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EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION POLICY OF FRINGE BENEFIT MONETISATION ON WORKING CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYEES IN YOBE STATE NIGERIA

Aminu Mohammed Lawan, Ph.D — Department of Political Science, Yobe State University, Damaturu, Nigeria

Salisu Adamu Dalah — Department of Political Science, Yobe State University, Damaturu, Nigeria

Razlini Mohd Ramli, Ph.D — School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)

Abstract

The study investigates the effect of monetisation policy on working conditions in the public service of Yobe State, Nigeria. It has been noted that the Government spends a great deal of money on routine spending, such as paying salaries, pensions, and other fringe benefits to civil servants. There was a waste, mismanagement, and nonchalant attitude towards government properties, as it was wrongly assumed that government property is no property of anyone. The Federal Government of Nigeria implements monetisation as the monetary quantification of certain fringe benefits that the Government used to offer to its employees as part of its terms of service. These benefits include accommodation, vehicles, residential furniture, utility facilities, etc. The study employed a qualitative research method, open-ended, and inductive strategy. The study has administered an in-depth interview on 15 respondents selected from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Office of the Head of Public service, and Ministry of Health and Human Services of Yobe State, Nigeria. The data collected was analysed using thematic analysis with the support of NVivo. The software was used in data coding and creating a pattern from an in-depth interview. The results show that monetisation policy introduced in Nigeria's public service to reduce the cost of governance. It includes housing, furniture, vehicle, and domestic staff allowance given to the public servants in bulk. The findings of the study has contributed theoretical and practically. The study discovered that the Government reduces public spending by looking inward without sacking employees, unlike what the neoliberal model advocates. The study provides essential guidance to Government, policymakers, and policy implementers to understand the influence of monetisation policy in public service.

Keywords: Monetisation, Working conditions, Fringe Benefits, Employees, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Globalization has contributed tremendously to the growth and development and uniting the world into a global village. The concept of globalization has become the topic of discussion in the early 21st century, and it is a method of integrating comprehensive public policies, social movement, cultures, societies, world capital markets through trade and exchange of ideas (Schaefer, 2005);(Baylis, Smith, & Owens, 2017). The process of globalization has been enhanced by modern means of communication and transportation, giving the impression that the world is united globally. It shows that in the 21st-century globalization is a fast way, and it is continuous even though 75% of the world's population has access to daily television reception. Only 20% have access to consumer cash or credit (McMichael, 2000).

Despite the importance attached to globalization, it has some drawbacks. The flaws include Downsizing and rightsizing, Mergers and Acquisitions, Privatisation and Commercialisation, Restructuring of the Economy, Outsourcing, and Emergence of non-traditional forms of employment. Examples are part-time jobs, casualization, contract Labour (Folorusho, 2012). Several administrations in the past have made ambitious efforts in reforming the public service in Nigeria, with each designing and implementing its policies and programs for the welfare of the workers such as fringe benefit monetisation, with little if any laudable success.

Beginning from its independence in October 1960 and present-day, the Nigerian Government with international collaborators failed to address labour issues such as increased wages and salaries, improved working conditions, high rate of unemployment; casualization of workers; the mass sacking of workers, and so forth. The introduction of the structural adjustment program (SAP) in 1987 by the Babangida administration propels the 1988 public service restructuring/reforms, which serves as the beginning of neoliberal globalization in Nigeria. The (SAP) also introduced privatization and commercialization policies. Unfortunately, such systems have generated pressures on organizations thereby forcing them to adopt survival strategies such as retrenchment, outsourcing, down-sizing, and casualization of public service workers; this creates the unemployment crisis (Omolawal, 2014).

The structural adjustment introduced a reform in public service such as monetisation of fringe benefits of employees. Monetisation is the actual quantification and payments for welfare packages in monetary equivalents. The monetisation of fringe benefits refers to the precise quantification of employees' in-kind, non-wage compensation, in financial terms in relative calculations of the total value to the amount of salary. In other words, non-wage benefits are measured equivalently to wages in monetary terms (Eke 2007).

Achieving significant results in reducing employee hardship often hinge on what has been done, how it is done, when it is done, where it is done, and whom it is target at. It is evident from several kinds of literature and statistics that globalisation efforts of structural adjustment in Nigeria have failed to achieve the expected goal. The study exposed the globalisation effects of structural change and workers plight, especially in Nigeria's public service.

i. Expose the element and attributes of globalisation from the workers' perspective.
ii. Be a guideline and planning requirement, which emphasised in workers' development in Nigeria, especially public-sector workers.

The study will serve as a contribution to a knowledge of the literature on globalisation efforts and how well being of workers will be enhanced. Moreover, it will serve as a dimension to the understanding of the phenomenon of globalisation and will prompt further research in the area.

Objective of the study is to evaluate how the monetisation policy impact working conditions in public service of Yobe State, Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

The concept of monetisation deals with the conversion of employees' social benefits to monetary terms. Several countries venture into the economic restructured system due to Bretton wood agencies' requirement to obtain a loan to stabilise their economy out of the recession.

Therefore, the Government of Pakistan is seeking a mechanism to monetise the rewards and benefits of its civil servants not only to avoid increasing the burden of administrative expenses and tiredness but also to ensure richer job efficiency, morale, and loyalty among civil servants with integrity and honesty. In search of being together with the world, there is an agreement in Pakistan that monetising the benefits of senior civil servants will result in capping the Government's expenditure for non-development and preventing budget deficits and ensuring more transparency and accountability of public bureaucrats.

The monetisation of benefits in civil structure is a delicate and complicated process. Therefore, the Government has conducted numerous diagnostic studies. Some commissions, committees, task forces, and working groups have been reviewing this proposal and making recommendations on changes to the structure/system of compensation for each civil servants class in Pakistan. Such deliberations correctly recommend changes spanning a more extensive spectrum, including rationalisation of pay structure, encashment of benefits, and improvement of underlying policies and procedures for successful human resource management in Pakistan's public sector (Idrees, Naqvi, & Riaz, 2013).

In this study, we are discussing how social project funding differs from the social business model. We explain how to slowly monetise social value development by changing the financial emphasis strategically from income for the social mission to income with the social mission. Therefore, the structure of earning is transferred from social participation to business income. This transition also increases productivity. In particular, we argue that each social business model can be defined by the degree to which it monetises social value production and the amount of market revenue it produces with the underlying social mission over the expenditure. While the monetisation of social value development rises through the evolving position of the social purpose within the business model, our research shows how consumer sales slowly replace external funding, e.g., through donations (Dohrmann, Raith, & Siebold, 2015).

Monetisation or Social Impact Bond (SIB), a financial instrument that has attracted much attention from politicians and financiers, and which has spread around the world in a short time. Since its origins in the United Kingdom against a background of austerity policies and the penetration of market opportunities and business interests into social welfare provision. Therefore, SIBs monetise social programs by linking pay to results while at the same time restricting government power over service delivery, as it is structured based on public-private partnerships. Governments and investors frequently describe SIBs as a 'win-win.' They are described as a tool for the public sector, "designed to help improve the delivery of public services. Through making funding conditional on achieving results, SIBs boost the social effects of publicly supported programs (Roy, McHugh, & Sinclair, 2017).

Competitive remuneration is the key to attracting and retaining high-quality skills in general, and especially in the higher civil service. It ensures that, in the public service, wage rates would be approximately comparable with those in the private and other economic sectors. Data available (IMF) also indicate that African civil services were the lowest paying and declined further in the 1980s and 1990s. The downturn had a global effect on wage rates, but African public services were the hardest affected; they also suffered from wage inflation and work decompression. The most challenging task is to create performance metrics that are generally agreed and successfully applied in the public sector and in a consistent manner understood by all as linking pay to performance to improve efficiency at the individual and institutional levels.

The changes were to 'rightsized' the public service, requiring eliminating some 33,000 from the 180,000 numbered federal civil service. Besides, it was recruiting new skills, monetizing wages, implementing computerisation and payroll centralisation. It became a massive financial burden with nothing in successful results or outcomes for these public programs (Olowu, 2010).

Today, Kenya's Government views the public sector transformation plan as a complex and focused mechanism designed to reshape the public service to fulfill the position in achieving Vision 2030 (Isahakia, 2010). This change plan is often seen as a transition for the public sector and the start of a more integrated, long-term reform approach.

Besides, the ERS 2003-2007 declared that "the government is committed to accelerating the reform of the public service to create a leaner, more effective, more empowered and more competitive public service that concentrates public finances and human capital on the provision of core government services" (the Republic of Kenya, 2003: 11). The proposals were also to concentrate on offering sufficient opportunities to recruit and retain qualified workers to achieve a public sector pay structure and scale compatible with both macroeconomic targets and a wage bill sustainability (Hope, 2012).

Civil servants over-dependent on the Government to achieve their desired goals have made the Government ineffective. There are obvious cases of public servants retiring from service in Ebonyi state without owning any property of their own. Civil servants leave service without a home, a vehicle, etc. because of low wages and over-reliance on the Government for the provision of such services. The Government needs to demonstrate a more significant commitment to enforcing monetisation policy by implementing an effective action plan. The focus should be put on the monetisation of ministries to facilitate the realisation of government policy objectives.

The Government should rethink the annual payment of housing and other monetised allowances in bulk to public servants. The fringe benefits are an incentive for jobs. Prerequisites are consisting of different non-wage compensations given to employees besides their regular salaries and wages. Those benefits include workplace insurance (health, dental, career, etc.), accommodation (provided by employers or paid for by employers). Disability compensation, insurance, health allowance, day-care, tuition reimbursement, sick leave holiday (paid or unpaid), social security, profit-sharing, college support, and other significant benefits all need to be expressed by the laws of the civil service and not based on greed, rather than merit. The study noticed tremendously how the monetisation strategy's implementation could boost the Ebonyi state's public service (Onyekachi, 2017).

It has been noted that the Government spends a great deal of money on routine spendings, such as paying salaries, pensions, and other fringe benefits to civil servants. There was a waste, mismanagement, and non-challan attitude towards government properties, as it was wrongly assumed that government property is no property of anyone. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN, 2006) implements monetisation as the monetary quantification of certain fringe benefits that the Government used to offer to its employees as part of its terms of service. These benefits include accommodation, vehicles, residential furniture, utility facilities, etc. Monetisation policy is one of the economic reforms put in place by President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration to reduce the excess of financial and human capital. The plan aimed to reduce waste, which would result in saving for infrastructural growth in time. The monetisation of fringe benefits was a welcome development. However, the top government official gained most from the policy through the acquisition and purchase at a very tangible price of government offices, apartments, cars, and other assets (Chinwe, 2018).

Monetarisation has been used as part of the monetary policy approach to address various economic problems in different parts of the world. Ramachandran (2003) says one of the best policy choices to achieve development and stability consistent fiscal prudence is to monetize some government policy portions. It is noted that in recent years, the cost of governance has continued to escalate beyond comprehension. This increase emanated mainly from the responsibility of supplying the public officials with basic amenities. To alleviate the cost of providing essential services to elected officials and curtail the exploitation and misuse of public resources, the Federal Government agreed to turn all the privileges public servants enjoyed into monetary compensation. When the monetisation is pushed down from the ministry workers to parastatal civil servants, they look for improved working conditions and the development of staff.

Monetisation, we conclude, has a lot to do with a healthy and efficient workforce. The Government will do many things they could not do with the public servants by using the monetisation program. The Federal Government is looking for ways to eradicate bloated and moribund jobs in the form of rightsizing, downsizing, consolidation, and rationalization to strengthen the structure of public service. However, the above conclusion does not rule out the possibility of raising workers' morals. And thus, higher productivity and real production, particularly improving and enhancing service conditions for employees, need to increase the numbers of Nigerian employees due to continuous depreciation of the value of the national currency (Saka, 2011).

Adamu and Rasheed (2016) define a public expenditure as the cost incurred by the Government in carrying out its operations. With the growing rate of government interventions, it might be easy to judge the portion of public spending attributed to government maintenance itself and the proportion to support society and the economy. Government spending is narrowly divided into two (2) major categories: recurrent expenditure and capital spending. Recurring expense is the one that happens on a regular, weekly or even monthly basis. For example, this includes payment of benefits and wages, administrative overhead vehicle repairs, cost of electricity and telephone bills, water rates and insurance premiums, etc. On the other side, capital spending applies to infrastructural ventures. Therefore, standard treasury management policies and practices are especially important in Nigeria's governance. To be constructive in preventing the persistent lack of productivity and effectiveness that characterised public sector financial activities leading to fraud. There is a need to start introducing value monetisation and making sure the trend of purchasing a lot of cars for public officers is discouraged (Adamu & Rasheed, 2016).

Nigerian workers in most organisations, both in the public and private sectors, have repeatedly protested inadequate remuneration, healthcare, and working conditions. For most of the top officers in Nigeria, remuneration packages include annual wages, housing, car maintenance and fuel, personal assistants, house maintenance, home employees, leisure and service allowances. Many provisions include electoral district provisions, annual leave, distress allowances, wardrobes, newspapers, and allowances for responsibility, etc. Enhanced workers' benefits packages would represent opportunities that make employment, transportation, housing, and healthcare services more available to reduce working conditions and improve people's living standards (Omilusi & Isaac, 2020).

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research method, open-ended, and inductive strategy. A qualitative approach is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives that are multiple meanings of individual experiences meanings socially and historically constructed, with the intention to developing a theory or pattern or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e., political, issue-oriented, collaborative, or change-oriented) or both (Creswell, 2003). The study collected open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data.

The justification for choosing the qualitative approach is because the research is exploratory, which requires an in-depth knowledge of variables under study. Besides that, the interview method is suitable for obtaining data in detail by the researcher on the research topic.

However, the researcher has administered an in-depth interview on 15 respondents selected from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Office of the Head of Public service, and Ministry of Health and Human Services of Yobe State, Nigeria. They include three (3) permanent secretaries, six (6) directors, and six (6) heads of planning, and administration, respectively, making the total number of fifteen (15) participants took part in the interview process.

A non-probability sampling method has been used in the study that is purposive sampling techniques**.** The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the participant's deliberate choice attributable to the characteristics that the participant holds. It is a technique non-random that does not involve basic theories or a fixed number of participants (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

The data collected was analysed using thematic analysis with the support of NVivo. The software was used in data coding and creating a pattern from an in-depth interview.

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. It is widely used, but there is no explicit agreement about what thematic analysis is and how you go about doing it (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis could be the technique that represents both realities and unravels the surfaces of truth. Braun and Clarke outline six phases of analysis, which have been served as a guide to the researcher. Step one: familiarising yourself with your data. Phase two: generating initial codes. Step 3 is searching for or creating themes. Step four: reviewing themes. Step 5 is defining and naming themes Step six: producing the report. Meanwhile, in data analysis, this research adopted and applied six stages of thematic analysis as enumerated by the above authors.

4. **Findings and Discussion**

Monetisation means converting into cash the fringe benefits being enjoyed by Civil Servants as part of their remuneration package and conditions of service in the Nigerian perspective.

It perceives the ramifications of the intended impact of monetisation as public policy reform. Its policy will enable the Government to get the real picture of what it costs to maintain a Political Office Holder, or Public Servant, in office, leading to more realistic budgeting and budget implementation (Ayapere, 2015).

Through October 2005, the monetisation program monetised these fringe benefits. When evaluating these benefits, a certain percentage of their basic salary would be paid to employees every month, thereby making the expense reimbursement scheme of the monetised benefits a fixed level (Aminat, 2010).

The monetisation is a policy introduced in Nigeria's public service to reduce the cost of administration of Government. It includes housing, furniture, vehicle, and domestic staff allowance given to the public servants in bulk. The participant that the researcher interviewed from the governors' office maintains that:

"*The government of Yobe state has monetised the use of a vehicle, furniture, and housing to public servants by given them money to buy as their own*."

Nigerian regime faced with severe socio-political and economic problems. The high maintenance costs and the need to allow good usage of public properties (Iji, 2003; Francis, 2004), The Government has agreed to formulate the monetisation strategy to address those challenges facing the nation, specifically the public service.

Saka (2005) states that the forces behind monetisation strategies are as much as the Nigerian Government is interested in as follows:

(i) Reducing the high cost of governance because past and current governments are rife with corruption that makes it costly to manage public affairs

(ii) Having public servants take a more proactive approach to public assets;

(iii) The prevailing maladministration of public assets by a government official will be over, as these individuals will be offered money elsewhere to obtain this property;

(iv). The strategy also presented a chance for the regime to refresh and add value to its investments to produce revenue for the administration sector (Saka, 2011).

The idea of monetisation policy intends to cut costs of governance in public service. The capital budgets have not been fully executed over the years due to the high operating costs of political, judicial, and public office holders (Ekaette 2003 (Saka, 2011). A response of participant interviewed from the field indicates that:

> "*The overhead cost has been reduced from 100% to 50% due to the economic meltdown. This policy has minimised the expenses of the government*".
>
> "*The monetisation policy helps reduce the cost of maintaining the organisation vehicle because the top management staff gets a car loan. However, cutting public expenditure has severely affected our ministry; we have many general hospitals under our supervision, and their overhead cost reduced to 50%; these changes affect the rendering of the human services*".

> "*For example, previously, many money-making consultancy firms come to organise a workshop to the public servants, but now they have not received any patronage due to the reduction of overhead cost*."

A respondent from the ministry of health complains about the cost reduction. "*For example, our overhead cost budgets for running the ministry are now cut down to 50%. Hence it affects our service delivery"* (Field Study, 2023).

The most apparent findings to emerge from the analysis are that the monetisation policies help diminish the Government's expenditure. Moreover, the employees working with the public service benefits from the plan. Even though, the implementation did not cut across the board among the beneficiary staff, some categories enjoyed the system most. This study set out to identify the importance of monetisation on working conditions in public service of Yobe state, Nigeria. The payment of fringe benefits is based on percentages to all categories of civil servants, as indicates below:

Once every four years, a judicial, public, and political office holder will receive three hundred per cent of their yearly basic salary as a furniture allowance. Such allowance is paid at a rate of 75 percent of the yearly basic salary per year.

The payment was already monetised and will continue to be enforced as follows:
Salary Level 01 – 06 - ₦3,600 yearly
Salary Level 07 – 10 - ₦6,000 annually
Salary Level 12 – 14 - ₦7,800 yearly
Salary Level 15 – 17 - ₦9,600 annually
Permanent Secretaries - ₦16,800 p.a.
The Head of the public servants of the federation has - ₦16,800 p.a.
Political, public, and judicial office holder has 20 percent of annual basic salary.

The domestic service allowance for public servants has also been monetised, and the rates continue to apply as follows:
Salary Level 15 - ₦119,586 yearly
Salary Level 16 - ₦239,172 yearly
Salary Level 17 - ₦358,544 yearly
The permanent secretaries with four domestic staff - ₦478.344 per year
Head of Service with four domestic helps - ₦478,344 each year
Judicial, political, and public office

It has not monetised the procurement of motor vehicles to government officials. The Government can no longer provide officials with chauffeur-driven cars affected by the plan. Loans for motor vehicles would be issued to officers at the cost of 350 percent of their annual salary. The loan must be repaid at a 4 percent interest rate within six years, as specified in the motor vehicle advance decree-law.
Concerning the use of public office cars, the Government has regulated the following:
(i) Brand new cars shall not be purchased by the government parastatals, agencies, or departments.
(ii) A precise number of utility vehicles, including buses, will be allowed to each Ministry/Agency for essential services:
(iii) An application for approval shall be made to the president or the governor, where the purchase of a brand-new vehicle is required by government agencies, parastatals, and departments.
(iv) to elaborate details of the disposal of the cars, a committee was formed;
(v) Under the management of the federation's Head of civil service office, service-wide staff buses will be a pool to take personnel to and from the office on an authorised date (Saka, 2011).

However, given the above, the monetisation policy's implementation is based on a percentage manner, for instance. One participant interviewed from the governors' office maintains that:

> *The furniture allowance is 300% of the officer's annual salary, while the vehicles allowance 300% of the pay per annum. For example, when the governor appoints the public office holder, such as a permanent secretary, he will receive a bulk payment of the furniture, vehicle, and housing allowance. That is, the Government will monetise these fringe benefits to the public officer's concern (Field Study, 2023).*

This result is likely related to the above assertions from the literature on the monetisation policy's execution on public sector workers. Below is the explanation on the existing law's passage that legitimises and legalises the monetisation of fringe benefit of employees in Nigeria.

Ekaette (2003) states that passing into law those wages and allowances of judicial, public, and political office holders Bill 2002 by the parliament creates some public service changes. The legislation prescribes wage allowances and fringe benefits for all judicial, public, and political office holders. According to him, the monetisation program offers 100 percent of the annual basic salary for housing, 300 percent of the same as the allowance for furniture. The circular letter No Res SGF 19/s.47/C.1/II/371 of 27 June 2003: Title 'Federal Public Service monetisation of fringe benefits' with the signature of the secretary of the Government of the federation, asserts that officers that currently occupied government housings or rented apartments are not eligible. They are obligated to pay 10% of their basic salaries, as a service fee for the government quarters' maintenance (Saka, 2011).

The monetisation policy impacts the working conditions of public servants because it instills discipline in them. One participant that the researcher interviewed from the governors' office said that,

"*The policy impacts on working conditions of our public servants by instilling discipline in public service*."

"*The government of Yobe state is operating base on the international best practice in terms of spending. We have financial discipline; we do not go outside our budget in terms of spending*".

"*Public spending now drastically reduced to the extent that the government did not sponsor its staff to attend a workshop and seminar that is not necessary which inculcates discipline among the staff*" (Field Study, 2023).

The Government of Yobe state restructures its public service to block some financial leakages through monetisation plan. This system ensures financial discipline in the state civil service. The restructuring plan instills discipline in the public service of the state.

Implementing the fringe benefit monetisation policy for Nigerian public servants is predicated on some observations. As stated earlier, such findings are that the provision of some compensation to workers has continued to drain enormous resources from the public purse. The wish to reduce the burden on public resources resulting from government involvement in the physical provision of fringe benefits was also articulated (Onyekachi, 2017).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The monetisation policy has impacted the working conditions of employees in Yobe state public service. The system teaches staff discipline in the civil service of Yobe state, Nigeria. Public servants are permitted to own personal property. The policy promotes excellent service delivery and cuts costs and extravagance. Monetisation policy creates a favourable working atmosphere within Yobe State, Nigeria's public service.

The results of the present study have both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, the current research results were discovered that the Government reduces public spending by looking inward without sacking employees, unlike what the neoliberal model advocates. Therefore, poor public governance could be responsible for certain factors such as corruption, inefficiency, lower productivity in public service, and misplaced priority. While practically, the study provides essential guidance to Government, policymakers, and policy implementers to understand the influence of structural adjustment in public service. Based on this knowledge, they know the significant impact of minimising expenditure by monetising civil servants' fringe benefit.

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