

Constraints in the Staff Recruitment and Selection System of Delta State Civil Service

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Abstract

Human resource is the most valuable and critical of all institutional and organizational resources in both public and private services. This is essentially because all other resources will be dormant without activation by the human element. And it is only through a systematically planned and scientifically executed recruitment and selection system that the appropriate team of competent, result-oriented and career-minded employees can be secured, created and built for purpose of engineering the civil service to play its critically indispensable and facilitating role in the socio-economic and political development of Delta State. The recruitment and selection system and practice in the Delta State Civil Service is however surprisingly fraught and plagued with extra-institutional/organizational factors that are altering the demands for meritocracy and constituting a threat to the efficacy of the Civil Service as an instrument and machinery of development in Delta State. This paper which relied on useful primary and secondary sources of data critically analyzed the recruitment and selection system and practice in the Delta State Civil Service and the factors constraining the appropriate workability of the process. The paper concluded with valuable recommendations including the functionality, operability and workability of an objective performance, merit and action based recruitment and selection system and practice that will position the Delta State Civil Service as a veritable instrument that will enhance the capability, viability, sustainability of the state to deliver the deliverables in the appropriate context of development.

Keywords: recruitment, selection, civil service, constraining factors, development, etc.

Introduction

Replenishing the stock of human resources is a critical activity in most organizations (Cowling and Mailer 1990:41). Recruitment and selection are basically about finding suitable ways of predicting as accurately as possible, effective performance on a job. They are concerned with filling and keeping filled positions in the organization structure (Koontz and Weihrich 2005: 356). As Watson (2004) posited, recruitment and selection constitute the process of soliciting, contacting and interpreting potential employees and then establishing whether it will be appropriate or suitable to appoint them. Recruitment and selection practices have an impact in both the short and long term on the capability of both public and private sector organizations. In the short run, the selection of high caliber personnel or

human resource can have rapid impact on corporate capability. However, this is only possible if the workforce itself possesses the capability to rise up to new challenges, and creating a sustained team of competent and committed workforce is a longer term proposition. The responsibility for recruitment and selection, as in all good human resource practices, is shared between line management and the personnel function. The personnel department should be competent to advise on the best and most modern techniques and practices and to provide a professional support and monitoring service, while line management must be involved in the final decision as to who does or does not work in their departments. This means that line management must receive training and advice in selection matters, particularly in interviewing. Too many bad employment decisions can still be traced to and linked with untrained line managers recruiting staff on the basis of a badly conducted interview.

It is worth reflecting for a moment on the potential costs and benefits of recruitment and selection. The decision to employ someone is an important decision both for the organization and the individual. The costs of employing someone can be looked at from two perspectives. The first is the costs of advertising, testing, interviewing and placement, which in itself can run into several thousands. The second is the employment costs which accrue once the employees have started work. These costs are considerably more than just direct wages costs, especially as they involve indirect benefits plus the costs of office or factory space plus equipment and support services. Furthermore, these costs can no longer be treated as simple variable costs, because human resource can no longer be hired and fired in an indiscriminate manner. Rather, these are quasi-fixed costs and the decision to employ an individual is tantamount to an investment decision by the organization. Additionally, there are potential costs of a bad recruitment and selection decision. Whether at management or lower levels, the employment of someone who turns out to be a rotten apple can have a marked impact upon the morale and the competence of the organization. The costs of poor recruitment and selection can also cripple an organization, but the benefits of good recruitment and selection can manifest in enhanced capability, higher quality decisions and better customer service. The two terms recruitment and selection refer to complementary processes in employment. While more attention has traditionally been paid to selection than recruitment, particularly by occupational psychologists, there are times when Recruitment is the more general term, and refers to the process of confirming the need to employ fresh staff, locating where potential recruits exist, and attracting a pool of potential employees. recruitment has a higher priority. This applies particularly when there are skill shortages, or when demographic change means that the labour market can turn into a sellers market. The most sophisticated selection procedures can even become of little use if there are no suitable candidates for employment. This is one reason why labour markets and recruitment now feature in strategic planning. The overall aim of the recruitment and selection process should be to obtain at minimum cost the number and quality of employees required to satisfy the human resources needs of the company. The three stages of recruitment and selection are: defining requirements that involve preparing job descriptions and specifications, deciding terms and conditions of employment; attracting candidates – reviewing and evaluating alternative sources of applicants, inside and outside the company advertising, using agencies and consultants and selecting candidates – sifting applications, interviewing, testing, assessing candidates, offering employment, obtaining references, preparing contracts of employment.

Despite the desirability, inevitability and utility of a sound and effective recruitment and selection system and practice in the civil service, it is disappointing to note that several factors plague the indispensable organizational activity with consequential and dysfunctional effects on macro (institutional) and micro (employee) enhanced capacity, high quality decisions, programme implementation and service delivery. Such factors include nepotism, ethnicity, favouritism and excessive political interference and manipulation. This paper therefore critically analyzed the recruitment and selection system and practice in the Delta State Civil Service and the factors constraining the appropriate functionality, operability and workability of the process.

To achieve the objective of the study, both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized. While interviews were conducted to obtain valuable data on the recruitment and selection system of the Delta State Civil Service from some of the staff of the civil service commission of the state, relevant textbooks and other academic materials were used through content analysis in the secondary data environment.

Recruitment: A Conceptual Understanding and Explanation

Recruitment is the most important aspect of public and private personnel administration. This is because the efficiency of both government and non-governmental machinery and the quality of the services rendered by them depends largely upon the soundness of its recruitment system (Laxmikanth 2008:299). It is one of the crucial tasks of modern government and lies at the heart of the problem of personnel administration (Basu 2007:261). Recruitment refers to the analysis of a job and the features the organization will look for in a potential employee and attracting candidates to apply to the organization and the offering of various terms and conditions of employment to a chosen potential employee (Croft 1996:93). According to Certo (2007:234), recruitment is the initial screening of the total supply of prospective human resources available to fill a position. In the words of Stahl (2007), recruitment is the 'cornerstone' of the whole public personal structure. Recruitment is equally the process of creating the image of a good place to work in the minds of potential employees (Akanni 1993:172). The organization must inject a considerable measure of realism into the image creating process by ensuring that there is a tally between the image created and the organizational reality in terms of compensation and other personnel functions. Recruitment is therefore the personnel or human resource function encompassing the discovery of potential applicants to fill the organization's vacancies and the process of generating a pool of candidates from which the organization can select the suitable ones that will fit their human resource requirements. Unless recruitment is soundly conceived, there can be little hope for securing and building a first rate staff. Recruitment is the more general term, and refers to the process of confirming the need to employ fresh staff, locating where potential recruits exist, and attracting a pool of potential employees.

Recruitment means filling up the vacant posts in both public and private service. According to Kingsley (cited in Basu 2007:262) recruitment is the process through which suitable candidates are included to compete for appointments to the civil service and an integral part of a more inclusive process-selection-which also includes the process of examination and certification. (Glueck (1992:246) also opined that recruitment is the set of activities that seeks and attracts job applicants with the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities and motivations to offset shortages identified in the employment or human resource planning. Ghosh (2008:70) equally viewed recruitment as announcing job opportunities to the public in such a way that a good number of people will apply for them. Essentially, there is a

consensus of idea among human resource theorists and practitioners that recruitment has to do with the means of attracting the proper and suitable type of candidates for particular jobs (Chand 2007:358; Fatiregun 1992:131; Hackett 1999:31; Koontz and Weihrich 2005:356). It has negative and positive connotations. Negatively, it aims at eliminating those who are not qualified and suitable for the posts in the service. Negative recruitment stands for the following:

- ✓ Elimination of political influence
- ✓ Prevention of favouritism
- ✓ Keeping the rascals out

Recruitment describes the process and various stages of searching for suitable candidates to fill vacancies in the workforce. Three initial conditions however must be fulfilled before this search begins. They are: confirmation of the need to fill the vacancy so as not to fill positions that do not exist, reference to the manpower plans to check on the overall situation and completion of appropriate job analysis and specifications. Positively, recruitment aims at filling the vacant posts with the best qualified and most competent persons. Thus, positive recruitment emphasize on an aggressive search for the best qualified, most talented and highly competent personnel through concentration on the sources of supply.

The main test of any machinery of recruitment lies in its ability to recruit type of persons for the right jobs. The concept of a career civil service assumes that public service recruitment would be based on the principle of merit and equal opportunity for all. In fact, the increasing diversification of the nature of civil service functions and the desirability of democratic and equalitarian principles has largely determined the normative context of personnel recruitment in democratic societies. Recruitment needs can be planned arising from changes in organizational decisions and retirement policies, anticipated comprising jobs that the organization through study of the trends within and outside the organization can predict or unexpected arising from individuals exit from the organization due to personal decision, ill-health, accidents or deaths. Thus, since recruitment costs can mount up, one of the guiding precepts must be the search for cost effectiveness and the ideal should be to ensure maximum benefit in terms of a recruit who can and will perform the job effectively in return for maximum expenditure on advertising.

Recruitment: Policies and Procedures

One of the first steps in planning for the recruitment of employees into the public and private service is to establish adequate policies and procedures (Cole 2002:172). A recruitment policy represents the organization's code of conduct in this area of activity. It is also broad rules that provide a framework for decision making (Glueck 1992:250). Recruitment policies should take into account that high caliber personnel are essential and hard to find. Whether written or unwritten, public or private services have recruitment policies regarding equal employment opportunities (EEO) sources of recruits and who does the recruiting as well as the overall approach to recruiting. An example of typical policy areas for recruitment include: advertising all vacancies internally, replying to every job applicant with the minimum of delay, aiming to inform potential recruits in good faith about the basic details and job conditions of every job advertised, aiming to process all applications with efficiency and courtesy, seeking candidates on the basis of their qualification for the vacancy concerned, aiming to ensure that every person invited for interview is given fair and thorough hearing, avoiding unfair discrimination against potential applicants on grounds of

sex, race, age, religion, physical disability or criminal record and making any false or exaggerated claims in its recruitment literature or job advertisements. In sum, recruitment policies must be based on a comprehensive programme of management development.

Job Design

It is the specification of the content, methods and relationships of jobs in order to satisfy technological and organizational, social and personal requirements of the job holder. Job design is concerned with a number of facets of job; consists of the amount of variety in it, the pattern of tasks that make it up, the length of the work cycle and the like. Thus a job has (1) work content (2) method content (3) organization content and (4) personal content. Poor job design affects job satisfaction for the job holder could find the job responsibilities too difficult or overtaking which could lead to frustration. For example, if the scope of the job is too narrow, it could give rise to boredom, carelessness and accidents. Ordinarily, jobs should be designed to suit the individual, but this not feasible in modern organizations. At least if a job is designed to suit a particular individual, when the person leaves the organization, or is transferred, the job has to be redesigned to suit the new job holder, which could involve redesigning many other jobs at the same time.

Job Analysis

It involves developing a detailed description of the tasks involved in a job, determining the relationships of a given job to other jobs and ascertaining the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for an employee to successfully perform the job. This information can be obtained from the person performing the job, from the immediate supervisor or from observing the job being done. If the organization is unionized, labour representatives can provide information about the job also. Information gathered by using one or more of the job analysis methods results in the organization being able to create a job description and person specification.

Job Description

A job description identifies the authority of the job, its location in the company and the activities and major responsibilities that must be done to perform the job. It is written statement of what a job holder does, how it is done and why it is done. It should accurately portray job content, environment and conditions of employment. Job description serves as the basis for performance rating and promotion, it makes the duties, tasks and responsibilities clear to the job holder, it is used in determining employees' remuneration and consequently his status in the organization, it is very useful in designing training programme and it is used in contract negotiation with labour unions. There are a number of different ways of approaching the drawing up of a job description. You can sit down and produce a synopsis of the job as you see it, you can ask the present job holder to produce a synopsis of the job as he sees, and you can produce a synthesis of the two above. You can interview the job holder to obtain precise information about what he does, in what circumstances and with what constraints or you can ask a trained job analyst to compile a job description for you. He will probably combine the two above and ask the job holder's boss of his perceptions of what the job entails. Once the data has been gathered, the next step is to organize the information into a usable document. There are two basic approaches to job description: open approach and classified approach. Job description is not an end in itself and the compilation is not a once-and-for-all exercise, especially as changes in technology, raw materials, company objectives, products and labour market will dedicate new job.

Person Specification

A person specification, also known as job specification, defines the education, training, qualifications, experience and competences/competencies required by the job holder. The purpose of a personnel specification, or candidate profile as it sometimes called, is to make explicit the attributes that are sought in candidates for the job in question. Thus the personnel specification becomes a summary of the most important knowledge, skills, and personal characteristics required by the successful candidates in order to be able to carry out the job an acceptable standard of performance. The specification depends for its relevance on the nature and scope of the job, as described in the job description, amplified where necessary by comments from the manager concerned. Naturally, the nature of the job will be performed in a type and level of knowledge and skills required, but the job will be performed in a particular social context, and so it is important to have the manager's view as to the sort of personal qualities that would permit the new comer to fit into the team. Drawing up adequate specifications is not easy. As Munro Fraser (2008:12) explicitly stated, each human being is unique and can only be understood as a complete entity. Ill-conceived attempts to force him into classifications usually lead to essential elements being either concealed or missed out altogether. But when trying to select from among a group of candidates, we want to be able to compare one with another.

Methods and Sources of Recruitment

There are two methods or sources of recruitment, one is recruitment from outside and the other is through departmental promotion. The latter is one in which appointment to the higher posts in the service is made only from within the service itself, either through a system of promotion or through restricted competitive examinations. It has been argued that the best methods are to have direct recruitment in the lower grades and recruitment through promotion in the higher grades of service. Both of them are however very useful depending on the situational factors and the purpose to be achieved. The two sources are:

Internal Source: In many cases where there is a job to be filled, the best place to start looking will be inside the organization. It is when suitable candidates are not found within the organization that the need to look outside will arise.

External Sources: The policy of the organization influences the choice of applicants. Some organizations fill their key positions from within the organization and only fill the entry position from outside. Other organizations have an open-door policy which gives equal opportunity to both internal and external sources. It should be emphasized, however, that the specific source to be utilized depends on factors such as the size of the organization, the financial resource, economic conditions and the time factor; the major external sources are:

Advertisements: They are fruitful sources of recruiting personnel. The main aim of advertising is to produce, at minimum cost, a compact field of candidates, capable of doing the job and motivated to perform it to the required standard. The advertisement is a key link between the recruitment and selection phases. It attracts a field of candidates, but through the process of self selection, it eliminates large sections of the population. By careful choice of both media and wording, the advertisement should strike home to the appropriate audience. The more the advertisement can convey the true atmosphere of the organization, so that prospective candidates can identify whether or not it is the kind of environment, the better. If the advertisement must attract the right people, it must contain a precise description of the

job, based on job description and person specification. A good advertisement should describe quite succinctly the post to be filled and state what specific qualifications are required and the remuneration offered. The advertisements should be placed in such a way that it attracts maximum attention to itself. Clarity in giving specific requirements such as qualification, experience desired, salary level, will help eliminate unnecessary applications. In sum, advertisements should be geared toward attracting attention, creating and maintaining interest and stimulating action (Armstrong 2007:402).

Employment Agencies: In return for basic information about the job to be filled (you should provide them with the job description and personnel specification), an agency will do some preliminary matching between your requirements and the individuals who are currently registered with them or who respond to an advertisement placed by the agency. The employment agencies can be federal or state or they could be private. These agencies assist in locating managerial talents for such top jobs as president or other major officers of a company. With the existing shortage of qualified managerial talent, executive search firms have contributed significantly to locating qualified managers for important positions. The requesting firm or company usually pays the placement fees.

Employment Consultants: When you engage the service of a consultant, he will normally come and visit your company and help you to compile the personnel specification. He will then examine the files to see if he is currently in contact with any suitable prospects. If not, he will advertise on your behalf, preserving your company's anonymity, if you desire (This may be useful if the salary is politically sensitive in the organization). The consultant will then screen applicants, leaving you with a shortlist of candidates from whom you may make your final choice. Like the agencies, the consultancies operate on a sort of sale or return basis: if you don't select anybody, you don't pay a fee (although you may have to meet advertising expenses).

Executive Search Consultants: Some consultancies offer a special search facility for senior appointments. Operation is almost entirely through personal contacts. They will seek out the one right person for the job in question and approach him with a view to discussing the possibilities. By building up detailed dossiers on people who may currently be employed by your competitors, they are able to match jobs and people down to a small shortlist. Although their methods have often been described as just an expensive form of poaching, for high level vacancies where candidates are not actively seeking a job change and are therefore unlikely to respond to an advertisement, executive search may prove fruitful.

Colleges/Universities/Vocational Schools: Educational institutions provide a wealth of talent, for organizations' representatives visit campuses across the nation in their search for potential future leaders. They interview students usually at the college placement bureau. Thereafter, they may invite qualified applicants to come to the company, at the organization's expense, for additional interviews.

Labour Unions: Union hiring halls are important sources of employees in certain types of occupations such as carpenters and longshoremen. The union provides a ready source of employees to management in industries characterized by sharp fluctuations in demand for employees.

Friends/Relatives of Workers/Referrals: Many organizations encourage their present employees to recommend friends or relatives as potential employees where there is a critical labour shortage, such as a scarcity of qualified secretaries; a firm may offer a financial reward to an employee for recommending a person who is hired. Although traditionally an

inexpensive way of recruiting staff of all types, it is advisable to add a proviso that the new entrant must remain with the organization for, say six months before the payment becomes due; otherwise you may find people making a living out of your introductory bonus scheme. The payments can be made in cash or in kind such as holiday vouchers. The only major setback from which word of mouth recruitment suffers is the danger that it will inhibit selectively and end up smacking of nepotism.

Former Military Personnel: Today's military services require that their members have specific job skills. Consequently, when a person leaves the service, the training received there may be put into effective use in civilian life. For example, airlines may hire former military pilots or firms may hire former military personnel for managerial positions. Many organizations recognize the value of this type of labour source.

Selection: A Conceptual Explanation

Selection has to do with making decision about prospective employees after attracting a pool of prospects. Bodeian (1999:343) posited that where there are several job applicants for an existing position or opening, managers in both the public and private service must decide which is the most qualified. Although the selection of staff is very often based on the subjective views of the interviewing officer, the selection of the right people is so important for the public and private service, that to avoid costly mistakes, a logical, valid and reliable method for carrying out pre-interview arrangements is recommended. The foundation of a successful selection is to know what the job is and how it will develop over a stated period of time (ACCA 2007:266). The objective of recruitment to create a large pool of persons who are available and willing to work for a particular organization, while the selection process has as its objective the sorting out or elimination of these judged unqualified to meet the job and organization requirements. While recruitment brings many people or persuades as many to apply for work in an organization, selection on the other hand, rejects a good proportion of those who apply. Selection is therefore a very important process which requires planning and objectivity. This explains why after prospective applicants have been recruited, a systematic effort is made to identify the most suitable candidates to fill identified positions. At least, no organization is better than the people who make it up. More importantly, the selection is perceived as a series of steps through which applicants pass (Akanni 1993). At each step a few more applicants are screened out and dropped from consideration.

Every selection procedure has at least five principal components including application forms, tests, interviews, references, medical checks (Hackett 1999; Ezeani 2006:325-6). All selection procedures are a two-way process: you are selecting the candidate and the candidate is selecting you. The selection process resembles a series of hurdles in which some of the contenders will fall at the first fence and others at the second, so that the field is progressively narrowed down to leave only one survivor. While the idea of making the first hurdle so difficult that only a few will surmount it has its attractions, candidates expectations or considerations of cost and time may weight against it. There is therefore the need to strike a balance and bear in mind the candidates' expectations while you try to whittle down numbers as fast as possible.

Despite the fact that all the selection components are useful and critical to the desired success of the exercise, the interview which is a formal exchange of facts, impressions and viewpoints between the prospective employer and potential employee demands special attention because it involves face-to face discussion and provides the best opportunity for the

establishment of close contact and rapport between the interviewer and the candidate or interviewee. The interview may take the single interviewer, panel or selection board approach. Before drawing up the interview programme, there is need to compare the applications with the key criteria in the job specification and sort the out into three categories: possible, marginal and unsuitable, scrutinize the possible again to draw up a short list. On the whole, the interviewers must review the major demands of the job and be aware of the team or department that the prospective employee will work if selected, prepare an agenda for the interview to give it structure and continuity, bearing in mind the importance of content, control and clarity, avoid irritators, aggressive behaviour and argument dilution, seek information, apply empathy and test for compatibility, suitability and competence and generally create a conversational interview atmosphere.

Constraining Factors to Recruitment and Selection System and Practice in Delta State Civil Service

The civil service is a vital instrument for rapid and sustainable socio-economic and political development of any nation, especially in developing societies like Nigeria where the government occupies a significant position as a dominant instrument of change. It is, in fact, impossible for the political leadership to execute the various and enormous tasks of government without the critical role, support and cooperation of the civil service bureaucracy. The civil service is, for instance, involved in national policy making, shaping and management in Nigeria (Adamolekun 2005: 130). An efficient, effective and result-oriented civil service trained in the specialist task of carrying out the broad decision of government is a necessity if the government is to meet the demands and expectations of the public as Santoy (1957:9) rightly articulated.

Recruitment and selection as means of attracting and securing competent and suitable candidates for various jobs in the civil service is therefore an indispensable activity because of the role of the civil service machinery in governmental administration. The fact that the major requirement of the civil service is for it to be impartially selected, administratively competent, politically neutral and imbued with the spirit of service to the community (Basu 2007:255) shows the usefulness, vitality and critical nature of the recruitment and selection process. Government, it is to be remembered, is not the only employer in society; it is only one of the many competitors in the open labour market. It offers certain terms and conditions of employment; so do the other employers like bankers, industrialists, universities, etc. People join the service where they get better pay and other attractive conditions of service, it need hardly an emphasis that if the government wants to secure and keep highly qualified personnel it should tender better terms of employment. There are some people who on humanitarian grounds hold that every citizen should get equal opportunity to occupy public office. But the interests of administration require that only competent and deserving persons with keen intellect and skill should get the public office. In the words of White (1958), the process of recruitment illustrates admirably the tug and pull of the opposing forces of equalitarianism and humanitarianism on the one hand against the claims of special competence on the other.

In the Delta State Civil Service, appointments to public offices from Grade Level 06 and above are made on the authority of the Civil Service Commission. The appointments are made either by letter written by the direction of the Commission or by formal agreement between the officer and the Delta State Government or its appointed agents like the

permanent secretaries and heads of Extra-Ministerial Departments (Delta State Public Service Rules 2009: 8-9). Accordingly, each Ministry/Extra-Ministerial Department shall recruit junior staff on salary Grade Level 01-05 and such appointments should reflect the geographical spread within the state. Appointments to the senior cadres are shall be made by the Commission into available vacancies after due advertisements as the need arises. Also, all applicants for senior posts are required by the Delta State Civil Service Commission to complete Form No. DSCSC 2 as a result of which their antecedents are carefully scrutinized before they are invited for an interview for appointment (Delta State Public Service Rules 2009:12).

In the face of the critically facilitating role that civil services are expected to play in the socio-economic and political development of governments at the international, national, state and local levels, it is rather surprising and disturbing that the recruitment and selection system and practice that is supposed to attract, secure, create and build a team of competent, professional, efficient, career-minded and productive human resource is fraught with extra-institutional/organizational factors that are arguably constraining and undermining the efficacy, utility and applicability of the civil service as an actualized vibrant and robust institution and a partner in the wholesale and eclectic developmental process. The Delta State Civil Service is typical in this instant case. The recruitment and selection system and practice of the Delta State Civil Service plagued with factors like nepotism, favouritism, ethnicity, top governmental connection, institutional and state politics and corruption such that the effects are debilitating and dysfunctional. In fact, since the restoration of the country to democratic experimentation in 1999, the practice in the Delta State Civil Service is evidently and largely unscientific. Each time recruitment and selection exercise is to commence or has commenced, the characteristic practice is throw professionalism to the winds and apply all kinds of unethical methods in a fashion that merit is sacrificed at the altar of mediocrity. For instance, slots are given to politicians including the governor, deputy governor, commissioners, members of the Delta State House of Assembly, chairmen and members of statutory and non-statutory boards, judges, political bigwigs and henchmen to the extent that appointments into the state Civil Service is manipulated and programmed to accommodate mainly the nominees or candidates of the likes above (Interviews with Legislators, Commissioners and Board Members and Personal Observation as Banking Representative and Consultant in Asaba between 2000 and 2007).

Although interviews could be conducted as a mere institutional formality, such interviews are seldom utilized. In the final analysis, the state civil service that is the user institution suffers from inefficiency, incompetence, poor organization and attitude to work, conservatism and lack of imagination, apathy, planlessness and over-staffing, insensitivity, rigidity, truancy and absenteeism, laziness and malingering. Worse still, many civil servants in the state have a hazy idea of the corporate goals of the Service or those of the Government which they serve to the extent that they are only involved in routine and perfunctory performance of their jobs and the result-oriented approach is lacking. The tendency is for people seeking employment to meet the political class and top civil servants for recommendation knowing that they have the clout to assist them. And the various factors exploited and utilized to achieve their dream of getting employed like ethnicity, nepotism and favouritism are only a manifestation of forces that are dominant in the macro Nigerian society. As a consequence, employment in the Delta State Civil Service is caught up in the horn of a dilemma between several extra-institutional/organizational factors like top

governmental connection, ethnicity and state politics on one hand and meritocracy on the other. The most dominant of the factors is ethnicity that has not only altered the demands of meritocracy and constituted a threat to the functionality, operationality and workability of the supposedly well crafted recruitment and selection system in Delta State.

The fact remains that the ethnic configuration in Delta State is such that the competitive short-term tactics and long-term strategies that are employed by the political and governmental class in Delta State determine the outcome of the decision process regarding recruitment and selection of candidates for employment. Every legislator, for instance, will strive to represent his constituency well by forwarding names of people from his or her area. Essentially, the Civil Service Commission Chairmen and Commissioners as political appointees bow to the whims and caprices of the political and governmental class. In as much as one cannot separate politics from administration, the various extra-institutional/organizational factors or forces should be well-managed in order to reduce their dysfunctional effects both in the short and long run. No wonder, White (1958) asserted that the process of recruitment illustrates admirably the tug and pull of the opposing forces of equalitarianism and humanitarianism on the one hand against the claims of special competence on the other. And the evils associated with recruitment and selection in Delta State will be remedied if the exercise were based on scientific principles and executed through an impartial agency.

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

Recruitment and selection are complementary critically indispensable functional institutional activities that add significant value to civil services globally. This position derives from the fact that they jointly provide the basis or bottom-line for the efficacious role of the civil service in supporting the policy formulation process and translating policies in action. After all, the onerous task of the civil service is to operate the administrative machine in accordance with the policy established by the political executive and the work of government cannot be done without it. This explains why recruitment and selection systems and practices must be allowed to take its full course or follow its entire cycle by adhering to the principles of systematic planning, scientific execution, objectivity and merit, even where there is the need to satisfy such demands for gender or ethnic balancing. In the instant case of the Delta State Civil Service, the recruitment and selection system and practice is plagued with extra-institutional/organizational factors that are altering the demands for meritocracy and constituting a threat to the efficacy of the Civil Service as an instrument and machinery of development in Delta State. In fact, the high level of political interference and manipulation by the political class, top administrative echelon and significant others through the exploitation of such factors like ethnicity, nepotism, favouritism, institutional and state politics, top governmental connection and corruption in determining who gets engaged in the service is not only anachronistic, it is equally dysfunctional with consequential effects and negative implications for human resource competence, capability, quality decisions and service delivery.

The end result of the manipulation of the recruitment and selection system in the Delta State Civil Service is a failed and incapacitated civil service that is unable or constrained from providing the desired and inevitable nexus between policy formulation and execution through a committed team of competent, capable, quality and service-minded workforce. To make the Delta State Civil Service a veritable instrument and machinery that will enhance the capability of the state to deliver the deliverables in the appropriate context of

development, the process of ensuring the viability, sustainability, growth, development and renewal of the civil service machinery as a facilitator of development in all its eclectic ramification must be grounded through a tangible and indispensably well crafted and scientific application and execution of recruitment and selection policies, system and principles. The recruitment and selection system and practice of the Delta State Civil Service should resultantly be performance, merit and action based with the potency of generating and sustaining the requisite skilled, knowledgeable and developed human resources that will be grounded in the acceptable civil service performance values, norms, culture and standards. The functionality, operability and workability of an objective performance, merit and action based recruitment and selection system and practice that will position the Delta State Civil Service as a veritable instrument and enhance the capability, viability; sustainability of the state to deliver the deliverables in the appropriate context of development is therefore a desideratum.

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