

# *Enhancing the Performance of Civil Service in an Emergent State: The Abia State Experience*

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This work espouses the performance of the civil service in an emergent state, with particular emphasis on Abia State. It is a fact that the civil service is not a new innovation in Nigeria; rather it has its roots strongly in colonialism. Its major thrust is to ensure the smooth functioning of government. It has survived many governments military and democratic. Using the system theory by Cheister Barnard, as the model of our analysis, this paper through its findings were strongly convinced that political interference, corruption, low morale had been its problem. The paper went on to proffer that through proper motivation, training and development of staff, harmonization etc. the civil service in Abia State will be a model in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Performance, Civil Service, Emergent State, motivation, harmonization, training and development*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The civil service is not a creation of modern times; rather it has its root in the history of civilization with the emergence of modern States. The civil service evolved as the bedrock of the executive arm of government. Its main task is the implementation and execution of policies decided by the legislature or those appointed by the legislature to carry out the executive work of the government (Adebayo, 2000). In accomplishing this task, the civil service found itself in the formation of policy matters. The civil service is also responsible for the management of the machinery of government and carrying out of the day-to-day duties that public administration demands. The ultimate decision and policy formulation rests with the political heads of the department. It draws its roots from colonialism, which is the hub of government. For the purpose of executing government policies, the civil service helps in the formulation of policies, implementation, advising on the full implications of policies open to it, stabilization of force in the society, planning, etc.

The efficiency and effectiveness of these function depends largely on the quality of the available human resources known as civil servants. Fundamentally, the world we live today is not static. It is a fact that deliberates bottlenecks arising from lack of motivation, lack of discipline, corruption, unfavourable working conditions, nepotism and general organizational problems (Abukahal, 1971). These problems have created lapses and inefficiency in administration for the emergent civil servants in Nigeria. It is therefore, the need to put in place a mechanism for an emergent civil service in Abia State to have a

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mechanism that will enhance efficiency, achieve organizational goals and fulfill the mission of government that this work is set to achieve. For purposes of explicitly, we shall derive our framework of analysis from the “system theory” of Chester I. Barnard. According to him, organization is a social system, consciously co-ordinate and co-operative system. The executive are to coordinate the working of the people in the organization (Barnard, 1938). He said that organization is a group of people working together whose activities are coordinated. All parts of the organization which help in achievement of the organizational goals must integrate interrelate and work interdependently. He also maintains that organization is a system of consciously coordinated activities by a capacity generating a common purpose by the willingness of its members to effectively contribute to the success of the whole process and achieve effective communication.

The purpose for the use of this concept is that all the parts of the organization, are interrelated and interdependent, contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the organization. All parts must communicate with each other; this will lead to the effective functioning of the organization because an individual cannot achieve everything alone due to biological, social, and economic restrictions (Nwachukwu, 1978). Pursuant to these promise, it is expedient to understand that the civil Service is not an individual affair. Rather, it is a collective affair in which every body must contribute his/her skill, experience and talent in order to achieve the pre-ordained goals. As regards civil service as a system, the administrative and professional class, the executive and clerical class must co-operate with one another and make sure that there is consistency in service. It is the duty and responsibility of the political heads to co-ordinate the officials and make sure that they function effectively according to the conducts of the civil service (Okoli, 2002). No department or official should be seen working alone all must interact and communicate with one another to achieve the great goals which they have been called for. All these will help uphold the integrity of the civil Service and make them the sole body for implementation of government policies and programmes.

### **The Concept of Civil Service**

It is good to point out that no nation whether developed or developing could forge ahead without the existence of the civil service. The civil service is the entire organization of employee of various ranks, talent and training who are in the service of the government on regular basis as who do not engage in any form of policies while in government service (Nwizu, 2002). It is also the collectivity of public bureaucracy set up by modern government and a body of men and women who are trained in various fields and employed by the government and people of the state which does not include the armed forces personnel and judiciary officers (Bennis, 1973). On his part, Adebayo, (2000) described “Civil Service as the bedrock of the executive arm of government responsible for the implementation and execution of policies and programmes decided on by the legislature to carry out the executive work of the government. Selassise (1974) also perceives it as comprising all servants of the state other than those holding political and judiciary appointment, who are employed in civil capacity and remunerations are paid wholly and

directly out of the money voted by the parliament. According to Ademolekun (1983), Civil Service in the Nigeria content and according to the 1999 Constitution to cover the federal civil service, the state civil service and local government permanently positioned by the government to implement its policies and programmes and to make sure that the objective goal is achieved. Again, Lawson (1985) on his concept understands “Civil Service as the servants of the state or central government, employed as civilians and close not cover ministries, cabinet members and judiciary. He went further to say that in some countries, it does not usually cover local government employees and the staff of public corporation. Lawson (1985) again perceives the civil service to embrace civilian employees of state and Federal government excluding cabinet ministries and judiciary.

According to section 277 of 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) civil service means works of the federal or State government in civil capacity as staff of the president or governor, vice president or deputy governor, a ministry or department of the government of the federal or State assigned with responsibility for any business of the government of the federal or state government. The Constitution also mentions that there is distinction between the civil service and the public service. Hence, it describes the later as the service of any capacity in respect of the government of the federal and of the State. The term “civil capacity” as used by the Constitution was to a large extent reflected in the conception by Dale and Okoto (2000) as one of the body of persons directly employed in the administration of affairs of the state and whose role and functions are not political and ministerial. Abiola (1991) sees the concept as that body of full time professional officials employed in the civil affairs of a State in non political capacity.

### **The Functions of Civil Service in an Emergent State**

Civil Service performs numerous functions. According to Lawson (1985), he said that in an organized state, the civil servants (those working in the service) perform certain roles, which can be studied at two levels. He called the first primary servants to advice, their political masters known as ministers in all aspects of government activities to ensure that formulation of the policies that are in consonant with the objectives of the government of the day. The other aspect of the functions of the civil Service is to ensure by all means that policy decisions of the government are faithfully implemented (Ogbuagu, 1974). Their basic role therefore is to initiate or take active part in all process leading to the formulation of policy and to ensure that the policy agrees by the government is faithfully and honestly executed (Osipow, 1923). He therefore opines that civil service is about the most important singular institution effecting the lives of the citizen of a state, its influence is all pervasive in modern world where most states carryout wide functions in providing social services and regulating the economic life of their citizens. According to Adebayo (2000), the civil service is charged with the responsibility and management of machinery of government and carrying out day-to-day duties that public administration demands while the ultimate decisions rest with the political heads. He also maintained that, it is the duty of the civil Servant to supply their political boss with all the information necessary for coming to a right decision. The civil Servant must place before their boss all the arguments on both sides of the matter

carefully and faithfully without their sympathies, personal prejudices and affections. Nwizu (2002) asserts that the civil Service is a body of people who are directly responsible for the execution of government policies and programmes. It includes everybody who participates in the execution of public policies and programmes from the administrative machinery of government and to advice government on the full implications of policy options open to it. They also serve as an organ for stabilization of forces in the society, an instrument of social change and planning (Peter, 1985). This view is also shared by Crozier (1964) when he defines civil service as those officials who are charged with responsibility of carrying out the policies and programs laid down by the parliament. Civil service is a mechanism for putting the policies of government into effect to achieve an objective of the government. He went further to state that civil Service is the official body responsible for achieving the objectives and goals of the government of the day on matters of policy formulation and implementation (Prince, 1977).

Nwachukwu (1995) in his work see the functions of the civil service to mean the body of men and women employed in a civil capacity and on a non political basis render advice and faithfully give effect to their decisions. In this context, the non-political nature of the civil service further shows that the Nigeria civil service system has been patterned on the British model, this practice is however contrary to what is obtainable on some countries, for instance in France, civil, civil Servants are allowed to take part in politics.

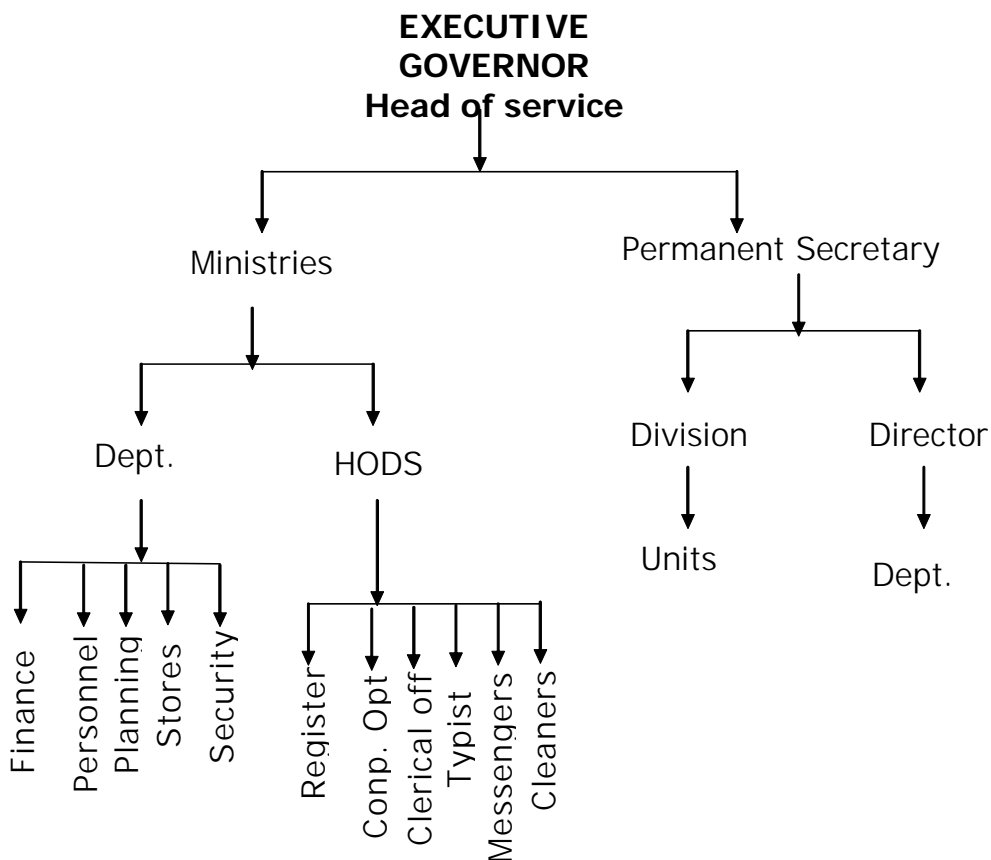
### **The Background History of Abia State Civil Service**

Abia is a State in South Eastern Nigeria created in 1991, from Imo State. The citizens are predominantly Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria. The capital is Umuahia; but the major commercial city is Aba, formally a British colonial government outpost. With this further creation of states by the military regime under General Ibrahim Babangida, in 1991, saw the beginning of Abia State civil service (H.O.S, 1991). Since its creation in August 27, 1991 ministries and departments were created to make sure that the young state achieved its objectives. On its creation the civil Servant who are indigenes of the state came down to Umuahia, the capital and various local government areas were created to also render services to the now state. The intention was for them to play a leading role in the execution of government policies and programmes for the overall development of the young state. There was also mass recruitment of officials from all works of life to fill in the various ministries to make sure that they function effectively and efficiently for the good and overall development of the state. Since then, Abia State Civil Service has not deviated from the primary function in the implementation of policies of government and maintenance of continuity in service (Uduma, 2012).

### **The Organizational Structure of Abia State Civil Service**

Abia State Civil Service is a network of civil servants structured hierarchically with a view to carrying out the policies and programmes of the state. The code of conduct, including the laid down rules and regulations must be followed adequately to achieve the pre-ordained goals of the State. A cursory look will focus on the organizational structure of Abia State

civil service starting from the office of the Executive Governor down to the lower echelon. The explanation will follow after the organizational chart. For Civil Service to work more effectively and efficiently, confidence and moral must be restored among the workers. The Civil Service must also develop a sense of pride in their work and career and to create in them a feeling of belonging and also foster in them the spirit of participation in the task of nation-building (Bola, 1989). Apart from that, although it needs patience, discipline and courage to put the Abia State Civil Service in right footing, there is need to heal Abia State from the glaring wounds which are militating against the smooth operations of the civil service. There should be equal employment opportunities irrespective of where one comes from prompt payment of salaries and other incentives should be put in place, promotion should go across board whether to administrative or professional class, rules and regulations should also be strictly adhered in order to make sure that the state civil service achieved its objectives. The multiple issues of corruption, political interference, lack of motivation, lack of funds and problems must be adequately taken care of as the state moves to a higher level.



**Fig. 1:** The Organizational Structure of Abia State Civil Service

Figure 1 represents the organizational structure of Abia state civil service. The executive governor is the chief image maker, ably represented by the head of service; with the

permanent secretaries as the administrative head of the various ministries. They are responsible for the day-to-day management and administration of the various ministries, as well as advise the commissioners in policy formulation, planning and also answerable to the commissioners as the political head of the ministry and as the daily authorized governor's representative (Dele and Okoto, 2002).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For the civil service to attain its desired height in the performance of its constitutional duties in an emergent state, it needs to be seen that the institutional bottle necks against such attainment is removed. As the only body responsible for the management of the machinery of government and carrying out the day – to – day activities of government, its moderate should not be tempered with. Therefore for the civil service in Abia State to be truly seen as an unbiased umpire serving every government that comes, this paper, hereby is proffering the following, as recommendations.

***Political Interference:*** To bring efficiency and effectiveness in Abia State civil service, political interference must be condemned and resisted by all stakeholders in Abia State. This will help discourage mediocracy, nepotism, favoritism and employment of unqualified officials into the state civil service,

***Staff Motivation:*** The present level of staff motivation in Abia State is very low. In order to raise the morale and enthusiasm in the system, staff of Abia State civil service should therefore be motivated through prompt payment of salaries, allowances and promotion exercise should be based on efficiency and productivity, rather than length of service or seniority to encourage competence among workers.

***Staff Training and Development:*** Each ministry should be encouraged to map out reliable training and manpower development programmes for their staff. To this end, on the job and off the job training exercise should be put in place. Staff should be encouraged to attend specialized course in professional institutions in order to acquire the needed knowledge and skills to enhance performance.

***Equal Employment:*** Presently there is nothing like equal opportunity in Abia State civil service. There should be equal employment opportunities in the state civil service irrespective of where one comes from. A situation where a particular area having upper hand in employment should be abolished, Rules and regulations should be adhered to strictly in order to avoid truancy and nonchalant attitude to work

***Lack of Harmonization:*** The Abia State Civil Service System should be harmonized as this will enable all the ministries to work on collaboration to achieve the objectives of the State.

***Modern Facilities:*** Modern and basic facilities should be made available, a comfortable offices with modern air conditions in them and also transport facilities to bring out the best

in this workers should be provided. Merit awards should be instituted for long servicing and for outstanding civil servants to government should also be provided upward review of housing loans to meet with the rate of inflation in the country should urgently be addressed. If these recommendations are properly implemented, it will help in salvaging the declining image of Abia state civil service and boast its prospects in the future. Presently, the world is turning a global village, it keeps changing and so is everything in it including manmade institutions. It is therefore, the view of this paper that these recommendations are strictly followed and implemented the civil service in Abia State, will be amount the best in Nigeria's of the 21st century.

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