

Chapter 7

Globalisation and the *Politics* of Productivity in Nigeria's Public Administration

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Introduction

The question of productivity in Nigeria's public administration is crucial, especially, at this period of its political and economic transition. This is because productivity is very central to the economic development of any given society. Udo-Aka (1982:68) argues that productivity is "the amount of output produced by each unit of input, where outputs are measured in physical units." Productivity, therefore, has to do with production of certain outcomes from a given resource. Similarly, Balogun (1982:149) maintains that "a simple definition will equate productivity with the capacity of a production factor to accomplish an objective, or a set of objectives within a given period." This suggests that productivity connotes obtaining greater results in terms of output from any human endeavour. In addition, Quick (1973:1) argues that "more than anything else, productivity is an attitude of the mind" (cited in Udo-Aka, 1982). It is concerned with the desire of individuals in an organisation or society to be efficient and effective in combining the factors of production to achieve development.

Over the years, Nigeria's public service has contributed marginally to the socio-economic and political development of the country. It is perhaps for this reason that Kura and Owoputi (2008:24) broadly argue that "to say that individual African countries' bureaucratic organisations are in abysmal decay is simply stating the obvious." The reason for this can be located from two dominant perspectives, domestic and international. The foreign multilateral institutions and capital have continued to make forays into the centres of economic and political institutions of Nigerian society with serious consequence on the operation of public administration. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, as well as other international agencies that have been acting as instruments of globalisation, have been prescribing different policy tablets to the Nigerian government all in the name of trying to revamp the economy for greater productivity and development. Of particular interest was the conditionality of privatising the major state owned enterprises so as to reduce the burden on government of payment of huge salaries to an 'unproductive' workforce.

Even as the Nigerian government adopted the policy of the IMF and the World Bank and introduced structural adjustment programme in the late 1980s, the performance of the economy still remains dismal. It is on this basis that Ninsin (2000:6) avers that:

It must be said, however, that the implications of globalisation for Africa should not be viewed narrowly in economic terms. The implications encompass the political, social, economic and other spheres of life. It is total, and threatens to jeopardise attempts to transform the entire social formation in order to improve the quality of the people on a sustainable basis.

From the above, it can be stated that the productivity of Nigeria's public administration in this period of globalisation is marginal and therefore grossly inadequate for the transformation of the country. This marginal productivity is seen in the corrupt nature of bureaucracy, inadequate training and personnel, value degeneration and many other problems. It is on this basis that this paper seeks to examine the interface between the domestic and external forces which influence the productivity of Nigeria's public administration. The paper is divided into four sections. After this introduction, the second section reviews theories of administration. Section three examines globalisation and public administration in Nigeria. Section four disaggregates the politics of productivity in Nigeria's public administration and concludes the discussion with relevant suggestions.

Public Administration and Productivity: a review of related theories

There are various theoretical approaches and suggestions for improving the productivity of private and public organisations. A review of these theories is necessary in order to appreciate the differing positions and thrusts in the maximization of worker's output, *vis-à-vis* their limitations in understanding the problems of productivity. These theories have been grouped into classical, behaviouralist, scientific management, human relations management and contingency theories. In the first place, the classical or traditional approach was associated with the works of industrialists and writers such as James Watt, Mathew R. Boulton, Owen Robert and Charles Babbage. According to this approach, the attainment of high productivity requires a systematically designed organisation that adhered to basic rules of order and logic. Also, the approach considers the functions of management to include planning, organizing, directing and controlling. Thus productivity could only be

enhanced if management and workers perform their respective duties effectively and efficiently.

Similarly, Frederick Winslow Taylor's (1919) Scientific Management theory argues that industrial problem or specifically lack of productivity could be solved by scientific approach. The theory emphasises that workers should be made supervisors and that productivity in factories can be enhanced through production standards, planning and training workers, their supervisors and managers (Aina, 1992:4). In addition, Taylor introduced three principles on how to attain the greatest efficient productivity in an organisation. These are: that each worker should be given a definite task to perform in a definite manner; select the right workers for the task; and motivate workers to a higher level of performance by incentive method of payment.

However, much as the theory tries to adopt the techniques of increasing productivity in factories, it has been subjected to the criticism that it lays too much emphasis on production through the use of machines and gives little or no concern for the workers. The theory also has limited application. The shortcomings of the theory led to the emergence of Human Relations theory developed by Elton Mayo and his associates, through studies at the Hawthorn Western Electric Factories in Chicago. Their findings attached much importance to the recognition of individuals as members of organisations. For Mayo, "organisations are systems of human beings, dependent on one another," (Cited in Evans, 1992:82). The theory considers people as the organisation not just part of it and that supervisors should satisfy the welfare of employees. Here, it needs to be pointed out that the Human Relations Management theory suffers from the weakness of placing too much emphasis on workers' welfare.

Another administrative theory is the behaviouralist approach. It places emphasis on the fact that if one is to understand an organisation then he/she must first

understand the character of individuals in the organisation. According to the behaviouralists, a manager must not only understand individuals and their interpersonal relationships, he/she must have a thorough knowledge of their group relations that make up an organisation (Aina, 1992:5). However, it suffices to emphasise that within the behaviouralist movement there are various theories propounded by different writers to explain motivation at work. These writers include Abraham Maslow, Douglas McGregor, Frederick Herzberg, Clayton Alderfer and Victor H. Vroom. These people were essentially concerned with why some employees put the interests of their organisation first, while others are more interested on the benefit they will derive from the organisation. It can, therefore be argued that one of the major concerns of managers is to motivate subordinates in order to enhance performance (Joseph, 1975).

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory emphasizes that all people seek to satisfy five basic needs, namely: physiological, safety, social, ego and self actualisation. He suggests that these needs constitute a hierarchy and that the most basic needs - physiological and safety - are at the bottom. He argues that these lowest levels of needs must be satisfied before a person strives to satisfy the higher needs in the hierarchy. Furthermore, Maslow argues that physiological needs for food, clothing and shelter must adequately be satisfied before an individual requires safety from physical harm and job loss. According to Maslow, the third categories of need involve social issues, which are, belongingness and love. These are followed by esteem needs, which are needs for stable and high self evaluation. Finally, self actualisation is the ultimate, as it is concerned with the development of individual potentials like having regular promotion and recognition (cited in Huse and Browditch, 1977:89-91).

Although Maslow identifies needs that could serve as sources of motivation for employees, sometimes an individual can dispense with the four needs.

Douglas McGregor's theories 'X' and 'Y' were developed to analyse the behaviour of people at work. The two theories are opposite to one another. Some managers prefer to apply theory 'X' and others theory 'Y'. In theory 'X', McGregor maintains that an average human being has an inherent dislike of work and would avoid it if he/she can. Because of this, most employees are to be coerced, controlled, directed, and threatened with punishment in order to get them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of organisational objectives. In theory 'Y' on the other hand, McGregor gives an alternative explanation of human behaviour that the expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest. He further maintains that external control and the threat of punishment are not the best means of bringing about effort towards organisational objectives. For him, people work and discipline themselves in the service of objectives to which they are committed. He stresses that the capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity and creativity in the solution of organisational problems is widely distributed in the population (cited in Evans, 1992:99-101; Knudson *et al.*, 1973:82).

From the above, it can be observed that while both theories "X" and "Y" seem to capture the behaviour of different individuals at the work place, they are limited in explaining productivity. In the first place, theory "X" is limited on the grounds that if you treat employees as lazy or rebellious, they can easily succumb to that treatment and refuse to work. This is detrimental to productivity. On the other hand, theory "Y" places too much emphasis on work as if that is the only way through which human beings can attain satisfaction. For example, in Nigeria and some other capitalist societies there are people who work very little or less and yet enjoy greater resources than others through primitive accumulation.

Frederick Herzberg propounded Motivation – Hygiene Model. This theory emerged from two studies conducted by

Herzberg and his associates published in the 1950s. To understand the relationship between productivity and workers' morale, the study used semi-structured interviews to obtain information from accountants and engineers on factors that made them to like or dislike their work. According to the study, those who liked their work identified the following motivational factors: achievement, recognition, nature of work, responsibility and advancement. On the other hand, those who disliked their work attributed this to the job context as disincentives. According to them, the most important dissatisfiers or hygiene factors, include company policy and administration (ineffective, unfair treatment), supervisor's lack of competence in carrying out their functions, poor working conditions, etc. (Huse and Browditch, 1977:96). The major weakness of this theory is that while it has succeeded in identifying both satisfiers and dissatisfiers among the employees, it fails to proffer any practical solution to improving workers' motivation *vis-à-vis* productivity.

In another postulation, Clayton Alderfer developed Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory of motivation by trying to collapse the five categories of needs in Maslow's hierarchy into three categories as follows: existence, relatedness and growth. Alderfer arranges his categories in hierarchy and suggests that as lower level needs become satisfied, a person seeks to satisfy higher level needs. For Alderfer, growth needs include the need for self development, creative and productive work and this can be achieved by allowing people to continually improve their skills and engage in meaningful work. Similarly, relatedness needs involve the need to have good interpersonal relations, to share thoughts and feelings. This can be attained by promoting interpersonal relations and providing accurate feedback. Existence needs include essential needs for food, water, clothing, shelter and a secure and safe environment. This can be achieved by paying enough to workers in order

to provide for their basic necessities of life (Jones and George, 2003:410). This theory just like that of Maslow suffers from an empirical problem. It is very difficult to realistically and empirically establish needs according to hierarchy. All needs are important and can be required at any period and time. In fact, needs are never constant. They change in accordance with time, availability of resources and circumstances.

Victor H. Vroom propounded Expectancy theory of motivation in the 1960s. The basic premise of the theory is that motivation is high when workers believe that high levels of effort lead to high performance and high performance leads to the attainment of desired outcomes. The theory focuses also on three parts of motivation equation, namely, inputs, performance and outcomes. The theory thus identifies three major factors that determine workers' motivation as follows: expectancy, instrumentality and valence. For Vroom, expectancy is a person's perception about the extent to which efforts (inputs) determine his productivity. Instrumentality is the person's perception about the extent to which his performance results in the attainment of outcomes, while valence is about how desirable each of the outcomes available from a job or organisation is to a person. Based on this, the theory maintains that high motivation results from high level of expectancy, instrumentality and valence. On the other hand, if any one of those factors is low, motivation is likely to be low (Jones and George, 2003:403; Glassman, 1978:28), and consequently jeopardises productivity.

Finally, contingency theory was developed as an attempt to combine the ideas of different approaches to the study of management. According to Obikeze and Anthony (2004:76):

[...] the crucial message of contingency theory is that there is no one best way to organise. So the task of the manager is to try to identify which techniques that would work in particular situation under particular circumstances and at a particular time best contributes

to the achievement of goals. Where workers need to be encouraged to increase productivity, for example, the classical theorist may prescribe a new incentive scheme; behavioural scientists may create a psychological motivating climate, while the manager trained in the contingency approach will ask which method will work best here?

On a general note, these theories have been very important in understanding various factors that influence productivity in public or private organisations. Despite their individual limitations, all of them seem to negate the very essence of productivity. They seem to treat organisations and workers as units of analysis separate from their immediate and international environments. In other words, these theories seemingly fail to appreciate the role of domestic and international environments on various forces thereof that influence productivity. This is because organisations do not operate in isolation from the international environment, let alone territorial environment. These factors or forces could be dichotomised into: super and supra structures. The next section deals with these issues.

Explaining the *politics of globalisation and productivity*

Given the global changes that are taking place in the social, cultural, political, environmental and economic life of the Nigerian state, it can be stated that the forces of globalisation are real and their effects on domestic and international political institutions are fundamentally clear. Thus understanding the 'politics' of productivity of public administration in this country could only be adequately appreciated if the forces that influence its functionality are identified and disaggregated.

One of the areas in which globalisation has impacted on the public administration in Nigeria is liberalisation policy. By this is meant the opening of Nigeria's border for free flow

of goods, services and capital. Many observers are concerned that the Nigerian economy which already has low productivity would further be placed in a disadvantageous position. This is because the globalisation process only favours efficiency. Evidently, the Nigerian economy has now become a dumping ground for all kinds of goods, including substandard commodities, expired drugs, and toxic wastes. It is on this instance that Akindele *et al* (2002:3-4) maintain that:

It is within this purview that we can argue that globalisation is mainly a phenomenon of capital mobility. Its two prongs are: (i) Foreign direct investment and (ii) international portfolio flows. Thus a global economy is one which is dominated by transnational firms and financial institutions, operating independently of national boundaries and domestic economic considerations.

Even as globalisation seeks to improve and spread the flow of resources among nations, the benefits that Nigeria and many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa gain from Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) are very minimal compared to other continents of the world (Adeboye, 2002; Ismaila and Dantani, 2007). Indeed, the picture of the decline in FDI to African countries was captured by Keet (1997:23) as follows:

African countries are beneficiaries of only a small fraction of the remaining global resource flows. For example, the continent's shares of the FDI which goes to the developing world has declined from an average of 16% in the 1970s to 10% in the 1980s, and to just 5% by the mid-1990s(cited in Ninsin,2000).

However, today, it is not surprising if the trend in the decline of FDI to Africa continues because of the global economic recession or financial meltdown which started and affected the major financial and industrial sectors in the developed capitalist countries. This has eventually spread to

other continents of the world, including Africa. In the more specific case of Nigeria, the table below indicates sector-by-sector declining trend of FDI in the country for some period of time.

Table 7.1: Sectoral Composition of FDI, 1990-2001 (%)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Mining & Quarrying</i>	<i>Manufac-turing</i>	<i>Agricult-ure</i>	<i>Transport & Communic-ation</i>	<i>Building & Construc-tion</i>	<i>Trading & Business</i>	<i>Misc. Service</i>
1990-1994	22.9	43.7	2.3	1.7	5.7	8.3	15.4
1995-1999	43.5	23.6	0.9	0.4	1.8	4.5	25.3
2000-2001	30.7	18.9	0.6	0.4	2.0	25.8	21.5

Source: Central Bank Nigeria Statistical Bulletin (1990-2001).

From the above table, it can be discerned that there were fluctuations in the rate of foreign investment to this country, in which only few sectors witnessed an increase. In this case the Mining and Quarrying sector witnessed an increase of foreign investment of 22.9% to 43.5% from 1990-1994 and 1995-1999, respectively. Also, the Building and Construction sector had slight increase of 1.8% to 2.0% from 1995-1999 and 2000-2001. In addition, the Trading and Business saw an increase of 4.5% to 25.8% from 1995-1999 and 2000-2001. Under the item on Miscellaneous Services, there was an increase of 15.4% to 25.3% from 1990-1994 and 1995-1999, but it later declined to 21.5% during the interval of 2000-2001. It can be added that even in the Mining and Quarrying sector there was a decline from 43.5% to 30.7% between 1995-1999 and 2000-2001, as shown in the table. Therefore, it can be argued that the claim by the supporters of globalisation, that the process would promote greater and efficient allocation of resources in the world appears not borne out by the facts in Nigeria and some other African countries. However, another

line of argument is that even in periods when FDI was higher in Nigeria, the country's public administration lacked the technical capability and human capacity to utilise such resources. This could perhaps even explain the decline.

Another important area in which globalisation affects the practice of public administration is the implementation of neo-liberal policy of privatisation of public enterprises. Although, privatisation started with the Structural Adjustment Programme, and continued with the implementation of reforms during the Obasanjo regime, the reforms were more comprehensive. This is because during the period some of the important public enterprises such as National Fertilizer Company of Nigeria (NAFCON) Onne, Port- Harcourt and Aladja Steel Company, Asaba were privatised to individuals and corporate bodies. Also, Nigerian Telecommunication Limited (NITEL), Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) etc, are on line for privatisation. The consequences of this were many and manifested in the society. In the first place, the privatisation exercises only succeeded in transferring state resources to the hands of very few individuals. Another effect was that many workers in the privatised enterprises were retrenched as their services were no longer needed. In addition, privatisation brought about drastic reduction in the standard of living of majority of people in this country as a result of government withdrawal from providing essential services to the masses. The new owners of privatized companies charge exorbitant prices for their goods or services. Evidently, it was the dysfunctional and decaying state of public administration, which forced successive governments in Nigeria to implement privatisation policies. The general effect is that it kills the morale of the civil service. Workers were always uncertain about their career.

Closely related to the above, the government embarked upon another neo-liberal reform agendum in the public service, 'right sizing' or 'down-sizing' the Nigerian public service in around 2005. The aims were to improve efficiency

and productivity in the public service. According to the government, those to be affected were redundant and not trainable workers (unskilled personnel). Consequent upon this, many public servants were retrenched at the federal level. However, it needs to be observed that even as the retrenchment exercise was carried out, the public service in the country was yet to record any greater efficiency due to poor remuneration, corruption, and lack of training of workers.

However, much as globalisation has impacted negatively on public administration in Nigeria, it has succeeded in transforming and improving the system of telecommunication in the country through the introduction of Global System of Mobile phone (GSM). With this development individuals and corporate bodies doing business in the country can easily communicate both domestically and internationally.

Also, the GSM and other components of Information Communication Technology (ICT) such as computers and internet have been the sources of knowledge for many administrators as well as generation of employment opportunities in Nigeria. In general, the problem with mere civil service reform, including privatisation, right-sizing, down-sizing, etc is that the reforms were introduced without adequate human and material capacity to absorb them. Globalisation-induced reforms are about ICT and use of modern machines and systems of doing government business. Nigeria's public administration is still rooted in traditions and conservatism. Since globalisation is like a wind, if it meets a country or sector unprepared, the effects are usually detrimental. From 1999 to date, Nigeria's public administration has seen unprecedented series of reform; however, these reforms have yielded insignificant results.

Undoubtedly, Nigerian public administration has not been responsive enough to confront the challenges of underdevelopment in the country. Just like what obtains in some other developing countries, the inadequacy of public

administration is manifested in the nature and conditions of these societies. This, according to Nnoli (1986:178), is because “the general underdevelopment of the African countries is the most pervasive constraint on the effectiveness of African public administrations.” It is, therefore, common knowledge that the system of public administration in Nigeria has for a long period of time not been able to effectively implement policies that would transform the structures and improve the living conditions of the people. The forces responsible for this inadequacy can be categorised into two, namely, the super structures and supra structures.

The superstructures denote the domestic variables that influence the activities of public administration and could be disaggregated into internal and external factors. The internal factors essentially deal with the organisational structures of public administration in Nigeria. As we can see the nature of civil service structure bequeathed to the country by the British colonialists was not meant for the development of the country, rather it was to facilitate the exploitation of the country. Even after independence, the structure failed to respond to the developmental needs of the people in the country. It is on this note that Bande (2007:1) observes that:

There seem to be not only growing poverty, unemployment and ever widening gap between the rich and the poor; but also the palpable decay of institutions. Decades of military authoritarian rule have significantly accounted for this. But what also cannot be contested is the role/complicity of both the political office holders and the civil service.

From the above, it can be argued that the problem of lack of performance of public administration in Nigeria can be located in the people who operate the institutions of government machinery both the political leaders and the public servants. These categories of people have rather failed to deliver the necessary developmental programmes for the country.

On the other hand, the external factors that have impinged on the performance of public administration in Nigeria can be located in the character of the political, economic and socio-cultural perspectives of the society. Basically, these constitute the environment in which public administration operates in Nigeria. To this end, many experts in the field suggest that one or a combination of the factors have been affecting the productivity of public administration in Nigeria. For instance, the mixture of politics and administration has not been auguring well for the practice of public administration in many developing countries like Nigeria. Based on this, Nnoli (1986:173) argues that 'political consideration may cause an industrial project to be embarked upon against all technical and professional wisdom.'

In addition, the type of economic programmes that Nigeria's leaders have been pursuing by trying to copy ideas from advanced capitalist nations have been responsible for poor performance of public administration. Based on this Ake (1972:21) observes that "even if catching up with the West were a legitimate goal, we do not help the achievement of this by cultivating our sense of inferiority and inadequacy" (cited in Gboyega *et al.*, 1989). This simply suggests that the Nigerian leaders have over the years relied much on foreign programmes without taking into consideration local needs and realities.

The second category of forces of globalisation that have directly or indirectly impeded public administration in Nigeria can be located in the supra structures. These are exogenous forces, coming from the international environment but which have impacted on the administrative structures of the country. One of these is the general impact of technology. Western advanced technology has improved the ways in which things are done, especially in the area of transportation. With this Western industrial countries have gained immense advantage over countries like Nigeria because they can easily

transport their goods from one place to another for marketing. However, due to lack of technology to engage in production of variety of commodities Nigeria has to rely on mostly goods from advanced countries. Based on this Onimode (1982:194) maintains that “technological dependence has persisted in Nigeria” (Gboyega *et al.*,1989). This means that as long as Nigeria lacks basic technology the system of public administration in the country will continue to record low productivity.

Another supra structure that has impacted negatively on public administration in Nigeria can be seen in the forms of foreign loans and/or foreign aid from international financial institutions and/or advanced countries. Loans from international institutions such as Paris Club, London Club, IMF, World Bank etc are usually given with high interest rates and in some cases with conditionality so difficult to meet. Thus the effect of loans has been to increase the debt burden on an economy and incapacitate the performance of public administration in countries like Nigeria.

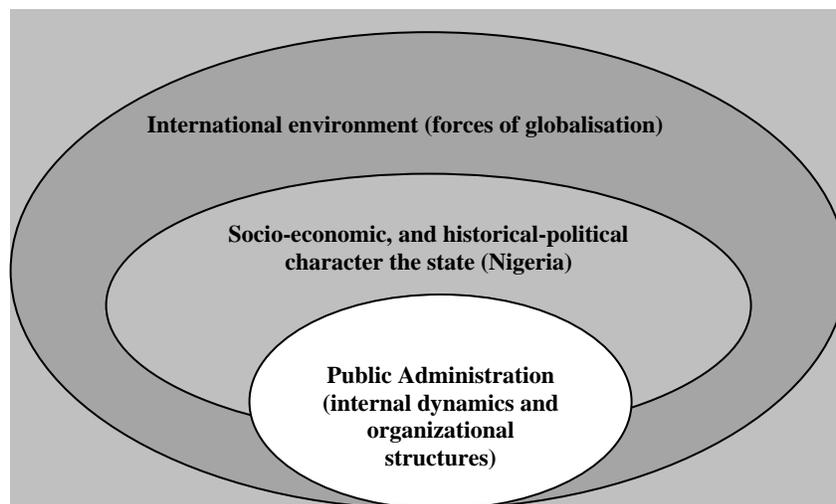


Figure 7.1: Interlinkages of global and internal forces of productivity in Public Administration

The above figure diagrammatically presents a combination of factors, which influence productivity in public administration not only in Nigeria, but generally in developing countries. The figure shows the forces could be disaggregated into three broad factors: (i) the internal dynamics and structural organisation of public administration. These comprise technical expertise, adequacy or otherwise of personnel, training, equipment, attitudes, motivational factors, and so. (ii) The socio-economic and historical-political character of the state under review. The heterogeneous nature of the state, its political history, economic development, political stability, and level of integration, etc. are very essential variables. (iii) International environment. This is concerned with forces of globalisation and the readiness of a country's public administration to absorb such forced changes. However, all the factors are directly and indirectly linked. In other words, it is difficult to discuss the internal dynamics and organisational structure of public administration without understanding the nature and character of the state in which it operates. It is also impossible to discuss the role of globalisation without understanding the level of a state's readiness or otherwise to contain and/or absorb changes being imposed by global forces. The major problem with the framework, as can be seen from our analysis of the Nigerian case, is that of establishing the demarcation between these three forces. There is problem of boundary. For example, where would the analysis of internal dynamics and structural organisation of public administration begin and stop? And, where would analysis of the nature and character of the state begin? This is not to even talk of forces of globalisation which care not about boundaries. These can directly and indirectly affect other factors. The framework could therefore be applied with caution, as indeed conducted in this study.

Conclusion and the way forward

In conclusion, it is important to emphasise that since the realities of globalisation are real and enormous, it amounts to shooting off-target in discussing the problems of productivity in Nigeria's public administration without due recourse to it. Similarly, globalisation alone is inadequate to provide comprehensive explanation. Thus as identified, a combination of forces of globalisation, internal structures of public administration and indeed the wider environment in which it operates provide adequate framework of conducting such analysis. If the problems are so complex, then policy measures and reforms would have to be comprehensive and complex too. In this context, there is the need to intensify efforts in the training of Nigerian public servants so as to be able to meet up with the challenges of modern technology. The importance of training cannot be over emphasized because it is the key element in increasing the efficiency and productivity of workers.

Secondly, the policy makers in Nigeria should as much as possible formulate and implement policies that reflect the needs and aspirations of the people in the country. Here, such policies ought to be home grown that will receive wider acceptance from the people so as to engender development in the country. Based on this, Bande (2007:3) argues that:

Foremost is a proper understanding of the realities within which the beneficiaries of the service you offer live. Where are they? How do you make a living? What things matter the most to them? What are the threats to their livelihood? What is their perception of 'government'-local, state, federal? A policy (intended for implementation by the civil service) must be clear, specific and thus unambiguous. The presence of good organisation on ground with appropriate planning level is also a key requirement. Also, effective implementation of policies requires that adequate resources are made

available just as the environment within which work has to take place need also to be made conducive.

The above captures the very important issues that will make public administration in Nigeria to become more result oriented and thus engender development in all ramifications of the society. This is because to get people who are willing to cooperate with government in policy implementations as well as available resources are key elements in the development process of any given society.

Thirdly, there is the need for the Nigerian government to have continuity in policy making processes. The importance of this is that consistency in policy will over a period of time yield a desired result rather than changing policy with every change of government, which has been creating confusion in the country. In addition, change of policy with every change of government has been responsible for waste of public resources in Nigeria.

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