

TRANSFORMING THE AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICE: INSTITUTIONS, GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE

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Abstract: This study is a public service that reflects the state of the nation, and no nation has been able to advance beyond its public service. The need for transformation in the public service, therefore, cannot be underestimated. It is at the heart of the public service's efforts to improve performance and productivity. It is essential to recognize that the logic of public service performance is undergoing profound changes due to transformations and innovations in governance and government policies. This development paves the way for new forms of interaction and socio-economic composition in social and economic life. This article provides a specific objective of an overview of the ongoing service transformation and applies it to public service delivery in West Africa. Our focus is on transformation in public service delivery, which refers to innovations that aim at renewing or improving public service performance. Using secondary data, primary and content analysis as a desk scientific research methodology, where the research adopts both descriptive survey and quantitative and qualitative data, newspapers, journals, published textbooks, and other researchable academic writings. However, research revealed that despite more than ten and a half years of democratic governance, the populace continues to suffer from extreme poverty, insecurity, unemployment, inadequate access to electricity, subpar housing and medical care, corruption, a lackluster enforcement of accountability and transparency, exclusion of the public from decision-making, and a crisis of legitimacy. The study noted, using the principle of political participation, that the public service remains significantly estranged from the people it is supposed to serve. It typically looks out for its interests rather than the general welfare. This is a major factor in its alleged dismal performance in delivering democratic dividends throughout the nation due to poor governance. This article looks at the issue of poor public service delivery in two West African nations and suggests solutions. In order to support good governance in Nigeria, the essay concludes that while innovations in the public sector ensure survival and enhance performance in the delivery of public services, regime change also necessitates changes in the mindset, organizational design, and operational dynamics of the public service. The report offered comprehensive suggestions on how to get the nation out of this undesirable circumstance. Promoting core democratic values, emphasizing professionalism in the public sector, developing public servants' capacity, advocating for the new public management principles, zero tolerance for corruption, maintaining political stability, encouraging participatory decision-making, and advancing distributive justice are a few of these.

Keywords: Public Service, transforming Performance, institutions, Reforms, Bureaucracy, government and governance.

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Introduction

Any country's public service is the backbone that keeps the government functioning and guarantees that its policies and programs are supported and carried out. Contemporary societies have grown increasingly dynamic and complicated. Every day, the demands for products and services are evolving. The organization, operations, and structure of the public service must also be altered. These adjustments are necessary for it to effectively, efficiently, and suitably address the people's basic needs. It can find itself in a race against time to provide its clients with high-quality services if it doesn't accept these operational necessities. The products and services that the public sector offers are outlined in government policies and programs and are anticipated to satisfy the demands of society and the ruling government in the present

and the future. The people who are the lifeblood of any government are its clientele. Dibic (2014)

But even after many years of independence, the Nigerian government and people still don't seem to have made much progress in providing the necessities of life, like food, shelter, portable water, security, good roads, high-quality education, dependable electricity, and healthcare for both young and old. The public service, which is frequently tasked with bringing the art of public administration to safety in terms of the effective delivery of government policies and programs at all times, is frequently held accountable for the majority of these flaws in the societal governance system.

Before gaining independence in 1960, the nation's federating regions agreed that public services should be provided in every region, then in each state, and at the federal level. As a result, there are currently 36 public services, including a core one. In any case, the country's advancements in general and the material conditions or social concerns of its citizens in particular have not been significantly realized. With a population that subsists on less than \$1 a day, the nation is still among the poorest in the world despite its immense wealth. The living conditions of the populace have gotten worse under the nation's current economic downturn.

However, with the return to democratic rule, it is expected that the public service will extend the frontier of the core democratic values of popular participation, accountability, legitimacy, and political freedom. These are core ingredients for any public institution's efforts at development. In light of the aforementioned, the essay looks at the public sector's efforts to provide good governance in Nigeria, the interactions between forces under democratic rule, the challenges the public sector faces in advancing good governance, and the opportunities presented by the opening of the nation's socioeconomic and political spheres.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The necessity for innovation in public service delivery has long been emphasized in the majority of the world's nations. Global market shifts, rising consumer expectations, the need for new technology and procedures, the desire to improve current goods and services, and pressure from the government have all contributed to innovation, which is now a major area of attention in the public sector (Obianyo, 2010:21). Organizations in the public sector are frequently under the same pressure as those in the private sector to decrease expenses, waste, and increase efficiency. Historically, public sector costs have risen more quickly than those of the rest of the economy (Mulgan and Albury, 2003:8). The main cause of this is the overall absence of competition. In this case, innovation is thought to be a tool that will encourage public services to become more commercially oriented. Innovation has thus emerged as the key to economic transformation, growth, and the reduction of poverty. In actuality, innovation is what propels economic expansion. It addresses highly challenging human problems, political challenges, and governance (Okibo and Shikanda, 2013:67; Arfeen and Khan, 2012:9).

"Innovation" in the public sector is a potent engine and a crucial tool for the reform and rejuvenation of both completely state-owned entities and quasi-governmental organizations and agencies, according to public administration experts and academicians (Eran, Aviv; Nitza and Ayalla, 2008:307). Computers, airplanes, high-tech televisions, and wireless technologies, to mention a few, would not exist without the ability to innovate. This demonstrates how invention has been used to improve human lives throughout human history. Through wasteful use of resources, a lack of innovation, or creative ideas impairs the functioning of the public sector and other economic sectors. Lack of invention and originality frequently results in costs, time, and quality standards not being met.

Despite the importance of innovation in rendering effective, required and adequate services to the citizenry, it has been observed that innovation in the public service in Africa in general and West Africa countries in particular has suffered from not only the lack of research seeking to understand it, but also a

considerable lack of recognition of its importance, contrary to the case in developed societies. According to Blayse and Manleyi (2004:8), the public sector is perceived as lacking in innovation and having a lot of space for improvement in the majority of emerging nations. Thus, it is clear that the push for innovation and creative incentives in the public sector is not limited to increased productivity or technology, competitiveness, or living standards; the problem of efficient service delivery also appears to be at the forefront of the current push for innovation. Even the majority of nations have implemented various reform initiatives to enforce this. It is crucial to remember that innovation has historically only been viewed as an addition to the government's primary functions and operations. As a result, compared to industrialized nations, it is more challenging to locate creative people and institutions in the public sector in these nations. Therefore, with special reference to Nigeria and Ghana, this article briefly examines public sector performance and the degree to which innovation in public service delivery has affected public service performance in West Africa.

Objectives of study:

The broad objective of this study is to evaluate the transformational institutional capacity building and public service delivery system of governance and government agencies in African states.

The Specific Objectives include:

- To determine the relationship between staff training and staff competencies; and
- To determine the relationship between staff competencies and service delivery.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is an empirical evaluation of the effect of public service capacity building on public service delivery in Africa. The choice of time frame is based on the conventional understanding that a five-year period is sufficient for the effect of capacity-building efforts to bear fruit. The study is limited to all public service institutions and good government governance policies in African states.

OPERATIONAL CLARIFICATION OF TERM:

PUBLIC SERVICE:

Public service encompasses services offered by the government to its citizens, either directly through government agencies or indirectly through contracted services. These services are typically provided for the benefit of the public and are not designed for profit.

CIVIL SERVICE:

The civil service refers to the administrative body of government employees who are responsible for implementing policies, delivering public services, and managing the day-to-day operations of the government. These employees are typically hired on a merit-based system, meaning they are selected based on qualifications and experience rather than political affiliation.

GOVERNANCE:

Governance is the overall complex system or framework of processes, functions, structures, rules, laws, and norms born out of the relationships, interactions, power dynamics, and communication within an organized group of individuals.

Governance refers to the systems and processes by which an organization or society is directed and controlled. It encompasses the mechanisms, rules, and practices that determine how power is exercised, how decisions are made, and how accountability is ensured. Essentially, it's about how things are run and who has the authority to do what.

- **Decision-making:**

Governance involves the processes for making decisions, including who participates, how information is gathered, and how choices are made and implemented.

- **Accountability:**

It establishes mechanisms to hold those in power accountable for their actions and decisions, ensuring transparency and responsibility.

- **Structures and Institutions:**

Governance relies on established structures, institutions, and norms that guide the way things are done.

- **Rules and Laws:**

Governance often involves the creation and enforcement of rules, laws, and regulations that shape behavior and interactions within a system.

- **Power Dynamics:**

It also addresses the distribution and exercise of power, including how different actors (individuals, groups, organizations) interact and influence decisions.

- **Different Levels:**

Governance can apply to various levels, from local communities and organizations to national governments and international bodies.

- **"Good Governance":**

When governance is effective and fair, it's often described as "good governance," which typically involves attributes like transparency, participation, accountability, and responsiveness to the needs of the governed.

GOVERNMENT:

Government refers to the system or group of people that holds authority and exercises control over a specific territory or community. It's the structure through which societies organize themselves to create order, enforce laws, provide public services, and promote the common good. Governments can be structured in various ways, including through branches like legislative, executive, and judicial, and can be classified into different types, such as democracy, monarchy, or autocracy.

REFORM:

to put or change into an improved form or condition: to amend or improve by change of form or removal of faults or abuses or policies.

TRANSFORMATION:

Transformation is *profound, fundamental change, altering the very nature of something*. Transformational change is both radical and sustainable.

INSTITUTION:

An institution is *a humanly devised structure of rules and norms that shape and constrain social behavior. Institutions are the rules of a society and economy*. The basic categorization is political, economic, and social institutions.

BUREAUCRACY:

Bureaucracy is a system of organization, often associated with government or large institutions, characterized by a hierarchical structure, defined rules and procedures, and a division of labor. It involves a complex set of processes and a large number of officials or employees who implement and enforce policies. While it can provide stability and efficiency, it can also be seen as slow and rigid, leading to complaints of "red tape".

- **Hierarchy:** Bureaucracies have a clear chain of command, with individuals at different levels reporting to superiors.
- **Division of Labor:** Tasks are divided among specialized units or individuals, each with specific responsibilities.
- **Formal Rules and Procedures:** Operations are governed by established rules, regulations, and procedures, ensuring consistency and predictability.
- **Impersonality:** Interactions are meant to be based on formal rules rather than personal relationships.
- **Professional Management:** Bureaucracies often rely on trained professionals to manage operations.
- **Written Records:** Detailed records are kept of all transactions and decisions.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Conceptual clarification:

In the social and managerial sciences, conceptualizing is a social phenomenon. It is a scientific endeavor with the primary goal of providing intellectual guidance to the topics being studied. They assist in sorting through the different facets of scientific concepts in order to place them within the context of academic discussions and assessments of the research topic.

Concept of public service:

The public service is that institution of government set up in a civil capacity to discharge the responsibility of a state. Bankole (2010) defines the civil service as the service of the federation in civil capacity. In Nigeria, there is a civil service for each State of the federation and a central or federal civil service. The President, Vice President, Ministries, and extra-ministerial departments tasked with overseeing all federal government activities comprise the federal civil service. The civil service is defined as the civil service of the federation (State) in a civil capacity as employees of the office of the President, the Vice President, or a ministry or department of the federation's (State) government in Part IV, Section 318 (1) of the 1999 constitution.

Nonetheless, the terms civil service and public service are occasionally used interchangeably. Although they may not have

the same definition, they are operationally intercepted at different places. Given that the 1999 Constitution's Executive Part I (D) and Part II (c) provide for public service at the federal and state levels, the phrase "public service" may be seen as more inclusive than "civil service" (Bankole, 2010). Judges, board members, and officers of statutory corporations or businesses in which the government owns stock are among them. Members of the armed forces, police, and other legally mandated government security services are also included. According to Maduabum (2006), the word "public service" appears to encompass the civil service. Thus, "we could say that there is an umbilical cord that strongly links the ministries (civil service) to parastatals," according to Maduabum (2006). Therefore, not all public servants are civil servants, even if all civil servants may be public servants. Maduabum (2006).

For the purpose of structuring their societies, all contemporary states and countries have adopted democratic and good governance frameworks. In its modern sense, democracy is defined as the rule of the people by their representatives. While everyone participated in decision-making during the classical era, indirect or representative democracy is more common nowadays due to population growth and other factors. To select official leaders for a predetermined term in office, elections are held regularly. In a similar vein, governance has evolved into a concept that is typically used in conjunction with democracy. The literature contained a number of ideas about governance. Broadly speaking, governance is the effective and efficient use of public power and resources to achieve societal goals. Kaufmann (2000) defines governance as "the exercise of authority through formal and informal traditions and institutions for the common good. Furthermore, governance is the process of selecting, monitoring, and replacing government; it includes: the capacity to formulate and implement sound policies and the respect of citizens and the State for the institutions that govern economic and social interaction. (Kaufmann, 2000) defines governance as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1997) notes that it is "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authorities to manage a country's affairs at all levels". This exercise aims to serve the common good.

When democracy and governance are joined together, it becomes democratic governance. The essence of this marriage is to extend the frontier of the citizens' welfare and the overall development of human society. In the opinion of Nzongola-Ntalaja (2023), democratic governance is said to have the following recursive elements: the rule of law and constitutionalism, legitimacy of the government in power, transparency and accountability by those exercising political power, right of the citizens to exercise civil and political activities, for example, to elect and or replace their leaders, decentralization of power and resources in the State and freedom or independence of associational groups from the State (Akhakpe, 2024). Under civil rule, the public service is to ensure that these core values of democratic governance are pursued and realized in the interest of the people and society. It is important to note that in doing these, public servants are expected to be political, that is, they should be unbiased in serving all governments that come to power with equal commitment and dedication.

Several theories may provide an adequate framework for a study of this nature. They include the system theory, the state and society relation theory, the political culture theory, popular participation theory, etc. However, for our purpose in this essay,

we shall adopt the popular participation theory that emphasizes the role of the citizens as active participants in matters that affect their individual and collective welfare and well-being. It sees the citizens of a State as the essence of government. Therefore, deliberate efforts are to be made to involve them and gain their support in the process of policy initiation, policy making, and policy implementation. They are to be seen as not just end products of government policies and programmes but active participants in the process leading to them (Ake 1994). This theory is in line with the bottom-up approach to development and governance. However, as Almond et al (2005) have observed, most citizens have low political efficacy due to their parochial political orientation and consciousness. This is particularly true of Africans who, perhaps due to their relative poverty and illiteracy, are involved in the political process only at election time; thereafter, they do not defend their votes or participate actively in public affairs (Henry, 2007). Be that as it may, for the dividends of democracy to be realized in the society, there is no gainsaying that recipients of these dividends should be involved directly in the process to achieve the goal of good governance.

Good Governance and government:

Governance generally means making decisions and exercising power over people, either in towns/villages, states, countries, or institutions, both national and international. Therefore, the World Bank's worldwide governance indicators report (2011) viewed good governance from six dimensions, which include: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. The United Nations Economic Global Programme Against Corruption (UNGPA 2012) identified eight characteristics of good governance, which include, among others, participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus-oriented, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, and accountability.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1997) described good governance as a measure that defines the process and structures that guide political and socioeconomic relationships, while adopting these eight elements as part of the good governance to include "strategic vision," which is the leadership quality. The UNDP suggests that leaders and the public should have a broad and long-term perspective of good governance and human development, together with a sense of what is needed for such development.

However, good governance implies a situation where majority say is respected, where government strives in all its policies and actions to provide better life for the majority, where social inequalities were minimised, where all stakeholders respect the rule of law and where the conduct of government or organisational business is transparent and accountability is institutionalised (Abubakar, 2008).

Nigeria's Vision 2020 Document viewed Good governance as accountability in all ramifications. It also means the rule of law and an unfettered judiciary, freedom of expression and choice in political association, and it also means transparency, equity, and honesty in public office.

Public Service and Professionalism

The complexity of modern government and the demands of the times have made it expedient to continually emphasize the imperative of a professional public service. This concern is given

the fact that more than ever before, quality services are being demanded by the people who are eager to enjoy the dividends of democracy they sacrificed for in 1999, after many years of military rule. At the centre of these expectations are the needs for a responsive, accountable, talented, and productive public service. To all these can be added the imperative of merit in the recruitment and promotion of public servants. To a large extent, these goals have been pursued by successive governments, though their outcomes have not reflected the enormous amount of time and resources expended on them. This submission can be gleaned from the performance evaluation made on the public service under democratic rule, with special focus on the economy. In this regard, Adamolekun (1997) observed that:

The gross mismanagement of the nation's resources and the insecurity and irresponsibility of the political leadership reached a point at which silence could not have been considered golden in every instance. Consequently, it is inescapable that the senior administrators (public servants) share part of the blame for the mismanagement of the national economy....

The public service should be the conscience of the people. Public servants should always speak out and defend the public interests irrespective of the government in power. Perhaps, the self-serving role of public servants has blurred these public values. The rat-race for material wealth in the polity has perhaps, caught up with the public service as shown in the rising "phenomenon of silent but wealthy public servants which some observers have noted could have been most likely derived from collusion between civil servants and politicians in the race for wealth accumulation" (Adamolekun, 1997). Under these circumstances, good governance could most likely be put in abeyance and suffer setbacks

Henry (2007) has suggested that the window of opportunities for financial gains in the public service under the present spoil system in our polity can be closed through the return to rigid application of administrative principles and the installation of a well-planned organizational structure and processes." These measures can focus the public service on its core duties and responsibilities rather than move it towards prebendal politics as is being observed under the present democratic dispensation. Corruption still remains pervasive as taxpayers' motives are used by public executives to pursue personal interests. In this circumstance, good governance suffers irreparably, just as it was in the immediate post-independence years. Therefore, there is an organic interface between the public service's professionalism and good governance. Given the exigencies of the time, more responsiveness of the government is required to meet and satisfy the demands of the people for quality goods and services. Thus, Stealfer (in Afegbua 2015) suggests that professionalism of the public service entails three recursive elements. The foundation for decision-making is provided by substantive law, and public officials have access to information sources and the means to put that information into practice. Procedural legislation is of a high enough caliber to support coordination and power balance. A new public service that can support good governance in Nigeria must also prioritize the quality of financial and administrative accountability, control mechanisms to ensure transparency, financial and administrative decision making, and the activation and use of means of correction, persecution, and addressing administrative actions. Additionally, it must emphasize communication with the public, providing them with opportunities to voice their opinions on issues that impact them.

Though the rules, laws, and ethics of administrative governance are well-considered and properly codified, experience has shown that public servants lack the inventiveness, creative instincts, and minds necessary to domesticate and actualize this body of ordinances for the advancement of the polity and good governance. Given these circumstances, academics have argued that public employees should adopt an innovative and creative management style going forward in order to contribute to the growth, development, and social well-being of society (Maduabum, 2014, and Yusuf and Idowu, 2017).

The Public Service and Good Governance

Ensuring the welfare and well-being of its citizens is the fundamental function of any government. The goal of public policy should be to apply this imperative to people's lives and society. However, it appears that not much has been done or accomplished in this area if the nation's social welfare situation is any indication. This has made the implementation of public policy reform essential. Best practices in administration are necessary to accomplish the ultimate goal of policy reform, which is improved service delivery. As demonstrated by Dibie (2014), the New Public Management (NPM) concepts were first developed with suggestions for the use of a competitive market and economy in governmental actions and operations. They can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of government operations if faithfully implemented.

Nonetheless, the good governance variation has gained attention since it aims to broaden the scope of the NPM by embracing the political landscape in order to make the reform process comprehensive. Adamolekun (in Dibie 2014) identifies the main elements of governance as captured in the public administration literature to include: freedom of expression and association, rule of law, electoral legitimacy, transparency and accountability, and development-oriented leadership. While the privatization of public companies and services was the initial form of public sector reform under NPM, the governance reform aims to involve the previously excluded citizens in decisions that impact their interests both individually and collectively.

This approach to governance has gained popularity, especially in developing nations where authoritarian regimes have historically predominated. In these civilizations, public resources were and are still spent without recourse to public accountability and transparency, and citizens and voluntary organizations were cut off from governance. The subtype of good governance that entails managing state or government resources for efficiency and fair distribution of public resources has to be emphasized as a result. Sarumi, O. (2016) is the source. As demonstrated above, these ideas are not new to the public sector, particularly in light of the governance agenda. Many governments aim to increase the public sector's productivity and performance-drivenness. However, if the populace is separated and resources are exploited ineffectively, this cannot be achieved. Therefore, certain actions must be taken in order to realize the good governance principles shown in the above diagram.

GENERAL OVERVIEW AND TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE IN AFRICAN (A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND PERSPECTIVE)

Public Service/civil service

Colonial administration is where the Nigerian Public Service got its start. Transparency and good governance are the

guiding principles of the Public Service. Thus, the Civil Service and Public Corporations are considered to be part of public service. The Civil Service reforms have led to the privatization of state companies. Compared to the Civil Service, the Public Service is a more expansive idea. The Civil Service, the Military, Parastatals, and others are all part of the Public Service. Every civil servant is a public servant, but not all public servants are civil servants.

The Public Service is established by section 169 of the 1999 Constitution. The government, which operates the Public Service, goes about its activities of making subsidiary laws and executing them through MDAs. The Civil Service consists of several ministries, which are a subsidiary of the Public Service. The Public Service contains the Civil Service, Armed Forces, Judiciary, Statutory Corporations, etc., which are owned and financed by the government at both the State and Federal levels.

The majority of public service organizations prioritize service over profit (see paragraph 19 of Part 1 of the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution). Whenever "public service" is delegated to private organizations, regulatory agencies are typically set up to oversee these private service providers, such as NCC, NERC, etc. These organizations were set up to stop these profit-driven commercial institutions from taking advantage of the people.

Civil service, being a part of public service in Nigeria, is a body of employees responsible for planning, giving advice, and implementing policies in government ministries and departments.

These employees are called civil servants. Government ministries are headed by ministers at the Federal level or commissioners at the state level and assisted by directors-general (permanent secretaries), as well as other departmental heads.

Ayeni (1990) maintains that as a management institution, the civil service should be seen as a system of human, material and financial resources for the provision of people's needs; that its success in this largely depends on the availability of the requisite resources and the effective and efficient organization and utilization of the resources to enhance the capacity of both politicians and administrators in the onerous task of serving the people.

In terms of its component organs, the Nigerian civil service consists of the Federal Civil Service, the 36 autonomous state civil services, the unified local government services husbanding 774 local authorities, but excluding the military and legislative and judicial arms of state as well as the multitude of federal and state agencies, parastatals and state-owned enterprises. The federal and state civil services are organized around government ministries and extra-ministerial departments headed by ministers/commissioners who are appointed by the president/ governors, respectively. These appointees represent the political heads of their respective charges and are primarily responsible for policy matters. The administrative heads of the ministries (the Chief Executive Officers, CEOs) are the permanent secretaries, responsible primarily for policy implementation under their respective jurisdictions. Extra ministerial departments, agencies, and parastatals are usually attached to ministries or the presidency for purposes of supervision and coordination (Civil Service Handbook, 1997). At the local government level, the political establishment is made up of the Chair and Councilors, with the latter appointed as political heads of the local government departments. The Secretary

and department heads constitute the civil service echelon at the local government level.

Responsibility for the regulation of the three civil services—Federal, State, and Local—rests with the corresponding three commissions: namely, the Federal Civil Service Commission, the State Civil Service Commissions, and the Local Government Service Commissions. The commissions are generally vested with the powers for the appointment/dismissal of persons to/ from offices in the services as well as the exercise of disciplinary control measures over persons holding posts in the services (Guidelines, 1999). In practice, however, the three civil services usually delegate such powers to appointed officers, committees, or ministries/departments as appropriate. This devolution of powers notwithstanding, employment practices are anything but merit-based, as politicians and members of the higher civil service come to see appointive posts under their jurisdiction as political prizes to be distributed among influential or faithful supporters.

The structure of the Nigerian Civil Service is bureaucratic and highly centralized, with decision-making powers mostly confined to federal and state capitals (Ayeni, 1994). Local and field offices—the grassroots impact-points—are consequently emasculated both in their ability to respond in real time to the needs of user communities and in the entrepreneurial leeway critical to the successful translation of policy objectives into concrete values at the grassroots. Since bureaucracy is often the primary organizing principle, rigidity and officiousness may hinder the system's ability to adapt to situations that call for quick responses and changes. This issue is more related to the bureaucratic nature of the service than to the competence or lack thereof of the civil servants. Yamamoto (2003) succinctly sums up the widespread agreement regarding the drawbacks of bureaucracy when she states:

Bureaucracy, it was claimed, is plagued by progressive inflexibility based on complex hierarchical rule-based systems and top-down decision-making processes, which causes it to be increasingly distant from citizens' expectations.

The reasons for this inherent irresponsiveness and rigidity, says Etuk (1992), is that the operating mechanism of the service has been cast in the marbles of "uniform operational guides" such as the Civil Service Rules and Regulations, Financial Instructions, Gazettes, Notes for Guidance, Executive Circulars, Treasury Circulars, Schemes of Service, Manual of Procedures, Conditions of Service, etc. Such "guides" hardly take cognizance of the ever-changing and different functions of and conditions under which the various ministries operate. The result is a crisis of performance, as policies are watered down as they cascade down and through the leviathan maze of officialdom. To parody Balewa (1994), I will additionally charge that the bureaucracy tends to absorb too much of the competence available in the service into itself, leaving too little talent and initiatives for advancing the purpose of governance as part of the democratic process.

The foregoing portrait of the civil service should be appreciated as a canvas produced over decades of work by countless artists, forces, and circumstances. For this paper, a brief historical excursion highlighting important milestones in the development of the service, beginning from 1954 to date, is not an unwarranted digression.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

Permanency:

The civil service is a permanent government establishment and employees enjoy security of tenure. The civil service remains intact while government changes periodically.

Neutrality:

Civil servants are required to be politically neutral so that they can serve faithfully, any government in power, no matter the controlling party. The Law requires them to resign their appointment where they are interested in partisan politics.

Impartiality:

This implies that civil servants should discharge their official duties fairly to all the people they are serving, without religious, class, gender, ethnic or any other sectional biases.

Anonymity:

Civil servants may neither disclose government official secretarial nor speak to the press on government matters, except they are authorised by the minister supervising the ministry. They cannot be held responsible for their official actions. The minister and director-general are politically accountable for the success or failure of their ministry.

Expertise:

The civil service consists of highly qualified and professionally experienced experts in various fields. The formulation and implementation of government policies and programmes depend largely on these specialists, while political office holders may not themselves be specialists in the areas they supervise.

Bureaucracy:

The civil service is characterised by very strict adherence to established rules and regulations; this sometimes causes delays in the implementation of government policies and programmes.

Merit System:

Recruitment and promotion in the civil service is often based on merit. Only qualified and competent candidates are recruited by the civil service commission. Promotion is also carried out in accordance with the established rules and regulations.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF PUBLIC/CIVIL SERVICE

CIVIL SERVICE, 1954 TO JANUARY 1966:

The Nigerian Civil Service is a heritage from the Colonial Civil Service (Jaja, 1996), with the latter having served as the instrument of governance for the British Colonial Administration, which lasted for about a hundred years from 1861 to 1960 (Olowu, Otobo, and Okotoni, 1997). The colonial civil service was compact, due mainly to the indirect rule then in force and the service's limited role—law and order maintenance. With independence came enhanced commitment to economic development, resulting in the expansion of the role of and numerical strength of the civil service. A further significant development came with independence on 1st October 1960, when the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) was created and granted full powers to appoint, promote, dismiss, and discipline civil servants of all categories (Salisu, 2003). In addition to the FCSC, there were three other civil services, one each for the Northern, Eastern, and Western regions (Olowu, Otobo, and

Okotoni, 1997). It has been noted that the four services admirably tried to live up to the theoretical requirements of neutrality, anonymity, and impartiality under the protective direction of the political leadership.

It is worth noting that the three regional political leaderships excelled in the traditional functions of policy formulation; the UBE, Local Government Reforms, and Northernisation Policy have been touted as prime examples of policies made during this period by the Western, Eastern, and Northern regional governments, respectively (Adebayo, 2001). The civil service rose to the implementation challenges of these policy initiatives and left behind lasting development legacies. However, the increasing preoccupation with political power towards independence in 1960 and afterwards made the political leadership less and less concerned with matters of policy and more and more enmeshed in politics, with the result that administrators in the civil service step in to fill the vacuum and assumed increasing roles in policy making initiatives (Adebayo, 2001).

The Civil Service, 1966 to August 1979:

The ascendancy of the higher civil service, especially its corps of Permanent Secretaries in policy- and decision-making, which began during the closing moments of the First Republic, gained further momentum at the federal level during the period of military intervention lasting 13 years (1966–1979). Two antithetical developments emerged during this period with regard to the role of the civil service in policy formulation and implementation.

First, during the first phase of the military interregnum (1967–1975), first division civil servants dominated the policy process, thus marking the first significant period in the politicization of the service and the consequent loss of its political neutrality, anonymity, and impartiality (Ayida, 1990). This period has come to be known as the era of super-permanent secretaries who, according to Adebayo (2001), formed the fons et origo of policy and decision-making. They become so powerful that the then head of state, General Yakubu Gowon, had to allow them access to the Federal Executive Council and Supreme Military Council meetings, where they attend and even argue policy options opposed to those espoused by their respective boss-ministers present. Permanent Secretaries at the state level, however, were no more than mere conduits for policies formulated by military governors, absolutely exclusive of the participation or contribution of the permanent secretaries. The permanent secretaries were reduced to the ridiculous position of errand boys (Adebayo, 2001); the result is predictable: widespread disenchantment and frustrations among their ranks.

The second phase of the military interregnum, however, saw the reversal of policy and administrative practices at both the federal and state levels. The Murtala/Obasanjo junta turned the tables against the all-powerful permanent secretaries by instituting massive purges of the public service in 1975, dismissing an estimated 10,000 public officers (Adebayo, 2001). The junta was determined to free itself from what it sees as the strangulating hold higher civil servants have on policy initiatives (Adamolekun, 1986) by cutting the “bloody Permanent Secretaries” down to size. This development, to a great extent, destroyed the cherished values of stability of tenure and retirement honours associated with the civil service. Suddenly, everything becomes uncertain and unsafe. Those remaining in the civil service felt and behaved as “survivors” – dazed, stupefied, and rudderless (Blau, 2006).

The Civil Service, 1979 to December 1983:

The political leaders' propensity to attenuate the role of the civil service in policy formulation was notched up in the civilian administration that came into office on October 1, 1979. Thus, the higher echelons of the service became more circumspect in policy advocating, even as the political leaders of ministries failed to exercise their duty of providing leadership and policy guidelines to their ministries (Adebayo, 2001). The result is the creation of a vacuum, as the political leadership increasingly gets preoccupied with politics and relies on the annual budgets, and the perennial supplementary ones, in providing for the needs of the society.

1983 to May, 1999:

This period was pregnant with epochal developments in the civil service. It was in this period that the unified grading and salary structures covering all established posts in the civil services, as recommended by the Udoji Commission of 1972, were reversed in 1997. States were obliged to separately establish their salary structures on the basis of their ability to pay (Olowu, Otobo, and Okotoni, 1997). The most radical developments the civil service saw were the reforms enabled under Decree 43 of 1988 (Salisu, 2003). The 1988 reforms among others, abolished the post of Head of Civil Service, leaving the service with no leadership; ministers/commissioners became the chief executives and accounting officers of their respective ministries, leading to financial recklessness and outrageous corruption; permanent secretaries became Directors General and must vacate office with the government that appoints them, thereby politicizing the upper echelon of the civil service (Adebayo, 2001). The framers of the 1988 reforms hoped to create a civil service that was sympathetic to the government of the day (Ayeni, 1990), but the result turned out to be the destruction of the service's cherished values and their replacement with rent-seeking and egoistic propensities.

The kernel of Decree 43 of 1988 was reversed by the Ayida Review Panel of 1997 under the Late General Sani Abacha junta. The roles of permanent secretaries and ministers/commissioners were restored to the status quo ante. Additionally, a fortnightly meeting of the executive council was suggested to ensure proper coordination of government policies (Adebayo, 2001).

The Civil Service, 1999 to 2007 and Beyond:

It was Ayeni (1990) who suggested that the political establishment, to develop its policy analytic capacity, should arrange a system outside of the civil service for the articulation and definition of clear policy directions on issues. This suggestion seems to have been taken seriously by the civilian administration that took office in 1999; we see the president/governors surrounded by cohorts of special advisers on virtually all businesses of government. In this kind of situation, what roles, if any, are there left for the higher civil servants in advising their respective political heads? This development—the proliferation of special advisers—seems to me to have foreclosed the relevance of higher civil servants in advising on policy matters.

This is further reinforced by the proclivity of the political establishment to countenance advice coming only from civil servants adjudged “loyal”—loyalty in a partisan sense. The cherished traditions of neutrality, impartiality, and anonymity are generally today considered “disloyalty” by the political leadership and punished accordingly, usually through re-assignments to out-of-the-way, sinecure positions where one can hardly find enough

tasks to justify his/her training and experience. It is therefore less surprising to see civil servants being openly partisan just to survive and or maintain their offices. The distinction between career civil servants and career politicians is fast becoming nebulous. The practice of appointing civil servants into political offices—such as local government chair, albeit in caretaker capacity—is accelerating this unhealthy development. The result is that the civil service is now highly politicized, with all service decisions based solely on political considerations.

Civil Service

Section 318 defines the concept of Civil Service as follows:

In the case of *Alhaji Mohammed v Permanent Secretary, Borno State*, the court described the civil service as a permanent body of officials that executes government policies. The time in office of a civil servant is not determined by the tenure of the president or governor. The civil service is meant to be an independent body. Sections 206-210 of the Constitution state the existence of the Civil Service at the Federal and State levels.

The ministries that make up the Civil Service are formally led by ministers. In particular, under the president's direction, the permanent secretary is in charge of the ministries' operations. Instead of being a political appointee like a minister, the permanent secretary is often a senior civil servant with the necessary expertise.

Because the civil service is everlasting, it possesses the following qualities: permanence, anonymity, neutrality, impartiality, technical know-how, and capacity. The civil service operates according to certain guidelines, such as the Code of Conduct. Unlike the government, which undergoes periodic changes, the civil service is composed of permanent officers.

Implementing programs, giving recommendations, creating policies, planning programs, creating laws, creating budgets, and performing quasi-judicial duties. Judges in the Civil Service are guaranteed certain rights under Sections 172-173, such as the right to earn pensions that are due every five years. Additionally, according to these rules, civil servants are required to abide by the Code of Conduct.

The Civil Service is a constitutional creature and so it carries a legal personality and can sue or be sued.

Differences between the Civil Service and the Public Service

Professor Smith states in "Constitutional and Administrative Law" that a civil servant is a government or crown employee who is paid by a department of government using funds provided by parliament, and who is not a member of the armed forces, a political office, or a judicial authority. However, a public servant was defined as someone who holds an office regardless of their characteristics in the *Great Western Railway v. Matter* (1923) decision. He also includes anyone who works and receives compensation from the public coffers.

Also, the public service is broader than the civil service. It not only includes ministries, but also statutory corporations.

Legal Nature of Employment in the Civil Service and the Public Service

When comparing the common law to our current situation, the common law stance was that a British crown public servant, whether in a military or civil role, had no tenure. The job

connection is harsher than the typical Master-Servant relationship because he is employed at the whim of the crown. The cases of *Dunn v. The Queen* and *Shelton v. Smith* (1985) established this idea. Public policy dictated that, since such employment in the public sector serves the public interest, it should end when the public sector no longer carries out this duty. This justifies the common law rule in giving discretion to the Crown to hire and fire.

This common law stance has certain repercussions. For example, it was inevitable that public employees would be fired without a fair trial or hearing. Additionally, these fired public employees were not permitted to file a lawsuit for damages or specific performance. However, it was observed in the *Terrel v. Secretary of State for the Colonies* case that certain public officers kept their positions with good behavior and could only be dismissed with notice and good reason.

About Nigeria, since we were colonies of the UK, we accepted the common law position due to historical relations. Since the rule was from a Statute of General application, it became applicable automatically. As a result, a lot of cases came up before the courts were in favour of the common law positions. In the case of *Markins v Federal Admin.* Generally, the court reaffirmed the rule as the applicable law in Nigeria relating to the legal status of employment for public servants. In this sense, public servants held their offices at the pleasure of the State. This ran until the Supreme Court drastically changed the rule in the case of *Shitta Bey v Federal Public Service Commission*.

In that case, the Plaintiff obtained a declaration from the High Court of Lagos that his removal from office as a Federal Adviser in the Federal Ministry of Justice was not in accordance with the Civil Service Rules. Despite this, the Public Service refused to reinstate him. The Court of Appeal approved the stance of the public service in their refusal. The Supreme Court, however, took the view that the civil service governs the condition of service of public servants, and these rules were made under powers conferred on the Federal Public Service Commission by section 160(1) of the 1963 Constitution. The Supreme Court, therefore, held that the rules have constitutional force and they vest the public servants with legal status, which makes the relationship between public servants and the public service one going beyond a mere Master-Servant relationship.

The terms of contract of employment are governed by the statute enabling the existence of the public service (the modern rule) and not the State, as before. The court then held that the appellant should be reinstated since his employment should not have been terminated without recourse to Civil Service rules. Thus, in modern times, employment is statutorily flavoured. This has been applied in cases such as *Olaniyan v UNILAG*, *Adeniyi v Governing Council, Yabatech*, inter alia.

The Legal Significance of the Modern Law position

When the office he holds is expressly established and strengthened by a statute, a servant with legal standing is protected by the statute. When the appointment and provision are subject to statutory enactment, as in *Olaniyan v. UNILAG*, *Karibi-Whyte JSC* stated the position in the case of *P.C. Imoloame v. WAEC*. He also stated that an employment with a statutory flavor arises when the body employing the servant is subject to certain statutory restrictions regarding the type of contract he makes with the servants or the grounds on which he can dismiss them.

In addition to the aforementioned, a statutory authority may contract with an employee to establish a legal status that is distinct from civil service regulations. Therefore, the only way to end an employment is to follow the guidelines outlined in the relevant contract or enabling statute. As demonstrated in *Shitta Bey v. FCSC*, a violation of the established process cannot result in a legitimate rejection of the employment contract. Public employees cannot have their employment terminated without providing adequate notice. For such a termination to be deemed lawful, misconduct or other reasons would need to be claimed or demonstrated.

The fact that the public servant has the right to a fair hearing before his firing is also significant. Therefore, according to the principles of natural justice, a public servant cannot be fired without providing notice and allowing him to defend himself against such charges. When a public servant files a civil lawsuit as part of his entitlements, he is entitled to further legal remedies, such as specific performance, mandamus, and an order of reinstatement, in addition to damages if his job was terminated unlawfully, just like any other employee. The terms of the enabling statute determine how long it takes to be reinstated. Public servants are also protected by the Public Officers Protection Act [section 2(a)]. There must also be a notice given to public servants before taking them to court.

THE PUBLIC SERVICE TRANSFORMATION PERSPECTIVE IN AFRICAN

Transforming the African public service requires a focus on strengthening institutions, improving governance, and fostering effective government structures that can deliver equitable and efficient services. This transformation is crucial for achieving sustainable development, promoting democratic governance, and enhancing the well-being of African citizens.

Institutional Strengthening:

Reforming Public Institutions:

This involves restructuring government agencies, streamlining processes, and improving the capacity of public servants through training and development.

Promoting Accountability and Transparency:

Establishing robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating public service delivery, promoting open governance, and ensuring accountability of public officials are vital.

Building Institutional Capacity:

Investing in human resource development, technological infrastructure, and research to enhance the ability of public institutions to respond to evolving challenges.

Leveraging Technology:

Embracing digital technologies to improve service delivery, enhance transparency, and foster citizen engagement.

Governance Reforms:

Good Governance Principles:

Adhering to principles of good governance, such as the rule of law, participation, equity, and responsiveness, is essential.

Strengthening Democratic Institutions:

Consolidating democratic processes, promoting free and fair elections, and ensuring the independence of the judiciary are critical.

Promoting Citizen Participation:

Creating platforms for citizen engagement in policymaking and service delivery, ensuring that citizens' voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

Combating Corruption:

Implementing measures to prevent and combat corruption, promoting ethical conduct among public officials, and holding those involved in corrupt practices accountable.

Effective Government Structures:

Clear Roles and Responsibilities:

Defining clear roles and responsibilities for different government agencies and ensuring coordination and collaboration among them.

Decentralization:

Empowering local governments and promoting decentralization of service delivery to enhance responsiveness and accountability at the local level.

Public-Private Partnerships:

Fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors to leverage resources and expertise for service delivery.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, identify challenges, and adapt strategies accordingly.

Addressing Specific Challenges:

Post-Conflict Reconstruction:

Building public services in post-conflict settings requires unique approaches, focusing on reconciliation, social cohesion, and institution building.

Urbanization:

Managing rapid urbanization requires innovative approaches to service delivery, infrastructure development, and job creation.

Youth Engagement:

Empowering and engaging young people in governance and development processes is crucial for sustainable transformation.

Gender Equality:

Promoting gender equality in public service and governance is essential for inclusive development.

By focusing on these areas, African countries can transform their public services, strengthen their governance structures, and achieve sustainable development and inclusive growth. The 10th African Public Service Day, held from June 21-23, 2025, will likely

address these themes and showcase best practices from across the continent.

Strategies for Implementing the Good Governance Principles

Some practices have developed in pursuit of the objectives or tenets of good governance. These consist of:

- Shifting the state's emphasis to funding human necessities in the areas of social safety nets for the underprivileged and disenfranchised;
- Strengthen state institutions;
- Introducing changes to the way parliament operates and boosting its efficiency;
- Improving the skills of the civil service by using suitable reform tools that balance accountability and performance;
- Creating new alliances with civil society organisations; and
- Creating a new framework for partnerships in business-government collaboration (Sarumi 2016).

These tactics are realistic and consistent with public service performance and good governance in society, but a performance review of public service and good governance in the political system will reveal that their execution has been subpar or poor because of several limitations, such as unequal resource distribution, a lack of managerial credibility, behavioral hazard, and a lack of capacity building, among others. However, optimism has returned with the Fourth Republic of Nigeria's inauguration. However, it is unclear how the public sector is managing the opportunities at its disposal to use leverage to promote sustainable national development. This may only become apparent through a close examination of the relationship between democratic governance and the public services.

The Nature of the Public Service and Democratic Governance

One of the European institutions that was brought to the nation as part of good governance is the public service, particularly under the Westminster Model that is used there. Principles of Good Governance: Strategic Perspective and Agreement Orientation, Transparent and responsive to the rule of law, Fairness and inclusivity, Accountability for Participation in Colonial and Effective Rule. Governments in North America and Europe have been successfully governed by the public sector, which was cultivated in Western civilization. During Nigeria's colonial era, British colonial administrators implemented a concept known as the "Dual Mandate" under the leadership of Lord Lugard, the former governor general of Nigeria (Adamolekun, 1997). It claims that the native people will be developed using European brains in return for their raw resources, which include agricultural products, solid minerals, and oil. This is more akin to the reciprocity policy. Yet, even in the post-colonial era, this has always been the case. However, the former colonies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have suffered as a result of this policy's implementation.

The public service was how this mandate was carried out. Permanency, anonymity, and impartiality are attributes of Nigeria's public service. It would appear that these qualities allow public servants to successfully and efficiently serve the interests of the country and its citizens. Adamolekun (1997) asserted that these concepts were supported by the following arguments:

A key component of British democratic governance and a prerequisite for its smooth operation is the political maturity of the public service. It must be upheld, even if some people choose to enlist in the military and lose some of their political freedom in the process.

Unfortunately, the services have not become more efficient as a result of this need. This state of the public services could be explained by a number of variables. Perhaps a parliamentary style of government and a setting where pattern maintenance is most needed are more suited for the Westminster model of public service. This cannot be stated to be the situation in Africa, where the imposed political and/or administrative system needs to be integrated and adapted immediately. Additionally, efficacy may have taken precedence over efficiency given the necessity for the new African states to expand more quickly. The question that then arises is how successfully the public service model that has been passed down could adapt to the urgent demands of the emerging State. In addition, elite pressure to Nigerianize the public service resulted from the demand for independence. As a result, seasoned foreigners left the public sector, creating a managerial void that was hastily filled by incompetent native officials in Nigeria's several regions and later states.

According to Gboyega (1992) and Adamolekun (1997), the years preceding independence were marked by achievements and excellent public service performances. Despite its small size, the public service performed its duties effectively. But soon after independence, the nation's public services started to operate poorly. This was caused in part by the rise in public services brought about by the establishment of four regions, the rise of ethnic politics, and the low quality of human capital that was accessible. Politicians get overly preoccupied with political issues rather than creating policies and programs that advance the political society. On their part, public employees seized the opportunity to strengthen and advance their own and the organization's interests (Adamolekun, 1997). As a result, a number of post-independence development programs failed to advance the nation's excellent governance. Law and order thus broke down due to neo-patrimonialism, prebendalism, and a crisis of legitimacy, which resulted in the first military coup in 1966.

The military-civil service complex emerged as a result of the country's subsequent civil war. This became evident following the Civil War when a group of state servants known as "super-permanent secretaries" organized into a club and advocated for the maintenance of military control under a one-party government. This was primarily done to further their interests, which have taken precedence because elected government leaders have been absent. Of course, democratic governance was overlooked in the backdrop of all of this. In the corridors of political power, military personnel, bureaucrats, and civilians engaged in a free-for-all competition for the state's resources, putting the ideal of public participation in decision-making on hold, restricting citizens' rights, and suspending the constitution. As a result, a social gap developed between the people whom public servants are supposed to serve and the public (Olugbemi, 1979). It should come as no surprise that even in the Fourth Republic, Nigerians' aspirations for decent administration have not been met. Olugbemi (1979) explained this by saying that the conflict of interest between the citizenry and the State and public employees is the cause of this. According to Olugbemi (1979), Nigeria's higher public servants will take advantage of their position to advance and defend their corporate interests to the

extent that the interests of the Nigerian State can be distinguished from the collective and/or sectional interests of the members of civil society.

It appears that governmental employees have taken advantage of their position to further their own and their companies' interests. For instance, the public service has been criticized over the years for being a part of the capital accumulation process that is destroying the Nigerian political system. According to Amuwo (1997), this trend has also resulted in accusations of "insensitivity to the reality of the society" against the public service. In summary, Nigeria's clientelist and neo-patrimonial nature has allowed the civil bureaucracy to develop its socio-economic and political power beyond what bureaucratic rules in the West could tolerate.

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that public workers have not performed well or responded to good governance challenges. In his speech to attendees of the Presidential Retreat on Service Delivery in Abuja, former President Olusegun Obasanjo correctly noted that: ...Unfortunately, Nigerians have been feeling undervalued by the quality-of-service delivery for far too long (Maduabum, 2014). For far too long, our public servants have served as displays of the twin evils of corruption and ineptitude, obstructing the efficient execution of governmental directives.

It would seem that civil workers in particular and public servants in general, who consider themselves to be "Lord" or members of the hegemonic class who are only doing the people a favor, are to blame for the current state of affairs in public service delivery (Amuwo 1997). The Presidential Address, however, is only one of many such speeches that have not succeeded in influencing public employees in the government's Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to adopt new perspectives and methods for providing services.

The State of Governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Another significant turning point in the development of the Nigerian State was the return to civil rule in 1999. It took place during a military dictatorship that lasted for more than ten and a half years. Expectations were high for the tenth time that the country's socioeconomic and political collapse would be stopped by the return to civil government. However, the free decline in Nigerians' standard of living seems to have shattered these hopes. Since elections for political office have become akin to war or a do-or-die situation, political impunity is on the rise. Food shortages, unemployment, and inflation are all contributing factors to the growth in poverty. With a dwindling supply of energy, insufficient roads, inadequate medical facilities, and a high rate of waterborne illnesses brought on by a shortage of portable water, social infrastructure is in appalling shape.

In addition, as its performance rating plummets, the central government is growing more agitated and impatient with civil society opposition movements. The crisis of legitimacy is the result of its inability to enhance its political and economic performance. However, the administration finds it easy to violate the constitution and the rule of law by defying court rulings, particularly when it comes to appointments to important state institutions. Even while the current administration has proclaimed fighting corruption a top priority, it seems to be picking sides in this battle, increasingly focusing on political grudges or witch hunts against the government's actual or perceived political rivals. Individual liberties are purposefully violated in each of these cases,

and the government process is not mediated by accountability or transparency. If the public sector had risen to the difficulties of the nation's excellent governance, things may have turned out differently. Undoubtedly, the public sector has challenges in fulfilling the business interests of the government and its people. We focus on these empirical and normative barriers in the next section.

Pitfalls to the Role of the Public Service in Good Governance

We examined the characteristics of the public service in connection with Fourth Republic good governance in the period that came before this one. According to our observations, not much has changed in the way the public service operates, especially in the current democratic regime. It seems that there are obstacles in the way of attaining excellent administration. This is the topic of this section's analysis.

It is crucial to remember that the public service's inability to perform its duties to the Nigerian State and its citizens is still hampered by structural and ideological limitations. The public service's Westminster model is set up to work with the parliamentary form of government, which emphasizes shared accountability. In this system, at any time during the tenure of the ruling regime, the failure of a government policy could result in the overthrow of that government. With the presidential system, this is not the case. The president is elected to a four-year term and is answerable to the people during that time. The 1988 civil service reform was an unsuccessful attempt to address the structural and organizational issues that arise when a system designed for a parliamentary administration is used in a presidential one. Additionally, the social gap between high-ranking public officials and other Nigerians demonstrates how drastically different their priorities are, with the former following their own business and personal goals (Olugbemi 1977). Instead of being a class for themselves, they are now a class in themselves (Amuwo 1997).

According to Ekeh (1980) and Basil (1997), the public service, like other political institutions that were transplanted or migrated from Europe, was dead when it arrived because it did not embody the ethos and mores that made it effective and efficient in Europe. Therefore, the public service that exists in Nigeria today is not a perfect clone of that which exists in Europe; rather, it has evolved into a form that lacks both the African moral order and European ideals that mediated pre-colonial governance structure and ideology. According to Basil (1997), Nigeria's public service runs very differently from that of Europe. The situation in which European public sector operations are ingrained in cultural norms that Nigeria could not have adopted. Nigerian public service is thus torn between the devil and the deep blue sea. Nigeria's public service is essentially neither European nor African.

The erosion of professionalism within the public sector is another significant obstacle in the nation's pursuit of effective governance. Public officials' main responsibility is to create and carry out policies, but they don't have the same level of professionalism as the colonial public service (Adamolekun 1997, Olaopa 2010). According to Adamolekun (1997), a perspective observer of the notorious "military-bureaucracy complex" era stated: Public servants, particularly those in the higher echelons of the service, have had their way for far too long. They were not only involved in the routine implementation of policy, but they also played a significant role in its formulation. Naturally, this goes against their professionalism and tradition.

As a result, the public service evolved into an institution that was too challenging for the nation's succeeding administrations to control or regulate. They have been successful in creating a glass wall between themselves and the people they are hired to serve in the pursuit of their self-sustaining objectives. Professionalism in the service has suffered as a result of these trends, as public servants have abandoned their vocations in pursuit of the shady lucre of acquiring riches or power. According to Olaopa (2010), the service has veered away from the professional road that the British colonialists established it on due to a number of post-independence events that are discussed above. Among other objectives or ends of the political society, the immediate result of all of these is the inability of the service to uphold the legitimacy of the government in power, faithfully implement developmental policies and programs to improve the material conditions of the people, ensure the safety of Nigerians' lives and property, foster an environment of inclusive decision-making, respect for the rule of law and constitutionalism, and ensure transparency and accountability in governance (Henry 2007, Dibia 2014, Akhakpe 2016).

Public employees seem to have the power to oppose any attempt to change the service for improved performance and efficiency in carrying out their primary mandate because of their dominance in the creation and implementation of policies. Nevertheless, despite a number of administrative reform initiatives during the colonial and post-colonial periods, none of them have been successful in bringing the service up to par with its counterparts in developed nations. As Idode states (in Igbugor 1998):

Unfortunately, because of the focus on material rewards (salaries and benefits), conflicts of interest among bureaucratic functionaries, and the shift of focus from development efforts to the struggle for control and authority, the various administrative reform exercises that were meant to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of these bureaucracies (Federal and States) simply produced counter-results.

The preceding submission raises two issues that are not unrelated. First of all, it appears that there is no effective system of rewards, which leads public employees to take advantage of any chance to increase their material wealth at the expense of the majority of Nigerians. Second, as a result of the previously mentioned issue, public employees seem to be shifting their attention from serving the nation-state to vying for power and control both inside and outside of their organization. The public sector has been reduced to a paper tiger due to the absence of the ethos that supports it.

Furthermore, the efficacy and efficiency of the public service have been severely hampered by corruption and nepotism, sometimes known as patron-client interactions. When he noted (The Punch, September 8, 2016) that: Many lament the decline of the public service from its days as the *primus inter pares* in the commonwealth to one that has earned a reputation for inefficiency, low productivity, corruption, and insensitivity to the needs of the public, President Mohammed Buhari had reason to lament the role of public servants in corrupt practices. The incapacity of the public service to adapt its vision and "modus operandi" to align with the "shift in all aspects of the original (socioeconomic and political equilibrium) in the nation may be a contributing factor to these problems (Fukuyama, 2012). A coherent vision based on the needs of the Nigerian State and its citizens, both now and in the future,

has not been adequately expressed by the service. The agency's focus on maintaining peace and order hasn't allowed for a more proactive and interventionist approach to public service. Lapalombara (1967) made a good point when he emphasized that: The days of public officials being expected to just fix general rules and provide certain basic services and incentives for those private entrepreneurs who are the main players in the complex and current game of fashioning profound changes in economic and social systems are over.

Public employees need to be more interventionist, given the state of our society now. Nonetheless, in many ways, public employees would rather remain anonymous and uphold the status quo while the populace bears the burden of social unrest, political turmoil, and economic crisis. In order to achieve good governance in society, public administration has evolved in the globalized period beyond the duties of law enforcement and night watchmen to include system reform and interventionist activities (Echikwonye and Kwaghaga 2011; Akhakpe 2016).

Under a democratic system, elections are generally seen as gauges for evaluating, confirming, or ousting underperforming governments. But in Nigeria, elections are quickly eroding because they are frequently marked by intimidation, violence, rigging, and bad electoral administration, among other things. The election process has been weakened rather than strengthened by the involvement of public personnel in many of these exercises. The militarization of the nation's elections is evidence of the public service's inability to control the conduct of both voters and political candidates. If the electoral process is unable to elect the people's preferred candidate and advance the legitimacy of the ruling administration, good governance may not be achieved.

Public Service and Good Governance: The Opportunities for Change

The hazards of the public service in its efforts to accomplish the objectives of good governance in society have been extensively covered in the part that came before this one. Nonetheless, as the democratic space continues to expand, new prospects for political and socioeconomic change in the country are opening up. This section examines these prospects and how they can support the Nigerian nation-state's short- and long-term objectives.

It is important to state from the outset that public servants should quickly align themselves with the democratic values of the present dispensation. The military command and obedience system has lost political clout in favor of democratic systems that necessitate ongoing interaction with the individuals who hold political authority. As the nation's democracy grows, this should start to alter, even though it would be expected that some military principles would still influence public service operations. Nonetheless, this will necessitate that elections under this system elect representatives who can pursue and deliver the benefits of democratic administration in the society. By actively involving stakeholders in the governance process, the public sector should once more be the game-changer in this process.

Additionally, it is anticipated that public officials' attitudes will shift in a favorable way, especially when they put the public's interests ahead of their own. With public servants demonstrating a readiness to adopt global best practices in public management and good governance, patriotic and nationalistic views of the state should replace the materialist view of the state as an entity whose

resources belong to no one and are limitless (Osaghae 2002, Akhakpe 2017, Maduabum 2014). The management of public sector organizations is one area where this shift ought to be evident. Every country would want to present itself in the best possible light! The best candidates should be hired by public organizations to accomplish this goal and ensure that the objectives of good governance are met. No one gives away what they don't have. Only mediocre outcomes may come from the practice of selecting individuals for public service based on neo-patrimonial factors. It is important to hire the top talent from throughout the nation. Accordingly, the effectiveness and necessity of the merit system should not be diminished by the federal character principle (The Punch, 25/10/2016).

The path to successful and efficient service delivery and sound governance is undoubtedly paved with a return to professionalism. If professionalism and creativity are marginalized, public service performance will continue to be poor (Afegbua 2015). To address the problems of a complex and dynamic world, capacity building and a persistent search for new management practices are essential components (Maduabum 2014; Afegbua 2015; Akhakpe 2016). Nigeria's civil and public services are struggling with the "inability to articulate a vision and develop the required capacity to implement such vision," as President Buhari recently stated (The Punch 8/9/2015). The ability of the public service to develop and implement public policies is crucial to the achievement of its development goals, including good governance (The Punch, 15/8/2015).

With the faithful implementation of the New Public Management (NPM) and the in-road Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has made into the public sector, particularly, the E-governance model of service delivery, there is bound to be better performance of the public service in meeting the demands of good governance in the country. If the people are the foundation of any administration, then the government should always prioritize their needs (Akhakpe 2016, Igbokwe Ibeto 2015, Oni and Oni 2016). Thus, building a solid relationship with the populace by involving them in public affairs management is essential to the nation's efficient and successful governance (Akhakpe 2014).

Above all, the service's operating plans should incorporate ongoing and continual reform of the public sector. This is due to the fact that public services that support colonial systems ought to differ from those that support dynamic, post-colonial global systems. Amuwo (1997) may have meant this when he claimed that "...whereas administration in the developed West is meant to maintain an already acquired and satisfactory level of socioeconomic development, the same administrative mechanism copied by developing Africa should serve as a catalyst for development." Therefore, administrative institutions such as the public service in Nigeria and Africa should be aware that their functions differ from those of their counterparts in the developed West. Governance and socioeconomic growth are fueled by the public sector. As a result, it should plan to influence Nigerian society and the government.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND DISCUSSION ON NIGERIA PUBLIC SERVICE AND FOCUS ON GHANA PUBLIC SERVICE

Public Service in Nigeria and Ghana: A Brief Overview

The state of the nation is reflected in public service, and no country has been able to progress past its public service. A key component of successful governance is the public service. Because it acts as the impartial administrative framework that implements the decisions made by the people's elected representatives, it is an essential component of democracy. Every other sector of a country's economy is thought to be supported by the public service. This is due to the fact that the public sector employs the greatest number of workers and is strategically positioned to offer people vital services (Fatile and Adejuwon, 2010:181). Therefore, efforts were made to provide an overview of public service in Ghana and Nigeria in this section.

The Nigerian public/ Civil Service

The Nigerian civil service evolved from the colonial service which was established by the British authorities as the administrative machinery of the country (Economic Commission for Africa, 2010:63). That is, the public service in Nigeria is a child of British colonial administration and like its parent, it is elitist (Oyediran, 2007:68). The civil service in Nigeria has been succinctly articulated as an instrument of governance that places before the leadership an assured quality of experience and competence which serves as the protector or the line between partisan and national interest (Ahmed, 2005:38). As a result, efforts are always made to make the service perform better since the civil service is about people and service.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Nigerian civil service was regarded as one of the best in the Commonwealth, and up till the mid-1980s. Unfortunately, from the mid-1980s, the Nigerian civil service was far from being ideal. The Nigerian public service is strategically located in roles, functions, activities, resources, and services that determine the state and level of development. Yet the service has been riddled with inefficiency, ineffectiveness, mismanagement, shoddiness, inertia, routine, poor responsiveness, conflicts, corruption, sectionalism, incompetence, and low productivity. The service has not had the skills, techniques, values, orientations, drive, and awareness that would direct and enable it to manage efficiently and effectively its enormous task and responsibilities. The problem of Nigerian civil service is traceable to the lack of consciousness, non-application of modern techniques of management, the absence of performance emphasis, the absence of systematic evaluation, the lack of emphasis on accountability and responsibility (Ikelegbe, 2005:16; Uhunmwangho and Osemeke, 2010:26). The Nigerian civil service was tradition-bound, somewhat ponderous and showing signs of deterioration and several undesirable characteristics of which the following were the most prominent: over-centralisation, incessant conflict between cadres, little emphasis on results and concrete performance, counter-productive, separation of authority from responsibility at the topmost hierarchy, dangerously low staff morale and productivity, inadequate staff development practices. Indeed, then, the civil service was displaying a patent inability to cope effectively with the challenges of a modern, complex, and development-hungry society (Adegroye, 2006:7).

Public service in Nigeria has been characterized by poor performance and productivity. It has been criticized for being one of the slowest to integrate technological advancements. Okafor (2005:67) traces poor performance of the Nigerian bureaucracy to the following:

- Bureaucratic inflexibility and rigidity inherited from colonial administration;
- Quick Africanisation of the civil service in which inexperienced and less qualified native officials were recruited into various job positions;
- The desire of early politicians for complete nationalisation of the public bureaucracy to fulfil campaign promises and to solve unemployment problems; recruitments based on political, family, ethnic and religious considerations;
- Inadequate office space and other administrative infrastructure at independence;
- Over-staffing and poor remunerations which encouraged corruption and moonlighting

The Nigerian public service is, however, large and does contribute largely to the economic growth of the nation, but most elements, especially those of technology that make up the development process, are not adequately provided. As argued by Okafor (2005:670), each of the stated problems above plays its role in diminishing the administrative capacity in public bureaucracy. It is important, therefore, to note that the performance of the public service in Nigeria has remained very dismal, inefficient, and ineffective. The search for a more responsive and effective public service led to the setting up of different commissions at various periods. In sum, public service reform in Nigeria has sought to improve the performance of the administrative system through managerial reforms.

The Ghanaian Civil Service

The Ghanaian civil service was once regarded as the "finest, most relevant and performance-oriented institution in Africa." At the time, it was well trained, adequately remunerated and resourced, while its size was manageable, and security of tenure as well as anonymity and neutrality of the civil servants were guaranteed. All these factors combined to produce an environment which was congenial and thus elicited in most civil servants the highest degree of performance and productivity. However, these good days turned into bad times under which the civil service was described as a "moribund, paperpushing institution" (Nti, 1978:1 cited in Economic Commission for Africa, 2010:50).

In recent times, the productivity of Ghana's public sector has become a concern to scholars and public servants alike. There have been numerous calls on the public sector to increase its productivity to enhance the quality of service delivery and to get value for money. These calls can be understood in the light of the fact that the performance of the public sector has implications for economic development in the country. The relevance of public sector productivity has necessitated an avalanche of attempts to reform the public sector in Ghana to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and the quality of public service (Sakyi, 2008:72). As a result, there have been calls on public sector workers to increase productivity in the public sector of Ghana. This comes against the backdrop that productivity in Ghana's public sector appears to be consistently declining. While this seems to be the situation, it appears there is a paucity of literature on the actual causes of productivity and how it can be improved in Ghana (Kwame, Alex, and Emmanuel, 2013:22).

Ghana's civil service reform efforts have produced disappointing results (World Bank, 2008; Owusu, 2006:701). As

noted by ECA (2010:51), the features of Ghana's civil service have been identified as debilitating to its performance, including:

Substantial overstaffing, especially at junior levels – lack of manpower planning;

- Deterioration of real salaries/wages plus a high degree of wage compression;
- Lack of morale/motivation – incentives problems;
- Inability of major institutions involved in civil service management to provide policy guidance, direction, and supervision to sectoral/departmental units – defective managerial competence;
- Over-centralization and over-concentration of powers and functions at the national level;
- Poor physical work environment and poor facilities – logistical problems;
- Excessive bureaucratization and red tape (e.g., of promotions and appointments to key posts);
- Lack of political direction and commitment, leading to apathy and inertia; and
- Serious deficiencies in training institutions and programmes (ECA, 2010:51).

In Ghana, for instance, it is very wearisome seeking the supply of water and electricity for domestic or industrial use. Consumers have to go through numerous bureaucratic channels before approval is given, and, in most cases, corrupt officials demand facilitation fees to hasten processes. Passport acquisition, registration of lands, law enforcement and judicial processes, health services, investment promotion, business registration, salary and pension processes have all been couched in cumbersome procedures that leave clients frustrated in their quest for services. In some cases, consumers abandon the pursuit of these services in midstream, due to delays and other forms of bureaucratic insensitivities.

Bureaupathology and Public Service Performance in West Africa: Nigeria and Ghana in Focus

Bureaucracy and Innovation are inextricably linked, in that organizations that are desirous of survival and growth particularly in a turbulent environment requires the application of both concepts (Maduabum, 2014:11). For instance, whereas bureaucracy introduces specialization, structure, rules and regulations, predictability, rationality and partial democracy amongst others, innovation brings about positive changes that quite often assist in surmounting impediments in the quest for growth. In practice, however, reverse sometimes appears to be the case.

The essence of bureaucracy is to enable large organisations to be managed, to achieve efficiency, and to be more accountable to the people. In other words, bureaucracy is the coordination of organisational activities for effective, efficient, and economical provision of services by public and private organisations. Max Weber refers to bureaucracy as the ideal and rational type of administration useful for the achievement of positive results. He, however, notes the dysfunctions of bureaucracy due to excessive application of its guiding principles by officeholders. Indeed, excessive bureaucracy negatively impacts social and economic development, especially in poor countries. The underlying assumption of Weber's model is that authority, which provides legitimacy to an organisational system, is legal-rational rather than traditional or charismatic. Hicks and Gullet (1976:144) x-rayed the ills of bureaucracy as they affect formal organizations as possible

causes of inability of superior officers to appreciate contributions made by their subordinates, especially where such contributions are seen as innovative and hence do not strictly accord with role-expectations of the subordinates.

The bottlenecks associated with service delivery have made bureaucracy very unpopular with the people, because excessive bureaucracy inhibits productivity and contributes to the loss of large revenues to the government. Bureaucracy has many unintended consequences or dysfunctions. It is a "machine model" that is non-adaptive and impersonal. Its rigidity leads to its failure to account adequately for many important human characteristics. It offers numerous opportunities for members to displace objectives and to work for personal or sub-unit goals, which may not contribute adequately to the achievement of the overall objectives of the organization. Innovative ideas are seen by bureaucratic officials as disturbances to an otherwise ordered situation. Such ideas are therefore never seen as a necessary life-giving element to an evolving, adaptive organization (Maduabum, 2014:310). In order to survive the challenges posed in a highly competitive environment, many businesses, especially private organisations, have shifted focus and are de-bureaucratizing their administrative processes for better service delivery. According to Sarji (1996), the primacy of the customer of public service dictates that the Civil Service provides services that are responsive to the needs of its primary customer and the public. The standards of service should be stipulated in line with customer expectations for efficient, fast, and friendly services. Consumer concerns are for reliability, credibility, accessibility, and timelines in service delivery. For any country to develop, it is very imperative for its government to provide goods and services that the private sector does not usually venture into, especially water, sanitation, waste disposal, road, health, housing, education, electricity, etc. These services, according to the World Bank Report (1999), are usually those that the private sector does not want to provide or those that people cannot afford at the given market value (Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, 2006). This prompted Thompson (1961:152-177) to refer to the ills of the bureaucratic organisation as 'Bureaupathology', a disease of bureaucracy which he further suggested are those dysfunctions which are produced by "bureaupathic behaviour".

Bureaupathology, according to Peter (1997:104), is negative administrative behaviours of professionals and experts in organisations that thwart the achievement of public goals and delivery of quality public service to consumers. Modibo (1978) says these are administrative pathologies by which public servants, while misconceiving their powers, functions, and responsibilities, act ultra vires, in bad faith, out of malice, or even with ill motives, thereby exhorting image, tips, importance, and cash benefits from service consumers. He describes bureaupathology as a phenomenon by which public servants use their statuses, positions, and authority to carnally procure for themselves some benefits from investors, contractors, consultants, and suppliers. Peter (1997:204) calls bureaupathology the administrative evils in public service delivery, because it is arbitrary due to the use of discretionary power, violate economic, social and political rights of consumers of public service; it sabotage government socio-economic and political programmes to the disadvantage of constituents; they delay services delivery to strategic investors and other consumers; and, is associated with ritualism and self-egoism of professional and experts. While Modibo (1978) argues that bureaupathology is associated with: bureaucratic insensitivity; misuse of administrative power and discretion; lack of concern for

customers' plights; lack of customer focus; and misuse of monopoly in service delivery.

In Nigeria, bureaucracy has a significant influence on the dysfunctionality of public service. This dysfunctional characteristic of bureaucracy vis-à-vis the implementation of innovative ideas is manifest in the Nigerian situation. As a result, the public service is characterised by a spirit of animosity and jealousy rather than of cooperation and teamwork. This spirit of animosity exists between peers as well as between superiors and subordinates. The animosity and jealousy become very high when a subordinate is perceived by his superior officer as being innovative and may supersede him. The superior officers employ the same bureaucracy as a means of scuttling the application of innovative ideas, especially where such ideas emanate from their subordinates (Maduabum, 2014:11;16). In addition, Ekpo (1979:8) observes that the Nigerian bureaucracies are corrupt, inefficient, and overstaffed. Complementing this is the Udoji Report of 1974 which charged the bureaucracies with nepotism, ethnic loyalties, corruption, elitism, inability of superiors to delegate responsibilities, unreliability of junior staff in executing delegated tasks, failure of all to apply specialized knowledge and training skills in the management of the public service, and failure to appreciate the importance of timeliness or efficiency in the performance of tasks. The report concluded by saying that the entire Nigerian bureaucracy was not results-oriented. Too bad it seems. In pursuit of private goals, several officials in the Nigerian bureaucracies form cliques and informal groups in order to maximize their benefits, all at the expense of the attainment of institutional goals. In effect, bureaucracies that are corrupt and steadily suffer goal displacement can hardly be expected to be efficient. If the bureaucracies are efficient at all in any way, it is in the special role of protecting their class interests rather than serving the masses whose interests it was created to serve (Eme and Emeh, 2012:30).

Nigeria's history has been marked by a crisis of governance. The consensus arising out of the general debates on good governance and its requirements has severely scored the bureaucracy for its failure to provide the much-needed institutional support for good governance. It is the abiding concern of this paper to discharge the bureaucracy from the "dock" where it sadly stands; to establish that the political superstructure is largely to blame for the leadership failure; and to argue that due to obvious constraints, the public service failed to optimize its statutory role of translating the will of the state into concrete and desirable terms (Ozohu-Suleiman, 2010).

Looking at bureaucracy in contemporary public service in Ghana, Adu-Gyamfi (2005) criticises Weber's concept of bureaucracy as being responsible for the following:

- Lack of initiative, creativity and innovation in public service delivery in organisations such as Ghana Education Service, Town and County Planning Department, Department of Birth and Death Registry, Land Title Registry and the Controller and Accountant-General's Department due to excessive adherence to laid down rules, regulations, procedures and methods;
- emergence of esprit de corps, self-egoism and ritualism instead of team work;
- Delays in service delivery to customers by public agencies such as Customs, Excise and Preventive Service, the Registrar-General's Department, Ghana Investments Promotions Centre, etc;

- Centralization of strategic investment services by top public officers;
- Rigidity and inflexibility of middle class public servants leading to exploitation of the consumer in service delivery.

It is therefore instructive to note that the civil service systems of African countries inherited from the colonial rulers in the 1960s were inspired by the Weberian bureaucratic model (Adamolekun 2002:379). In Africa, the civil service structures, which were based on the bureaucratic model, led to inefficient organizations, excessive red tape, and structural arrangements that impeded as much as or more than they served the implementation of public policy. It discouraged individual initiative and supported a culture of unreflective defence of the status quo. This, therefore, provides an understanding of the challenges that Africa has to overcome to truly become innovative public services.

New Public Management and Public Sector Innovations: Redemptive Attempts and Pitfalls

Since the advent of New Public Management (NPM), public service innovations have become increasingly popular around the world as a strategy for improving governance and scaling up service quality. The New Public Management philosophy is part of the tendency towards privatization of the public sector and has transformed its role in many sectors and countries. The replacement of the term 'citizens' with the term 'customers' to describe the users of public services exemplifies this movement towards characterizing the public sector in terms of market mechanisms. The term 'customer' indicates freedom of choice in buying services in a market and implies effective market relationships between buyer and seller. Adopting the "customer" perspective in public administration might cause a rethinking about the foundations of the public sector's role. The shift towards a practice of treating the citizen as a customer may lead to a real change in the relationship between the citizen and the public sector. There is thus a challenge to develop a system that includes innovation and accountability, but at the same time retains the role of the public sector as a vehicle for a sense of community, equal rights, and solidarity.

Traditionally, government institutions have tended to use the traditional public administration system, which employs rigid bureaucratic norms in service delivery. Today, there is a clarion call on the entire public sector to be client-focused and market-oriented in service delivery. A new paradigm shift has become necessary because of the changing world economic environment, global pressure for nations to enhance their competitiveness to attract foreign investments, increasing expectations of consumers that there will be improvements in service quality, and that they will pay an economic price devoid of corruption and delays. The New Public Management is the new focus recommended in public service delivery. It is accepted worldwide that the public sector also has consumers who need to be cared for and satisfied. NPM has become a global trend to challenge public bureaus by network-based and market-oriented arrangements (Valkama & Bailey 2001:55).

Although innovation in the public sector has received increased attention only recently, it does not imply that there has been no innovation being practiced before. Innovation has been tried and tested in the public sector using various models and principles, which were mainly influenced by experiences from the private sector. For instance, new public management was

implemented with the core tools and ideas borrowed heavily from the private sector in order to fix the issue of inefficiency in the public sector. NPM is criticized for undermining public service motivation, learning, and trust, and for promoting competition and silo thinking (Aagaard, 2011). However, innovation opens up new organizational and managerial constructions and possibilities. The assumption of the NPM that more managerialism will lead to a more efficient administration cannot be taken for granted.

NPM reforms are hierarchical because those with leadership responsibilities are normally considered the drivers of the reforms. At the same time, NPM promotes specialized tasks and undermines collaboration across sectors. The administrative culture needs to develop the ability to recognize all employees as potential drivers of innovation (Christensen and Lægreid, 1999:180-181). While NPM focuses on results and efficiency, bureaucracy seems to point to the input side of the public administration and processes to balance the administration system.

An Assessment of Public Service Innovations in West Africa

Over the past decade, fundamental changes have been transforming societies all over the world. There has been a significant shift within the field of public administration. Many developing countries, including Africa, are now realizing the need for innovation in order to provide customer-focused, cost-effective, and updated methods to improve public service performance.

The African post-colonial predicament has generated so many epithets that describe the continent. Apart from the notorious “Dark Continent” prevalent in the colonial discourse on Africa, a most recent one in journalistic assessment abridged the African continent into an “Island of Want”... The failure of the African governments and the post-colonial states in Africa is starkly manifested in the decline and decay of bureaucracy, which represents the existential institutional interstice between the government and the citizens (Utomi; cited in Musa, 2014:1). Africa has mainly, unfortunately, been missing out on benefitting from the diversity of its peoples to innovate for a better future. Emphasis has been put on taking diversity as a problem to be solved rather than a resource to be harnessed for better performance.

Public service has always been the tool available to the West African government for the implementation of developmental goals and objectives. It is seen as a pivot for the growth of West African economies. It is responsible for the creation of an appropriate and conducive environment in which all sectors of the economy can perform optimally, and it is this catalyst of public service that propelled governments in West Africa to search continuously for better ways to deliver their services. However, there is increasing evidence pointing to the deterioration of the public service’s performance in Africa as a whole and West Africa in particular. This notwithstanding, the public service in West Africa is perceived as not being innovative for various reasons such as the nature of services rendered, its regulations and standards, etc. Therefore attention ought to be given to it in determining its level of innovation and innovation practices, otherwise it will affect the activities of other sectors in any economy (Obianyo, 2010:49). It is important that if new ideas in the public service are not developed, how can better facilities that can be used in other sectors of an economy be better provided by the public service?

In West African countries, the design and implementation of innovation strategies convey a new vision for the entire public

service. It has been suggested that innovation has the potential to transform governance and the relationship between the state, citizens, and businesses. Today, innovation is changing the way we work, play, learn, and govern. It is generating a new revolution already as significant and far-reaching as those of the past. The context of innovation has changed rapidly in recent years. For many years, it has been one of the priority goals of West African governments. Innovation projects were seen as important drivers of development, as they provided the inputs for public service delivery and increased performance.

Nigeria

Nigeria is a country that has always posed a paradox to the international community in terms of its level of development vis-à-vis its public service performance. Innovation in Nigeria is considered by Obasanjo (2004) as the backbone engine, which will run good governance that will drive social and economic transformation in the public service. The Nigerian government has, in the last couple of years, taken steps to give the country a sense of direction and harmonize the efforts of the disparate organizations and stakeholders in the development of and utilization of ICT. The main innovations in Nigerian public service include:

- Tracking corruption through the setting up anti-corruption units in all MDAs directly linked to the Anti-Corruption Agencies such as the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC);
- The setting up of the Bureau of Public Sector Reforms (BPSR) as the institutional framework for sustaining the reform;
- Establishment of public procurement practices
- The opening of the post of Permanent Secretary to both administrative and professional/specialist staff;
- The harmonization and unification of job grading and salary systems through the service;
- The introduction of the merit system as a basis for reward (Adegoroye 2006).

In Nigerian public service, innovation has faced a number of challenges that have limited the scope, speed, and quality of service rendered. There is no doubt that there are observable limits to the ability of innovations to solve all economic and social problems. Nevertheless, there is a consensus that public service, particularly in the area of innovation, needs to be improved. If innovation and innovative practices are adopted in the public service, costs could be saved, utilization of resources could be more efficient, adjustments for the sustainability of the environment could be improved, etc. These and other demands and expectations of the citizens could be met either by solving them with existing knowledge or by creating new solutions (Obianyo, 2010:91).

Balogun (1983:8-9) identified resistance to innovative ideas as one of the factors that differentiate the Nigerian public sector from its private sector counterpart in situations where public administration is linked with the public sector, while business administration is linked with the private sector. Other factors identified by Balogun, which are inextricably linked with ‘resistance to innovative ideas’, are survival, maintenance of the status quo, risk avoidance, mistake avoidance, self-protecting, fear of trouble, fear of the unknown, and retroactive. While Maduabum

(2014:16) notes that the tendency to resist innovative ideas is higher in public management. It ought to have been 'killed' with the transformations that public sector management in Nigeria had undergone over time.

Ghana

Ghana was among the first African countries to reform its public sector and establish the necessary legal and regulatory framework to support the growth of the sector. Since 1990, the government of Ghana has liberalized the telecommunications sector to enable the private sector to actively participate in the provision of services to increase access and coverage, introduce value-added services, and boost consumer access to state-of-the-art technology (Frempong and Atubra, 2001). Ghana has requested the Economic Commission for Africa's support to introduce ICT into the process of reforming the civil service and even to implement innovations to support the governance activities. The main innovations in Ghana's civil service include:

- The design of a Civil Service Code of Conduct;
- The development of standards for service delivery and printed brochures by service delivery institutions;
- The introduction of a high flyer scheme in 1996 which enables young officers who are deemed to have the potential to be given specialized training to enable them to maximize their potential and strengthen the capacity of the Civil Service through accelerated promotion if they were able to demonstrate their worth; .introduction of customer/client orientation through beneficiary surveys;
- The introduction of performance improvement plans and the signing of performance agreements;
- computerization of personnel records;
- The introduction of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and the linkage of functional reviews to the implementation of the MTEF; and
- Separation of policy formulation from implementation through the creation of executive agencies (Economic Commission for Africa, 2010:54).

There is great potential for the use of innovation development in Ghana. Unlike some other West African countries, Ghana is fortunate to have developed an ICT policy, which indicates the government's commitment to supporting ICT programmes in the public sector. What is required now is policy implementation with emphasis on the provision of information to the citizen.

From the above discussion, it can be said that innovation in West Africa is not effective and relevant enough to bridge the information and digital gap. Despite all these, researches have shown that in other parts of the world like Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, South Korea, India and Russia, etc., innovations have been successful through the deployment of ICTs to bridge the information and digital gap of the public service delivery which virtually lead to their development (Cheunwatanna, 1998, and Yusof, 2004). It is therefore imperative for West Africa to re-evaluate its public sector innovation programmes in order to achieve effective and sustainable public service performance.

The Future of Public Service Delivery in West Africa

While public sector innovations hold great promise in West African countries, substantial challenges need to be faced. Many innovation projects failed because of insufficient planning capacity and political instability in the sub-region. In order to overcome these challenges, successful implementation requires matching the

right technologies with capable and progressive reformers and government systems.

The public service in West Africa needs public servants who can define and pinpoint the bottom line of the public service and pursue its realization. It is imperative to realize that within the public service, there is a need for foresighted public servants who can discern the horizons of the requirements of the future from the standpoint of today; pragmatic dreamers who realize that development will not be wished. It must be planned and implemented. Such public servants are the ones who will be able to transform West African countries and propel their development through sustained innovations like services and the way they are delivered equitably to everyone (Kauzya, 2013:8).

Innovation is now seen to be critical to public services' ability to respond effectively to the challenges posed by social and technological change and rising public expectations that come with it. The great demand that public services serve users rather than the providers has meant that most of the efforts to develop innovative practice in the public services have been oriented to issues focused on service delivery. Innovation in the public sector can be a way of rethinking old ideas and practices and finding solutions to new problems. In order to create an innovation culture and work systematically with innovation, politicians and public managers need to understand the potential and risks of innovation, rethink organisational structures, and accommodate organisational values, norms, and routines in coherence with innovation practices.

It is suggested that policies that impede innovations in the public sector should be eliminated and replaced by more liberal ones that can stimulate creativity and innovation in the public sector. Innovation should be the criterion for judging high-performing public sector organisations, and reward systems should be restructured to reflect such changes. These measures will not only help them innovate but will also result in improved services to the consumers. Also, the implementation of innovations in West African countries requires sound decisions in developing citizen-adoptable initiatives by adopting a 'home-grown' approach or domesticating the application of innovations. This will help avoid experimentation and reduce the risk of failure of innovation due to the low adoption rate of the initiatives.

West African countries need to adopt a holistic and comprehensive approach, with vision and strategy, to overcome the barriers and challenges to change. Integrate public sector innovation with other development strategies and policies to ensure a broad base of diffusion.

Public sector organizations must first grow to be conversant with their strategies on innovation and build up the required integration. The focus on innovation in a public sector context may also improve our overall understanding of innovation, irrespective of sectoral foundation. In the same way as studies of innovation in services have brought about a focus on non-technological innovations, which later have also been applied to the private sector, an expansion of innovation studies to also comprise the public sector can perhaps help shed new light on innovation in the public sector in West Africa in particular and Africa in general.

The 1988 Public Service Reform:

The 1988 public service Reforms in Nigeria have inherent elements of the NPMS. Such as a paradigm shift from the traditional syndrome of 'Jack of all trades and master of none' to professionalism in the Nigerian Public Service. The constraints

which impeded the effective implementation of the Reforms were numerous and included, among others, A change in leadership between General Buhari and General Bagauda in 1985 and 1988. Again, the Nigerian Public Service continues to lay emphasis on paper qualifications and certificates, instead of experience, in the employment of potential workers into the public service. This posture still reflects the British tradition and culture. Despite bold attempts to implement the 1988 Reforms, the dangers and menace of corruption are still on the increase in Nigeria. As a cancerous weapon, corruption in the Nigerian Public Service is a matter of serious concern and serves as a locust that eats the resources of the country, as well as impedes the implementation of governmental programmes and activities. Essentially, no significant impact is felt on the professionalization of the public service, as compared to that of the private sector organizations in Nigeria.

The National Economic and Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS):

Another very important socio-economic reform agenda which has Suffered a similar fate of lack of implementation is the NEEDS that was launched in 2007 by President Obasanjo with the four cardinal objectives of poverty eradication, employment generation, wealth creation, and value reorientation. At its inception, the Federal level was to be replicated both at the State and the Local Government levels, as State Economic and Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (LEEDS), respectively. A critical survey (and as a one-time participant observer) of the system between 1978 and 2005, most states of the Federation, including Akwa Ibom, have not implemented the LEEDS. Even though a few Local Governments in the state had produced the LEEDS documents, they were not captured in their respective budgets to guarantee effective and instant implementation.

Service Delivery Charter (SERVICOM):

This was a public service charter that was inaugurated to serve as a civic contract between the public service and its citizens in service delivery. In his official inauguration speech, the former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo underscored the importance of SERVICOM in this manner: To support government's efforts to sanitize and rationalize the operational system of our society, the process and mechanism of governance, to ensure that policies such as monetization, reduction of wastes, improved service delivery, cost effective administrative machinery and enhanced economic productivity are successfully implemented. (Extract of Mr. President's speech on retreat on service delivery, March 2004).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Theoretical underpinning or explication of this paper is based on two Theoretical frameworks. These include Institutional Theory by Scheuler (2000) and Evolutionary Theory of development by Herbert Spencer (1960). According to Institutional Theory, public service as a service institution and catalyst for national development has norms, values, attitudes, and myths as resources of the organization, which, when properly guided, are the by-products that can determine the failure or success of such an organization. It is equally linked to organizational learning Theory, which posits that the overall success of an organization depends on the ability to learn the best practices borrowed from sister organizations within and outside the shores of Nigeria. On the other hand, Evolutionary Theory of development by Herbert

Spencer (1960) regards development and sustainable development as a twin paradigm and subset of the process of evolution, which, like organic evolution, is a process of growth, with attendant complexity, increasing differentiation of structures, functions, and increasing differentiated parts. The main argument of this Theory is that all societies developed and metamorphosed from a primitive stage (agrarian) and developed to an industrial stage. According to Riggs (1961). A primitive society, according to the Theory, is homogenous and monolithic, but as it develops, it becomes complex as specialization sets in.

Expatriating further on the Evolutionary Theory of development, Ramesh K. and Arora Ferrens think that to understand the structure and functions associated with this theory, it must be studied in the context of interrelationship with other institutions. In systematic terms, bureaucracy as a social institution is continually interacting with and affected by feedback upon the economic, political, and socio-cultural systems in a society. The implication herein is that the interplay of the streams of interactions and setting can aid national development. Thus, in practical terms, the thrust and application of this theory lies in the insight it provides in the policy formulation process in the area of technical assistance and national development.

METHODOLOGY

This article aims to explore and explain the causes of low public sector performance in West Africa and how it can be improved. Based on this, the study is situated within the qualitative paradigm of social research, which is deemed appropriate for exploratory and explanatory studies (Babie, 2004). This study used secondary sources of data, while the design for this paper is the content analysis design. This was used to analyze written reports, journal articles, and other relevant sources of data about the topic. It reviews the literature on public service globally, in Africa, and in two countries in West Africa, i.e., Nigeria and Ghana, to enable us to analyze the trends, processes, dynamics, and major innovations in their public services. The choice of the two countries is instructive because of the strategic place/role of the countries in West Africa. Also, these countries have undertaken substantial reform efforts and show the symptoms of trends, processes, dynamics, and innovations in public service delivery in West Africa.

CONCLUSION

In Conclusion, it is obvious that in this 21st century, innovation is the theme of public administration. This is because it brings continual change to public organizations. Public sector innovation is increasingly regarded as a central factor to sustain a high level of public services for both citizens and businesses. Therefore, the public sector should not be treated as a static framework for innovation in the private sector, but rather as a co-evolving actor along with innovation in the private sector. Furthermore, parallel to innovation in the private sector, innovation in the public sector should neither be seen as independent from the underlying incentive structures that structure behaviour, nor from their wider systemic context. The vast literature on innovation systems has largely tended to ignore the role the public sector plays in processes of innovation.

Innovations in the public sector guarantee survival and improve performance in public service delivery. Thus, any state that is desirous of such growth should invest heavily in research and development as well as training activities, which have been

identified as fast sources of innovation and acquisition of innovative ideas. The public sector innovation and its impact on society have been experienced all over the world. It has undoubtedly become the determinant of the progress of nations, communities, and individuals.

The study has shown that public sector innovation in West Africa is best explained by citizens' perceptions of 'responsiveness' and by 'leadership and vision'. The more responsive the public sector is in service delivery, the better leadership and vision they demonstrate, the higher the perceived level of innovation in these systems.

RECOMMENDATION

We have dealt with the issue of the public service as a catalyst for good governance in a neocolony like Nigeria. The paper recognizes that inherited political institutions like the public service in Nigeria needs some adaptation to make in order to remain relevant in a different context like Nigeria. Therefore, to serve the goals of good governance, it should embrace international best practices such as ICT, the NPM, professionalism and innovation, capacity building, articulation and pursuit of a vision for the public service and prioritization of merit in appointment of seasoned technocrats and econocrats to drive the vision of the public service. It recognizes that there are pitfalls to realizing these visions of the service, such as attitudinal constraints, poor policy implementation, resource deficits, poor remuneration of staff, etc. However, with dedication and commitment to set goals and involvement of the people in all activities of government, these pitfalls are surmountable.

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