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Research Article

Assessment of Innovative Ideas in Nigeria's Public Sector

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Abstract

Public administration as a field of study and practice is undergoing certain changes in order to meet the new demands from society. This is necessary considering the growing complex nature of society and new technological innovations shaping human transactions. Innovative idea in public administration is about evolving new ways of meeting the demands of citizens. This involves a remodeling of the principles and procedures of public administration to achieve prompt response to citizens' demands and their satisfaction with the service delivered. The focus of this paper is to examine the outcome of these innovative ideas in Nigeria's public sector. Evidence from extant literature suggests that the Nigerian public administration system is yet to fully inculcate the philosophy behind the idea of innovation management. This is because the idea is not allowed to run a full circle of implementation before it is either discontinued or allowed to die naturally. This is evident by staff appraisals of public officials without well pre-defined objectives, regular auditing of staff strengthen to ascertain those on Government payroll, recruitment processes poorly executed and citizen's dissatisfaction with public service delivery. Indeed, there is little evidence that show that the structures and processes of government as change remarkably since the return to civil rule. In other words, innovative ideas are yet to take firm root in government establishments. This could be attributed to the lack of support for these innovative ideas by senior public servants.

Data for this research was obtained from secondary sources, such as journal articles, books, newspapers, government and online publications. A qualitative approach, using content analysis, was then applied to analyse the data.

Key Words: Performance management, Public-Private-Partnership, Professionalization

Introduction

The concept of innovation in the civil service was borne out of the need to change the way public services are delivered. It is about finding new and better ways of meeting the expectations of citizens in a growing and complex society. To achieve this, governments across different countries embarked on reforming the structure and processes of its civil service. This means evolving new ideas about how to run government business to make it more efficient and effective.

The genesis of these reforms could be traced to the dissatisfaction with the Weberian ideology of bureaucratic organization. The principles of Max Weber's ideal type bureaucracy were based on adherence to rules and procedures for carrying out government activities. These principles became inadequate in the face of growing expectation by citizens for prompt response to their request and the need to consider individual preferences. The New Public Management (NPM) movement which started in the 1990s was considered as the paradigm shift aimed at addressing the fundamental flaws of the civil service. Osborne and Gaebler [1] in their book *Reinventing Government* offered a set of principles as practical solutions to government institutions that "were seen as undemocratic, unresponsive, inefficient and failing in most measures of what constitutes an effective organization" (Miller and Dunn, [2]. These principles were considered as set of prescriptions for enhancing the performance of the public sector. While the New Public Management has its passionate proponents, there are those who are pessimistic of its ability to transform the public sector. Notwithstanding the divide, there is a consensus that most of the civil service reforms that started in the 1990s across developed and developing countries could be partly traced to the New Public Management movement.

The New Public Management enunciates innovation as a panacea for efficiency in the civil service. The term innovation connotes creative ideas on how to deliver public services that meets customers' (citizens) satisfaction. For instance, most civil service processes in Nigeria are manually driven. The Permanent Secretary in need of advice on a particular issue forwards a memo in that respect to the Departmental or Sectional Head competent to render advice on the issue (Dike, [3]). This process involves a chain of activity that starts with the secretary who receives the memo from the Permanent Secretary and hands it over to a clerk or messenger to dispatch to the appropriate office. The time it takes for the memo to reach the Department concerned and back to the Permanent Secretary is often the reason for the delay in addressing issues that affect citizens' welfare, which some consider as bureaucratic [3,4]. Similarly, these issues are considered within the context of rules and procedures guiding civil service operations. To address this delay, governments in developed and even some developing countries have adopted a modern approach of e-governance to facilitate speedy transaction between agencies of government and citizens. E-governance deals with electronic transaction between the government officials and citizens. The old procedure of citizens been physically present at government offices to transact has changed to internet based transaction. This has not only save time but cost for the citizens who most time have to travel a considerable distance to government offices.

In the area of public service delivery, the old approach was to have public agencies serve as the sole producer and provider. However, this practice has given way to innovative ideas such as Public-Private-Partnership (PPP), outsourcing, performance measurement and so much more. These innovations have transformed the operations of the civil service in developed countries. However, the situation is quite different for the public sector in developing countries. While some changes have occurred, there is still need for improvements in some key areas of the civil service. Table 1 below chronicles the progress made so far in selected African countries.

Innovation and Best Practices	Ghana	Kenya	Nigeria	South Africa
i.Indigenizing and mainstreaming programme leadership and management:	CSSIP homegrown, participatory and consultative with meetings and workshops with stakeholders (i.e, civil servants, parliamentary, industry, CSOs, politicians) Technical assistants from outside. Reform lacks political leadership and commitment.	Not homegrown, participatory and consultative, largely imposed by donors.	Homegrown, participatory and consultative. Largely the results of commissions or enquiry reports.	Careful design of the reform programme including learning from the lessons of reform experiences in both developed and developing countries. Emergence of reform champions, especially at the cabinet level and at the leadership level of the civil service and in parliament.
ii.Integrating an incentive framework under severe budgetary constrains:	Pay reforms to attract skilled staff but longer term pay policy to achieve living wage problematic.	Pay reforms to attract skilled staff but longer term pay policy to achieve living wage problematic.	Pay reforms to attract skilled staff but longer term pay policy to achieve living wage problematic.	Pay reforms to attract skilled staff but longer term pay policy to achieve living wage problematic. Competition from private sector.
iii.Integrating civil service reform processes:	Reforms interventions were running as disparate programmes and projects with minimal links and virtually no coordination.	Reforms interventions were running as disparate programmes and projects with minimal links and virtually no coordination.	Reforms interventions were running as disparate programmes and projects with minimal links and virtually no coordination.	Reforms interventions were running as disparate programmes and projects with minimal links and virtually no coordination.
iv.Radical reorganization of government:	Rationalization of government institutions, roles and functions, decentralization, institutional pluralism in service delivery, agnencification.	Rationalization of government institutions, roles and functions, decentralization, institutional pluralism in service delivery, agnencification	Rationalization of government institutions, roles and functions, decentralization, institutional pluralism in service delivery, agnencification	Rationalization of government institutions, roles and functions, decentralization, institutional pluralism in service delivery, agnencification
v.Building smart partnership with a variety of stakeholders:	Vigorous public private partnerships, civil society, cabinet, politicians, industry, etc.	Less public private partnerships, civil society, cabinet, politicians, industry, etc.	Less public private partnerships, civil society, cabinet, politicians, industry, etc.	Vigorous public private partnerships, civil society, cabinet, politicians, industry, etc
vi.Effective and efficient delivery of public services:	Ineffective and inefficient delivery of public services.	Ineffective and inefficient delivery of public services	Ineffective and inefficient delivery of public services	Ineffective and inefficient delivery of public services
vii.Performance management agreements with senior civil servants:	Progress made but more room for improvement.	Progress made but more room for improvement	Progress made but more room for improvement	Progress made but more room for improvement
viii.Promoting accountability and transparency:	Self-appraisals, beneficiary surveys in the form of consultation with clients, diagnostic workshop, establishment of client services units and the complaints system, communication strategy involving newsletter and press conference.	Little consultation with clients and customers of MDAs; lack of communication strategy involving newsletter and press conferences; little information sharing between MDAs and public.	Little consultation with clients and customers of MDAs; lack of communication strategy involving newsletter and press conferences; little information sharing between MDAs and public.	Centre for Public Service Innovation influences behavior and change work practices. It engages with stakeholders, determine areas of potential action.

ix.E-government:	Some progress made to establish e-government through creation of websites of government institutions.	Some progress made to establish e-government through creation of websites of government institutions.	Some progress made to establish e-government through creation of websites of government institutions.	Rapid progress made to establish e-government through creation of websites of government institutions. Integrating service delivery with special focus on e-government.
x.Capacity building initiatives:	Little progress made.	Little progress made.	Little progress made.	Little progress made.
xi.Reducing corruption:	Some progress made to reduce corruption.	Some progress made to reduce corruption.	Some progress made to reduce corruption.	Some progress made to reduce corruption.
xii.Enhanced remuneration for civil servants:	Poor remuneration package of civil servants.	Poor remuneration package of civil servants.	Poor remuneration package of civil servants.	Poor remuneration package of civil servants.
xiii.Institutional framework for innovation:	Ministry of Public Sector Reforms established to coordinate public sector reform in 2005 to provide an institutional home. No institution for innovation.	National Steering Committee assisted by the Civil Service Reform secretariat was established in 1999 to be the overall coordinating body for reform initiative in the civil service.	Bureau of Public Sector Reforms established in 2003 to initiate and coordinate action plan on reform at all levels. No institution for innovation.	Centre for Public Service Innovation established in June 2001 to actively identify innovative solutions to service delivery challenges and support innovators. It produced a pocket guide to innovation in the South African Public Sector.
xiv.Annual civil service monitoring and evaluation:	Not done.	Not done.	Not done.	Since 2000 the Public Service Commission initiated the Transversal Public Service Monitoring and Evaluation System (TPSM&ES) to see how Departments comply with the 9 principles of the Constitution.

Source: ECA, [5]

From the table above, it will be observed that South Africa is the only country that has made appreciable progress on some of the indices of innovative management. Similarly, the country has made significant progress in adopting innovative ideas such as Public Private Partnership and E-government. Innovation management is all about bringing new principles and ideas to civil service procedures that will enhance efficiency and effectiveness. There is also the need to put in place structures and processes that will sustain these innovative ideas. This is because public officials could become fixated on an innovative idea and ignore a review so as to improve on it. Innovative ideas are dynamic and constantly evolving in an atmosphere that encourages broad base participation and updating of knowledge. The preceding sections of this paper will consider the areas where innovations were introduced in Nigeria's public sector and examine its effect on the Nigerian public administration system.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

An important aspect of innovation management is performance measurement. The output of a civil servant or public official must be evaluated to ascertain if it is corresponding with the mission of the organization. Previous experience in the civil service has shown that most civil servants simply adhere to civil service rules and regulation without recourse to the attainment of the goals of the service. Output of civil servants was difficult to measure and even instances where such were embarked up on, there were contention on the objectivity and practicability of the criteria used. However, the civil service reforms of the 1990s ushered in a new perspective on performance measurement which has seen more and more countries adopting its tenets. The aim of performance measurement system as stated in the State Human Resources Manual of North Carolina [6] includes the following:

1. The work performed by employees accomplishes the work of the agency;
2. Employees have a clear understanding of the quality and quantity of work expected from them;
3. Employees receive ongoing information about how effectively they are performing relative to expectations;
4. Awards and salary increases based on employee performance are distributed accordingly;
5. Opportunities for employee development are identified and
6. Employee performance that does not meet expectations is addressed.

Thus, a performance management system is a two way channel between the employer and the employee, in this case the government and the civil servant. Clearly, each ministry within the civil service has a clear mandate from government. The establishment of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) is to address certain issues in society. The work needed to address these issues is then clearly enumerated such that everyone is aware of the process of achieving the task. The next step is to communicate these tasks to the

worker such that he or she knows what is expected of them. Furthermore, there are regular appraisals to know if the employee is working in line with the expected results and if the employee is not, avenues for improvement is identified. This is the general view of what performance management system is.

According to Dogarawa [7] performance management is "the process of setting performance expectations, monitoring progress, measuring results, and appraising and rewarding or correcting employee performance". This definition is in line with that of Shane [8] who defines performance measurement "as a philosophy of continuous learning in which feedback is used to make ongoing adjustments to the course of an organization in the pursuit of its vision". These definitions illustrate the need to have a framework for informing the civil servants about what he or she has to do on the job to achieve spelt out objectives which are sacrosanct with the mission of the ministry, department and agency. Similarly, there are measures put in place to reward those who are attaining organizational expectations while those not doing so are giving opportunities for improvement. A Civil Service Agency Document of Liberia [9] defines civil service performance management system(PMS) as "a framework for assessing, maintaining and improving employee job performance through the use of various performance tools while providing continuous feedback, thereby affecting the general output of the institution". Thus, indicating the important role the civil servant has to play in the success of their ministry or agency. A salient attribute of performance measurement is job description. This according to Dogarawa [7,10] will encourage the employee, within the working time to work more efficiently.

Despite the inherent benefits of performance management systems, there are certain challenges that supervisors or managers encounter. The supervisors and managers have the responsibility of appraising the performance of their subordinates using prescribed formats. However, the credibility of some of these appraisals has been questioned. Gilbert [11] was of the opinion that the performance appraisals done by supervisors lack credibility when it is used to favour family and friends at the expense of other co-workers in a competitive promotion exercise. This negates the intention of the performance measurement system. This was the case with the Federal Civil Service Commission introduction of examination to evaluate officers to be considered for promotion. The exercise was perceived as sacrificing the career of competent and productive public servants on the altar of corruption and thus created a lack of confidence in the Federal Civil Service Commission. Similarly, it led to low morale, lack of commitment, frustration and low productivity in the civil service [11, 12]. Notwithstanding, the performance measurement has certain advantages. One, it gives the employer and the employee an opportunity to meet formally. The latter is made aware of what is expected of him/her and the former knows what the employee is actually doing and not an assumption of what he/she is doing. According to Boswell and Boudreau, [13] performance appraisal serves two basic functions; evaluative and developmental. The evaluative aspect of performance appraisal is mainly for salary administration, promotion decisions, retention-termination decisions and recognition of individual performance, layoffs and the identification of poor performance. While the developmental functions covers areas such as identification of individual training needs, providing performance feedback, determining transfers and assignments and the identification of individual strengths and weaknesses.

Performance Measurement System could be categorize into the following types; Category Rating Methods, Comparative Methods and Narrative Methods. Each method could be further divided into various sub-categories. The Category Rating Methods comprises of Graphic Rating Scale, Checklist and Forced Choice. The Comparative Methods has the Ranking, Paired Composition and Forced Distribution. The Narrative Methods is made of the Essay, Critical Incidents, Field Review, Management by Objectives (MBO) and Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS). Each of these performance measurements could be used separately or collectively as each serve different purpose. The Management by Objectives for instance, is widely used in the both the public and private sector. Under this category of performance measurement, the employee and the manager meet usually at the commencement of the appraisal period to outline specific goals and objectives to be accomplished within a specified time frame. The hallmark of the MBO system is the direct link the employee goals and objectives have with that of the organization. Its strength lies in the ability to make the employee aware of the appraisal process, a format to measure successful performance and smooth integration in to the overall performance improvement initiatives of the organization. However, the disadvantages are that it takes more time and paperwork. In choosing a performance measurement for the civil servants, there is need to understand what works best for the civil service. Basically the criteria for determining a suitable performance measurement system are:

1. Setting performance criteria (what exactly is to be evaluated),
2. Developing tracking and documenting procedures (using forms and/or notes),
3. Determining which areas should be measured quantitatively (giving points for each category of performance) and,
4. Determining how the information should be communicated to the employees (feedback: discussion or notice).

(Civil Service Agency Document of Liberia, [9, 14]).

Performance measurement is gaining wide acceptance as government are been asked to justified the huge resources expended on civil servants or the civil service which does not commensurate with the services rendered.

From available evidence in Nigeria, performance measurement is seen more as a tool to reward loyalist in the system and punish perceived 'villians'. Thus, negating the purpose it was meant to serve. A major flaw in the performance measurement exercise is that there are no specific goals or objectives that civil servants are working towards. The appraisal that is done at the end of the year is more subjective than objective since there were no well defined goals to measure performance of civil servants against. Obasan and Sotunde [15] conducted an empirical assessment of performance appraisal in selected government parastatals and found out that "most government parastatals do not set goals and therefore do not conduct objective appraisal". Atakpa et al [16] also observed that performance appraisal in Nigeria public service are laden with cultural values and limited resources. It is a noticeable cultural trend for younger officials to respect elderly officials even in the public service. This makes appraisal by younger superiors of their elderly subordinates difficult. This is because it is culturally inappropriate to inform elderly subordinates that they are performing below expectations. Similarly, these officials may not get the necessary resources to achieve the tasks assigned to them, thereby making it unreasonable to appraise these officials objectively.

Introduction of Ippis in The Public Service

The acronym IPPIS stands for the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System. The purpose of the system is to eliminate the wastages noticed in payroll administration of the public service. The intention of this system is bring about a more efficient and effective procedure for collating and analyzing staff information in terms of salaries and emoluments. The need for this system which is computer based arose from the challenges noticed in the area of linking staff bio-data and remuneration. The number of ministries and departments in the Federal civil service in Nigeria had grown such that the number of civil servants had expanded from less than thirty thousand in 1960 to 273,392 in 1988 (Anazodo et al, [17]). This number would have further increased as additional ministries and departments were created upon the country's return to civil rule in 1999. How to ensure accurate information of these staffs in order to determine their remuneration and allowances became a source of concern to the government. Instances of ghost workers abound, salary delays, short payments, in-accurate staffing levels and poor accountability of funds abound in the federal civil service. A major challenge in the control and management of personnel in the Nigerian civil service is the gradual collapse of the system for collecting, storing and disseminating data on government employees. Information about civil servants were not readily available or incomplete and this availed the opportunities for fraud in the service.

To address these challenges, new procedures were sought for that will eliminate the manual or semi-manual system of payroll administration. The IPPS is a computerize and efficient human resource management information system that could be deplored by Ministries, Departments and Agencies to undertake human resource activities from recruitment to separation including payroll and pension processing. The IPPIS serves the following purposes:

- To maintain accurate and consistent personnel data in the Public Service.
- To address the challenges in manual complement control, payroll and personnel registries, skill inventories and budgeting of Personnel Emoluments posed by manual payroll administration and thereby do away with salary delays, promote accurate data capture on staffing levels.
- Create an efficient computer-based system for gathering , storing and processing information for management decision making in such aspects as recruitment, training, postings, transfers, seniority lists, promotions and retirements, salary related issues, enforcing statutory deductions, processing of request for loans, advances and ensuring their recovery.
- To minimize wastage that used to be incurred through bulky printing of paper whenever personnel related query was raised.
- Make it possible to use data for purposes of expediting decision making on such matters as discipline, assessments of liabilities for calculation of pension and processing and payment of gratuities.

(Source: Management Consultancy Services Division, Ministry of State for Public Service, Office of the President, Nairobi-Kenya)

The introduction of the IPPIS in to the Federal Civil Service started with six selected ministries, departments and agencies as pilot projects. Part of the outcome of the IPPIS as enumerated by Mr. Jonah Otunla, then Accountant-General of the Federation, is that "From April 2007 when the scheme commenced till date, 246 MDAs were enrolled with a total number of 250,000 members of staff and over N120bn cumulatively saved as a result of the difference between the amount the government would have released to the MDAs based on appropriation and the actual amount released and paid through the IPPIS," (The Punch, [18]). Clearly the system is a better approach to managing payroll and personnel issues. It reduces time spent of manually collating the data of personnel which are not regularly updated and tends to be inefficient. However, this system has not been fully entrenched in the Nigerian civil service as Kariuki and Kiragu [19] observed:

..... the systems for collecting, processing, maintaining and reporting data on public servants remain weak. As a result, critical information needed to compute government's wage bill is incomplete and unreliable. This collapse in the system's controls increases the risk of fraud in the payrolls, such as over payments and the entry of ghost workers, which can be a major drain of public resources.

A recent case to highlight the poor system of data collection of public officials was the discovery of a fake Doctor practicing with the credentials of another individual in a government hospital (The Punch, [18, 20]). The individual in question had being on government payroll for some years before he was discovered. This is an indication that the IPPS has not been fully deployed to eliminate incidence of ghost workers.

Professionalism in the Federal Civil Service.

The Weberian concept of bureaucracy advocates that been a bureaucratic official constitutes a career (Weber, [21]). In other words, the civil service is a profession with its own unique knowledge and skills. The attempt to professionalize the public service has been a perpetual trend in the history of Public Administration. The civil servant is supposed to be an individual who espouse the ethos and values of his/her profession. The demand to professionalize the civil service escalated at the advent of the public sector reforms which swept across the developed and developing countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This was as a result of the negative impression given to the profession by civil servants who were seen as officials that just observed rules and were not result oriented. The situation in developing countries was at best abysmal as government officials were not only perceived as been incompetent but also grossly corrupt. The attitudes and work ethics displayed by civil servants in Nigeria are appalling. Government officials are more concerned about the security of their positions than how to effectively manage the affairs of the state. This is compounded by the unethical way individuals are recruited in to the public service. Eme Okechukwu and Onwuka [22] observed that the fallout of the spoils system of recruitment and ineffective on-the-job training “is the emphasis on filling slots rather than matching employees’ skills with the needs of the position”. This trend has not help the push for a more professional civil service.

According to Hammer ([23], cited by A.A Gebrekidan [24]), “a professional must be a problem solver. He or she must not be the one who is interested to serve in a readymade situation alone”. A professional should be someone who has a high degree of theoretically and empirically based knowledge acquired by means of education or training from a recognized institution. The United Nations Department for Economics and Social Affairs [25] conceptualize public service professionalism as that which “embraces the notion that those people who join the public service need to be inculcated with shared values and trained in basic skills to professionally carry out their official duties”. These official duties are the implementation of government policies and programme. These policies when formulated are usually vague and ambiguous such that it is the duty of the civil servant to operationalize how they are to be implemented. For instance, the overall policy objective of the revised 2004 National Health Policy is “to provide effective, efficient quality, accessible and affordable health services that will improve the health status of Nigerians through the achievement of the health related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)” (FMH, [26]). It is the duty of civil servants to identify the activities or processes that could achieve this objective. Therefore, the civil servant must possess the requisite skills and knowledge to perform this function. Professionalism in the civil service is so sacrosanct and the base for which other important values such as loyalty, neutrality, diligence, impartiality and effectiveness are built.

To achieve a high level of professionalism in a country faced with wide spread corruption and poverty like Nigeria is considered a herculean task. Most times, civil servants in Nigeria find themselves in a state of dilemma on how to perform their official duties without offending their political head. Their loyalty often times is to the political head and not to the institution of the State. The political heads have assumed overbearing influence such that by the time they leave office, there are allegations of corruption and misappropriation of funds leveled against them. The civil servants are by law to render advice impartially to the political head on the most suitable option of achieving government programmes. The situation has degenerated to connivance between the political head and civil servants on how to siphon public funds. Another sour issue in the civil service is the delay in remuneration of civil servants. Sometimes salaries are delayed or not paid for months making engagement in corrupt practice an inevitable course of action. These issues will in no way enhance professionalism in the civil service. There is the need to address how civil servants are controlled at will by Political heads and prompt payment of their salaries.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the Federal government took some steps in professionalizing the civil service. Some of the measures put in place as enumerated by Adegoroye [27] for professionalization of the civil service include;

- a. *Rightsizing the service: under this arrangement the public service is being right size based on some defined criteria to weed out those who are not professionally, technically and ethically competent to continue to remain therein. At the end of this exercise, a total of 8,916 officers were disengaged from the service.*
- b. *Restructuring of Ministries: this is about facing out the excess staff strengths that ordinarily should not be in the ministry. For instance, it was noticed in the ministry of Finance that professional staff constituted 15% of the entire staff population. Under the reform programme, those with relevant experience and qualification were retained and others were redeployed to ministries that they could function in.*
- c. *Service wide capacity Building: Basically, Public servants have to be trained and retrained for efficiency and effectiveness. To achieve this, training institutions had to be repositioned to ensure that public servants are up to date in terms of modern skills and knowledge.*

Despite the introduction of these measures, instances still abound of unethical behavior of civil servants. Absenteeism from work, corrupt practices and poor service delivery are still part of the vices affecting the nation's civil service. The challenge must times is that the action taken to reposition the civil service ends with each administration. Once a new administration comes in to power, the previous efforts at reforming the service are jettison and new programmes are embarked upon. These new programmes of reforms suffer the same fate at the expiration of that administration. The process of professionalization of the Public service is a continuous one as society keeps encountering new challenges that will necessitate these public officials to be more professional in handling them.

Recent Innovations in Public Service Delivery

Recent innovations in the area of Public service delivery has seen a shift from the traditional model of government been the sole provider to a more pragmatic approach such as public-private partnerships and alternative service delivery (ASD). The primary responsibility of any public administration system is to deliver services that the private sector may not deliver at all or to deliver services to those who cannot afford the market price of the product. Fundamentally, the ability of a government to legitimately tax and govern people is premised on its capacity to deliver a range of services required by its population which no other player will provide. In other word, government owns their existence and legitimacy to the fact that there are services in which the possibility of market failure is great. Consequently, public service delivery is the process of ensuring that services needed by the citizens are delivered in an efficient and effective manner.

Goods and services that require exclusion, jointness of use or consumption and not easily divisible are regarded as public goods and services. Similarly, services are classified in several ways. Services that can be financed by user charges are referred to as utilities; those that can only be financed by taxes are referred to as services (Olowu, [28]). The concept of public services delivery has been shaped by two fundamental notions. These are that one; provision can be separated from production. The primary responsibility of a provider is to aggregate and articulate the demand of its constituents and to raise the funds, using its coercive governmental powers over citizens, to finance public goods. The producer on the other hand, performs the wholly technical function of transforming inputs into outputs. The producer could be a unit of government or a private or voluntary institution. The other notion about public service delivery is the recognition that government agencies do not need to dominate the provision of services. On the contrary, their efforts should be on creating an enabling environment for the private investor and play their own roles in an increasing complex governance environment. In other words, government is supposed to "steer" the delivery of public services and not necessarily provide such services (Miller and Dunn, [2, 29]). It is the responsibility of government to look for ways of providing public services and play the role of a facilitator or regulator. This principle has given rise to certain innovations that has altered the structure and process of public service delivery. One of such innovation is Alternative Service Delivery (ASD).

Alternative Service Delivery is a creative and unique procedure that involves changes in the style of existing public sector organizations or the design of new forms of organization and is sometimes referred to as "restructuring" and "organizational innovation". Paquet [30] says that ASD represents "A creative and dynamic process of public sector restructuring which improves the delivery of services to clients by sharing governance functions with individuals, community groups and other government entities". In other word, the aim of ASD is to change the process of service delivery from government monopolies to joint ventures that ultimately improve the quality and quantity of these services.

The development of ASD arrangements has been closely linked with the advent of New Public Management (NPM) movement which advocates for innovative approaches to service delivery. NPM is of the view that government should steer and leave the actual delivery of these services to non-governmental entities or to collaborative arrangements between governmental and private entities. The crux of the argument of the NPM was that government should focus on policy formulation as its main function and engage the private or non-governmental organization in service delivery.

The factors that led to the Alternative Service delivery arrangements could be seen in the fiscal problems that engulf most developing countries. According to Peteri [31] *"Cutbacks in expenditures and increase of public revenues did not provide sufficient sources for financing the traditionally accepted level of public services. So government entities were forced to increase the efficiency of their services. One potential form of achieving higher efficiency is to utilize the advantages of the private sector entities that is to develop alternative service delivery arrangements"*. This was the situation in Nigeria when government could no longer finance most capital projects and even public corporations were performing at a loss. The general trend was to privatize these entities and hands off management. However, issues bothering on equity and access had to be resolved to guide against the exclusion of certain strata of the society like the lower-class. Therefore, beyond the privatization process, other mechanism were sought for in order to effectively deliver public goods and services. To achieve this, there was need to classifier public services. Olowu [28, 32] argued that in adopting a suitable option for delivering services, there is a need to classifier these services. Services according to him could be grouped in to those for which the exit option for citizens is feasible and which can therefore be provided by the private sector. An example of such

service is solid waste disposal. On the other hand, services for which exit options is not feasible and would require enhanced voice mechanism, the public sector has to be involved in some form. This could be in the form of Public-Private-Partnership (PPP).

Alternative Service Delivery could come in various forms depending as argued earlier on the nature of the services involved. Peteri [31, 33] identified some of the common types of ASD;

1. Contracting Out.

Under this technique, government as a client signs a contract with the private entity to provide the service for a group of consumers. These services are purchased from the contractor and they are paid directly by the government or the consumers. In the latter case, the price is mostly controlled by government decisions. There is an obligation on the public bodies to monitor and control the service delivery. An example is the importation of petroleum products into the country by Independent Petroleum Marketers of Nigeria. The importation of petroleum products had been contracted out to these marketers to ease the distribution of fuel across the country.

2. Build, Operate, transfer (BOT) schemes

Public services and public utilities are capital intensive sectors of the economy, so national and local governments are always faced with the lack of sources to finance capital projects. Most times, capital costs could be recovered after some years or the assets are used for generations. In this case, private capital could be involved in financing government projects. If the construction is financed by private investors, the government can pay back the capital and the interest on the capital by contracting with the private company. The sources of financing the projects are user charges and other payments made by the users of the utilities. When the project costs are totally covered, the government takes over the assets and the right to run the service. An example is the Ikoyi bridge in Lagos state.

3. Concession

Contracts for public service delivery with the requirement to implement capital investments are called concessions. It is different from BOT schemes as the service is not based on a new investment. In most countries it is restricted by law, where services can be operated through concession agreements. An example is the reconstruction of the Eti- Osa –Epe expressway by Lekki Concession Company.

Alternative Service Delivery could take the above forms depending on the economic realities within the country. In the case of Nigeria, this took the form of Public-Private-Partnership. This initiative was used to address areas where government could not meet the expectations of the citizens. However, certain challenges arose from these new arrangements that could mar the success of this initiative. One, the vast majority of citizens could find it difficult to adjust to the charges for these services. For instance, the Lagos state government had to terminate the concession on the Ikoyi Bridge as motorists were complaining of the high cost of toll. Secondly, some of the companies were not able to deliver the needed services. An example is the concession granted Bi-Courtney to reconstruct Lagos-Ibadan expressway. The federal government was compelled in 2013 to revoke the contract as the company was unable to raise the funds to execute the project. This initiative cannot be implemented in isolation as other extraneous factors have to be considered in order to ensure success. Notwithstanding, the initiative has the capacity to transform infrastructural development in the country as long as the terms of the contract is well spelt out and parties to it (government and private companies) fulfill their own part of the agreement.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis assessed certain areas of the public sector where innovative ideas were introduced and the outcome it generated. Although, this is not an empirical research, the observable trend in the literature is the gradual decline in the tempo ushering in these ideas. At the initial stage, there appears to be a will on the part of government to actualize these ideas. However, down the line, the will begins to wane particularly when there is a change in government. Similarly, Maduabum [34] observed that innovative ideas are often resisted by superior officers particularly when these ideas come from junior officers. They perceive such ideas as inimical to their interest in the public service. Consequently, they tend to frustrate or not support such innovative ideas. This probably explains why there is a decline in the tempo heralding the introduction of such innovative ideas. Senior civil servants though are supposed to be neutral, have become obviously partisan in order to protect their interest.

In conclusion, innovative ideas have the potential to transform the structure and processes of the public sector to make it more efficient and effective. This is possible if such innovative ideas are given the necessary support by the political class and top echelons of the civil service.

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