Management of Social Services In Africa and Ghana

...PROSPECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES
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Structure of presentation

- Introduction
- Issues of public service
- Women’s empowerment
- Modes of management of social services
- Prospects and Opportunities
- Conclusion
• Importance of the theme: role of public service in women’s empowerment, innovation and accessible service delivery
• Significance of placing an emphasis on public service
• The project of development for Africa a major priority
• A lot of possibilities on the continent
Introduction

- The Economic Report on Africa (2013) says that Africa is now one of the fastest growing economies of the world
- The continent is also hailed as the next frontier for opportunity and a potential global growth
  - Mainly due to minimisation of overt political conflicts
  - National efforts at promoting economic growth
  - Some marked increase in democratisation
The Public Service

- Been under siege historically
- Different perspectives about the public service
- Some make arguments in favour of reduced size, low spending and limited role in public life
- Persistent calls for reduced social spending, less regulation, and more tax cuts.
- Service delivery: trend now is for it to be placed in the hands of the private sector
Irony is that when there is an emergency everyone expects much greater intervention /role for the public service.

Recent flooding in Ghana individuals and groups doing their best in mobilising and assisting affected persons.

Yet to deal fundamentally with what happened, public institutions have to act and swiftly: weak institutions cannot act decisively.
The role of government (executive, judiciary and the legislature) state (all citizens, women, men, boys, girls)

Much more nuanced responsibility/role among public and private institutions

Clear demarcation losing out
Activities traditionally undertaken by government (at whatever level) now being done by other actors particularly the private sector (e.g. water provision, sanitation etc)

Government also undertaking activities formerly known to be for non-state actors

Profit motive no longer the preserve of private sector

Even civil society is being tasked to make profit a motive: social enterprise as a favoured trend
Consequence of above is that the arrangements of service delivery tends to leave citizens confused.

Who should we hold accountable for what?

For women this is a major dilemma given their position in society, their traditional roles and functions in the care economy.

Often absent from mainstream public policy/decision-making spaces and arenas.
• Emphasis on making a ‘business case’ even with regard to the implementation of public policy including national development plans

• Reforms constantly reducing the public sector

• Public service values now replaced by business values

• Have tended to leave behind values developed by women (e.g. petty-trading model in Ghana)
Employment: used to be permanent and pensionable

Now contract-based; implications for women and their life cycles; ability to negotiate;

Terminologies from the private sector have found their way in the language of the public service:

- results-oriented management, benchmarking, right sizing, re-tooling, output-based budgeting

Citizens are now referred to as ‘clients’ customers’
Women’s Empowerment

- A means to address inequalities in the system with reference to the different experiences, conditions and situation of women and men
- Promoting equitable and equal development for women and men
- A clear mandate from the UN through to the African Union, ECOWAS and at the national level
- Conventions, instruments and documents in place
- Measures and tools developed over the years to make this possible
Women’s Empowerment

- To a point where it is now a requirement

- But the requirements are still located in the changing character of public service with its characteristics of downsizing, loss of accountability to citizens

- Challenges for women to realise their rights in all spheres

- Inadequate resources for addressing issues of concern to women
Women’s Empowerment

- Significant successes but fundamental change still a mirage
- Gaps remain in several areas:

  ➢ Education and schooling; health and healthcare; safety and crime control; decision making and political participation and access and control to resources (e.g. land)
Women’s Empowerment

• Need for women and men to work together to transform structures, processes and relationships

• Public service then becomes relevant as the source of inclusiveness, equality, peace and development

• Clear accountability mechanisms for empowered citizens, both women and men
Modes of management of social services

- Outsourcing
- Contracting out
- PPPs (public private partnerships)

- What do these mean to citizens and women specifically?
- Is there a level playing field?
- Where are the entry points?
Modes of management of social services

HISTORICAL CHANGES:

- The Politics-Administration Dichotomy (1887-1926)
  - The Principles of Administration (1927-1937)
  - The Era of Challenge (1938-1947)
  - The identity crisis (1948-1970)
  - From Public Administration to Public Management (From 1970s to early 1990s)
  - From Public Management to public governance (late 1990s to 2008)
  - Global economic crisis (2008-2010)
  - From Governance to New Public Governance (2010....)
  - From Public service to New Public Service (2013.....)
Modes of management of social services

Public service dominant approach:
- The distinctive characteristics of services and their impact upon their management
- Takes a holistic and systemic approach to the delivery of (public) services
- Acknowledges the central role of service user expectations, and experience to the performance of (public) services.
Modes of management of social services

- The public service seen as a key instrument to regulate, administer, execute, mediate, invest

- delivers the construction, operations, maintenance and servicing of service delivery infrastructure,

- ensures that the public service machinery is oriented to diligently serve the citizens irrespective of their social status.
• Public servants are the backbone and heartbeat of the public service,
• Thus importance of ethical and professional characteristics for the service to remain vibrant
• Public service essentially focuses not only on the delivery of services
• It is also crucial for economic and social development
• Provision of essential services and basic infrastructure

• The means to spur economic development and improve the lives of communities, especially poor women and men in rural and urban communities.
Modes of management of social services

- Public servants must be responsive to the government of the day,
- At the same time they must use their professional knowledge, skills and competencies to ensure a better life for all by offering their best services in the most known efficient way
- The public servant must also be fully accountable for their decision
- How do we achieve this when public service is so unattractive?
The key challenge for African countries today is how to build an efficient public service that can design and implement effective policies.

Well intentioned policies are influenced from wrong premises and end up not posting the right results. The Public administration systems are not working.

The public servants are accused of so many things: corruption, absenteeism, incompetence.

Why is this so?
• The problems of the lost decade, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank imposed structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s and 1990s.
• Theoretical premise was that markets were efficient while government interventions were inefficient because they distorted the market signals.
• Long-term development planning was abandoned and industrial policies neglected in most African countries.
Ghana was one of such countries.

Attention was focused on civil service staff reduction, freezing of new recruitments, and removal of “ghost workers” with a view to reducing the size of the civil service wage bill.

Only modest results were achieved:
- some new appointments had to be made to some essential services (notably in the social sector)
- in most cases the largest numbers of retrenched staff were from the lower pay levels, yielding only small savings
Modes of management of social services

- This experience posed challenges on how to deliver services-relying on the market, management and measurement or getting involved
- Some people favor the centrality of government-public administration
- Others seek to eliminate government, and thus, government bureaucracy, by moving as many of the functions of government to the private sector
- Thus government agencies become contract administrators rather than persons who deliver services,
- The justification being that private bureaucracies are more efficient than government bureaucracies
Public service transformation covers a high level deliberate and well-coordinated process of change.

A reorientation of public service in a new direction to make it efficient and effective in enabling the government fulfills its mandate to citizens, women and men.

Public service transformation suggests a basic change of the entire machinery of the public service.
Prospects and Opportunities

- Not only should such a transformation cover the public service infrastructure (processes, procedures, policies, rules and regulations, practices)
- Should re-orient the character and attitudes of the public servants to a good job within the prescribed rules and regulations.
- It should equally extend to emancipating the citizens in whatever capacity necessary to demand accountability from those in charge of the state apparatus.
How do we build a public sector that can deliver?

Public servants need to be educated in their philosophical roles and the inherent public service values which are expounded in the public service codes of conduct.

The implementation of national service courses becomes a matter of necessity not choice.
Prospects and opportunities

- More attention towards policy preparation and evaluation.
- Governments need to take decisions based on well thought visions that have seen major stakeholders participated and feeling a degree of ownership of the policies.
- The culture of minimalist consultation during policy development needs to be replaced with a true meaning of consultation.
- While participatory representation may be a challenge representation itself has to take the heterogeneous and gendered nature of the country into account.
Prospects and opportunities

- More regulatory role of the government in a complex society is urgently required and will be a catalyst for effective transformation agenda.
- An effective government must have an elaborate instrument to safeguard the well-being of citizens in society.
- Our complex society needs a government that supports opportunities for further growth towards a harmonious organization and an effective and safe society.
Prospects and opportunities

- All administrations will need to have a continued desire for innovation in the public service processes while they optimize the processes.
- Need to adapt to specific strategies, legal changes, innovation, new services and delivery models.
- An efficient government should look for standardized solutions in domains as finance, human resources, public procurement,
- These should be adapted to the specific public sector environment.
The power of an efficient coordination and monitoring framework is critical.

Government urgently needs to re-evaluate the mandates of its various departments and agencies with a view of consolidating existing mandates into related areas.

This will build synergy among related functions but will also see significant resource saving which will be put to good use.

The relationship between the central government and local government should be a major area of emphasis in debating coordinating and monitoring.
Prospects and opportunities

- Performance measurement for senior managers will need a much more robust attention than it has attracted.

- Even public servant in responsible supervisory position must be given clear benchmarks of performance

- Remedial action needs to be taken where non adherence to agreed benchmarks is not accomplished.
Conclusion

- Africa has vast human and natural resources
- Youthful and urbanised populations
- 12% of world oil reserves; 42% of its gold; 80-90% platinum and chromium group metals; 60% arable land with forestry resources
- Same is true of Ghana
Conclusion

- Strong public service infrastructure is needed

- Quality of the public servant—both women and men on an equal basis

- Empowered women and men as citizens to demand accountability
Conclusion

- Strong public service must benefit the citizens themselves through a process of addressing inequalities at all levels

- Ease burdens on poorer sections of the society: urban and rural poor women and men

- Create opportunities for enhanced knowledge, skills needed for transforming our vast resources into productive and reproductive use forms
THANK YOU