Civil Service Reform Program in Ethiopia: General
Overview with Special Emphasis on Civil Service Reform Program

Ethiopia is one of the fifty three states in Africa. It is one of the landlocked countries situated in North East of Africa. Its neighbors includes in the east Djibouti, south east Somalia, in the west Sudan, in the South Kenya, in the north Eritrea. Out of the country's physical structure a total area of Plateau covers 2/3 of an average altitude of 3000 and meters, an altitude of 2,500-3,000 meters in most areas of volcanic lava plateau. The highest peak reached 4,620 meters above sea level. The Great East African Rift Valley crosses the heart of the country and cuts it into two slices of highlands. Annual rainfall of 1,500 mm from the western plateau, to the northeast, southeast reduced to 100 mm. Desert and semi-desert area about a quarter of the total.

The total area of the Country is 1,103,600 square kilometers. The annual average temperature 16°C, and annual precipitation 1237 mm.

The Total population of the country is about 84,320,987 million with annual population growth rate of 2.9%, which is the second most populated country in Africa. There are more than 80 ethnic groups, out of which Oromo (37%), Amhara (22.4%), Tigray (5.8%), Somali (6.1%), Sidamo (1.2%) and so on. Out of the total population, 45% of the population are followers of Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 33% are Muslim, a minority Protestant, Catholic and the remaining indigenous religion. Amharic is the Federal Government (Official) language of the nation and English is the main international languages used in many international relationships.

The country has three thousand years history of civilization with the establishment of the Axum kingdom, which is well known for its present day oblique erected still today. Axum dynasty was well renowned for its civilization and rulership to the present day Yemen. After that time, most of the history of the country was full of tribal landlords fighting among each other for more wealth control and authority.

Modern Ethiopia took shape in the time of Emperor Tewodros at about the middle of 19th Century and after that time subsequent procedures have been made.

The Civil Service in Ethiopia

The modern Civil Service in Ethiopia dates back to 1907 when nine of ministries were established, with an objective of ensuring orderly and efficient arrangement for the workings of government. These nine ministries were (Ministry of justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Commerce and Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Industry, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of War, Ministry of Pen and Ministry of Palace). The initial years were characterized by inadequate structures, inefficient services, corruption, political interference, and the interference of the nobility in the due process of law in matters of public concern for their private wellbeing. Given the very nature of the regimes and among other things, due to the high regard given to political loyalty in assigning civil service posts and the level of political interference affecting standard operating procedures, the Civil Service failed to deliver the intended service to the public.

At that time, the public administration was implemented based on the free will of the kings and lords without any pertinent rules and regulations. People were employed and
got into work with the personal acquaintances and relationships of the nobility. Anyone who has not some kind of relationships no matter how intelligent was refused to get any kind of service as well as employment. It was, therefore, a widely established culture among the people to pay tribute and bribe to the nobility in order to get any kind of service from the public office. Judges and local officials were under the influence of the nobility. Therefore, justice was easily and obviously violated based on the quality and amount of bribe paid.

Emperor Haile Selassie was effective after the beginning and mid 20th Century to institutionalize the rule bound public administration by establishing successive legal frameworks. The urge presented to institutionalize the public sector was the resistance and an attempted but failed attempt of overthrow by two foreign learned senior official brothers, Germaine Neway and Mengistu Neway who were caught red handed and killed on the spot. Even if significant change has been observed in the affairs of public administration, the basic framework and assumptions were still persisted.

The Military government which took power through coup de et in 1974, has established its own image in the public service. The Institutions and the mindset of the workers and civil servants were operated against the long lasting development of the country.

In 1991, the military rule of the country was replaced by people’s liberation and after that significant progress has been made in the entire country’s economic, social and political arena. One of the significant developments in the history of the country is the establishment of autonomous regions organized and renews their commitment under the principle of peaceful coexistence and collaboration to establish a strong country. To this effect, in 1994, a new constitution was crafted and endorsed and give legal ground for the establishment of a democratic federal states, where the autonomous regional states enjoyed vast powers in various aspects of public administration and shoulder service delivery responsibilities such as health, education, social security, rural water and rural roads.

The emergence of the federal state system has led not to a measure of rationalization of government structures and functions as the core initiative that greatly influenced the operation of the civil service, but also a great devolution of managerial autonomy and resource control, thereby creating unprecedented opportunities for people’s participation in deciding on matters affecting their lives. The devolution of administrative and governance power, in particular, has facilitated actions aimed at strengthening the role and capacity of local authorities. Hence, they become responsive and accountable to the concerns of local communities and groups. Moreover, they become equal partners in local governance and development by involving the community, civil societies and the private sector in formulating, implementing and managing plans and policies of the region.

Given that it is designed to promote democracy and achieve the Government’s long term development objectives through public participation, the new federal government arrangement is also a key initiative driving the civil service system and the reform program, initiated to improve the quality of service to the public.

The new federal arrangement comprises the Regional State as members. The Federal Government has both a President and Prime Minister. The President serves as the Head of State, nominated by the recommendation of the Prime Minister, and receives the credentials of ambassadors and proclaims laws approved by the Council of Peoples’ Representatives. The Prime Minister is the head of the government.

Statistics clearly depict that the Ethiopian civil service have been growing averagely by 6.7% annually since 1955 G.C and the trend is expected to keep on with increasing rate. During the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, in the year 1962/63 the total number of civil servant was only 46,701. But, at the downfall of the emperor in 1974 the civil servant was doubled itself and reached 93,963. During the fall of the Dergue, In 1991 the number of the civil servant has reached 216,058. The growth of the civil servant was interrupted three times in 1978, 1991 and (1996). At this time, the number of civil servants reached 926,716.

As we see the reason for the slow growth rate in this year we see that in 1991 Eretria, which were one of the former region of the Ethiopia was established as an independent state and 1996 because of the implementation of the structural adjustment program which reduced the number of the civil servant. On the other hand, the rate of growth of the civil servant was very slow in the year 1994 and 1996 because most of the organization was engaged in the implementation of Business process re-engineering. According to the recent statistics accessed, the ratio of the civil servant to the total population is 1.13 % or 1.13: 100 which is one civil servant serves to the ratio of 100 people or in other words, averagely a single civil servant serves 100 clients or customers.

### National Capacity Building Program

After the new government took power in 1991, its prime agenda has been the eradication of poverty from the country. The government has committed itself for this grand purpose, and has laid down 14 National Capacity Building Programs as a big step forward. The basic idea for the formulation of these 14 Capacity Building Programs was the practical reality that without first enhancing the capacity of the nation as a whole on the selected key sectors, the development of the country would have not been realized and the poverty will sustain to threaten the integrity of the country in to jeopard.

The 14 Capacity Building Programs designed were:-

1. Civil Service Reform Program (CSRP)
2. Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) Agriculture Reform Program (TVET-A)
3. Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET)Non Agriculture Reform Program (TVET-NA)
4. Education Sector Development Program (ESDP)
5. Justice Sector Capacity Building Program (SRP)
6. Civic Societies and NGOs Capacity Building Reform Program (CS-NGO-CBP)
7. Engineering Capacity Building Program (ECBP)
8. Textile and Garments Capacity Building Program (TG-CBP)
9. Private Sector Capacity Building Program (PSDP)
10. Information and Communications Technology Development Program (ICT-DP)
11. District Level Decentralization Capacity Building Program (DLDP)
12. Tax System Reform Program (TSRP)
13. Urban Management and Development Capacity Building Program (UMD-CBP)
14. Cooperatives Capacity Building Program (CCBP)

These 14 Capacity Building Programs were designed to form a National Capacity Building Program and the former Ministry of Capacity Building was in charge coordinating them in to a meaningful manner. Most of these capacity building programs were practically implemented by their respective sector Ministries under the direct supervision and coordination of the Ministry with the support of the actors. In the year 2009, a national evaluation has been conducted and a conclusion has arrived that most of the programs were matured and a conducive environment has been created where they can be conducted by their respective sector.
ministers. Therefore, the former Ministry of Capacity Building has accomplished its purpose and hence no longer in existence. As the name implies, the Civil service reform Program only exist in the Ministry of Civil service presently.

The Civil Service Reform Program

The Civil Service Reform Programs, as one of the National Capacity Building Program, was initiated in 1997 in response to weaknesses in the administrative system, challenges encountered in the public service delivery system and in general with the objective of revitalizing the overall development of the country as a whole. It is a large national undertaking in terms of both the human resources and financial commitment. It also aims at introducing new and improved legislations, and working systems to simplify administrative processes as well as ensuring effectiveness, efficiency and ethical behavior in performance and service delivery. It provides a roadmap for moving ahead towards enhancing the capacity needs of the civil service and supports the policy and strategy of the Government for promoting sustained economic development within the framework of a democratic and market driven economic order.

The Civil Service Reform Program has a grand objective of transforming the Civil Service through addressing the key challenges that hinder the performance of the Civil Service and enhancing the capacity. The Program seeks to achieve effectiveness and efficiency of the various aspects at the Federal and regional levels through radical transformational changes. The Program was destined to address includes:

- The major objectives of the reform program was to redress the backwardness and the deep-rooted, old and anti-development paradigm that tightly dominate and govern the overall structure and environment of the civil service in the country that hinder the appropriate realization of the policies and programs of the country. The reform envisaged to transform the age old tradition of anti-democratic style towards democratically natured style of management; the corrupt behavior at all levels towards ethically right behavior; the control oriented system towards empowerment and result oriented, the disorganized and parasitic nature of civil servants towards service mentality, and towards an overall situation in which the civil service is ethically, structurally a result oriented, the disorganized and parasitic nature of civil servants towards service mentality, and towards an overall situation in which the civil service is ethically, structurally a result oriented.

**Objectives of the Civil Service Reform**

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### Challenges that trigger the Civil Service Reform Program

The major challenges and problems that encountered the Civil Service of the Country in which the Reform Program was destined to address include:

- Management concentrates on the administration and control of inputs and activities rather than on achievements of government policy and objectives.
- Management systems are outdated and unable to respond to the changing environment in which the civil service operates.
- Although it was realized that rules, regulations and practices inherited from the past had to be changed, the public perceives the bureaucracy as a hindrance than a facilitator in efficient public service delivery.

### The overall outputs of the CSR Program are:-

- Reformed and new operating systems and a set of best practices policy guideline and procedures manuals that are instrumental to improving the performance of the Civil Service;
- Strengthened human resources capacity to ensure the sustained ability of Federal and Regional Civil Service institutions to achieve governmental policies and priorities; and
- Strengthened organizational/ institutional capacity to ensure effective resource utilization and management within the Civil Service.

**Sub Programs of the Civil Service Reform Program**

In order to organize the reform program into logical framework, the CSR Program has been organized into five, interrelated and inter-wined subprograms, namely:

- Top Management Sub Program;
- Human Resources Sub program;
- Expenditure Management sub program;
- Service Delivery Sub Program;
- Ethics Sub program;

Each sub program was organized in such a way to address specific areas of governance that believed to transform the civil service of the country. They were designed based on the Task force report studied about the reform program in 1997.

### Basic Tools of the Civil Service Reform Program

At present, the Five Sub Programs are under implementation through the use of different management tools.

The Reform Program, in its implementation phase so far, has taken into place the following basic management tools so as to realize the objectives and outputs: these are:-

- Concentrates efforts and resources on government priorities.
- Is accountable and answerable to elected representatives.
- Aids the development of federalism.
- Promotes the development of the private sector both by providing support where required and by limiting regulation to essential areas only.
- Is re-oriented to achieving government objectives efficiently and effectively rather than bureaucratic control of inputs, activities and procedures.
- Is responsive to citizens needs and where services are provided in a fair, open and efficient manner;
- Where the scope for impropriety is reduced to the minimum both in its relations with the public and internally;
Strategic Planning and Management (SPM): Strategic Planning and Management was the first tool that has been made into action at the beginning of the reform program. This tool uses the techniques of Strategic Planning and Management where each and every institution has to design its 3-5 strategic plans and implement it accordingly.

Quick Wins: It is a technique to implement those reform agendas that results in an easy and short time frame. Within this technique, institutions planned to implement those reform activities that brought about small and easily observable results so that it is possible to win the confidence of the people involved in it.

Business Process Reengineering (BPR): is a radical approach to implement change where every aspect of the institution has been undergoing major change. Through this tool, government institutions were expected to transform the way they do their business and the structure to implement it. It is radical in its approach and dramatic in the extent of results delivered. This tool is the most implemented and its effect in either positive as well as bad consequences is significant. Almost every government institution at all levels have undergone this tool.

Different Performance Management Tools:-
- **Management By Objectives (MBO):** Management By Objective was one of the tools experimented to implement the reform activities. Its basic objective was to manage performance.
- **Integrated Performance Management System (IPMS):** This is also another version of performance management using the techniques of SPM. This tool is used to implement an integrated performance management system.
- **Balanced Scorecard (BSC):** The BSC is used to plan, implement, monitor and measure the performance of all actors involved in the implementation of the goals and objectives of the country. It is an integrated approach to strategically plan, implement, and measure the performance of all actors involved. Because of its strategic approach, balanced set of measures and strategic alignment, BSC has been taken as the most important tool to be implement in almost all government institutions throughout the country.

Civil Service Change Army (Yelewit Serawit): Yelewit Serawit is being implemented to create a structured approach to implement, monitor and evaluate the operations at each level. Yelewit Serawit is nothing but an organized platform where team members build their capacity, evaluate the basic challenges and problems they encounter and relieve them through democratic way, measure the performance collectively and individually and identify pioneers (gibuark kedezem tesamit). Yelewit Serawit can be equated to quality circles established in Kaizen and Total Quality Management (TQM) for the purpose of ensuring quality. It is the most dynamic platform available and suitable for our condition to identify strategy, to clearly articulate basic shortcomings in the implementation of the strategy, build the capacity of performers, and the key circle of excellence. Change Army in general is the combination key actors in the implementation of strategy which comprises the government wing, the key stakeholders and the ruling party.

Citizens Charter: government institutions have got into agreement with the general public with the manner in which basic public services have been delivered and the modalities in which problems and challenges will be resolved. So far, several government institutions have designed and published citizen charters in consultation with the general public and the public has found the framework to ensure their rights and obligations.

Basic Results Obtained
Through the implementation of the Capacity Building Program in general and the Civil Service Reform Program, several results have been obtained, some of which include:

- Efficiency and effectiveness have been realized in almost all government institutions. What has taken previously days, months and even years, now can be achieve in a matter of minutes and hours. In most institutions, it has been now history for the provision of basic public services to be delivered in long extended time.
- The capacity of the Civil servants now has been enhanced through the comprehensive capacity building programs and the practical matters.
- The public at large now increase its trust in the provision of basic services and began to voice its interests.
- Basic public services now widened through the expansion of basic services in the vicinity of the public at large and through the implementation of the Information Technology Infrastructure. Even the local governments are now applying basic IT infrastructures.
- A new country with new system structure and style is being built with democracy, development and good governance is underway.
- A double-digit economic growth has being realized for nine consecutive years.
- A new hope, bright future has been created.

Challenges encountered
There are several challenges encountered along the way. Some of the challenges include:

- The attitudes of the people in general and the civil servant in particular. There was a widespread historic distrust of the public institutions by the public, and the removal of such distrust demands great commitment and effort. People need tangible and sustainable evidence for this. And this also takes too long time.
- The skill and knowledge gap. The country is now developing at a significant stage. There is also a huge international pressure to cope up with the ever changing global situation. The country is now integrating with the international community. The people have more connection with the international world. With this situation it is quite difficult to cope up adequately the real demands of the public. The Civil service is in greater demand to upgrade the knowledge and skills of the civil servants.
- Resource constraints in discharging the huge work to build the nation on a new foundation.

Conclusion
Ethiopia is a country with a long tradition of bureaucratic and backward performance in the civil service. Transforming the civil service is the most critical agenda to ensure the sustainable development throughout the country. The government has undertaken several serious measures to radically transform the civil service. The basic objective of
the capacity building program is to ensure developmental oriented civil service that ensure the vision of the country to be a middle income one within a period of twenty years. For this grand objectives several projects, programs have been underway and so far several hopeful results have been obtained.

References