



An assessment of public sector service delivery in Nigeria: A case study of federal capital territory area councils, 2007-2011

Nazifi Abdullahi Darma ^{1*}, Muhammad Ali ²

¹ *Department of Economics, University of Abuja, Nigeria*

² *Center for Economic Development and Policy Analysis, Abuja, Nigeria*

Abstract

This paper examines quality of service offered by the Nigerian public service in the six local councils of Nigeria's federal capital Abuja. Using tools of Gap Analysis for the period of five (5) years beginning from 2007 to 2011 we measure and quantify the gap between the expected level of service delivery and the actual quality of service delivered to the public. The paper applies gap analysis to identify and assess the quality and key determinants of service delivery in Nigeria's public sector. We find that there is a very noticeable difference between what is officially expected of the public service and the perception of the quality of service actually delivered. We also find a noticeable difference in perceptions of the efficiency of public service delivery relative to services provided by private agents.

Keywords: Public sector; service delivery; gap analysis

Published by ISDS LLC, Japan | Copyright © 2014 by the Author(s) | This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.



Cite this article as: Darma, N.A. and Ali, M. (2014), "An assessment of public sector service delivery in Nigeria: A case study of federal capital territory area councils, 2007-2011", *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, Vol. 3 No. 8, pp. 1756-1776.

* Corresponding author. E-mail address: nazeefdarma@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Service delivery is more complex in the public sector as it is not just about meeting expressed needs, but finding out the needs that are not expressed, setting priorities, resource allocation and publicly justifying and accounting for what has been done (Gowan, et al., 2001). In most developing countries, the public sector plays significant role in service provision as it controls much of the economic resources. In today's globalizing and competitive world, the delivery of quality service is strategic for success and survival (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990; Zeithaml, et al., 1990). In view of this, public agencies have come under pressure and debate in recent years in terms of their efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery with respect to the needs and rights of the citizens. This according to Carvalho et al. (2010) is in line with the principles of New Public Management (NPM) which aims at meeting the needs of the citizens rather than that of the bureaucracy.

The essential elements of NPM as explained by Pollitt (1995) are budget cutting, disintegrating traditional bureaucratic organizations into separate agencies, decentralization within the agencies, separating the function of public service delivery from purchasing, introducing market mechanisms, working to performance targets, indices and output objectives, flexibility in public employment, and laying more emphasis on service quality and customer responsiveness. Hence, it has become expedient to rethink public service delivery in order to improve their quality (Roy and Seguin, 2000) to satisfy public needs, please people and firms as much as possible, favour good governance and national economic competitiveness (Carvalho et al., 2010).

In Nigeria, the main objective of the public sector is to provide and serve as catalyst for affordable and quality service delivery to the citizens. Basic needs of life such as food, shelter, education, power and energy, health and water supply, but above all, peace and security are needed to live a decent and productive life. This cannot be possible without the provision/delivery of services that are capable of ensuring and enhancing human security and welfare by government.

In order to achieve this, the government is given certain powers through the constitution such as controlling "the national economy in such a manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity" (section 16 (1) (b)). Also Section 16 (2) (d) states that the State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age care and pension, unemployment, sick benefits, and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens. In fact certain sections of the constitution make it illegal to withhold these services to any citizen of the country.

Therefore, the provision of public services in the country is the primary responsibility of the government, complemented by the private sector. The financing of projects for the provision of these services such as education, health, agriculture, water and sanitation, power, housing and urban development, justice, defence and Security among others is usually carried out through annual government budgetary provisions. However, the distribution/delivery of public services in Nigeria just like in many other developing economies is often fraught with discrimination, low quality and access, lack of fairness and equity between urban and rural

areas. This discrimination in the provision of public services is responsible for the gap in development between urban and rural areas in Nigeria presently.

It is in view of this that this study undertakes a rapid analysis (and appraisal) of the status of public service delivery and its financing in Nigeria using baseline information on public services in terms of their provisioning, access, quality, equity, and gender responsiveness with a view to ascertain existing gaps between budgetary allocations and delivery of public services and between expectations and performance using gap analysis/SERVQUAL model. Other specific objectives include but are not limited to:

- Analyze public expenditure trend on social services in Nigeria during the review period;
- Assess public response to service quality, adequacy and gender responsiveness; and
- Articulate policy options towards addressing defined gaps in public services provision.

2. Literature review

Service quality has been defined as the extent to which an organization meets or exceeds expectations of customers or beneficiaries (Parasuraman et al., 1998). It is the gap between customer expectations of service and perceived service (Zeithaml et al., 1990). Perceived service quality is derived from comparisons by customers, of expectations with what they perceive of service delivery by the suppliers (Zeithaml et al., 1990). Customers' expectations according to Bitner (1994) are their perceptions of service that serve as standards against which service performance is judged. Parasuraman et al., (1998) explained that expectations are what beneficiaries think a service should deliver rather than what might be the offer.

If expectations outweigh performance, then perceived quality is not satisfactory and customer dissatisfaction occurs (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Lewis and Mitchell, 1990). Four factors are identified as influencing customers' expectations: word of mouth communications; personal needs; past experience; and external communications (Zeithaml et al., 1990). A gap is created if customers' perceptions of service delivered fails to meet their expectations (Ramseook-Munhurrum et al., 2010). This gap can be closed by identifying and executing strategies that affect perceptions or expectations, or both (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml et al., 1990).

There are two main perspectives on the appropriate method of measuring service quality: the expectation disconfirmation paradigm; and the performance paradigm. The former explains service quality as the extent to which service provision meets expectations while the latter argues that expectations are not relevant and only performance should be considered. These two explanations have given rise to two theories: SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml et al., 1988) and SEVPERF (Cronin and Taylor, 1992).

In view of the fact that the consideration of expectations in public service provisions allows for participation of the public in issues of governance and better consideration of the needs of the people in the process of service delivery, we adopt the SERVQUAL model or gap analysis which proposes that customers evaluate the quality of a service on the basis of five factors: "reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles" (Ramseook-Munhurrum et al., 2010; p.39).

Also, the SERVQUAL model is applicable across different forms of services (Parasuraman et al., 1998); the model could be adapted to suit specific needs and is most valuable when applied in periodic tracking of service quality trends (Ramseook-Munhurrum et al., 2010). In addition, SERVQUAL model could be extended to measure quality gaps, and as a diagnostic tool to help management in identification of shortfalls in quality. The gap is computed by deducting perception statements from the expectation statements. Positive gap score means that the expectations have been exceeded. This helps service providers to review whether there is need for redeployment of resources to areas of underperformance (Wisniewski, 2001).

According to Brysland and Curry (2001) the literature is more in support of the use of SERVQUAL model in the public sector. The flexibility and applicability of SERVQUAL in various organizations both public (Ramseook-Munhurrum et al., 2010; Donnelly et al., 2006); and private establishments (Kangis and Passa, 1997; Luk, 1997); gives confidence in utilizing it as a theoretical and empirical basis for measuring service quality in this study.

A number of empirical studies have been conducted to investigate the extent to which service delivery meets the expectations of beneficiaries. Among these studies include Anderson (1995) who examined the quality of service provided by public health clinic of the University of Houston Health Centre using the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model. The study revealed that patients were generally dissatisfied with the service delivery as measured by the five dimensions of SERVQUAL model with the highest dissatisfaction associated with assurance while tangibles and empathy revealed the lowest level of dissatisfaction.

Donnelly et al. (2006) conducted a research using SERVQUAL technique to investigate police service delivery in Scotland and to examine how well the force understands its customers' expectations and how well its internal process is in support of quality service provision. The study found that the police have a good understanding of the service quality expectations of their customers represented by elected councillors. The study revealed the need for improvement in service quality performance from the viewpoint of customers and the need for more attention to be paid to the definition and compliance to service quality standards. Using the SERVQUAL model, Wisniewski (2001) conducted a study to investigate customer satisfaction with the public sector in Scottish councils' services. The research found that customer expectations were not met as the dimensions of tangibles and reliability had negative gaps.

In another study, Ramseook-Munhurrum et al. (2010) investigated the extent to which customer expectations of service match the front-line employees' (FLE's) perceptions of customer expectations in the public sector in Mauritius. Using SERVQUAL model, the study also examined customers' expectations of public service and compares it with their perceptions of the service provided. The findings revealed a significant gap in meeting customer expectations and the FLE appears to have a good understanding of what the expectations actually are.

This study provides evidences from the Nigerian economy using the Federal Capital Territory Area Councils as a case study.

3. Methodology

The SERVQUAL model was adopted to measure the quality of public sector service as represented by the gap between beneficiaries' expectations and perceptions. Thus, service quality can be measured by tangible assessment, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. These factors were taken into cognizance in designing the questionnaires. The Basic Services considered were health, electricity, water, safety, security and sanitation.

The qualitative and quantitative analysis include the public access to public services; the distribution of public services; the quality of public services from the various channels of delivery; the effectiveness and efficiencies of the channels of distribution of services; the providers of the public services; the effectiveness and efficiency of each of the providers of the public services; and gender audit of public service delivery.

The standard measure of service delivery is as perceived by the Citizens, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and selected Public Institutions. Citizens' experiences and perception of public services are critical for identifying local needs and priorities, design and implementation of effective and efficient service models.

We use gap analysis to assess the difference between the expected and actual quality of service offered by the Nigerian civil service. To assess the relative quality of public service, a comparison is made between the perceptions of public and private agents. The scope of the gap analysis is for the period of five (5) years beginning from 2007 to 2011. The analysis provided information regarding public service provision/delivery and public service financing. The period of evaluation in question coincided with the successful transition from a civilian administration to another civilian administration in Nigeria for the first time in over 50 years.

The data sets used comprise both primary and secondary data.

3.1. Primary data

For the primary data sources, a specially designed Questionnaire and a Key Informants' Questionnaire were administered on the selected MDAs, service providers, end users and CSOs. A total of 20 Questionnaires were administered to the select service providers, with 19 of them filled and returned, representing a 95% positive response. In addition, Key Informants Questionnaire were administered to 10 service end users, out of which 9 of the respondents answered the designed questions, representing 90% response rate to the Key Informant Questionnaire administered. The various responses from the surveys were collated and analyzed.

3.2. Secondary data

Literature review of past budgets and appropriation Acts 2007-2011, the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended, sectoral policy objectives and goals of the selected public services related MDAs as contained in the Nigeria Vision 20:2020 Economic Transformation Blueprint document and 1st National Implementation Plan (2010-2013) for NV20:2020 was undertaken with a view to determining the gaps through projections and actual delivery.

The essence of reviewing Appropriation Acts was to study the overall national budget, its distribution for the delivery of key public services in the selected MDAs in comparison with other non-service sectors and the various sources of income/revenue for financing public services for the purpose of:

- Analysis of total spending on education, water supply & sanitation, health, agriculture, housing & urban development and other essential social services over the period of 2007-2011 with a view to detecting an increasing or decreasing trend.
- Comparison of total expenditure on public service provision from 2007 to 2011 relative to total capital expenditure and overall public expenditure to determine proportional allocation and trend over the period.
- Analysis of public services provision expenditure relative to total debt service payments (Internal and External), national security expenditure, recurrent expenditure, overhead expenditure and total capital expenditure for the purpose of comparison and trend analysis over the period under review.

When assessing perceived quality of service delivery, reliable information is difficult to obtain, and this has remained one of the major difficulties over the years in Nigeria. Basic statistics on performance released by public institutions are neither generally correct, nor comprehensive enough. Thus, service quality can be measured by tangible assessment, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. These factors were taken into cognizance in designing the questionnaires. The Basic Services considered were health, electricity, water, safety, security and sanitation. The effort is the continued tracking of citizens' opinion on salient issues affecting human wellbeing.

4. Analysis of results and findings

The study has revealed that government has not live up to public expectations in terms of service delivery. In recent times, the MDAs have been accused of lack of adequate capacity to implement developmental projects. The level of corruption in public establishments has also contributed to the weak governance structure for the delivery of public services in Nigeria.

Due to the inadequacies of public services particularly in the rural areas, there is a growing demand for the provision of these services in all parts of the country. Communities and social organizations usually channel their demands for public services through their elected representatives at the various tiers of government, but these communities are not usually involved in the monitoring of the execution of projects for the provision of these services.

4.1. Quality of service delivery

The effort is the continued tracking of citizens' opinion on salient issues affecting human wellbeing. Findings imply that most people assess the quality of healthcare facilities to be (28.4%), water (26.3%) and electricity (24.2%) as uncertain. However, the figure shows that residents in Abuja mostly perceived, the quality of services of safety (62.1%), security (64.2%) and sanitation (54.7%) were insufficient and ineffective.

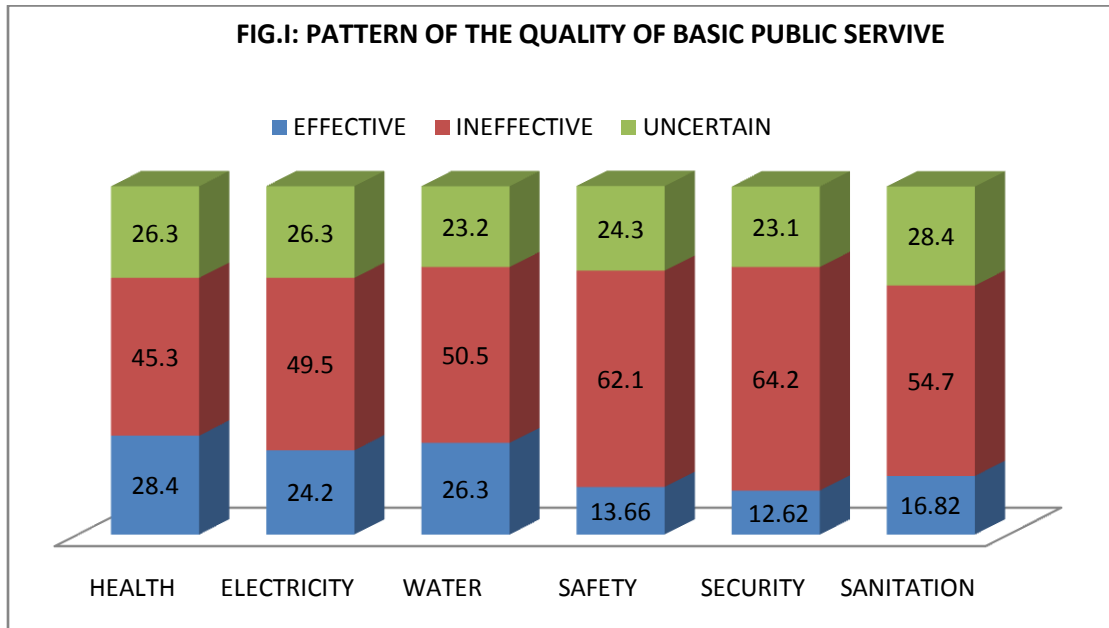


Figure I. Quality of Basic Public Service Delivery in the FCT (Source: Public Service Survey, 2012)

The relative quality of public service is very low when compared to service delivery from private agents (See Figure II). 100% of the respondent perceived that there is a difference in the services of Basic Hospitals by the public and private agents.

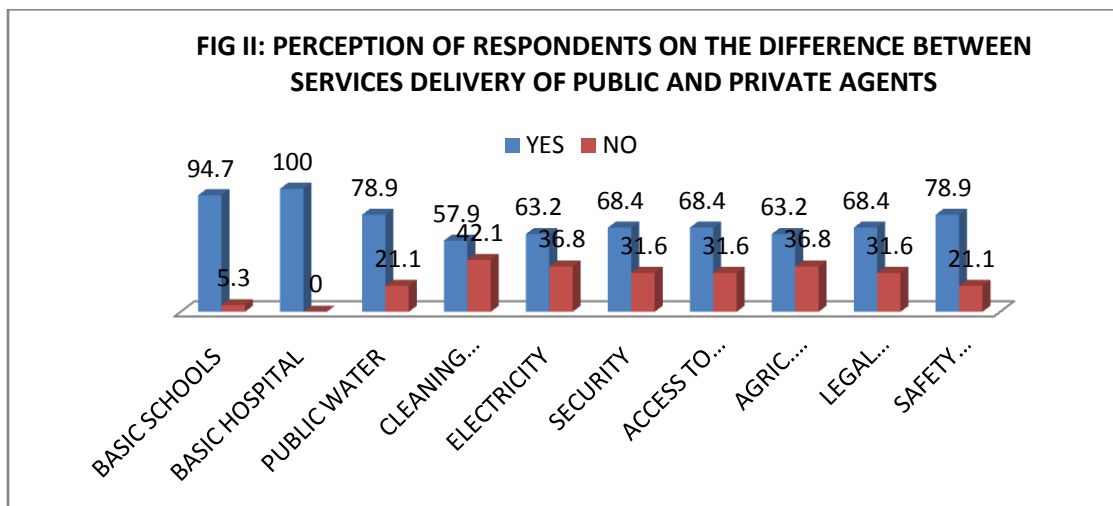


Figure II. Perception of Respondents on Difference between Public and Private Service Delivery (Source: Public Service Survey, 2012)

It is clear that most of the respondents perceived a significant difference on all the services listed above as provided by public and private entities, thereby indicating their preference for the services of private entities relative to public agencies and institutions.

From the study conducted on the availability of service delivery, almost 79.0% of residents surveyed in Abuja perceived availability and access to Basic Schools and 42.1% of the respondents perceived the availability and access to both Basic Hospitals and Cleaning Services, while only 11% strongly agree with the provision of Agricultural facilities and 15.8% with security services. However, about 13.6% of the respondents were uncertain about the availability of all the services.

4.2. Availability and Equitable Distribution

4.2.1. Urban Distribution (Abuja)

From the study, substantial differences were recorded on the type of services availability and levels of agreement. For example, while almost 79.0% of residents surveyed in Abuja perceived availability of Basic Schools in the service delivery survey, the corresponding figure for Basic Hospitals was 42.1%. Furthermore, 42.1% of the respondents perceived the availability of both Basic Hospitals and Cleaning Services, while only 11% strongly agree with the provision of Agricultural facilities and 15.8% with security services. However, about 13.6% of the respondents were uncertain about the availability of all the services.

Table II. Perception of Availability of Public Services

Type of Service	Disagree or Strongly Disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Agree or Strongly Agree (%)
Basic Schools	15.8	5.3	79.0
Basic Hospitals	42.1	15.8	42.1
Public Water	31.6	15.8	52.6
Cleaning Services	47.4	10.5	42.1
Electricity	31.6	15.8	52.6
Security	68.4	15.8	15.8
Access to Credit	63.1	10.5	26.4
Agricultural Facilities	68.4	21.1	10.5
Legal Entitlements	73.7	10.5	15.8
Safety Equipment	73.7	15.8	10.5

Source: Public Service Survey, 2012

In terms of the distribution of public services, 68.4% of the respondents agree or strongly agree on the distribution of Basic Schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Additionally, 47.4% of respondents perceived both the provision of Public Water and Electricity to be distributed equally, while 36.9% of the respondents perceived the distribution of Basic Hospitals in the Federal Capital Territory as adequate. The least in the perception of the distribution is the provision of Agricultural Facility (5.3%) followed by Security Services and Safety Equipment (10.5%) each. However, about 15.79% of the respondents were uncertain about the distribution of all the services.

The implication is that Government needs to do more in the provision of Basic Infrastructure on Security, Agricultural Facilities, Health and Safety Services, access to Credit and Legal Entitlement. In addition, with less than 50% perceiving equal distribution, service delivery is less than equitable in at least half of the city. Thus, distribution even within urban centres is less than ideal. As can be seen in Figure 5 below, the efficiency of public service distribution in Abuja is not encouraging.

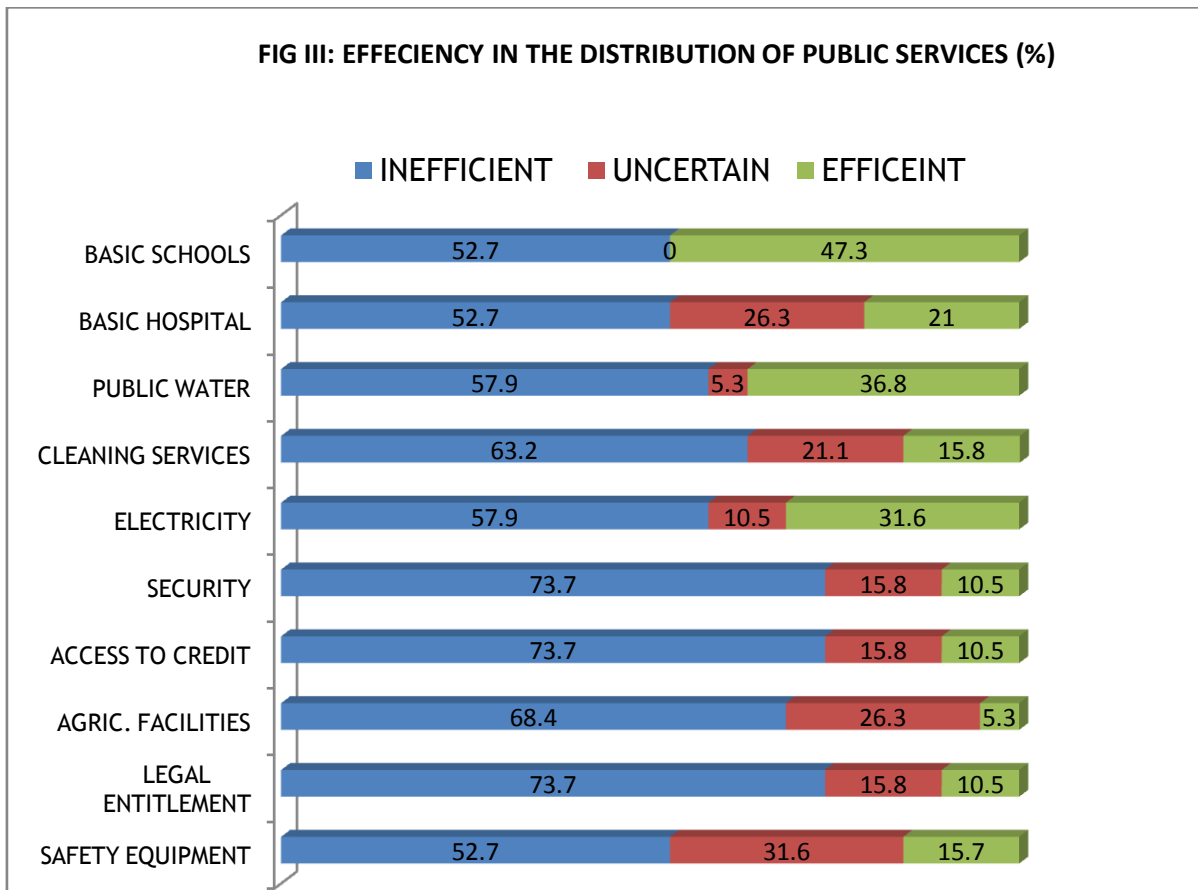


Figure I. Efficiency in Public Service Distribution (Source: Public Service Survey, 2012)

The result shows the highest perception of efficiency in the distribution of public services in descending order starting from Basic Schools (47.3%), Public Water (36.8%), Electricity (31.6%) and Basic Hospitals (21%). Also, the highest perception of inefficiency in increasing order were actually from Cleaning Services (63.2%), Agricultural Facilities (68.4%), Security (73.4%), and Legal Entitlements and Access to Credit separately at 73.7%. About 16.8% of the respondents were however uncertain about the efficiency of the distribution of all the services surveyed.

On the quality of the public services, the findings imply that most people assess the quality of healthcare facilities to be (28.4%), water (26.3%) and electricity (24.2%). However, the figure shows that residents in Abuja mostly perceived the quality of services of safety (62.1%), security (64.2%) and sanitation (54.7%) were insufficient.

The summary of the findings on public service delivery in Abuja is shown in APPENDIX I. While table II below shows perceptions of service delivery in the Federal Capital territory.

Table III. Perception of Public Service Delivery in the FCT

Type of Service	Disagree or Strongly Disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Agree or Strongly Agree (%)
Basic Schools	26.3	5.3	68.4
Basic Hospitals	32.1	21.1	36.9
Public Water	42.1	10.5	47.4
Cleaning Services	57.9	21.1	21.0
Electricity	42.2	10.5	47.4
Security	79.0	10.5	10.5
Access to Credit	73.7	10.5	15.8
Agricultural Facilities	68.4	26.3	5.3
Legal Entitlements	63.1	21.1	15.8
Safety Equipment	68.5	21.0	10.5

Source: Public Service Survey, 2012

4.2.2. Gender responsiveness

For equity dimension in the provision of public services, the study shows that more than half of the respondents perceived gender parity in the services provided by Public Water Sources (52.6%), Cleaning

Services (57.9%) and Electricity (52.6%). On the average, 45.3% of the respondents perceived the existence of gender parity in the provision of all the Basic Public Services. Furthermore, slightly less than one third of the respondents perceived gender disparity in the security, legal entitlements and safety equipment. On the average, about 25% of the respondents perceived gender disparity on the overall services provided, while about 30% were uncertain as to whether there is gender parity or disparity on the provision of these services.

4.3. Effectiveness of Budgetary Allocations

The sources of financing Government budget is through revenues generated from crude oil, non-oil exports, customs & excise duties, taxes (company profit tax, personal income tax, value added tax, etc) and other sundry revenue sources. This shows that the percentage of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) in financing the national budget is virtually zero, as it is not officially captured in national plans and budgets, though a lot of development intervention is provided by many development partners.

Table I. Disparity against Women and Children in Public Service Provision

Type of Service	Disagree or Strongly Disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Agree or Strongly Agree (%)
Basic Schools	47.4	26.3	26.3
Basic Hospitals	47.4	26.3	26.3
Public Water	52.6	31.6	15.8
Cleaning Services	57.9	36.8	5.3
Electricity	52.6	21.1	26.3
Security	47.4	21.1	31.6
Access to Credit	47.4	26.3	26.3
Agricultural Facilities	36.8	36.8	26.3
Legal Entitlements	36.8	31.6	31.6
Safety Equipment	26.3	42.1	31.6

Source: Public Service Survey, 2012

Successive increases in government total budgetary allocations and expenditure did not translate to actual performance and tangible deliveries of public services in terms of availability, access, quality and distribution. This is attributed to the high levels of corruption in public establishments. In fact, the marked

improvement in the amount of revenues that accrued to all tiers of government as a result of higher price of crude oil did not help to bridge the gaps as well. Even the guarantee to quality and equity in the provision, distribution and delivery of public services to Nigerians contained in the constitution did not yield the desired result.

Fig 4.4 below shows that in 2007 and 2008 , total allocation for the key public service sectors was N490 billion Naira. It decreased in 2008 to N390 billion Naira and was maintained at N380 billion Naira by 2009.Total allocation for these sectors however increased in 2010 to the sum of N1.12 trillion Naira and dropped to N840 billion Naira by 2011.

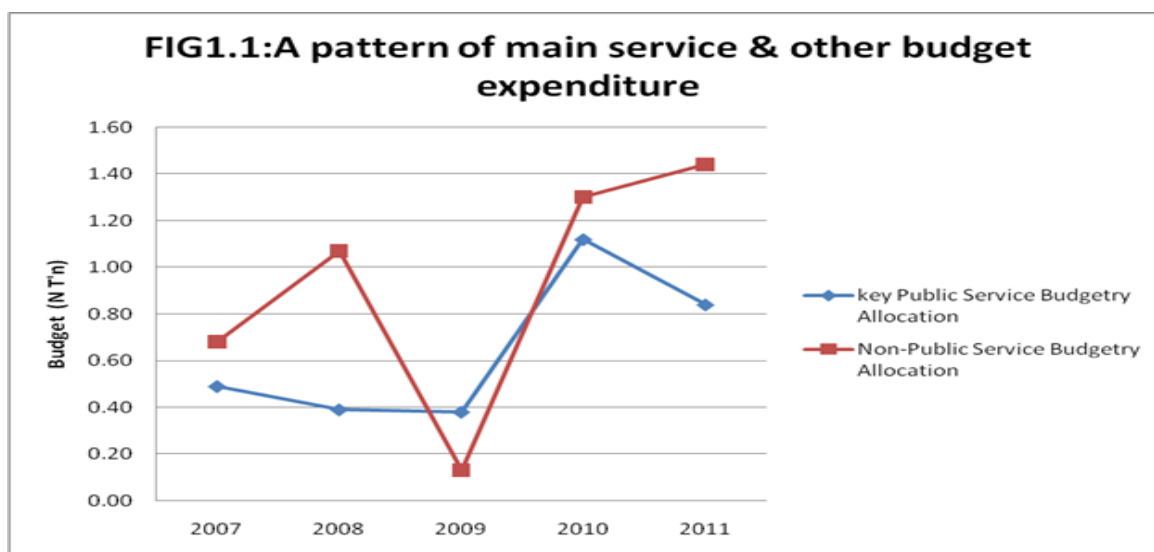


Figure II. Pattern of Main Service and Other Expenditure
(Source: Federal Government Appropriation Acts 2007-2011)

A careful examination of the budgets appropriation to specific sectors, which were depicted in the above figure shows that in 2007, the sum of N122 billion and N326 billion were respectively allocated to Defence and Debt Service, while the sum of N38 billion and N13 billion were allocated to Agriculture and Housing & Urban Development respectively.

In 2008, while the sum of N372 billion and N112 billion were respectively allocated for Debt Service and National Assembly, only the sum of N52 billion and N55 billion were allocated for capital projects in the Education and Health sectors respectively. The trend is the same for 2010 when Education and Health sectors got N74 billion and N53 billion for capital projects respectively, the National Assembly and Debt Service were appropriated the sum of N158 billion and N542 billion respectively. For 2011, Defence and Debt Service were respectively allocated N348 billion and N495 billion, while only the sum N91 billion and N65 billion were allocated to Power and Agriculture respectively.

The analysis further shows that in 2007 Agriculture got only about 12 percent of the total amount that was allocated for Debt Service. In 2008 Housing & Urban Development was allocated only 11 percent of the sum allocated to Defence, while the allocation of the Health sector was only 30 percent of the allocation for Debt Service in 2010. In 2011, the Power Sector was appropriated only 26 percent of the amount allocated to Defence. Clearly, this trend of unfavourable budgetary allocation to key public service sectors cannot support and sustain essential public service provision to improve the welfare of the people to achieve the nation's developmental aspiration.

Table II. Variation in Nv20:2020 and Capital Budget Allocations

Sector	2010 ('m)			2011('m)		
	NIP	Capital Budget	Variance	NIP	Capital Budget	Variance
Education	97,208.44	74,923.25	(22,285.19)	159,426.86	51,825.29	(107,601.57)
Health	67,277.03	53,066.62	(14,210.41)	120,501.71	55,411.96	(65,089.75)
Agriculture & Water Resources	149,900.75	144,320.48	(5,580.27)	198,738.42	93,456.89	(105,281.53)
Power	189,789.30	146,882.57	(42,906.73)	204,593.63	87,247.72	(117,346.91)
Housing & Urban Development	-	300,746.53	-	74,449.60	33,147.99	(41,301.61)
Justice	8,088.71	3,518.05	(4,570.66)	7,853.82	360.43	(7,493.39)

Source: First National Implementation Plan of NV20:2020 and Federal Government Appropriation Acts 2010-2011

In 2007, the sum of N1.05 trillion was allocated to Recurrent Expenditure and the sum of N830 billion to Capital Expenditure. Debt Service was allocated N326 billion and National Security which comprise of allocation to Defence, National Security and Police Formations amounted to N232 billion. By 2008, the Recurrent Expenditure increased to N1.35 trillion, while the Capital Expenditure slightly increased to N860 billion. Debt Service also increased to N372 billion, while National Security also increased significantly.

By the fiscal year of 2010, Recurrent Expenditure has hit the sum N2.13 trillion and Capital Expenditure hit the sum of N1.56 trillion. Debt Service also moved up to N542 billion, while National Security moved to N572 billion. By year 2011, Recurrent Expenditure further increased to N2.42 trillion while the Capital Expenditure declined to N1.14trillion. Debt Service also declined to N495 billion, but National Security increased to N753 billion.

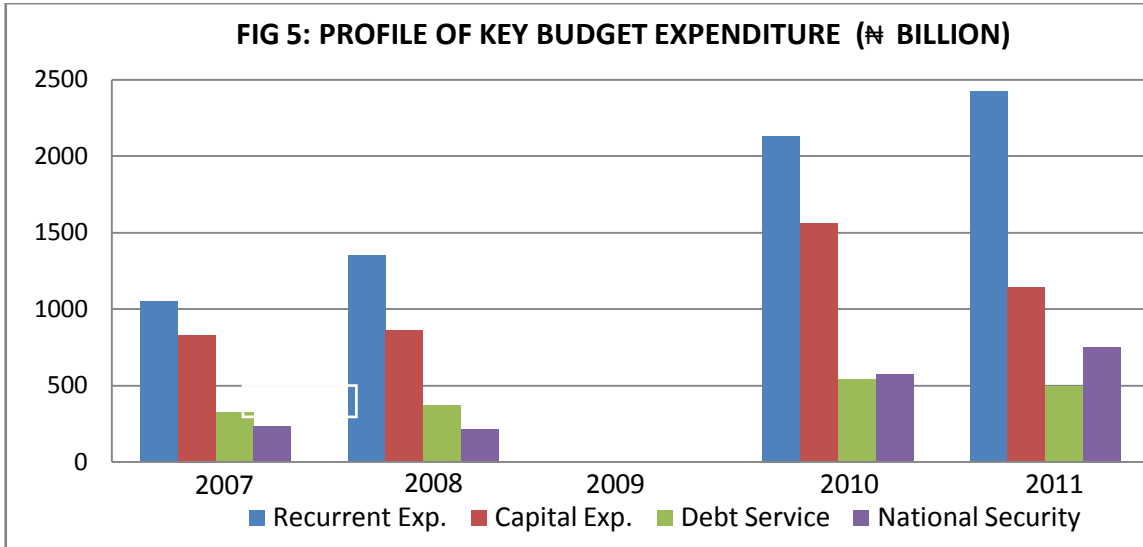


Figure III. Profile of Key Budget Expenditure (Source: Federal Government Appropriation Acts 2007-2011)

A critical analysis of the budgetary allocations revealed that Recurrent Expenditure has increased steadily by 28 percent from 2007 to 2008 and between 2008 and 2010 it increased by 57 percent and steadily increased by 13 percent in 2011. For Capital Expenditure, it increased slightly by 3 percent from 2007 to 2008 and increased substantially by 81 percent between 2008 and 2010, but declined by 26 percent in 2011.

Generally, between 2007 and 2011 Recurrent Expenditure has increased by 130 percent, Capital Expenditure by 37 percent, Debt Service by 51 percent and National Security by 224 percent. Comparatively, it shows that Capital Expenditure got the least increase of 37 percent during the period under review. However, National Security got the highest increase of 224 percent when the country was not at war followed by Recurrent Expenditure of 130 percent and Debt Service payments by 51 percent.

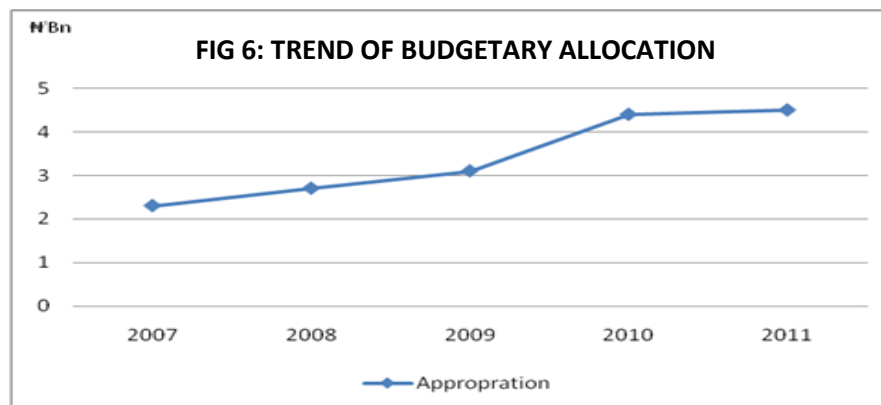


Figure IV. Trend in Budgetary Allocation (Source: Federal Government Appropriation Acts 2007-2011)

The irony of the whole scenario is that while the total budgetary expenditure has continued to increase steadily as deflected by an increase of 88 percent between 2007 and 2011, the level of poverty in the country has also continued to rise as the Harmonized Nigeria Living Standard Survey for 2010 conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) revealed the country's National Poverty Incidence of 69% indicating that about 112 million Nigerians are in living in absolute poverty.

4.3.1. Trend in budgetary allocation

Fig 6 shows the trend in budgetary allocation over the period. From 2007, the nation's budget was N2.3 trillion naira and increased to N2.7 trillion naira in 2008. By 2009, the national budget further increased to N3.1 trillion naira and up to N4.4 trillion naira in 2010 while a marginal increase of 2.2% was recorded in 2011.

The ratio of services provision to the total available resources is a measure of the government's efficiency in utilizing its resources towards providing for the basic needs of its citizens. An increase in budgetary spending is naturally expected to translate towards an increase in the value and quality of services provided to citizens, but this is not the case with Nigeria as such, citizens' perception of Government's efficiency in public service delivery is low.

4.4. Summary of findings

The study has revealed that the reality on ground is that government has not been able to deliver on public service provision based on its development plan in all the sectors identified in section 3.1.1 above.

There is a gap between the requirements of the peoples and their expectations for public service provision and what the government has been able to actually deliver.

There is an obvious gap between government budgetary allocations/expenditure for the provision of public services and the actual performance in terms of tangible deliveries.

In terms of the availability, access and quality of public service provision, there is a gap between the urban and the rural areas in all parts of the FCT. The Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) who are promoters of social justice and socio-economic development are usually engaged in the advocacy for the provision of these public services, but the Organizations needs to be more actively involved in the monitoring of the implementation of these public services especially in the rural areas.

The implementation of the national budgets particularly the capital budget has been less than satisfactory at below 50 percent.

5. Policy recommendations

There is the need for government to put in place deliberate policies that will ensure active participation of Communities, Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and other relevant stakeholders in conceiving and

monitoring of development projects that are meant to provide these public services. Other specific recommendations are advanced below.

5.1. Public service delivery

- As the first step towards addressing any development problem is a comprehensive needs assessment of our needs, adopting the culture of comprehensive development planning and budgeting that entails a comprehensive needs evaluation across sectors, articulation of defined objectives and targets and translating these initiatives into costed and implementable projects and programs should be enthroned at all tiers of government.
- Adoption of a popular and public oriented participatory process in needs articulation at all tiers of government as part of the planning and budgeting process.
- Institutionalization of a robust and result oriented monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the extent of programs and project implementation at all tiers of government and to use the M&E report as an input to new policies or correcting existing ones.
- Instituting a monitoring and evaluation culture involving government, private sector and CSOs.
- The Federal Character Commission (FCC) should be adequately empowered to enforce the provision of its Act that mandated it to ensure even and equitable distribution of developmental projects and social amenities across all parts and sections of the country.

5.2. Public service budgeting

- The Nigeria Vision 20:2020 is Government Economic Transformation Blueprint articulated to launch the country unto a path of sustained social and economic progress and accelerate the emergence of a truly prosperous and united Nigeria. So far, Government has not shown sufficient commitment to the implementation of this laudable vision. Government must renew its determination and develop the political will and sufficient commitment to ensure full and effective implementation of its development plan as enshrined in the 1st National Implementation Plan (NIP) of the Nigeria Vision 20:2020.
- The need to re-order public expenditure budgeting in-favour of socially relevant capital expenditure over the coming years as a way of addressing the existing huge service delivery gap accounting for the high incidence of absolute poverty in Nigeria.
- In view of the obvious variance between the projected expenditure for identified key public service sectors outlined in Government Development Plan and the actual budgetary allocation to these sectors, it is imperative for Government to deliberately scale up its budgetary allocation to these identified key essential sectors to meet up with the projected expenditures outlined in the 1st National Implementation Plan (NIP) of the Nigeria Vision 20:2020.
- Even though public entities provide more of these public services than the private sector, the studies have shown that people have more preference for the services of the private entities than the public establishments because of their relative efficiency. Accordingly, Government should make deliberate efforts to truly create the enabling environment through appropriate regulatory framework that would

promote the participation of the private sector in the provision of critical public services either directly or through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP).

5.3. Constitutional and legal amendments

- The failure of the Constitution to make people's rights to service delivery justiciable and enforceable has led to non-compliance and abuse of the provision. Therefore, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should be amended to make people constitutionally guaranteed right to public services justiciable and enforceable in the Court of Law in order to enable individuals, groups, organization or communities that are deprived of basic amenities seek redress.
- The prevailing land administration system has often contributed to the problem of land ownership, which has impeded the delivery decent housing accommodation to the ordinary citizens. Hence, Government should revisit the issue of land reform with determination to fast-track the necessary constitutional amendment that would ease land administration processes and truly make land ownership available, accessible and easily transferable at affordable rate.
- The need to institutionalize transparency in public financial management through effective implementation of public procurement Act at the federal level and enactment of similar legislation at State and Local Council levels.

5.4. Advocacy and CSO roles

- Bearing in mind the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in championing the course of social justice and promoting socio-economic development, the Organizations should be supported to use the above recommendations as advocacy tools for engaging the various tiers of government and relevant stakeholders in addressing the identified gaps in public service delivery in Nigeria.
- The need to strengthen CSOs at all tiers of government towards grass-root mobilization and advocacy in articulating social needs for their communities and society for incorporation into development plans and budget so that they can be part of the process of monitoring budget implementation.
- Improve the capacity of community based CSOs in budget monitoring and implementation in line with the key Performance Indicators (KPIs) developed for the NIP of NV20:2020.
- With the enactment of Freedom of Information Act (FOI) in Nigeria, the scope of individuals and CSOs raising questions about propriety or otherwise of public expenditure pattern and trend across all tiers of government has been enhanced. Indeed, public sector managers must be tasked with heightened scrutiny of public resources management, hence facilitating the enthronement of accountability and transparency in the management of public resources.

6. Conclusion

The social charter which is the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended, clearly states government responsibilities and makes it a binding obligation on government to provide citizens with basic health care services, education, access to shelter, sanitation, water, security and justice. In an attempt to provide these basic needs for the citizens, government through budgetary allocations often incurs expenditures. It is in the bid to ascertain whether government is meeting the expectations of the citizenry with regards to public service provision/delivery that a review of the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended, the 1st National Implementation Plan (NIP) of Nigeria Vision 20:2020 and government budgetary appropriations from 2007 to 2011 was undertaken with a view to identifying citizens' entitlements, the status of public service provision/delivery, gaps in their provisioning and available mechanism for redressal in the event of failure by government to provide the required essential services.

From the studies, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guaranteed the provision of services to the people by government without any discrimination whatsoever. Yet the same constitution failed to provide that the service delivery it guaranteed is justiciable and enforceable in the Court of Law. Furthermore, SERVICOM that was meant to monitor and ensure that MDAs provide quality services for Nigerian citizens were found to be ineffective as only 50% of the MDAs established the SERVICOM Unit in their establishments. The established SERVICOM Units in the MDAs were found not to be independent of the MDAs, within which they were established, thereby making them to compromise in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities.

The studies also discovered that there is a gap between the urban and rural areas in terms of service provisioning/delivery in Nigeria, while the gap between the budgetary provisions and peoples' expectations on one hand and the actual delivery of services to the people on the other hand tends to widen. The studies however discovered gender parity in public service provisioning/delivery in Public Water Supply, Cleaning Services and Electricity Supply.

The sources of funding for the National Budget is basically from government main sources of revenue which comprise of Crude Oil, Non-Oil Exports, Customs Duties, Taxes (Company Income Tax, Personal Income Tax, Value Added Tax etc.) and other sundry revenue sources. There is no indication of any contribution from aids/grants in the funding of National budgets in Nigeria as same is not incorporated in national plans and budget, though a lot of intervention is provided by development partners.

In the area of budgetary allocation, government was discovered to have neglected the 1st National Implementation Plan (NIP) of Nigeria Vision 20:2020, which is a need assessment and policy document of government developmental plans on which budgetary allocation ought to have been based. The key public service sectors that tend to critically impact on the lives of the people were found to have received less allocation compared to less critical areas that do not directly affects the well-being of the people.

The budgetary allocations over the periods have been in favour of recurrent expenditure due to high cost of governance and corruption, while capital expenditure, which is used to undertake projects that are meant to impact directly on the lives of the people, was assigned lesser budgetary allocations. Besides, even the

implementation of the unfavourable capital budgets allocated to the key public service sectors have over the years been less than satisfactory at below 50 percent. Substantial increases in successive budgetary allocations during the period under review were never commensurate to the actual performance and tangible deliveries.

Government did not show sufficient commitment to the full implementation of the national budgets and its developmental plans as articulated in the 1st National Implementation Plan of Nigeria Vision 20:2020 to meet the basic needs of the people. Hence, Government seems to lack necessary commitment, budgetary discipline and the political will to create the desired positive impact and better the lives of Nigerians.

7. Suggestions for further research

While this paper has assessed the effectiveness of Nigeria's public service, there is an urgent need for further research into the determinants of this effectiveness. Issues of performance based incentive schemes should be explored together with the possible reforms of the civil service.

Acknowledgment

The conduct of this extensive research on Public Service Gap Analysis and the resulting outcomes that are likely to influence positively the direction of public policy is made possible by Funds provided by Action Aid Nigeria.

References

- Anderson, E. (1995), "Measuring Service Quality in a University Health Clinic", *International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 32-37.
- Bitner, M., Booms, B. and Mohr, L. (1994), "Critical Service Encounters: The Employee's Viewpoint," *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 58, pp. 95-106.
- Bryslund, A. and Curry, A. (2001), "Service Improvements in Public Services Using SERVQUAL," *Managing Service Quality*, Vol. 11 No. 6, pp. 389-401.
- Carvalho, C., Brito, C., and Cabral, J.S. (2010), "Towards a Conceptual Model for Assessing the Quality of Public Services", Available from http://www.carlosmelobrito.com/.../Artigo_... Accessed on 10 July, 2014.
- Central Bank of Nigeria 2010 Annual Reports.
- Cronin, J.J. and Taylor, S.A. (1992), "Measuring Service Quality: A Re-examination and Extension", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 56, pp.55-68

- Dehn, J., Reinikka, R., and Svensson, J. (2003), "Survey Tools for Assessing Performance in Service Delivery", *World Bank Public Services Research*.
- Donnelly, M.K., Neil, J., Rimmer, R. and Shiu, E.M. (2006), "Assessing the quality of police services using SERVQUAL," *An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 92-105.
- Gowan, M., Seymour, J., Ibarreche, S. and Lackey, C. (2001), "Service Quality in a Public Agency: Same Expectations but Different Perceptions by Employees, Managers, and Customers", *Journal of Quality Management*, Vol. 6, pp. 275-291.
- Kangis, P. and Passa, V. (1997), "Awareness of Service Charges and its Influence on Customer Expectations and Perceptions of Quality in Banking", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 105-117.
- Lewis, B.R. and Mitchell, V.W. (1990), "Defining and Measuring the Quality of Customer Service," *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, Vol. 8 No. 6, pp.11-17.
- Luk, S.T. (1997) "An Examination of the Role of Marketing Culture in Service Quality", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 13-20.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2010), Nigeria Poverty Profile 2010.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml V.A. and Berry, L.L. (1988), "SERVQUAL: A Multiple-item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 64 No. 1, pp. 12-40.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. and Berry, L.L. (1985), "A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and its Implications for Future Research", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 49, pp. 41-50.
- Pollitt, C. (1995), "Justification by works or by faith-Evaluating the new public management", *Evaluation* Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 133-154.
- Ramseook-Munhurrum, P., Lukea-Bhiwajee, S. and Naidoo, P. (2010), Service Quality in the Public Service, *International Journal of Management and Marketing Research*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 37-50.
- Reichheld, F.F. and Sasser, W.E. (1990), "Zero Defections: Quality Comes to Services", *Harvard Business Review*, Sept.-Oct., p. 105-111.
- Roy, C. and Seguin, F. (2000), "The Institutionalization of Efficiency-oriented Approaches for Public Service Management, *Public Prod Manage Rev*, Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 449-468.
- The First National Implementation Plan for NV20:2020 (2010), Vol.II, Sectoral Plans and Programmes, 1st October Publishing,
- Wisniewski, M. (2001), "Using SERVQUAL to Assess Customer Satisfaction with Public Sector Services", *Managing Service Quality*, Vol. 11 No. 6, pp. 380-388.

Zeithaml, V.A., Berry L.L. & Parasuraman A. (1988), Communication and Control Processes in the Delivery of Service Quality, *J Mark*, 52:35–48.

Zeithaml, Valerie A., Parasuraman, A. and Berry, L.L. (1990), *Delivering Quality Service*, The Free Press, New York.