

Appraisal of Civil Service Reforms in Nigeria and Options for Stability

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Abstract

Civil service remains an expedient spring board upon which every nation takes off her developmental strides. The institution is fundamental and strategic particularly to Nigeria as a developing country. Development of civil service in Nigeria is tied to the colonial administration even as the period recorded unprecedented reforms. Quest for reform in the civil service became very essential and regular given the observed poor condition of service. The crux of this paper is to appraise several reforms in the civil service of Nigeria with the view to finding the flaws that necessitated further reforms. The appraisal is justifiable given the increasing clamor for more reforms, a situation that dovetailed into incessant labour unrests. Nigerians are the main beneficiary of a stable civil service sector particularly the workers as the sector remains the highest employer of labour. This paper adopted comparative and analytic approaches. In the end recommendations were made.

Keywords: Civil Service, Reforms, Options for Stability

1.1 Introduction

The history of civil service reforms in Nigeria has been trailed with checkered development. Scholars and pundits attributed this to a number of factors and circumstances some of which include lack of wider consultation, marginalization and discriminatory policies, dehumanization of workers and the need to increase productivity (Nwankwo, 2010, Igbokwe, 2012 and Okami, 2012). Others linked it to several constitutional reforms and later increased political awareness during colonial rule (Eze 2013). Apparently notable scholars such as (Nwosu 1985, Udenta 1999, Kukah 2003, Rotimi, Kunle, Adigun and Georges 2003 and Oyovbaire 2008) aptly notes that the wave of reform initiatives in the civil service is orchestrated by non-implementation or respect for accepted characteristics such as neutrality, impartiality, ethnicization and infiltration of mediocre in the civil service. The recorded factors and circumstances are instructive and germane. However, the recorded six reforms (Tudor Davis 1945, Harragin 1947, Foot 1948, Philipson-Adebo 1952, Gorsuch 1954 and Mbanefo 1959) under colonial administration were largely necessitated by the observed gap between the broad objectives of colonialism and emerging issues in Nigeria as at then. Reform initiatives in the civil service generally are fundamentally aimed at ensuring efficiency in government business.

Reforms in the civil service of Nigeria gained epicenter discuss from 1945. The circumstances that lend credence were the nation wide industrial action in 1945. The crux of the industrial action was deeply rooted in the spate of trade union pressures for inclusion of Nigerians in government's senior staff posts and regionalization of the public service (Olaopa 2007:131 and Usman 2003). From 1945, request for reform has been a ritual that each regime (military or civilian) must perform.

Civil service reforms in Nigeria has been significant and manifested through two main eras; colonial or pre-independence (1914-1959) and post colonial or independence periods (1960-Date). Within the post-colonial periods, it passed through two known stages and regimes, military and civilian. Each of the regimes remarkably shaped the present crop of civil servants in Nigeria.

The paper is therefore set to critically appraise several reforms in the Nigerian civil service from colonial period to post colonial era. The fundamental focus is to identify key flaws in each of the reforms with a view to making strong recommendation that would ultimately nip the wave of reform in the civil service to the board. There is the need to reposition the sector, even as it remains the highest employer of labour and its collapse would be catastrophic. The paper is contextually and methodologically opinionated as well as based on scholarly, visual and experienced observation. Again, it was deliberately partitioned into two main sections. The first section was dedicated to the colonial period while the second section discussed post colonial reforms. The idea is to present a clear comparison of the periods. Generally, it presented conceptual and contextual explications which are remarkably the very foundation of the paper. In the end, the paper drew conclusion, made recommendations and acknowledged some notable scholars that directly or by extension discussed similar points.

1.2.1 Civil Service Reforms during Colonial Era

Colonial era in Nigeria witnessed unprecedented constitutional reforms and amendments which resulted to a number of reforms in the civil service sector. Most reforms during the colonial era focused on administrative

restructuring and are aimed at Nigerianization, devolution of political authority and decentralization of administrative powers. The reforms were products of gradual and consistent agitation for inclusion of Nigerians in senior cadre of civil service (Adamolekun 2004), ineffectiveness, fear and low morale (Debie 2004, Boyle 2013), political decay, arrogance, corruption and emergence of primordial chunk of civil servants (Diamond 1983 and Ihonvbere 1994), These reasons were seen as a worthy step towards self determinism and indeed liberalization as against the closed system in the operations of civil service. In the view of (Olusanya ,1973) agitation for reforms opened the door for training indigenous professional public servants in the like of John Otunba Payne (who retired as Chief Registrar and Taxing Master of the Supreme Court of Lagos and Henry Carr (Inspector of Schools).

Chikwendu in (Obikeze and Obi (2004:148) identified five major civil service reforms during the colonial era to include: Tudor Davies Commission 1945, Harragin Commission 1947, Huge Foot Commission 1948, Adebo 1952, Gorsuch commission 1954 and Mbanefo commission 1959. Colonial administration was premised on centralized closed administrative system dominated by expatriates, a situation that prompted agitation for open system. The closed centralization of civil service strengthened the workers to speak with one voice in demand for reforms.

Tudor Commission of 1945 was the first civil service reform effort by the colonial administration. It was inaugurated at the eve of growing tension mounted by labour unions particularly after the 1945 nation wide industrial action. Crux of the nation-wide strike was located in the demand for inclusion of Nigerians into the senior cadre. Against this backdrop, the commission suggested decentralization of administrative authorities and powers without due consideration to the prevailing dearth of qualified manpower. Given the commission's submission the quest for more reforms continued with increased pressure.

1.2.2 Harragin Commission 1947

The commission was named after its chairman Walter Harragin who as well doubles as the Chief Justice of Gold Coast (Ghana). The commission was inaugurated to address the observed manpower shortage and prevailing harsh whether and poor working condition for expatriates, a situation that adversely affected the staff strength of colonial government.

The commission reviewed the operations and conditions of the public establishment and recommended, unified civil service structure as well as exclusive preserve of senior cadre for expatriates. It also recommended establishment of furnished staff quarters for expatriates. The idea was to offer them juicy and attractive options in order to increase the manpower strength. The recommendations were adopted and applied thereof.

The recommendations were fundamentally implied deepening the process of excluding Nigerians in the management cadre as well as marginalize and dehumanize Nigerians. It was also intended as institutionalizing closed bureaucratic system, perpetuate inexperience for Nigerians, limitation of their career opportunities and create wide margins of career disparity. This led to frustration and intensified labour pressure. The development wrecked public service, slowed productivity and threatened attainment of the interest of colonial administration. Other major set backs suffered by the recommendations of Harragin's commission include the vibrant and vocal trade union's mobilization of the seemingly populated junior (Junior) workers, persistent request for Nigerianization and decentralization of the civil service. These problems formed the basis for another commission in 1948.

1.2.3 Hugh Foot Commission 1948

By may1948, a commission of inquiry chaired by the then secretary of the government, Mr Hugh Foot was set up to advice the colonial government on a number of bickering issues concerning public services (Olaopa, 2008:131). The commission was mandated to study and review the complaints on recruitment of Nigerians into the senior cadre, training and improved condition of service (Abba, 2008:286).

Instructively, the commission recommended first, regionalization and Nigerianization of civil service, except where there is no available, qualified and willing Nigerian (Olaopa 2008:131). Second, it recommended for the establishment of central and regional public service boards in the regions, which is the precursor or the present day federal and state civil service commissions, establishment of public service boards dominated by appointed ex-officio members with the mandate to recruit candidates, ensure their training, award scholarship and include women in the public service through scholarship schemes. The recommendations were adopted and applied by the colonial administration as it momentarily diluted the growing tension and pressure from trade union as well as stabilized productivity and efficiency in the public service (Philips 2010).

On the contrary, its application marked the genesis of mediocrity, inefficiency and structural deformity. In response, (Maduabum 2006) referred this as Nigerianization principle in civil service and noted that it replaced merit with mere representativeness and this adversely affected the quality of civil service in Nigeria. The recommendation is partly responsible for the present day disparity between federal and state civil service as well as clash and repetition of duties by federal and state agencies. Generally, the reform reflected in a shift from administrative centralization to decentralization without recourse to administrative difficulties and quasi federalism, manpower shortage and ethnic mentality. Agitations continued unstopably because the

recommendations were short of expectations. First, it was tied to the whims and caprices of the centralized colonial administration. For instance recruitment was based on availability of qualified Nigerians. This situation would be difficult given that Nigerians were not opportune to receive the necessary assistance to enhance their qualification. Also, training by scholarship award was still an exclusive policy of the colonial administration to determine who would be given scholarship.

Appointment of ex-officio regional board members was undoubtedly a scheme for controlling the activities of the various boards by the colonial administration. These were the major impediments to the success of the commission's recommendation, thus leading to search for a productive and acceptable civil service.

1.2.4 Philipson–Adebo Panel 1952

The panel was mandated to draw a framework for the attainment of Nigerianization status, review complaints arising from decentralization policy, and liberalize recruitment and training policy. Major achievements of the panel include increased number of senior cadres of Nigerians as civil servants as well as regional devolution so that the boards would be active.

The policy of Nigerianization was truncated, even as most of the expectant Nigerians were not given the needed professional training. The committee was silent on the issue of devolution of authority and decentralization was in principle. Liberalization of recruitment was relevant but was limited by available qualified personnel. These gaps remained unresolved and the wave resulted to the 1954 reform.

1.2.5 Gorsuch Commission 1954

The commission was chaired by Messr L. H Gorsuch and was the first reform commission since 1945 that attempted a corresponding match of Nigerianization policy with structural formation as well as bureaucratization. Agitation for increased number of Nigeria senior civil servants was intense. The commission among other things was mandated to review and recommend structural framework and required qualification for public service in Nigeria. It was also directed to review the salaries and condition of service for the workers.

The commission restructured civil service into two broad groups “professionals” and “generalists” or professionals and administrative groups. There are three distinctive hierarchies in the professional group; senior, middle and junior cadres. Within the cadres, there are super-scale, professional, higher technician, technician and minor technician. On the administrative/generalist group, the hierarchies are super-scale, administrative, executive, clerical and sub-clerical cadres.

The classification granted Nigerians greater opportunities to migrate under any chosen and qualified broad groups (generalists/professionals). This was a landmark effort at creating a gradual ladder for career progression. It reviewed the salaries and general conditions of civil servants as the palliative measure to enhance their performances and probably douse the growing tension of labour unions.

The Gorsuch commission was criticized on a number of platforms. It was viewed to be alien conceived and structured after British public service organogramme and as such served and promoted colonial interest. It favoured expatriates given the gap inherent in the structure. Both professionals and generalists were still been dominated by expatriates who occupy the senior cadre. The middle class created were not filled immediately by many Nigerians even when some of them by years of work experience were due. The recommendations still bequeath the colonial bureaucrats the authority and powers to recruit and dismiss, promote and discipline, supervise and direct junior civil servants. It caused bureaucratic delay, bred inefficiency and poor output due to bureaucratic bottle necks. The suggested improved condition was met with complications in the grading and justification for any grade therein. There were variation in grading, salaries and condition of service. These generated tension and contempt among the groups. Implicate in the development was feeling of superiority among some of the cadres and groups. These were the impediments that prompted further reform initiative in 1959.

1.2.6 Mbanefo/Hewn's Commission 1959

The Mbanefo commission inaugurated in 1959 was essentially welfarist in nature rather than structural. It was nevertheless mandated to reconcile the ensuing centrifugal issues orchestrated by the parallel classification of civil servants into cadres and groups. It was also expected to harmonize the salaries and conditions of service between civil servants of the federal and regional governments, particularly Northern and Eastern regions and Cameroon. It was the expectation that the commission would recommend an acceptable modus of grading and condition of service.

Mbanefo commission recommended the same salary scale for federal and regional public servants. For the artisans, it recommended 15% increase in daily pay. This is to ensure uniformity in pay and condition of service for all cadres and groups across the country.

In the same year, the Hewn's commission was inaugurated. The committee was headed by Mr A F. Hewns with the singular mandate of structural harmonization. It recommended for the integration of existing departments into ministries under directors to be headed by permanent secretaries. This is significant in the annals of Nigeria civil service reform and British colonial administration.

Mbanefo and Hewn commissions marked a turning point in the civil service reform initiatives. Their

submissions reflected deeply rooted British bureaucracy anchored on the Weberian bureaucratic principles. Their recommendations institutionalized professionalism and hierarchicalism were the relationship among civil servants was firm and rooted in compatible corporation, partnership and mutual respect. (Attlee 1956 in Adamolekun 1985:21).

The major pitfall of their submission was the introduction of capitalist based bureaucratic model of weberian principles. It impliedly reduced the level and areas of authorities. Advice and decisions are hierarchically structured. In ministries where the permanent secretary is not a professional (as he cannot be in all departments) he will rely on the advice of directors or heads of sections/departments before advising the minister. This will result in red-tapism and besides, it was structured in the form where input and output must be measured and seen to determine investment. For these reasons, all was not well in the civil service sector before Nigeria's independence in 1960.

1.3 Post Independence Civil Service Reform Commissions

Following the independence status granted Nigeria by Britain on October, 1 1960, the stage was set for another era of civil service reforms. Unlike the colonial period in which civil service reform was dominated by agitation for Nigerianization of the civil service, structural harmonization and salaries, the post colonial era was dominated by indigenization, salary increase, acceptable grading system and clarification of the relationship between bureaucrats and politicians (Adebayo, 2007).

1.3.1 Morgan Commission, 1963/Elwood Grading, 1966

By September 27th 1963, there was nationwide strike by civil servants in demand for better condition of service and harmonization of salaries between the expatriates and Nigerians. In the view of (Fashoyin 1992 and Obi & Obiekezie 2004) the active role of Joint Labour committee in mobilizing workers for the strike was quite apt. This development necessitated setting up Morgan's commission in 1963. The commission was specifically mandated to exhaustively review the issues that resulted in the September 1963 nationwide strike among which is disparity in salaries and grading as well as establish a formidable federal bureaucracy capable of engendering efficiency in the civil service.

Morgan's commission not only revised salaries and wages of junior staff of the federal government but introduced for the first time, a minimum wage package for each region of the country (Ec-Rufai,2008).The two outstanding basis for Moragan's decision were prioritization of social family responsibilities in determining wages and zonalization of wages given peculiar variety between government and private employees and employers capability to pay. This decision was quite in order given the economic and psychological pressure from extended relations which is akin and germen in accessing workers performance. According to (Obi & Obiekezie 2004:150) salaries were zoned.

In principle Morgan's report created a synergy between the workers social responsibility (outside the job) and productivity (on the job). This is largely in tandem with the proposals of human relations theorists (Shama,Sadana & Kur 2011:254 and Sapru 2009:154)

Submissions of Morgan's commission were faulted because the instrument for determining the wages was relatively irreconcilable. First it was difficult to base wages on social responsibility which is dynamic and varies within cultures and ethnic nationalities. It provided for disparity in the salaries of workers in the same grade, cadre and performs the same functions but are located in different parts of the country. This submission seemingly ignored the possible variation of economic situation.

The zonalization formula was quickly jettisoned by the Northern region who unilaterally granted 10% wages increase to labour leaders on excuse of their role in suspending the 1963 labour strike. This singular act by Northerners not only politicized wages, salaries and labour unionism but also sowed the seed of discord and inefficiency across zones/regions.

1.3.2 Elwood Panel

The apparent flaw in the report/implementation led to setting up the Elwood grading panel. The issue of salaries and wages was topical as it speedily affected workers productivity. The Elwood panel was appointed to identify and investigate anomalies in the grading and other conditions relating to all post in the public service of the federation, with a view to determining an appropriate grading system and achieving uniformity in the salaries of officers performing identical duties (Collins 1980 and Olaopa, 2008). The growing indifference orchestrated by labour activism permeated into the already deteriorated social activities and relationship such as electoral malpractice, ethnic politicking, embezzlement, impunity and disrespect. By May 24 1966, the military took over and ushered another era of retrogression in public service. The impact of service Decree 34 of 1966 was apt and significant.

1.3.3 Simeon Adebo Wages and Salaries Review Committee 1970

The commission was set up as one of the reconciliatory mechanisms after the civil war, and this made it unique and many expectations were bestowed on it. It centered on review and recommended better working condition for all Nigerian workers, rationalized and harmonized cadres and grade for public and private employees as well

as uniform pay package for private and public workers (Abba, 2008, Obi & Obikezie 2004, Adebo Report 1971). Specifically it recommended 30% and 12% increase for junior and senior staff respectively in addition to the existing minimum wage. It further recommended establishment of a National Board on Productivity, Prices and Incomes (PPIB) to handle emerging issues relating to variation in salaries and wages of private and public employees.

The notable flaws in the recommendations include salary increase which widened the inflationary scope because the purchasing powers of the civil servants depreciated rapidly. Granting 30% salary increase to junior staff rather created internal conflict among the different cadres and grades of staff, more so, when they purchase from the same market. Attempt to rationalize and harmonize the structures in private and public sector cannot be sincerely achieved given variation in capital, size, and objectives. These problems persisted as it created labour unrest which was inimical to the recuperating economy after the civil war. It was therefore expedient to have another commission.

1.3.4 Udeoji Commission 1972 and Williams and Williams Salaries/Wages Panel 1975

Given the notable flaws inherent in the Simeon Adebo committee report and the increasing wave for true unification, integration, harmonization and restructuring of public service, the popular chief Jerome, O. Udeoji commission was set up in September 1972. Setting up of the commission followed a debate on how the federal government will occupy the commanding height in the quest for national development and provide the leadership and administration necessary to achieve national objectives (F G N- Udeoji report 1974:1). The commission has the widest terms of reference compared to its predecessors. In the view of (Anazodo 2012:22) objectives of the commission include, review and over-haul of the entire public service, and to ensure development and optimum utilization of manpower for efficiency and effectiveness in the services. He further stated other thrusts of the commission as: to carry holistic reform of the civil service in terms of organization, structure and management of the public service, investigate and evaluate methods of recruitment and conditions of employment, examine all legislation relating to pension, as regarding all post; establish scale of salaries corresponding to each grade as a result of job evaluation (Abba 2008; 292, Adamolekun 1986 and Lewis 1992)

Report of the commission was submitted on the 28th September 1974 while government's white paper was released December 1974. Submissions of the commission was encompassing among which are:

- That the concept of result-oriented management be adopted,
- Introduction of a unified public service structure,
- Transformation of administration into management,
- Salaries be subject or determined by job content and performance,
- Promotion should be based on merit not seniority,
- Equivalent relationship between compensation in public sector for the increment of salaries wages of employees,
- Financial management should be strengthened and modernized and
- Modernization of personnel management. (FGN 1974)

Scholars like (Otobo 1999 and Debie 2004:81) assert that the commission extended its recommendation on salaries and grading to federal and state civil service. Its recommendations successfully introduced modern management style, techniques and culture among which are Open Reporting System (ORS) that replaced Confidential Reporting (CR) Management by Objectives (MBO) and Planning Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS). It provided for professionalization, restructured and bestowed the principle of competence, officiating and performance. It introduced a grading system whereby civil servants are graded from 01-17. It created the post of chief executive in the ministries as permanent secretary and made them the accounting officers of the respective ministries. It further liberalized the condition for appointment into permanent secretary post to specialists or professionals.

The report was however flanked with some discontents. Whereas some scholars were of the opinion that its scope was too large and ambiguous, others maintained that some of the recommendations fall short of addressing the social challenges (Aduba, 2010 and Ogunka 2012). For instance, the wage award was indirectly inimical to the economy as it widened the inflationary rate and correspondingly reduced the purchasing power of civil servants. Also the private sector complained that the juicy condition in the public sector would result to exodus of competent and qualified staff to the public sector.

On the contrary the report resulted in down-sizing the workforce as about 12,000 public servants lost their jobs in 1975 (Adebayo 2004 and Abba, 2008). The purge destroyed the already deteriorating public service because the best creams of civil servants were affected while the remaining people developed low morals due to frustration and fear of uncertainty. Again, stratification of the entire public service to grade level 17 was resisted by some professionals such as university staff and medical personals.

The criticisms led to setting up Williams and Williams's salaries and wages panel. Mandate of the panel was concise and significant. The panel looked into the spate of complaints which arose out of the grading and

salary structure put in place by the Udeoji commission (Adebayo 2004:213). These problems resulted in agitation for more reforms.

1.3.5 Prof. Dotun Philips Commission 1985

The military head of state, Mohammed Buhari, set up a commission in early 1985 to review the federal civil service, assess their effectiveness (Olaopa2008:147), review the structure, composition and methods of operation (Omoniyi 1991), identify and proffer solution to cases of over-centralization, incessant conflict between the cadres and grading problems, low morals and inefficiency, inappropriate staff deployment (Philips 1991 and Olowu 2005), recommend solution to cases of corruption, primordial recruitment, and guarantee job/career security (Olowu 2003 and Philips 2010), enhanced public and personnel management performance, increased autonomy, pay reform, openness and transparency (Adamolekun & Kiragu, 2005:159).

It carried out the assignment and doted some of the clogs in the wheel of civil service and recommended what it considered worthwhile and push forward for the desired civil service. The report was submitted in September 1985, but rather to Gen. I. B. Bangida following the August 27th military coup which ousted Gen. M Buhari Junta. The report recommended that the position of permanent secretary be replaced with politically oriented position of Director-General (Jain, 2004:124), the minister would be made both the chief executive and accounting officer of the ministry (Anazodo 2012), streamlined the relationship between specialists and professionals, abolition of central pooling system which means each staff would spend his career years in his ministry or extra ministerial department, enhanced performance evaluation mechanism/instrument which centered more on concrete performance and less weighty on politics, seniority and other subjective factors (Olowu 2005).

Impact of the recommendations could neither be ascertained nor measured because it was not implemented but it nevertheless midwived the 1988 civil service reform. However, Babangida administration had to set up Koshoni Panel (Abayode 2007:213). Report of the panel metamorphosed to the popular 1988 Civil Service Reform which was legalized by decree No 43 of 1988. Reason for the latter panel (Koshoni) could mainly be explained in the content of Nigeria's cultural perspective of wastefulness, corruption, tactical delay and inexperience, particularly by the military. However, the reasons does not form the crux of this discuss but such administrative summersault distorts evaluation of Philips commission reform initiative which is very important in this paper and in the annuals of civil service reforms in Nigeria.

1.3.6 Koshoni Panel – 1988 Civil Service Reform

By 1st February1988, Gen. I. B Babangida inaugurated a panel made up of technocrats. Chairman of the 1988 panel was Vice Admiral P. Koshoni. The panel played dual role, first reviewing the problem that led to setting up 1985 commission, as well as restudied report of the committee to ensure they are in tandem with current challenges (FOSAAS 1997)

Report of the committee was promulgated as Decree No 43 of 1st April 1988, which was significant because it received legal status. Four main elements of the reform were hinged on: Professionalization of civil service, designation of the status of chief executive and accounting officer of ministry to the minister, appointment of permanent secretary was politicized as it became tenured and or would end with the regime that appoints it, abolition of office of Head Of Service and its function shared between Secretary to Government of the Federation and Civil Service Commission (Abba 2008: 299, Olaopa 2008: 147), the status of permanent secretary was re-named with Director-General who will serve as deputy minister, greater ministerial responsibility in the appointment, promotion training and discipline of the staff, vertical and horizontal restructuring of ministers to ensure overall management efficiency and effectiveness; permanent career progression (Igbuzor 1998:8, Abayode 2004: 214 and Nwuzu 2002: 42 Chukwu 2007: 33)

Despite the detailed effort and legalization of the reform, it contributed in obitualizing civil service in Nigeria within the period of its life span. The era was characterized by bourgeoisie bureaucracy. it was noted (Okoli & Onah 2010) that the reform was founded on faulty assumptions. Introduction of the reform could be reasonably explained within the realms of conditions of International Monetary Fund (IMF) one of which is Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). It further institutionalized corruption, politicized and wreaked untold havoc to the system. For instance, it is unexplainable to replace permanent secretary who is a career civil servant with director general whose tenure expires with the government that appointed it. The implication in that the director general would be more loyal to the person that appointed him other than the job and may be tempted to loot the treasury at the expiration of his tenure. More so, abolition of the office the head of service means that civil service has no leader. This was made worst by transferring most functions of the civil service commission to management committee of respective ministries. Apart from developing guideline for recruitment and training, there is no uniformity in other aspects of the service. The approved limit introduced corruption because the audit alarm would not interfere with the spending limit, particularly when career civil servants are no more accounting officers (because a director general was appointed). These negative implications prompted inauguration of Ayida panel in 1994.

1.3.7 Ayida Panel 1994

Morale of public servants continued to thrive on the path of speedy decline. The future of economic recovery through bureaucratic machinery was bleak as uncertainty of all manners and approach besieged government business. Gen S. Abacha abrogated decree 43 of 1988 and set up a seven man committee on the 10th November, 1994. Members were drawn from academic and technocrats. The committee was named after its chairman Allison Ayida. The committee has the following terms of reference:

examine and properly define the role of civil service as the executive arm of government, examine the various provisions of Decree No 43 of 1988, make provisions that would raise the morale of civil servants, examine the problems of co-ordinations and accountability in ministries, examine the abolition of the office of the Head of Service and the pooling system, and make other recommendations which in the opinion of the panel were relevant to its assignment (Abba 2008: 301).

The committee submitted its report in June 1995. The committee made forty two recommendations some of which include:

Ministries and extra ministerial departments should be structured according to their objectives, restoration of the post and office of the Head of Civil Service which should be appointed from Permanent Secretary or officers of equivalent ranks, Recruitment into the civil service should be based on merit and principles of federal character but further progression thereafter should be normally on merit, Annual upwards review of salaries in keeping with the inflation, intensified war against all forms of corruption in the public institutions starting from government officials, political office holders should be made to work according to the laid down rules, Any body found to have corruptly enriched him/herself should not be appointed again or fraternize with by government.

Despite the lofty ideas of the committee, there were sizeable and costly loopholes observed therein. Some of the recommendations of the committee were neither firm nor assertive. For instance, the use of “either” and “or” for critical appointments like permanent secretary and head of service creates confusion, conflicts and cast doubt if the committee was not guided by the military junta. Issues relating to the office of head of state, secretary to the government and head of service failed to be clear and assertive, the recommendation of not been re-appointed for corrupt public holder is watery. Permanent Secretary, Secretary to the Government, Head of Service and Ministers are appointees of the government in power and there was clear job schedule. It also recommended for annual upwards review of salaries and wages which is capable of causing inflation. It also did not resolve the number of departments, a situation which exposed permanent secretaries to the threat and manipulation of ministers.

1.3.8 Obasanjo Civil Service Reform programme, 1999-2007

Civil service reform under president Obasanjo regime trickled in peace-meal focusing on many areas some of which include, pension reform, restructuring of ministries and departments, monetization, down-sizing in the public sector, strong financial regulation and anti corruption campaign, quality service delivery and so on. The pension reform requires all workers to make compulsory remittance of 7.5% of the monthly salary to pension managers. It established Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR) on September 2004 and introduced information and computer technology in the ministries to monitor implementation of reform programmes and avoid over-bloatedness in the civil service as well as restored the ministries between 4-8 departments, it tried to reduce corruption and waste through monetization policy as well as raised minimum wage of every Nigerian worker to N7, 500. It developed criteria for reducing the workforce for which over 35,700 people were retrenched or retired in the first phase, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC) were established with legal backing to investigate, arrest and prosecute corrupt public office holders, SERVICOM was established to guarantee quality service delivery

The reforms were capitalist oriented as they were modeled after USA and UK civil service pattern.

Anti-corrupt agencies (ICPC and EFCC) established by the administration were politicized as they were manipulated as political weapon against opponents. The regime was characterized by cases of fiat in budget related issues. Transactions were carried out with impunity and due process rarely followed especially when there is government interest. There was lack of coherence in the implementation and coordination of the reforms. There was overlapping conflict and clash of interest between the agencies such as Bureau of Public Service Reform (BPSR), Public Service Reform Team (PSRT) and Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC)

Nigeria civil service has never witnessed the level and nature of havoc experienced under Obasanjo regime by way of down-sizing the staff strength. About 35,700 workers were either forcefully retired or retrenched without an honest and transparent procedure or criteria. The pension reform policy is filled with deceptiveness and corruption. The pension administrators were mostly connected to network of highly placed politicians.

1.3.9 Steve Oronsaye Committee 2007

Oronsaye committee had a singular but comprehensive mandate to review and re-structure Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and personnel composition of the federal public service. The committee

recommended that permanent secretaries and directors only will serve for an initial tenure of four years renewable on the basis of performance, irrespective of age and years in service. Oweh (2013) noted that the committee equally recommended for forceful retirement of hundreds of Directors and Permanent Secretaries who had occupied the post for more than 8 years. Government adopted the report and gazettes it as a working document. The second mandate of structural re-organisation of MDAs was not fully realized before Yar Adua (former Nigeria president) died.

The major pitfall of the report was retirement of the most senior civil servants who should have provided the lead for junior workers. The recommendation was against their terms of recruitment for the affected workers. It as well created sense of corruption and demoralizing for the retirees and the serving workers.

Dr Goodluck Jonathan as Nigeria president retained Steve Orosaye's committee, renamed it and expanded its terms of reference. It was re-named Presidential Committee on the Rationalization and Restructuring of Federal Government Parastatals, Commissions and Agencies. The committee was given the following terms of reference: study and review all previous reports/records on the restructuring of federal civil service and find areas of overlap or duplication, examine the enabling acts of all the federal agencies, parastatals and commissions and classify them into various sectors, examine critically, the mandate of the existing federal agencies.

It made strong recommendations for merger and scraping of some departments and agencies. Summarily, it recommended for the reduction of 541 MDAs in the country to 163 by merging those agencies that perform the same function, like police, road safety and civil defense and so on.

The report however generated reactions from labour unions and analysts and the president did not implement the report. The recommendations could be viewed from two perspectives; it will result in monumental purge of workers and an extended hardship to relatives. On the contrary, the present composition results in high cost of governance. Most countries like UK, USA, Ireland and many others adopted the idea of merger and reduction of workforce for the purpose of having efficient and productive civil service.

1.3.10 Adamu Fika Committee

Alhaji Adamu Fika committee was inaugurated to review the implications of Steve Oronsaya report. Terms of reference for the committee were to review the reform processes in the Nigeria public service and harmonize issues relating to salaries and wages of public servants in the country. The committee submitted its report in January 2013. However, there was a minority report submitted by Mrs Francesca Yetunde (the first female permanent secretary) and Prof. Murtala Balogun. Areas of disagreement between the chairman, his group and the duo was on the issue of tenure for permanent secretaries and directors which they wanted to remain 4 or 8 years as recommended in 2009. The second issue was non inclusion of Dr Dauda Kigbu who was permanent secretary Bureau of Public Service Reform (BPSR) as a member of the reform committee. Majority report led by the chairman, Adamu Fika argued that the introduction of tenure for permanent secretaries and directors amounts to gross violation of the rights of those affected particularly when they are at variant with the condition of service at the point of engagement. It added that the earlier policy had depleted and deprived the service of some of the most competent and experienced hands in the service (Oweh 2013). They recommended for the cancellation of tenure regime institutionalized by Oronsaye in 2009 so that permanent secretaries and directors can remain in office until they are 60 years old or 30 years in the service. The report further pointed out the need to reverse the huge resource that goes with the payment of salaries and allowances, a situation that over blows the re-current expenditure of government. It observed with dismay that the Revenue Mobilization Allocation Fiscal commission (RMFAC) which took effect in July 2007 indiscriminately fixed allowances and salaries to the tune of ₦1.126 trillion.

So far, the administration has not implemented the report of Orosanye committee on harmonization or restructuring of MDAs. The implication of its application could be damaging without proper arrangement. It will lead to another massive purge and hardship. It has also not implemented the recommendation of deleting tenure regime; rather both reports are being studied at the point of writing.

1.4 Recommendations

Appraisal of civil service reforms in Nigeria since independence shows that the quest appears intractable. It is therefore very expedient to control the quest in order to avoid collapse or confusion in the sector. We strongly recommend the following:

- Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission should establish clear and unbiased guideline for wage increase. Most agitation for reform by workers in the recent times has been dominated by demand for salary increase.
- There is the need to have political will for implementation of commission's reports. For instance, merger of agencies need to be implemented provided palliative measures are established and the criteria for merger is clear and unbiased.
- Civil service commission at various levels (federal or state) should be strengthened for implementation

of the reforms. Politicians (ministers/commissioners) often hijack the reforms and implement it to their whims and caprices.

- Establish an agency that would coordinate reform in the civil service. The agency should be constitutionally empowered to ensure that reforms are democratized from the various ministries, departments and agencies.

1.5 Conclusion

Reforms in the Nigerian civil service have been an intractable assignment. During colonial era, quest for reform was dominated by clamor for Nigerianization of the service as well as improved condition of service similar to that of the expatriates. From the post colonial period, reforms in the civil service was dominated by the need to structure the sector, stop corruption, low morale, wage increase, harmonization and so on. Several commissions have been inaugurated with the mandate to resolve these problems, yet the request persisted. Attempts have also been made particularly from 1988 to legalize reforms. These efforts are quite commendable but have failed to contend with the problems of civil service in Nigeria. The paper did an appraisal of the various reforms with the view to resolving the intractable problems in the Nigerian civil service.

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