



## Civil Servants as Managers of the National Economy in Nigeria: Matters Arising

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**Abstract:** Without exception, the first major challenge that all the newly independent nations of Africa faced in the early 60<sup>th</sup> was how to balance the political and economic sides of the new nations. In secular language, the problem was how to direct the creative energies of the citizens towards socio-economic development of the new nations to enable the political class boast of the dividends of independence and the benefits of decolonization. The activists and politicians who agitated successfully for self-rule already gave themselves high pass mark. The question and dilemma was finding a well-organized and robustly competent group to supervise and manage the dynamic and unpredictable forces of economics. In virtually all nations, the mantle for economic management of the new nations fell on the civil servants in public service. In both the mixed and centralized economic systems, the civil servants became the pivot and driving force of national economic management (in Africa). This paper highlights the various structural flaws and some positives of using public officials as economic managers, especially in polyglots with ethnic and cultural diversities like Nigeria. The avalanche of declassified materials and the lucid writings of participants who were foremost managers of the Nigerian enterprise, provided useful troves and materials for this paper. The experiences garnered under civilian and military leaderships together with the realities of a very destructive civil war and an unending peace-building mandate gave this paper a useful fullness for future reappraisal. Finally, this publication adopts the theory of Utilitarianism as the major tool of its theoretical analysis while it recommends that highly cerebral, disciplined and non-tribalistic technocrats from relevant fields of studies should be appointed as managers of our national economy, along with the growing Chambers of Commerce in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Civil Service, Civil Servant, Manager, National Economy and Nigeria.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

All over Africa, especially in the Sub-Sahara region, the child-like massive jubilation and celebration that accompanied the process of independence and self-rule did fundamental damage to public caution and the collective planning necessary for the departure of white colonial masters. It was as if the symbolic departure of white men automatically guaranteed transformation and development in the emerging independent nations. The hardwork, meticulous planning and discipline which are essential ingredients for development were down-played. In all honesty, some African leaders spoke about restraint in celebration and the hard road ahead. Leaders like Lumumba, Nyerere, Nkrumah, Awolowo and Mugabe warned that decolonization would not automatically lead to national development. However, such realistic and patriotic voices were drowned in the euphoria of grandeur and in the misleading assumption of assured progress, even if the leaders and others fail to act.

The first generation of leaders who inherited power from the colonial masters have been aptly described as lazy, inept, incapable of taking hard decisions necessary for real change and quite unprepared for the rigours of leadership. Most of those who inherited power and positions from the departing colonialists were expert “local politicians” but complete neophytes at the international level. They had scant and limited ideas of protocols or practices which guided politics at the regional and world levels. However, if they were limited at the political area, most of them were completely deficient and comprehensively ignorant of the 1648 treaty of Westphalia which created the blocks and pieces for national trade, international economics, domestic economic hurdles and unequal exchange

at market and production levels. To be fair, a few of them identified the civil service block as an important resource group that could help to harness and strategize the populace towards sustainable growth and development. In reality however, the use of civil servants as managers of national economy had its own serious structural challenges and flaws, because the inexperienced new leaders, who having secured power suddenly faced the enormity of people's expectations which could not be easily addressed (Aladegbola, 2005).

Against the foregoing background, this paper intends to highlight some salient features of the Nigerian economy, examine the roles and functions of civil servants in the management of the national economy, assess their performance and the problems militating against their performance and proffer some suggestions for organizational renewal under the civil service reforms.

## **2. THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SERVICE AND/OR CIVIL SERVANT**

Civil service is often regarded as the fulcrum of public administration and it remains the strong foundation upon which the stability and promotion of rapid social, economic and political development of any nation can be built upon. Akande (1999) as cited in Aladegbola (2005:17-18) corroborates this assertion when he opined that "the civil service is central to the performance of any government: It constitutes the tool for the formulation and implementation of an administration's policies and programmes. In ... democratic setting and with clear mandate and policy objectives, government could not but rely on the civil service to translate into action all its political, social and economic policies". Similarly, Isah and Tenuche [2016] view civil service as the prime mover of the wheel of progress, that must be strategically placed or situated in the achievement of the vision and mission of government without which it may become a cog in the wheel of corporate governance and democracy.

According to 1999 constitution, section 318, sub-section (1) (as amended), "civil service of the Federation", means service of the Federation in a civil capacity of staff of the office of the President, the Vice-President, a ministry or department of the Government of the Federation assigned with the responsibility for any business of the Government of the Federation; while "civil service of the State", means service of the State in a civil capacity as staff of the office of the Governor, the Deputy Governor, a ministry or department of the Government of the State assigned with the responsibility for any business of the government of State (FGN, 1999). To Aladegbola (2005:18) civil service refers to only workers in the government ministries or departments. This exclude government parastatals, companies, military, magistrates and judges in view of the peculiar nature of their organizations and functions.

The civil service as a permanent institution of government has over the time developed the ethos of political neutrality, always willing to advise and serve any elected government of the day. The core values of civil service included discipline, integrity, transparency, excellence and loyalty and its mission is to formulate and implement government policies and programmes with professionalism and passion. Be that as it may, civil servants are generally referred to as the seasoned administrators charged with the sole responsibility of formulating and implementing government policies and programmes at all levels of government for effective running of the state/country as well as the harmonious relationships between individuals and the various social groups within the state/country.

## **3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION – UTILITY THEORY**

This theory is suitable in a study of this nature which upholds the view or belief that the existence of any state is to guarantee the satisfaction of the majority if not all. Notable political thinkers and philosophers like Bentham, Mill, Hutcheson, Hume and Burke observed that, "That action is best which procures the greatest happiness of the greatest number". The doctrine that actions should be judged on their capacity to produce happiness was an ancient one, recognizable as the classical Greek eudaemonism. However, it was only in the secular and commercial milieu of the eighteenth century that it became an important and respectable philosophy (McLean & Mcmillan, 2003).

The greatest happiness of the greatest number is an indication of the spirit and purpose of Utilitarianism. The most important defence of Utilitarianism is that there is no alternative to it as a public philosophy. Utilitarianism, uniquely accepts this and yet makes an important moral demand of those who make policy that; they must always consider the 'bottom line' of the decisions, who is gaining and who is losing and whether the net aggregate of well-being might not be better served by an alternative (McLean & Mcmillan, 2003).

The application of the above thinking to governance presupposes that the State has utility function and must as a matter of fact implement actions that are capable of producing the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people within the political community. Hence, the entire discourse in this paper apparently tallies with the utilitarian concepts of maximum good for the greatest number of citizens. Indeed, the strengths and short-comings of the civil servants as managers together with the proposed changes via new legalistic frameworks and structures appear to validate the precepts of utilitarianism.

#### 4. HISTORY IN BRIEF

For decades, pundits and political analysts pointed at the failures of civil servants as managers of national economy. They pointed to the disheartening failures of Peugeot Automobile of Nigeria (PAN) in Kaduna, the Volkswagen Assembly Plant in Lagos, the poor management of telephone and power generating companies, (former NITEL and NEPA), the decline of the fortunes of Railway management and many more. Some analysts pointed to the fact that only a few civil servants had the academic grounding in Finance, Economics and Development Studies and that this lacuna affected decision making. Some writers pointed to the power structure of federal service and the ethno-religious divisions which made state functionaries to give loyalty more to primordial sentiments than national interest. However, all these changed on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August, 2008 when the Federal government declassified official documents and papers in the presidency between 1968 and 2008 (forty full years). Today, new insights and understanding are coming afresh necessitating the review of early submissions of analysts and academics on roles played by civil servants in the management of national resources aimed at development.

From a cursory but privileged position of access to the massive newly declassified documents, five major facts have emerged:

- (a) Oversixty years of self-rule, only Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief Anthony Ani were the two finance ministers who insisted on discipline in the execution of budgets, whether annual or four years term. Indeed, Chief Awolowo was both majestic and insistent on discipline and commitment to agreed decisions that he successfully managed a civil war without borrowing from Europe or North America.
- (b) The emergence of “Super Permanent Secretaries” under the tenure of Gowon, Muritala and Obasanjo happened because those permanent Secretaries had fundamental grasp of the theories and practice of economics: Yahaya, Asiodu Philips, Arc. FolaAlade, Allison Ayida and others. They were not pure economists but their respective professions enabled them to contribute robustly to arguments on the path of development. Consequently, such Permanent Secretaries had more visibility and assignments which constantly made them travel under international lime lights, round the world.
- (c) The abandonment of the four (4) years development plans of the 70’s and 80’s occurred largely because of the structural lapses in the Civil Service topmost echelon. Some Permanent Secretaries were so used to annual budgeting that they insisted on smuggling new ventures and extra financial demands into the already approved four years programmes. Such new additions meant unexpected challenges and stress for developmental plans. In many cases, it was the lack of discipline on the part of senior executives of the civil service that derailed the attainment of set goals and made a mess (in Nigeria) of the long term plans of some budgets.
- (d) There is clear evidence from the block recruitment chart that the Civil Service, from 1980, could no longer struggle with other sectors to attract the best of brains from the Universities in Nigeria or abroad. Up until 1979, the Federal and State Civil Service managed to remain in the top three sectors. But by 1980, the Civil Service had gone down the pecking order as shown in the graph below:

**Block Recruitment Chart (1980 – 1985)**

S/N	Sectoral Identifies	Grades
1	Nigerian Universities	1 <sup>st</sup> Class, Second Class Upper
2	Nigerian Military (Army, Navy & Air force)	1 <sup>st</sup> Class, Second Class Upper
3	International Organizations in Nigeria	Second Class Upper
4	Multinational Corporations (MNC)	Second Class Upper & Lower

5	Federal Civil Service	Second Class Lower
6	State Civil Service	Second Class, Third & Pass
7	The Nigerian Police	*Third Class, Pass, Polytechnic
8	Others	*Third Class, Ord. Pass, and Poly graduates

(NISER, 2005)

(e) Until the advent of Gen. Babangida, the managers of the national economy did not place premium emphasis on discipline in the areas of budgeting, fiscal expenses and goals achievement. Ironically, it was Babangida's administration that refocused the development process on self-reliance, social justice and maximum information for all citizens. Indeed, the Directorate for Social Mobilization and the Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) agencies were established in 1986 to propagate these revamped ideas.

### 5. TOWARDS A NEW CENTURY: TACTICS OF ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

It is interesting to note that during the fourth national development plan, a developmental programme to promote greater self-reliance as a fundamental guiding principle and strategy for meaningful and self-sustaining growth and development was introduced. According to the Directorate of Social Mobilization, the concept of self-reliance has to do with increased dependence on our own resources in seeking to achieve the various objectives of society and it also implies increased efforts to achieve optimum utilization of our human and material resources as well as considerable reduction of our dependence on the external sector in general and on the petroleum sector in particular. This strategy, in practical terms, means "developing in the individual as well as in the society as a whole such attitudes as the will to succeed in life through productive labour, to experiment, to be resourceful and to conquer new frontiers" (Gana, 1991).

The concept of self-reliance has a number of basic elements:

- conceiving and designing simple functional and economic projects and standardization of existing designs for similar projects;
- direct labour using local resources;
- transfer of and development of relevant intermediate technology as distinct from the importation of the most sophisticated equipment from abroad;
- consolidation and maintenance of existing facilities; and
- Development of the individual and society as a whole particularly at the grassroots level through active participation in projects execution.

It was envisaged that a programme aimed at developing people, in order to create things, is bound to enhance in the population the capacities to initiate and organize their own concepts, policies and even to devise their own technologies for achieving self-sustaining socio-economic transformation. Having regard to the limited resources of government and the consequent need for a high degree of cost consciousness, it was further envisaged that the maximum use of existing designs for similar projects and the conception and design of simple functional and economic projects as distinct from grandiose projects involving elaborate structures and the importation of sophisticated equipment will increase the impact of the self-reliance strategy.

### 6. THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY

It is a well-known fact that the Nigerian Economy is both mixed and dual, urban oriented and open. A mixed economy system is one in which private enterprises and nationalized industries exist side by side but while the public sector participates in all sectors of the economy, the private sector is excluded from participating in some strategic sectors of the economy. This situation is different in both the USA and the former Soviet Union. In the former, the role of the public sector is mainly limited to ensuring a conducive regulatory environment while in the latter, the means of production is entirely held by the public sector. In Nigeria, the public sector is the pivot of the economy and the dominant force in economic and social development. This is because, the governments of most developing countries have learnt a lesson from their peculiar socio-political experience before the

attainment of independence to the effect that it had to intervene in industries and other virile, expansive and profitable industries in order to harness the fruits of economic growth for national weal. Hence, government in developing countries and particularly Nigeria remains a complex octopus, despite the recent attempt at disinvestment through its privatization and commercialization policy (Johnson, 2002).

An open economy, on the other hand, is one in which the ratio of either imports or exports to national income exceeds 30%. In this respect, it is pertinent to draw attention to the trend in our imports and exports in the last four decades. For instance, Nigeria's exports rose rapidly after the discovery of oil in commercial quantity and reached a peak of about ₦14 billion in 1980 and from there declined to ₦10 billion in 1982. The rise in the imports especially of food was faster, reaching an all-time high of ₦12,565.5 million in 1982 and resulting in disturbing effects and depletion of the country's external reserves from ₦5.6 billion in 1980 to about ₦1.1 billion in 1982 and the trend has not changed for better till now (Aluko, 1999). The massive importation of food is the consequence of our neglect of agriculture which was the result of the urban orientation of the economy.

Apart from its openness and mixed nature, there is also the attribute relating to the relative size of the public sector vis-à-vis the private sector. According to Philips (1984:4) the public sector now controls over 70% of total economic activity in Nigeria. The relatively large size of the public confers on the government an enormous leverage for controlling and managing the economy and ensuring its efficient performance and this implies that its performance is a major determinant of the economy as a whole. Indeed, the public sector can largely be blamed for the state of the economy "in terms of its poor performance and the misuse or abuse of it by government for purposes of managing the economy". Thus, the Nigerian economy has undergone major structural developments since the turn of the century and hence a proper understanding of the economy today requires a reflection on the historical process which has shaped the present economic activities.

An historical analysis of the development of the Nigeria economy from 1861 to date reveals that the economy was characterized by subsistence peasant economy before the arrival of the British Government. However, by 1960-66, agricultural exports which constituted 80% of total Nigerian exports was the engine of growth rather than large-scale manufacturing which constituted a very small sector of the economy. This is because about 85% of the population live in predominantly small rural settlements where agriculture provides the bulk of employment, income, food for the population, raw materials for the country's agro-based industries, as well as foreign exchange. Specifically, in 1960 agriculture employed over 60% of the working population and was responsible for about 60% of national income; its share of national income decreased to 20% and 10% in the 1970's and 1980's respectively (Awoniyi, 1985).

However, the contribution of the petroleum sector increased from 2% of the GDP in 1962/63 to 12.6 in 1973/74. For instance, revenue from export of crude petroleum in 1958/59 fiscal year was ₦122,000.00 (representing 0.8% of the federal government's current revenue of ₦154.6 million). This percentage has increased steadily and fairly consistently, except for marginal declines in 1963/64, 1968/69 and 1980's, to 86% in 1975/76 (Gana, 1991). Thus, while agriculture was the engine of growth of the economy in the 1960's, drilling and mining was the major source of wealth in the 1970's up till today.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to note that as a result of intermittent bad government and associated gross mismanagement in the period 1979/82, the country was left with a legacy of economic problems culminating in the battered state of the economy. Apart from the "debt bomb" which stood at ₦27, 952 billion by December, 1985, the naira was also overvalued, resulting in unrealistic exchange rates that made imports cheaper than locally made goods (Akpieyi, 1986:4). Consequently, our economy tended to be more reliant on imports at the expense of local industries. The series of problems culminated in the declaration of a 15month state of economic emergency with effect from October, 1985. The aim was to visibly turn around the economy and lay a solid foundation for a healthier long term development. Prior to this declaration, the government has applied in April, 1983 for and subsequently rejected the extended fund facility programme from IMF to bridge the resource gap and augment the finance figure required to salvage the economy. Following the rejection of the extended fund facility, the task of restructuring the economy became a fundamental and onerous one. That

rejection led to the need to introduce the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) to salvage the economy and reset it on a healthy course of reconstruction, growth and development. The two year policy measure took off in July, 1986.

The SAP comprises three inter-related policy measures, namely: tackling the country's liquidity problem which involves negotiating for a re-scheduling of outstanding debts; keeping a lid on foreign loans while at the same time giving inducements to encourage new capital in-flow; intensification of effort to curb public sector inefficiency and corruption through improved public expenditure control as well as privatization of parastatals; and correcting the over-valuation of the naira through the setting up of the Secondtier Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM).

Of the three inter-related policy measures, the competence of the Civil Service managers was limited to just the first measure. The civil service structure could not confront the ministerial block or the military-political block which had the power to hire, fire, sack and compensate. This opened the gate of hypocrisy, sycophancy, corruption and impunity in governance.

Chief OluFalae aptly summed up the state of the Nigerian economy when he stated that:

“Although, Nigeria's economy has grown rapidly since 1970 in terms of national income estimates, it is still an economy characterized by serious structural imbalances; it is a frightfully open economy virtually all of whose supply and demand activities are hooked on foreign transactions; an economy whose public sector predominates over the private sector (which enormous leverage has hardly been used for the efficient management of the economy); an economy ravaged by serious unemployment, stagnant (often negative) worker productivity, and raging inflation; an economy that is at once blessed and cursed by crude petroleum; an economy in an almost chronic state of seemingly unmanageable crises” (Falae, 1991).

In the light of the above, one can argue that the aggregate economic development efforts of successive Nigerian governments over the years has not yielded the desired results. To buttress this point, Ifesinachi and Aniche (2014) corroborate this assertion when they asserted that the inability of the government to do the needful has no doubt deepens the economic hardships in Nigeria. Adoyi, Eugene and Usman (2019) also share similar view, when they observed that several years of uninterrupted democratic practice in Nigeria, party politics have not been able to mobilize the majority of the citizens for sustainable socio-economic development.

## **7. THE NIGERIAN CIVIL SERVICE**

The government is the heart or pivot of the public sector service and has three distinct arms, namely the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary. The executive is the machinery which supervises and administers the day-to-day affairs of the nation while the public service is an important part of the outfit of the executive and its functions are crucial to the effectiveness of the governmental system. The Nigerian public service has been described as:

“an organ which enjoys continuity of existence as its members who command a pool of experience and know-how for implementing policies are not limited to a short term of office at the end of which they may not be returned to the office” (FMESM, 2000).

Its role, among others, is

“to carry the burden of planning for and dealing with the problems of growth and development in order to transform our natural resources into goods and services that would meet the rising expectations that come with political independence” (FMESM, 2000).

Thus, while the public service is responsible for applying government rules and regulations equally and fairly to everyone, it does not determine the basic policies of the government which it serves as it is an instrument of the public, subject to direction and open public scrutiny.

The Federal Public Service is split into Ministries, extra-Ministerial Departments and Parastatals and each ministry is headed by a Minister as chief executive and accounting officer with the Director-General as the principal adviser. The distinction among them is given thus:

“While the Economic Ministries help to administer the economy and to manage the nation’s resources, the social ministries provide essential social services and the necessary infrastructural facilities. The Special Services Departments severally and collectively see to the maintenance of law and order, ensure the security of the state, guarantee the protection of individual and corporate rights and liberties and take care of foreign relations as well as look after the welfare and training requirements of officers” (Balogun, 1993).

The term civil service on the other hand, is used to describe “servants of the state or the central Government employed as civilians, excluding ministers/commissioners, cabinet members, and the Judiciary. Essentially, the functions of the civil service are to:

- (i) contribute to the formulation of government policy by supplying Commissioners/Ministers with the information necessary to make right decisions;
- (ii) advise government on the full implication of policy options open to it by placing before the Commissioners/Ministers the arguments on both sides of the case, fully and fairly whatever his own sympathies may be;
- (iii) execute Government policy loyally after the approval of the appropriate authority (Cabinet, Minister/Commissioner, etc) even though he may have preferred a different one;
- (iv) provide continuity through reference to, or clarification of the basis of, past Government decisions and procedures, which are relevant to an issue under consideration and thereby submit national point of view; and
- (v) Protect the public interest and act as the custodian of public conscience (Balogun, 1993).

In carrying out the afore-mentioned functions, the civil servant, being a person “employed in a civil capacity and non-political career basis by the government primarily to render advice and faithfully give effect to their decisions, is obliged to:

- (i) play a leadership role within the Service and in the Community, as a whole;
- (ii) refrain from taking credit for any measure taken by the Commissioner/Minister or government for which he is the author or contributor;
- (iii) observe absolute silence and be discreet as to what takes place in the office since responsibility for policy rests upon Commissioners/Ministers and civil servants are the instruments, rather than masters, of policy;
- (iv) observe the triple maxim of impartiality, neutrality, and anonymity so as to be at all time on tap and never on top; and
- (v) resist illegitimate political demand or pressures by learning that it is in his own interest (and the good of the nation as a whole) to resist political encroachments upon the internal self-regulation of the civil service system (Balogun, 1993).

However, while it is true that the Civil Service has a critical role to play in the management of the economy, the fact remains that economic growth and development is fundamentally a co-operative venture not only between the political leadership and the higher civil servant but also between the public and the private sectors. The role of the civil service at any point in time is a function of the role of state in national development as well as the political leadership’s perception of its role. For instance, the colonial economy was period affected by the market failure of the 1920<sup>’s</sup> and 1930<sup>’s</sup> and during that period, the colonial state acted to provide administrative, legal, fiscal and security conditions to enable metropolitan companies carry out their commercial activities. The colonial state also built roads, railways and ports, and directly intervened to regulate and direct economic activities. However, in the post war years, the state was transformed from a regulatory organ to an instrument for the promotion of welfare. Thus, given adequate educational background and continuous investment in training and retraining, the civil service could shift from one role to another depending on the needs of the time. This role shift has become more feasible with the recent professionalization and specialization of the civil service.

## 8. MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCOVERIES

- (i) In a nation of 200 million people, the entire workforce of civil servant-managers cannot boast of more than three hundred thousand workers. The exposure and relationship ratio stands at less than 15%. Therefore, those civil service managers can only claim maximum understanding and exposure to only 40 million out of 200 million people. The economy of a nation affects every living citizen. For effectiveness and wider coverage, the system, as operated now, can only touch less than 30% of the vast populace, making the system ineffective, unaccountably distant and unknowable to citizens.
- (ii) The huge investment of the Federal government in three assembly plants of automobiles, Power generation and supply, telecommunications, hotels and hospitality industry, arms and armaments, agro-business airlines, insurance business and iron and steel industry all failed largely due to the incompetence and bad management of civil servants (Olagunju, 1987).

## 9. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND PROBLEMS OF CIVIL SERVANT MANAGERS

In the pursuit of its role and functions in the last six decades, a catalogue of short-comings and failings have been made against the civil service. According to Akinyele (1999), these short-comings can be classified into two: institutional defects and Human frailty. The institutional defects include:

- (i) Poor corporate organization characterized by:
  - (a) Bad divisions of labour and poor work arrangement for optimum efficiency;
  - (b) Unstreamlined organizational structures with improper or confused inter-relationships which are detrimental to effective co-ordination; and
  - (c) Poor public relations.
- (ii) Lack of proper planning;
- (iii) Over-establishment leading to the vicious circle of low productivity, under-employment, inefficiency, idleness and vagrancy; waste of human and physical resources and the existence of virtual sinecure appointments without corresponding responsibilities, repetitive duplication of work and related processes;
- (iv) Extreme laxity and gross indiscipline arising from the foregoing;
- (v) Bureaucratic red-tapism (institutional sluggishness);
- (vi) Undue secrecy and confidentiality;
- (vii) Conservatism (institutional inflexibility or rigidity) customarily anchored on Civil Service Rules (CSR) and Financial Regulations (FR) leading to unpurposeful and inert administration; and
- (viii) Vague authorities (lack of clearly defined lines of authority resulting in diffusion of powers and glorified individual positions.

The human frailty includes:

- (i) Attitudes – bad leadership, nepotism, tribalism, ethnicity, insensitiveness and inaccessibility, a master – rather-than-servant ethos and laziness; and
- (ii) Corruption – bribes, grafts and gratifications for consideration for carrying out lawful duties.

Others, however, contended that the civil service has not been fairly portrayed given its contribution to nation-building since independence, particularly at trying periods. In this regard, Lawson while commenting on newspaper publications which refer to civil servants in derogatory terms stated that:

“The top civil servant is being characterized as a person who holds adherence to protocol and avoidance of mistakes as his guidelines. Mr. President, without being immodest, I would like to say, with all sense of responsibility, that the civil servant today, as his predecessor has been before him, is the greatest innovator of political, economic and social changes. This has been his traditional role. On many occasions, those who accused the civil servant of addiction to protocol are persons who, for narrow sectional interests, would wish to flout existing rules” (Lawson, 1973).



In a similar vein, Ayida asserted that:

“The Federal civil service provides one of the pillars in our march to full nationhood. From its record during and since the civil war and the spirit de corps in times of national crisis, the Federal Civil Service occupies the pride of place in the task of nation- building. Like other public institutions, we have had our setbacks and we have a few bad eggs but I am proud to place on record that the Federal Civil Service has been second to no other institution in its loyalty to the nation at all times and adherence to the concept of “One Nigeria” throughout the modern history of Nigeria” (Ayida, 1986)

The evaluation of the civil service should therefore not be viewed from the public image perspective since the civil servant is most often to be seen and not to be heard. Besides, having regard to its low morale and shaken confidence after a baptism of misfortunes, poor image and the whittling down of the responsibilities of its leaders, to be a civil servant is today almost synonymous with being in servitude. And yet no government, no matter its ideological complexion, can perform without an effective and results-oriented civil service whose members should be partners in progress with the political leaders.

Commenting further on the role of the higher civil servant in nation- building, Ayida remarked that:

“The civil servants are to a limited extent expected to dance to the tune of its political masters. They are duty-bound to execute faithfully their decisions. They are however, to do more than that. They are obliged to tender advice fearlessly and must never tailor advice to suit their convenience. Like, all other public functionaries, they must in the final analysis, be guided by the national interest at all times” (Ayida, 1986).

## **10. QUALITIES OF ECONOMIC/DEVELOPMENT MANAGERS**

From the foregoing, there is no gain saying that the dynamic nature of the environment in which public managers currently carry out their day-to-day activities has accentuated the complexity of their task. The civil service reform as well as the commercialization of public enterprises requires the service of development managers who are results-oriented. In order to achieve economic recovery, public sector managers would be expected to acquire the qualities of development and result-oriented managers which will help them execute their open-ended roles successfully. At this juncture, it will be pertinent to state some of the qualities of development and result-oriented managers as enumerated below by Attah (1999):

First, development and result-oriented managers must have an absolute command of basic facts. This means that they must know who is who in the organization, identify key objectives and available scarce resources for an effective and efficient attainment of the organizational objectives. The second quality is relevant professional knowledge, while the ability to exhaustively make rational judgements is the third quality of a successful manager. Some schools of thought hold the view that corporate success is a function of its problem-solving capability. It goes without saying that managers must develop judgement or decision-making skills, including the ability to cope with ambiguity, risk and uncertainty.

Fourth, development and result-oriented managers must have social and commanding qualities so as to work and communicate effectively as a group member to build cooperative effort in the organization. To do this effectively, a successful manager must, in his day-to-day organizational communication, know what to say, when to say it, to whom to say it, and how to say it. He must also be able to listen effectively and attentively to others, be it colleagues or subordinates.

Fifth, the manager’s work is a complex one. He performs a great quantum of work at an unrelenting, nerve wrecking pace. Thus, his job involves a degree of emotional stress and strain. This arise as a result of working in situations which involve the exercise of authority and leadership, the resolution of interpersonal conflicts and crises and meeting of set targets and deadlines. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that development and result-oriented managers must be resilient, versatile and disciplined in order to cope effectively.

Lastly, development and result-oriented managers must be creative. This is the ability to come up with unique responses to changing situations. They must have an insight to recognize, take up and utilize favourable opportunities. Creativity involves having new ideas, and the ability to recognize good and useful ideas from colleagues and subordinates is a supreme condition for transformation.

## 11. SUMMARY/CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper has been able to show the lacunae in the Nigerian civil service system. Thus, the varying degrees of decline and decay and their poor performance is the major explanatory factor responsible for policy somersault that later resulted in poor service delivery at all levels of government (Federal, State and Local Governments). The paper further examines the invaluable importance of civil service in the various facets of the country's endeavours. It also pointed out some of the problems of civil servants as managers of the national economy. While acknowledging the dynamic nature of the environment in which public managers are expected to carry out their day-to-day activities, the paper carefully identified some of the qualities of development and result-oriented managers. The paper concluded that efforts to achieve a vibrant and well-performing civil service would require taking all the issues raised in the write-up with due regard to the country's social, economic and political realities.

## 12. RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM DIRECT PRAGMATIC INSIGHTS

The position of the Civil Servants as managers of the Nigerian economy is delicate, thankless and absolutely impossible to satisfy political leaders and tribal elders, at any given time. A strong body must be created by law to encompass technocrats from necessary frontiers and backgrounds – finance, development studies, economics, civil service top echelon, industries, entrepreneurs, sociologists, legal profession and others, to form a virile agency and serve as vibrant guardians and overseers of budgets and development plans. States, local governments and federal government must set up similar bodies to eradicate impunity and minimize wastages associated with budget implementation. The ministries and departments would still be empowered and able to monitor respective demands from the central body but the guiding spirit for implementation would come from the new legal body suggested for implementation. Needless to say that careful choice of persons with inflexible abhorrence for impunity and corruption must be the mantra of the agency.

The private sector and the Chambers of Commerce must be encouraged and empowered to have a say in the running of state and national economy. Indeed, the imposition of and the direct role of government in economy, other than regulatory measures, should not be allowed to dominate the structure, ever again. It has been established through history and documents that vibrant capitalism thrives under minimal supervision of government but more importantly, through the release of energy, creativity and innovativeness of private sector entrepreneurs and adventurers.

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