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ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SERVICE: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

Chinyeaka J Igbokwe-Ibeto[1] Kehinde O. Osakede[2]
[1]*Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.*
[2]*Pokomocha Nigeria Ltd, Isuti Road, Egan, Igando Lagos*
Emails: c.igbokwe-ibeto@unizik.edu.ng[1] ; kosakede@yahoo.com[2]
ORCID: [1]https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9710-7802

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Abstract
The Nigeria's Public Service is bedeviled with plethora of ethical issues ranging from bribing, embezzlements of funds, meant for developmental projects, falsification of government's documents for selfish motives, over-voicing of contracts' figures etc. Conversely, this widespread of lack of ethics and accountability in the public service are part of the causative agents for the poverty, deprivations, and inequalities facing the generality of Nigerians, especially in the face of abundant natural and human resources. The blatant looting of palliative materials meant for the vulnerable during the Covid-19 pandemic era and lockdown periods, by public officials, points to the fact that, there exist ethical problems and gaps in our public service, which is saddled with the responsibility of implementing programs and projects of the government. The article therefore, sought and explored the causes of the widespread unethical behaviour in the public service. The study employing mainly secondary data, adopted the content analysis method where findings and relevant information from textbook, newspapers, magazines, journals, government publications, specific empirical studies etc., as they relate to the issues of ethics and accountability. Arising from the analysis, the article identified as constraints to ethical behaviour in Nigeria's public service generally are general poverty, corrupt practices, lack of accountability culture, unethical culture from the erstwhile colonialists, weak regulatory instruments, politicization of the service, nepotism, amongst others. Based on the identified problems, recommendations such as; creation of practical anti-crimes tools and instruments in the service, the use of the public service occupational associations to institutionalize professional values, creation of enabling environment and more realistic condition of service, strengthening public institutions responsible for ensuring accountability devoid of selective justice, are suggested as practical ways of promoting ethics and accountability in the public service.

Key Words: *Behaviour, Character, Service Delivery, Organisation, Value.*

Introduction
The public service is the backbone of the state for implementing any strategy for economic growth of the country. According to United Nation (UN, 2020), the public service provides the programmes and services that function as safety net for the most vulnerable segments of a society. It is also characterized with privileges and obligations essential for the conduct of public affairs. The public service therefore, reflects the state

of the nation and no nation has been able to advance beyond its public service. This probably accounts for the reason or rational for the public service, to ensure fairness, justice and equity in the provision and distribution of goods and services needed by the people. To become a public servant therefore, means that a person assumes these obligations of administering laws to which his duties pertaining rendering faithful services to achieve the aims and objectives of the government, implementing lawful decisions, advising his political head and above all, serving the public diligently and impartially. In other occasions of life, there exists a conflict between these noble obligations and the public servants' private interest and conscience. A public servant is however, expected to reconcile his private interest and conscience with these obligations in order to promote ethical standard and accountability in the public service. Clustering around these obligations is a number of roles which constitute the code of ethical obligations peculiar to the public service. These ethical obligations are of importance because they create and maintain standards, which constitute a conducive atmosphere for public servants' work and life.

The value for these ethics arises from the fact that public servants participate in governing process of the society which requires among other things, that a public servant be responsible for the purposes of accountability (Sorkaa, 2021). This in turns goes to tell us that ethical rules are designed to ensure impartiality, objectivity, integrity, efficiency and discipline of public servant when carrying out assignments dictated by the roles and or existing discretionary powers. so, beneath every misconduct of a public servant lies the violations of these ethical principles.

It is most unfortunate however, that essential ethical values in most African public services including Nigeria have been eroded away, to the extent that there is utter ethical decay. Failure of public servants to observe ethical obligations or values in the public service has not only affected the efficiency levels of the service, but even more seriously, brought the public service to discredit the general public losing its faith in the government. The ugly events of the lock down era during the period of the covid-19 pandemic leaves a sour taste in the mouths of Nigerians. According to Adewale (2020), Dangote palliatives worth N4 million, meant for the Covid-19 vulnerable in Benue State was diverted by officials of the State Government on the 9th of September 2020. This is just a case out of many cases of misappropriation, misapplication and outright diversion of incentives, materials and resources meant for public benefits. This also paints an ugly picture of the public service before an ordinary Nigerian. Degeneration and decay of the public service or what has been tagged to be 'un-ethical' behaviour prevalent in the public service, fully explained by Ake (1993), has noted in the poor disarticulation between the state and the society which manifests itself in the plurality of "publics" and of public morality. He therefore maintains that Africans state is yet to attain moral entity which enjoys the support of all, and that considerable efforts are made to transform the African state if ethical public services are to emerge.

On a contrary opinion to Ake's, Olowu (1991) emphasizes on the distraction between fundamental and immediate causes of African, Nigerian in particular ethical crises. According to him, it is the policies of African political leaders which have increased the

incentives for corruption or inefficient performance in the public. Policies such as centralization, bureaucratization, non-democratization and pauperization of the public service were identified by them, as the major causes of unethical behaviour in the public service. This article is intended to first explore the causes of the widespread unethical behaviour in the Nigerian public service with view to promoting ethical standards in the public service. As a way of significance, the ideas in this paper will be of a help to the government in understanding the manner ethical behaviour is violated so that policies that discourage the unethical practices in public service can be formulated and implemented.

Methodology

This article which is theoretical in nature drew its arguments mostly from secondary data using qualitative desktop method in deriving data for addressing the issues under analysis. 29 literature sources were consulted and analysed in order to explore the nexus between ethics and accountability in Nigerian public service. This includes textbooks, journal publications and internet sources relevant to the study. Authoritative scholarly sources were reviewed, during a desktop study. The purpose was to identify the relevant publications and apply them in the research.

Conceptual Review and Theoretical Framework

Public officials who are members of professional bodies usually have a code of conduct or the appropriate practice of their professional calling. Such public officials would have no problem understanding the practical meaning of the concept of ethics. What this simply means is that there is usually a professional standard for all public officials. Hence, ethics can be described as the norms and values attached to what is right and wrong, appropriate or inappropriate conduct within a professional or occupational group (Sorkaa, 2021). Corroborating this, Davis (2020) sees ethics as consisting of those standards of conduct that, all things considered, every member of a particular group wants every other to follow even if their following them would mean he too has to follow them. Actually, ethics are generally a matter of value judgments or occupational morality. In the public service, professional ethics pertains mainly normative values underpinning loyalty, courtesy and respect, integrity, confidentiality, mentality, discipline and accountability (Chapman, 2018).

These ethical values, which uphold the tenets of efficiency, effectiveness and service delivery, must be looked into so that we can come to terms with what they entail and their significance in the public service. The loyalty of the public servants is an important fundamental ethical value for any organization other than the public service. Loyalty is a reference to an employee being faithful or always giving support to an institution or person of super-ordinate status. It just means that an administrator or official is carrying out instructions on assignments faithfully. In the case of the public service, it is the executive arm of government that is expected to carry out the laid down policies of the political leadership. Generally, the performance of the public service in that regard affects the opinion and image; people have about the government of the day. This explains why there is the need to have a special relationship of loyalty between the public service and the government, the next ethnical value of importance is courtesy and respect,

which has to do with the need for courteous behavior always in the dealing of public servant with staff and the public. Public servants must always be fair, objective and just. They are to avoid arrogance, deliberate hostility, roughness and apathy well as use abusive language towards the people. Courtesy and respect as important ethical standards also involve creating an atmosphere of friendliness and respect for ordinary people in the society and be ready to serve all and sundry promptly. Public servants are also to be prudent, patient, respect human dignity and be generally humane to the public they serve. This includes a respectable attitude inside and outside the office. They must readily give advice and information to persons who are even ignorant of the law and official procedures. They must not attempt to seek special privileges for themselves just because of their public position in service. They have to be involved in the on-goings within the society but they should not stand aloof from the public. They are to serve as role models who do not tolerate unethical behavior. Attitudes of responsibility have to be displayed towards public property, especially vehicles and official materials and property should not be diverted to personal use. They must be also diplomatic in their dealing and approaches to the people.

Another ethical value needed by the public servants, is a high sense of integrity. This requires public servants to have high ethical standards by being honest, trustworthy, frank, principled and morally upright. Upholding all these elements of integrity is to avoid bringing discredit upon the public service. The ethical value of confidentiality, which pertains to the non-disclosure of government information, is also handy for public administration. There are documents of government that may prejudice the security and integrity of the government if they are leaked. So, public servants are meant to hold these documents in high level of secrecy and confidentiality. Finally, public servants are political animals and so have their political preferences but they should be politically neutral to event of partisan conflicts. It also means that public servants should not assume the role of politicians by making their views public. Instead, they are expected to act as advisers to politicians. But most importantly of all, administrators must be impartial in all official dealings, irrespective of personal, ethnical, religious, racial and other considerations.

In the same vein, accountability refers to the obligation of a subordinate to be answerable to the super ordinate in carrying out assigned duties and is exercising discretionary powers. According to Igbokwe-Ibeto, Osakede and Nwobi (2020), to be accountable is to be liable to present an account of, and answer for the execution of responsibilities to those entrusting the responsibilities. This implies the concept of responsibility for a level of performance or accomplishment. Accountability is a pivotal concept in democratic governance underpinning most analysis. It constantly dictates the behaviour of policy making actors, both in terms of responsibility of those charged with policy making and the behaviour of those observing and seeking to influence policies from the larger society (in Igbokwe-Ibeto et.al, 2020). Accountability can be in private or public sector. However, our venue of study here is public or bureaucratic accountability. Accountability therefore depicts hierarchical chains of accountability put in place to make the civil or public servants responsible for their actions and in actions. Accountability is supposed to make government easy to understand and also enhance government responsiveness,

legitimacy and at the same time, improve on policy implementation. To Laxmikanth (2015), the concept of accountability connotes the obligation of the administrators to give a satisfactory account of their performance and the manner in which they have exercised power conferred on them. Its main aim is to check wrong and arbitrary administrative actions and increase efficiency and effectiveness of administrative process. Furthermore, Adamolekun, (2015) avers thus:

> *Accountability conventionally refers to answerability for one's actions or behaviour. in addition, formally, it involves the development of objectives standards of evaluation to assist the owners of an organization: a clear definition of responsibility, reporting mechanisms, and a system of review, rewards, and sanctions. Thus, accountability flows in different directions: upwards, downward between subordinates and superiors, and laterally among professional peers.*

The rational for accountability to the general public, is the fear that public officials might exploit government apparatus for their own personal aggrandizement. This usually happens because civil servants usually command so much power, too much expertise, information and resources that potentially can be misused. Give also that the public service is in charge of a significant portion of the resources of any state, they can therefore make or break governments and sometimes even end up usurping governmental power. This then is the fundamental basis for controlling the public servants in order to minimize individual misbehavior, group aggrandizement and excessive use of power.

The Public Service refers to all organization that exist as part of government machinery for executing or implementing policy decisions, programs, and rendering services that are essential to the citizens. A graphic definition of public service is captured in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as outlined in Chapter VI of the Constitution under the title; the Executive, Part I (D) and Part II (C) which provides for a public service at the federal and state levels of government. Specifically, Section (318) of the 1999 Nigeria Constitution defines the Public Service as: The service of the federation in any capacity in respect of the Government of the Federation and includes service as:

a. Clerk or other staff of the National Assembly or of each House of the National Assembly;
b. Member of staff of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, the Federal High Court, the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the Sharia Court of Appeal of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja or other courts established for the federation by this Constitution and by an Act of the National Assembly;
c. Member or staff of any commission or authority established for the Federation by this Constitution or by an Act of the National Assembly;
d. Staff of any area council;
e. Staff of any statutory corporation established by an Act of the National Assembly;
f. Staff of any educational institution established or financed principally by the Government of the Federation;

g. Staff of any company or enterprises in which the Government of the Federation or its agency owns controlling shares or interest; and
h. Members or officers of the armed forces of the Federation or the Nigeria Police Force or other government security agencies established by the law.

From these definitions, it is inferable that the public service has coverage over all the arms of the government. This goes to establish the fact that the public service is a reflection of the government. There are several theoretical windows through which the issue of ethics and accountability in the public service can be used to analyse the subject under analysis. These include the Game theory also known as the economic theory of politics, Riggs theory of prismatic society, democratic approach as well as the Kantian moralist theory. However, this article is anchored on the moralist theory and democratic approach, an eclectic approach because of their advantages in explaining the subject matter over others. The Kantian moralist approach attributes corruption to moral laxity, decadence, lack of common stand of morality, growing culture and religious decay. The German philosopher, Immanuel Kant who lived between 1724 and 1804 propounded the Moral theory, otherwise known as the Kantian Moralist theory (Elias, 1998). The theory was developed as a result of enlightenment rationalism, stating that an action can only be right in its maxim, i.e the principle behind it, is duty to the moral law which arises from a sense of duty in the actor.

The Kantian theory argues that ethics has been organized around the notion of a categorical imperative, which is a universal ethical principle of respecting the humanity in other people, and that one should only act in accordance with rules that could hold for everyone (Guyer, 2021). Ethics according to this theory is a deontological belief that it is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation. Specifically, the theory holds the following tenets:

a. The principle of universalizability which requires that, for an action to be permissible, it must be possible to apply it to all people without a contradiction occurring.
b. His formulation on humanity, which states that as an end in itself, humans are required never to treat others, merely as a means to an end, but always as ends in themselves.
c. Rational agents are bound to the moral law by their own will (Korsgaard, 2015).

The utility of this theory lies in the fact that it is the lack of ethical standard by the public servants in Nigeria that is responsible for the unethical behaviors in the Nigerian society. This could largely be traceable to the decay in and deviation from our societal positive values coupled with corrupt leadership in political arena and the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). It also advocates for the promotion of ethics and accountability as a fundamental mechanism for the attainment of development through the effective implementation of policies and programmes of the government.

Genesis of Unethical Behavior and Lack of Accountability in the Nigerian Public Service

Public service in Nigeria began since the amalgamation of the Protectorate of the Northern Nigeria and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. This period also marked the beginning of the process of dismantling the colonial civil service in Nigeria, which hitherto, as in all other British west African colonies then was composed of two broad classes: the senior service, covering all posts reserved mostly for the Europeans and the junior service, embracing all posts to which Africans (Nigerians) were appointed (Abdulsalami, 2020). The genesis of unethical behavior and lack of accountability in the Nigeria civil service has root mainly in the colonial experience of the country. Before the creation of the Nigerian public service, there existed a civil service elsewhere as far back as 462 BC courtesy of a renowned Greek Aristocrat, Pericles whose scheme for compensation of officials who served in the king's court as a mark of reward for the job they performed and as means of their daily sustenance. This was seen as a motivating factor that could boost workers' morale towards achieving success through efficiency (Al-Gazali, 2017). In Nigeria, however, the public service was a colonial creation. According to Adebayo (2021), the creation of the public service by the British was actually to enhance the co-ordination of the activities geared towards the exploitation of the vest natural resources in Nigeria. As a result of this, several anomalies were entrenched in the colonial service, which, to a large extent, tend to have a hangover effect on the post-colonial civil service. Buttressing this point, Sorkaa (2021) points out that "the roots of the general poverty, unethical behavior, the lack of accountability in governance and administration has much to do with the nature and character of the Nigeria state that was created through colonialism".

Be that as it may, the ethical and accountability problems in the public service are rooted in the nature and character of the Nigerian state which lacks the hegemony to cater for the needs of the people. The inability of the Nigeria state to produce to better the lots of the people has led to a high premium placed on the public bureaucracy which to Sorkaa (2021) has been politicized. Thus, colonialism has passed to an independent Nigerian an administrative system with serious obstacles that usually limit the attainment of the goals of the generally of the people. The roots of unethical behavior and lack of accountability in governance and administration in Nigeria, especially the public service has much to do with the nature of the state that was inherited from the colonialists. The violent character of the colonial rule placed it in a permanent situation of war against the people of Nigeria. This was so just because the logic and assumptions of the colonial state were so different from that of the people that it was completely not connected with their experience and it threatened everything they valued and the people had to vehemently resist it. According to Ake (1999), the Nigerian people therefore, saw the colonial state and its public service, as an alien force that had to be appropriated, tamed or defeated. This explains why the colonial Nigerian had to carry out their lives in a parallel polity (Ekeh, 1975). This is the picture of the psyche and perception of the Nigeria's public servants towards Nigerians and vice versa.

Thus, with a pernicious legacy left and the Nigerian state undergoing no surgical operation at independence, the public service has, for the letter years of its existence, gone through a vicious cycle of crises, especially crises that have to do with ethics and accountability, which tend to negate any attempt at development. These problems still leave with us, even as successive administrations and governments have not summoned the political will and courage to carry out reforms that will help eradicate or correct these anomalies.

Ethical Issues in Nigerian Public Service

When they talk about problems of ethics in a public or civil service, it is a reference to when civil or public servants individually or collectively use their positions or appear to do so in a manner that is contrary to public confidence and trust. Such unethical behaviour, according to Anger (2012), "is usually due to the conflict of loyalties or values as it could be as a result of the attempt to achieves some form of private gain at the expense of the common good of all and sundry". Public servants in the course of policy implementation have breached the ethical values of integrity, loyalty, courtesy, respect and neutrality. And these problems underpin the poor performance of the public service. In the first place, the Nigeria public service has been bedeviled with the problem of disloyalty. Disloyalty to Sorkaa (2021) refers to a scenario where an employee is unfaithful or fails to give support to an instruction or persons of super ordinate status. This problem also accounts for the unhealthy relationship among public servants, which go a long way in inhibiting the overall objective for which the Service was created. Disloyalty is manifested as indolence, insubordination and inertia reign supreme.

Apart from disloyalty, there are the problems of lack of courtesy and respect, which are the basics values, needed by all public servants in dealing with the people. It is disheartening and disgusting that public servants in Nigeria, apart from using abusive language on the people, have become unnecessarily rough, arrogant, hostile and unaccommodating. As a researcher, the writer has witnessed unruly behavior in government parastatals like the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), The Nigeria Police stations, Scholarship board, General Hospitals, Federal Medical Centres, Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS), to mention a few. This has rubbed negatively on the public service fortunes. Besides, there is the problem of a low sense of integrity. Public servants constitute veritable tools through which vices like diversion, theft, falsification of certificates (as experienced in most tertiary institutions) and leaking of official records are perpetrated. Fundamental to the understanding of this malaise is the problem of poor remuneration in the service. The elections of 2015 in Nigeria, that was superintended by Professor Attahiru Jega, the then INEC chairman, saw some of INEC staff received heavy bribes up to the tune of N3 billion to influence the outcome of the elections, (Iyang, 2017; Ajayi, 2017). Moreover, there is the problem of neutrality which to Adebayo (2018) connotes public servants involving themselves in politics. This problem has become so pervasive in the Nigerian public service that civil or public servants are overtly seen in the vanguard of political campaigns without first of all resigning their position. Worse still, the expectation that such "bad eggs" would be shown the way out of the service has always been dashed as such public servants get the blessing of the powers that be.

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The Challenges Confronting Accountability in the Nigerian Public Service

Accountability, a basic value in the public service, has for long eluded the Nigerian public service. The service has over the years, gone through a vicious cycle of accountability problems including corruption, political interference, redtapism, waste of human and material resources, to mention a few. Of all the manifestation of problems of accountability, corruption stands out glaring and is all encompassing. To Klitgaard (2001), corruption exists when an individual illegally or illicitly puts personal interest above those of the people and the ideals she or he is pledged to serve. Corruption in the public service to Ayua (2001) is caused by the nature of our political economy where there is massive poverty and public servants have to satisfy many demands. This, as earlier pointed out, lures them to utilize any evil machination to steal government money at the slightest opportunity. The Vice-President of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osinbajo outlines the reason for this act when he asserted thus:

> *The reason for the corrupt civil (public) service, which in turn has given room to ineffective service delivery, are not too far to seek: these are the weak institutional structures, cumbersome administrative procedure, negative attitude of the civil servants to work and individuals' insatiable appetite for wealth at all cost. Public policy researchers have since discovered that the culture of accountability and ethical behaviour, for which the service was once noted, has been thrown overboard. (Guardian, 2017).*

Apart from corruption, political interference constitutes another stumbling block to the success of the service. Political interference exemplified in the politicization of the service, which reached its height in the Second Republic when the constitution empowered the governors, and president to appoint and dismiss top public servants. Deriving from the nature and character of the post-colonial state, the political class has used the service in Nigeria as a veritable tool to amass wealth by appointing their cronies into top and sensitive posts. Moreover, the public service in Nigeria is plagued by the problem of red tapism. This is the strict adherence to the public service rules and regulations, which is prone to dysfunctionalism and restrictive of rapid economic and social transformation of the society. It must, however, be stated here that, rules and regulations are themselves good; it is the strict adherence to them that is problematic.

Finally, there is the problem of dissipation of human and material resources through duplication of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The public service in Nigeria is beset by the massive waste of human and material resources occasioned by unnecessary duplication of MDAs. Sequel to the non-productive nature of the Nigerian economy, a high premium is placed on the public bureaucracy so much such that MDAs are arbitrarily created to reward political well-wishers or political rejects at the polls. This act is antithetical to an efficient public service. The effect of this malaise cannot be overemphasized, as the effects include poor service delivery, underdevelopment, and the entrenchment of corruption as a culture in the public service. There is definitely the need to have corrective action to remove this cankerworm that threatens to completely destroy the credibility and image of the public service.

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Ethics and Accountability in the Nigerian Public Service: The Way Forward

This practical suggestions and recommendations for fostering and promoting ethics and accountability in the public service in Nigeria comprise three main elements. The first one involves creating the condition of service of public officials that would foster and promote ethics and accountability in public service. It is axiomatic that poor conditions of work, unrealistically low salaries or official rewards are key problems that have eroded the professionalism of the Nigerian public service. These poor conditions of work can be seen in the shortages of working facilities, equipment's, incentives and other allowances, which is typical of most of our law enforcement agents and other MDAs. For MDAs officials that are designated for supervision and monitoring, such assignments and schedules are frustrated by the lack of means of movement. In this regard, sometimes, public servants find it difficult to move as a result of lack of serviceable means of mobility. This problem of poor working conditions has been further compounded by significant increases in the public service employment since independence in 1960 (Sorkaa, 2021). It has been found that that most of this increment in public service employment is made up of unskilled and semi-skilled labour. This situation looks paradoxical in the sense that the public service as we write, is understaffed in professional and managerial areas and overstaffed in semi-skilled and unskilled areas. This phenomenon is also attributable to the exit of some professionals for greener pasture in foreign counties.

But more important in the erosion of ethics and accountability through the conditions of service of public servant has been the unrealistic pay and compensation patterns established. In fact, a prominent feature of the public service pay in Nigeria and most other African countries, generally, is the usually low salaries as compared to the private sector pay. However, a more serious problem has been that of a dramatic delay in payment of salary or the accumulations of arrears of salary which has become a reoccurring decimal in most of the states in Nigeria. what has made the survival of workers in the public has been that most of them have taken to farming as a coping strategy in order to augment the outright non-payment of salaries. This situation discourages and explains the inability to attract and retain the best and brightest skilled manpower. Hence, the problems of brain-drain and for those who have stayed, it has not been easy to have optimum job performance.

Relatedly, the conditions in the foregoing have provided not only an excuse but also an incentive for unethical behaviour and lack of accountability in the service. However, it is imperative to note that even though we have been emphasizing objective conditions in Nigeria that have had a profound effect on the ethical behaviour of public servants, this is not an excuse for the dominance of unethical behaviour in the Nigerian setting. For despite these objective conditions, people still have a choice as to what to do. For example, one can decide to demand bribes, falsify official records, stand up against abuse of office or take official duties seriously or lightly. It is people that decide the quality of their institutions by the kind of choices they make. This even includes the quality of our lives. This is why to promote ethics and accountability, an enabling condition of service

has to be created, particularly adequate pay levels and other incentives. This would definitely encourage and enhance ethics and accountability.

Furthermore, the element of promoting sound policies on recruitment, training and public personnel management as a way towards promoting ethics and accountability, especially in the public service is sacrosanct and imperative. The "federal character" has been constitutionalized to influence recruitment by ensuring that public service is a reflection of the social and regional structure of Nigeria in order to promote justice and equity. However, promotion on the job for career development should be based on merit and ability. This orientation would promote professionalism in the public service. The second element that can be used in promoting ethics and accountability has to do with the encouragement of public service occupational associations to institutionalize professional values. Indeed, public service occupational associations run by public servants themselves to promote their own interests can also be used as instruments of communicating what the society wants from members. Also, they are tools through which the morale, feelings and attitudes of public servants can be communicated and even maintained. A call is therefore put forth to the National Labour Congress (NLC), National Union of Teachers (NUT), National Union of Journalists (NUJ), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), College of Education Academic Staff Union(COEASU), Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), Trade Union Congress (TUC), and other similar unions to begin to promote efficiency by imbibing and preaching the values of ethics and accountability to their members.

As an element of promoting ethics and accountability in public service, this has to do with creating a psychology or culture of service in the public interest. This involves the development of what is called normative restraints as a means of enforcing ethics and accountability. The development of mechanisms of control and check should involve both governmental machinery and within individual public service officials so as to serve as a guide to service delivery in the public interest of all and sundry. There is the need to also strengthen the public institutions of accountability. This involves mainly the legislature and its institutions that are expected to promote accountability such as Public Accounts Committee, the Civil Service Commission and Auditors General's Offices must be also strengthened to be more effective as accountability instruments.

Finally, the ability of the citizenry to hold civil servants accountable for their actions and inactions as well as fulfill their obligations and responsibilities can be quite useful. Civil societies especially should be willing to expose and insists on remedying abuse of power and office. By so doing, the values of ethics and accountability will be upheld

Conclusion

This article traced the root causes of the problems and challenges of ethics and accountability in the Nigerian public service. The reason is not farfetched; it has origin from our colonial experience and the spill over on the post-colonial Nigerian State and consequently on the public service. The continual decay in the system is further occasioned by the inability of successive governments and administrations to summon political will and carry out the necessary reforms.

The study have also proffered panacea for the enhancement and achievement of ethics and accountability in the service. Critical and central to these measures are the issues of adequate remunerations, and honest activities of the civil societies. This would serve as catalyst to the efficient and effective workings of the public service in carrying out the policies, programmes and projects of the governments. Above all, all public servants irrespective of their portfolios or positions must embrace ethics and accountability as both requirements for their job and lifestyle for their existence. They are admonished to see themselves as catalysts in effective and efficient service delivery in Nigeria.

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