

Civil Service in Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This paper assesses the development of the Civil Service in Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia in terms of its size; Civil Service to Population ratio; Male to Female ratio; composition of the Civil Service by sex, type, Ethnic; perceived reasons that attract Civil Servants to join the Civil Service and problems of the Civil Service. In order to address those issues, the research used primary and secondary data; and the findings of the paper indicates that the size of the Civil Service has increased by 287% from 2003/04 to 2012/13; the ratio of the Civil Servants to the regional population has improved from 1:178 in 1996/97 to 1:81 in 2012/13, but the composition of Males and Females was almost constant that ranged between 62.55% to 68% for males and 32.29% to 37.45% for females from 2006/07 to 2012/13 respectively; Majority of the Civil Servants are from the Amhara, Agew, Oromo, and Tigrie Ethnic in the order of their size in the population; and lastly the Civil Service is characterized by prevalence of poor salary structure, weak working culture, weak sense of serving, weak reward system, favouritism, politicization, high rate of turnover, role ambiguity, and corruption. In order to strengthen the Civil Service, the paper recommend re-assessment of the salary structure and making active the bi annual horizontal increase of salary; give continual training to solve the problem of attitude, and sense of serving; and lastly all the Civil Service works have to be done only in lines with rules, regulations and proclamation set for this purpose.

Keywords: Civil Service, Civil Servants, & Amhara National Regional State

Introduction

The introduction of Civil Service (CS) in developing countries is directly linked with emergency of modern state, and it came to exist to formulate and execute policies efficiently and effectively. This portrayed that, the CS is one of the instrument used to implement the developmental activities of countries (Esman, cited in Joseph R.A, Ayee, 2001). In Ethiopia, it was Menelik II who assigned the first ministers in the history of the CS of the country with very narrow duties and responsibilities that primarily focused on maintaining law and order as compared to the recent one. It was during the episode of Emperor Haile Selassie that the Ethiopian CS had brought significant structural and functional change as the result of the issuance of the Public Services Order No.23/1961 that created the Central Personnel Agency that wished-for developing a standardized Public Service in the country (Alemayehu Hailemariam, 2001, p. 4, and Tesfaye Debela, 2001, p. 8).

In the history of the Ethiopian's CS, it was the Military/ the Derge government that highly strengthened the bureaucracy for promoting democratic centralization, and the military regime had done and passed different rules, proclamation and regulation to control and used the CS as a tool to promote its thought. Even though, undeniable works had been done to strengthen the CS, it was the Military government that has violated the autonomy and independence of the CS institution worse than ever (Tefaye Debela, 2011, p. 8).

This research paper is about the CS of the Amhara National Region State (ANRS), Ethiopia, and focused on analyzing the status of the Regional CS in regarding to its size; number of civil servants as percentage of the regional population; percentage of Male and Female civil servants; composition of Civil Servants in terms of its type, sex, ethnic, and type. Besides this, Salary bill as percentage of other bills of government; perceived reasons that forced people to joined the CS, cases of separation; and perceived challenges of the CS.

In order to address issues raised above, the researcher has used primary and secondary data. The sole sources of the primary data were 342 respondents who are randomly drawn from five sample organizations at Regional & district level through the use of questionnaire and focused group discussion. However, the secondary one was obtained from reports of Bureau of CS, and Finance and Economic Development.

1. The concept of Civil service and the Civil Servant

The CS systems in every country, whether it is democratic or autocratic is the backbone of the administrative machinery of the country; and expected to deliver efficient, and effective service to the public. However, the CS in most African and Asian countries was not and still is not effective and efficient. CS is not a precise concept and People have defined in different way depending on their context and as a result of this there is no universally

accepted definition. Most scholars in public administration and World Bank reserve the term for career employees working under an explicit CS law. The most common trend is to include the central government and sub-national government employees as part of CS category. In some countries, the CS law regulates everything related to employment, while in others; only supplements the general labour law. Provisions for the management of the CS are included in the CS law in some, while in other countries such provisions must covered in other legislation

(http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/civil_service.aspx-extracted on 23/09/2014).

Anne Evans (2008, p.38) has defined CS as a subset of persons working to provide a public service. To him, military personnel are generally excluded from the CS, but many categories of civilian employment like the local government, state enterprises, judges, teachers, health professionals, elected officials, and, police appear to be excluded along with the military.

The World Bank has not clearly identified which public sector employees are Civil Servants, in part because people and institutions defined differently across countries. Depending on regional or administrative conventions, Civil Servants can refer to military personnel, teachers, or health workers, as well as career bureaucrats rather than differentiating between elite cadres of careerists and other public employees, Bank operations have essentially considered Civil Servants to be those personnel (outside public enterprises) whose salaries are supported by the central government's wage bill (World Bank Report No.19211, 1999, p9).

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Proclamation No.262/2002: p.1659 defined. Civil Servants are individuals working permanently or temporarily in government organizations. However, this definition excludes:

- Government officials with the rank of deputy minister;
- Deputy commissioner and with other equivalent ranks or above,
- Members of the House of Peoples' Representatives, and the House of the Federation,
- The federal judges and prosecutors,
- Members of the Armed force and the federal police including other employees governed by the regulation of the armed force and the federal police, and
- Employees excluded from the coverage of this proclamation by other appropriate laws.

In this paper, the term Civil Service and Civil Servants are defined in the following ways:

"A CS is a system of body of government officials who are employed in civil occupations from the Federal to the bottom administrative level of the given country that are engaged neither in political nor in judicial activities and clearly articulated in their CS law."

"Civil Servants are employees working in government institutions in permanent or temporary term with the exclusion of ministers, deputy ministers, members of parliaments, members of the military and police force and the federal judges and prosecutors. The inclusion and exclusion of some workers will vary from country to country and fixed by the CS or labour law each country."

2. Data Analysis & Discussions

2.1. Growth of the ANRS Civil Service

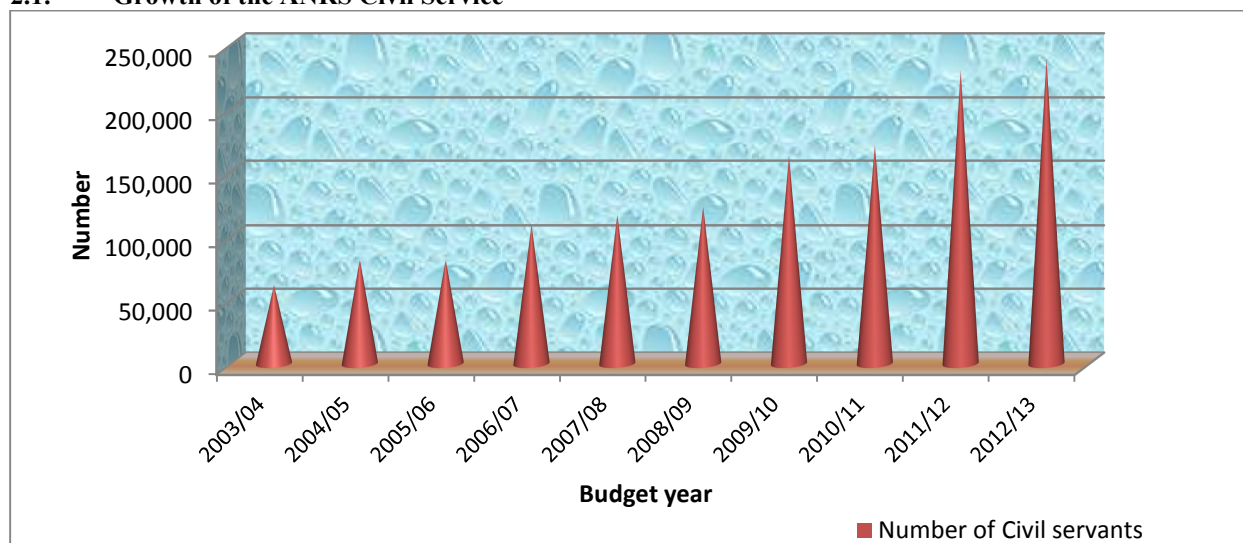


Figure 1: Growth of the CS from 2003//04 to 2012//13

Source: Computed from reports of BoCS, BoFED, and MoCS, 2014

As depicted in Figure. 1, the number Civil Servants who are working in a permanent way in the ANRS CS were 61, 625 in 2003/04; 81,808 in 2004/05; 81,612 in 2005/06; 109,247 in 2006/07; 117,109 in 2007/08; 123,355 in 2008/09; 162,895 in 2009/10; 170,951 in 2010/11; 229,759 in 2011/12; and 238, 483 in 2012/13. The growth rate of the Civil Servants was 32.75% in 2004/05, (0.24%) in 2005/06, 34% in 2006/07, 2.28% in 2007/08, 5.25 % in 2008/09, 32.05% in 2009/10, 4.95 % in 2010/11, 34.4% in 2011/12, and 3.79% in 2012/13.

Even though, its growth was not that much visible up to 2006/2007, it has increased at an incredible rate starting from 2006/07. In the past 10 fiscal years that is from 2003/04 to 2012/13 the size of the CS has grown from 61,625 in 2003/04 to 238,483 in 2012/13, and this portrayed that the number of the CS in terms of personnel has increased by 176,858 civil servants(nearly by 287%).

2.2. Civil servants as Percentage of the regional population

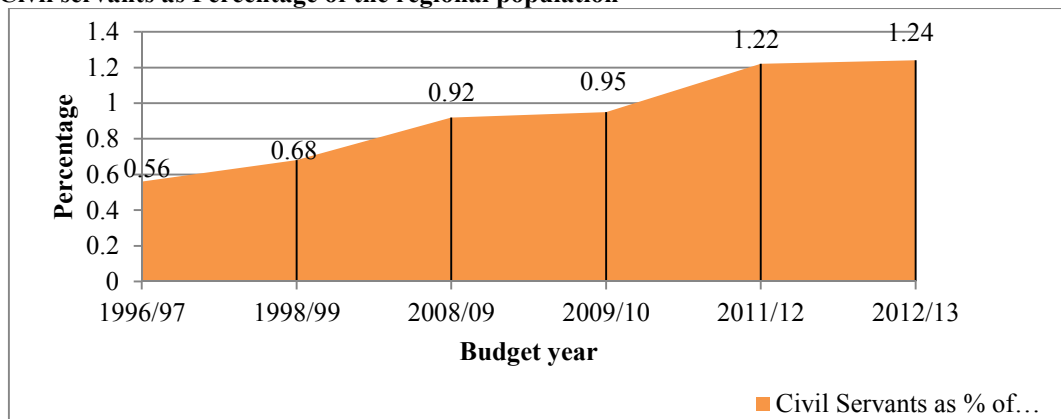


Figure 2: Size of civil servants as Percentage of Population (1996/97-2012/13)
 Source: Compiled from Census report of 1994 & 2007, “BoFED” & “BoCS”, 2013

As pointed out in table 2, the CS as percentage of the population in the ANRS was 0.56 %, 0.68 %,0.92 %,0.95 %, 1.22 %, 1.24 % in 1996/97,1998/99,2008/09,2009/10, 2011/12, and 2012/13, respectively. The percentage has shown greater improvement and it has grown from 0.56 % in 1996/97 to 1.24 % in 2012/13 and has grown with an increasing rate for the past 16 years.

When we see it in terms of ratio, the Civil Servant to population ratio, was 1:178, 1:147, 1:108, 1:105, 1:82 and 1:81in 1996/97, 1998/99, 2008/09, 2009/10, 2011/12, and 2012/13, respectively. This indicates that the ratio of the regional Civil Servants to the total population of the region has improved from time to time and in the past 16 years (1996/97 to 2012/13); it has improved from 1:178 to 1:81 ratios. It meant that in 1996/97, one Civil Servant was expected to serve 178 citizens, whereas in 2012/13, it has improved, and was expected to serve only 81 citizens. This portrayed that the burden of the Civil Servant in number of customers serving has decreased by 97 customers in the past 16 years.

As to Olowu, cited in Richard C, Crook (2010:494), the Public Sector employees as percentage of population was 1.5 % in 20 sub Sahara African countries, 2.6 % in Asia, 3 % in Latin America, 3.9 in Middle East, 7.7 % in OECD, and 5.8 % in Botswana, 0.6 % in Benin,1.2 % in Central Africa Republic, 0.7% in Congo,1.8 % in Ghana, 1.5 % in Kenya, 2.6 % in Gabon,0.4 Nigeria, 0.7 Uganda,1.3 % in Zambia, and 1.5% Zimbabwe in 1996 (IMF working paper, 1996:44). In addition to this, Gebre Miruts and Melesse Asfaw(2014, p.98), have found that the civil servants to population ratio of Tigray (one of the constituent region of the FDRE) is 1:82, 1:69, 1:67, and 1:64 in 2010,2011, 2012,and 2013 respectively. Even though the government had done different measures to increase the size and the proximity of service and some changes have been registered, the Civil Servants to population ratio is not in a good situation as it is compared to Civil Servants to population ratio of some African, Asian, Latin Americans, and the Tigray’s CS.

2.3. Composition of the CS

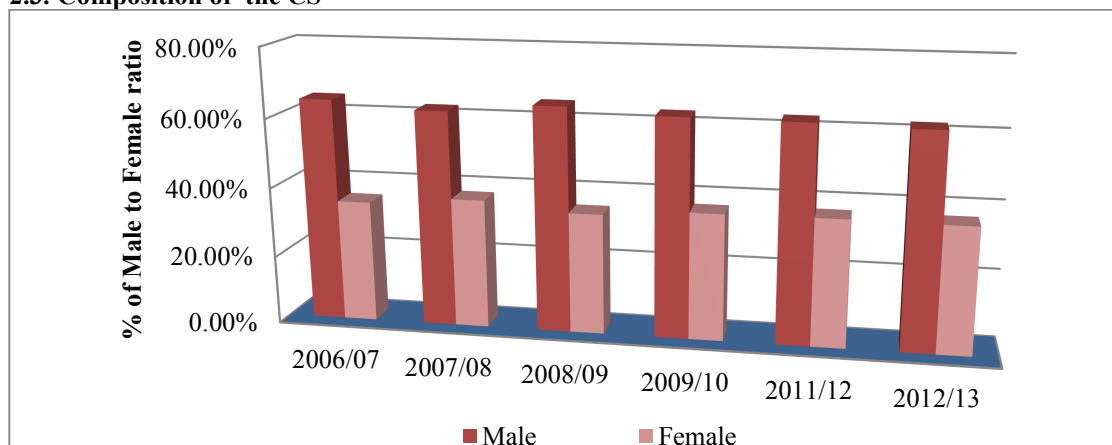


Figure 3: Male –Female ratio of the ANRS Civil service
 Source: Compiled from Annual statistical report of BoCS, 2012/03)

As it is revealed in the above Figure 3, the percentage of Male and Female Civil Servants in ANRS Civil Service was 64.71% & 32.29% in 2006/07; 62.55% & 37.45% in 2007/08; 68% & 32% in 2008/09; 65% & 35% in 2009/10; 63.15% & 36.85% in 2010/11; 62.99% & 36.01% in 2011/12; and 63.25% & 36.75% in 2012/13. The data indicated that the percentage of Male and Female in the ANRS CS were nearly static for the past 7 years.

The sex wise composition of the CS is not going in line with their composition in the population, because as to the 2007 Population and Housing commission report, of the total population of the region, 50.2 % were Males and 49.8 % were Females. The difference between the two sexes is only 0.4 % but in the CS males account for 63.25 % and females accounts 36.75 % and there is big difference between Males and Females (26.5%). Even though, the government had done different affirmative action to boost up the size of Female Civil Servants, their involvement is still has not brought significant improvement. The findings of this paper are almost similar with the research findings of Gebru Miruts and Melesse Asfaw in Tigray CS, Ethiopia in 2014.

Table 1: Composition of the Civil servants by Types & Sex in 2012/13

No	Category of civil servants	Male		Female		Sum	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Professional science	25,357	10.63	8,999	3.77	34,356	14.42
2.	Administrative	61	0.025	26	0.01	87	0.04
3.	Sub professionals	17,695	7.41	18,057	7.57	35,752	14.99
4.	Clerical& Fiscal	114	0.047	142	0.059	256	0.11
5.	Trade & Craft	2,083	0.873	42	0.027	2,225	0.89
6.	Custodial & Manual	7,832	3.28	3,692	1.54	11,023	4.83
7.	Teachers	64,172	26.9	36,851	15.45	102,023	42.36
8.	Health professionals	10,170	4.26	12,343	5.275	22,513	9.44
9.	Appointees	6,803	3.85	1,646	0.69	8,449	3.54
10.	Specially Assigned	13,184	5.525	4,942	2.072	18,126	7.6
11.	Not stated	3,370	1.4113	903	0.378	4,273	1.79
	Sum	150,841	63.25	87,642	36.74	238,483	100

Source: Computed from Annual statistical report of BoCS, 2013

As demonstrated in Table 1, the share of professionals' science were 14.41%, 0.04 % for Administrative group; 14.99 % for Sub professionals; 0.11% for Clerical & Fiscals; 0.89% for Trade and Crafts; 42.36% for Teachers; 9.44% for Health professionals; 3.54% for Appointees; 7.6% Specially assigned; and 1.79% covered by those position which were not stated in 2012/13. The data pointed out that majority of the Civil Servants are teachers with coverage of 42.36 %. Even though, having high coverage of teachers is a sign of healthy symptom; the composition of the Civil Servants in terms of types skewed to one side, the share of sub professionals, professional science and Health & Professionals is too small that accounts 14.99 %, 14.41 %, and 9.44 %, respectively in 2012/2013.

Table 2: Composition of the Civil Servants by Ethnic (2012/2013)

No	Ethnics	Male	Female	Sum	%
1	Amhara	133,552	78,909	212,461	89.08
2	Agew	10,427	5,347	15,774	6.61
3	Oromo	4,028	2,071	6,099	2.6
4	Tigris	2,507	1,170	3,677	1.54
5	Guragie	54	16	70	0.03
6	Harerie	36	20	56	0.023
7	Kembata	9	5	14	0.005
8	Argoba	76	12	88	0.04
9	Wolayita	22	5	27	0.01
10	Gumuz	3	0	3	0.001
11	Hadiya	4	3	7	0.002
12	Gamo	2	1	3	0.001
13	Shinasha	22	8	30	0.01
14	Afar	10	3	13	0.005
15	Silte	2	2	4	0.001
16	Somali	2	0	2	.00083
17	South Nations	31	7	38	0.01
18	Himitegna	4	3	7	0.002
19	Kimant	50	60	110	0.04
Sub total		150,841	87,642	238,483	100

Source: Computed from Annual statistical report of BoCS, 2012/13.

As to the 2007 Population and Housing Census report of Ethiopia, of the total 17,221,976 people living in the region, 91.47 % are Amhara Ethnic, 4.85 % are Agew Ethnic, 2.62% are Oromo Ethnic, and 0.22% are Tigris Ethnic. The involvement of Amhara Ethnic in the Civil Service is 89.09 %; Agew is 6.61%, Oromo is 2.6 %, and Tigris is 1.54%. Therefore, different Ethnic groups residing in the region are represented in the Civil Service in proportionate fashion to their population size, and this shows that the Civil Service of the Amhara National Regional State qualified one of the features of an effective Civil Service, that is the principle of representativeness.

2.4. Perceived reasons that made people to joined the Civil Service

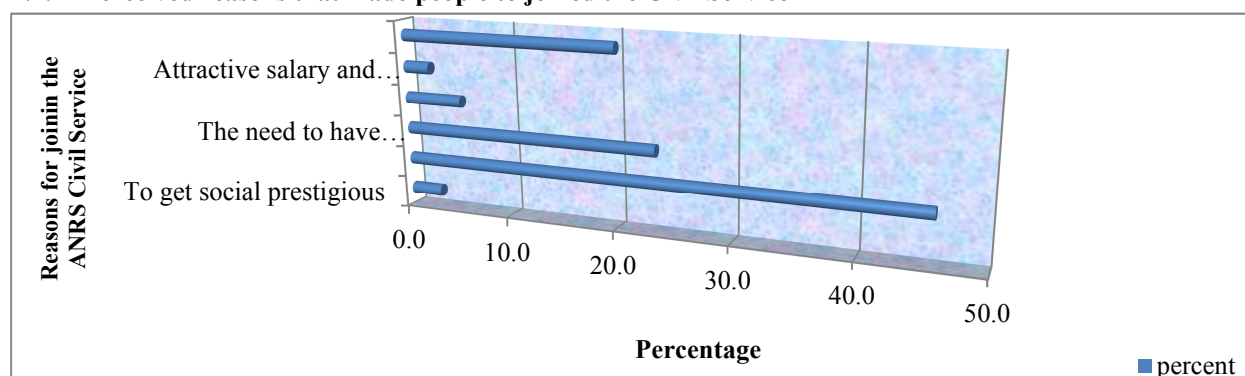


Figure 4: Attributes to determine the choice of the CSs of ANRS

Source: Compiled from own survey, 2014

Civil Servants in the region may have different reasons for joining the CS. In order to ensure that respondents will disclose their real feelings and attitude towards the CS, serious of questions were asked about, and the result has been summarized in figure 4. As illustrated in figure 4, majority of the respondents that accounts 45.9 % stated that they have joined the CS due to the absence of opportunity to join either the private sectors or the NGOs. To the perception of those respondents that stated this justification, if they would get the chance to join either the private sectors or NGOs, they would not have been a Civil Servant. In most cases in Ethiopia, people who possessed good skill and knowledge do not like to stay in the CS except for getting experience and shifting either to the private sectors or to the NGOs.

The second reason that was stated by 23.4 % of the respondents was the need to get job security. As to them, the job in the CS is more secured than both the Private Sector and NGOs, and once an individual joined the CS,

he/she would continued as a Civil Servant unless he/she committed a big disciplinary cases, or failed to work due to continuous illness; or failed to have the minimum skill needed to the position he/she owned. Those groups of Civil Servants perceived that sticking with what they have is better than looking outside due to frustration of risk of loss.

The third reason that was supported by 20 % of the respondents was that they have joined the CS as a matter of chance. Those people do not have any well-defined rationale to join the CS but unfortunately, they become member of the CS. To the perception of those respondents, their dream was joining either the Private organizations, or NGOs, or to open their own business other than joining to the CS.

On the other hand, 5.4 % of the respondents stated that they have joined the CS due to their personal willingness to the serve the public by their skill and knowledge. Among the 11 respondents that have supported the above rationale, 7(63.6%) of them were respondents who are members of the management body of the CS.

The fifth rationales that attracted people to join the CS as to the perception of 2.9 % respondents were their desire to get social prestige. Some years back in Ethiopia, the size of Civil Servants were too small and even their salary as compared with the private sectors was better and at that time people respect the Civil Servants, and even some people considered getting a CS title as a means of getting prestige from the society. However, now a day that become history and the social perception to the CS has dissolved out gradually.

At the end, respondents that have relatively small coverage, 2.4 % stated that their driving force to join the CS was their interest to secure their income after their retirement. This idea supported by almost most Ethiopian Civil Servants who are less educated, old aged, working in clerical & fiscal, trade & Craft, and Custodial Manual positions. It is because that those people did not earn good salary during their stay in the CS and at the end of their retirement unless supported with pension they will be empty handed. Therefore, in light of all the above reasons, it is safe to conclude that the CS is not such attractive except being a risk free job tenure, because most respondents have joined to the CS as a matter low probability of joining the private sectors and NGOs (45.9 %); risk free nature of the CS (23.4 %); and as a matter of chance (20%). This result has some relationship with the research findings of Nada Ahmed (2009) in Egypt CS, and the CS survey report of the Indian government (2010).

2.5. Perceived problems/challenges of the Civil Service

Table 3: Perceived problems of the CS in percentage (n=297)

Perceived problems of the civil service	Agree	Disagree	No idea	Total
	%	%	%	%
1. weak working culture Employees	62	30	8	100
2. Administrative inefficiency	56.9	30.6	12.5	100
3. Weak reward system	59.9	25.6	14.5	100
4. Existence of favouritism	55.9	29	15.2	100
5. Politicization of the CS	50.5	30.6	10.8	100
6. Weak sense of serving the public	61.3	32.3	6.4	100
7. poor salary structure	62.3	23.6	14.1	100
8. High rate turn over	60.3	26.3	13.5	100
9. Role ambiguity of leadership	55.2	31	13.8	100
10. Existence of corruption	54.2	27.9	17.8	100
11. Problem of attitude	52.7	42.9	4.4	100

Source: Compiled from own survey. 2014

As elucidated in table 3, 62.3 % of the respondents agreed that the salary structure of the CS is too small as compared to the private sectors and NGOs reside in the region; nevertheless, 23.6 % of the respondents disagree that the salary structure is not small and 14.1 % of the respondents do not have any idea about the salary structure of the CS. Prior to the CSRP, Civil Servants were eligible to get annual promotion per two years if their performance is above the expected standard. However, post the CSRP, the government freeze up without the amendment of the proclamation that stated so. This made the salary structure of the CS too small.

For simple comparison, the highest salary for the Process owners working at the bureau level in the CS is 214.5 USD, but the salary of a worker working in the same position in the private sector in the region is 303,06 USD. This is only for simple comparison, because there are organizations that paid 740.75USD; but if we take this average payment of the private sector, there is a variation of 88.60 USD, or 6.4 %. This is not a simple difference in Ethiopian context, and this become a bottleneck to the CS to maintain skilled and experienced Civil Servants

and attract fresh talented workforce to it.

The second problem is weak working culture of the Civil Servants; 62 % of the respondents agreed that the working culture of the Civil Servant is too weak. In contrast to the above, 30 % of the respondents did not agree with, and 8 % of them do not have any idea. To the perception of most participants in the focused group discussion, some civil servants do not have a good perception towards their mere existence in the CS and do not care whether they serve the public or not. Those Civil Servants entered lately, chat with their colleagues, and went out early before the end of the regular working hour of the CS to their home without doing any value adding work to their organization except misusing the internet and telephone services for their personal usage.

Thirdly, 61.3 % of the respondents stated that there is weak sense serving the public by both the Civil Servants and the leadership; but 32.3 % of them did not agree with this; and 6.4 % of them do not have any idea. In order to enhance the sense of serving; the government has enforced code of conduct of the CS; has given friendly and helpful approach trainings; take care of during recruitment, selection and promotion; and also has given training on its strategy and policies, but the problem exists with minor improvement.

Of the 297 respondents, 60.3 % agreed that there is the high rate of turnover of both the civil servants and the leadership, and according to 2012/2013 annual statistical report of Bureau of CS, 14,742 Civil Servants withdraw from the CS and of this 67.54% was voluntarily withdraw. Most skilled full, knowledgeable, and sometimes icon of the Public organizations have withdrawn and joined either the Private sectors or NGOs.

59.9 % of the respondents agreed that the reward system in the CS is too weak and considered as one of the push factor for employee turnover. Even though, the government has declared a reward system in line with its new performance appraisal system and designed to establish a National CS award system, it failed to practice it up this time. It is clearly stated in black and white that a civil servant who scores above the satisfactory level is entitled to get reward. Nevertheless, in practice during evaluation, even though there are outshined performers, the nearby supervisor of the civil servants had not give above satisfactory level as if they have got a direction not give.

Due to this fact, some people said that the government is setting this idea only to meet the international standard, not to change it into practice. This trend of giving low performance appraisal result is mismatched with the findings by Bassist & Darwish cited in Nada Ahmed (2009), in the Egypt CS, and to their findings, in Egypt almost all Civil Servants got excellent annual appraisal result regardless of their actual performance because performance appraisal result is managed as a means to give Civil Servants extra bonus rather than using as a performance measurement system.

The sixth problem of the ANRS CS is administrative inefficiency. 56.9 % of the respondents agreed that there is an administrative inefficiency, more especially at a lower administrative level. 30.6 % of them do not agree with the existence of administrative inefficiency and 12.5 % do not have an idea. Respondents who raised administrative inefficiency articulated the followings as reason: The vices and process owners positions are appointees than merit based assignment; the evaluation system of the leadership is too loose that gave a room for weak leaders to stay in the CS without fetching any change. In addition to the above problems, favouritism, role ambiguity, corruption, politicization of the CS, poor attitude of the civil servants are the other attributes of the ANRS civil service.

3. Conclusion

As delineated in the discussion part, the CS has increased from 61,625 in 2003/04 to 238,483 in 2012/13 and has grown up by 287% in the past ten years. In terms of Civil Servants to population ratio, it shifted from 1:178 to 1:81 from 1996/97 to 2012/13, and this indicated that in 2012/13, one Civil Servant was expected to serve 81 citizens. The burden of the Civil Servants in terms of number of citizens served is too big as compared to the findings of Olowu cited in Richard C, Crook(2010, P.494), in some African, Asian, Latin American countries; and Gebre Miruts and Melesse Asfaw(2014,P.98) in Tigray CS, Ethiopia.

The composition of the CS in terms of Sex is almost constant that ranged between 62.55% and 68% for Males and 32% and 37.45% for Females from 2006/07 to 2012/13 budget year, whereas in terms of type, majority of the Civil Servants are Teachers (42.36%), followed by sub professionals (14.99%), Professionals (14.42%), and Health professionals (9.44). In regarding to Ethnic composition, majority of the Civil Servants are from Amhara (89.08%), Agew (6.61%), Oromo (2.6%), and Tigrie (1.545) Ethnic in the magnitude of their share in the population, and from this, it can be concluded that the inhabitants of the region are represented in the CS and this

has qualified one of the features of good CS. The CS is characterized with poor salary structure, weak working culture, and weak sense of serving the public, weak reward system, Administrative inefficiency, and favoritism, Politicization of the CS, high rate of turnover, role ambiguity, attitude problem, and prevalence of corruption. To mitigate the problems and strengthening its good features, the ANRS government and other responsible bodies of government have to re-assess the salary structure of the CS; set a means to improve the attitude problem, rate of turnover, corruption, and favoritism. Moreover, it needs to be governed by rules, proclamation, and regulations set by the government in order to depoliticize the CS, and to decrease role ambiguity of both the leadership and some of the Civil Servants.

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