Civil service reform and public service delivery in Somaliland

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of the study was to investigate the status of civil service reform, the institutional framework, the challenges and contributions of civil service reform, and the impact of public service delivery in Somaliland. The study analysed the institutional structure and functions of the civil service, human resource management practices, the effectiveness of civil service reform, and recommendations for improvement of the country’s public service delivery. A descriptive survey method was employed to conduct the research, involving the use of questionnaires and in-depth interviews with key informants. The assessment of civil servants and directors used stratified random sampling, while the key informants adopted purposive sampling. The sample sizes for civil servants and key informants were 100 and 10, respectively. Primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, and secondary data was gathered through a thematic review of literature on civil service reform and public service delivery. Qualitative data were analysed using the thematic method, while quantitative data was analysed using descriptive frequencies with the aid of the Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study's findings indicated that the proper institutional framework and mechanisms for civil service reform are in place, but research has revealed some gaps in policies and laws, including pension policy, promotion, pay and grade legal frameworks. The main challenges of civil service reform are institutional weakness and resistance to change among employees and leaders, qualifications mismatch which need review and realignment to accelerate reform, overstaffing, absence of job descriptions, performance evaluation, and limited budgeted service delivery plans. Service delivery is not the main priority of the current civil service reform, which is its biggest weakness. The research revealed that the majority of civil servants encountered some form of discrimination in promotion, training opportunities, and benefits. The civil servants had doubts about the openness and fairness of hiring and selection process. The absence of motivation and job descriptions among most government employees makes it difficult to measure the performance of civil servants, which affects the provision of quality service delivery in the public sector. The research recommended the adoption of meritocracy, service user feedback assessment, job descriptions for all staff, linking capacity-building training on service delivery, sound regular performance evaluation for civil servants, e-government platforms, and the development and implementation of relevant policies and laws to facilitate the creation of effective systems.

Keywords: Civil Service Reform, Public Reform, Service Delivery, Performance.
1 INTRODUCTION

The Somaliland Civil Service Commission was founded in 1993 with the aim of improving effective public human resource management and creating a merit-based system for the success of the Somaliland civil service. It also leads reforms in the decentralization process of Somaliland and supervises the hiring of civil servants. As reported by the 2012 capacity assessment of the Somaliland Civil Service Commission, despite all the past initiatives and endless efforts to revitalise and reform the civil service, there is little indication that its performance is improving. The civil service remains amorphous, demoralized, and lacking in the right culture, professionalism, and capacity to deliver on its mandate. The Somaliland Civil Service may currently have more personnel than it requires, but a chronic shortage of those personnel is required if the country is to meet its citizens' expectations and aspirations.

Civil service reform is a critical aspect of governance and public administration, particularly in countries like Somaliland, where institutional strengthening is essential for effective public service delivery. This study aims to investigate various aspects of civil service reform and its impact on public service delivery in Somaliland. Specifically, the research focuses on the institutional framework, the roles of civil service institutions, the effects of civil service reform on public service delivery, human resource management practices, the challenges encountered in reform efforts, and potential solutions to address these challenges. Through this study, insights will be provided to enhance the effectiveness of the civil service and improve public service delivery in Somaliland.

This study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on civil service reform and public service delivery in Somaliland. By examining the institutional framework, roles, and challenges of civil service institutions, as well as the effects of reform efforts on service delivery, this research aims to provide valuable insights for policy makers, practitioners, and researchers interested in enhancing governance effectiveness and citizen satisfaction in Somaliland. Contemporary governments are expected to meet citizens' requirements and become more entrepreneurial; as a result, a knowledgeable and capable civil service is a tool for the government to operate efficiently and keep its commitments. To provide effective and efficient services to the public, decent jobs in the public sector are a must. Since a strong civil service may spur economic growth, it is vital to establish civil service mechanisms and processes that are ethical, open, and devoid of corruption, nepotism, and favouritism in order to enhance the delivery of public services.
2 METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey method was employed in the research, entailing the use of questionnaires and in-depth interviews with key informants. The departmental directors and government employees were evaluated using stratified random sampling, while the key informants were evaluated using purposive sampling. The sample sizes for the public servants and key informant interviews were 100 and 10, respectively. The study employed semi-structured interviews and questionnaires to collect primary data, while a thematic evaluation of the literature on civil service reform and public service delivery was used to collect secondary data. Thematic analysis was used to examine the qualitative data, while the SPSS was employed to assess the quantitative data using descriptive frequencies.

In order to conduct the study, assess the views of public sector employees, and management officials, and investigate the contributions, challenges, and methods of executing civil service reform programs in the delivery of services, a descriptive survey methodology was employed. The researcher consults primary and secondary sources to get relevant data for characterizing and evaluating the opportunities and challenges of integrating civil service reform into the provision of services. The research used questionnaires and interviews as data gathering procedures in order to obtain pertinent data on public sector reform and service delivery, particularly civil service reform. The key research tools used to collect primary data from the civil service commission, the civil service institute, the civil service reform team, and government employees were questionnaires and interviews.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

This part reviewed and covered the available literature on public sector reforms, specifically the civil service reform agenda, the challenges encountered during the reform, and the contribution of civil service reform in restructuring and improvement to the delivery of key services to the community. New Public Management (NPM) theory was highly applicable to the research on civil service reform and public service delivery in Somaliland, as it provides a framework for improving administrative efficiency, accountability, and service quality within the public sector.

3.1 NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT THEORY

Bilous and Tyshchuk indicated the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm was created in the 1970s as a way to improve management techniques in the public sector by incorporating business practices. NPM is a theory of public management that has shaped many of the tools used in the public
sector to this day. Gruening (2001) pointed out that the NPM developed a series of administrative principles aimed at enhancing civil service and public service delivery. These theories, which included specific functions like objectives, targets, performance management, and accountability, drew their inspiration from a variety of theoretical stances, including public-choice theory, management theory, classical and neo-classical public administration, and principal-agent theory.

According to Polidano (1999), the theory of "New Public Management" (NPM) was considered to inspire the implementation of several changes to improve the provision of public services. The fundamental essence of NPM may be characterised by new developments in public administration that move some valuable perspectives and values from the private sector approach to the public sector in order to improve service delivery. These include productivity, efficiency, flexibility, responsiveness, competitiveness, results-oriented management, more clear and observable levels of success, more active monitoring, and accountability based on preset production metrics. The success and failure stories, on the other hand, show that the results of making changes to improve service quality depend on the overall situation and, to a large extent, on local circumstances rather than on general national traits.

The New Public Management (NPM) theory and practise transformed the way government institutions functioned and changed the Weberian bureaucratic system of public administration, which characterised poor service delivery in the public sector. The NPM, as a more entrepreneurial management paradigm of public administration institutions finds innovative and new ways of doing public service delivery that are efficient and effective. According to Nasery, New Public Management (NPM), which opposes Weber's public administration for its reliance on bureaucracy and rigid laws, advocates greater autonomy in the civil service, recommending that the civil service be more result-oriented and not exclusively bound by law (Nasery, 2019, p. 21).

According to Pollitt (2003), the New Public Management (NPM), which gained popularity in the 1990s, advocates a redefinition of the size, scope, and role of the state in society and its relationship with the market, as well as reforms to improve the public bureaucracy's competence. It promotes making public service delivery effective and efficient. As a result, it has become a core element of policy efforts to reshape and enhance the efficiency of public institutions in terms of delivering public services to sustainable economies. "New Public Management" is a concept related to the improvement of the public sector and consists of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organisations with the objective of getting them (in some sense) to run better.

Reforms of the New Public Management kind have been and are being introduced to African civil services because these services are seen as unprofessional, frequently lacking the capacity to solve their new difficult problems; too bloated in size in comparison to their outputs; suffering from dysfunctional rigidity; lacking in their performance assessment; and instead of encouraging, defending, and representing...
the public interest, they are concerned with their own laws and practices; and, in general, being too corrupt and intent on preserving their own patrimonial and territorial interests (Hope, 2001, p. 10).

3.2 PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

Most public-sector organizations, which are gradually replacing their traditional bureaucratic structure, are now becoming more flexible and proactive in handling social issues. This paves the way for the productive transformation of management systems from a routine-based approach to a more content-specific approach where problems are addressed efficiently and timely, free of all the needless delays common in the approval process of public organizations. The era of devising "one-size-fits-all" approaches to issues is over, and managers of the public sector have a greater role to play in this period of organisational changes. They are expected to deal with problems creatively and, most critically, to draw on opportunities in the present. (Denhardt 2009, p. 368–369)

Chosdhury and Shil (2017) cited Aulich (2001), which divided public sector management models into three categories: traditional administrative state, managerialist state, and market state. The first model emphasises the conventional theory of public administration, which is characterised by procedure, inputs, hierarchy, and the utilisation of the public sector to deliver services. The focus of management in the second model is on results and outputs rather than processes and inputs, and management is acknowledged as a key operational concept. The third model emphasises the value of competition, management's emphasis on results, and the primacy of the private sector. The idea of the market state has gained significant traction recently, and occasionally this kind of state, also known as an enabling state, sees its function expanded to include an enabling organization. It provides services through a variety of public and private organisations that have been given contracts through some sort of market mechanism.

Public sector reform is targeted to improve the work of public institutions to reach government priorities and goals. The focus of administrative reform is to change the structure of government institutions through reorganisation as well as the attitudes and behaviours of civil servants. Therefore, it may be argued that the spectrum of reform initiatives involves modifying the government’s organisational structures, including their divisions, their working practises and procedures, and their managers' and organisational staff's actions and attitudes. Reform could be applied broadly or selectively across the public sector as a whole (Quah, 1992, p. 121).
3.3 CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

As noted by Urbanovic (2017), the general definition of the civil service includes civil servants and their operations when carrying out their assigned duties and making policy decisions. In other words, it is a group of civil servants carrying out the duties entrusted to a public administration. The civil service encompasses a broad and complex range of public administration problems, processes, and systems related to personnel management, agencies, and relationships. This covers both technical and political issues relevant to the operation of government machinery and the provision of both national and local public services and goods. (UNDP, 2018, p. 3)

There is a paradigm shift from the traditional roles of bureaucratic, hierarchical, and rigid control of states towards result-based management, flexibility, and citizens as customers of the public services model. The success of culture change in the civil service is one of the most important factors in the reform of how governments function. Extensive care and attentiveness are required to trust and implement tried-and-tested solutions coupled with ingenuity, innovation, and new methods. Merit, capacity, and quality should be more important than mere seniority. Nevertheless, any external reform initiative should take into account the economic, social, cultural, constitutional, and political context of the state in which it is introduced. Reforms that have emerged in some developed countries and increased transparency in their civil service cannot be replicated elsewhere unless local social and political circumstances are taken into account. (Public Service Reforms: Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities; Horizontal Papers, 2013, p. 4)

To grasp what the civil service entails, Olowu offers three ways it can be thought of. One can be conceived as a structure of jobs based on the size of the civil service and the rules of jobs in the civil service, as these relate to issues such as recruitment, selection, work appraisal, training and development, performance evaluation, and the function and composition of the senior civil service compared with the rest of the service. Second, it can be conceived as an instrument of governance, an institution that serves as a bridge between the state and specific administrative bodies. Third, it is possible to define the civil service in terms of its role in the policy process. He concludes that the civil service derives its importance from the above-mentioned social and economic roles as bodies of employment, governance, and policy making (Olowu, 1999, p. 2–3).

The conventional civil service was a closed, vertically integrated, and hierarchical organization, as Smalskys and Urbanovic (2017) noted. This conservative system was built on a foundation of service and allegiance to the immediate superiors, the central state institutions, and only thereafter to the citizens who used the administrative services. This public service model did not satisfy contemporary demands as Western democracies liberalised and globalisation got under way. The civil service has to be reformed in order to become more efficient, goal-driven, and transparent. (Civil Service Systems; Smalskys;
Urbanovic, 2017, p. 5). Referring to Adomonis (2009), for the effective establishment of the civil service, defined criteria must be met, including the strong distinction between the public and private spheres, the depoliticization of the civil service, the establishment of individual accountability, clearly defined duties and rights, the standard of pay and job security, and merit-based promotions and recruitment. According to Repucci (2012), one of the critical tasks and great challenges for governments and stakeholders is civil service reform; it concerns the existence and purpose of government and is therefore a highly susceptible and protected area. The civil service is critical to the state's ability to function; it either supports or undermines the entire government structure. It also supports many other forms of change. The transformation of the civil service has mostly failed to date.

As stated in Mthethwe (2001), citing Olowu (1991), in several sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, the ineffectiveness of the civil service undermines nearly any development initiative as well as basic public administration. So, reforms of the civil service are an important component of administrative reforms. One may describe the three approaches to civil service reform as follows: The first approach describes it as an employment structure, concentrating on the scale of the civil service and civil service employment rules (e.g., recruiting, selection, work appraisal, training, and development, etc.). Second, the civil service can be viewed as an instrument of governance, with structures that serve as a bridge between the state and particular administrative bodies. Finally, the civil service is described as policy authorizers, implementers, fixers, payers, suppliers, arrangers, and customers in terms of its role in the policy process. (Olowu, 1991, p. 3).

Ruppica divided civil service reform into three phases. Approximately in the 1980s, donors funded different facets of institutional improvement as they started to understand the vital role of the civil service in policy reform. After the fall of Communism and the failure of many of the previous phase's assistance programmes, the 1990s saw an increasing consensus that the secret to reforming the civil service was reducing the state's position. That process has brought unexpected consequences, and donors have concentrated since the late 1990s on supporting transparent institutions whose members recognise and embrace the changes they are introducing. (Ruppica, 2012, p. 3)

As reported by Scott (2009), the World Bank’s Independent Evaluation Group acknowledged that civil service reform was largely considered a failed intervention. The evaluation divided the history of civil service reform into three phases. The first move in the 1980s related to the downsizing of government employees and the restructuring of central government organs. Public management reform strategies, such as performance evaluation, decentralization, and increased accountability in the public sector system, had an impact on the second move at the beginning of the 1990s. The third move is based primarily on enhancing civil service efficiency and motivation, improving recruitment and promotion processes, and eventually improving service delivery. In addition, Scott (2011, p. 14) notes that there is an increased...
emphasis on outcomes for most post-2000 civil service changes that are related to quality service delivery to promote long-term growth and poverty reduction.

In line with Tenente (2003), the main objectives of public service reform are to improve citizen services and the executive's ability to carry out essential governmental functions while also increasing the efficacy and performance of civil servants. The majority of institution-building plans are comprehensive, emphasising the construction of strategic human resources management and overall quality management methodologies and practices as well as the development of senior staff members' strong leadership capabilities. As reported by the Ethiopian Civil Service Transformation Research Center (2012), the key goal of civil service reform is to address the incompetent and deep-rooted, age-old, and less progress paradigm that tightly controls and regulates the country's overall civil service system and creates an atmosphere that hinders the proper implementation of the country's policies and programs. The reform targeted changing old practises of autocratic style, unethical conduct, disorganization, and parasitic servants into a democratic management style, a result-oriented approach, customer-focused employees, and ethical and professional employees with appropriate systems and structures to deliver efficient and effective public service.

Mtoba (2006) points out that the measures and mechanisms of civil service reforms are guided by the following objectives:

- conduct a functional review of government systems to identify essential and non-essential functions, outsource non-core functions, and redesign structures;
- downsize and match government positions to the restructured institutions with job security, competitive pay, and benefits;
- improve the quality, capability, productivity, and performance of civil servants through hiring processes, quality training and grading systems, discipline, and promotional mechanisms;
- delegation of centralised authority to local levels through decentralization.

The expectation of these targets was focused on the dream of providing reduced staff, attractive remuneration, and enhanced public service. The innovative strategies included downsizing, decentralization, autonomous agency development, and retrenchment execution; improving administrative processes through staff management, planning and budgetary systems, and information system management; and extensive processes are inferred throughout the field of recruiting to boost efficiency and results throughout the delivery of public services (Mtoba, 2006, p. 18-19).
3.4 PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVER

In line with Fox and Meyer (1995, p. 118), service delivery is defined as the provision of services to community members and the resulting benefits to citizens. The delivery of services applies to both the provision of tangible public goods and intangible resources. Public service is provided to citizens through government institutions and organizations, parastatals, private organizations, non-profit organizations, or individual service providers. Wenene (2016:23) noted that "the term public service, therefore, has three distinct meanings: it is a service that is provided, it is a structure, and it encompasses public servants who work in the public service.

Abe and Monisola (2014) argue that the provision of services is a central feature of the relationship between government and citizens, and the government is required to offer quality services to its people. It provided metrics for evaluating service delivery to people, such as low inflation, better education, quality health care at affordable rates, and the availability of clean water and good infrastructure, such as roads to transport local productions between countries. According to the South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI), 2003: 5, noted that public service delivery requires structured strategies to meet the different demands for services by conducting purposeful operations with the best possible use of resources to provide effective, efficient, and competitive service, resulting in tangible and reasonable benefits for consumers.

3.5 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

In today's public sector, the successful handling of human capital is a vital feature. In the public sector, human resource management has been characterised by the establishment of systems and processes that are more flexible, the reduction of highly centralised agencies, the consistency of rules across the service, and greater responsibility for line managers and superiors in employee management under flatter management systems of decentralization. (Brown, 2004, p. 307).

In pursing civil service institutions and Civil Service Reform, Human Resource Management is an umbrella concept that includes specific human resource practises such as staffing, selection, evaluation, and promotion, as well as relevant human resource policies that guide and partially limit the development of specific practises and overarching philosophies of human resources that define the principles that inform institutions (Jackson; Schuler, 1995).

The first logical step in maintaining a working civil service with the capacity to deliver essential public services effectively and efficiently is to attract and hire a civil service workforce with the right qualifications at the right time in their careers. However, core frictions and obstacles remain in the
categorization, attraction, and recruitment of a fully integrated workforce in the civil service (International Growth Center (IGC), 2019, p. 2).

In order to achieve organisational goals, recruiting is a series of practises to attract skilled and qualified job applicants. Employee recruiting policies, regulations, and guidelines should be implemented in this regard, and recruitment should be the primary method for staffing work positions in accordance with human resource management strategies (Redman and Wilkinson, 2001). Training is described by Gordon (1992) as the organised and structured adjustment of behaviour through learning experiences, activities, and programmes that lead participants to achieve the levels of knowledge, skills, competencies, and abilities to effectively perform their work.

Redman and Wilkinson (2001) noted effective performance evaluation clarifies and defines expectations, identifies training and development needs, plans success, provides career consultation, improves individual and organisational performance, facilitates communication and participation, allocates monetary rewards, determines promotion, and motivates and controls public institutions’ human resources. Performance management is increasingly gaining momentum in the public sector. It is a way to manage public resources in a strategic way, with the goal of making public services as efficient and effective as possible. This approach has become a statutory performance measure to deliver quality services in a dynamic and diverse public sector environment. (Somaliland Civil Service Commission strategic plan, 2020, p. 27)

Reward management is concerned with formulating and enforcing strategies and policies aimed at equally, equitably, and regularly rewarding individuals in line with their contribution to the organisation and thereby helping the organisation achieve its strategic objectives (Armstrong, 2007:623). Organizational incentive programmes are procedures, policies, and methods that empower people to accomplish strategic objectives and increase organisational efficiency and effectiveness. According to Bratton and Gold (2007, p. 360), all financial, non-financial, and psychological benefits that a company provides to its staff in exchange for the work they do are referred to as “rewards”.

3.6 SOMALILAND CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

Civil service reform in Somaliland has been shaped by the country's history of state building, governance challenges, and political transitions. Following the civil war and collapse of the Somali Republic, Somaliland declared its independence in 1991, Somaliland embarked on a path of institutional reconstruction, including efforts to reform the civil service. Initial reform efforts focused on establishing basic administrative structures, rebuilding government institutions, and restoring public services.
However, the legacy of state fragmentation, clan politics, corruption, and institutional weaknesses posed significant challenges to reform efforts.

As noted by the 2012 Somaliland Civil Service Commission capability assessment, despite all of the previous initiatives and ceaseless efforts to revitalize and reform the civil service, there is little sign that its performance is becoming better. The civil service is still demoralized, amorphous, and lacks the necessary professionalism, culture, and ability to carry out its mission. The Somaliland Civil Service may presently have more employees than it needs, but if the nation is to live up to the expectations and aspirations of its people, there must be a persistent shortage of those employees.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Civil service reform is a pressing issue in Somaliland, where effective governance and service delivery are essential for socioeconomic development. While significant progress has been made in reform efforts, challenges persist, hindering the delivery of quality public services. This finding, and discussion provides an analysis of civil service reform, analysing its implications for public service delivery and offering insights for policy makers and practitioners.

4.2 THE CIVIL SERVICE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND FUNCTIONS

In agreement with the strategic plan of the civil service commission 2020, the autonomous Civil Service Commission of Somaliland (CSC) was established in 1993 and derives its mandate from Article 113 of the Constitution of Somaliland, with the aim of improving effective public human resource management and creating a merit-based system for the success of the civil service. It also leads reforms in the decentralization process of Somaliland and supervises the hiring of civil servants. The amended Civil Service Law 2019 provides for the administration and control of the civil service, the responsibilities of the CSC include, discipline, structure, powers, roles, appointment, and dismissal of civil servants, and all ancillary and incidental matters concerning the civil service. In line with the Constitution, the mandate of the CSC includes policy development, recruitment, promotion, demotion, and termination of civil servants; competitive appraisal evaluation and conduct functional examination of government departments, ministries, and agencies; and advice to the President on all matters relating to public service.
As per MOPND Somaliland in Figures 2023, the overall number of civil service employees in 2022 was 25,510, broken down into four grades: A, B, C, and D. There are 18,112 male employees and 7,398 female employees. The highest pay grade is A for both senior staff and new university graduates. In terms of the country's acute unemployment rate, Table 1 of civil servant employment demonstrates a consistent annual increase in government workforce. However, it contradicts the agenda of downsizing aim of civil service reform.

The annual growth in Somaliland's civil service workforce is seen in figure 1. The total number of civil service employees has increased consistently from 14,850 in 2018 to 25,510 in 2022. Both genders have experienced growth in employment within the Somaliland civil service sector.

The research has indicated that the Somaliland government has adequate institutional framework for managing the civil service, which includes, civil service commission, civil service institute, steering committees for civil service reform and World Bank financed civil service reform project. They make up the institutional framework of the civil service mechanism in Somaliland to create modern civil servants but the main challenges render on policy implementation.
The Somaliland Civil Service Commission strategic plan 2020, indicated that civil servants’ capacity and career development are about the development of individual competencies, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences required by staff, and leaders to effectively perform their defined roles and responsibilities as defined by their job descriptions. It also focuses on identifying the needs, aspirations, and career opportunities within an organisation and the implementation of human resources development programs to support the respective career planning and professional development of a person in accordance with the organization's needs and the individual's performance, potential, and preferences.

4.3 THE EFFECT OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORM ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

In regard to the interviews, the reform focuses on four main areas: building capacity; functional review, including restructuring of ministries and agencies; and developing administrative policies and procedures for staff, such as leave, recruitment, and performance appraisal policies. The filling system, pay and grade, human resource information system, law and policy development and modifications, review structures, capacity building, and employee rewards are among the current civil service reform goals. 18 ministries underwent restructuring and hired qualified individuals for critical positions where skill gaps were identified.

The research revealed that the majority of civil servants 60 percent encountered some form of discrimination in promotion, training opportunities, and benefits. The civil servants had doubts about the openness and fairness of hiring and selection process. The absence of motivation and job descriptions among most government employees makes it difficult to measure the performance of civil servants, which affects the provision of quality service delivery in the public sector. The lack of motivation, job descriptions, and performance measurement mechanisms directly impacts the provision of quality service delivery in the public sector. When civil servants are unclear about their roles, feel discriminated against, and lack motivation, it's likely to affect their productivity and ultimately the quality of services they provide to the public.

Figure 2. Civil servants experienced discrimination

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<th>Civil servants experienced discrimination</th>
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<td>40; 40%</td>
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Source: Author
The public notice of job opportunities and the appointment of administrative positions are crucial components of transparent, competitive hiring process for civil service employees. But only recently has the government of Somaliland started publicizing few of the job vacancies. Although, few of the available positions are disclosed to the public, the study found that hiring and selection procedures is mainly based on nepotism, tribalism and patronage rather than competence. A large number of government employees reported taking part in capacity-building trainings, which is good for the advancement of their knowledge and skills. In addition, there was disagreement among the participants regarding the optimal approach to selecting training—which ought to be predicated on a thorough assessment of training needs and fair access to training opportunities—they did concur that training enhanced their performance in their roles as service providers.

One of the objectives of the study was to ascertain how civil service reform affected civil servant performance evaluation. The research found no performance evaluation mechanism with consequences related to employee performance results, such as rewards or disciplinary actions. However, the majority of respondents stated that there is no performance evaluation in government institutions but they understood performance evaluation well, and agreed that it is important for improving work performance. When asked whether there is a strong correlation between outcome and reward in their offices and whether the system of rewards is performance-based, respondents gave disagree answers. However, they agreed when asked whether the current wage attracts the best candidates for the various public sector positions because of the high unemployment rate among youth in the country.

In agreement with discussions of the key informants, some of the challenges of civil service reform include weak government institutions, resistance of employees and leaders to restructuring and downsizing, project-based reform with a limited timeframe, increased government recruitment which contradicts downsizing agenda of the reform, and mismatches between positions and qualifications of civil servants. In addition, regular changes of departmental directors by the appointed ministries, poor compensation for government employees, and the current salary structure do not support service delivery improvement. In addition, the civil service reform agenda is not mainly tailored to improve public service delivery.

4.4 THE CHALLENGES, AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF REFORM TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

As reported by the 2012 capacity assessment of the Somaliland Civil Service Commission, despite all the past initiatives and endless efforts to revitalise and reform the civil service, there is little indication that its performance is improving. The civil service remains amorphous, demoralized, and lacking in the right culture, professionalism, and capacity to deliver on its mandate. The Somaliland civil service may
currently have more personnel than it requires, but a chronic shortage of those personnel is required if the country is to meet its citizens' expectations and aspirations.

As stated in the key informant interviews, the constraints of civil service reform include: weak institutions; civil servants and leaders' resistance to change due to fear of restructuring; a preference for their traditional structures and positions to avoid losing their current positions; top-down project based reform; government priorities on job creation that contradict long-term downsizing agenda of civil service reform; and qualification mismatch. The civil service reform is typically donor-driven projects that fade away once the project intervention period ends, but there is a genuine need for state-led public service reform with a long-term agenda and commitment to improving citizens' lives. The major challenges of the Somaliland civil service include unskilled staff, low productivity, poor leadership, a low remuneration system, the absence of clear functions and job descriptions, a lack of focus on customer needs, a lack of creativity and entrepreneurship among government employees. Lack of established service standards, absence of commitment, goal-oriented accountability, performance evaluations, and clear and consistent guidelines and policies to manage human resources in government institutions have created a disorganised work environment with limited motivation to deliver quality work in public institutions. There is no meritocracy where employees are recruited, selected, reviewed, and promoted based on their performance and skills. The civil service reform in Somaliland is in a nascent stage and focuses on the registration of civil servants, the provision of ID cards, institutional functional review, and the policy development process. The service delivery of the public sector is weak, incompetent, and lacking in accountability; it needs transformation to meet global standards.

The main civil service reform progress includes development of civil service administrative policies, procedures, functional reviews and restructuring of ministries; 18 ministries were restructured and seconded recruited qualified personnel to key positions where skill gaps identified. The civil service reform project initiated a pilot performance measurement system in late 2020.

As per the interviews, public sector service delivery needs to be improved, there is discontent with the way public services are delivered, and the majority of employee lack job descriptions that serve as guidelines. The present civil service reform places less emphasis on service delivery and more emphasis on developing capability, policy formulation, and personnel systems development. The goal of civil service reform is to establish human resource management practices that are sound, as well as policies, equipment, and capacity building for civil service employees. Additionally, an assessment of service delivery is planned in order to investigate ways to improve service delivery in Somaliland.
4.5 ENHANCING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE

The findings suggest that civil service reform must prioritize service delivery outcomes and citizen satisfaction. Efforts to combat corruption, improve transparency in recruitment and promotion processes, and enhance capacity-building programs are essential for achieving meaningful reform and improving public service delivery in Somaliland. The absence of planned service delivery activities for ministries and agencies, coupled with a significant portion of the government budget allocated to running costs, presents a critical gap in the effective functioning of the civil service in Somaliland. This gap undermines the government's ability to deliver essential services to its citizens efficiently and transparently, thereby impeding socioeconomic development and citizen welfare.

The improvement of public service delivery requires a sound civil service system and performance oriented culture that can deliver public policies and programmes in an efficient and effective way. Proactive measures will promote civil service mechanisms that address the challenges of the country's people, such as the adoption of meritocracy, which includes merit-based recruitment, selection, performance evaluation, training, and development, and promotion; the development of job descriptions for all civil service employees to direct them to the national development priorities; capacity building on public service delivery improvement for public officers; budgeted service delivery activities for all ministries and agencies, the development of a national public service delivery strategy, use of technology for speedy delivery of service to the citizens, data collection for public policy implementation and service user feedback.

5 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research on civil service reform and public service delivery in Somaliland highlights the multifaceted challenges and opportunities facing governance effectiveness in the country. Through an examination of existing literature, empirical studies, research findings, and theoretical frameworks such as New Public Management (NPM), several key insights have emerged.

It is evident that civil service reform efforts in Somaliland are crucial for improving administrative efficiency, accountability, and service delivery outcomes. Based on the findings, the basic institutional framework and mechanisms are in place for the civil service reform in Somaliland, but research has shown some gaps in policies and laws, namely the pay and grade policy, and others are in the early stages of development, including the pension law and a review of personnel law. However, challenges such as
institutional weaknesses, resistance to change, nepotism, and discrimination persist, hindering the effectiveness of reform initiatives. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that focuses on enhancing transparency, meritocracy, and citizen participation in governance processes.

According to the study’s data, institutional weakness, employee and leadership resistance to change, and mismatches between incumbents’ qualifications and positions are the main obstacles to civil service reform that need to be reviewed and realigned in order to speed up the reform process. Its greatest shortcoming is that the current civil service reform does not prioritize service delivery. In its early stages, the reform concentrated on system development, functional reviews, restructuring, policy development, civil servant headcounts, and other housekeeping tasks.

There is little progress on the effect of civil service reform on human resource management practices, including transparent and competitive recruitment, selection, rewards, performance evaluation, and promotion. The research indicated that the majority of civil servants encountered some form of discrimination in promotion, training opportunities, and benefits. Although some positions are advertised publicly, civil servants have expressed concerns about the transparency and competitiveness of the recruitment and selection processes. The absence of clear job descriptions and motivation among most government employees makes it difficult to measure the performance of civil servants, which affects the provision of quality service delivery in the public sector. Future research on this subject could further examine on the role of leadership and institutional capacity in civil service performance, and public service delivery, as these are critical elements in any civil service reform that is backed to drive the development of the country.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the research on civil service reform and public service delivery in Somaliland, the following recommendations are proposed to address the identified challenges and enhance governance effectiveness capacity to deliver services. Firstly, Adoption of meritocracy, ensuring that promotions and advancements are based on merit and performance, and developing job descriptions for all staff, establishing transparent and merit-based recruitment and promotion practices is imperative to counter nepotism and discrimination. By ensuring that appointments are based on qualifications and performance, the civil service can attract capable individuals who contribute positively to public service delivery.

Secondly, enhancing performance measurement and accountability mechanisms is essential. Implementing robust evaluation systems and regular monitoring processes fosters transparency and
ensures that resources are effectively utilized. This fosters trust in government institutions and encourages a culture of responsibility among civil servants, ultimately improving service delivery outcomes.

Thirdly, capacity building on public service delivery improvement for public officers; budgeted service delivery activities for all ministries and agencies, the development of a national public service delivery strategy, use of technology for speedy delivery of service to the citizens, data collection for public policy implementation and service user feedback. Embracing digital transformation and innovation can revolutionize administrative processes and service delivery efficiency. Investing in e-government platforms and digital solutions enhances accessibility and streamlines operations.

Lastly, promoting a culture of transparency, accountability, and good governance in government operations and decision-making processes through open data initiatives and disclosure of information to the public. Incorporating service user feedback assessment, considering feedback from the public to improve service delivery. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of reform progress are essential. Regular review and adaptation of policies and procedures ensure their relevance and effectiveness in achieving governance objectives. By implementing these recommendations, Somaliland can improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of its civil service, ultimately enhancing public service delivery, citizen well-being, and development.
REFERENCES


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