



SERVICE DELIVERY AND ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS IN NIGERIANS POLYTECHNICS.

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ABSTRACT

The paper is a synthesis of some concepts and issues in Service delivery and Administrative functions. It approached the discourse in a concise and lucid manner which was anchored essentially on secondary data and analytical framework. This paper interrogated some of the constraints in Nigerian's Polytechnics towards Service delivery and role of Servicom within the environment in which public administration operates and highlighted the administrative and service delivery.

Keywords: *Service delivery, administrative, functions, institutions and Servicom.*

INTRODUCTION

The polytechnics and colleges of technology in Nigeria according to Idowu et al (2000) are established to train a new generation of technicians, technologists and business technocrats whose distinctive attributes would be self-reliance and preparedness to set up their own business either individually or cooperatively. The polytechnics or colleges of technology are known foremost in Nigeria with their great contributions in all field of endeavours to satisfy the national manpower needs within and outside Nigeria.

The impact of Servicom on service delivery has always been an underlying motif in the literature on service delivery in Nigerians institutions. Administrative functions as a central theme of the debates on Service delivery, however, only took root after the World Development Report of 2004 which identified failures in Service delivery squarely as failures in accountability

relationships (World Bank 2004). By showing how the ‘long route’ of accountability (via elected politicians and public officials through to providers) was failing the poor, the World Development Report argued in favour of strengthening the ‘short route’ direct Service delivery between users and providers. The World Development Report sparked off a spate of work that examined ways of strengthening the short route: from amplifying voice, increasing transparency and enhancing Service delivery (Sirker, Cosic 2007; McNeil & Mumvuma 2006).

DEFINING ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

What are the effects of our increasing emphasis upon administrative functions in Nigerians Polytechnics administration in changing the actual roles of the school board and superintendent in the administrative scheme? By law and custom, the superintendence has developed as an executive office having the rather clear-cut function of executing policies which are formulated and adopted by the board of education. In the same way, the board as a representative legislative body has had traditionally the policy making functions. However, since we have come to expect the board to rely more and more heavily upon the superintendent’s recommendations in making policies and Service delivery, the superintendent has gradually become almost uniquely responsible for the formulation of school policies as well as for its execution. Consequently, it is of the greatest significance that this newer Servicom conception of administration as a participative function virtually gives to the working school staff a large responsibility in both the legislative and executive functions in Service delivery.

METHODOLOGY

The paper examined Academic and non-teaching staff of the Polytechnic institution as well as some students were questioned on service delivery. The Management board, head of Units, Deans and head of departments (H.O.D), are the custodian of service delivery who are expected to deliver services under the SERVICOM Unit, who supervises all services in the Institution, data were analysis and discuss.

ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

Administrative function involves improving and enhancing administrative capabilities for achieving developmental goals and service delivery. Administrative capability involves ability to mobilise, allocate and combine the actions that are technically needed to achieve developmental objectives. The functions as the capabilities to mobilise, allocate and combine actions necessary for Service delivery through the systematic institution of the civil service structure and extra-governmental institutions. In this particular instance, the capacity refers to the people who occupy positions in these organisations and Servicom as a watch dog. They are said to be capable when they are recruited following strictly laid down criteria which put merit above all other considerations. Furthermore, where such capability is potentially existing, it could be developmental on-the-job or through external training (polytechnics and other institutions).

ADMINISTRATION

The context of administration is one devoid of certain institutional constraints on the efforts to Service delivery. The last of these constraints is administrative in nature. That is to say, administrative structures and managerial capacities are inadequate for the task of Service delivery. Therefore, to succeed in the Service delivery struggle, administrative capabilities have to be improved consciously. There are two major areas of action in the effort to improve administrative capability.

Firstly, organizational Service delivery is required. It is often described as change in administrative structure which is directed from the top and is oriented towards the achievement of certain goals. In the Nigerian context, such changes have taken the forms of civil service reforms and there have been several including: the 1988 civil service reforms (Patrick koshoni); 1982 Gamaliel Onosode; 1975/76 Ani commission, Williams (1975) commission; 1973/74 Jerome Udoji commission; 1970 Simon Adebo commission; Adeyinka Morgan and Coker commissions/panels among others. These reforms did not only affect the civil service in isolation but they affected public enterprises as well. For instance, it is through the intervention of some of these commissions of enquiry that public enterprises experienced rapid growth in Nigeria between 1970 and

1980. Similarly, it was through their intervention that government began to think of divestment (privatizing) of public enterprises (Ibietan and Oni, 2013). The second area which characterizes the process of administrative function in attempt at developing managerial capacity (skills) within the public sector. It is not very easy separating activities related to organizational and structural development from activities aimed improving managerial capacity. This is so because, all panels or commissions which have looked at the performance of the civil Service delivery or public enterprises have always included recommendations for structural reorganization or improvement as well as recommendations for improving managerial performance by creating a sector known as servicom. Looking at the documents of various commissions of enquiry, it is possible to identify certain broad areas of action which they recommended for improving civil service performance. Udoji in his recommendations stressed three areas: Improvement in working conditions, salaries and fringe benefits. Adoption of MBO (management by objectives) as a system of operation in the civil Service delivery. This was calculated to introduce an efficiency criterion in the civil service management and the salary awards were meant to justify a harder working bureaucracy. The Udoji recommendation stressed the need for further training of civil servants. In this case training was to be essentially in service (Obi and Nwanegbo, 2006).

OBJECTIVE

The Administrative functions allow users to perform standard application administrative tasks such as creation & maintenance of quotation templates, maintenance of user access roles and rights, maintain language transaction of menus, as well as track user access, and troubleshoot possible application problems.

ADMINISTRATIVE OR MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS OF AN OFFICE

1. Organizing the Office

Organizing the office on modern lines involves performing the management functions of planning, organizing, directing and controlling. In other words, the office work must be properly planned, organized and then executed according to the plan.

A proper control must be exercised over the office activities and also over the affairs of different employees and departments. Besides them, activities must be effectively coordinated.

2. Laying down Office Routines and Systems

For steady and undisturbed performance of the office work, the office should develop definite Routine Systems and Procedures. Since all the jobs in the office are interdependent and interrelated, there should be proper sequencing of routine for each type of work. This is possible only when proper systems etc. are laid down.

3. Form Designing and Control

A form is a standardized record, which is used to accumulate and transact information for reference purposes. These forms serve as a storehouse of Information. Since the office work is largely paper work and filling, the forms used should be properly designed so as to furnish the required information in an appropriate manner. It is the duty of the office management to design the forms that can be used in various departments.

4. Procurement and Supply of Stationery

It is stated already that office work is mostly paper work. To carry on the office work, stationery of suitable quality should be supplied to the clerical staff and others in required quantities. The office should arrange for the procurement of the necessary stationery and issue them to all departments on the basis of their need.

5. Selection and Purchase of Office Appliances and Equipment

In every office, the management should provide **suitable furniture to its staff** so that they can perform their work conveniently. Besides, modern devices like telephone, calculators, typewriters, Dictaphones, Computers etc. are extensively used now-a-days.

Labour saving devices have become popular in all modern offices. The office manager should procure the right type of equipment and also maintain them in good working conditions. Since modern equipment is very costly, proper care is needed for preserving them to enable good Service delivery.

6. Public Relations Functions

Public understanding and acceptance are essential for any growing organization. This calls for constant touch with the public, that is, public

relations. The purpose of public relations is to make the enterprise look good to all actions.

According to M. C. Shukla, the functions of public relations are:

A. To keep the managers at all levels well informed about the current status and changes in the opinions of the public both internal and external. Internal public include the key policy makers, supervisory personnel, employees and the shareholders.

B. To warn about the unfavourable reaction of others to the action of the institution and to suggest a suitable modification in the institutional action to avoid such unfavourable reaction.

C. To communicate the institutional policies and actions to the public by all established media. Every organization has to deal with a number of external public. Therefore, every organization has to make proper arrangements for the reception of students and visitors alike and to attend them promptly and courteously towards good Service delivery.

7. Personnel Functions

We bedded that the office work can be performed only by trained and experienced office personnel. To procure suitable personnel, an office performs certain personnel functions also. It recruits, selects and trains the clerical personnel and places them on various jobs in the office.

Sometimes, particularly in large undertakings their work is delegated to the Personnel Department. But the **office manager** must assist the Personnel Officer in the matter of selection. The office manager should also provide them proper working environment in the office and motivate them for peak performance.

8. Controlling Office Cost

Clerical expenditure on office cost is yet another factor, which needs control. By adopting scientific methods like mechanization of the office, adopting labour saving devices, using proper forms and periodically analysing and reviewing the existing systems and procedures, the office cost can be controlled effectively and reduced substantially.

THE SERVICOM CHARTER.

On 21st March, 2004, the Federal Government of Nigeria resolved to enter into a “SERVICE COMPACT” (SERVI-COM) with the citizens of our country for

a commitment to their welfare and satisfaction with Service delivery; and thus, was born the SERVICOM Charter (SERVICOM, 2003). By SERVICOM, it was agreed that all Ministries, Parastatals and Agencies and all other Government Departments will prepare and publish, not later than the First Day of July 2004, SERVICOM CHARTERS whose provisions would include:

1. Quality services designed around the requirements of their customers and served by staff sensitive to the needs of their clients;
2. Set out the entitlements of the citizens clearly and in ways they could readily understand;
3. The list of fees payable (if any), and the prohibition of the demand of any additional payments;
4. Commitment to the provision of Services (including the processing of applications and the answering of correspondence) within realistically set timeframes;
5. Details of agencies and officials to whom complaints about service failures may be addressed;
6. Publish these details in conspicuous places accessible to the public;
7. Periodically conduct and publish surveys to determine levels of customer satisfaction. (SERVICOM, 2004)

SERVICE-DELIVERY MONITORING

With these, the usefulness, or otherwise, of the SERVICOM Charter in the improvement of

Service delivery to the catchment population of Nigerian Polytechnics, both Staff and students, could be reasonably determined.

1. To determine the success or failure of any change in Service delivery, the Servicom monitors the outcome of the change. This monitoring occurs over the life of the change, usually at specified periods, such as weekly, monthly, semi-annually, or annually. Meetings, interviews, and surveys are used to monitor the change. When feedback indicates that needs are being adequately and efficiently met, monitoring will then be used to determine whether they change over time, requiring an alteration in the Service delivery in the future.
2. To ascertain if there were changes in the effectiveness and quality of Service delivery pre-SERVICOM Charter and post-SERVICOM Charter

as mirrored, amongst other parameters, by the number of high grade students with good qualifications, amongst other things and seriousness of the staff towards the progress of the institutions, as an indirect reflection of the quality of Service delivery.

3. To protect the interests of internal and external Managements and stakeholders. The Nodal Officer generate raw data and create reports that become part of the system. They may also be responsible for analysing information for the purpose of assisting in decision-making, establishing, or monitoring trends.

As soon as the protocols of the SERVICOM Charter were put in place, the attitude of Staff began to change, and remarkably too. Whether it was solely from self-conviction or for fear of sanctions, it was not very clear, but for whatever reason it was, the positive change was rather dramatic. Every employee rushed to make it to the duty post every day before the attendance register was closed, and at the various service points, students were given timely and polite attention; lectures were readily taking place ta when due.

CONSTRAINTS

Some of the problems faced by the polytechnics is fully actualizing their objectives, especially towards alleviation of poverty in Nigerian by sustaining the existing protocols or developments and skills include:

1. Poor funding of Nigerian polytechnics,
2. Poor Nigerians poverty level,
3. Poor government attitudes towards creation of good entrepreneurship culture in Nigeria,
4. Poor networks and physical infrastructures needed to complementary technological innovation and entrepreneurship skills,
5. Discouragement as a result of disparities among Nigerian Polytechnics and Universities hinders Nigerian polytechnics efforts to achieve their aim with the better potentiality possessed to train students for good technological innovation and job creation (self-reliance) qualities,
6. Failure to transform NBTE into a National Commission for Polytechnics (NCP) which would be responsible for proper supervisory of the polytechnics alone like their counterparts in the Universities,
7. Long delay in reviewing the Nigerian Polytechnics curricula.

CONCLUSIONS

It is axiomatic that the structural and attitudinal changes introduced by the SERVICOM, brought a very significant improvement in all the performance indices of the Service units and departments of Nigerians Polytechnics, and thus, contributed to the improved in Service delivery to their clients. Perhaps, one of the most likely handicaps that could stall or reverse these gains is the non-sustenance of the current momentum, but which if sustained and the introduced changes improved upon, Service delivery despite its various challenges would most likely continue to improve the educational expectancy of the average Nigerian.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the outcomes of Service deliveries, the following recommendations are made:

1. Deans of Schools as academic leaders should accord academic Service delivery as top priority attention. This is necessary because the way and manner it is managed determines to a large extent, the academic outcome of students. Effective management of academic Service delivery may go a long way to enhance students' academic attainment to make it more qualitative. Qualitative academic outcome means that the right skills and experiences are derived from academic programmes. This results to individual and national education transformation.
2. Heads of departments and Unites should monitor academic Service delivery at the Departments and Unites levels to ensure that it is given a pride of place. This calls for proper coordination, because it is academic Service delivery that strengthens academic programmes. It is only when academic programmes are strengthened that they can result to national education transformation.
4. The departments on their part, being in direct contact with the students should strive to ensure that academic Service delivery is effectively carried out, irrespective of how the School handle it. They are in a better position to do this because they have lesser number of students than the whole institutions to deal with. This may enable them to identify the needs of students academically and work towards satisfying them. Students may

thus be enabled to get the best out of their education, which may help them fit in properly in the national scheme of things.

5. An independent SERVICOM Charter Commission should be established as a part of Federal Government Parastatals and extended in authority to the various States of Nigeria just like the case with the National and State AIDS/HIV Control Agencies which are represented all the way down the 3 tiers of government, to enable them exercise their authorities in the scheme of action.

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