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FROM PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TO PUBLIC MANAGEMENT: WHITHER THE NIGHERIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

By

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ABSTRACT

Tracing the evolution of public management in the world, the author starts off with the clarification of the concept of public management. He goes on to discuss the implementation of the concept at the international level, citing the examples of United States, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Malaysia and some sub-saharan African countries. He follows up the discussion with the efforts of the Nigerian government in reforming its public service, to conform with the international trend. Among the significant efforts in this direction were the 1973, 1988 and 1994 reforms and, most especially, the businesslike reforms of the Obasanjo Regime. He concludes that there are still areas where improvements can be made. These include separation of politics from administration, small government, market oriented policy, greater use of information technology, improved human resource management, among others.

INTRODUCTION

Nearly two decades ago, especially during the 1980s, a number of governments of developed and developing political systems embarked on a new organisational design of their public service to engender new paradigms of public administration. The classical Weberian model of public administration which placed emphasis on division of work, neutrality, anonymity, impersonality, rationality and specialisation was jettisoned for its inability to meet the desired expectations of the society it was "established to serve. It seemed, in most cases, to have fulfilled principally, the aspirations of the politicians and top civil servants at the expense of the larger population. The realities of the 80s could not support the public service, as it was then being managed. This explained the rationale behind the efforts of various governments to re-channel their public service towards a market-based philosophy, where emphasis would be placed on

effectiveness, efficiency and market in the management of public organisations. This new model of public administration has been labelled 'New Public Management'. From the United States of America to the Commonwealth countries and even to the Asian-Pacific countries, various versions of the model have been implemented. In the US, for example, emphasis was placed on a government that would be highly decentralised, mission-driven, result and market oriented, where citizens would be empowered and treated as customers (Osborn and Gaebler, 1993). The United Kingdom, during the Thatcher administration, in the same vein, embarked on similar reform where changes were directed at making 'public sector management more efficient, according to an ideology which regarded business values and business methods as the most productive and preferred typology. (Chapman, 1995:158).

The essence of this article is to assess the extent to which the Nigerian public sector has imbibed the tenets of public management in its operation. As at 1999, there were 590 public enterprises at the federal level alone, employing about 420,000 employees with more than \$3 billion at their disposal (*Sunday PUNCH*, May 6, 2001, p.36). This exercise becomes imperative to determine the readiness of Nigeria's public sector managers to function in the new world order symbol-

ised by globalisation, and more particularly, in the role that will reverse to these managers under the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD). The article is divided into three sections. Section one examines the concept and features of public management. Section two discusses the practice of public management across both developed and developing countries. In the third section the author reviews some of the reforms that have been carried out in the Nigerian public service, with particular emphasis on their implications for the implementation of the principles of NPM.

The Concept Of Public Management And Its Core Features

The term 'Public Management; otherwise called 'New Public Management' describes the insertion of managerialism into the public service by bringing the entrepreneurial spirit to transform the public sector. It considers the state as an economic actor, whose primary objective may not be profit making, but desirous to run a performance-oriented administration.

Different variations of the New Public management have been practised across the world, based on the emphasis placed on its principal characteristics. Hood, who has been acknowledged as the founding father of the movement, identified certain elements that are central

to the NPM. These include: Hands-on professional management: a clearly defined accountability for particular functions and actions within the organisation, explicit standards and measures of performance, an increased emphasis on output control, continuing disaggregation of operational units, an increased emphasis on private sector styles of management and consistent pressure to reduce the cost of public service provision (Kerley, 1994:8-10)

The World Bank (1997) and Moore (1996) also identified certain attributes that are similar to the ones above that depict the NPM. For example, the tax payer should get full value for his or her money. There should be greater flexibility in allocating financial and human resources. More operational functions should be subject to competition and contracts, while performance incentives are introduced for personnel and agencies. Furthermore, objectives and progress should be subject to measurement.

Based on the experiences of several countries, Monks (1998:82) presented four "ideal-types" models of the NPM. The first model, the efficiency model, according to him, was prominent after the mid-70s and emphasis was more on bringing certain private sector management tools like value for money, efficiency and, to a lesser degree, effectiveness. The second model, which he refers to as

organisational flexibility model, is characterised by loose and flexible organisational structure with little emphasis on hierarchical authority and more emphasis on contract employment. The qualitative model, which is the third one, is more concerned with the quality of public services and customer satisfaction. The last model, the participative model, places emphasis on community empowerment and citizen participation in the decision and implementation of the provision of public services.

In general, various scholars have identified various principles that should be prominent where the New Public Management is in operation. These principles and ideas as presented briefly by one as follows: (Shand, 1998:717-718).

- * a closer focus on results in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and service quality;
- * the replacement of highly centralised hierarchical organisational structures with decentralised management environments where decisions on resource allocation and service delivery are taken closer to the point of delivery, and which provide scope for feedback from clients and other interest groups;
- * flexibility to explore alternatives to direct public provision which might provide more cost effective policy outcomes;

- * new personnel management policies to provide greater flexibility in the deployment of staff (e.g. through multi-skilling);
- * the use of mechanisms to improve performance, such as performance contracting and the creation of competitive and market environments within and between public sector organisations;
- * incentives to improve performance (or, at least, removing disincentives) through enabling organisations to retain a portion of savings from improved performance;
- * the strengthening of strategic capacities at the centre to "steer" government to respond to external changes and diverse interests quickly, flexibly and at least cost; and
- * greater accountability and transparency through requirements to report on results.

The International Perspective

It is appropriate to underline here that there is no blanket application of the principles of NPM in the countries that have taken steps in this direction. In essence, various countries have adopted the form that is appropriate to their public service needs, placing emphasis on one aspect or the other. Consequently, the countries have tried to limit the role of the State, downsize the bureaucracy, decen-

tralize authority, cut administrative cost, contract out management operations, encourage performance contracting, introduce open and transparent governance and commercialise the delivery of certain social services.

The United States

The American version of the NPM, the National Performance Review, and the Contract with America, were launched in 1993 with the title, *Creating A Government That Works Better, and Costs Less* (Gore, 1993). The two principal preoccupations of the reform were (1) more emphasis on financial control and (2) performance evaluation, a.k.a. value for money. In fact, the tenets of the NPM have long been incorporated during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. It was during this regime that public service was taken closer to the 'client' and new organisational performance culture, with more emphasis on performance was introduced (Peters and Waterman, 1982).

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is not left behind in the reorientation of its public administration. The last two decades could simply be referred to in the UK as the decades of administrative reforms. From 'Next Steps' to 'Citizens Charter', then to 'Competing for Quality', the British government introduced a system whose principal objectives were "the safeguarding and improvement of (the)

public services, for the benefit of those who use them, at a cost which the nation can afford". (The Citizens Charter, First Report.) The essential aspects of the reform have been well summarized by Mottram (1995:312) as follows:

- * outcomes and outputs rather than inputs, and the needs of users and not the interests of producers;
- * government sticking to essentials and doing them well; using markets wherever possible to improve choice and, through the spur of competition, to achieve better value for money;
- * addressing the particular task, designing the shape of the organisation that best meets it, and delegating responsibility for delivery" to that organization; and
- * raising the performance of individual public servants (through effective recruitment, training, appraisal, and incentives).

Under the 'Next Steps' policy, for example, the government reduced the Civil Service to a small core of policy makers and created several agencies, under the direction of a chief executive, who will be responsible directly to the Minister, each Agency with a Framework Document, which sets out its financial and quality of service targets. Moreover, each agency is expected to publish its annual

report for evaluation purposes.

The Competing for Quality programme was established in 1991 to promote customer responsiveness. This was backed up by means of the Citizen's Charter. Charters were published covering the main public services, setting out the standards of service and what people are expected to do if the set standards are not met. It also involves the provision of comparative information on public establishment against key indicators, to give room for performance evaluation, regular surveys of the needs of the users, reduction in the response times for complaints, strengthening of inspection of public services and the publication of a free quarterly newsletter to commend best practices, backed by an award to recognize excellence in delivering services. All these efforts are to be reported in official *White Paper* to monitor progress against commitments (Mottram, 1995:313-314). One other interesting thing about the British experience is that the Labour Party that took over in May 1997 did not deviate from the new trends established by the Conservative Party (*The Economist* August 21st 1999: 47-49).

New Zealand

New Zealand represents one of the most radical examples of the implementation of the NPM principles

(Boston, J. et al. 1996). On the surface, it looked similar to what we had in the UK, it is however in some respect different. Like Britain, New Zealand embarked on massive privatisation. In addition, there was what was referred to as corporatization. This involved the removal of noncore government activities into corporate structures under distinctive roles and objectives. In addition, control was minimized to enable the managers to manage while, at the same time, putting in place agreed performance measures, controls, management targets and plans. On the personnel management aspect, civil servants are to compete with other professionals from the private sector for appointments into, corporatized agencies and incentives are strictly attached to performance. Moreover, chief executives (Heads of Departments) are appointed on contracts with definite targets and resources and their performance is judged strictly by results. The reforms led to a huge reduction in the number of regular civil servants by 50% over a period of five years.

Malaysia

Malaysia also adopted the principles of NPM through downsizing of the public sector and privatisation. Other reforms of the administrative system revolved around efficiency, quality, and productivity improvement (Salleh, 1995:66). The government introduced a series of official guidelines known as the

Manual on Quality Management and Improvement in the Public Sector. The concepts of Quality Control Circle and Total Quality Management were adopted as management tools. To improve quality, an Improvement Panel was set up under the leadership of the Chief Secretary of Government to monitor the level of improvement in the public service. In addition, procedural improvement programmes are carried out regularly to modify, upgrade or even delete existing procedures, rules, and regulations. There was also greater accessibility and speedier processing in the provision of counter services, implementation of the client's

charter and the increase in the number of one-stop licensing centres (Shafie, 1996: 187). This has enabled the government to.. create customer-focused organisations capable of delivering quality outputs and services to customers within a reasonable period. Moreover, efficiency was achieved through an improved system of financial and asset management. Public servants were also offered a new remuneration scheme that is performance related.

Sub Saharan African Countries

The sub-Saharan African countries were also not left out of the New Public Administration movement of the 1980s and 1990s. It is worth mentioning that the governmental bureaucracy that

was left behind by colonial masters in most sub-Saharan African countries lacks accountability to the civil society, legislative and judicial checks and balances, and transparency (Dia, 1996:37). The effect of these, according to Dia, are "institutional instability, the privatisation of the state, and patrimonial economic management and incentives, whereby clientelism replaces moral and political legitimacy, and political and personal loyalty and obedience are rewarded more than merit". However, the realities on ground forced most of these states to embark on administrative reforms. One is the need for economic reforms occasioned by the depression of late 1980s in most SSA countries. The second democratic waves of the 1990s also played a significant role. With more emphasis being placed on transparency, accountability and good governance, reforming the administrative system became imperative. The last reason was globalisation, which has been compelling sub-Saharan countries to follow the global trend.

It is in respect of the three points above that some sub-Saharan African countries also embarked on piecemeal reform of their administrative systems. It is no gainsaying that in these countries, emphasis was actually placed, like in the countries where these reforms originated (United Kingdom, New Zealand, etc), on the principles guiding the NPM like

downsizing, privatisation/corporatisation, competitive "contracting, customer oriented services and performance related promotion and compensation. However, the lacklustre political will in these countries has not really been encouraging enough to allow the reforms make any appreciable impact (Schick, 1998).

The Nigerian Scenario

The Nigerian public service is a product of British colonialism. As such, its structure, principles, policies and politics were fashioned after the British model. In the period prior to independence in 1960, several reforms were carried out, to make the service responsive to the aspirations of Nigerians. Principal 'among the pre- independence' and post independence reforms were the Harragin Commission (1946), Gorsuch Commission Reforms (1955), the Morgan Commission (1963), the Nigerianisation of the civil service policy (1964-1966), the Adebo Commission (1970-1971), the Udoji Review Commission (1972-1974, the 1988 Civil Service Reforms, and the Ayida Panel (1994-1995) that was set up to review some major aspects of the 1998 reforms.

The five decades of reforms in the Nigerian civil service has not taken the country near the level of the New Public Management approach. It is obvious that most of the reforms of the public sector carried out since independence in Nigeria

have failed to successfully address the problems of efficiency, productivity and good service delivery. The resultant effect is the lack of satisfaction on the part of the populace who see the public sector as 'an obstruction instead of a catalyst for development.

As far back as 1973, the Udoji Commission had seriously shared the NPM ideals by recommending that "a new style of public service capable of meeting the challenges of development and using concepts familiar to the private sector such as (a) a result oriented management technique, which makes things happen, by organising men, money and materials in order to achieve the particular objectives of the organisation within time targets." (Udoji Commission Report, 1974). This was to be accompanied, by a policy of merit related promotion instead of seniority criterion. In fact, the major goal of the reform which was based on a managerial philosophy and culture, was not achieved. It was also the intention of the reformers that senior civil servants be regarded as managers of the business of government instead of policy advisers to politicians (Adamolekun, 1997:364). This could have indeed marked the beginning of the NPM if the reforms had been implemented to the letter. However, for reasons best known to the implementation committee, the aspect relating to salary increases was implemented immediately, leaving the other

aspects till further notice, whereas they were never revisited.

The celebrated 1988, reform was also not short of ideas on efficiency, decentralisation, accountability and professionalism. In fact, among the rationale for the reform was the concern for a virile, dynamic, efficient, effective, and result-oriented civil service through professionalisation (Imhanlahimhin, 1999:47). It is in this direction that the reforms provided for the professionalisation of the service by insisting that all officers, whether generalist or specialist, must begin and end their career in the same ministry to enable such officer acquire the necessary expertise for the job over time.

Other aspects of the reforms were the politicisation of the top echelon of the civil service, through the abolition of the post of Permanent Secretary and its replacement by a new political post of Director-General who is appointed and removable by the President; scrapping of the office of the Head of Service; making the Ministers/Commissioners the Chief Executive, in addition to being Accounting Officers of their respective ministries. In addition, financial accountability was strengthened by introducing the audit alarm system. The reform empowered the Auditor-General to institute sanctions against any officer who violates laid down financial management rules and regulations. (Federal Government of

Nigeria 1988: Section 1(4). This control system is to be strengthened through the establishment of internal audit division in each ministry, to be headed by an Internal Auditor, who is to monitor records of revenue, expenditure, plant, allocated stores and unallocated stores. In case of disagreement with the Minister over certain payments, the Internal Auditor is to accordingly notify the Audit Alarm Committee; which is composed of the Auditor-General as Chairman, the Accountant-General and a representative of the office of the President. The reform document further listed a number of financial management offences and complementary sanctions.

By 1994, government was of the opinion that the goals of the 1988 reforms had not been accomplished. Consequently, it set up the Ayida Review panel to review some aspects of the 1988 reform, because all the ideals of efficiency, professionalism, and accountability which the reform was expected to bring into the Service were nowhere to be found (Abacha, 1994). The panel, which was composed mainly of professional civil servants, people who had passed all their career in the service, and headed by a former Permanent Secretary of the Gowon era, wasted no time in reversing most of the principles enunciated in the 1988 reforms. The panel restored the posts of

Permanent Secretary and Head of Service. It also recommended an upward review of wages and incentives for civil servants to restore to them what inflation had eaten up in their earnings. The issue of merit recruitment was also given strong consideration. The panel believed that the federal character principle which had been dominant in recruitment and promotion be mitigated with elements of merit and performance, so that only the best candidates will be offered appointments into the civil service (Ayida, 1997).

Despite the enormous resources put into these reforms, an assessment of the service shows that the years of reforms have not transformed into concrete development on ground. This is well reflected in the thinking of Olaopa (2002:37), a deputy director in one of the federal ministries. He wrote as follows: "Senior managers manage their subordinate officers in a different way from how they believe they should be managed. We run a system where the good, bad, or indifferent are treated alike, for purposes of deployment and promotion. Indeed, the diligent, careful and efficient hardly get adequate recognition and reward. Many others, who show little of these qualities get on as well. Consequently, officers are not motivated to be dutifully diligent and efficient, and by the same token, hardly any fear of the consequences to them of negligence and waste".

In fact, a report by the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) puts the debt portfolio of government agencies at N1.3 trillion (*The Guardian*, Wednesday, September 18, 2002, p.5). Surely, these are attributes that are contradictory to a service reflecting the new public management standard.

Recent Trends And The Way Forward

The government is not unaware of the role that the NPM management can play in the overall development of the country. Consequently, it has continued to take steps to review some of the evident lapses, not only in administrative structures, which at times are overlapping and thereby cause delay, but also in the processes of governance which are at times slow, cumbersome and ineffective. As early as 1999, the current administration had set up a committee under Alhaji Ahmed Joda, to appraise all ministries, parastatals and agencies of the Federal Government to pinpoint cases of overlap of functions, not only between ministries but also between agencies and their parent ministries, as well as between ministries and other regulatory agencies of government (*The Guardian*, Friday, 22 October 1999).

On another front, in what looked like the British Citizen's 'Charter, the Federal Government made its Ministers, Special Advisers and Permanent Secretar-

ies to sign a declaration popularly referred to as *The Kuru Declaration*, committing themselves and those who serve under them to what is supposed to be the National Ideology and New Orientation. The New Orientation which they all agreed and signed to abide with include, among others, a commitment to:

- remove impediments to efficiency and effective implementation and, execution of programmes initiated by the Federal Government;
- Rededicate ourselves and those who serve under us to the values of patriotism, honesty, hard work and diligence, merit and excellence, trustworthiness, personal discipline, tolerance and mutual respect, justice and fairness, love, care and compassion;
- Eschew the negative values of corruption, slothfulness, nepotism, indiscipline, bitterness, prejudice and other manifestations of anti-social behavior;
- undertake a critical review of practices and procedures in every Ministry and Department of Government, with the aim of introducing and inculcating modern management techniques and procedures in every Department of Government, so as to rapidly increase their productivity and service delivery to the public;

- foster a culture of efficiency in the management of funds and other resources; maintaining high standards (resource management, and reducing waste at all times;
- efficiently supervise all Government departments and agencies, ensuring timely returns and reports, and undertaking regular spot-checks;
- abide by the terms of the Code of Conduct which we all have signed, an expression of our commitment to the crusade against corruption, and working closely with all relevant agencies such as the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission, the Code of Conduct Bureau and the Public Complaints Commission;
- strengthen the partnership in working with the private sector, since this partnership translates to a better appreciation of the wealth creating capacity of this sector, and the need for Government, through its various ministries and legislative processes, to create an enabling environment for the sector to function efficiently as the major driver of the economy;
- strengthen and inculcate the culture of working closely and in consultation with the leadership of

Labour and Civil Society organisations;

- mobilize, involve, and promote the interest of all stakeholders, namely, the society in general. Also, since, in the ultimate, all decisions and actions of Government are aimed at the promotion of public welfare, there is also the need for a new attitude that has that welfare permanently in focus, as the only goal, and that the economic well-being of all citizens, under unfettered freedom, is of cardinal importance; and
- design strategies and techniques of implementation for the New Orientation so as to ensure that the value being inculcated permeates all levels of management and staff (*The Guardian*, Thursday, March 22, 2001: 67).

The Uncompleted Tasks And the Way Forward

The achievements of the current administration in making the public service businesslike cannot be ignored. The current economic situation in the country demands a rational and cost-effective administration where waste, in whatever form, should be eliminated. It means there should be a redefinition of the role of the state. It will also require that the business of government be made

open and transparent not in theory alone, but seriously in practice. In addition, apart from reducing the size of the public service to a manageable workforce, work improvement units should be established to see that there is value for money, proper project monitoring and evaluation, which will serve as periodic check on the performance of agencies. There is the need for effective decentralisation of authority and citizens should be empowered to participate effectively in the decision process that affects them.

To some extent, certain aspects of the Kuru declaration are being implemented to take care of some of these issues. For some time, the issue of open competitive tendering has become the norm in awarding government contracts.. There have also been efforts at encouraging the citizens to ask questions concerning governmental projects. In this direction, the Federal Government in 2002 issued a press release inviting the general public to comment on projects that were executed by government. The release, which was signed by the Honourable Minister of Finance, states that:

The Federal Government of Nigeria has approved two reports of the Value for Money Audits carried out on selected capital and recurrent projects by two consulting firms. The objectives of the exercise are to ensure accountability, foster greater

transparency in conducting government business, as well as strengthen the systems designed to improve the efficient use of resources. The reports examined compliance with contract award/procurement procedures, contract monitoring and supervision and content of procurement reports by Ministries. These reports are now available to interested parties on request (The Guardian, Thursday, January 3, 2002).

Although this is a laudable achievement, it is too limited when compared to the extent of the reorganisation required. One will expect a more systematic effort that will be all embracing and touching the following areas:

Separation of politics from administration. In most administrative systems where the new public administration is practised, there exists a division of responsibility between elected officials and permanent civil servants. This does not mean promotion of friction between the two, since the increasing complexity of government warrants that they both cooperate. In the words of Aberbach et al. (1984:9, 24), while politicians are expected to "articulate broad and diffuse interests of unorganised individuals, bureaucrats mediate narrow, focused interests of organized clienteles." In addition, politicians introduce "energy"

into policy making, while bureaucrats provide "equilibrium" seeking to avoid conflict, seeking technical and incremental solutions and agreements on narrowly defined problems (Muramatsu and Kraus: 1984:127). In this way, there should be substantial autonomy among the parliament, the executive and the administration. The autonomy in question should also touch the financial operations of government, where public services will be rendered on contract and the citizens given opportunities to deal with other suppliers of services outside government parastatals and agencies. In short, it assumes that public services are not necessarily to be provided by public servants all the time.

Decentralisation of the administrative system- This, according to Adamolekun (2002: 49), refers first to 'an administrative measure involving the transfer of management responsibilities and resources to agents of the central government located outside the headquarters at one or more levels', and second, to a political arrangement involving the devolution of specific powers, functions, and resources by the central government to subnational level government units. The essence of decentralisation, apart from encouraging wider participation of citizens in decisions that concern them is that it gives room for competition among the various decentralised units and this may lead to

lower cost of services and high quality service delivery (ibid.50-51). The practice in developing countries is to devolve responsibilities without financial backing thereby incapacitating the power so delegated, especially at the local levels. Nigeria can still not boast of a viable local government system because their autonomy is incapacitated by insufficient finance. In fact, there were rumors that the Conference of Speakers of, State Houses of Assembly had recommended the scrapping of local governments for non-performance, a move that was immediately resisted by the National Union of Local Government Workers (*The Guardian*, Friday, March 7, 2003). Nigeria can learn from where more autonomy is being granted to Scotland and Wales, irrespective of its national implication. Administrative authority should also be decentralized' to enable core agencies like finance, planning and economic development exercise certain decisional autonomy to exclude them from undue bureaucratic red-tapism. Even Singapore created Autonomous Agencies to administer certain services. These agencies set their own objectives, run their budgets the way they deem fit and also retain the power to recruit their staff and terminate those employees whose performance fall short of the Ministry's expectation without recourse to any other supra agency or commission (Ma, 1998:36).

Small government and reduced hierarchy-

There is the need to change the notion that the public service is synonymous to social security programme where the unemployed are recruited without regard to the required need, skill, and available resources. It is strange that while other governments are downsizing, the federal civil service, keeps blowing up. The government should, by all means, reduce the size of the public sector through what is called "lean management". The size of the federal civil service, for example, grew from a paltry 30,000 at independence in 1960 to about 237,392 in 1990 and to remain at about 200,000 in 1998 (Otobo, 2002:298). There are indications that the number of public servants keeps growing. The federal civil service commission, recently, advised all government ministries and agencies to forward to its office of those recruited by each Ministry since year 2000, because the commission does not have such lists. This is in flagrant disregard for civil service procedure and should be discouraged, if government actually wants to control recruitment level and encourage meritocracy. The overall impact of this is an unwarranted astronomical cost of government, which the current economic situation cannot support (Utomi, 2002:75)

vMarket oriented policy - One of the basic problems of traditional public administration is monopoly. There was no

way to compare the quality of service delivery by governmental agencies as they were the sole providers of such services. To serve as a challenge, there should be Compulsory Competitive Tendering, where private contractors are invited to offer certain services where the public sector has failed. To some extent, the Federal Government has contracted out the revenue collection of some of its agencies. For example, the revenue collection of the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) has been contracted out to enable the parastatal improve on its finances. Closely linked to this is the serious need to reduce, if not eliminate, inter-departmental debts in service delivery payments. Government department should equally pay for all forms of services enjoyed by them. More than 50% of bills owed public companies like Water Corporation, NEPA and NITEL are by government ministries and parastatals. The BPE once put the amount owed the public sector organisation by other agencies at N342 billion (*The Guardian*, Wednesday, September 18, 2002, p.5). Although government has gone towards the extreme level of 'marketisation' of its activity through the deregulation and partial/full privatisation of some parastatals and agencies, its go-stop-go approach has really incapacitated whatever gains it could have brought into public sector management. The continued

intervention of government in the internal management of commercialised organisations should stop. One will be surprised at the fact that, even the commercialisation of NITEL in 1992, did not remove or reduce the meddlesomeness of the Ministry of Communications which continues to interfere in the way and manner NITEL does its business, where and what to invest its money in and who to employ, among others.

Customer/client oriented and value for money - If there is any complaint that is frequent about the public sector in Nigeria, it is the way it treats its customers. Public service delivery is so poor that using them is so stressful that they are better avoided. This occurs mostly in the long period it takes before information can be obtained. And when one even decides to visit them, there is long delay before customers are attended to. Added to this is the absence of public relations by most desk attendants in the public sector, who first of all see their customer as an intruder. In the current dispensation, public servants need to be made to realise that government service delivery should be more customer driven. The public should be considered more as customers than as ordinary citizens who have no choice. Even though there is limited competition for most of the services now, the public has not stopped crying for further liberation of all the

sectors of the economy. The role of the Private Telephone Operators (PTO) in forcing the national telephone carrier, NITEL, to improve its services is a case in point. Market surveys could be encouraged to know customer preferences. With increased averseness by taxpayers, and more emphasis on value for money (as demonstrated several times by NITEL and NEPA customers) the use of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Work Improvement Teams (WITs) will not be out of place as they will enable the public sector managers realise almost immediately when mistakes are made and how to rectify them. By so doing, other relevant aspects of public management like efficiency, effectiveness, benchmarking, performance management and accountability would have been adequately addressed (*The Guardian*, Wednesday, February 26, 2003, p.25). Closely linked to the concept of value for money is the problem of productivity. There should be a shift of emphasis from inputs to performance. The measurement of performance (output) should be based primarily on results rather than on any other factor.

Greater Use of Information Technology-

One aspect that the government has neglected and which has really limited its capacity is the use of information technology. Apart from the fact that information technology will improve the

response speed of government, it will also assist in record keeping, tracking files, managing revenue generation and collection, and even reduce the workforce. It can also be effectively used to check corrupt practices in the public sector. In addition, it can facilitate the citizens' accessibility to the activities of public organisations, their procedures and limitations. Specifically designed software can be packaged, not only for personnel management functions like recruitment, promotion, payroll management, training, and even pension. It can also be useful in performance measurement. Government has however made strategic effort since the pronouncement of the National Policy on IT in March 2001. There has been a tremendous improvement in telephone services and more offices are being computerized. Although belated, a National IT Development Agency (NITDA) has been set up to serve as catalyst to the country's move toward its policy of e-governance. If implemented, the e-government policy is expected to cover most if not all of the facets of administration in the country (*The Guardian*, Tuesday, March 18, 2003: 41,45).

Community/citizen participation - One other area where the ideals of the NPM will be better implemented is through the empowerment of the civil society and community based associations in the

decision making process that concern them. Although Nigeria boasts today of hundreds of non-governmental organisations, each dedicated to different causes, their role in enforcing transparency and accountability is still negligible (Fajonyomi, 2001). Involving these groups in decision-making can improve not only the quality of service delivery, but also work against the abuse of contract execution. A very known practice is for contractors to abandon contract sites after collecting mobilization fees. This practice can be curtailed when local communities are involved in the procedure leading to the award and signing of such contracts. To some extent, the Community Development Associations (CDAs) as operative in local governments in Lagos State have been useful, although several projects are carried out without their knowledge.

Transparency and Accountability - One area where little has been done and that should be given serious consideration are the twin issues of transparency and accountability. Of recent, Nigerian citizens, bathing in the aura of the new found democracy, have developed the habit of asking questions on what has become of the huge amount of money accruing to government from petroleum. Despite their powerlessness in enforcing accountable and transparent government, the level of awareness and complaints has

been a deterrent to the malpractices of some public officials. It is imperative that government decision-making should not be conducted in secret. Open tender policy for government contract and supplies should be the norm and not an exception, as it is in most public organisations today, where friends, family members and cronies are offered contracts without following the due process and again, mostly to incompetent companies. The public and other stakeholders should be carried along when matters that affect them are to be discussed. There should be free access to full, accurate and clear information about the nature of government activity, who is in charge, how well they have been performing, and their future plans. In addition, the attitude of public servants towards accountability must change. Without a change of attitude in this regard, efficiency in the provision of services cannot be achieved. The public service should discard its attitude towards information flow so as to enable the public use available information as a tool of checking abuse of power and authority and controlling financial profligacy. President Obasanjo introduced a semblance of transparency and accountability by a monthly media chat where the President explains certain governmental policies and actions. Some ministers do the same, sometimes. There is still however a long way to go, as a lot of policies, targets and

achievement still remains obscure.

Improved Human Resource Management - No matter the amount of efforts

put into transforming the Nigerian public sector, it will amount to nothing if a programme is not put in place for the development and effective management of available human resources. In fact, one problem that surfaced in most of the commercialised public sector organisations was the absence of well-equipped and trained personnel to cope with the expected speed of service and manage the IT requirements of the newly privatised organisations. As such, it was business as usual, old wine in new bottle. The new public management will require new human resource management practices, where individual performance will be well rewarded, where new entrants will be the most talented people on ground and can compete with their contemporaries in the private sector, where only the very competent ones are put in challenging positions, where flexible working hours will be the norm, where the working environment will be well equipped and challenging, a situation where determination of wages and salaries is not centralised and will be comparable to what obtains in the private sector, management practice where there will be constant training to keep workers abreast of new developments in their fields, where promotion will be based on

performance and not on seniority, where merit and not patronage will be the norm, where success and innovative contributions will be identified and rewarded and where salaries will be paid at appropriate times. It is only then that the human capital required to move from public administration to public management can be made available.

Concluding Remarks. In spite of the fact that the traditional public administration has been flattening out in most countries of the world, the Nigerian situation seems to be far from this reality. The international experience clearly established that a number of restructuring towards a more focused, efficient, effective, citizen and market-oriented public administration has taken place. In essence, there have been downsizing of the public sector workers, a load shedding in the development and role of the state, increased role for the private sector in the provision of certain services which were earlier provided by the state, entrenched competition between the private and the public sector for government jobs, among others. In Nigeria, a number of reforms directed towards realising these new norms in the public sector were

haphazardly implemented. In most cases where managerialism, transparency and accountability were recommended, as we had in the Udoji and 1988 reforms, when it came to implementation, the "status quo ante" remained. The pressures presented by globalisation, economic depression and representative democracy appear not to have had any impact on the management of the Nigerian public sector. There is this general belief that the countries that had succeeded in transforming their public sector had certain factors in their environment, which facilitated this translation. Among the often-cited factors are strong political institutions, a tradition of transparency and accountability and the absence of ethnic or racial differences that would have warranted constitutional policies like federal character in recruitment or sharing of federal and state appointments. Despite the absence of these factors, learning to conduct the business of government in the open can eradicate those other symptoms (especially the propensity for mutual suspicion among the various groups) that have made the practice of public management difficult.

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