

**SESSION 2**  
**DISCUSSION PAPER 2**



**Capacity Building workshop on “promoting professionalism in the public service: Strengthening the role of Human Resource Managers in the public sector for the effective implementation of the charter for public Service in Africa ,14 – 18 March 2011 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)**

**Promoting and strengthening professionalism in the civil service: The Ethiopian case**  
**by**

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## Introduction

The civil service is the life blood of any government. It is because; the implementation of government policies and strategies is highly dependent on the courage and passion of the civil service. When the capacity of the civil service to discharge its responsibility is low, the implementation of government policies and strategies will fall in a trap.

During the last two decades, countries have been trying to replace the traditional rule driven and highly bureaucratic public administration model by result oriented and responsive model of new public management. Here, the main drivers of reforming the civil service are escalating citizens' demand, global competition and environmental changes such as in the technology and the market.

In addition to the above facts, reforming the civil service in developing countries arises from the need to realize effective and responsive civil service that is capable of facilitating the implementation of developmental programs in an environment which is constantly changing and demanding. In this endeavor, professionalizing the civil service shall be the central agenda of any government seeking fast moving economic development with effective public engagements. Therefore, the paper tries to explore efforts made to promote and strengthen professionalism in Ethiopian civil service and opportunities and challenges. Meanwhile, the paper will also try to identify best practices that can be transferred to the civil service in Ethiopian context.

The paper uses only secondary sources and the researcher's personal observation as he has been witnessing the process of the Ethiopian Civil Service Reform as a change agent. Secondary data are reflecting mainly the Ethiopian experience which is almost similar with the continent's experience in terms of reform and civil service professionalism.

Thus, the main objective of the paper is examining efforts & achievements of Ethiopian civil service in Promoting & strengthening Professionalism through different management reform initiatives.

The following is the main coverage of the paper.

- Conceptual issues of professionalism ;
- Efforts of building Professionalism in the Ethiopian civil service through civil service reform initiatives ;
- Challenges and opportunities facing the Ethiopian civil service to promote & strengthen its professionalism ;
- Selected best practices of building professionalism which can be adapted to Africa /Ethiopian context ; and
- Recommendation.

## **1. Concepts of Professionalism in the Civil Service**

The concept of profession traces back to ancient disciplines such as theology, law and medicine. Though the depth and width of the concept of the term varies through time it still focuses on a certain occupation that required a special training in the liberal arts or science ( Collins Concise Dictionary : 2001 ).And consequently, professional means a person who is extremely competent in his/her job. To be professional a person needs proper education as well as training.

According to Hammer (1996) a professional must be a problem solver. He or she must not be the one who is interested to serve in a ready made situation alone. As professionals are visionary they are directed towards stretched goals. They must use their profession for long - term benefit too. Generally, Hammer identifies the following features of professionals of the 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge age society.

- A true professional is engaged in an ongoing inquiry , an endless quest for insight into and understanding of his or her practice ;
- The professional examines what is effective and what is not , tries to identify successful and unsuccessful techniques ,and fashions ,theories to be applied in the future ;
- The professional is a constant learner not only in the class room but in the field – the worker is trained ,the professional learns ; many professions in fact demand it as a condition of accreditation ;
- Real professional naturally takes to a team environment because their overriding concern is getting the job done ;
- The professional sees himself or herself as responsible to the customer ; the mission is to solve problems or to add value in any case for the customer , to create the value that the customer requires; In contrast, a worker is focused on three words : boss , activity and task ;
- To be a professional a person needs education as well as training ; He / she must get knowledge and skill about what to do , why to do , and how to do the job ; and
- Professional work is not an activity performed a certain number of hours a day, but one's persona, one's essence (Hammer,1996: 32 – 52).

The success in any profession depends on a person having knowledge, Perspective and attitude (Hammer, 1996). Besides, many Human Resource Management (HRM) literatures explain success factors in any profession as the right knowledge, skill and attitude (Bach & Kessler, 2008).

The civil or public service is broadly defined as those employees of the state who are covered by national and civil service laws. In Ethiopian context civil servants are government employees that are governed by The Federal Civil servants' Proclamation number 515/2006. The public service as a profession, as it developed, espoused the value of probity, neutrality, and fairness, among many others. It has embraced the merit

principle in setting up career structures from recruitment to promotion. For example according to US American civil service merit principles are the following.

- Recruit , select , and advance on merit after fair and open competition ;
- Treat employees and applicants fairly and equitably ;
- Provide equal pay for equal work and reward excellent performance ;
- Maintain high standards of integrity , conduct ,and concern for the public interest ;
- Manage employees efficiently and effectively ;
- Retain or separate employees on the basis of their performances ;
- Educate and train employees if it results in better organizational or individual performance ;
- Protect employees from improper political influence ; and
- Protect employees against reprisal for the lawful disclosure of information in “whistleblower” situations (U.S. Office of Personnel Management).

Many of these merit principles are adapted to Ethiopian Civil Servants’ Proclamation. It must be clearly understood that having the right merit principles by law is the corner stone of any professional civil service. Here, precaution must be taken that serious violation of these principles leads to ineffectiveness. It is also taken as an indication of a patronage system in which ignorance is reined and celebrated.

Professionalism in the civil service / public service is an over arching value that determines how its activities will be carried out. It encompasses all other values that guide the public service / civil service such as loyalty, neutrality transparency, diligence, punctuality, effectiveness, impartiality and other values that may be specific to individual countries (United Nations, 2000:3).

The rationale behind professionalism in the civil service is that civil servants shall adhere to a certain degree of value to serve the public effectively. It shows that civil servants shall have the highest professional quality and behaviors that put the public interest first. Thus, professionalizing the civil service has the following benefits.

- It helps to have civil servants that are efficient and effective in their performance ;
- Impartial civil service is important in multi - party democratic system to realize stable and long serving civil service despite the fact that government might change through ballot box ;
- Since professionalism is the quest for excellence the effectiveness of the civil service is guaranteed despite changes in citizens’ needs ;
- Constant learning is the basis for professionalism. As a result employees can easily adjust to different organizational changes ;
- A professional civil service is honest and has high level of integrity, it will enjoy trust and respect by the public. These are great intangible assets for any civil service that aims to beat poverty ;
- Professional civil service has an ability to maintain its employees’ effectiveness’ that it contributes much to realize the goals of an organization. In this endeavor the whole purpose of public service reform is to realize

effectiveness in the public service. So the success of public service reform is unthinkable without at least having core professional civil servants ;

- Professional civil service is an image for a nation which helps to attract lucrative direct foreign investment ; and
- Professional civil service is an instrument to build a system of good governance and democracy.

A well performing public service is based on its professionalism and integrity (Elia, 2000). Public service / civil service professionalism include some values that may be specific to individual country that its part is culture bound. According to Turkia it is not possible to seek to promote professionalism in public servants without taking into account the socio – cultural values of Africans, especially rural Africans (Turkia, 2008: 57). On the other hand some of the elements of civil service professionalism are universal. They require global knowledge and skills that conforms their universal nature. From this one can conclude that elements of civil service professionalism have global perspective while they need localization or they are glolocal.

The rationale behind professionalism is that public servants should be neutral, impartial, fair, and competent and serve the public interest in carrying out their duties. Such personality requires appropriate knowledge, skill and attitude towards public service. Professional civil servants are expected to function as follows.

- Remind that civil servants are policy advisors not policy makers. As a result they are expected to advise government impartially and competently. When the government decides on a policy direction , civil servants are there again to implement it impartially and competently ;
- Put citizens' interest first. Public servants shall be proud of serving the citizen. Above all citizens' interest shall be first. Public servants shall not use their power to serve their individual selfish interest ;
- Civil servants' shall be result - oriented. They are paid for what they contribute ;
- Public servants are there to make service agile. Public service must be easy to do business ; So civil servants shall strive always for excellent service that can satisfy end users and stakeholders ;
- Public servants shall believe deeply in change. The current environment is prone to change. As a result, successful civil servants are those who are deeply interested in change and its effect ;
- Public servants shall strongly believe in continuous learning and improvement. Continuous change requires a culture of life long learning ;
- Civil servants shall learn to work in a team. Team working is a form of serving the public together whose members have different perspectives and complementary skills helping to satisfy the public at large ; and
- Public servants shall avoid rent seeking behaviors & practices which are contrary to objectives of progress & development.

According to Ssonko professionalism manifests itself in the public service employees' behavior at work and in his /her constant effort to improve, reinforce and update his /her knowledge, refine the skills that are necessary for carrying out his / her tasks and

enhancing his /her output and productivity (Ssonko, 2008: 7). ON the other hand professionalism resides in how skillfully and how well a public servant performs his / her functions and duties (Simataa 2004: 2).

## **2. The role of Civil Service Reform in strengthening professionalism in Ethiopia**

The New Public Management (NPM) concepts and techniques transform many of the assumptions of traditional bureaucratic public administration. Civil Service Reform program as one of the waves of NPM tries to change the way business is done in the sector. Though NPM gives many opportunities for developed countries, applying North American and West European management methods in whole sale approach might lead African countries into chaos and ineffectiveness.

The way governments function to undertake public business has always been changing in response to the emerging needs and demands of the People /the tax Payer (Antiwi, 2009).Reform initiatives in the public service shall be carried out to solve development problems of that particular nation.

NPM is not a single concept, but an umbrella team covering a broad range of “New ways of thinking” about getting public business done properly by drawing from a highly inter – disciplinary field of study . So we learn how to think not how to apply from such initiatives. The fallacy of many implementations arises from using the same formula to solve problems of different nations which have different causes.

According to Borins (1994) NM paradigm has five interrelated meanings, including:

- Provide high - quality services that citizens value ;
- Increasing managerial autonomy ,particularly by reducing central agency control ;
- Demanding , measuring ,and rewarding both organizational and individual performance ;
- Providing the human and technological resources that managers need to meet their performance targets ;
- Maintaining receptiveness to competition and open – mindedness about which public activities should be performed by public servants as opposed to private sector.

The increased emphasis on public administration reforms (PAR) by governments and development partners including UNDP heralds the importance of building capable states that are able to foster dynamic partnership with civil society and the private sector, improve the quality of the service delivery, enhance social responsibilities and ensure the broader participation of making & feedback on public service performance (UNDP, 2007:1).

NPM advocates the benefits of small government and Promoting the value of making things private in order to avoid rent seeking behavior. However, the recent financial slow down justifies that rent seeking is not the problem of government ownership alone. Many American and West European private companies have highly suffered from big scandals

arising from serious rent seeking behaviors. Rent seeking is not necessarily sector specific problem but societal as well. Besides, scholars in NPM are recognizing that there are best practices that can transfer from public to private sector.

The developmental states of Africa are transitional instruments towards welfare state. In a continent where there are no strong market forces and market failure is business as usual rather than a short phenomenon of lacking the invisible hand, countries in Africa need developmental state to develop and in some cases to create market systems that will enhance developmental objectives.

So the concepts and techniques of NPM shall be scrutinized for adaptation in the interest of developmental state. According to Fakir the public administration of developmental state must be governed by the following basic values:

- A high standard of professional ethics ;
- Efficient , economic and effective use of resource ;
- Public administration must be developmental oriented ;
- Service must be provided impartially , fairly ,equitably and without bias ;
- People's needs must be responded to and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy – making ;
- Public administration must be accountable ;
- Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely , accessible and accurate information ;
- Good human resource management and career – development practices to maximize human potential ; and
- Public administration must be broadly representative of the diverse people with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation. ( Fakir , 2007 )

The Ethiopian civil service is a century old initially organized in the crude form of the 20<sup>th</sup> century European civil service model. As civil service is the reflection of its political economic system, it is expected to serve the purpose of the government of the day.

The 1960s were remarkable period in Ethiopian civil service history. During this time modern personnel orders, policies and directives were introduced. Central Personnel Agency was established in the same period. The purpose of all these reforms was to establish uniform and rule driven civil service all over the nation. Almost all orders and directives were adopted from the western personnel management systems mainly from US of America. The personnel establishments and the reforms were having the following effects.

- Uniform personnel management system had been established through out the nation ;
- Western type of merit principles were introduced for the first time in the nation's history ;
- The principle of equal pay for equal value of work had been introduced with position classification job evaluation method ; and
- Central Personnel Agency was established.

The 1974 Ethiopian revolution had introduced a social socialist military government which abuses many of the merit principles and relative work ethics of the Emperor era. During this period (1974 – 91) civil service professionalism is deteriorated and its impartiality put in question. As a result, the civil service of the day was with low moral. In 1991, the incumbent government seized power. The political and economic systems of the government became multi - party democracy and market driven economy respectively. The changing role of government witnessed federalism and devolution. Therefore, the role of civil service is changed. The main role of the civil service is to serve the government of the day impartially and competently. Therefore, introducing a civil service reform that works for Ethiopia was a top agenda of the government. The Ethiopian government is engaging in civil service reform for the last ten years in the following major areas.

- Top Management system reform sub program ;
- Human Resource Management System Reform Sub Program ;
- Service Delivery improvement Reform Sub Program ;
- Government Expenditure and Control reform Sub Program ; and
- Ethics Sub Program.

The main rationale behind civil service reform in Ethiopia is the need to reinvent a civil service which resembles the new political and economic order of the nation which is federal, democratic and market oriented. Subsequent reasons of reforming the civil service can be:

- Top leaders in the civil service were not visionary and supportive ;
- Top leaders were not developed and managed adequately, systematically and rationally as a result they were with low level of leadership competencies ;
- Low level of civil servants' performance resulting from incompetence and low level of morale ;
- Inefficient service as a result of poor design of work and wrong employees' attitude towards clients or citizens ;
- Inappropriate utilization of public resources. For instance public resource utilization was input driven and resources were not tied to results that accountability losses its ground ; and
- Unethical practices in delivering the service. For example, bribes, kick backs, embezzlement, and etc.

To alleviate the above problems step by step, the government has embarked on civil service reform program which is comprehensive, indigenous and sensitive for global realities. The purpose of the civil service reform program is to create efficient and effective civil service that serves the government of the day ethically and professionally.



**Main initiatives of the reform program & their contributions to promote & strengthen professionalism in the civil service**

**(A) Business Process Reengineering (BPR)**

Business Process reengineering( BPR ) was introduced in 2003 and applied across public organizations in Ethiopia as part of the civil service reform program (AH consulting 2010). According to AH consulting report (2010) 82 % of institutions at Federal and Regional levels engaged in BPR change initiative.

According to Hammer & Champy business process reengineering is “the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business process, in order to achieve dramatic improvement in critical contemporary measures of performance such as cost, quality, service and speed.” (Hammer & Champy, 1996: 32). Later, Hammer strongly emphasizes that the main purpose of BPR is to create process – based organization which has many manifestations among all customer satisfaction , outcome orientation, team building. According to AH consulting BPR as change initiative was selected by the Government of Ethiopia in order to improve the capacity of civil service organizations to deliver national priorities , including economic development , poverty reduction and improving service delivery to citizens ( AH consulting , 2010 : p.124 ). In AH’s survey 82 % of civil service institutions were either implementing and or designing phase of their business processes. According to AH consulting survey the following are achievements of BPR implementation in Ethiopian public service.

- Organizations have been organized around processes , outcomes or results ;
- Processes are defined and designed in such a way that they can add value to customers ;
- Efficiency has been improved – less time is taken and less money is spent to provide services as a result of BPR ;
- Achievements of flatter structure – less time to decide ; empowering employees and increasing flexibility of service ;
- BPR helps to drive the HRM reform agenda of the civil service which is highly related to professionalism of the civil service ;
- Customer satisfaction has been registered in many implementing agencies ;
- Improved effectiveness – in most institutions, BPR has helped institutions to do the right things as defined in their mission and vision. This helps to improve effectiveness in the civil service ;
- Change attitudes – The attitudes of the civil servants started to change to be client focused. After BPR the attitude of employees towards clients and team work is improved ;
- Skilled workers – multiple tasks were carried out by individuals that pushes employees to learn more in order to have multi skills ;
- After BPR team work has been recognized and its performance has been improved ;

- One – stop – shopping service has been introduced that makes the civil service easy to do business ;
  - Customer care and client relationship has been improved ;
  - Management skills have been improved as a result of trainings in areas of strategic planning and Management, Change Management, Team Building, process management, performance management ;
  - Many benchmarking programs were carried out and lessons helping to improve performance have been gained ;
- The above achievements of BPR change initiative have many implications to strengthen professionalism in the civil service. These are:
- Creating a drive to focus on citizens' service means that civil service leaders and employees will be conscious of the value of serving people which is an important indication of any professional civil service ;
  - The improvement of efficiency of organizations depicted that civil servants try to be conscious enough to use the public resources properly and in good faith.

As a result of the BPR change initiative it is customary that the role of leaders will be changed from controller and evaluator to coach and mentor. Despite little has been done in preparing leaders for the new roles, the change direction gives an opportunity to create an environment of organizational learning which is important to enhance professionalism in the civil service.

- The BPR change initiative helps leaders and employees to be outcome oriented which is the ultimate make over of professionalism ;
- The change initiative helps civil servants to have general knowledge and diverse way of doing things. It asks employees and leaders to think out of the box. It helps civil servants to have new attitude that acknowledges end users and citizens at large. Making end users the center piece of service is the ultimate goal of any professional civil service. The BPR change initiative helps to improve new professional skills and attitudes that are outcome oriented and citizens' focused ;
- BPR implementation has resulted in team work. In some institutions it helps to learn in team and to function as a team. This is an important aspect of enhancing professionalism in the public service ;
- The BPR change initiative helps civil service institutions to emphasize on in-service training. Though it is not systematic , many civil servants have got training opportunities in different topics of management such as team building , change management , strategic Management , Human resource Management , Project Management , Benchmarking , and , etc . Above all BPR necessitates the training of civil servants in government policies and strategies which helps to understand government directions and perspectives, so as to align organizational goals with national strategies.
- The change initiative helps to attract best practices through benchmarking programs. Though many of benchmarking programs were not systematic and resulting in twinning arrangements, benchmarking as a management tool is introduced to Ethiopian civil service which is very important to professionalize it; For instance strengthening the custom and revenue

profession is the result of many benchmarking efforts. As a result of professionalizing the custom and revenue sector in Ethiopia, the tax base and amount of revenue collected has dramatically increased within the last five years.

- Above all, BPR helps professionals in the civil service to be sure that changing the civil service is possible through changing the mind sets of civil servants. This is a step ahead to professionalize the civil service.

According to some researches and observations, in some cases, poor process design, lack of change management capability, absence of timely employees' incentives, lack of technological input, misalignment of processes from strategy and systems had impaired the role of BPR in transforming civil service institutions in Ethiopia.

Different government supervision reports also reflect that though BPR realizes efficiency in the civil service, the effectiveness of business processes in terms of tackling rent seeking attitudes and achieving developmental objective is not satisfactory.

### **(B) Result oriented Performance Management change Initiative**

Performance management is a systematic and strategic approach which works on continuous improvement of teams' and individuals' performance so as to achieve organizational goals (Armstrong and Angela, 1998). Performance management is both strategic and systematic approach of achieving results.

While it is important to have better goals, targets and measures in government, we must recognize that such a highly formalized approach has severe limitations for complex activities. There is a danger that the constitutional, legal, cultural and leadership factors which together create what is important and distinctive about public services and the people who work in them, are considered or, worse, and dismissed as the bureaucratic problem, which must be 'reformed.' (OECD survey, 2003, Cited by Bach and Kessler, 2007: 481).

The Ethiopian civil service has been engaging in building result - oriented performance management systems in the last eight years. Organizational aligned employees' performance appraisal system is introduced in Ethiopian civil service before eight years and that helps employees' to focus on results that can contribute for organizational success. The challenge with the first generation of result - oriented individual performance appraisal system (2002 – 2007) is its focus on measurement alone which is unwanted business by employees. The other challenge is the misalignment of individual performance with that of the organization.

The last three years (2008 – 2011) witnessed in the civil service the use of Balanced Scorecard (BSC) as an integrated strategic management system. Balanced Scorecard focuses on critical few strategic matters and also helps to align individual performance with organizational goals.

The peculiar feature of BSC is its power to align intangible asset with expected tangible results that it helps much to build professionalism in the civil service. BSC helps

organizations to think beyond financial bottom lines such as employees' capacity, leadership capability, process efficiency and a culture of performance.

BSC is introduced in Ethiopia since 2009 and to - date 27 % of civil service institutions have undertaken BSC change initiative .Achievements to – dates are:

- Many civil servants and leaders have got training on BSC which is an instrument to revise and describe the strategy and thereby operationalize it ;
- The training helps leaders to get different perspectives to gauge organizational success in balanced view ;
- It is widely understood by leaders and employees that BSC is an important tool to align strategic planning, performance management, project management , Business processes and budget ; and
- Many professionals and leaders recognize that BSC is a strong tool in communicating and implementing strategies at any level.

The focus of BSC on intangible asset means that organizations shall work tirelessly in strengthening employees' knowledge and skill which is critical to professionalize the civil service. BSC is the 21<sup>st</sup> century integrated strategic management system to solve management problems of the information and knowledge society. It is also one of the 21<sup>st</sup> achievements of management. The following are features of BSC:

- It is integrated strategic management system ;
- It is a communication tool ;
- It is a change management tool ;
- It focuses on four main perspectives, namely : customer / citizens, finance / budget , internal processes , learning and growth ;
- It aligns internal and external organizational achievements ;
- It is about showing the logic of value creation with the help of strategy maps ;
- Aligning intangible asset with the tangible asset through value creation mechanisms ; and
- Above all it is about focusing on critical few issues of the organization (Kaplan & Norton, 2005).

### **The role of BSC in strengthening professionalism in Ethiopian civil service**

Since BSC values intangible asset such as human resource and processes and their technologies, its application helps much to strengthen the civil service professionalism. The developmental and motivational aspects of BSC can contribute much to create high performing civil service institutions which emphasize the importance of professionalism. The performance management system of BSC helps much to improve values of professionalism. This has been observed in many European and North American civil service. Even South Korean and Chinese civil services have used BSC to strengthen professionalism (Qin G 2009, Cho C, 2009). The overriding themes within existing commentary imply not only the positive potential contribution of adopting as systematic approach to performance management but also a significant emphasis on enhancing human resource capabilities of as key strategic tool for the development agenda across the continent ( Adebabay A. & Perkins S , 2010 : 94 ) .

However, the BSC implementation in Ethiopian civil service shall emphasize the following:

- It must be implemented from the prime minister's office down ward ;
- It must serve as aligning and mobilizing tool for The Growth & Transformation Plan ;
- It must be an instrument to escalate best practices in the civil service reform ;
- It must be used as an instrumental to create performance contract system through out the civil service ; and
- Above all, it must be an instrument to create strategic focused organizations.

### **(C) The role of HRM in strengthening Professionalism in Ethiopian civil service**

The main indicator of the Ethiopian civil service inefficiency is poor service delivery resulting from mismanaged civil servants. The Capacity Building strategy of the nation has been giving greater emphasis for Human resource development. Though HRM reform sub program is one of the components of the wider civil service reform program in Ethiopia, its implementation is highly impaired. The following can be cited as major reasons for the retardation of the sub program implementation.

- Lack of comprehensive and integrated knowledge and skill on HRM ;
- Lack of visualizing the contribution of HRM in attaining organizational goals;
- Inability of creating modern structural framework for HRM in all line institutions ;
- Lack of understanding to use HRM as a change model to achieve organizational transformation ;
- Devolving HRM authorities to line institutions with out adequate support to HR professionals and line managers ;
- Inadequate enforcement and accountability mechanisms ; and
- Lack of getting line managers ownership for HRM; and etc.

Despite the above impediments the following achievements in HRM reform shall be recognized. These are:

- Federal Civil Servants Proclamation had been revised in line with modern HRM concepts and practices ;
- The devolution of HRM functions pave the way to flexibility and empowerment of line managers ;
- The reorganization of the former Federal Civil Service Agency at Ministry level shows the importance given for human resource management ;
- The HRM reform drives training and education institutions to focus on HRM. This gives professionals an opportunity of getting training and education in the subject ;
- The establishment of leadership institute which is fully dedicated for leadership development will have greater role to supply skilled and motivated cadre of leaders ;
- Many HRM professionals drawn from different civil service institutions were trained in modern HRM ;

- Information and Education programs are executed with HR magazines like Merit , and through different electronics media like radio and television ; and
- Different HRM systems such as fast streaming , point rating job evaluation , integrated HRM information systems , civil service eligibility criteria , code of conduct, policy and procedures of human resource development , performance related pay etc are developing and are ready for stakeholders consultation .

Actors of the HRM reform shall be The Civil Service Ministry, political leaders and line managers, The HRM staff of federal line Institutions, management education and training institutions, various professional associations and oversight organs of the government. From all these actors Ministry of Civil Service and HR departments of line institutions are expected to take the lead. The above reform achievements contribute much to strengthen professionalism in the following way.

- Strengthening the HR department and line managers through devolution of HR functions helps line managers to get proximity to develop and motivate employees that are the basis for civil service professionalism ;
- In some organizations like Custom and Revenue Authority HR reform helps to create a career management system which is important to professionalize the sector as one entity of the civil service ;
- Trainings and awareness creation efforts in HRM are basis to promote & strengthen , in one hand the HR profession and on the other hand the civil service profession at large ;
- Training courses and university curriculum (which leads to post graduate degree in HRM) are introduced in the past few years. This is an important measure to professionalize the civil Service HRM ;
- Devolution of HR functions gives an opportunity of learning by doing which is critical for the HR profession development ;

Moreover, a reform in the area of ethics helps much to inculcate ethical behaviors in the civil service which are critical component of civil service professionalism. Ethics can be defined as a proper exercise of judgment and discretion based on accepted values and norms (Elia, 2000). The Ethics and Anti Corruption Commission of Ethiopia which was established in line with the recommendation of the Civil Service Reform Program delivers the following major results since its establishment ten years ago. Achievements of Ethics & Anti - corruption which are relevant to strengthen professionalism in the civil service are:

- Promoting Ethical principles in the civil service through the establishment of Ethics Officers which is highly relevant to strengthen professionalism ;
- Reinforcing ethical principles in the civil service with different preventive and curative mechanisms ;
- Establishing corruption investigation mechanisms ; and
- Carrying out surveys on the status of corruption in Ethiopia in collaboration with different research and Education institutions.

Protecting institutions and individuals from rent seeking practices is a critical issue in Ethiopian development agenda. This has greater contribution in promoting and strengthening professionalism in the civil service.

### **3. Best practices of strengthening Professionalism in the Civil Service**

The following can be taken as best practices to promote & strengthen professionalism in the civil service. The best practices can be applied to Ethiopian in particular & the Continent's civil service at large. Refining and implementing comprehensive merit system is the basis for civil service professionalism. The North American and West European experiences indicate that adhering to merit principles is key success factor to establish legitimate and respected civil service.

Since public services are working in an environment that is in constant change, effective training and development are investments with high return. As professionalism is the quest for Excellency continuous learning will be the new culture of the civil service. Civil service institutions that have been aspiring professionalism are laying effective Human resource development systems including formal and informal training such as pre - service training, in - service - training, post - service training, coaching and mentoring etc. Human resource development as effective means of professionalizing the civil service necessitates believing in people and investing in them as well. Best professional civil services in both developed and developing countries are those that have been executed effective Training & Human Resource Development system which is strategic and holistic.

Creating a performing culture through integrated performance management system is critical to enhance professionalism in the civil service. Since effective performance management system addresses both developmental & motivational objectives, it is an instrument to promote and strengthen professionalism in the public service. Moreover, effective performance management system helps to combat corruption and curb other unethical practices.

As stated by Hammer, in traditional pay systems, people are paid for seniority, for showing up, for following rules, for being pleasant to the boss, or perhaps even for performing & completing assigned tasks. But they are not paid for producing results, which is ultimately the only thing that really matters (Hammer M. 1996: 57). So developing a performance related pay (PRP) which is based on objective performance measurement system is instrumental to cultivate the true professionalism. PRP had a political objective in demonstrating that public sector workers are not unaccountable and only receive pay increase linked to performance (OECD cited by Bach and Kessler, 2008). Besides, paying for competence is vital to attract brightest and talented young work force to the public service. This is an effective mechanism to realize the continuity of the civil service in time of change. Performance related pay together with competence related pay can realize paying for contribution (Armstrong & Angela, 1998). Contribution pay enhances professionalism in the civil service. In addition, contributions pay helps the government to improve the total compensation that is vital to enhance professionalism.

In UK civil service, government is trying to improve civil servants working life by introducing flexible working hours. Flexi – time allows employees to choose, within certain limits, when they start and end their workdays. Usually the organization defines the core period. Flexi – time allows professional employees to use their biological clocks to be effective. Again this must be taken as an important strategy in Ethiopian civil service to retain talented employees in hard finding skills like Medicine, Engineering Law, Business, and etc (Adebabay, 2008: 54).

Benefiting from both career and post system is important to enhance professionalism in the civil service. According to OECD survey of 2008, countries that have moved away from career – based systems for civil servants have encountered negative consequences in terms of a loss of collective responsibility and unifying culture (OECD cited by Bach & Kessler, 2008). The UK, New Zealand and Australia are cited as example in the survey. On contrary career based model of employment in which public servants remain in the public sector for their whole working life might lead to ineffectiveness in African civil service. Thus, a mixed model of both career and post system is applicable for Africa.

Improving the professionalism of human resource management/ personnel officers has a spill over effect. The effectiveness of the human resource depends on effective HRM systems. So developing a structure and systems of HR professionals' is vital. In this context, designing a set of HR professional standards is critical. Besides, redefining the HR personnel's role is a step ahead to professionalize human capital management. In modern HRM, the officers' role will be advisory, facilitation, HR system designer etc. In addition to this, licensing both HR and other professionals can be cited as best practice for African civil service.

According to Linden, the use of self – managing teams is growing in the public sector. Self managing teams plan, implement, and evaluate their own work, with minimal involvement from senior managements. They focus primarily on external customer needs not the bureaucracy (Linden, 1994: 5). Introducing a self – managed team is valuable in terms of value creation to citizens. It is also important to cultivate a culture of organizational learning. Self – managed team is highly empowered and risk taking work group that it is conducive to strengthen professionalism at the grass root level of civil service organizations. Moreover, self – managed teams create time space for senior managers to focus on coaching and mentoring business. In this regard, introducing systems and structure that helps to grow self – managed team is advantageous and mandatory.

Empowering citizens through total engagement of end users will create demand side pressure to the civil service. The demand side pressure is important to create a culture of accountability which leads to capacity building for both service givers and service users. The introduction of charter and charter mark programs in many west Europe and North American civil services helps to improve the quality of the civil service. It also realizes stakeholders' full engagement and insight in the process of service delivery. The experiences of developed countries show that citizens in public service are not only end



users but also owners and solution seekers for the challenges facing the service. Such an engagement of citizens' is not only to ask rights but also to seek solutions.

Introducing competition among civil service institutions through charter mark was fruitful in UK public Hospitals (Iles & Sutherland, 2000). As far as keeping the systems effective, charter mark induces competition among civil service institutions and creates an environment to learn from the total process of the competition. This is an important leap in strengthening professionalism in the public service. Creating citizens' awareness on public service, through citizens' charter, organizational charter and accountability reports helps to empower the citizen and reinforce professionalism.

Building professionalism demands enriching and enlarging jobs. Enriched and enlarged jobs motivate employees' to improve their knowledge and skills which is central in promoting and professionalizing the civil service.

Leadership development programs play an important role in professionalizing the civil service. The purpose of the leadership development shall be to create forward looking, innovative, and courageous leaders in the civil service. Most importantly creating model leaders is critical factor in the process of building professionalism in the civil service. West European experience including countries like France, Italy, Germany and Holland show that systematic leadership development is vital for professionalizing the civil service. Since human resource development is an investment, civil service institutions shall consider installing effective recruitment mechanism of leaders. If institutions recruit leaders unwisely, their investment will have less returns. So in many professional civil services the top management system is installed with great care and focus.

#### **4. Opportunities and Challenges of professionalizing the Ethiopian Civil Service**

The growth and transformation plan of Ethiopia (2010 – 2015) which has an integrated stretched goals calls for effective civil service leaders and employees. According to the plan, civil service institutions are expected to perform at the highest possible to realize the vision of the plan. Such circumstance avails multiple opportunities to professionalize the civil service. Stretched development goals calls for superior organizational performance which is possible with mobilizing professional employees in any organization including the civil service. The growth and transformation plan embraces capacity building as one of the pillars of its strategy. According to the capacity Building strategy of FDRE, Human Resource Development is critical. Thus, the Growth and Transformational Plan is a driver to build professionalism in the civil service.

The capacity building initiatives in Ethiopia are instrumental in building good governance, democracy and the economy by – and - large. Ethiopian capacity building program is comprehensive and encompasses all actors of good governance: public, private and civil society. The government political commitment is very strong to implement programs of capacity building that has greatest contribution to the national development.

The capacity building program which focuses on development of effective and efficient systems, structures and people runs themes on human resources development that are focusing on professionalism of the civil service. Generally, the capacity building strategy gives special attention for human resource. Moreover, the capacity building strategy gives priority for the civil service that it opens an opportunity for professionalism. The country's stride to democracy and good governance is highly dependent on the effectiveness of the civil service. Effective civil service means professional civil service that can deliver as it promises. Thus, professionalism is a prerequisite for civil service effectiveness. In this regard, lessons shall be taken that the effectiveness of reform initiatives can't be realized without acquiring the required values & believes.

The progress Ethiopia has made in democracy and development tells us that the more the nation respects the people's right the higher will be their engagement and therefore they demand more. Civil Service Institutions as vector of development has got an opportunity to improve their service level continuously. As a result the civil service of the day demands highly competent and professional civil servants. This reality obliges to professional development.

The National Growth & Transformational Plan with its stretched goals (In both its high case and base case scenarios) means that there is a lot expected from the civil service and in return compensations and working conditions will be improved as targets realized. Such transformation and renaissance era can create a fertile environment to professionalize the civil service.

Last but not least, the civil service reform initiatives, as the major ones are discussed in this paper, look after professionals' shows that both professionalism and reform have cause and effect relationship which has a spiral effect.

In discussing the challenges of strengthening professionalism in the Ethiopian civil service the following major points need to be highlighted.

- As public administrations are the state's tools, their reason for being depends on the role of the state (Blair D. 2009). Thus, aligning the Civil Service Reform Program with the objectives of the developmental democratic state has a paramount importance. The effectiveness of any civil service reform program depends on its adaptability with countries' context. This seems unbeatable challenge in many developing and transitional civil services including the Ethiopian.
- Quality service depends on quality people. Reforming the civil service to serve the public better needs to have talented and inquisitive people. It is a challenge for the civil service to attract and retain talented people with relatively minimum compensation. But civil service institutions can minimize this challenge by creating better attractive working conditions basis on intrinsic incentive schemes too.
- Installing effective training & development system is another challenge in Ethiopian Civil service. Building skills of people in areas of training need analysis which helps to identify right needs and suppliers will be a challenge in the short run. Another skill challenge will be measuring training effectiveness correctly.

With out developing these two main skills in managing training and development, one can't know the level of return gained by training investments.

- Developing the right attitude for professionalism and making people transparent and accountable will stay long as a challenge. Building the right attitude for professionalism requires the right structure and system as causal factors. The more we stay long to install appropriate systems and structure, the less will be the attainment of professionalism in Ethiopian civil service.
- Cultivating model leaders and professionals as much as possible will be a challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> African civil service. With out having model leaders and professionals in required number and quality, the ethos of professionalism can't be transferred easily from leaders to other civil servants. Lack of model leaders in required number means shortage of adequate mentors. In this regard leaders' competency framework need to be established and a system of performance management with its recognition and reward mechanisms shall be installed soon.
- Fighting corruption in a society where corruption is considered as easy and proper access for wealth is a strong challenge that the Ethiopian civil service encounters.
- Installing effective Performance Management system is another area of challenge in a situation where people are avoiding measurement and open appraisal. Open appraisal is a challenge in high power distance and closed society (Schneider and Louis, 1997).
- Implementing a comprehensive merit principles and make people accountable for violating the law is also a challenge. For example according to Merit Magazine knowingly and unknowingly, there is a serious violation of merit principles in Ethiopian civil service (Merit, vol.15, No.2, June 2010).

## **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1 Above all, improving the capacity of Ministry of Civil Service shall get priority. As the Ministry is a coordinator of Civil Service Reform Program of the nation and as it is a supervisory and facilitator of the HRM of the civil service, building its internal capacity must be at the top of the agenda.
- 5.2 According to Merit Magazine in some ministries & agencies the HRM function is suffering from misguided structure and wrong personnel staffing (Merit, vol.15, No.2, June 2010). The assumption behind this fallacy is considering HRM as any ordinary pen pushing administrative work. This indicates that the strategic notion of HRM is not properly perceived in Ethiopian Civil Service. There fore, professionalizing the HRM function of the civil service is required. In this regard, The Ministry of Civil Service shall be guided by a comprehensive HRM strategy and develop a competency framework of HR professionals in the civil service. So the recruitment and development of the professionals shall be based on the competency framework basic considerations. Moreover, a council shall be established with the leadership of Ministry of Civil Service that will serve as a capacity building and networking mechanism.
- 5.3 Devolution of the HRM functions shall be followed by appropriate capacity building of HR officers and line managers. There is a need of planned and sustained advocacy works on HRM in the civil service. The HRM reform agenda shall be

- backed by all appointees in the civil service. So there is a need of creating consultation forums and mechanisms to buy – in officials will.
- 5.4 Increasing managers’ coaching and mentoring knowledge and skill is important. In this regard Civil Service Ministry shall play a leading role in initiating and coordinating appropriate efforts.
  - 5.5 Civil service institutions shall strive to create a culture of learning. Initiating self – managed teams is critical to increase line managers’ coaching and mentoring skills so as to increase team performance.
  - 5.6 Improving the performance management system is critical in today’s Ethiopian Civil Service in order to align individual, team and organizational performance. The system must not be seen from measurement point of view alone. Such a system must play greater role in improving employees’ knowledge and skill.
  - 5.7 Strengthening the strategic planning and management system is advantageous to align civil service goals and objectives with the targets of Growth and transformational plan.
  - 5.8 Aligning the draft code of conduct of the civil service with different management and measurement systems is advantageous to ground the code.
  - 5.9 Installing a communication systems and plan that helps to mobilize civil servants and there by realize professional civil service is mandatory and urgent. In addition to system installation, using the media proactively & effectively to promote ethics and professionalism in the civil service is important.
  - 5.10 Planning to work together with other stakeholders and interest groups such as ombudsman , Ethiopian Human Right Commission , Ethics and Anti Corruption Commission , Office of General Auditor , Professional Associations ( such as Ethiopian Management Professional Associations , Society of Human Resource Management in Ethiopia ,and etc) , over sighting organs such as parliamentary committees , universities ( special relation with those working on Management and Human Resources Management disciplines ), the media is vital to promote professionalism in the civil service.
  - 5.11 Installing Benchmarking as one of organizational improvement mechanisms in the civil service. Its implementation must be disciplined and principled. Moreover, line institutions and agencies twinning initiatives must be promoted.
  - 5.12 A system of award and reward must be introduced in the civil service to induce organizational learning and a culture of performance.
  - 5.13 A system of Fast streaming must be introduce in order to promote high flier young employees to leadership position. In this regard countries (The UK & Singapore) best practices must be evaluated.
  - 5.14 The reintroduction of Job evaluation mechanism is very urgent because the current situation might lead to paying differently to jobs which have equal value. Paying differently for equal value of work is a serious violation of the merit principle.
  - 5.15 Currently over sixty-five different salary scales are used by different civil service institutions. This situation might violate the principle of paying equally for equal value of work.
  - 5.16 Different organizations with in the civil service have different benefit packages. This is a violation of civil service value that “we paid for what people contributes.”

So standardized benefit packages must be introduced in the civil service. But benefits arising from the nature of the job might be considered.

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