

The Melting Point between SERVICOM and Service Failure: A Labyrinth for Efficient Service Delivery in Nigeria

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Abstract: *This paper is meant to re-engineer and re-invent a service efficiency in an institutional investment dynamism in line with the global best practices and competency in government and governance activities in Nigeria. The approach adopted is a review of literature that illuminates and forms a background for discussion through descriptive and content analytical methods across the globe. The findings show that ethical, social/ethnic and religious factors are impediments, thereby creating service inefficiency in the system. The study revealed that public service is currently being positively impacted by the service compact initiative. The study noted that service promotion, courteous treatment, staff attitude and timeliness which enhance efficiency in public service were greatly adhered to. It revealed that responses have shown a massive support for enhancing efficiency of service delivery. The study further reveal that lack of rigidity and meritocracy in recruitment, low remuneration of staff among others are some of the root causes of service failure in the Nigerian public sector. In line with the findings above, the study spur scholarly interest on the performance of SERVICOM in democratic governance, considering its goals and objectives. SERVICOM studies in Nigeria is currently new and need to be developed. This paper, thus, seek to compel scholars to delve into the performance of SERVICOM particularly as it affects public perceptions of service delivery in administrations.*

Keywords: *SERVICOM, Service failure, Labyrinth, Bureaucratic process, Public Sector, Implications.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, service delivery has been an issue of controversy in respect to the quality of service received by the public. A wide range of factors such as conservative bureaucracy, ethnicity and ethical considerations have been identified as a *cul de sac* to efficiency despite various government policy reforms in the public sector. The Nigeria public service is a vital government institution consisting of the staff of the central administrations, state administrations, the police and the Nigerian Armed forces among others of the nation. The public service refers to all organizations that exist as part of the federal government system responsible for the implementation policy decisions and delivery of social services (Tamuno, 2004). According to Adamolekun (2001), the public service in Nigeria is made up of the following: the civil service, which is often referred to as the core service. It is composed of ministries, extra ministerial agencies and directorates; the public bureaucracy, which is composed of the enlarged public service, is including: Services to the states and national assemblies; the judiciary; the armed forces; the police and other security agencies.

Although the Nigeria public service has greatly deviated from the inherited British system of administration, which is noted for prompt and efficient service, an argument many scholars like Badmus (2012), Igwilo (2012) and Alalade (2006) noted was due to improper learning, crave for wealth, poverty and insincerity on the part of the technocrat who collect the instrument of administration from the British. This has constituted a serious impediment to effective implementation of government policies; and thereby culminating into dwindling standard of service provided by government institutions. In the current situation, Ezeani (2006) noted that the damaging effects on the amount of trust the people have in the ability of the government has become a problem. Nigerians are well aware of the unpleasant manifestations of the appalling standard of service delivery in the country. Under the popular caption of the 'Nigerian way' many Nigerians have grown accustomed to regarding public service as something you battle for; and you cannot succeed unless you know someone inside the system (King, 1988). The Nigerian Public Service has degenerated into the present circumstances of poor service delivery in government agencies, when public servants, if they serve you at all, do so as a favour, or at a price (Gboyega, 1996). To this effect, SERVICOM was introduced by the government as an intervening platform to

checkmate poor services and ensure efficient service delivery in its varied public institutions, agencies and parastatals. Thus, on these stated problematic underpinnings, former president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in year 2003, constituted a committee of experts headed by Wendy Thomas to help Nigeria do a diagnostic audit of the system, examine institutional environment for service delivery, reflect on people's lives and experiences and draw a road map for a service delivery programme. The service delivery programme should:

- Create 'citizens' and 'customers' demand;
- Instil higher expectations of public services;
- Communicate service entitlements and rights;
- Publish information about performance;
- Redesign the services around customer requirements;
- Success of the programme will require committed leadership from the top;
- Government should demonstrate leadership commitment with a public declaration about service delivery.

The compact's provision says:

"We dedicate ourselves to providing the basic services to which citizens are entitled: timely, fairly, honestly, effectively and transparently" (Reports, 2003).

Obriki (2013) clarifies that SERVICOM is responsible for coordinating the development of Service Charters for all government offices, monitoring the implementation of the charters, evaluating the performance of the government ministries and departments in terms of productivity and service delivery, and reporting back to the Federal Executive Council (FEC) on a regular basis. A critical examination of the above objectives of SERVICOM, indeed, brought hope to millions of Nigerians whom the door had been shut against in relation to the marginalization arising from service failure. Still emphasizing service failure in the Nigerian public sector, Ekwunife (2003:39) x-rayed service failure in the words of Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu as a phenomenon that is inimical to the social, economic and political climates of the nation. He speaks:

According to Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu, the enemies of our land are political profiteers, the intellectual swindlers... the men in high and low places who seek bribes... seek to keep the country presently divided and poor so that they can remain VIPs; tribalists, the nepotisms... and all who try to put social, economic and political calendar of Nigeria back...

These lines presuppose the practice of bribery, swindling, tribalism and nepotism manifest in "who knows who" (connection syndrome) as factors that demean SERVICOM and promote service failure in the Nigerian public sector. Corroborating this idea, Obasanjo (2003) notes that Nigerians have for too long felt shortchanged by the quality of public services which are not delivered without "undue influence" or "inducement". Anyanwu (2002) lends credence to this while writing on his prison experience in Kirikiri maximum prison Lagos State, Nigeria. She notes that the prison inmates are denied of every right that makes them human beings, and that the slightest fair treatment to a prison inmate is given on the offer of "tips to the prison officer who is the goddess of this Queen". Presenting the nature of service failure in election campaign towards democratic governance, Nwabueze (2011) reveals our politicians as deceivers of the masses whose campaign promises and manifestoes are far removed from the truth. For a character who was called 'Reverend' during the campaign, Nwabueze shows the service failure involved:

Forget about hm. We called him reverend during the campaigns because we thought that the title would purchase us some credibility from the voters. And it worked! Politics is no child's play... Prof. was a factory worker in London. We asked him to take that title in order to make our party look intellectual. You see, our people are obsessed with titles. He doesn't have a certificate... politics is no child's play.

To this effect therefore, these public offices in Nigeria have for long been riddled with inefficiency and corruption and have become impediments to the effective implementation of government policies, particularly in ensuring an efficient service delivery. The foregoing shows the need for enhanced productivity in Nigeria public sector in view of the challenges of inefficiency which stand as major hiccups to public service delivery (Okechukwu; Ndukwe, and Ukeje, 2015) and an efficient and effective governance that is poised with the mandate of ensuring quality service towards building a modern state. This entails creating a service culture that recognizes the citizens as 'customer' of government.

Furthermore, arising from the persistent problem of low productivity in the Nigerian public sector, studies reveal that the public sector in most third world countries signals the worst tendencies of the 'dead hand' of bureaucracy, corruption, poor services, red tape ideology due to the accumulation of excessive power, lack of accountability and representation indifference towards public needs and demands, official secrecy and

inaccessibility, and role in depoliticizing the public sphere (UN-ECA, 2009). Looking at the red tape ideology as a form of official service failure in the society, Libondo (1973: 9) notes some experiences:

I'm a member of the R. E. D. T. A. P. E (party) too... you should be quick to understand that bicycles are used on public roads, and that therefore the Government has a definite interest in who owns and operates bicycles. We can't allow just anyone to be loose on the roads with a bicycle.

According to Iloh et al (2012), government-owned public establishments in Nigeria have received the highest level of negative comments in the society. These negative comments range from poor quality of service delivery to service delay; staff indifferent attitude to ineffective bureaucratic procedures thereby leading to poor service delivery/ service failure. There is therefore an urgent need to improve the capability of public servants to deliver services to the satisfaction of the citizens in consonance with democratic principles if higher productivity is to be achieved. Arowolo (2010) opines that public service is the tool by which development is attained. Service delay in the public sector can also be a product of bureaucratic procedures whereby the official process to a goal is as frustrating as frustration itself. Perhaps, service delay is one feature that characterizes Nigeria's democratic governance. Public service can suffer service delay owing to the fact that it is no man's venture; hence, it suffers efficient service delivery. Every body's business is nobody's business. Libondo (1993:6-7) captures this failure arising from bureaucratic procedures when he satirically recounts that an attempt to buy a simple machine like bicycle requires the buyer to:

"...fill the permission form and return same with a certified true copy of birth certificate, certified true copy of identity card, certified true copy of academic diplomas, twelve identification photos, certified true copy of labour (party) card... certified true copy of marriage certificate, certified of non-conviction, certificate of..."

Certainly, this official procedure frustrates and negates the ideas and ideals of SERVICOM and brings to question the effectiveness and usability of SEVICOM in enhancing productivity. Proper implementation of SERVICOM should therefore be able to tackle the problem of low productivity that has jeopardized the development of the Nigerian public sector in a timely, fair, honest, effective and transparent manner (Oswald, 2014). Since SERVICOM is aimed at orientating and changing the mind-set of public servants in workplace, issues like low productivity in service delivery, weak systems for managing government finances, human resources and staff training, among others would be addressed through the adoption of SERVICOM principles. Ocheni; Atakpa, and Nwankwo, (2013) assert that the acquisition of proper skill and knowledge through training makes staff versatile and enhances their speed in performance and productivity. Obriki (2013) also observes that poor funding and lack of political will in Nigerian public sector have weakened the implementation of SERVICOM in various government ministries, departments and hindered the ability of realizing quality service delivery.

Speaking about "Effective Service Delivery in Nigerian Customs Service", Nwabueze (2011:9) quoted the former President Umaru Yar'Adua as saying:

...the service should reduce, to the barest minimum, the cost of doing business, as well as make it simple and faster... the Federal Government is concerned about efficient service delivery in the Nigerian Custom Service.

This addresses both the issue of cost implication and bureaucratic bottleneck which relegate the ideals of SERVICOM in the Nigerian Customs Service. Poor funding can be a serious impediment to both human and material resources in the public sector and pins down every idea of SERVICOM. Service failure is experienced in many facets of our social institutions and a major case in point is institutional recruitment. This is where the connection syndrome tends to cripple the idea of efficient service delivery. Corruption in institutional recruitments, brown envelopes, unhealthy competitions, among others are factors that interplay to make recruitments the worst experience a job seeker faces in Nigeria. Nwabueze (2011:14-15) captures this vividly:

The Kogi State Commandant of Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), EtimAbasi has been petitioned for allegedly playing ethnic politics in the just concluded recruitment and verification exercise... there was gross lopsidedness and imbalance against volunteers.

Scenes of this kind are no news in Nigeria. It is on this premise that this paper argues for an institutionalization of good governance principles in Nigerian democracy as a necessary foundation for effective and efficient service delivery in public organizations.

An x-ray of the state of Nigerian Public Sector: A scholarly perspective

Sokoya (2000) agrees that the public sector in developing countries, over the years, has been in the fore-front of economic development. The public sector reflects the state of the nation and no nation has been able to advance beyond its public service. Nasir (2006) refers to the public service as an agglomeration of all organizations that exist as part of government machinery for the delivery of quality services. This includes: the civil service, the National Assemblies, the Judiciary, the Police and other security agencies such as Immigration, Customs, Prisons, etc including social service, infrastructure agencies, regulatory agencies, educational institutions and research institutes at Federal and States levels. In relation to the service failure prevailing in institutional recruitments as shown above, Oswald (2014) maintains that the introduction of SERVICOM was to ensure that all citizens have equal and equitable access to government services and that adequate information should be provided at every service point to eliminate bottlenecks in service delivery.

Olukemi and Babatunde (2013) examining the nature of public service in terms of service delivery, posit that Nigerian civil service was over-sized and poorly remunerated, resulting in inefficient service delivery. Rapid public sector recruitment under military regimes has resulted in an over-sized and under-skilled workforce in which employees often did not have the appropriate technical skills needed for their assignments and that about 70% of Federal civil servants had high School Diplomas or lower, with less than 5 percent possessing modern computer skills (Okonjo and Osafo, 2007). Without an efficient and well-motivated public service, the implementation of government policy programmes will be highly affected thereby deteriorating the level of service delivery to the citizens (Adegoroye, 2006). Thus, under the machineries of public service, the civil service are referred to as the functionaries of the state who are appointed to their government jobs through non-elective process (Ayeni, 1987). The civil service according to Okereke (2003) refers to government ministries and departments that are charged with the responsibilities of implementing policies. Hence, without the civil service, government policies will remain a still-birth. Poor service delivery therefore is a product of ethical depravity in government ministries and establishments. Talking about ethics, Merrill in Nwodu (2006:135) explains:

A nominative science of conduct, which stipulated guidelines, rules, principles, and codes that are designed to lead individual to make moral decisions.

Ethical consideration remains central to understanding the implication of SERVICOM and service failure in enhancing or retarding productivity in the public sector. The workforce in the public sector are still individuals with varying ideological leanings who see rights or wrongs as relative values depending on the prevailing situation or circumstances. Nwodu (2006) and Udeze (2013) note that the ethical consideration determines individuals response to any given situation. Thus, staff response to service delivery which affects productivity can be greatly influenced by individual or even group ethics. Okunna (1999) notes that ethical depravity can arise from poor remuneration, un-conducive working environment such as lack of facilities, among others, often times, ethical conceptualization offers a relative morally defensive answer to a problem, of which there is no correct and even best answer. The application of this to the public sector, certainly, can be a diminishing effect on productivity, hence, service failure. Isabelle, Lonti, and Teresa (2007) assert that there is a strong relationship between proper funding and increased productivity in the management of public sector organizations.

The practice of SERVICOM in Nigeria Democratic Institutions: implication for productivity and service delivery

Corroborating the statement of former President Umaru Musa Ya' Adua earlier cited, Sambo (2014) observes that the high cost of maintaining the public service has greatly hampered economic growth in the country. The over-staffing of many ministries with an estimated 45,000 ghost workers on the payroll of 251 ministries, departments and Agencies (MDAs) is an issue undermining efficient service delivery in Nigeria, hence, the need for the implementation of the white paper, Steve Orosanya's report, in order to ensure that the government increases her effort in achieving optimum efficiency and effectiveness in the service delivery of the public sector. Bemoaning the challenges of over-staffing and ghost workers in Ebonyi state for example, the incumbent Governor, Engr. Dave Umahi in a radio broadcast disclosed that the just concluded workers verification exercise in the state showed that there are 660 ghost workers and 20 non-existing schools. The implication of this to the public sector in relation to SERVICOM can be monumentally disastrous. It raises question as to the efficiency and effectiveness of all supervisory and monitoring teams in the public institutions. The ghost workers' syndrome implies that workers are assumed to be somewhere working but these staff are non-existent. The result is a complete absence of service delivery whereas allocation is sent to such offices. This trend has the capacity to diminish productivity, mess up government policies and facilitate underdevelopment and unproductivity in the country.

On the other hand, over-staffing in the public sector places too many personnel's for the same job. Often times, they end up sitting in redundantly and this can reasonably be viewed as a cul de sac to enhanced productivity in the public sector. No wonder Umoru and Omolara (2013) maintain that the labour productivity growth in Nigeria has been unsatisfactory. This is evidenced in the huge decline in GDP per worker over the years which implies low GDP per person in the country. Nigeria's productivity dividend opportunity is very significant (OECD, 2008). The impact of SERVICOM on labour efficiency could be seen in the way public services are delivered and Fagbemi (2006) notes that there should be an effective consultation platform with the citizens, having service standards, equal access of citizens to services and full and accurate information. This means that the destiny of the state or nation and its public sector is tied and overthrown if efficient service is not rendered. Obasanjo (2003) clarifies this view when he opines that governance in the public sector should be politically neutral, impartial, loyal, transparent, accountable and of high integrity if effective service delivery is to be achieved. There is therefore a nexus between good governance and effective service delivery. In this sense, SERVICOM and an effective public sector make for an effective productivity and developmental state owing to the fact that the state exists essentially to serve the public interest, and this consists solely in the provision of goods and services which enable the citizens to live good, healthy and comfortable life. In Nigeria democratic governance however, traces of inefficiency, low productivity and inadequate implementation of the principles of meritocracy pose a serious threat to the realization of effective service delivery. Sequels to these factors are unstable pay policies and structures, inadequate training and development, job insecurity and general indiscipline. All these do not provide enabling environment for enhanced productivity in the public sector, hence service failure. Monye (2006) lends credence to the existence of poor service delivery in the public sector and attributes it to a low level of consumer awareness. This scholar explains that consumers are saddled with poor services and are often subjected to unwarranted hardship over basic services. This means that consumer satisfaction is not met and nothing explains this ill as much as service failure. The problem is more glaring with government agencies.

Oswald (2014) stressed that the main aim of SERVICOM was to ensure that all citizens have equal and equitable access to government services while emphasizing that adequate information should be provided at every service point to eliminate bottleneck in the delivery of services. The study posits that public servants should strive in the course of endearing services to meet and exceed the expectations of their customers by avoiding complaints which should be achieved by getting things rightly done at the right time by imbibing the spirit of responsiveness/timeliness, competence, accessibility, courtesy, effective communication among others in the process of rendering service to the people/ society. However, systematic corruption and failure to meet people's basic needs for public services results into poor public confidence, high inequalities in the system and poor institutional arrangements (Thompson, 1993). Service failure can be averted if public servants practice a holistic transformation and reorientation of their core values in line with service oriented charter objectives.

SERVICOM vs Service Failure: A Governance challenge in Bureaucracy

Imhonopi and Urim (2013) assert that Nigerian nationhood has been caught in the whirlpool of a corrupt public sector which has undermined the effectiveness of the whole system in the face of good governance. In the view of Skweyiya (1997), public sector organizations in every civilized or democratic society are legitimate expectations used by the government in meeting the basic needs of all citizens. They are therefore expected to maintain high standard of professional ethics in an accountable, transparent and development-driven manner. Ndukwe, Ukeje and Onele (2015) opine that ethical recruitment process, appointment and promotion should be benched on due process, qualification, skill and experience in a particular field and not on ethnicity. The place of ethics in the public sector for efficient service delivery has been emphasized in this writing because the public sector being no man's venture is a game of conscience where efficiency is synonymous with doing the right thing. Adegroye (2006), however, maintains that despite several reforms instituted by different successive government to improve the overall performance of public sector in Nigeria in terms of productivity, efficiency and effectiveness, the service is still being seen as tradition-bound, operating within over-centralized, hierarchical and rule bound systems, counterproductive, in appropriate staff development practices. Libondo (1973) laments this rule-bound and hierarchical process as factors that interplay against efficient service delivery in the Nigeria public sector. In the same vein, Skweyiya (1997) observes that these make it difficult for individuals to account for their services because decision-making is diffused and is focused on inputs rather than on outcomes which are at odds with the vision of a public service that is aimed at achieving a transparent and effective service delivery to the citizens. Report of the department of public service and administration (2007) reveals that the public sector is faced with the challenges of skills, system's coordination and institutional arrangements to efficiently and effectively utilize their resources and recommends the need for proper recognition of staff for hard work, which include good salaries and benefits, opportunities for advancements,

promotion and a sound working environment by placing competent people in senior positions as a necessary pre-requisite for effective service delivery in governance.

The Crisis of Bureaucracy in Democracy: A Service Melting Paradigm

Discussing the negative outcomes of bureaucracy, Okpata (2004) in a study of the dysfunctions of bureaucracy explains that the bureaucratic process has actually led to inefficiency in public institutions following the rules of bureaucracy; staffers are expected to adhere strictly to a streamlined process of administration which actually impinges on the spirit of innovation and creativity. Administratively, recruitment is done based on specialization and professionalism. The recruited staffs are therefore supposed to explore their specialization, creativity and ingenuity to solve the problems that bedevil mankind and the society at large. The trust of this paper at this point is that the exploration of professional skills, application of innovative spirit and maximization of personal ingenuity towards solving the myriads of social problems are jeopardised by adherence to the bureaucratic process, thus, the crisis of democracy. Peretomode (1991) and Schalar (1970) lend credence to this thought when they note that the bureaucratic bottleneck does not enhance personal growth and development towards effective service delivery. Besides, this lead to administrative situation whereby knowledge and its application are seriously guided by a specified mode of operation, which does not promote diversification and widening of horizon on the part of the staff.

Bureaucracy has also been seen as a trend that gives a serious support to too much conformity to an idea. It relegates individual thinking spirit and encourages group thinking in the managerial/administrative process. This group thinking, however, does not encourage the resolution of offences between ranks since individuals have different make ups. Okpata (2004) maintains that bureaucracy breeds communication over-load where “communication and innovative ideas are often thwarted or distorted due to hierarchical dimensions. As a result of this, the human resources in public institutions are not fully utilized due to lack of trust and fear of punishment. Bureaucracy tends to institute a linear way of doing things and this could lead to monotony and boredom. To worsen matters, the bureaucratic process cannot easily embrace new technology and science since this brings modifications into the system which run in antithesis with adherence to bureaucratic process, first at the individual level, and second, at managerial stage. Response to change therefore brings fears and crises because bureaucracy is equivalent to ritual. Any deviation is consequential and must be appeased. Suffice it to note that bureaucracy encourages service deliverers not to accept blames; rather, blames are apportioned to the procedures and administrators keep defending themselves. This is prevalent in public organizations where over conformity arising from rigidity, red-tape ideology and absence of a scope gives rise to frustration; indifference, fear and non-application of personal initiative.

To this end, Kranier (1997) argues vehemently that bureaucracies are not indicators of excellence and efficiency. Therefore, rules are in themselves incomplete since rarely is there a rule that takes care of all possible situations that can arise in perfect social setting. The argument here is that in the absence of rules, issues will still be attended to and decisions taken at the higher level in the hierarchy. Communication crisis is imminent in bureaucracies. Information flows vertically from the superiors to the subordinates. This can be managerially disastrous, particularly when such ideas are wrong. Even when information flows from the subordinates to the superiors, such information are informal and are tailored to carry favour from the superiors since every subordinate wants to be a harbinger of good news to his boss. Peretomode (1991) explains that if superiors depend on information given to them by their subordinates to make managerial decisions, such a system will definitely hit the wall.

Peretomode (1991) sums up the crisis of bureaucracy this way:

Bureaucracy cannot offer satisfaction for higher level wants of employees, thus bureaucracy through a social construct is aimed at producing social environment and human elements short of natural and social instinct of effective and creative existence.

Standard and Values in Bureaucracy: A Tussle Ground for Ethical Service Delivery

Cooper (2006) and Menzel (2007) have been so concerned about administrative ethics and the violation of integrity in public institutions. In Nigerian democratic governance, people’s confidence in public organizations has taken a very shaky dimension due to ethical relativism which invariably leads to ethical depravity in public service delivery. The ethical trustworthiness of the political class is held in doubt. Ari and Rinna (2009) observe that “one single factor to explain trust does not exist”. Warren (2006) avers that every good political institution is a system of distrust because those who hold political power have the authority and temptations to abuse it. Thus, actions of indiscretion can damage the confidence which the people repose on the political class.

Ari, et al (ibid) note that if confidence cannot be found in the public realm, a great damage is done since the entire political and administrative institutions will be perceived in a different light. It is necessary to pinpoint that standards and values in governance are seriously affected by individual's emotions, beliefs, views and experiences which invariably have been influenced and shaped by other things, thus, ethical uprightness in maintaining societal and administrative standards and values in governance remains very relative. Hence, Lacey in Ezeani (2006:380) and Ekennia (2003) agree that ethics is "an enquiry into how men ought to act in general, not as a means to a given end, but as an end in itself.

In the discussion of standard and values in bureaucracy towards efficient service delivery, moral backgrounds and underpinnings which determine human behaviour are brought to the limelight. In this case, bureaucratic behaviours lead us into the examination of administrative ethics which determines the standards and values such as honesty, devotion and expertise prevalent in public institutions. A bugging question arises here. In Nigeria, for example, does the public institution have values and standards? The existence of values and standards on paper is hereby strictly separated from adherence. Thomson (1985) aligns thought with Agara and Olarinmoye (2009) that ethics in administration has to do with the application of moral standards/principles/values in the discharge of official duties. This paper here makes bold to point out that bureaucracy and individual ethics can be in sharp contrast. Since bureaucrats are expected to exhibit a level of ethical consideration in making value judgment, it should be noted that this value judgment (determined by ethics) may have a direct and offensive implication on their professional and administrative poise. Maesschalck (2004) agrees that there is a level to which civil servants are guided by rules and procedures and individual ethics take-over to determine the standards and values that are morally sound. This has a serious implication on service delivery in democratic governance. The thrust of this paper here is that public servants have choices to adopt or comply with procedures which they consider ethical and vice versa.

Ibietan and Joshua (2013) carefully note that there have been overt manifestations of the attempt to instil ethical conduct in the Nigerian public sector and this is seen in:

...the Public Service Rules ...Financial Regulations; due process act and ancillary enactments that seek to guide and regulate the activities of public officials in the discharge of their duties...the code of conduct for public officers as spelt out in the fifth schedule of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

One issue begets many issues. To what extent are these codified standards, values and principles adhered to in the public services and how does ethical consideration in making value judgment conflict with these paper standards in service delivery? Ikejiani Clark in Ibietan et al (2013) sums it up this way:

The initial publications on corruption...were concentrating on local government levels. They were described as institutions riddled with bribery, nepotism, politics and corruption...Over the years, as more documentation on corruption in central government accumulated; it became evident that corruption was a universal problem.

In essence, the aforementioned codes of conduct and ethical standard have not ridden corruption from our public sector, thus, inefficiency in public service delivery. Rasheed (1995) presupposes that the Nigerian public sector cannot boast of standard and moral values in service delivery since unaccountability, unethical behaviour characterized by corrupt practices have been institutionalized as norms in our system to the extent that there is "a crisis of ethics in public services". This is the tussle in democratic governance that tends to relegate to the background the ideals of SERVICOM, hence, service failure. To this effect, Ibietan et al recommend that staff who are skilled, motivated and well behaved should be recruited into the civil/public service so as to "halt the tide of unethical conduct and enhance ethical service delivery in public organizations. Malaolu and Ogbuabor (2013) capture this idea when they note that trained employees will be able to translate their improved human capital into improved organization performance thereby achieving high productivity and development.

In Nigerian civil service to be precise, Rasul and Rogger (2014) argue vehemently that standards and values are sacrificed on the altar of ethnicity while Eifert, Miguel and Posner (2010) corroborate same idea by noting that, most individuals, particularly in Nigeria, tend to identify with their ethnicity than their nation. Hence, in public service delivery, higher fractions of Nigerians base their identity and goodwill on ethnicity rather than the laid down standards, rules, laws or procedures (Ukeje; Abraham, and Ndukwe, 2015). This is closely linked to what Iyanda (2012) calls "influence peddling and bestowing of favours to friends". Singled out as perhaps, the highest malady that rocks the public sector in Nigeria, impinging terribly on efficient service delivery and weakening ethical soundness in the system. This paper christens it, "The who sent you syndrome", "The complimentary card paradox" or "the deification madness".

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Bureaucratic institutions should be free from all kinds of inclinations, emotional attachments or prejudice in its service delivery to attain professionalism and best practices.
2. Bureaucracy in the public sector should be applied with balanced loose-handedness so as to accommodate other on-the spot issues which may crop up in service delivery.
3. Vibrant and ethically ‘on the spot’ monitoring and evaluation teams should be created at all levels/ departments in this process so that even a monitoring team will also be monitored so as to ensure compliance and enforcement of set standards.
4. Administration of public bureaucracies should be structured within the framework of international/ global best interest and practices in all government activities, agencies, ministries and establishments etc.

CONCLUSION

The absence of SERVICOM spirit driven by ethically proven standards and behaviours has lowered the credibility of public service. There is also the need to keep customer/patients informed and ensuring that information on the full range of services provided by the organization is published, give details of where and when services are provided. This information must be available to all by using a variety of information means.

The organization must also ensure that the information must be published in a charter. There is also the need to recommend that the Nigerian public service need to overhaul its administrative system that would lead to the enthronement of transparency, accountability and due process. Finally, the Nigerian public service must guarantee a situation where the government will need to evolve a Nigerian public service culture or tradition which will be value based. This ‘value will centre on impartiality, equity, transparency, ethical standard, selflessness, etc. as a panacea to redirect the present public service into a newly branded service. It is therefore expected that a service oriented bureaucratic system and governance should ensure the emergence of the right kind of bureaucrats (civil servants) as human resource managers in various government institutions for quality service delivery.

There should be a total re-overhauling and revolution of the process of bureaucracy in line with international best practices and New Public Management (NPM) principles in an ethical and transparent manner for a sustained civil service delivery paradigm in a fledging democratic system like ours. This aligns with the submissions of Oswald (2014) that the aim of SERVICOM was to ensure that all citizens have equal and equitable access to government services. The thrust of this paper here is that public servants have choices to adopt or comply with procedures which they consider ethical and vice versa. Thus, utilisation of professional skills, innovative spirit and maximization of personal resourcefulness towards solving the myriads of social problems are jeopardised by adherence to the bureaucratic process, hence, the “crisis of service delivery”.

The paper therefore concludes that SERVICOM and service failure are largely determined by ethical considerations that every micro decision initiated by a staff in the process of service delivery or followed in compliance with bureaucracy has a far reaching effect on the society who is at the receiving end of services. Suffice it also to buttress that service failure or efficient service delivery holds sway for the underdevelopment or development of any institution, nation or society at large.

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