
PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS' CONTRIBUTION TO POOR PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN ZAMBIA: POOR IMPLEMENTATION OR DEFECTIVE PROGRAMMES?

Royd Malisase
University of Zambia

Abstract

The ultimate goal of any public sector reform is always effective and efficient delivery of public services in the right quality and quantity. Amazingly, evidence seems to suggest that not only have Zambia's public service reforms failed to improve service delivery, but they are also at the heart of the problem. In some instances, these reforms have even rolled back the few positives of the pre-reform era. Pro-reformers contend that service delivery would have improved had the reforms achieved their intended objectives. However, it is the view of this article, that the reforms were a failure due to their inherent deficiencies of the pioneering reform programmes resulting from flawed programme designs and objectives which were out of touch with reality. As a result, current reform programmes are aimed not at improving service delivery, but rather, minimising the damage caused by the earlier reforms under privatisation and the Public Service Reform Programme.

Introduction

Public service reforms have been ongoing for many years with widely diverse forms related to various cultural environments, but also with a number of common aspects (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011). In many countries, the public sectors expanded a great deal between 1945 and 1980. As economies grew and societies became more differentiated, the State took more and more prominence (Guido and Yolande, 2000). Max-Weber's model of bureaucracy became the model of choice. However, in the early 1980s, scholars, such as Christopher Hood, came up with new approaches to public management. Hood (1989) advocated for the New Public Management (NPM) approach to public service delivery. Propelled by Neo-Liberalism, NPM called for the rolling back of the public sector and limiting government presence in the economy (Dunsire and Hood, 1989). However, to deal with the catastrophic failures of reform strategies under NPM, Janet and Robert Denhardt developed the New Public Service

(NPS) model in the late 1990s, which remained popular in the early 21st century (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011). The NPS focused on capacity building in the public sector (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011).

The evolution of public sector reform in Zambia mirrors the trend above. During British colonialism, the country was administered through the Weberian model of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy continued to dominate the administrative system after the country gained independence. With the subsequent introduction of socialist policies by the end of the 1960s, the public sector took dominance in Zambia's economy (Kanu, 2014). By the late 1980s, Zambia was not spared by the spread of neo-liberalism, culminating into the implementation of NPM aligned public sector reform programmes between 1987 and 1999. Through Structural Adjustment Programmes (1987), the Privatisation Programme (1992) and the Public Service Reform Programme (1993), the public sector was dismantled and rolled back while the private sector was simultaneously promoted. This was aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness in public service delivery (the Republic of Zambia, 2000). However, following the failures of these programmes, NPS led to the introduction of the Public Service Capacity Building Programme (PSCAP) in 2000 and the Public Service Management (PSM) programme in 2005. These programmes aimed at building the capacity of the public service so as to make public service delivery very effective and efficient (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). However, these reforms have been cited as being at the heart of the poor state of service delivery in Zambia (World Bank, 2016).

The article, therefore, attempts to provide an explanation of why various public sector reforms undertaken in Zambia contributed to poor service delivery. In order to comprehensively achieve this, the article is divided into seven sections. In addition to this introduction, the other sections are as follows: section two gives an overview of the scope of the public sector in Zambia; section three explains the main objectives to be achieved by public sector reforms while section four shows the state of public services in Zambia. Section five comprehensively demonstrates the reforms undertaken and their contribution to poor service delivery while section six uncovers the reasons behind the reforms' contribution to poor service delivery. Section seven, which is the last section, is the conclusion to the study.

The Scope of the Public Sector in Zambia

There are two sectors of a country's economy. These are the public and private sectors (Guta, 2012). The other term used interchangeably with the public sector is public service (Guido and Yolande, 2000). The United Nations (UN) (1979) defined public as an organisation legally, wholly or partially, owned and controlled by the government. The UN (1979) emphasises that the term legal excludes from the public sector,

institutions that governments have acquired accidentally as a result of wars, or to avoid extreme unemployment, and so on. Regardless of the different definitions, what is clear is that the public sector is that part of the economy made up of organisations legally owned and controlled by the government and whose main focus is regulatory, monitoring, production and delivery of public services (Ayee, 2008:9; Guta (2012: 95 and United Nations Statistical Office,1968). In terms of scope, the public sector encompasses government institutions such as those under the central government, local government, and parastatals.

The public sector is a significant part of Zambia's economy. The public sector in Zambia is made up of all institutions, wholly or partially, owned by the Zambian government. Pertinent are institutions under the central government, local government, and parastatals (the Republic of Zambia, 2015). The number of provinces rose from 9 to 10 with the creation of Muchinga in 2011. As of September 2016, there were 24 ministries (Central Statistical Office, 2016). At the height of nationalisation, over 80 per cent (about 280) of enterprises in Zambia were government-owned (Mwiinga, 2003). However, the number has reduced to only 41 parastatals (Balbuena, 2014). The number of districts, on the other hand, rose from about 70 in the 1990s to 103 in 2016 (Central Statistical Office, 2016).

The share of the public sector informal employment was 71 per cent in 1991 before reducing to 40.72 per cent in 2000 (United Nations, 2004). There was a further reduction to 35.1 per cent in 2014 (Central Statistical Office, 2015). In terms of numbers, there were 180,000 public sector employees in 1993 before reducing to 104,000 in 2000 (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). However, by 2014, public sector employees increased to a total of 331,587 of which 243,277 were in central government, 29, 729 in local government and 58,581 in parastatals (Central Statistical Office, 2015).

Objectives of Public Sector Reform

One has to be familiar with the meaning of public sector reform if one is to understand the anticipated objectives of the said reform. Terms like Public Management Reform, Public Service Reform, Public Administration Reform, and Administrative Reform are often used synonymously with public sector reform. Just as there are various synonymous terms, there are a plethora of definitions of public sector reform. Heeks (1998:2) saw public sector reform as 'change within public sector organisations (PSOs) that seeks to improve their performance.' Heeks (1998) endeavours to imply that reforming the public sector involves making changes aimed at making PSOs perform better. The Republic of Zambia (1993) defines public sector reform as a deliberate action to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, professionalism, and democratic representative character of civil service, with a view of promoting better delivery

of public goods and services, with increased accountability. Schacter (2000:1) sees public sector reform as:

Strengthening the way that the public sector is managed. The public sector may be overextended – attempting to do too much with little resources. It may be poorly organised; its decision-making processes may be irrational; staff may be mismanaged; accountability may be weak; public programmes may be poorly designed and public services poorly delivered. Public Sector Reform is an attempt to fix these problems.

In all the definitions considered, a recurring theme is that the universally accepted objective of the public service reform is to improve the delivery of public goods and services. This is to be achieved when the reforms lead to improved efficiency, effectiveness, professionalism and representation in the public sector, among others.

Poor State of Public Services in Zambia

Public service delivery in Zambia, in terms of speed, quality, and quantity, is very poor (Mulimbika, de Waal and Goedegebuure, 2015). Michelo (2007) found that people who seek services at any government institution complain that it takes long to be attended to. Long queues characterise government institutions providing services. In most cases, people are made to undertake several trips to the offices before they are attended to or told never to go back. In other cases, they are sent running in circles from one officer to another (Michelo, 2007). Further, when accessed, the services are ineffective (Mulimbika, de Waal and Goedegebuure, 2015).

The services rendered to the public are also of poor quality across all sectors of society. For instance, water provided by the Lusaka Water and Sewerage Company is not clean enough to drink (Lusaka Times, 2016). There has been a general reduction in the quality of education with many students who make it to tertiary schools unable to read or write and people die from simple, treatable diseases with transportation being in disarray (Michelo, 2007).

The Contribution of Public Sector Reforms to Poor Service Delivery in Zambia

Public sector reforms in Zambia, as in most reforms, had strategies aimed at addressing malfunctions in the operations of the public sector to improve the delivery of public goods and services (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). To reform the public sector, and achieve the above objective, various programmes, each containing a myriad of strategies, have been implemented by the Zambian government beginning in the early 1980s (World Bank, 2013). The most significant are the Structural Adjustment Programme, Privatisation Programme, Public Service Reform Programme, Public

Service Capacity Building Programme and the Public Service Management Programme (World Bank, 2016). However, as will be shown below, the reforms failed to improve public service delivery.

Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)

The IMF and the World Bank-initiated the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) had a stabilisation and structural adjustment component. The stabilisation component was short-term and was requested for in 1983. It had four basic policies all aimed at reducing the current account deficits in the balance of trade payments and curbing inflation (Todaro and Smith, 2003). The Zambian government was ordered to reform tax collection, reduce government expenditure, devalue the local currency, manipulate (increasing) interest rates and reduce domestic credit (Saasa, 1996).

Between 1983 and 1987, the Kaunda Government adopted and partially implemented the stabilisation measures. However, against the backlash of the shortages in key commodities, the programme was abandoned in the mid-1987 (Saasa, 1996).

Once the economy was stable, structural adjustment measures were then expected to be implemented and were meant to be medium and long-term. These measures were aimed at creating a new economic structure which would ensure increased efficiency and flexibility. The structural adjustment component had a number of policies including trade liberalisation, redirection of expenditure towards key areas of the economic, health, education and infrastructure development, agricultural liberalisation, deregulation of the economy, privatisation of all loss-making parastatals and reduction in the size of the public sector (Todaro and Smith, 2003). The last two led to reforms in the public sector. To effectively implement the diverse policies under SAP, the government decided to operationalise the programme through the adoption of more precise programmes (Fundanga and Mwaba, 1997). Reduction in the size of the public service was to be achieved through the Public Service Reform Programme, dealing with the non-profit component of the public sector (the Republic of Zambia, 1993). On the other hand, the privatisation of loss-making parastatals was operationalised through a privatisation programme (Republic of Zambia 1996).

The Privatisation Programme

On 4 July 1992, the Zambian government enacted Privatisation Act No. 21 under Chapter 386 of the Laws of Zambia which was amended to Act No. 13 of 1994, itself amended by Act No. 9 of 1996 (Republic of Zambia 1996). The main aim of the Act was to guide the process of privatisation and commercialisation of state-owned enterprises. In addition, the Act formally established the Zambia Privatisation Agency to spearhead the process. Privatisation occurred in two ways. First, there was the

sale of entire public organisations to one or more private organisations. Second, there was the partial sale of a public organisation to a private organisation or organisations (Fundanga and Mwaba, 1997). The new organisation was partially owned by both the State and the private organisation or organisations. By 2010, more than 253 enterprises had been privatised (Zambia Development Agency, 2010).

The rationale of privatisation was that it would reduce the cost, to the government, of running loss-making enterprises. This would allow the government to concentrate on the provision of basic services including social capital and basic human services, such as health and education (Fundanga and Mwaba, 1997). Unfortunately, in this regard, Zambia's privatisation was a catastrophic failure. Rather than creating employment, by 2003, over 50 000 jobs were lost due to the closures of newly privatised companies (BBC, 2003). The government graduated from paying for loss-making enterprises and immediately enrolled in spending exorbitant amounts of resources on the provision of social safety nets to the redundant workers (World Bank, 2013). To compound the misery, even after privatisation, the private sector did not set the Zambian economy (World Bank, 2016). By 2015, the public sector still provided over 35 per cent share of formal employment (Central Statistical Office, 2015). The economy took a tumble, growing at -1.9 per cent in 1998, at the height of privatisation, from 6.6 per cent in 1981, at the height of nationalisation (International Monetary Fund, 2015).

Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP)

Determined to operationalise the SAPs, the Chiluba government launched the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) in March 1993 (the Republic of Zambia, 1993). The programme advocated for restructuring among other issues. Restructuring the public sector was aimed at making the public sector cost-effective and more efficient, by streamlining or leaning it. This called for a reorganisation of the structure and a corresponding reduction in the size of the public sector, between 1993 and 2000. The result was a reduction in the size of the civil service from 180,000 in 1993 to 136,000 in 1997 (World Bank, 2000). There was a further reduction to 112,000 by 1999 and to 104,000 in 2000 (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). However, restructuring failed to improve service delivery; as of 2000, many ministries were found to be understaffed.

Furthermore, the reorganisation resulted in qualified personnel being blocked from occupying the new structures and the job design being faulty (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). The net result was a highly centralised public service, stocked with unqualified management personnel occupying poorly described positions. Poor decisions were made, negatively impacting the delivery of public services (the Republic of Zambia, 2005).

Public Service Capacity Building Programme (PSCAP)

In 2000, the Zambian government launched the Public Service Capacity Building Programme (PSCAP). To improve service delivery, PSCAP called rightsizing, policy, and Public Service Management, financial management, accountability, transparency, judicial and legal management and decentralisation (the Republic of Zambia, 2000).

Rightsizing the public sector was in response to the negative consequences of restructuring and more importantly the shortage of staff. However, the restructuring programme did not ensure that the number of employees in the public sector was adequate for service delivery. After reducing to 104,000 in 2000, the size of the public sector personnel increased to 115,000 in 2004 (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). However, in 2005, the public sector reduced to approximately 112,259 (World Bank, 2005). The result was a continuation of acute shortages. For instance, in 2005, the Ministry of Health (MoH) had a staff of 23,000 when it needed 40,000 to meet minimum standards of health care (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). To make matters worse, due to misplacement, many sectors, especially health and education, still continued to have a severe shortage of personnel (World Bank, 2016).

Policy and Public Service Management attempted to improve service delivery by, among other things, creating a gender-sensitive public service and public policy capacity building (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). However, critics argue that emphasis on gender balance has led to ignorance of expertise in human resource management as well as prudence in decision-making. For instance, it goes against human resource development. Mafuleka (2005) states that the limited reforms in the legislature have only served to enable lawmakers to continue making questionable laws on party lines, with damaging results. In fact, capacity has only been built to benefit private interest at the expense of improved service delivery (Mafuleka, 2005).

Financial Management, Accountability, and Transparency led to capacity and decentralisation of the Auditor General's Office (AGO) and the National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee (PAC). The AGO and PAC conduct annual audits of public institutions (the Republic of Zambia, 2015). However, critics have argued that, in reality, irregularities highlighted in the AGO and PAC's reports are not acted on. The result of this has been that the two institutions worsen financial irregularities by giving the false impression that there is accountability, transparency, and financial management in public service delivery. In the meantime, public services have continued being delivered surrounded by poor financial management, with little hope of success (the Republic of Zambia, 2014).

With regards to *Judicial and Legal Management*, the overall understanding is that the reforms weakened the judiciary by subjecting it to political pressure and control (Shezongo-Macmillan, 2013). Presidential powers to appoint high court judges have

led to biased court judgments. In addition, changes in court procedures have led to delays in delivering justice. As a result, High Court sentencing for criminal cases from Magistrate Courts, such as defilement, takes more than six months (Shezongo-Macmillan, 2013). This goes against effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of judicial services.

Decentralisation under PSCAP, aimed at among others, the creation of new structures and systems and improved financial management and autonomy at the local level (the Republic of Zambia, 2000). Although full implementation of the 2002 National Decentralisation Policy was never realised, the decentralisation that has occurred has had a negative effect on service delivery (Lolojih, 2008). For instance, Prud'homme (1995) argued that decentralisation leads to an increase in corruption. It can be argued that Prud'homme's (1995) arguments do apply to the Zambian public sector.

The steady increase in corruption in the Zambian public sector coincided with the renewed calls for increased decentralisation. With zero (0) meaning clean and 100 meaning very corrupt, Zambia's corruption perception index increased from 25 points in 2003, just after the launch of the Decentralisation Policy, to 38 in 2016 (Transparency International, 2016). Critics argue that this would have been worse had the decentralisation been complete. The decentralisation that occurred also led to a deconcentrated rather than the devolved system. Local councils did not gain any administrative autonomy and the central government retained all the lucrative sources of finance. Consequently, local authorities were neither able to pay their workers nor deliver services (Lolojih, 2008).

Public Service Management Programme (PSMP)

The Public Service Management Programme (PSMP) was launched in August 2005 with three components; one is the Public Sector Management (PSM) Component (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). In a bid to improve service delivery, PSM called for rightsizing, pay reform, service delivery improvement and payroll management and establishment control (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). Rightsizing under PSM aimed at limiting staffing to the MTEF ceiling. The failures of rightsizing have been adequately dealt with previously.

Pay reform tried to reverse the negative effects of restructuring and rightsizing on pay. The Government of the Republic of Zambia intended to improve real pay, which by 2000 had fallen by 85 to 90 per cent of 1975 values. This led to 91.5 per cent and 82.7 per cent of public sector employees expressing dissatisfaction with their salaries and benefits respectively (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). Pay reform, thus, called for unfreezing pay. Following initial freeze between 2005 and 2012, salaries were unfrozen in 2012, before being frozen again between 2014 and 2015 (Mwansa,

2015). Between 2012 and 2014, pay for public sector employment was increased by as much as 200 per cent for some employees (Mwansa, 2015). Unfortunately, the public sector wage bill ballooned to 11 per cent of GDP (as opposed to the recommended 8%), consuming 53 per cent of domestically generated revenue (World Bank, 2016). Financial resources needed for improving service delivery were instead wasted on wages.

Poor service delivery as identified earlier in this article renders the *Service Delivery Improvement* subcomponent of PSM redundant. On the other hand, under the *Payroll Management and Establishment Control* subcomponent, the government established the Payroll Management and Establishment Control (PMEC) System. The system, housed under the Public Service Management Division (PSMD) at Cabinet Office led to the implementation of a centralised computerised system for controlling establishment and payroll management (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). Payroll Management and Establishment Control was to ensure that the payroll marched the establishment register. However, in reality, a deal to some positions missing in PMEC, the payroll did not match the establishment register (World Bank, 2016). Also, some positions were deliberately frozen in PMEC, preventing the hiring of key personnel. The PMEC system was also over-centralised, leading to chaos at the district level (World Bank, 2013). Payroll Management and Establishment Control add more shortages of personnel, worsening the impact of shortages created by restructuring and rightsizing. Mulimbika, de Waal and Goedegebuure (2015) found that while the Patents and Companies Registration Agency's establishment register showed 108 employees, the actual number was 86. The net result is inadequate personnel needed for the delivery of public services.

Explaining Public Sector Reforms' Contribution to Poor Service Delivery

When it comes to improving service delivery, the reforms went belly up. The underlying dynamics leading to this fiasco can be grouped into two categories: failure to achieve actual objectives of reform programmes as well as the inherent deficiencies of the reforms themselves.

Failure to Achieve Actual Objectives

Proponents, such as the World Bank and IMF, argue that the reform programmes had well-meaning objectives which, if properly implemented, would have enabled the improvement of public service delivery (World Bank, 2016). They insist that the reason why reforms did not lead to improvements in service delivery in the public sector was that the intended objectives, of perfectly designed programmes, had not been met. Cited reasons for failure to meet reform objectives included lack of

political will, limited financial resources, unpredictable macroeconomic environment, poor quality of supervision from the World Bank, corruption and unpreparedness for implementation (World Bank, 2016).

To this end, the World Bank has produced a myriad of reports showing that the programmes did not achieve the objectives they intended to achieve. The World Bank (2013), therefore, contends that, had the objectives of the programmes been met, service delivery would have improved. For instance, the overall objective of PSRP was *'to improve the quality, delivery, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness of the public services to the people of Zambia'* (the Republic of Zambia, 1993:2). However, according to the Republic of Zambia (2005), this objective was only partially achieved. Specifically, the restructuring component's objective of making the public sector less costly, but more efficient by reducing its size, streamlining it, was substantially achieved. That is, the size of the public sector was reduced by about 24.4 per cent, nearly equal to the 25 per cent target, and 19 ministries (out of 22) successfully restructured (the Republic of Zambia, 2005).

The human resources component had the objectives of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Service through the establishment of personnel management and data compiling systems. These were to be achieved by a result-oriented Organisational Performance Management System (OPMS) and a result-oriented personnel performance appraisal system (APECS) in the civil service (the Republic of Zambia, 1993). However, the World Bank (2006) states that the human resources component was barely achieved as OPMS and APECS were not operating as envisioned. Finally, the component on decentralisation, according to the Republic of Zambia (1993) had the objective of decentralising appropriate government functions and operations from central government to the provinces and districts. This was to be achieved through, among others, the creation of new structures at the local level. However, the World Bank, (2006) states that the component was not achieved. No new meaningful structures were created, provinces were maintained at nine and districts stagnated at around 70 and deconcentrated with neither financial nor decision making autonomy (Lolojih, 2008).

The overall objective of PSCAP, according to the World Bank (2000:3) was *'to make public service delivery processes more effective and efficient in order to facilitate economic growth and reduce poverty.'* However, the World Bank (2006) states that this objective was only partially achieved. Specifically, rightsizing was rated as partially achieved. The public service was restructured, payroll reformed, performance contracts introduced and public service social safety net programmes strengthened. However, staffing in the public service was only reduced by 17.5 per cent, falling short of the 20 per cent target. In addition, 14 of the 24 allowances

were maintained even though the programme recommended for their abolition (the Republic of Zambia, 2005).

The component of Policy and Public Service Management had the objective of improving policy formulation and performance monitoring so as to make the public sector more efficient and effective. This was to be achieved by activities such as creating a gender-sensitive public service, the introduction of a public service which prioritises results, human resource development, the introduction of HIV and AIDS prevention measures in the public service and policy capacity building across the entire public sector (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). However, the World Bank (2006) states that the component was rated as partially achieved. This is because the public sector is still male-dominated, human resources occupying high positions are unqualified in terms of academics and experience and, at over 12 per cent, HIV and AIDS have not been prevented (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016).

The objective of the financial management, accountability and transparency component was to allocate and spend public resources accountably within the MFEF framework (World Bank, 2000). However, the World Bank (2013:3) states that the achievement of the objective was modest since:

New regional offices were built to allow the Office of the Auditor General to execute its accountability role, but they have not yet been fully staffed with qualified personnel. Central ministries prepare 5-year strategic plans, but these are not yet linked to performance-based pay as required. Activity-based budgeting has been partially implemented. Committee rooms were built to facilitate parliamentary oversight, but it is not clear whether the parliamentary oversight has improved.

Judicial and Legal Reform had the objective of improving legislation and human capacity in the judiciary through staff training, legislative review, and infrastructure development. Shezongo-Macmillan, (2013) rates the component as partially achieved.

According to the World Bank (2005), between 1996 and 2005, only a total of 44 judges were trained. On infrastructure development, eight courthouses in four provinces were rehabilitated (The Zambian Economist, 2015). Permanent buildings for the High Court are in Livingstone, Lusaka, Kabwe, Ndola, and Kitwe rather than in all provinces. In addition, judicial reforms focused on higher level courts rather than throughout the judiciary as recommended (Shezongo-Macmillan, 2013).

Finally, according to the World Bank (2000:19) decentralisation had the objective of *preparing for the implementation of the GRZ's Decentralisation Policy*. However, decentralisation was rated as not having achieved the non-implementation of the Decentralisation Policy (World Bank 2006).

According to the Republic of Zambia report (2005:4), the main objective of PSM was *'to enhance the delivery of services for Zambian citizens and to create an appropriate institutional environment for reducing poverty.'* The World Bank (2013), rates PMS as barely achieved. For instance, rightsizing had the objective of ensuring that government ministries and institutions had staffing in line with the MTEF ceilings (Republic of Zambia, 2005). In this case, the World Bank (2016) rates the component as partially achieved. Medium Term Expenditure Framework is not stringently followed in Zambia. However, most appointments are in line with approved establishments and through P MEC; salaries and allowances are paid with a significant degree of accuracy, although challenges remain.

The pay reform component was rated as moderately unsatisfactory. While the pay policy was designed and adopted in 2009, the implementation has not taken off because of political sensitivities (World Bank, 2016). Payroll Management and Establishment Control (P MEC) were partially achieved. This is because while P MEC had been implemented throughout the civil service, the wage bill was not substantially reduced. Performance management was not achieved as no ministry linked its strategic plans to performance management. The provision of more effective human resources management was rated moderately satisfactory. While P MEC was introduced, it was not complemented with a functional APAS and senior officials were not placed on performance contracts (World Bank, 2016).

With the exception of privatisation, reform programmes did not completely achieve their intended objectives or outcomes. One can, therefore, fairly argue that perhaps proponents of the reform programmes are right in concluding that successful implementation of the programmes would have resulted in public sector reforms improving public services. However, as the section has eloquently shown, the majority of the programmes partially achieved their intended objectives or outcomes. The programmes still spectacularly failed to improve service delivery in the public sector. In fact, privatisation, which achieved intended objectives or outcomes, had the worst effect on service delivery. Perhaps the reason for this could be that the programmes themselves were inherently defective.

Deficiencies Internet in the Reform

Proponents of public sector reform programmes, as shown above, argue that had the programmes achieved the set objectives, service delivery would have been improved. However, this is doubtful. Even if the reform programmes had achieved their intended objectives, service delivery in the public sector would not have improved (World Bank, 2013). One might go a step further and argue that a number of objectives were achieved and it is actually the achievement of these objectives which accounted for the

majority of the negative impact on service delivery. In reality, public sector reforms in Zambia were an inherently flawed deal to bad objectives (World Bank, 2016).

A quick critical analysis of most objectives of the reform programmes shows that they could not adequately improve service delivery in the public sector (World Bank, 2013). For example, SAP and its operationalisation through PSRP and privatisation had a hidden agenda of reconfiguring Zambia's economy from socialism to capitalism at the expense of actually improving the delivery of public goods and services (Saasa, 1996). International capital, led by the United States of America and controlled by IMF and the World Bank, took advantage of Zambia's indebtedness from the economic crisis of the 1970s and required reforming the public sector as a condition for further borrowing. The gimmick used was to hoodwink Zambia into believing that privatisation would improve the delivery of public goods and services (Saasa, 1996).

For instance, the objective of privatisation was to transfer loss making parastatals into private hands, thus allowing the government to divest itself of parastatal investments. The government would then concentrate on public service delivery. In this regard, with over 250 parastatals privatised from a total of over 280 (close to 90%), privatisation was achieved (World Bank 2016). The World Bank once remarked that Zambia had one of the most successful privatisation programmes in the world (World Bank, 1995).

Clearly, if the goal was to promote the delivery of public goods and services efficiently and effectively, commercialisation of parastatals would have been the best choice (Tanjuk, 2008). According to the World Bank (2004: 9) commercialisation refers to 'the reorganisation of specified government departments and enterprises so that while they remain under government ownership and control, they may operate as profit-making commercial ventures.' Commercialisation enables public enterprises to become efficient and operate with the features of private businesses. An excellent example of successful commercialisation in Zambia is the Zambia Telecommunications Company Limited which through commercialisation is able to compete with Airtel and MTN, private telecommunications companies, with 15 per cent of the market share (Lusaka Voice, 2015). Curiously, the IMF and World Bank chose privatisation. Rather than making improvements, privatisation dismantled the public sector.

Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP), in turn, called for the realignment of the non-profit making portion of the public sector from service provision to serving the private interest. This was done by restructuring the non-profit making segment of the public sector by reducing it in size through retrenchments. It was argued that the public sector was ineffective and inefficient because, with 180,000 employees in 1993, it was bloated (Republic of Zambia, 1993). Yet the moment the size was reduced by the 25 per cent target to 136,000 in 1997, the result was shortages of

personnel in key sectors such as education and health (World Bank, 2000). Rather than reversing the trend, PSCAP called for further reduction to 112,259 in 2005 (World Bank, 2005). By 2004, there was a 17,000 shortfall in the health sector alone (the Republic of Zambia, 2005). Evidently, the solution was not to gut the public sector. Rather, the proper course of action was to maintain adequate numbers but reallocate to appropriate departments and ministries. The World Bank (2006) categorically states that retrenchments undertaken since 1997 had been negative. In fact, if privatisation and PSRP were not flawed, there would have been no need for PSCAP and PSM. Instead, the correct procedure would be to implement the same programmes better.

If truth be told, later reform programmes, PSCAP and PSM, did not stand a chance in succeeding to improve service delivery in the public sector. The Public Service Capacity Building Project and Public Sector Management were preoccupied with straining to solve the chaos generated by the shortcomings of privatisation and PSRP. For instance, PSCAP's and PSM's rightsizing which were aimed at righting the wrongs of the restructuring component of PSRP, were unsuccessful (Republic of Zambia). To worsen the situation, PSCAP and PSM had design flaws. The World Bank (2005) states that the programme had an unrealistic design.

PSCAP encompassed civil service, public finance, parliamentary, judicial and legal and decentralisation reforms. The inclusion of all of these types of reform in a single project funded and supervised by a single donor (except for one subcomponent) was overly ambitious and assumed a capacity in the borrower that did not exist.

The programme failed to adequately address the public service delivery processes. In addition, none of the programmes' five components directly dealt with achieving the main objective of facilitating economic growth and poverty reduction. Moreover, there were far too many subcomponents and the programme was excessively complex. The complexity of the programme required a sufficient time frame for implementation, longer than was allowed under the project design. In the meantime, the political and bureaucratic environment kept changing (World Bank, 2005).

As for PSM, the World Bank (2016) argues that the relevance of design was rated as modest because it was not overly relevant to Zambia's circumstances and development priorities. The programme was also too complex with too many subcomponents. Public Sector Management Program (PSMP) had three components; PEMFA, PSM, and Supporting Retrenchments (World Bank, 2016). Each of these components had their own subcomponents with PSM alone having four. This led to a number of shortcomings during implementation. To make matters worse, none of the four subcomponents of PSM had objectives directly addressing improvement in service delivery. The World Bank (2016:14) adds that:

While project design was based on sound analytical underpinnings, the project was made excessively complex by attempting to address too many system ailments without regard to prioritisation or client capacity. Similarly, comprehensive civil service reform may have been overly ambitious and complex and the project may have been more effective in focusing only on payroll management and establishment control. Complexity together with complicated coordination mechanisms turned out to be a critical implementation constraint.

Mulimbika, de Waal and Goedegebuure (2015) found a weak positive relationship between service reforms in Zambia and quality of service delivery in Patent and Companies Registration Agency (PACRA) and the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA). Although PACRA and ZDA adequately implemented the reforms, the quality of service did not improve.

Conclusion

Any reform worth its salt should be tailored towards improving the public sector's ability to deliver public goods and services that are adequate and of high quality in an effective and efficient manner. Zambia's reforms lamentably failed to do this. Proponents advance the argument that this failure was the result of an inability to accomplish the goals of otherwise ideal reform programmes. However, to conclude that public sector reforms failed to improve service delivery because they were not successfully implemented is a great cope out. The reality is that public sector reform programmes in Zambia were inherently defective and could not improve service delivery, successfully implemented or not. This is because earlier reforms under SAP, PSRP and Privatisation had the unfortunate hidden goal of promoting and strengthening the private sector at the expense of service delivery. As a consequence, latter reforms were aimed at minimising the fallout from promoting the private sector. Unfortunately, none of them called for the reversal of earlier reforms.

References

- Ayee, J.R.A. (2008), *Reforming the African Public Sector: Retrospect and Prospects*. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- British Broadcasting Corporation (2003), *Zambia to Re-Think Privatisation*. London: BBC. Available on <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/2749219.stm> (Accessed: 25 February 2017).
- Central Intelligence Agency (2016), *The World Fact Book: HIV/AIDS Adult Prevalence Rate*. Virginia: Central Intelligence Agency.

- Central Statistical Office (2015), *2014 Zambia Labour Force Survey Report*. Lusaka: Central Statistical Office.
- Central Statistical Office (2016), *Administrative Divisions: Provinces and Districts*. Lusaka: Central Statistical Office.
- Dunsire, A. and Hood C.C. (1989), *Cut Back Management in Public Bureaucracies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fundanga, C.M. and Mwaba, A. (1997), *Privatisation of Public Enterprises in Zambia: An Evaluation of the Policies, Procedures and Experiences*. Economic Research Papers No 35. African Development Bank.
- Guido, B. and Yolande, J. (2000), 'Public Sector Reform Revisited in the Context of Globalisation.' Paper Presented at Seminar on Public Administration Reform in Asia, Beijing, 15 July, 2000.
- Guta, A.J. (2012), *Characteristics of Public Sector Management*. Annals of the University of Petroşani, Economics, 12(4): 95-102
- Heeks, R. (1998), *Information Systems and Public Sector Accountability*. Working Paper Series, Paper No.1. Institute for Development Policy and Management. Manchester: University of Manchester.
- International Monetary Fund, (2015), *World Economic Outlook Database*. New York: International Monetary Fund.
- Kanu, I.A. (2014), 'Kenneth Kaunda and the Quest for an African Humanist Philosophy.' Research Paper. *African Journal of Social Sciences* 3(8): 375-377.
- Lolajih, P.K. (2008), *The Role of Local Communities in Decentralization*. EAZ – Public Discussion. Lusaka: EAZ.
- Lusaka Voice, (2015), MTN Zambia is the Country's Largest Mobile Operator – ZICTA Accessed from <http://lusakavoice.com/2015/03/02/mtn-zambia-is-the-countrys-largest-mobile-operator-zicta/> (Accessed 22 May 2017).
- Mafuleka, W.N. (2005), 'Capacity for Public Policy-Making: The Role of the Legislature In Zambia.' Conference Paper. African Association for Public Administration and Management 27th AAPAM. Livingstone, 5–9 December.
- Mulimbika, T., de Waal, A. and Goedegebuure, R. (2015), 'Reforms in Public Sector Management: A Relevant Issue for the Citizens of Zambia?' *African Journal of Management Research Vol 23*, No. 1
- Mwansa, B. (2015), *Politics of Wage Freeze and the Truth about the 2015 Budget*. Available: <https://www.lusakatimes.com/2015/10/27/politics-wage-freeze-truth-2015-budget/> (Accessed 1 April 2017).
- Mwinga, L.M. (2003), *The Effects of Privatization in Zambia: The Case of Five Kitwe Based Companies*. Masters Dissertation. Kitwe: Copperbelt University.
- Pollitt, C. and Bouckaert, G. (2011), *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis - New Public Management, Governance, and the Neo-Weberian State*, (3rd ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Prud'homme, R. (1995), 'The Dangers of Decentralisation.' The World Bank Research Observer, Vol. 10 (2), pp. 201-220. The World Bank: Washington, D.C.
- Republic of Zambia (1993), *The Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP)*. Lusaka: Cabinet Office.
- Republic of Zambia (1996), *The Privatisation Act: Chapter 386 of the Laws of Zambia*. Lusaka: Government Printer.
- Republic of Zambia (2005), *Public Service Management Component: Final*. Lusaka: Cabinet Office.
- Republic of Zambia (2005), *Public Service Management Component: Final*. Lusaka: Cabinet Office.
- Republic of Zambia (2015), *Report of the Auditor General on the Accounts for the Financial Year Ended 31st December 2014*. Lusaka: Office of the Auditor General.
- Saasa, O.S. (1996), 'Policy Reforms and Structural Adjustment in Zambia: The Case of Agriculture and Trade. *Regional Trade Agenda Series*.' Technical Paper No. 35. Washington, D.C: AFR/SD and REDSO/ESA.
- Schacter, M. (2000), *Public Sector Reform in Developing Countries: Issues, Lessons and Future Directions*. Ottawa Policy Branch Canadian International Development Agency.
- Shezongo-Macmillan, J. (2013), *Zambia Justice Sector and the Rule of Law*. A Review by AfriMAP and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa. New York: Open Society Foundations.
- Tanjuk, K. (2008), *The Asia Pacific Regional Seminar on Commercialisation of Public Enterprises*. Istami: Manila.
- Todaro, M.P. and Smith, S.C. (2003), *Economic Development* (8thed.) New Delhi: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Transparency International (2016), *Global Corruption Report*. Berlin: Transparency International.
- United Nations Statistical Office (1968), *A System of National Accounts*, Series F, No. 2, Rev. 3, United Nations, New York, 1968. See Chapter IX, paragraph 9.47 ff.
- United Nations (1979), *UN. Draft Manual on Public Sector Statistics*. ST/ESA/STAT. S5/Rev. 1, February 1979.
- United Nations (2004), *Republic of Zambia: Public Administration Country Profile*. DESA.
- World Bank. (1995). *Privatisation Principles and Practices*. Washington, D.C: World Bank.
- World Bank (2000), *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Credit in the Amount of US\$28 Million Equivalent to the Republic of Zambia for the First Phase of the Public Service Capacity Building Program*. Report No: 19239ZA. Washington D.C: World Bank.

- World Bank (2004), *World Bank Atlas: Measuring Development*, (36thed.) World Bank: Washington, D.C.
- World Bank (2005), *Implementation Completion Report: Zambia Public Service Capacity Building Project*. Report No: 34450. Washington, D.C: World Bank.
- World Bank (2006), *Zambia: Public Service Capacity Building Project (PSCAP)*. Report No. ICRR12372. Washington, D.C: World Bank.
- World Bank (2013), *Public Service Reform Program. Implementation Completion and Results Report*. Report No: ICR2484. Washington, D.C: World Bank.
- World Bank (2016), *Zambia: Public Sector Management Program Support Project. Project Performance Assessment Report*. Report No. 106280. Washington D.C: World Bank:
- Zambia Development Agency (2010), *Zambia Privatisation Status Report*. Lusaka: Zambia Development Agency.
- Zambian Economist (2015), *Judicial Reforms in the Justice System in Zambia*. Lusaka: Zambian Economist.