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Public Sector Reforms and National Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the link between public sector reforms and national development in Nigeria and it argued that the adoption as well as the neo-liberal economic reforms in a developing economy like Nigeria usually underdevelops than it develops the people. Accordingly, the study argued or noted that the practice of the neo-liberal economic principles and policy prescriptions in the process of restructuring the public domain (public sector or public service) in the country as evidenced in the so-called down-sizing and right-sizing of the public service accounts for the swelling rate of unemployment and poverty in the country. And as such it fails to advance the economy towards the desired end. To this end, the study posited that future reforms in the public sector should be well focused in order for them to stimulate the needed development of the economy

Keywords

Public Sector, National Development, Reforms, Civil Service and Neo-Liberal

Introduction

The Nigerian public sector and its activities have over the years been subjected to various academic discourse and policy targets. This arises from the fact that the country's public sector performs below expectations and in most cases renders services that were classified as ineffective, inefficient and to an extent "appears to be non-existent" despite the huge quoted financial budgetary allocation directed to the sector. Besides, just like the public sectors (public enterprises) elsewhere in the continent, it suffers from a number of well-known bureau pathologies, inefficiency, centralization, fragmentation, poor leadership, lack of capacity, patrimonialism, rent seeking, corruption, and poor accountability and legitimacy (Therkildsen, 2001), colonial, outdated administrative machinery, poor capacity of the majority of civil servants, sometimes to the point of illiteracy, certificate forgery to gain entry and get promotions, age falsification to remain in service beyond the stipulated period/age, corruption, policy reversals, primordial considerations like ethnicity at the expense of merit, among others (Suleiman, n.d.:2). Specifically, the long years of military rule in addition to the factors outlined above severely weakened public sector institutions in Nigeria. Indeed, by its command-and-central control nature, military rule tends to undermine the culture of accountability, inclusiveness, private sector growth, the

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free flow of information, and predictability in commercial transactions. This, however, does not exonerate the role played by civilian components of the military ruling elites in addition to their allied comprador bourgeoisie oligarchies during the military era. Therefore, upon return to democratic governance, Nigeria was faced with the challenges of seeking strong development performance with weak governance institutions (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2015).

Interestingly, in order to instill transparency, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, meticulousness and meritocracy in the country's public sector, various Nigerian governments have carried out a number of reforms in the public sector that aimed at strengthening the institutions, growing the economy and accelerating the country's development. However, these reforms are fundamentally different from those of the immediate post-independence period, which aimed at shaping a public administration that could spearhead national development; while the contemporary reforms aim to reduce the costs and refocus the activities of the public sector, to change the way it works, and to promote the role of the market and non-governmental actors both in service provision and in the economy at large. This time around, reforms are driven by pressures from economic crises and structural adjustment, donor imposition, domestic demands for change amplified by growing political pluralism, and emulation of reforms in other countries (Batley, 1999; Kiggundu, 1998; Luke, 19-90; Mkandawire and Soludo, 1999; Mukandala, 1992; Mutahaba et al., 1993; Olowu, 1999 and Therkildsen, 2001).

Although, socio-economic reforms that targeted at the public sector that are rooted in neo-liberalism as derived from Washington and Post-Washington Consensus had been touted as the magic wand that possesses the capacity of rescuing the Third World countries from their state of socio-economic doldrums and developmental deficiencies. However, their implementation in Nigeria starting with the Structural Adjustment Programme has generated mixed results and reactions such that after series of privatization, commercialization, liberalization, deregulation and divestment of government shares in public enterprises, public service provisioning in the country remained a far-cry from the anticipated results that motivated these reform efforts. It is as a result of this that Musbau (2015:1-2) states that:

Unfortunately, despite being endowed with all the human and natural resources it takes and requires, to become a great Africa and world power, Nigeria is steadily becoming a bankrupt nation apparently due to shortcomings of both its political class and public service. It is palpable we found ourselves where we are today because the 'Nigeria factors' have produced many political leaders without a vision and the mental acuity to manage resources of government, just as it has produced many dead and unproductive ministries and workers.

In a more concrete term, the former Minister of the Abuja Federal Capital Territory, EI-Rufai, observed that:

It is both a truism that no nation develops beyond the capacity of its public service, and there is broad consensus amongst Nigerians that our public service is broken and dysfunctional. The quality of public servants and the services they provide to our nation are both below expectations. From the glorious days at independence when the best and brightest graduates competed to join the administrative service up until 1970s, our public

service is now seen as employer of the dull, the lazy and the venal. We need to retrieve our old public service - effective, well paid and largely meritocratic, attracting bright people imbued with a spirit of promoting public good (NasirEl-Rufai, 2011:1).

This study considers the synergy between the enforcement of neo-liberal reforms and national development in Nigeria, with a focus on the public sector reform. It begins with the clarification of the concepts of public sector and public sector reform. It makes an overview on the Nigerian public sector. It then presents a critique on the practice of neo-liberal reforms vis-a-vis the attainment of national development in the country as well as discusses the basic missing links in the conduct of reforms in the country's public sector; on the basis of which practical recommendations were made.

Public Sector and Public Sector Reform: A Conceptual Clarification

The public sector is a vital aspect of every country, by serving as the wheel that drives the development of the country's economy. Public sector is seen as those parts of the economy which are not controlled by individuals, voluntary organizations, or privately owned companies. The public sector thus includes government at all levels, national and local; government-owned firms; and quasi-autonomous non-government organizations (Black, 2003:380). Looking at it from a broader perspective, ECA (2009) sees it as ... the machinery government, that is, the totality of services that are organized under public (that is, government) authority. It is the totality of the administrative structures within which the work of government is carried out.... The public sector covers the following categories of institutions: (a) the civil service in the strict sense of ministries and departments of the central government, (b) the legislature and judiciary, (c) local governments, (d) public or state enterprises, boards, corporations generally referred to as parastatals which operate and provide service in areas such as water and electricity, (e) the security forces, (d) the professional regulatory bodies which are given the power to prescribe training required for members; to regulate the conduct of members and to prohibit the unqualified from practicing (EGA, 2009: 4).

Besides, Suleiman (n.d) states that the public sector refers to all organizations that exist as part of government machinery for implementing policy decisions and delivering services that are of value to citizens. He further notes that it is a mandatory institution under the Nigerian Constitution of 1999; wherein the Chapter VI of the Constitution, Executive, Part 1 (D) and Part II (C) provides for a public service at the federal and state levels of government. The public sector in Nigeria is made up of the following: (1) the civil service, which is often referred to as the core service and is composed of line ministries and extra-ministerial agencies, and (2) the public bureaucracy, which is composed of the enlarged public service, including the following: (a) services of the state and national assemblies, (b) the judiciary, (c) the armed forces, (d) the police and other security agencies, (e) paramilitary services (immigration, customs, prisons, etc), (f) parastatals and agencies including social service, commercially-oriented agencies, regulatory agencies, educational institutions, research institutes, etc.

Hence, public sector organizations (as publicly owned) receive funds from government budget allocations for their operations. These wide-ranging organizations include the civil service commissions, boards, agencies, bureaus, parastatals, the judiciary, the armed forces, and the Federal Capital Territory Administration. Strengthening these organizations leads to more and better public services, a more creative and productive workforce, a stronger capacity to effectively regulate the private sector, and a greater chance of equitable and inclusive economic growth.

Meanwhile, Rasak Musbau (2015:1) presents an elucidating picture on the importance of public service while capturing the need for its reform when he opines that:

Public sector is one institution which drives the activities of government, all over the world. It consists of the civil service which includes workers in Ministries, Extra-ministerial Departments/Agencies, the local government service and parastatals. With professionals and non- professionals from whom it demands a special aptitude, training, language, discipline and culture, public service is the major instrument used by government to implement its policies, programmes and plans. There is no gainsaying the fact that the health of a nation rest on good politicians and men and women who constitute the permanent staff of the department of government. Indeed, going by the very obvious direct relationship between good governance and a virile and visionary public service, no government anywhere in the world has ever surmount the enormous task of turning the fortune of its nation around without resort to fundamental reform of its public service (Rasak Musbau, 2015:1).

However, Olaleye (2001) sees reforms as an attempt to reconstruct administrative structure and revamp operational machinery and techniques capable of improving organizational effectiveness and efficiency. This definition shows that reforms may occur for the purpose of addressing problems arising in operation, structure and organization of an institution.

To Adewumi (1988:20), reforms are usually embarked upon on the assumption that "it is possible and feasible to reach the optional level in the working of a given organization if the administrative process is fully equipped to provide such support." Reforms should be purposeful or goal-oriented changes which are designed to improve the skills as well as the preparedness of members to satisfy the organizational set goals or objectives. In sum, reform involves identifying an existing problem and attempting to solve it. It has to do with policies formulated and aimed at restructuring and transforming an organization from a bad condition to a better one.

A genuine reform can be defined as a change that either produces a measurable improvement in services or a noticeable change in relationship between institutions of the state and the citizens; hence a reform that changes the way in which civil servants are paid that has no impact on services or on the way those civil servants relate to the citizens would not be counted as a genuine reform (Public Sector Reform: An Introduction Concept Paper No.1, 2009).

Public sector reform is a systematic intervention directed at the structure, operations and procedures of the public service with the purpose of inducing its transformation as multi-faceted agent of change as well as an instrument of national cohesion and socio-economic development (Adegoroye, 2005; Mikail, 2013).

In the same vein, Mhone (2003) maintains that "public sector reform is the total overhaul of government administrative machinery with the aim of injecting real effectiveness, efficiency, competence and financial prudence in the running of public sector".

Meanwhile, the United Nations Economic and Social Council, in its 2006 paper, states that "public sector reform consists of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organizations with the objective of getting them to run better. Structural change may include merging or splitting public sector organizations while process change may include redesigning systems, setting quality standards and focusing on capacity-building" (http://www.parlicentre.org/Public_Sector_Reform.php). Again, public sector reform involves the idea of improvement in the ways and manners in which government is managed and public goods and services are delivered effectively, efficiently, economically and with value for money. It involves the "processes and practices which are concerned with improving the capacity of institutions to make policy and deliver services in an efficient, effective and accountable manner" (ECA, 2009: 4).

According to the African Development Bank (ADB) (1995: 139), "public sector reforms usually include a range of reform measures dealing with core government functions such as civil service reform, financial and fiscal reform, decentralization, enhancing accountability, legal and judicial reform, and improving corporate regulatory frameworks." It argues that public sector reform in Africa was carried out within the conceptual framework of "redefining the role of the state." This is a highly ideological framework which speaks to the declining relevance of state-managed economies, especially in the Third World, vis-a-vis the growing rate of progress recorded in the market economies of the Western societies. Redefining the role of the state, therefore, implies that the state restricts its interventions to those areas of governance that are strictly public while subcontract-; the rest to sub-national agencies and especially the private sector. In this regard, the significant function of the government is to serve in a regulatory capacity that nurtures a conducive environment for the private sector to perform and produce results.

Historicising Public Sector Reforms in Nigeria

The Nigerian public sector which is a colonial creation consists of wide-ranging organizations that include the civil service, commissions, boards, agencies, bureaus, parastatals, the judiciary, the armed forces, and the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FGN, 2015). The public service consists of the civil service- career staff whose appointment, promotion and discipline are under the exclusive control of the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC), National Assembly Service, the Judiciary, public officers in the military, police and paramilitary services, employees of parastatals, educational and health institutions. Besides, the need to improve the overall efficiency

and effectiveness of the Nigerian public service has been recognized from pre-independence days that necessitated the instituting of several administrative reforms (El Rufai, 2011). The idea of reform in Nigeria straddles both its backward and forward dimensions. In other words, the attempts at reforms in Nigeria are meant not only to capture *the framework of a professional and efficient civil service the Nigerian state was blessed with at independence* (<http://www.tunjiolaopa.com/a-critical-overview-of-public-sector-reform-in-nigeria-framework-of-transformation-for-the-federal-civil-service/>), it also aims at repositioning the sector for meeting future needs and challenges. In this sense, public sector reform is conceived as "the process of aligning public service structures, systems and processes, human and material resources to government policies, targets and plans under the justification that it is always only possible to determine the configurations of the public sector organizations from the nature of the comprehensive plans they exist to implement (Olaopa, 2009: 55).

There is no gainsaying that the Nigerian public service has since the days of colonial rule been subjected to numerous reforms. However, the changes of government, styles of government and policies have

meant that no single policy had had the chance of making the necessary impact before a new policy direction will be introduced by the succeeding administration/ regime (National Political Reform Conference, 2005). In fact, the Nigerian public service (sector) over the years had gone through a lot of reform phases all in a bid to make it result-oriented, professional as well as effective and efficient in the service delivery. Meanwhile, the litany of public sector reforms in Nigeria is presented in the table below:

Table 1: Public Sector Reforms in Nigeria, 1934 - 2003

s/n	Name of Commission that conducted the reform	year
1	Hunts Commission	1934
2	Tudor Davis Commission	1945
3	Harragin Commission	1947
4	Foot Commission	1948
5	Gorsuch Commission	1951
6	Phillips-Adebo Commission	1954
7	Mbanefo Commission	1959
8	Hern Committee	1959
9	Morgan Committee	1963
10	Eldwood Commission	1966
11	Adebo Commission	1971
12	Udoji Commission	1972
13	Onosode Commission	1982
14	Dotun Phillips Commission	1985
15	Decree No 43	1988
16	Ayida Review Panel	1995
17	Bureau of Public Service Reform (BPSR)	2005

Source: As compiled by the author

Basically, the Harragin Commission of 1947 divided the service into junior and senior services; the Gorsuch Commission of 1954, restructured the service into five (5) sections namely, the sub-clerical, clerical, sub-professional/technical, administrative/professional and super-scale. The Mbanefo Commission of 1959 focused on the issues of salaries; just as the Hern Commission, which was constituted the same 1959 integrated the pre-existing departments into ministries as well as replaced the

directors with permanent secretaries as heads of these ministries. This is followed by the Adebo Commission of 1971.

Besides, the Udoji Commission of 1972, harmonized the structure and organization of the country's public service. It later on suggested a unified public service structure for the entire country. Hence, the recruitment/appointment, promotion, remuneration, retirement, discipline and dismissal of public/civil servants all over the country came under the same condition all over the country (PRSC, 1974:297). Moreover, the Philip Dotun led reform of 1988, successfully aligned the public service with the presidential system of government as well as the change in the designation of the heads of ministries from permanent secretaries to directors-general. Again, the outcome of the suggestion made by the 1995 Ayida Panel resulted in the revision of the position of directors-general back to permanent secretaries (FGN, 1997:280).

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Public Service Reform (BPSR) which was established in 2003 sought to ensure minimum standard in the country's public service in addition to the reformation of all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of all arms and branches of government. As at September, 2005, the number of federal public servants was slightly above one million. The estimated number working for the 36 states and the FCT was another 2 million, broken down in the table below:

Table 2

S/n	Institution	Number
1	Federal Core Civil Servants	including some 2,000 directors 180,000
2	Uniformed Services - Military, Police and Paramilitary Services	457,000
3	Parastatals, Agencies, Educational and Health	470,000
4	Total Federal Public Service	1,107,000
5	Public Officers at the State Level - 36 States	(Estimate) 856,000
6	Public Officers in the Federal Capital Territory Administration	19,000
7	Public Officers at the 774 Local Governments and 6 FCT Area Councils	620,000
	Total Sub-National Public Service	1,495,000
	TOTAL: Public Sector Employees in Nigeria	2,602,000

Source: As adapted from El Rufai, 2011.

Adjusting for the increasing numbers of aides of the president, ministers, governors and legislators, it is not unreasonable to put the total number of those working directly for governments at about three million. So while our national population has increased by about 160 per cent between 1960 and 1999, the size of our public service increased by 350 per cent in the same period.

Interestingly, prior to the reforms (Oust as now), the country's public service is clearly over-bloated, rapidly ageing, mostly untrained and largely undereducated. Its average age then was 42 years, and over 60 per cent were over 40 years. Less than 12 per cent of the public servants held university degrees or equivalent. Over 70 per cent of the service was of the junior grades 01-06, of sub-clerical and equivalent skills. About 20 per cent of the public service employees were "ghost workers" - non-existent people on

the payroll which goes to staff of personnel and accounts departments. El Rufai (2011) specifically notes that in the FCT, out of an initial headcount of 26,000 staff that 3,000 ghosts workers were discovered and that by the tire f-e Public Service Reform Team (PSRT) introduced the use of biometric ID and centralized, computerized pay: that as much as 2,500 failed to show up for documentation.

Despite the fact that the public service pay is low relative to the cost of living, the overall burden of payroll as a percentage of the budget is huge. Indeed, in most states of the federation other than Lagos, Kano, Kaduna and Rivers States, an average of 50 per cent of the budget goes towards the payment of salaries. Out of the N2,425 billion included in the 2011 Budget for recurrent expenditure, between 73 per cent and 84 per cent for each MDA constitutes personnel cost. The breakdown of federal public service emoluments by class of service in 2005 is as follows:

- Core Civil Service - 18 per cent
- Military, Police and Paramilitary - 35 per cent
- Parastatals, Education and Health - 47 per cent (El Rufai, 2011).

Public Sector Reforms in Nigeria: Noting the Gaps

Public services have always represented an important factor for social cohesion and a significant contribution to the economic infrastructures essential for the operation of social market economies. In public debate allusion is frequently heard to the inefficient, ineffective and over-expensive nature of public services. Generally speaking, however, such comments are evidence of radical free market leanings seeking to justify the dismantling or even the destruction of public services. That in a context of overwhelming structural change there is a need for adjustment and modernisation of public services is, from a trade union angle, undisputed (Martin, 1997:5).

In all countries, there is a recognition that the provision of certain services, which address fundamental basic needs of the people falls squarely within the responsibilities and obligation of government. That is why even in the advanced capitalist countries, governments recognize this obligation and expend considerable resources in the provision of these services (Jega, 2007:185). Indeed, the emergence of government as the custodian of public interests imposes certain obligations on it. These include the provision of basic services and infrastructure needed to sustain and improve the quality of life of the people. Most people cannot afford these services were they left for private individuals to provide. In addition, the manner of the emergence of modern societies has not made the private sector sufficiently well developed and positioned to lead in the provision of such services, partly because of the huge financial resources required. This is partly the reason why governments are involved in the running of enterprises, and Nigeria is not an exception (Adewumi & Idowu, 2012). This however, does not vitiate the fact that private providers operate and those who have the means can choose to get them, but this is not necessarily because the public or government ones have failed to provide standard and acceptable services (Jega, 2007).

However, in the Nigerian context, partly due to economic crisis and mostly due to irresponsibility of our leadership at all levels, government has been increasingly unable to discharge its obligations in meeting

popular and basic needs (Jega, 2007:186); and since it is through the public sector that government provides the public goods to the people, it (public sector) has been accused of being ineffective and inefficient as well as constituting a clog to the country's development. A situation that provided the impetus needed by the neo-liberalist in their argument for government disengagement from social service provisioning, through the introduction of neo-liberal reforms that savors the ascendancy of minimal or non-interventionist state; which in the case of Nigeria as do most other sub-Saharan African countries results in the acceptance of the IMF/World Bank touted Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which was a counterblast to the African governments own Lagos Plan of Action as the panacea to Africa's underdevelopment.

Interestingly, the implementation of SAP in the country between 1986 and early 1990's; in addition to neoliberal policies since 1999 to date, has had a colossal implications for Nigeria's national development. This is so because in planning for national development, the stage of the country's development must be taken into considerations, as complex plans requiring sophisticated models and techniques may not be appropriate for countries at certain stages of development, such as the developing countries (Abah, 2010:103), to which Nigeria belong. In other words, development planning comprehensively involves predetermining a nation's visions, missions, policies and programmes in all facets of life such as social, human, political, environmental, technological factors etc. and the means of achieving them. Economic visions and programmes cannot be realized without looking at developmental issues holistically, which entails improvement in all human endeavours. In this sense, development surpasses the economic criteria often measured by economic growth indices and must be conceived of as a multidimensional process involving changes in inelastic social structures, destructive popular attitudes and ineffective national institutions as well as the plan for economic growth. Development planning presupposes a formally predetermined rather than a sporadic action towards achieving specific developmental results. More importantly, it entails direction and control towards achieving plan targets (Ikeanyibe, 2009:198-199).

In the light of the above conceptualization, it is now obvious that the introduction of neoliberal reform packages contradicts the country's overall national development objectives in many ways. For instance, while the various national development plans among other things aimed at creation of more employment opportunities, provision of necessary infrastructure, rapid improvement in the level and quality of social services provided for the welfare of the people, reduction of personnel income disparities through equitable distribution, reduction in the level of unemployment, a more even distribution of income, the benefit of economic development being spread out to bring about marked improvement in the standard of living of the majority of people, and increased participation of citizens in the ownership and management of productive enterprises (see the 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th National Development Plans for details), the neo-liberal reforms that have been adopted in the country seems to emphasis otherwise .

The diametric relationship between neoliberal reform packages and national development in Nigeria is such that these neoliberal reforms naturally constitute a hindrance towards the achievement of the goals set out in the country's national development plans. Besides, instead of empowering Nigerians to own and control the productive enterprises, it had succeeded in entrenching the power and influence of foreign capitalist exploiting powers in the control of the politics and economy of country; just as neither corruption nor inequality had been reduced (Omotoye, 2014). This prompted Aluko (2007) to categorically state that some of the reforms being touted by the present regime are not only

unconstitutional but also inimical to the continued growth of the Nigerian economy and the welfare of the majority of our citizens.

In fact, the neoliberal foundations of this reform are definitely incongruous with Nigeria's peripheral enclave economy (Nwozor, 2006:148). Hence, Iyayi (2004:16) observes that wherever neoliberalism forms the basis of reforms in the Third World countries its emphasis on the pursuit of efficiency at the expense of people-oriented production systems and attack on public spending and welfare state are antithetical to the possibilities of genuine economic growth.

Moreover, the bidding process that culminated in the sale of most public enterprises is questionable; just as the reasons adduced and justified by our comprador political elites in alliance with their international paymasters and patrons as the basis for sanctioning "their selling and buying" of the privatized enterprises are but a hoax. Much more, despite the implementation of the neoliberal reforms Nigerians especially the poor still experience almost the same ineffective and inefficient services just like before. The only difference is that in the present order, the people are made to pay more; even for the services they did not enjoy; our collective experience with the power and telecommunication sectors (as privatised) is a case in point.

Now having made general remarks on the problems of the neoliberal reforms on economy, let us specifically consider its inherent shortcomings in relations to public sector reforms as noted below:

1. Absence of the necessary conditions for the successful and efficient allocation of resources. Hence, the reform of the country's public sector may not produce the expected results. In the light of this, Monye- Emina (2012: 21) notes that:

The New Public Management model and its associated schools of thought are hinged on the operation of market forces and the pursuit of self-interest in order for resources to be efficiently allocated for the benefit of the society. The effective operation of market forces however depends on the satisfaction of certain conditions/assumptions In Nigeria, as in other developing countries, several constraints exist which prevent the attainment of the conditions. The existence of the constraints therefore suggests that the public sector reform as currently designed and implemented may not guarantee allocative efficiency; a major goal of the exercise. Thus the country, while not getting the benefit of allocative efficiency, also suffers the social and political consequences of public sector reform.

2. Primitive accumulation of wealth by the private individual as the cause of the inability of the state to effectively and efficiently provide public goods and services. This, therefore, puts a big question of the creed of the New Public Management (NPM) school that professes self-interest as the panacea to the seeming deficiency in the public sector, which is but a manifestation or by-product of the unrestricted pursuit of self-interest by the individuals to the detriment of the general will.
3. Again, the argument of the rolling back state or the so-called non-interventionist state which is among the precursor of the public sector reform in the developing economies of the Third World

appears defeatist. Meanwhile, it took enormous intervention of the state in the economics of the Western advanced societies for them to recover from both the great economic depression of the 1930s and ruins of the Second World War. Hence, Monye-Emina (2012:22) observes that:

The Keynesian revolution of the 1930s, which advocated expanded economic role for government, was the developed world's response to the great depression of the era. Apparently laissez-faire, market forces and individualism had failed. It took collectivism, massive state intervention and, finally, the emergence of a welfare state to turn the economies around. It seems inexplicable that these principles and initiatives, which proved helpful in times of economic depression similar to the experience in the developing world, including Nigeria, in the last few decades, are now considered inimical to growth and development, and so must be jettisoned. This paradox simply shows that the arguments in favour of neo-liberalism are quite self-serving, with the Bretton Woods institutions finding ready tools in the subservient political elites who are in power.

4. The wholesale adoption of the IMF/World Bank neoliberal economic reform packages without any attempt at adapting it to the socio-economic realities of the country: Though, the reason for this can be located in the uncritical belief of the country's ruling elite that these packages represent a "one-size-fit- all" programme (Leipziger & Zaghera, 2006) in addition to keep in touch with the contemporary wave of reforms taking place around the world. However, while emphasizing the need for the adaptation of these neoliberal reforms to a country's socio-economic realities with a focus on whether or not to involve the state, the economic life of society, Briscoe (2009:17) observes that:

For fragile state, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's 10 principles of engagement, released in 2007, underline the importance of adapting to local context and working alongside state authorities wherever possible". That is, the degree of state involvement should be dependent on the local environment of the people and a demarcation of clear goals to be achieved.

5. It has been observed that the implementations capitalist styled public sector reforms posed serious challenge on the efforts targeted at addressing the twin issues of poverty alleviation and high rate of unemployment in the country. This is so because the right-sizing and down-sizing aspect of the public sector reform usually results in laying off a huge number of workers and this adds to the army of unemployed persons in the country, which in turn worsens the poverty situation. On this note, Adewumi (2012:119) states that:

The fall-out of privatisation is that many workers have lost their jobs. Figures available indicate that 8,000 workers lost their jobs in NTEL, 8,991 from the NPA, 4,800 from the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST), and 1,800 from the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN). From the core civil service, a total of 45,000 senior civil servants have been laid off due to the reforms.

Moreover, Aluko (2007:13) in his analysis on the extent of job loss and swelling rate of unemployment in the country, notes that the administration has so far retrenched about 4.8 million Nigerians across the entire public service, all in a bid to downsize the workforce and minimise the economic roles of government. He also notes that most countries have jettisoned the idea of downsizing its public sector due to its negative multiplier effects on the economy. Hence:

The downsizing of the public sector has been abandoned even in developed countries of USA, Canada, Europe and in the developing countries of Asia and Latin America, because of its negative multiplier effects, that is, its economic deceleration effects. Retrenchment leads to reduced consumer demand which reduces the propensity to produce and which leads to reduction in the rate of growth of the gross domestic product. It is a suicidal economic policy. All true and sensible reformers in history have increased rather than reduced, employment quantum in very significant manner (Aluko, 2007:13).

6. There is the disheartening issue of delayed and non-settlement of the entitlements of the retrenched/disengaged workers in the privatized public enterprises such as the PHCN. This contradicts the norms and practices in other parts of the world where similar reform and privatization of public enterprises had been carried out. Indeed, the global best practice in the process of disengagement of staff is such that they are presented with their entitlements and benefits alongside their disengagement letter.
7. Non-reinjection/reinvestment of the funds either saved or realized from the sale of these public enterprises into the economy. The advocates of the public sector reforms in Nigeria usually state unequivocally that these public enterprises are draining the government of its revenue and that the gains of the reform are such that it will save and release money for the government to inject into the economy through the execution of projects and provision of social services, which will directly or indirectly benefit every member of society most especially the poor. However, after many years of reform, there appears to be a practical disconnect between the theory and practice of reforms in the country. Interestingly, this failure of the reformist promises to either keep faith with their words or deliver the now Delusive dividends" of public sector reforms in the country, prompted (Mohammed, n.d:1) to observe among other things that:

Over the years, government had embarked on several economic reforms aimed at bettering the lives of its citizenry; promising fulfilment of human needs for peace and security, clean air and water, food, shelter, education, arts, culture, and useful and satisfying employment; maintenance of ecological integrity through careful stewardship, rehabilitation, reduction in wastes and protection of diverse and important natural species and systems; provision for self-determination through public involvement in the definition and development of local solutions to environmental and development problems; and, achievement of equity with the fairest possible sharing of limited resources among contemporaries and between our generation and that of our descendants. Almost all of these reforms or policies failed to live up to its projections; the remains are abandoned strategic projects that could eliminate the unemployment quagmire the nation is experiencing today. However, Nigeria's failure to turn around the

economy is not in the policies, but rather in its inability to find one right way out of the million wrong ways it has consistently followed in achieving a plausible quest for an economic reform that could stand out as a reference to other nations. Perhaps, one good solution to Nigeria's economic problems could be a rendezvous of an effective research and feasibility studies on countries with a functional and effective economic reform.

This, therefore, results in infrastructural decay, turning of hospitals into mere drug dispensaries, roads becoming death traps with increasing rate of carnage on daily basis, to mention but a few.

8. The reform has also widened the gap between the rich and the poor. Indeed, a major outcome of the public sector reforms (privatisation) in Nigeria is the exacerbation of the inequalities (Monye-Emina, 2012) that exist between the haves and the have-nots (the rich and the poor) in society. In other words, the benefits accruable from the privatisation of public enterprises in the country are practically enjoyed by few wealthy individuals at the expense of the larger society.
9. Economic planlessness: There is no planned economic development today of 4-year, 5-year - 10-year or 25-year Development Plan, as was the case between 1946 and 1985. Planning the economy of Nigeria ceased when the Babangida Regime introduced the IMF-World Bank imposed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986. Economic planlessness has been more greatly emphasised, since 1999, in deregulation, privatisation, downsizing of the public service and reform agenda of the Obasanjo regime.

Setting the Post-2015 Public Sector Reform Agenda

The results of the reforms in the Nigerian public sector over time were marked by socio-economic indicators that missed targets and projections in most aspects: unreliable/epileptic power supply, ineffective and inefficient service delivery, mismanagement and corruption, and lack of commitment among others. It is, therefore, on this basis that this section tries to present a number of policy guidelines that will direct and drive future public sector reforms in the country.

First, we remarked that the public sector has been identified as being ineffective and inefficient. The truth is that effectiveness and efficiency are but the product of the quality of personnel that operate in whatever organization. There is, therefore, the need that the human resources component of the country's public sector are constantly provided with appropriate training, retraining and other manpower development exercises. This, it is believed, has the capacity of addressing the twin issues of ineffectiveness and inefficiency; bearing in mind that a system cannot give what it does not have.

On a similar note is the issue of low morale and commitment by the staff of our various public sector institutions/organizations. This again is a function of the meager salaries/wages that our public servants receive. Experts in the field of personnel and human resources management know too well that one of the major ways of enhancing productivity is through motivation, which can take the form of adequate salary and other non-financial incentives such as prompt promotion etc. Hence, any meaningful attempt at tackling the problem of lack of commitment in public sector/service must as a matter of necessity start by reforming the manner in which labour and reward are organized in that sector of the economy. When this is done, it will go a long way in addressing the problem of corruption that seems endemic in the public sector as it will discourage the public servants (majority though) from engaging in sharp practices and primitive accumulation of wealth.

Another issue that is worth mentioning is that of privatisation. Whereas privatisation in itself is not entirely bad, it is, however, best applied on certain class of services in the case of Nigerian type of economy. While those institutions that attend to the basic needs of the citizens should remain in the public domain; but should be thoroughly reorganized, restructured and refocused towards enhanced social service delivery rather than auctioning them out. Hence, Jega (2007) notes that public enterprises need not be privatised before they can become efficient. In other words, government cannot become efficient and effective by running away from its obligations and responsibilities.

Besides, the reckless manner with which Nigerians are being forcefully retrenched from their jobs needs to be reconsidered. That is to say, that where impossible before retrenching a worker, the reforming body must ensure that the severance package and entitlements of the people being laid off are ready in order for them to have something to start life with. Again, the multiplier effect of such actions in terms of poverty, unemployment and ultimately increase in the rate of crimes must all be taken into account. On this basis, care must be taken to ensure the proposed private-sector driven economy has the capacity to absorb the people that are being retrenched.

Again, while embarking on the privatisation and liberalization of public ventures, adequate care must be taken to ensure that local people have the capacity or be assisted to buy shares in those enterprises, which government is divesting from. This is to ensure that the people participate in the ownership and management of the productive enterprises within the economy than leaving it in the hand of predatory foreign investors and few local surrogates. Second, it will reduce poverty rate in the country as well as trigger self-reliance. In the absence of such support in a situation where over 70 per cent of Nigerians are said to be poor, how can they buy shares in the enterprises that are being privatised?

There is also the need to ascertain the service delivery capacity of these marauding private investors before selling away any basic public utilities to them. The system where patrimonialism, parochial interests and kick-backs determine the buyers of those enterprises with utter disregard for due process has to cease forthwith. In other words, the bidding process should be made transparent to ensure that whoever emerges from it, has the capacity to deliver. For instance, it was Dora Akunyili (in her capacity as the Minister of Information) who observed that "because of poor services, Nigeria is the only country where people carry two, three, four phones. It is an embarrassment" (see Tell, March 23rd 2009:25). The implication of Akunyili's submissions is that the private sector itself appears to have failed in ensuring effective and efficient services to the people.

Conclusion

Deriving from the analysis made in this study, it is evident that the pursuit and implementation of neoliberal reform packages in our public sector cannot actually solve the country's problem of underdevelopment. Undoubtedly, these reforms that enthroned rolling back state as manifested in the rightsizing and downsizing of the public service in addition to the mindless privatisation, commercialization and liberalization of most of the our public enterprises can only succeed in aggravating the existing socio-economic stress in the country. Meanwhile, the negative impacts of the reform are already being felt in the areas of worsening poverty and papuperisation, rising rate of unemployment, proliferation of quacks and marauding private investors, indirect denial or exclusion of most citizens from enjoying certain class of social services that were granted them by the country's constitution through high service charges.

Meanwhile the ultimate implication of the rescinding government intervention in the economy is such that most of the various indicators of national development are either completely eroded or badly damaged at the altar of vulgar capitalism and pursuit of primitive accumulation of wealth. This then necessitates the clarion call for a drastic redefinition, refocusing and reprioritization of the targets and goals of reform in our public sector; starting with the concerns identified and recommended in the preceding section.

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