

Civil Service and Socio-Economic Development in Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract

The civil service played a critical role in fostering socio-economic development, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. This paper examined the role of the civil service in driving socio-economic progress, with a focus on Akwa Ibom State. The study assessed how civil service structures and policies influenced key areas such as employment generation, economic growth, infrastructure development, and public service delivery. To achieve the study objectives, the researcher utilized both descriptive and ex post facto research designs to analyze civil service operations and their impact on socio-economic development. The descriptive design provided a detailed overview of the current state of civil service practices, while the ex post facto design allowed for the examination of past policies and their outcomes without manipulating variables. Data were collected from a variety of secondary sources, including textbooks that offered foundational knowledge, journals with empirical studies, civil service information handbooks detailing regulations, and government bulletins providing insights on policies and challenges. The findings revealed that inadequate allocation of resources; bureaucratic delays, corruption, and ineffective human resource management were major factors that hindered the civil service's ability to achieve socio-economic development. The paper concluded with recommendations for enhancing the efficiency of the civil service, including policy reforms, capacity building, and strategic leadership, to better align with national development goals in Akwa Ibom State.

Keywords: Civil Service, Socio-Economic Development, Bureaucratic Delays, Corruption, Service Delivery.

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INTRODUCTION

The civil service plays a crucial role in the governance and socio-economic development of any region, acting as a bridge between government policies and the implementation of services that directly impact citizens' lives. In Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, the civil service is instrumental in translating state policies into tangible benefits for its residents, particularly in the realms of education, health, infrastructure, and economic growth. This state's unique socio-economic landscape, characterized by a rich cultural heritage and abundant natural resources, presents both opportunities and challenges for civil service effectiveness.

The civil service in Akwa Ibom has undergone significant transformations since the state's creation in 1987. Over the years, it has faced various challenges, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and inadequate funding, which hinder its ability to deliver services effectively (Ezeani, 2020). However, the state's government has initiated several reforms aimed at enhancing civil service efficiency and accountability,

thereby promoting socio-economic development (Akpan, 2019). These reforms are critical in addressing the pressing issues of poverty, unemployment, and infrastructural decay that have plagued the state and its citizens.

Recent studies indicate that effective civil service delivery positively correlates with improved socio-economic outcomes, such as increased educational attainment, better health indicators, and enhanced quality of life for citizens (Obi & Okereke, 2021). In Akwa Ibom State, initiatives targeting civil service capacity building and transparency have begun to yield positive results, fostering an environment conducive to socio-economic progress. For instance, the introduction of e-governance initiatives aims to streamline processes and enhance service delivery (Nwankwo, 2022). Furthermore, the civil service's role in policy formulation and implementation is critical in addressing the unique challenges faced by the state, such as ensuring equitable resource allocation and promoting sustainable development (Eme & Nwankwo, 2021). This paper seeks to explore the intricate relationship between the

civil service and socio-economic development in Akwa Ibom State, examining how effective governance and public administration can lead to improved outcomes for the populace.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilized both descriptive and ex post facto research designs to analyze civil service operations and their impact on socio-economic development. The descriptive design provided a detailed overview of the current state of civil service practices, while the ex post facto design allowed for the examination of past policies and their outcomes without manipulating variables. Data were collected from a variety of secondary sources, including textbooks that offered foundational knowledge, journals with empirical studies, civil service information handbooks detailing regulations, and government bulletins providing insights on policies and challenges. This diverse array of sources contributed to a comprehensive and evidence-based analysis of the civil service's role in promoting socio-economic development.

Civil Service

The Civil Service is the administrative bureaucracy which occupies an essential position in the political system of nations. Throughout the world, the contributions of Civil Service in promoting sustainable and equitable economic growth are receiving increasing attention. Efficient and effective management of the Civil Service are critical to sustainable socio-economic development of a nation. The civil service in the words of Ipinlaiye (2001) is the body of men and women employed in a civil capacity and nonpolitical career basis by the federal and state governments primarily to render and effect government decisions and implementation. According to Abba and Anazodo (2006), civil service in Nigeria comprises workers in various ministries, departments and agencies apart from political office holders.

“The civil service is the main instrument which government uses to regulate and manage all aspects of the economy of a society. It is the main medium through which all institutions obtain various types of approvals, licenses, permits among others” (Ishaq, 2013: 158).

The civil service is a branch of government which is usually grouped with the Executive, and without which governments cannot function. These are men and women who have been selected based on their experience, knowledge, character and training and constitute the permanent staff of the departments of governments. They are professional administrators. Some people refer collectively to these personnel as public administrators or the bureaucrats (Eme and Andrew, 2013). Career officers got their appointment from civil service commission, and exercise power of delegating duties and responsibilities to ministries,

departments and agencies of government in accordance with laid down rules (Nebo and Nnamani, 2015).

The civil service is mainly organized around the federal ministries headed by a minister for federal or commissioner for State appointed by the president or governor for state, who must include at least one member of the 36 states for Federal and one member of local government for States in his cabinet. President's appointment is confirmed by the Senate of Nigeria for Federal while the, the State House of Assembly approves that of the state. In some cases, a federal minister is responsible for more than one ministry and a minister may be assisted by one or more ministers of state as is the case in Nigeria. Each ministry has a permanent secretary who is a senior civil servant. At the state level, civil service is the collectivity of ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs). Governor's appointments into the MDAs are confirmed by the State House of Assembly. The political heads of state ministries are the Commissioners while administrative of the ministries are the state Permanent Secretaries.

The civil service according to Marshall and Murtala (2015) is an organ created to ensure that policies and programs of any government at any particular time are carried out. To Iyayi, (2016), the characteristics of the civil service are that:

- a. It has to be non-partisan to enable it serve any government of the day.
- b. It has to be made of experienced men and women with the technical and professional know how to enable it implement government policies.
- c. It has to be orderly and also ensure that orderly administration of the country or state is continuous.
- d. The Civil Service is indispensable since it continues the traditional role of keeping the functions of government running no matter what changes occurs in the administration of the country.
- e. It operates under rules which guide its conduct.

The basic role of the civil servant according to Eme and Andrew (2013) is therefore, to initiate and take active part in all the processes leading to the formulation of policy; and thereafter ensure that the policy agreed by government is faithfully and honestly executed. Obi and Nwokwu (2022), observes that the critical highlight in the major function of the civil service is the implementation of government policies. Also, Ezeani (2005) noted that the civil service is a store of knowledge of past government decisions and procedures.

Socio-Economic Development

Socio-economic development, often referred to as simply development, is a multidimensional concept focused on improving the economic, social, and cultural

well-being of a society. It aims to enhance living standards, reduce poverty and inequality, and promote overall human welfare through economic growth, social equity, environmental sustainability, and cultural advancement (Magbodeh, 2020). The term encompasses social factors like education and profession, alongside economic aspects such as income and resource availability. It involves measurable indicators, including GDP, life expectancy, literacy, and employment levels, as well as intangible factors like personal dignity and civic participation (Metu, 2017). Economic development often begins with expanding productive capacity, creating jobs, attracting investments, and fostering entrepreneurship, with the overarching goal of alleviating poverty and ensuring access to basic necessities like food, clean water, healthcare, education, and shelter (Magbodeh, 2020).

Infrastructure development including roads, transportation networks, energy supply, and communication systems is crucial for promoting economic growth and social development. Socio-economic development prioritizes equity and social inclusion, addressing disparities related to gender, race, ethnicity, and income, while also considering environmental sustainability and responsible resource management (Ciroma, 2017). The impacts of socio-economic development manifest in various positive changes, including the enhancement of the rule of law, improvements in the physical environment, and advancements in ecological conditions. Successful socio-economic development requires effective policies and mechanisms to improve key areas like food security, education, healthcare, and gender equity, while also protecting vulnerable groups (Waziri, 2018). Key objectives of socio-economic development include promoting self-reliance through skill acquisition and access to resources, strengthening policy delivery mechanisms, ensuring affordable access to essential services, progressing towards gender equity, encouraging broad-based participation in development opportunities, and expanding access to life-sustaining goods. Ultimately, the goal is to enhance individuals' and nations' economic and social choices, liberating them from poverty and ignorance (Metu, 2017; Waziri, 2018).

The nation socio-economic development is evidenced by its economic growth (Todaro & Smith, 2012), poverty reduction (Sachs (2015), education (Sen, 1999), healthcare (World Health Organisation, 2020), infrastructure development (African Development Bank, 2018), employment generation (International Labour Organisation, 2019) Income inequality reduction (Piketty 2014), environmental sustainability (United Nations, 2015), social inclusion (World Bank, 2018) and good governance (Fukuyama 2013)

Civil Service and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria; an overview

The relationship between the civil service and socio-economic development in Nigeria is fundamental. The civil service plays a pivotal role in implementing government policies and programs that directly influence the nation's socio-economic progress. Its primary responsibility is delivering essential public services such as education, healthcare, infrastructure development, and social welfare programs. The efficiency and effectiveness of these services have a direct impact on the country's socio-economic development. An efficient civil service ensures that resources are allocated and utilized effectively, leading to improved access to basic services and better living standards for the population. Conversely, a dysfunctional civil service can hinder the delivery of these crucial services, perpetuating poverty, poor health outcomes, and hindering human capital development.

In essence, the Nigerian civil service has evolved from its colonial roots to become a crucial instrument for driving the nation's socio-economic development. Its effectiveness in implementing policies and delivering public services directly impacts the country's progress and the well-being of its citizens. Secondly, civil servants are instrumental in implementing government policies and development plans. Their technical expertise and administrative capabilities play a significant role in translating policies into actionable programs and projects. Effective policy implementation can foster an enabling environment for economic growth, poverty reduction, and social development (Obasi, 2018). Policies aimed at diversifying the economy, promoting industrialization, and encouraging entrepreneurship can only succeed if the civil service is capable of executing them effectively. Furthermore, the civil service is a key pillar of governance in Nigeria. Its ability to uphold principles of transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct significantly impacts the socio-economic development of the country. A well-functioning civil service can help curb corruption, promote good governance, and ensure the efficient allocation of resources (Ogunrotifa, 2012). Corruption within the civil service can undermine development efforts, divert resources from essential services, and erode public trust in government institutions.

Moreover, the civil service is responsible for developing and managing the human resources required for the effective functioning of government agencies and public institutions. Effective human resource management, including training and capacity building, enhances the productivity and efficiency of the civil service, contributing to socio-economic development by ensuring the effective delivery of public services and the efficient implementation of development programs (Ayeni, 2012). Additionally, the civil service plays a

vital role in creating an enabling environment for private sector development, a key driver of economic growth and job creation. Efficient bureaucratic processes, transparent regulations, and effective public-private partnerships facilitated by the civil service contribute to a conducive business environment (Bayo, 2012). This attracts investments, promote entrepreneurship, and foster sustainable economic growth, ultimately leading to improved socio-economic conditions for the populace.

Review of Empirical Literature

The role of civil servants in managing the national economy and contributing to sustainable development in Nigeria has been the focus of several studies, highlighting the complexities and challenges faced by the civil service in the country. Tunde and Majekodunmi (2022) examined the historical context of civil servants as economic managers in post-colonial Nigeria. They pointed out that newly independent African nations, including Nigeria, confronted the dual challenge of political and economic development in the early 1960s. The emphasis was on channeling the citizens' creative energies towards socio-economic progress to showcase the benefits of independence. Civil servants were identified as crucial players in managing economic affairs, tasked with harnessing these energies for national development. The study utilized declassified materials and historical writings to explore the experiences of civil servants under both civilian and military regimes, while also addressing the impact of the Nigerian Civil War and ongoing peace-building efforts. Utilizing Utilitarianism as an analytical lens, the study concluded that appointing skilled, disciplined, and non-tribalistic technocrats is essential for effectively managing the national economy.

In the work titled *Civil Service Rules and Effective Service Delivery in Nigeria: Interrogating the Trajectory of Enforcement*, Obi and Nwokwu (2022) underscore the essential function of the civil service in realizing the public policy objectives of any government. They contend that the civil service may find it difficult to validate its role as the government's operational backbone without strict compliance with governing rules. This study examines the enforcement history of these rules within the Nigerian Civil Service to improve service delivery. Grounded in Max Weber's (1864-1920) Bureaucratic Theory, the research adopts a qualitative approach, heavily relying on secondary data from official documents, esteemed journal articles, and relevant literature. The analysis produced several important insights, including that public service rules are not enforced effectively due to insufficient motivation, conflicting government policies especially regarding "second addresses" and various human factors. These results suggest that without concerted efforts to instill discipline through the proper enforcement of public service rules, the civil service risks losing its significance as a catalyst for sustainable development in Nigeria. As

a result, the study recommends that the government enhance motivation for all civil servants, discontinue any policies that contradict public service rules, and eliminate favoritism, nepotism, and other biases in the enforcement of discipline within the Nigerian civil service.

In a separate study, Atairet (2022) examined *Innovative Administration and Service Delivery for Sustainable Civil Service in Nigeria*. This research highlights the reliance of every government on its civil service for the effective and efficient formulation and execution of policies and programs. It posits that the administrative advancement of a nation is dependent on the innovative capacity of its civil service, which is fundamental to governmental functions. A lack of effective innovation can obstruct sustainability and reduce the efficiency of service delivery. Focusing on how innovative administration impacts service delivery in the civil service, the study is based on Modernization Theory and employs qualitative methods, utilizing secondary data sources. The findings reveal that innovative strategies are being implemented to address issues like corruption and absenteeism within the civil service, along with the introduction of digitalization efforts aimed at improving service delivery efficiency. However, the study also highlights that civil servants often do not receive adequate rewards for their innovative efforts and may have difficulty adapting to the changes that innovative practices bring. It recommends maintaining ongoing digitalization initiatives, incentivizing and rewarding civil servants for their innovative contributions, and ensuring that any new innovations are clearly communicated to civil servants before implementation.

Joy (2022) investigated the relationship between civil service administration and effective service delivery in Rivers State, Nigeria. This study employed a correlational research design, focusing on the civil service administrative staff within the Rivers State secretariat. Using a simple random sampling technique, 80 respondents were selected for the study. The research utilized two instruments: the Civil Service Administration Scale (CSAS) and the Effective Service Delivery Scale (ESDS), which were validated by the researcher through Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistics, yielding coefficients of 0.85 and 0.81, respectively. The study's findings indicated a significant relationship between civil service administration and effective service delivery in Rivers State. Additionally, improvements in civil service administration were positively correlated with enhanced service delivery. Based on these outcomes, the study recommends that civil service administrators in Rivers State adhere to their responsibilities as outlined in the Public Service Act, without political interference. It is vital to ensure that politicians do not influence project processes, as such involvement often leads to directives on project

execution. Therefore, preventing political interference in the establishment of public projects is crucial for ensuring effective service delivery within the state.

Theoretical Framework

To give this work a scientific base, the researchers adopted the Public Value Management Theory (PVM), propounded by Mark H. Moore in 1995 as a theoretical framework. The theory offers a vital lens for understanding the role of the Civil Service as an agent of socio-economic development. Moore's theory emphasizes that civil services are not merely vehicles for policy implementation but are strategic actors responsible for creating public value by aligning government actions with citizens' needs (Moore, 1995). In the context of Nigeria and other developing countries, the civil service serves as a key driver of public sector programs and services that impact critical sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and poverty alleviation.

The fundamental assumption of PVM is that public value is realized when the services provided meet the expectations and improve the well-being of the citizenry. The Akwa Ibom State Civil Service can be evaluated on this basis, where its effectiveness is judged not only by its administrative efficiency but by the tangible improvements in the lives of the people. For instance, the successful implementation of social welfare programs, economic empowerment schemes, and infrastructural projects, such as roads and healthcare facilities, directly contributes to socio-economic development and creates value for the citizens of the state. In line with Public Value Management theory, the Akwa Ibom Civil Service must foster collaborative networks by engaging multiple stakeholders, including local communities, private investors, and non-governmental organizations. This approach allows the government to leverage external resources and expertise, ensuring that developmental goals such as poverty reduction, job creation, and sustainable growth are met through collective action. An example is the state's partnership with development agencies and businesses in implementing agricultural programs like Fadama III, which seeks to boost rural income and food production (World Bank, 2020).

Additionally, the theory's emphasis on strategic leadership and accountability is crucial for effective civil service. Accordingly, Civil service leaders in the state must demonstrate foresight by adopting innovative practices to address challenges such as unemployment and economic diversification. For instance, promoting skills acquisition and entrepreneurial programs can help harness the state's youth potential and drive socio-economic transformation. Furthermore, enhancing transparency in service delivery and incorporating citizen feedback mechanisms will build public trust and ensure that development projects align with the state's

long-term economic goals. By focusing on public value creation, strategic collaboration, and leadership, the civil service can be a powerful catalyst for improving living standards and fostering sustainable development across the state.

Civil Service and Socio-Economic Development: The Akwa Ibom State Experience

The civil service in Akwa Ibom State plays a crucial role in ensuring effective service delivery across sectors such as employment, education, and infrastructure. Its influence is central to the state's progress in achieving its development objectives and improving citizens' welfare. In the realm of education, the civil service is integral to shaping and executing policies that elevate the standard of education and guarantee accessibility for all. Numerous government efforts have aimed to enhance educational infrastructure and resources. A notable example is the "Free and Compulsory Education Policy," introduced in 2007, which reflects the state's commitment to advancing education. Administered by the Ministry of Education, this policy provides tuition-free education at the primary and secondary levels. The Akwa Ibom State Universal Basic Education Board (2021) reported that, as a result, school enrollment surged, with over 150,000 students newly admitted into primary schools during the 2020 academic year. This initiative has played a significant role in eliminating obstacles to education and fostering inclusivity.

Moreover, the School Improvement Programme, launched in 2021, prioritizes the renovation of aging school buildings and the provision of essential learning resources. The civil service has efficiently managed this program, with strong support from community groups. The Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Education (2022) noted that more than 300 schools have benefited from infrastructural upgrades, creating a better learning environment for students. A partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) further highlights the civil service's impact, with initiatives such as teacher training and the supply of learning materials contributing to enhanced educational processes (UNICEF, 2022). These initiatives illustrate the pivotal role of the civil service in advancing education reform. Additionally, civil service is involved in planning and budgeting for educational infrastructure through the Inter-Ministerial Direct Labour Coordinating Committee (IMDLCC). This body, composed of public officials, managed the construction of over 300 classrooms across the state, including at Government Secondary School, Etoi in Uyo, ensuring projects met financial and educational benchmarks. Civil service also oversees project implementation, as seen during the School Renovation Programme (2015-2020), when officials from the Ministries of Works and Education supervised the refurbishment of more than 2,500 classrooms. Their oversight ensured contractors followed schedules and

quality standards, exemplified by the successful upgrades at St. Mary's Science College in Abak, where new laboratories and classrooms were added.

Civil servants also monitor and evaluate projects to ensure they meet specifications, as demonstrated in the Eket Model School Project in 2019, where site inspections led to critical adjustments. Following construction, they are responsible for the upkeep of educational infrastructure, such as at Uyo High School, where routine maintenance of classrooms and laboratories was organized to prevent decay. The case of *Attorney General of Akwa Ibom State v. Attorney General of the Federation (2002)* underscores the importance of civil servants in aligning state projects with federal guidelines while addressing local needs. Through their involvement in these initiatives, civil servants contribute significantly to the enhancement of educational facilities, thereby improving the learning environment throughout Akwa Ibom State.

In the area of employment, the civil service in Akwa Ibom State serves as a crucial mechanism for generating employment opportunities and implementing policies aimed at reducing unemployment. Apart from regular employment exercise undertaken by civil service that has generated thousands of employments, various other employment initiatives have been launched to engage the youth and address the growing unemployment challenge in the state. One notable initiative is the Akwa Ibom State Employment Scheme, introduced to provide jobs for young graduates. According to the Akwa Ibom State government establishment (2021), over 5,000 youths have been engaged through this scheme since its establishment, significantly contributing to the state's efforts to combat unemployment. This initiative not only provides immediate job opportunities but also enhances the skill sets of the youth, preparing them for future employment. Moreover, the Dakadda Programme has been instrumental in creating temporary employment for unskilled laborers. This programme focuses on providing job opportunities through infrastructural projects, thereby addressing both unemployment and infrastructural deficits simultaneously. In 2020, the government reported employing over 1,500 local laborers through this initiative, directly impacting the livelihoods of many families (Udom, 2020).

In area of infrastructural development, the civil service plays a critical role in Akwa Ibom State. The successful execution of various infrastructural projects, such as roads, health facilities, and public utilities, heavily relies on the civil service's planning and implementation capabilities. One significant project is the Ibom International Airport, inaugurated in 2009. The civil service was instrumental in its planning, construction, and management, facilitating air travel and enhancing the state's economic prospects. The airport

has not only improved connectivity but has also significantly boosted tourism and commerce, attracting both local and international investors (Akwa Ibom State Government, 2022). Additionally, the Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project (RAAMP) initiated by the Akwa Ibom State government exemplifies the civil service's role in enhancing rural infrastructure. The project aims to improve rural road networks, facilitating better access to markets for farmers and promoting agricultural development. As noted by Effiong (2021), the project has led to the rehabilitation of over 150 kilometers of rural roads, positively impacting agricultural productivity and local economies. Furthermore, the civil service has facilitated the development of health infrastructure, such as the Akwa Ibom State Health Insurance Scheme, which aims to provide affordable healthcare services to the population. The scheme was launched in 2020 and has expanded access to quality healthcare services for thousands of residents (Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Health, 2022). This initiative demonstrates the civil service's commitment to improving health outcomes, which is essential for the overall development of the state.

Civil Service and Socio-Economic Development in Akwa Ibom State: The Challenges

The civil service in Akwa Ibom State faces several challenges that hinder its effectiveness in driving socio-economic development. One of the most significant issues is corruption and lack of accountability, where funds intended for development projects are often misappropriated or diverted. This has led to the collapse or delay of vital projects, especially in education, healthcare, and infrastructure. For instance, cases of financial mismanagement in the state's education sector have resulted in unfinished school renovations, with funds allegedly siphoned by some government officials (Akpan, 2018). This undermines public trust and severely impacts the state's capacity to deliver essential services.

Another challenge is bureaucratic inefficiency, which is characterized by excessive red tape, lengthy approval processes, and poor interdepartmental coordination. These inefficiencies delay the execution of key projects, negatively affecting development outcomes. An example of this can be seen in the delayed implementation of the Fadama III Agricultural Program in Akwa Ibom, where administrative bottlenecks slowed fund disbursement and project approvals, thereby limiting the program's potential to boost agricultural productivity (Effiong, 2021). Political interference further compounds these issues, as civil servants often face pressure from political actors, undermining their neutrality and professionalism. This interference sometimes leads to the appointment of unqualified personnel to critical positions and the misdirection of resources towards partisan interests. For example, during the 2019 elections, several civil servants

were coerced into aligning with political factions, disrupting their regular duties, particularly in sectors such as education and healthcare (Udoh, 2020). Such politicization weakens the civil service's capacity to focus on developmental goals.

Moreover, underfunding and poor resource allocation are prevalent, limiting the ability of civil servants to implement socio-economic development projects effectively. Critical sectors such as healthcare and infrastructure often do not receive adequate financial support. For instance, the state's health sector has long struggled with underfunding, making it difficult for civil servants to improve healthcare delivery, especially in rural areas (Etuk, 2019). This lack of financial backing hinders the execution of essential services, leaving gaps in infrastructure development. Another challenge is the skills deficiency among civil servants due to a lack of continuous training and capacity-building opportunities. Many civil servants lack the skills necessary to implement modern development policies and technologies. For example, civil servants in the Ministry of Education have struggled with integrating digital learning tools into public schools, primarily because of insufficient ICT skills (Akpan, 2018). This limits the efficiency of public service delivery and hinders the state's socio-economic progress.

Poor working conditions and inadequate infrastructure further demoralize civil servants and impede their productivity. The lack of proper office infrastructure, insufficient tools, and poor remuneration negatively affect their ability to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Civil servants in the Ministry of Works, for instance, have faced difficulties executing infrastructural projects due to inadequate office space and lack of functional equipment, including vehicles for site inspections (Essien, 2021). Lastly, poor monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems are a significant challenge, as the absence of effective oversight mechanisms often leads to the abandonment of projects or their execution without adherence to quality standards. Civil servants responsible for monitoring and evaluation frequently lack the tools necessary to ensure that projects meet their intended objectives. For instance, road projects in the Eket and Ikot Abasi local government areas were delayed or abandoned due to poor monitoring, with contractors failing to meet agreed-upon milestones (Edet, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The civil service is a crucial pillar for the socio-economic development of Nigeria, essential for effective governance, policy implementation, and public service delivery. However, the Nigerian civil service faces significant challenges that hinder its effectiveness and, consequently, the country's development. Bureaucratic inefficiency, inadequate resource allocation, corruption, inadequate skill and capacity among personnel, and

political interference are the primary obstacles impeding progress.

Bureaucratic inefficiency which is characterized by excessive red tape and slow decision making processes, leads to delays and frustrations in service delivery. Corruption siphons off resources meant for public services, causing shortages and diminishing the quality of these services. Moreover, the work observed that lack of adequate skill and capacity among civil servants further exacerbates inefficiencies, particularly in critical sectors like education, where it directly impacts the nation's developmental prospects. In similar vein, political interference undermines meritocracy, resulting in the appointment of unqualified personnel and further weakening the civil service.

Recommendations

Based on the research objectives outlined, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. The study recommended for simplify bureaucratic processes by reducing red tape to enhance efficiency and speed up decision-making. By tackling the root causes of inefficiency and implementing targeted reforms, the Akwa Ibom State government will enhance public service delivery, foster economic development, and restore public confidence in its institutions. The success of these reforms will depend on the commitment of both the government and civil society to create a transparent, accountable, and efficient bureaucratic system.
- ii. Investing in education and training infrastructure is crucial. This includes providing adequate resources for training institutions and ensuring that civil servants have access to modern training facilities and materials. By investing in training, reforming recruitment practices, and enhancing infrastructure, a more competent and effective civil service that supports the development of a robust and high-quality education system will be built. Furthermore, continuous monitoring and evaluation are essential for maintaining and improving educational standards. Skilled personnel are required to design and implement effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
- iii. Akwa Ibom State Civil Service should conduct comprehensive reviews of existing administrative structures to identify areas for improvement and optimization, ensuring that administrative systems are aligned with the evolving needs and priorities of Akwa Ibom State. Also, should invest in modernizing administrative processes and technologies to streamline service delivery, reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks, and enhance efficiency and

effectiveness across government departments and agencies.

By implementing these recommendations, policymakers and stakeholders can work towards strengthening the civil service, improving political advisory services, and enhancing administrative structures to drive socioeconomic development in Akwa Ibom State effectively.

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