of few individuals or a group.

Adamolekun (1983) also opined that, apart from the public enterprises contributing to productive activities, it also provides employment opportunities and, access to essential goods and services at affordable prices.

Productivity has assisted in the control of strategic sectors of the economy such as central banking, broadcasting, iron and steel, and international air transportation.

When the productivity is improved, so is the level of income, consumption and the welfare index of the citizens. According to Okereke in Ezeani, et al, (2007), efficiency and performance are fundamental measures of productivity of any economy. Productivity will launch the nation on the path of growth and eventually increase National development.

Balogun (1980) also asserted that productivity is the major tools for measuring national development, particularly in the third world countries, Nigeria inclusive. It creates wealth, enhances growth and accelerates National development. The pivotal role of productivity to national development is enormous. The government all the time seeks the means to boost the economy, increase the welfare of the people, raise their standard of living, which will result in the overall national development.

Efficient productivity in the Public Service has multiplicative effect: employment opportunities are created, the various organizations will generate enough funds for expansion, salaries are generated and paid; organizations will embark on training, to improve the skills of their staff for greater efficiency; incentives and motivation of the employees are guaranteed. On the contrary, if productivity in the public service is inefficient, it will affect the national economy negatively and consequently, the overall National Development.

The Public Service is the principal agent for social and economic transformation; through the development of suitable infrastructures in the core industrial sectors; efficient production in public enterprises occupy central position in financial sector by providing the necessary guide to the private sector. It helps in the capital formation, fuller utilization of National resources, equitable distribution of income and wealth for overall national development.

The contributions of Public Service through productivity in the post independence era in Nigeria can be seen as .efforts to meet the developmental standards and to fulfill the economic needs of the country.

Productivity in the Public Service, through the creation of public enterprises utilizes the same as a deliberate design to control the economy for the overall National Development.

Organizational Relationship in (The Public Service) for National Development

The public Service (organizations) is made up of human, material and financial resources. The resources must be harmonized and integrated in order to accomplish predetermined goals. Nwachukwu (2007) opined that in order to accomplish objectives, tasks must be determined, tools and technology required must be provided and structural relationship in the Public Service must be established. It is the function of the Public Service to determine the best structure that will optimize the utilization of the resources. It is also the function of the management of any organization to integrate the resources. Therefore, the Public Service is a means of achieving the best result, from concerted efforts of the members. Another major function of Public Service is to determine the type of employees required and their relationships in the organization by establishing an organizational structure, to achieve objectives.

In Nwachukwu's (2007:76), own words: *Organization is fundamental to human nature. Man is a social animal and shares relationship with his neighbours. The subject of organization is central to sociology, psychology and even anthropology.*

He went further to assert that the organizational relationships and goals, the purpose to be achieved is divided into specific and identifiable jobs and departments; tasks and responsibilities are assigned to the individual; diverse organizational tasks are coordinated; jobs are clustered into units; relationships among individuals, groups and departments are established; organizational resources are allocated and deployed and formal lines of authority established.

The Public Service is a formal organization; the relationship is a planned pattern of group behavior designed to achieve predetermined objectives for the overall national Development.

The reason for formal relationships in the public Service is to establish efficient and logical pattern of interrelationships among the members of the group; secure advantage of specialization or division of labour and optimum utilization of talents; coordinate the various components, in order to facilitate the realization of the goal of the organization and the resultant national development.

Organizational Charts

There are visual devices that allow various departments and the relationships between them. Organizational charts assist the employees, directors, stakeholders to see, at a glance, the division of responsibility, line of authority and the relationships. The major advantage of

organizational chart is that it helps in studying how to modify or improve the relationships and areas of responsibility within the organizational structure. Although, the existence of charts in an organization does not indicate a workable structure.

Sources: Researcher's Field Work 2010

Figure 1: Below is a Typical Structure of a Federal/State Ministry

Sound organizational structure involves dividing activities into departments, divisions, units and subunits, defining relationships between the heads and other members. It is a major problem to find an organizational structure that can be adapted for the best performance. All matters relating to duties and roles have to be clearly defined in organizational chart.

Simon, in Nwachukwu (2007:78), carefully summarized the important features to be designed thus:

Division into section and units, number of levels, location of decision making authority, distribution of access to information, physical layout of building, types of people recruited, what behaviours are rewarded and so on.

It is usually on the process of designing an organizational chart that managers invent, develop and analyze alternative forms of combining those elements. A good organizational design, usually leads to the attainment of organizational objectives; flexible, changeable as the environment, its economic performance, ability to serve in a dynamic environment, growth and the satisfaction of the members.

Public Service Reform in the Context of Productivity and Sustainability for National

Development

According to Adegoroye (2006), the governments' response to the strategies to the Nigerian situation are of a two pronged approach. First, at the continental level, in collaboration with key African leaders such as Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, AbdelazizBouteflike of Algeria, Abooulaye Wade of Senega/and Hasan Mubarak of *Egypt* to produce in the year 2000, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

The second approach is a national initiative called national Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) which has four thematic priority areas:

1. Democratic and political governance
 - ii Economic governance

iii Corporative governance

iv. Social governance

NEEDS as an Over Aching National Reform Strategy

The formation of the national Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), in 2003, provided a frame work for integrating into organized entity, all sections of reforms, that existed before, in order to make them to align with the overall goal of promoting good governance, productivity, and national development.

NEEDS as a Macroeconomic Frame Work, Resting on a Tripod

Empowering Nigerians by creating more job opportunities, affordable housing, improvement on health care services, strengthening skill base, protecting the vulnerable and promoting the people and security.

Promoting Private Enterprise:

This will be achieved by creating an enabling environment for business to thrive, stabilizing the value of the Naira, diversification of the economy, reduction of dependency on oil, privatizing, deregulating and trade liberalization, power generation, transportation and communication. It also includes targeting 70% annual industrial growth, capacity utilization and investment by the year 2007. NEEDS is envisaged to promote agriculture and other key sectors such as information, technology, tourism, entertainment, finance services, protect the environment and ensure sustainability of the public service for national development.

NEEDS is expected to identify the core business areas of government and sticking to them. It is expected that, it will allow other stakeholders, to run business and provide other services, for which they have comparative advantage to the government. Other areas that major changes are expected to occur are: implementing accountability in governance, transparency, anti-corruption measures, curtailment of unbridled waste in the public service through pension reform, monetization, national health insurance scheme and budgetary discipline.

Adegoroye (2006), maintained that all the above multiplicity of interventions are grouped and driven under four areas of National Economic and Development Strategy (NEEDS), namely.

1. Economic management reform
2. Governance reform and institutional strengthening
3. Public service reform in the areas of public expenditure, budget reform,
4. efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness.

v. Transparency, accountability and ant-corruption reforms, through the following: Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Executive Industries and Transparency Initiative (EITI).

Needs and the Expected Major Changes in Government the Four Implementation Strategies of Operations Reform Domains Implementation Goals

Strategies

Economic Reforms Implementing a Government Reforms and strengthening Transparency, Corruption Reform	Growing Private Sector Social Chart Reforming Government and its Accountability Value Re-Orienta	Wealth Creation Service Reforms Effective and Efficient Poverty Reduction institutional Institutions Re-orientating Values and Anti-
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Sources:

The implementation strategies and goals of the four domains of national Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) Report of 4th Retreat held at the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPASS) Jos, from 23rd-25th February

2001.

Public Service as an Engine of government Development Initiatives

All developmental initiatives will come to naught without an efficient public service. In the very words of Ededeji (2006:20), “without an accountable, efficient, effective and incorruptible Public Service, there cannot be a good governance”.

Public Service Reforms are categorized Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). The centrality and the critical requirements of the public Service to the success of national Economic Empowerment and Development strategy (NEEDS) was clear to all stakeholders.

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), (2003:21) states as follows: “critical to successful implementation of NEEDS is an effective institutional framework, particularly a public Service dedicated to excellence and support reforms”.

Character for the Public Service in Africa

According to Adedeji, in Adegoroye(2006), to demonstrate the expectations of the public service, the charter for the Public Service in Africa adopted at the 3rd Pan-African Conference of public Service Ministries in Windhoek, Namibia on February 5th, 2001, 29 Articles, enunciating a set of principles to achieve the fundamental principles, of the Public Service. The charter affirms the imperatives of professional values of the public service in Africa; it redefined the objective and missions and specified the fundamental conditions required for strengthening the Public Service role, competence, ethical values and images; and prescribes code of conduct for African employees. The charter defined the framework for legislative, regulatory, technical and practical measures, as may be required to ensure the performance and proper functioning of their Public Service and as well improve the quality of service delivery. The charter has since become a reference point for measuring the adequacy and the performance of the Public Service in African countries.

Public Service Review (1999-2007)

According to Adegoroye (2006), an average Nigerian has been traumatized by the Nigeria's retrogression from its height of development of the 60s and 70s according to the former president, Olusegun Obasanjao. He observed that Nigeria was on the ladder of development when he handed over power as the Military head of state in October 1979; Nigeria the 49th developing state in rank, had slidded in twenty (20) years; when he assumed power as a democratically elected president in 1999, to a position on 178th in rank, in terms of development. In his address, at the swearing-in ceremony of Ministers in the presidential villa, Abuja, on 30th June 1999; titled "The Historic Mission of National Restoration" President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999:12), observed as follows:

Our beloved nation has been virtually on brink of collapse. At least the past one and half decades have been characterized by calamitous retrogression in almost every conceivable sphere of life. Nigerians have indeed, passed through harrowing times and watched their standards of living plummet drastically, just as their human rights were steadily eroded. Life became almost short, brutish and nasty. Those were the surely the most difficult days for Nigeria since the end of the civil war in 1970... There were many things crying for attention. Our battered national economy is certainly one of them. The grim condition of many of our citizens were worsened by the deterioration of Public Service where access to pipe borne water and affordable health care became a pipe dream, supply of electricity became epileptic and unreliable in an era in which globalization has made such services unique and cheap.

Contributing further, Adegoroye (2006) said that the indices were too glaring for everyone to see and that they include, among others

1. *economic downturn; decay and near collapse of social and physical infrastructure;*
2. *impairment of public sector institutions;*
3. *high unemployment;*

4. *low investor confidence;*
5. *wide spread corruption;*
6. *excruciating debt overlap;*
7. *high poverty rate and*
8. *lack of confidence in governance.*

There is no doubt, with globalization and democracy, that pressures are increasingly exerted on the public service, to render services more competently, diligently and professionally.

Attempts to Address the Problems of Nigerian public Service and National Development

Barely one week after swearing-in the President (Olusegun Obasanjo), he set the tone for the change process in the public service: a ten (10) day seminar was organized for the Federal Permanent Secretaries; coordinated by Professor Adebayo Adedeji, former executive secretary for the Economic Commissioner for African and the. Under Secretary-General of the United Nations. There were about twenty (20) editions of workshops running from 1999 to 2001, covering one thousand, nine hundred and two (1,902) officers.

According to Adegoroye (2006), there is the need to address the following problems of public service:

- i. The massive expansion in the size, which had risen to 359% between 1960 and 1999;
- ii. The decline in institutional capacity, effectiveness and efficiency, effectiveness and commitment;
- iii. Ethical, moral and corruption;
- iv. Training, retraining and budgetary provision for training;
- v. Uniform application of civil rules;
- vi. Restructuring and streamlining the public service and
- vii. Reinvigorating the public service.

Between 1999 and 2001, several retreats were organized for Ministers, Special Advisers and Permanent secretaries at the Federal public service level.

The most noteworthy being the 4th retreat held at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru, Jos, Plateau State, from February 23rd to 25th, 2001, under the theme “The new orientation”; the major outcome of the retreat was “the Kuru Declaration” embodying a new National Ideology and code of ethics for public officers. The apprehension of the federal

government on the quality of the public service delivery was confirmed by the findings of a 2001 service wide study, conducted by the Management Service Office (MSO), office of the Head of Service of the Federation (OHSF), which revealed that:

1. 6% of the workforce is constituted by officers who are 40 years old and above;
2. 70% are unskilled, Grade Level 10-06, while 1.7% of the workforce are officers in strategic thinking directorate cadre (GLs15-17);
3. Prevalence of “ghost” workers symptomatic of poor personnel records and payroll control system;
4. 60% of federal government spending is on bureaucracy, including the National Assembly;
5. Pervading low morale, at the high echelon of the Public Service;
6. Highly centralized service, and lack of individual initiative; muffles corporate accountability;
7. The Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), have neither vision nor mission statements, nor clear corporate and individual schedules of duties;
8. Under sourced public institutions, lacking the capacity to make optimal use of technological changes to modernize;
9. Grossly inadequate working tools, required to operate modern management system;
10. Erosion of professionalism and spirit de corps;
11. Policy making had degenerated to a routine response to addressing urgent problems, rather than a structured initiative involving control;
12. There were serious capacity gaps, at all levels due to prolonged absence of systematic training, needs identification and serious commitment towards updating skills;
13. The procurement system was fundamentally flawed, as it was not transparent.

Source:

Public Service Reform for Sustainable Development: The Nigerian Experience. At the Common Wealth Seminar, 2006 Wellington New Zealand 20th February 3rd March, 2006.

Conclusion

Productivity in the Nigeria public Service imperatives for National Development has posed several questions. Although the paper posed a lot of challenges, there is need to unveil the problems and come out with reasons, proffer solutions to guide the government and other policy formulators to improve the productivity in the public service so as to kindle the overall development in the country. The importance of resources to run the various establishments for the development is imperative particularly when we realize the productivity in the public is the ability to use resources to produce goods and services with less input and thus less cost. The public service should enhance the socio-economic development of the country, implement the government programmes, improve the living standard of the people; significantly assist to the development of the country by increasing output of goods and services and make them available to the masses. It should act as a major tool for the economic development of the country; improve the peoples’ welfare and raise the standard of living.

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