EXAMINING MALAWI’S ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM AND ITS IMPACT ON SERVICE DELIVERY

BY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Annie Chisomo Mabomba hereby declare that this mini-dissertation is my original work and that it has not been submitted, and will not be presented to any other University for a similar or any other degree award.

.................................................................

Signature
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the following people who were very instrumental in the completion of this project:-

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My respondents, thank you very much for assisting me with the information that made this project a success, am highly indebted to you all, thank you.

My Lord and Saviour, it was through His Grace and Mercy that I reached this far. Thank you Father, surely ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me’. Philippians 4 verse 13.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to the memory of my late Parents, Mr and Mrs S.S Mabomba, my late Brother and Father, Mr R.S Mabomba, whose inspiration and love could never be valued. I will always cherish everything you did for me. May the good Lord continue resting your souls in eternal peace.
ABSTRACT

The advent of multi-party democracy in 1994 spearheaded different reforms in the Malawi public sector. One prominent reform is administrative reform. The new government that was ushered into power instituted a policy on civil service reform and institutional development. The reforms that were introduced aimed at improving performance and enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services. Accordingly, a Public Service Act was promulgated that constituted the clarification of the role of the civil service; equal access to public employment; merit based recruitment and promotion; and increased accountability and transparency in the policies and practices of the public service.

This study therefore seeks to examine administrative reforms in Malawi and assess their impact on service delivery. The research further endeavours to explore factors which block the successful implementation of reform programmes, and seeks to come up with areas of improvement which would ensure successful implementation of reform programmes in future. The scope of this research is limited to the current civil service reform programmes and is mainly based on primary and secondary sources of information. The study uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. However, findings reveal that reforms had a negative impact on service delivery since no significant change in the delivery of services was registered. The Malawi civil service continues to suffer from unprofessionalism, inefficiency, corruption and a host of other problems. The study shows the gap between rhetoric and reality of civil service reform programmes in Malawi.
# Abbreviations and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSRP</td>
<td>Civil Service Reform Programmes</td>
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<tr>
<td>DHRMD</td>
<td>Department of Human Resource, Management and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPP</td>
<td>Democratic Progressive Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>Deputy Secretary</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Africa</td>
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<td>EMS</td>
<td>Economic Management Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPCAR</td>
<td>First Provincial Commission for Administration Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>GoM</td>
<td>Government of Malawi</td>
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<tr>
<td>MGDS</td>
<td>Malawi Growth Development Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPRSP</td>
<td>Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCCSR</td>
<td>Oversight Committee for Civil Service Reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODA</td>
<td>Overseas Development Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPC</td>
<td>Office of President and Cabinet</td>
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<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Principal Secretary</td>
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<td>PSA</td>
<td>Public Service Act</td>
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PSR: Public Sector Reform

PSRP: Public Sector Reform Programme

PSMR: Public Sector Management Reform

PSMRU: Public Sector Management Reform Unit

RIPA: Royal Institute for Public Administration

SAIS: Structural Adjustment Institutional Support

SAP: Structural Adjustment Programme

SPCAR: Second Provincial Commission for Administration Reform

US: Under Secretary
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The advent of multi-party democracy in 1994 spearheaded different reforms in the Malawi public sector. One prominent reform is administrative reform. According to Kiragu (1998), a new government that was ushered into power instituted a policy on civil service reform and institutional development. The reforms that were introduced aimed at improving performance and enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services. Accordingly, a Public Service Act was promulgated that constituted the clarification of the role of the civil service; equal access to public employment; merit based recruitment and promotion; and increased accountability and transparency in the policies and practices of the public service.

Just as the case in many other countries implementing structural adjustment programmes, civil service reform programmes appear to address a broad spectrum of issues. Kiragu and Mutahaba (2005:1) outline wide-ranging features that underlie administrative reforms in southern and eastern African countries, including Malawi. Among others, Kiragu and Mutahaba (2005:1) note that the reforms have been “increasingly comprehensive in terms of their coverage and scope”. The principles behind the reforms are a “set of minimum national standards which should be met by all service providers with the objective of rising service expectations from the public” (Mokhothu, 2006:5).

The researcher therefore endeavours to explore factors which block the successful implementation of Malawi’s administrative reform and come up with areas of improvement which would ensure successful implementation of reform in future. The study focused on current civil service reform and the impact on service delivery.
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Since independence in 1964, the Malawi Government has embarked on various reform programmes to accelerate the pace of economic development and growth. However, despite the tremendous efforts and resources that have been allocated to this endeavour, progress remains scanty. Just as Kiragu (2005) argues in the case of Malawi and other African nations, reform programmes are hindered by a lot of factors such as political environment, management culture, and incentive framework; these culminate into slow processes of implementation.

It should also be mentioned that administration is often regarded in the wider public service as a function that anyone can perform without having a university qualification in Public Administration or undergoing training and development as a preparation for entering middle or senior levels of civil service. In Malawi, an increasing number of public servants with specialist or technical background have been appointed to senior Administrative positions in recent years and these people lack knowledge, skills and understanding of public administration, and they take no action to acquire them after appointment. However, these are the officials who are either involved in the designing and formulating of reform, or facilitating its implementation. As a result, implementation of administrative reforms in Malawi has not been effective (Malawi capacity assessment and development report, 2008).

It is against this background that the researcher decided to conduct the study on administrative reform and its impact on service delivery in Malawi. Therefore due to the above stated problem, a number of research questions were posed. Firstly, the researcher wanted to know how the Government ensures effectiveness in the implementation of reforms, and how the reform programmes impact on service delivery. Secondly, the researcher wanted to find out the major challenges of the civil service reform programme and whether measures have been put in place to address them.
1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
At the end of the study, the researcher aimed to unravel reasons why administrative reforms in Malawi do not achieve their intended purpose. Several objectives were set up to study the topic. Firstly, the researcher wanted to establish the extent to which the current civil service reform programmes impact on service delivery. Secondly, the study aimed to assess the factors that slow down and weaken the reform implementation process and thirdly, the researcher aimed at suggesting ways and means of improvement to ensure successful implementation of reforms in Malawi.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS
The study had two hypotheses. Firstly, it was hypothesized that current administrative reforms have not translated into improved service delivery in Malawi and secondly, that a range of socio-economic and political factors in the implementation of reforms affect service delivery.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
Administration is often regarded in the wider public service as a function that anyone can perform without having a university qualification in Public Administration. However, in Malawi, a number of public officials are assigned Administrative functions, even though they do not possess the right qualification. This has had a negative impact on service delivery because such officials lack knowledge, skills and understanding of public administration. The research, therefore, would greatly assist Government, Administrative Reformers and interested Institutions to adopt a different dimension in the administration of reforms. The Malawian political leadership would be encouraged to take a leading role in improving the performance, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of reforms. The outcome of the research in suggesting ways and means of improvement in the way administrative reforms are being handled could initiate realistic changes in some of the
administration processes and procedures that hinder successful implementation of reforms.

The study, therefore, would contribute to the new knowledge of administration of reforms in the public sector, and most importantly, it would increase the Malawian political leadership’s knowledge and capacity, as well as sensitizing them to make informed decisions when dealing with issues of administration of reforms. The study could also add new academic knowledge to the body of literature on Public Administration.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher ensured that dignity and confidentiality of the participants was respected and that the respondents were fully informed about the study regarding its methodology. A consent form describing the purpose and objectives of the research was obtained and a briefing session was conducted whereby the participants were informed of the intentions of the research.

1.7 SCOPE OF RESEARCH AND LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Since this study was explorative in nature, it did not attempt to address all the reforms taking place within the public sector in Malawi, but limited its attention to the civil service reform programme. The study was therefore restricted to government departments and only top level government and management officials were involved in the study.

The critical limitation to this study had been time constraints. There were delays in granting the researcher an opportunity to conduct the interview at the requested time due to busy schedules of the participants. However the researcher obtained and produced a declaration letter which stated the intention and objectives of the research and also assured the respondents of confidentiality and anonymity of the information provided in the interviews. However an attitude problem was also another limitation which resulted into lack of cooperation by some participants to respond to questions faithfully.
1.8 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS AND TERMS

This section clarifies concepts and terms so that the discussion in the text is put into context and understood throughout the study. These key concepts are:

**Reform**

Reform is about bringing about change through the removal of faults and errors or by abolishing or correcting malpractice, especially of a moral or political or social kind (Peters & Pierre, 2003:465).

**Public administration**

Public administration can be broadly described as the development, implementation and study of branches of government policy. The pursuit of the public good by enhancing civil society, ensuring a well-run, fair, and effective public service are some of the goals of the field (Miller et al, 2009).

**Administrative reform**

A process of changes in administrative structures or procedures within the public services because they have become out of line with the expectations of the social and political environment (Farazmand, 1999:806).

**Civil service reform**

Civil service reform is the process of modifying rules and incentives to obtain a more efficient, dedicated and performing government labour-force in newly decentralized environment (World Bank, 2010).

**Public sector reform**

Public sector reform means an induced, permanent improvement in administration” (Wallis, 1989: 170).
1.9 PRELIMINARY FRAMEWORK FOR THE RESEARCH

The research is structured as follows:

**Chapter one: Introduction and General Orientation**

This chapter deals with the orientation to the Study. It contains the introduction and the main assumption of the problem statement. This chapter also highlights the research objectives, hypothesis, and significance of the study among other aspects which are discussed under this chapter.

**Chapter two: Literature Review**

Chapter two provides the study with a conceptual and theoretical framework related to create a deeper understanding of the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings within which administrative reform is discussed.

**Chapter three: Research Design and Methodology**

Chapter three deals with the Research Design and Methodology followed for collecting data for the study. This includes the techniques and procedures followed in investigating the problem.

**Chapter four: Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Chapter four contains a presentation and discussion of the Research Findings and an analysis of those findings. It applies theory to practice in the case study also by making cross references. The results are analysed and interpreted.

**Chapter five: Conclusions and Recommendations**

Chapter five contains a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations for improvement, and also provides an area for further research.
1.10 CONCLUSION

The first chapter dealt and clarified administrative reform as a process whereby government adjusts its internal and external environment change by redesigning and reinventing its culture, function, structure, procedure and its management style for the purpose of enhancing effectiveness of its governance. The objectives of the study as well as its significance were clarified. The chapter concluded with ethical considerations and limitations of the study.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The public sector has long been subjected to criticisms for, among others, inefficiency, red tape, lack of flexibility, ineffective accountability and poor performance. Such criticisms have paved the way for administrative reforms seeking to address various administrative ailments and enhance the efficiency and performance of public services. Reform agenda has varied with changes in time and circumstances, but reforms have always been seen and applied as a means to bring about desired changes in administration and improve its capacity as well as performance. While reforms are nothing new in public services, the period since the early 1980s has seen a major shift in public management reforms in both developed and developing countries. The recent reforms are unprecedented in terms of their scale and intensity and they have brought about far more profound changes than those experienced in the past. In many cases, such reforms have not only transformed the structure of public service or the way it operates, they have also radically changed the nature of the government and its role in the society. This chapter therefore attempts to give an account of public service reform trends globally. It presents various efforts made by countries in reforming their public services and the challenges encountered in the implementation of the reforms in the various countries. The chapter further gives a conceptual, theoretical and legislative framework of public service reform using a descriptive and analytical approach. The chapter also explores the three generations of administrative reform across Africa and evaluates its initiation efforts and strategies. It concludes by identifying factors causing administrative reform failure.
2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Since the 1960s, administrative reform was very popular and was aimed at the transformation of third world bureaucracies to enable them accommodate new development demands (Swanepoel 1992:139). Caiden (1969:6) argues that the old colonial bureaucracy with its rigid Max Weber-type of administration could not supply the needs of the post colonial state, therefore the third world bureaucracies had to be reformed in such a way that they would be capable of playing a leading role in the more intensive social reform and in the unstoppable changes which third world communities had to undergo, hence administrative reform programmes have been the most popular devices for improved public administration both in developed and developing countries (Hanekom et al., 2001:218).

However, attempts have been made by various scholars over the years to define the term administrative reform but without much success (Ohemeng 2009:4). Farazmand (1999:806) explains that there is a lack of consensus among scholars on the meaning of administrative reform, arguing that it means one thing to politicians and another to administrators and academic scholars. This entails that administrative reform has different meanings in the different nations with different political systems. Farazmand (1999:806) defines administrative reform in developing countries as ‘attempts to modernize and change society by using the administrative system as an instrument for social and economic transformation’. Farazmand (199:806) further defines administrative reform in developed nations as ‘a process of changes in administrative structures or procedures within the public services because they have become out of line with the expectations of the social and political environment’.

However, Bayat and Meyer (1994:250) define administrative reform as efforts to induce fundamental changes in public administration systems through system-wide reforms or at least through measures for the improvement of one or more of its key elements. Wallis (1989:170) contends that administrative reform means induced, permanent improvement in
administration. On the other hand, Zhang and Zhang (2001:4) describes administrative reform as a process whereby government adjusts its internal and external environment change by redesigning and reinventing its culture, function, structure, procedure and its management style for the purpose of enhancing effectiveness of its governance.

In conclusion, although literature has shown that there is no universally accepted definition of administrative reform, there is fundamental agreement among scholars of public administration that administrative reform is meant to improve administrative capability and capacity, particularly in the developing countries, for the purpose of achieving national goals effectively. Hanekom et al. (2001:219) concur and posit that administrative reform is intended to enhance the administrative capacity of public administration which is considered a scarce commodity and, almost universally, a limiting factor in the achievement of national development goals. Caiden (1969:65) echoes this statement saying administrative reform is meant to enhance and increase the quality of public services and deliver such goals and services to citizens more economically, efficiently and effectively. In other words it is meant to encourage an effective administration capable of bringing about economic, political and social development.

2.3 WHY ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

Public administration is the principal state machinery to implement the public policies and to carry out the activities of the national development. Therefore, an efficient, effective, competent, transparent, and accountable civil service can only work to achieve the goal of national development. However, public administration is generally criticized for being too complex, centralized, bureaucratic, rigid, and incompetent (Brunsson and Olsen, 1993:15).
Bureaucrats are also criticized for sitting on files, delaying in decision-making, and adhering to rules and regulations. Therefore, there should be continued reforms in the public sector to overcome these malpractices. According to Pollitt and Geert (2000: 6), reform is necessary for improving quality of public services, making the operations of government more efficient, implementing public policies effectively and making public expenditure cost effective. Reform is necessary in an organization for its adaptation in the changed environment. Therefore, it is a continuous process and is undertaken in order to work in the changed context, time and public demand. Reform is a means to make the administrative system a more effective instrument for maintaining equality, bringing justice and for creating economic growth (Turner and Hulme, 1997:106). There is widespread agreement among governments regarding the need to reshape the public sector in order to increase efficiency and improve public services (Brunsson and Olsen, 1993:27). Therefore, administrative reform is necessary for bringing change in established bureaucratic practices, behaviours, and structures.

2.4 THE INITIATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

Swanepoel (1992:142) states that there are two determinants which initiate the process of administrative reform in developing countries. Firstly, when the functioning of the bureaucracy becomes such a problem that political leaders cannot make their influence felt, they will bring about change. Secondly, political leaders introduce administrative reform when the risk of not retaining the existing power base is too great.

Zhang and Zhang (2001:4) state that administrative reform is initiated when governance cannot meet social, political, economic, environmental change or citizen expectations. In addition to these, Caiden (1969:131) outlines the following circumstances that would give rise to administrative reform:-
- When the existing administrative structures and functions are unable to satisfy the demands of the society
- When they are not capable of satisfying additional demands and services, although adequately satisfying present demands
- When the administration is powerless to meet the demands of the future. This problem is particularly inclined to crop up when changed circumstances have an unexpected impact on the administrative system and provision has not been made for the development
- When the administrative system has not adopted the latest procedures and is not adapting to new demands and procedures.

Caiden (1969:131) identifies the above aspects as the phase of need-consciousness and will therefore be a phase leading to the initiation of administrative reform. The fundamental objective of administrative reform is the improvement of administration. Caiden (1969:136) states that in the majority of instances, administrative reform is tackled in order to solve structural problems in the bureaucracy. Administrative rigidity has often been the main factor giving rise to reform programmes.

In conclusion it can be deduced that administrative reform is initiated in order to overcome the numerous anomalies and undesirable elements which hinder the institutionalization of the modern managerial system in the public sectors around the world.

2.5 STRATEGIES OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

According to Swanepoel (1992:144) reform theoreticians rejected the validity of a universal reform strategy whereby administrative systems could be changed, arguing that a reform programme ought to be determined and guided by the specific circumstances, environment
and inputs involved. However, Leemans and Dror in Swanepoel (1992) emphasise on the strategy approach and define this approach as a macro policy which merely lays down a framework of guidelines, as well as determining the limits of policy options, within which operationally detailed policy may be drawn up and decisions taken. Leemans and Dror identify the various polar components as follows:

2.5.1 Structural versus behavioural change

Leemans in Swanepoel (1992:144) maintains that reform theoreticians agree that administrative reform should be a combination of both structural and behavioural elements of change. Swanepoel (1992:144) concurs that traditionally, too much emphasis was put on the structural side of administrative reform which derived largely from the close contact that exists between structures and power, as well as the fact that relations among the various administrative levels in an organisation are determined and regulated by power. Swanepoel adds that structures are also important in the subdivision and allocation of tasks and assignments and that they are directly related to formal organisation (a primary component of bureaucracies) while behaviour and behavioural change, are more a matter of informal attitudes and actions.

In respect of behaviour changes, Swanepoel argues that reforms tend to concentrate on a micro approach (individuals or small groups) rather than investigating the organisation as a whole and influencing it. Swanepoel further states that it may also occur in the course of reform through behavioural change that certain power and interest groups will simply continue with old established approaches and views, when what is needed is structural change. However Swanepoel (1992:145) emphasises that the most successful reform action must consist of a mixture of both of these components.
2.5.2 Cooperative versus non cooperative (forced) change

According to Swanepoel (1992:145) a non-cooperative strategy implies that reform decisions are exclusively a matter for the top structure of the organisation, which consults other interest groups within the organisation by way of exception. A cooperative strategy involves consulting as many subordinates as possible, while the lower strata of the organisation is involved in the formulation of the reform programme. Experience suggests, however that to a large extent all reform will be of a forced nature, since the final decision making involved must be done by the top management of an organisation. Traditional administrative reform has for the most part been non-cooperative owing to the powerful hierarchic and centralised nature of bureaucracies. Cooperative strategies are important in that they are capable of performing a specific communication function. Information may be provided by way of this approach which could play a determining role in the preparatory, planning, decision-making and implementation phases of administrative reform.

In terms of cooperative strategies, the preparation and implementation of reform programmes is a long drawn-out process. Therefore mixing of noncooperative and cooperative strategies will also depend on prevailing conditions within the organisation as well as the urgency of reform (Swanepoel, 1992:146).

2.5.3 Drastic versus piecemeal (incremental) change

According to Leemans in Swanepoel (1992:146) the following three dimensions play an important role in these choices:

- The extent of change
- Its intensity
- The time available for its implementation and finalisation
Drastic reform usually leads to the establishment of a strong opposing group, which can consequently exert a negative influence on the possibility of the reform succeeding. The choice between drastic or piecemeal change is primarily influenced by the extent of the planned reform. Reform may focus on the microlevel, mesolevel and macrolevel. The latter refers to reform which involves the entire administrative system, while the mesolevel emphasises one or more larger units within the administrative system. A macroapproach or mesoapproach therefore implies that the reform programmes will, in the nature of the matter exert a determining influence on the microlevel. It should however be borne in mind that large scale reform is undoubtedly easier to achieve in relatively small bureaucracies (Swanepoel, 1992:147).

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory underpinning the study is the open system theory of Katz and Kahn. It is worth noting that the concept of reform is viewed as a process towards achieving a desired end. For this reason, this study was informed by the open system theory which concerns itself with conceptualising ways to improve the administrative techniques needed to realise policy goals. The policy goals of the administrative reform taking place in Malawi, for instance, are to improve service delivery. The open system theory is thus consistent with the fact that “many developing countries have put in place the reforms in order to handle and achieve this important goal of meeting its citizen’s needs” (Mokhothu, 2006:2).

The open system theory is one of the organisation theories of public administration. Watson (1986:55) describes an organisation as an instrument rationally and logically designed to meet certain purposes. Kreitner (2001:70) defines a system as a collection of interdependent parts which form some whole. According to Kreitner, the major characteristics of an open system are:
They receive inputs from the environment
They convert these inputs to outputs
They discharge their outputs into their environment

According to Dzimbiri (2009:78) Katz and Kahn identified several subsystems of an organisation like:

- Production or technical subsystem – concerned with the accomplishment of basic tasks of the organisation
- Supportive subsystems – systems which procure the inputs and dispose the outputs of the production subsystem
- Maintenance subsystems – concerned with the stability and predictability of the organisation
- Adaptive subsystems – concerned with what the organisation might become: they deal with issues of change in the environment
- Managerial subsystems – these deal with managerial functions of planning, coordination and control of the total system.

Katz and Kahn maintain that an organisation be looked at as an open system which continuously interact and depends on its environment Dzimbiri (2009:79). The open system theory emphasises on openness, interaction, exchange of inputs and outputs between organisations and their environments. Organisations are not closed systems, but are open to and depend on flow of personnel, other resources and information from outside it.

The link between the study and the theory is about creating public institutions that are open to change, institutions that are ready to embrace change so that those obstacles that continuously deter reform efforts might be removed thereby improving delivery of services which is the core business of reform.
2.7 ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM IN MALAWI

Like most African countries, Malawi undertook the first, second and third generation reforms after attaining independence from Britain in 1964. Its reform programmes focused on transformation of the old colonial administration which was mainly oriented to serving the interests of colonial masters, to one that serves national interests and national development programmes. The mechanism adopted was that of public service reviews by high powered review commissions including, the Skinner Commission of 1964, the 1966 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Herbecq Review Commission of 1985.

However, the Skinner Commission failed to address the needs of the independent Malawi as it overly focused on the cost of running the post colonial public service and not how to redesign and restructure the public service to effectively respond to and manage the development agenda of the Malawi nation. As such the Malawi Government decided on another review, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), whose report only recommended the reorganization of Government ministries Msosa (1998). The Herbecq Review Commission which was the final review took place in 1985, its mandate was to assess modifications needed in staff structure, grading and personnel management and career development. This was done to make the best use of the human and financial resources available, to assess the capacity of Malawi’s educational and training institutions and to provide the needs of the public corporations and the civil service (Msosa, 1998).

The recommendations in the Herbecq Report just like the latter reviews were not fully implemented. This suggests that past reform initiatives did not help to effectively reform the public service. They lacked a framework that provides guidance to reform interventions which address common goals and strategically target a public service that actively and effectively responds to the needs of the citizens.
The current civil service reform in Malawi has been influenced by the structural adjustment programmes which viewed good governance as a condition for promoting socio-economic development. First initiative in the civil service reform was a census of civil servants in 1995. According to Msosa (1998), this aimed at removing ghost employees from the pay-roll; and also harmonising personnel management information systems with pensions and pay roll systems.

2.7.1 BACKGROUND TO PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS IN MALAWI

The Government of Malawi (GoM) has over the last several decades implemented public sector reforms in order to strengthen the capacity of the public service and improve its performance in the delivery of services. Although numerous reform initiatives have been implemented at central and sector level, indications are that most reform interventions did not succeed in addressing the issues for which they were designed to resolve (PSMRU, 2008). This section provides the background to public sector reforms in Malawi. It outlines key areas of public sector reforms and reviews their effectiveness in resolving issues impacting upon the performance of the Malawi Public Service. The intention is to establish the rationale for public sector reform initiatives and outline key development challenges that necessitate ongoing reform initiatives and the need for refocus.

According to PSMRU Report of 2008, the reform agenda in Malawi has been driven by long term development policies and strategies that have been put in place such as Malawi Vision 2020, the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP), the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), and Sectoral Policies and Strategies. These policies and strategies articulate development aspirations and challenges that need to be addressed primarily through the Malawi Public Service. They outline broad development vision for Malawi and strategic objectives they aim to achieve. Therefore, public sector reforms are an
integrated part of these broad policies and strategies which are aimed at supporting the efforts to achieve their goals (PSMRU Report, 2008).

As the PSMRU Report articulates, the GoM has been implementing public sector reforms since independence with the primary objective of strengthening and improving efficiency and effectiveness of all branches of Government, namely; the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary in the delivery of services to the general public. In the last seven years government renewed its commitment to public sector reforms to address broad and specific institutional, policy, systems and management challenges and constraints to poverty reduction strategies and economic growth and development. The reform initiatives were also adopted in response to demands for sustainable democratic and good governance practices with focus on accountability and transparency and the active engagement and participation of the civil society and private sector (PSMRU Report, 2008)

2.7.2 MAJOR PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS IN MALAWI

According to the DHRMD Report (2006), major reforms implemented over the last seven years can be categorized under four broad areas, namely; Civil Service Reforms, Economic and Financial Management Reforms, Governance Reforms and Sector specific reforms. A number of specific interventions have been implemented by the GoM in each of these reform areas as follows:

- **Civil Service Reform**

The Civil Service plays a very important role in the execution of government programmes and delivery of public services. However, over the past seven years the performance of the Malawian Civil Service has been affected by a number of factors which in many ways
compromise quality of service delivery and implementation of programmes and projects as well as the formulation and implementation of development policies and strategies. The factors in question include weak leadership, weak institutional and human resource capacities, weak institutional linkages and coordination, inadequate management and operational systems and procedures, low morale and poor motivation as well as lack of enabling environment. The reforms were, therefore, intended to develop, among others, a high performing, accountable, modern Civil Service characterized by strategic leadership, highly and appropriately skilled and qualified personnel and an appropriate management culture and reward structure (DHRMD Report, 2006).

- **Economic and Financial Management Reforms**

According to DHRMD Report, successful implementation of sound fiscal and economic policies and strategies is one of the major determinants to achieving macro-economic stability and sustainable economic growth and development in Malawi. It is, however, evident that in the past several years the performance of the economic and financial sectors has been generally frustrated by various challenges such as fiscal instability, lack of transparency and accountability in the use of resources, weak institutional and human resource capacities for policy development, implementation, coordination and monitoring, and largely donor driven initiatives, among others. The reform interventions in this area were, therefore, intended to achieve fiscal stability, increase accountability and transparency, strengthen institutional framework and capacity, and improve aid effectiveness and coordination. The initiatives are expected to help create an enabling environment for all actors and strengthening capacities of key stakeholders for improved performance in the delivery of services.
2.8 CONTRIBUTION AND LIMITATION OF SPECIFIC REFORM INITIATIVES

2.8.1. Civil Service Reforms

According to PSMRU Report, various initiatives were implemented under this category of reforms which included functional reviews, capacity development through training and development programmes, strategic planning, leadership and management development, performance management, job evaluation and salary restructuring, review and development of policies, systems and processes. Some of these initiatives are listed below:

2.8.1.1 Functional Reviews

According to the PSMRU (2008), the overall aim of functional reviews was to improve organizational functioning of government ministries and departments by primarily focusing on their core functions. This entailed examining roles and functions of ministries and departments so as to make them more effective and efficient in their performance. The initiative also meant streamlining government operations and reducing the size of the Civil Service. As such, the initiative resulted in all ministries and departments being reviewed. This helped to reduce or remove functional overlaps and duplications within ministries and departments on one hand, and between ministries and departments, on the other. Some of the institutions were merged and staff reductions particularly at the lower echelons were also realized. In addition non-core functions were identified for either outsourcing or contracting out to the private sector (PSMRU Report, 2008).

However, these accomplishments have not effectively translated into institutional effectiveness and efficiency in the functional performance of various ministries and departments. Concerns over the size of ministries and the scope of their operations are still as valid as they were before the functional reviews. For example, there are still concerns over duplications and overlaps as well as ongoing debates on core functions of some of institutions (PSMRU Report, 2008).
2.8.1.2 Strategic Planning

The main purpose of this initiative was to enable government ministries and departments to focus on their core functions and programmes by improving their work planning and strategic management capacities linking with budget. The initiative has been championed by Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) through the Department of Human Resource Management and Development (PSMRU Report, 2008).

2.8.1.3 Performance Management Initiatives

One of the key concerns has been how to better motivate civil servants and raise their individual and team performance particularly at senior management level. This led to the introduction of contract employment and performance management appraisals. Although the scheme was applauded as a key initiative in motivating civil servants at this level, nothing much has been achieved as fundamentally the same habits, attitudes (mind sets) and beliefs continue to prevail and have effectively frustrated the initiative leading to a policy reversal (PSMRU Report, 2008).

2.8.1.4 Job Evaluation and Pay Reform

According to the PSMRU Report, this has been one of the major reform areas over the past decade. The GoM initiated a job evaluation exercise and pay reform resulting in a number of reviews and studies as well as the formation of a Pay Reform Board. Although significant efforts continue to be made to improve pay for civil servants and raise their expectations, pay problems continue to be a source of major concerns affecting the performance and commitment of most public servants. Various occupational groups continue to point to distortions or discrepancies in the pay systems which have sometimes forced sectors to introduce incentives that further complicate the pay structure within the Civil Service. It is also perceived that initiatives made are mainly reactive and untimely given rapidly changing
market forces that override such interventions.

2.9 GLOBAL LITERATURE ON PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

Over the past twenty years, many Western countries irrespective of their political and administrative systems have embarked upon a similar type of public sector reform Peters and Pierre (2003:467). These were considered as a part of the wider public sector reform agenda (Peters, 1999:382).

Administrative reforms from some of the European countries are summarized below:-

2.9.1 Public Sector Reform in Canada

In Canada reform programmes included strategies to do with increased authority and accountability, the creation of special operating agencies to replace some government departments, and the promotion of innovation to encourage efficiency and programme delivery Bayat & Meyer (1994:250). Between the mid 1960s and the early 1970s, public sector reform was concerned with the creation of the welfare state Manning and Parison (2003:20). By the mid 1980s, pressure to curtail government growth existed, but few concrete actions were taken. The 1985 Nielson Task force, drawn primarily from the private sector, recommended the elimination of over 1,000 government programs costing $7 billion, but few recommendations were ever implemented. In 1989, “Public Service 2000” was launched to renew the public service, but again the resulting changes were very modest. Real restructuring did not begin until 1994 with the launch of “Program Review.” This reform initiative produced significant changes in the role and size of the public sector. Measures included cutting 45,000 civil service jobs, reducing provincial government transfers by $4.5 billion, eliminating 73 government boards, commercializing or restructuring 47 others, ending agricultural and transportation subsidies, and reducing business subsidies by 60
percent. By using fiscal urgency as a backdrop, public support for the cuts and restructuring was maintained.

The latest reform effort, _La Releve_, was initiated in 1997 and dealt with less controversial issues such as attracting and retaining skilled public servants. Increasing emphasis was also placed on e-government (Manning and Parison, 2003:20).

### 2.9.2 Public Sector Reform in Britain

According to Bayat & Meyer (1994:250) the British government created the Next Steps Agencies and introduced a Citizens’ Charter as part of that country’s administrative reforms. The changes were aimed at greater accountability and making use of a system of government by contract where appropriate. However, the British government introduced dramatic reform programmes during Margaret Thatcher’s regime in 1979 whose reform agenda was based on businesslike management, client orientation, and market type mechanisms Kickert (1997:21). However, reforms of the current administration are centred on the framework of performance management provided by the Public Service Agreements (PSAs) which were introduced following a Comprehensive Spending Review in 1997-1998. These agreements are struck between Ministers in charge of departments and the Treasury (Manning and Parison, 2003:29).

### 2.9.3 Public Sector Reform in Japan

During the post-war period, Japan has undergone three major public sector reforms in central government Yamamoto (2003:15). According to Muramatsu in Yamamoto (2003:15), the first two of these reforms were overseen respectively by the First Provisional Commission for Administration Reform (FPCAR) in 1962-64 which used lessons learnt from the American Hoover Commission, and the Second Provincial Commission for Administrative Reform (SPCAR) in 1981-1983, which proposed the goal for medium-sized government for Japan and which privatised large public corporations. Prime Minister Hashimoto initiated public
sector reforms in 1996-1998 which represented the largest reorganisation of central government and were implemented in January 2001 (Yamamoto, 2003:15).

In Japan however, the major objectives of administrative reform have been to improve management so as to make the institutions of public administration operate more efficiently and effectively Masujima (2005:3). Administrative reform was classified into two approaches which basically were the coercive and the cumulative approaches. Coercive reforms were characterized by the extensive use of coercive approach, including cutting the number of ministries, divisions and staff. The drawback of this approach was that it reduced the quality of services, and gave birth to oversized departments, or blur lines of responsibility. On the other hand, the cumulative approach required the exercise of the political Will to overcome resistance (Masujima, 2005:3).

2.9.4 Public Sector Reform in China

For China, administrative reforms have taken place since the late 1970s, in order to promote economic growth and development Zhang and Zhang (2003:2). Major changes introduced in their administrative system include, decentralization of decision-making power, separation of economic enterprises from administrative agencies, simplification of administrative structures, professionalization of public administration, training and development, and an establishment of a Civil Service System (Zhang and Zhang, 2001:3).

The Chinese government conducted large scale reforms in 1982, 1988, 1993 and 1998, which heavily involved streamlining government agencies Manning and Parison (2003:19). Manning and Parison further elaborate that in 1982, authorities reported that they cut the number of State Council agencies from 100 to 61 and the number of employees from 51,000 to 30,000. In the 1988 restructuring, officials reportedly reduced the number of ministries and commissions from 45 to 41, the number of directly subordinate bureaus from 22 to 19 and the number of State council employees from about 50,000 to 44,000. Many of the cuts in 1993
were made at the local level. Significant cuts were also reported beginning in 1998. The idea was that many of the laid-off staff would enter the growing private sector. However, in spite of sustained effort to cut the number of government employees, the State Bureau of Statistics reported continuous growth of government employment during these years.

According to Manning and Parison (2003:19), the Chinese government implemented a fixed-tenure system for government officials, establishing mandatory retirement ages at 60 for most men, and at 55 for most women. This has secured a younger generation in government; from 1982 to 1987, for example, the average age of ministers and governors fell from 67 to 59 and from 65 to 55, respectively. The 1993 Provisional Regulations on Civil Servants require that civil servants be recruited into the service through open, competitive examinations, rather than through labour allocation. It also indicates that wage markets will be used to determine civil servants’ salaries and that training for civil servants will be revamped to meet the needs of a market economy.

2.9.5 Public Sector Reform in Australia

According to Manning and Parison (2003:15) the first phase of the reforms involved increased financial flexibility for government departments, a more certain operating environment through the introduction of rolling forward estimates based budgeting, and an increased focus on identifying program objectives and reporting program outcomes. This altered the focus of the annual budget preparation from the financing of existing government programs to the improvement of those programs. The second phase of the public sector reforms, undertaken in the 1990s, was intended to increase the efficiency of the delivery of government goods and services by the introduction of commercial principles. These included contestable contracts, more flexible personnel management, and service delivery agreements based on the full cost of providing the service, determined in accordance with accrual accounting principles (Manning and Parison, 2003:15).
In conclusion it is evident that in these countries, administrative reform efforts have been directed at downsizing the civil service, efficient financial management, customer satisfaction and effective governance.

2.10 AFRICAN LITERATURE ON PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

According to Mutahaba in Mokhothu (2006:5), administrative reform is about strengthening the way that public sector is managed. However, looking at the African context, after more than a decade of transition to democratic governance, most African countries have also embarked on public sector reform programmes. However, since their independence, the public sector was regarded as the pivot that would promote socioeconomic development and the main provider of goods and services to citizens based on the notion that “realization and representation of public interests and its possession of unique public qualities compared to business management” Haque (2001: 65). However, the public sector was not able to perform its function effectively.

Several reasons contributed to this result. Researchers indicate the following as the causes of such ineffectiveness:

(a) Public sector’s “accumulation of excessive power, lack of accountability and representation, indifference towards public needs and demands, official secrecy and inaccessibility, and role in depoliticizing the public sphere” (Haque, 2001:67).

(b) The economic crises of the late 1970s and 1980s that prompted governments to introduce new approaches to public sector management. These approaches were drawn from the successful and international experiences of introducing market-friendly-economies into the public sector.

However, as Ohemeng (2009:8) elaborates, administrative reform can be seen as a two-edged sword that looks at changes in the relationship between the bureaucracy and the politicians,
on one hand, and between the bureaucracy and the citizenry on the other. Nevertheless administrative reform in Africa has gone through various phases which can be classified as ‘generation’ of reforms.

2.10.1 Three Generations of Reform

According to Crook (2010:480), efforts to reform the public services have conventionally been divided into the first, second and third generation. The third generation is associated with attempts to improve the quality and delivery of public services. Crook (2010:480-483) summarizes the three generations as follows:-

- **First Generation (1980s)**
  
  In this generation, large scale, donor-funded civil service or public sector reform programmes really began in Africa with the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s. Between independence and the late 1970s, the main focus had been on Africanisation of the small, inherited colonial civil services combined with rapid expansion (particularly of education services) – a process aided by the former colonial powers mainly through training and technical assistance.

- **Second Generation (1990s)**

  The second generation reforms of the 1990s to some extent emerged from a limited recognition that downsizing and pay restructuring alone were not producing the desired results. The 1990s reforms retained the assumption that the civil service needed to be reduced in size, but accompanied this with much more ambitious attempts at total restructuring of civil services, focusing on management systems, performance management and budget/financial management, and marketisation of service delivery. This period of reform was an attempt to transfer to African and other less-developed countries all the techniques of
public sector reform which in the developed, particularly English-speaking, countries have come to be known as New Public Management (NPM).

- **Third Generation (End of 1990s)**

What might be called a third generation of reforms has only emerged since the end of the 1990s, following on the World Bank’s recognition in its 1997 World Development Report that having an effective, responsive and legitimate state was crucial for sustaining an effective market economy. New generation programmes since the millennium, although still very much within the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm, have tended to focus on how to improve service delivery to citizens, making it more responsive and effective. The aim of these reforms is to enable the state to function more rationally and effectively.

However, administrative reforms in some of the selected African countries are summarised as follows:-

2.10.2 **Public Service Reform in South Africa**

In South Africa, since the early 1980s the public sector has been subjected to a number of far reaching administrative, cultural and political reform (Van Der Waldt & Helmbold, 1995:111). During the years 1994 to 1998, extensive change was evident in South Africa, especially in the public service. The reform of the public service had focussed on legislative as well as administrative reform. The administrative reform focussed on replacing the apartheid regime with one that focussed on reorienting public servants to serve the public in a customer focussed way.

The reform programme however had some challenges which include; new policies being set at national level without due consideration to the organisational and service delivery implications in provinces, failure to monitor the performance of service delivery by national departments, limitation of the efficient use of state resources by national financial
regulations, (which do not establish value for money as the key principle) and lack of support for provincial departments by national departments in the performance of their tasks (Kiragu 1998: 62).

2.10.3 Public Service Reform in Ghana

Ghana, like any other country, especially the Third World ones that gained independence from colonialism in the aftermath of the Second World War, has been attempting to develop its administrative institutions for ensuring national development Ohemeng (2009:13). According to Ayee (2001:7) the Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP) was commissioned in 1987 to eliminate the constraints which had impeded the civil service's ability to function as an agent of progress and change. The CSRP was a component of the Structural Adjustment Programme’s (SAP) public sector management improvement exercise which began in April 1983. Ayee (2001) further elaborates that the SAP entailed economic measures such as trade liberalization, subsidy withdrawal, currency devaluation, job retrenchment and a reduction in parastatal activity. These measures were meant, among other things, to stimulate production (especially of exports), discourage rent-seeking behaviour, correct budgetary and balance-of-payment problems, penalize the urban middle and working-classes—the very social groups that have tended to dominate the governing coalitions of post-colonial states.

According to Ayee, The CSRP was also seen as crucial to the government's plans for "orderly and effective" decentralization to the regions and districts. It was jointly funded by the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of the United Kingdom and the World Bank (under its Structural Adjustment Institutional Support (SAIS) project and later (from mid-1991) under the Economic Management Support (EMS) project) by way of logistics backup. Messrs Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte and the Royal Institute of Public Administration (RIPA) of the United Kingdom undertook the consultancy aspect of the reform Phase I of the
CSRP started in July 1987 and ended in June 1988. It identified problems peculiar to the civil service and designed the means of achieving specific objectives within the context of SAP. Between July 1988 and May 1989, there was a Continuation or Bridging Project to maintain the continuity of the programme while waiting for the commencement of Phase II, which was to coincide with SAP II. Phase II of the CSRP, that is, the implementation phase, based on the diagnostic and design work outlined above, started in June 1989 and lasted for four years, up to May 1993. An Oversight Committee for Civil Service Reforms (OCCSR), chaired by the Member/Secretary of the Committee of Secretaries and the Head of the Civil Service that comprised a membership of 12 (against 19 initially) was set up in 1987 to oversee the work of the consultants and periodically advise and submit recommendations on specific aspects of the reforms to the government for approval.

However according to Ayee (2001:25) this reform programme had some demerits to it. Some of the constraints were:-

- The nature of the reform programme, the characteristics of which were that its elements were imposed top-down with only limited participation from civil servants. Consultation and consensus-building did not take place and facilitated a sense of exclusion, as if other civil servants were not party to the reform;
- The weaknesses in its CSRP’s terms of reference, for example, relatively narrow in scope and lacked explicit linkage with a well understood policy framework;
- The focus of the reform activities which concentrated almost solely on one organization, that is, the office of the Head of the Civil Service (OHCS). This weakened links to ministries, departments and agencies
- The 'adhockery' nature of the oversight of the reforms. There was no full time coordinator and the Oversight Committee was an ad hoc institution;
• The lack of effective machinery to ensure evaluation and follow-up actions on the new systems that had been introduced. For instance, even though a new appraisal and reporting system had been introduced into the human resources management system of the civil service five years earlier, it was found during the consolidation period (1994/95), that it had not become an effective part of the culture of the management in the civil service;

• Even though the structure of the Pay and Grading System had been finalized for implementation several years earlier, it had still not been operationalized due, in part, to inadequate and incomplete manpower data; and

• Donor funding, conditionalities and failure to meet set deadlines created imbalances which upset the government's own planned implementation schedule

2.10.4 Public Service Reform in Zambia

According to Mataka in Kiragu (1998:62) Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) in Zambia was launched in November 1993 and was scheduled to be implemented within a period of three years. The overall goal of the programme was to improve the quality, delivery, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the Public Service to the people of Zambia. The reform programme’s three specific objectives were to:-

• Improve government capacity to formulate, analyse national policies and perform its appropriate functions;

• Effectively manage expenditure to meet fiscal stabilisation objectives; and

• Make the Public Service more efficient and responsible to the needs of the Country’s population.
The strategy for achieving the programme’s goal and objectives had the following three components:

- Restructure and rationalise the size of the ministries, departments and provinces;
- Introduce improved organisational and personnel management and accountability systems into government operations; and to decentralise decision-making authority and control of resources allocation and utilisation from central government to the districts and local authorities;
- Introduce a management information system to enable the government to effectively compile and manage data useful in making vital management and personnel decisions.

However, there have been a number of problems and challenges constraining the effective implementation of the PSRP and these problems include:

- **Unpreparedness for implementation**
  Although the formulation and development of the programme underwent various stages in order to create widespread consensus and commitment among stakeholders there was little attempt to simultaneously develop the institutional and managerial capacity for implementing the exercise.

- **Underestimation of the duration of each step in the implementation Plan**
  It was originally estimated that the completion of the three-step restructuring process for each ministry or institution would take a maximum period of three months. This was a gross underestimation of the complexity and sheer quantity of work involved. In practice it was found that in large ministries such as Education, Agriculture and Works and Supply the process took up to five months.
• **Resource Constraints**

Adequate resources are a prerequisite for the success of any major programme of change. However it turned out that anticipated finances both from within and from outside the country was not readily available at the required stages in the implementation process. The inability by government to fund retrenchment packages, for example, meant that those civil servants whose positions were abolished as a result of the new structures and those who were not qualified for new positions in the new structure could not be separated or retrenched.

• **Uncertainty and apprehension among personnel**

The lack of clear understanding among many middle and lower level civil servants of the objectives and benefits of the PSRP has given rise to a lot of apprehension and low morale among some civil servants.

• **Failure to achieve consensus and commitment of key stakeholders**

Although efforts were made to create consensus throughout the development and implementation of the PSRP, it was difficult to obtain consensus from some stakeholders including trade unions and others with regard to the scoping, planning and implementation of retrenchments. To this effect a number of PSRP and “management of change” workshops have been conducted for Permanent Secretaries and other senior managers in ministries and other government institutions, and pamphlets, write-ups, and progress reports on the implementation have been developed and distributed to the public and the donors.

2.11 **FAILURE OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM**

In implementing civil service reforms, governments seek to downsize the civil service to make it more affordable and to bring it into line with a new, scaled-down role for government
in economic activities, provide civil servants with appropriate incentives, skills, and motivation; and enhance management and accountability Lienert (1998:42). However, most reforms in government fail. They do not fail because, once implemented, they yield unsatisfactory outcomes. They fail because they never get past the implementation stage at all. They are blocked outright or put into effect only in tokenistic, half-hearted fashion Polidano (2001:1). As a matter of fact, after many decades of reform efforts and capacity-building, the delivery of public services in most African states remains in crisis. According to Crook (2010:479) the key problems of African public services remain those of understaffing and lack of organisational commitment.

However, there are several factors which have played a part in the failure of administrative reform. Leemans in Swanepoel (1992:147) holds the view that the methods applied and the ways in which administrative reform is tackled are too one-sided, arguing that the emphasis in reform has been mainly on structural change, and aspects relating to the behaviour of bureaucratic officials has largely been neglected. As a result, Leemans further argues that the formal change effected is only marginal, and little influence is exerted on the overall practical operation of the administrative system.

In conjunction with this, Rothwell in Swanepoel (1992:147) mentions that deficient coordination, excessive centralisation and inadequate organisational arrangements have also caused reform programmes to fail. In this regard manpower shortages, corruption and nepotism, deficient motivation, inadequate leadership, discipline and control have also been determining factors in the failed programmes. Crook (2010:487) mentions the following as reasons for administrative reform failure:-

- **Failure of implementation**

According to Crook (2010:487) it is very common to assert that the plan or design of the reform was fine but it was not implemented properly. A typical example is the World Bank’s
Public Sector Management Reform Programme for Ghana, launched in 1999, which aimed at a ‘total redefinition of the roles and functions of the state and its agencies’ across ‘all sectors’. This inherently unrealistic objective was described as satisfactory and ‘in line with best practice’. The failure to properly implement was ascribed to the lack of capacity, the poor quality of consultants and agency rivalry (World Bank, 2004).

- **Supply-side factors**
  Typical answers to the question ‘why was the plan not implemented properly?’ are derived from supply-side issues such as lack of staff capacity (meaning too many underpaid, poor quality staff) and inadequate technology, meaning that more ‘training’ and IT-based technical fixes are needed (Crook, 2010).

- **Organisational problems**
  Another implementation-focused explanation suggests that the plan was fine, but there was resistance and conflict from within the public services, caused by agency rivalry (a common consequence of locating the reform programme in a dedicated agency), or lack of clear lines of command (Crook, 2010).

- **Lack of ‘ownership’**
  This explanation focuses on resistance to change, seen as coming from conservative or fearful staff. It is usually brought into play four or five years after the launch of the reform programme, when it is discovered that members of the public services have, in practice, little real commitment to reform or to changing their ways. The culprits are managers who fail to explain the reform properly, and donors who fail to ensure that there is local ownership of the plan during its development (Crook, 2010).
• Lack of political commitment

This is the favourite catch-all explanation, in that it appears as the most plausible underlying reason for all the failures of implementation, lack of ownership and commitment, and failures to resolve conflicting lines of command. It is suggested that all these other problems could have been cut through if the highest political authorities had really been committed to the reforms and prepared to put their authority on the line to implement them (Crook, 2010).

However, according to Polidano (2001:20) there are three important success factors in civil service reform and these are: keeping the scope of change narrow, limiting the role of aid donors, and giving reform firm leadership while simultaneously allowing for line management discretion. Polidano contends that these are strategic and tactical issues in relation to which the wrong choices are made repeatedly, whether by design or default, often leading to the failure of reform efforts. Polidano adds that what matters most in improving the record of implementation are the strategic and tactical decisions which are taken in the course of putting the reforms into effect. Wallis (1989:174) argues that administrative reform failure occurs where the proposals of reform are vaguely stated; the ideas for reform originate from donors (e.g. the World Bank) with marginal indigenous involvement at the planning stage, and where the staff responsible for implementation are poorly trained and/or lack appropriate qualifications for the tasks required of them.

There are several factors that can be attributed to the failure of administrative reform in various countries around the world; however, it should be borne in mind that due to different types of culture, what works in one country may not necessarily work in another. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to the unique situation in each country before any reform measures are introduced in the administrative system. If reformers ignore this point, the result is nothing else but failure.
2.12 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, administrative reform generally aims to improve the administrative system. This is evident from literature that some reforms are designed to enhance state legitimacy, while others attempt to raise administrative efficiency. Some are cost cutting exercises; and others are aimed at raising the quality of public services. However, this chapter highlighted the conceptual and theoretical framework of administrative reform, looked at its initiation and strategies and presented a brief country context of administrative reform in selected countries of Africa and Europe. Some of the factors that cause administrative reform failure have also been briefly outlined in this chapter.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter provides the research method and design utilised by the researcher. The research method explains the technique used to collect data. The research design provides a framework used in the collection and analysis of data. The methodological design serves as a guide to the researcher on the procedure to be followed when interacting with research participants. Consequently a conclusion is drawn at the end of the chapter to provide a base for the next chapter.

3.2 Research Methodology
Methodology refers to the choices researchers make about cases to study, method of data gathering, forms of data analysis etc, in planning and executing a research study Silverman (2001:306). This study used both qualitative and quantitative methods. The Qualitative research is being chosen because the research aims at developing an in-depth understanding regarding the experiences of Malawian Administrative reforms. As Wisker (2008:75) points out qualitative paradigm is ideal when “we wish to understand meanings, interpretations and/or to look at, describe and understand intangibles such as experience, ideas, beliefs and values”.

In contrast, Bryman (2004:19-20) defines quantitative research as a research strategy that emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Unlike qualitative research where the researcher gets in contact with the people under study, in a quantitative research, such contact is nonexistent due to the types of methods used. In the case of this research, quantitative method was adopted to complement the qualitative method.

This research was conducted using a mixed research methods approach, which falls within a pragmatic tradition. Use of mixed methods is relevant in this research because it provides
richness and detail to the study, exploring specific features of each method Bryman, (2006). The study on Malawi Administrative reforms would benefit from integration of research methods in that it would expand the breadth of the study and would likely enlighten the more general debate on reforms in Malawi and their impact on service delivery. As PREST (2004) notes “using multiple approaches can capitalize on the strengths of each approach and offset their different weaknesses”.

3.2.1 Qualitative Research Methods

Sound research requires a systematic and rigorous approach to the design and implementation of the study, the collection and analysis of data, and the interpretation and reporting of findings Fossey et al. (2002:720). According to Weinreich (2006:2), Qualitative research methodologies are designed to provide the researcher with the perspective of target audience members through immersion in a culture or situation and direct interaction with the people under study. Weinreich adds that the methods used include observations, in-depth interviews and focus groups. These methods are designed to help researchers understand the meanings people assign to social phenomena and to elucidate the mental processes underlying behaviours. Weinreich further asserts that in the Qualitative paradigm, the researcher becomes the instrument of data collection, and results may vary greatly depending upon who conducts the research. Weinreich points out that the advantage of using qualitative methods is that they generate rich, detailed data that leave the participants’ perspectives intact and provide a context for health behaviour. The disadvantage is that data collection and analysis may be labour intensive and time-consuming.

Therefore, in this research, the case study was civil service. The study was concerned with the impact civil service reforms have on service delivery. Structured interviews were utilised where interview sessions were arranged with ten (10) very senior officials from government.
As suggested by Bryman (2001:267), the researcher formulated research questions, then selected the relevant respondents and finally collected data through the interviews. The use of qualitative methods allowed the researcher to collect the primary data in a flexible, non-structured way that allowed emergence of new information and interpretations of the impact of administrative reform in Malawi.

3.2.2 Quantitative Research Methods

Quantitative research involves counting and measuring of events and performing the statistical analysis of a body of numerical data (Smith, 1988). The assumption behind the positivist paradigm is that there is an objective truth existing in the world that can be measured and explained scientifically Matveev (2002:60). The main concerns of the quantitative research are that measurement is reliable, valid, and generalizable in its clear prediction of cause and effect (Cassell and Symon, 1994). According to Matveev (2002:63), the strengths of the quantitative paradigm are that its methods produce quantifiable, reliable, data that are usually generalizable to some larger population. The weaknesses of the quantitative method as pointed out by Matveev include, failure to provide the researcher with information on the context of the situation where the studied phenomenon occurs; inability to control the environment where the respondents provide the answers to the questions in the survey; limited outcomes to only those outlined in the original research proposal due to closed type questions and the structured format; not encouraging the evolving and continuous investigation of a research phenomenon.

In this study, the quantitative method was used which allowed the researcher to collect the data from the respondents in the numerical format, exercise objective judgment, and to achieve a high level of reliability and accuracy. The researcher therefore used questionnaires
to collect quantitative data on the impact of administrative reform on service delivery in Malawi.

3.3 Research Design
According to Schurink (2009:803), a research design is a researcher’s plan of how to execute a particular study from identifying the topic to interpreting the results. Mouton (1996:107) concurs and states that the purpose of a research design is, ‘to enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decisions should be so as to maximise the validity of the eventual results.’ As suggested by Mouton (2001:151), the researcher in this study formulated exploratory and descriptive research questions; employed structured interviews and collected primary textual data through Qualitative and Quantitative approaches. The study followed the case study research design, which according to Bryman (2001:47), could be a community, organisation or person. In this research, the study case was about the impact of reforms on service delivery.

3.4 Target Population
The target population refers to the subjects who possess attributes which the researcher wishes to study and a universe of units from which the sample is to be drawn Devos (2000:198). Kalof et al (2008:41) define a target population as a collection of people, objects, countries that share a common characteristic of interest. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:87) view a target population as a set of elements on which the researcher focuses and from which the results obtained by testing the sample can be generalised.

In this study, the research population consisted of sixty (60) subjects, who comprised 10 Members of Parliament, 10 Permanent Secretaries, 10 Cabinet Ministers, 10 Deputy Ministers, 10 Deputy Secretary and 10 Under Secretaries.
3.5 Sampling Procedure

Sampling is usually to select representatives from the large population, which is powerful and determinative mechanism of the total study because the information to be gained from the sample will be considered as the representative of the total population. It is also very important that sampling frame has to be as comprehensive as possible to minimize information distortion. However, according to Babbie (2004:34), a sample consists of elements of a population only considered for the actual inclusion in the study. Shipman (1988:52) concurs with this statement and explains that sampling is a systematic way of choosing a group small enough to study and large enough to be representative of the population under study.

In this study, purposive sampling was utilised. Purposive sampling as Denzin and Lincoln (1994:202) put it, ‘they seek out groups, settings, and individuals where the processes being studied are most likely to occur. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which the researcher is interested Silverman (2001:250). The sample was determined in consideration of the fact that some of the participants might be outside their duty station during the distribution of questionnaires and that it might be difficult to reach them, some are no longer in these positions for instance, Permanent Secretaries and that the researcher’s work commitments might not allow a second round of distribution of questionnaires or conducting interviews.

3.5.1 Sample Size

Sample size is a segment of the population which the researcher attempt to control the various factors that might influence their research Yates (2004:25). Welman and Krugar (2001:147) state that sample size is properly fixed by deciding the level of accuracy required and the acceptable magnitude of the sampling error. The major criterion in deciding the sample size is the representativeness of the population.
In this study, the researcher was confronted by the fact that it was not possible to collect data from everyone in the research population. Therefore, the researcher used samples to carry out the research.

In this research, senior managers involved in civil service administration as well as politicians were purposively selected. The criterion was those that have wide range of experience in policy formulation and implementation of reforms that have taken place in Malawi. Therefore the total sample comprised seventy (70) respondents. Out of the seventy (70) respondents, ten (10) were interviewed and (60) were given questionnaires.

3.5.2 Sample technique

Since this research adopts a mixed research methods, use of multiple sampling techniques is inevitable. Creswell (2006) outlines sampling techniques which are consistent with both qualitative and quantitative methods. The author summarises that qualitative methods go hand in hand with purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is defined by Creswell (2006) “…as one of the most common sampling strategies which groups participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question?”

According to Dooley (1990:134), there are two primary sample techniques, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, every member of a population is given an equal chance of being included in the sample, whereas in non-probability sampling, there is no way of knowing the probability that a case will be selected for a sample, thus there is no way of knowing how representative the sample is. Mouton (1996:38) states that the researcher may use multiple methods and techniques in order to improve the quality of research.

In this study, the non-probability sampling technique was used in conjunction with in-depth interviews. The researcher used self administered open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews to collect data from all the sample respondents. According to Family Health
international (2006), “the in-depth interview is a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participant’s perspective on the research topic.” In-depth interviews were beneficial in this research because of their appropriateness to elicit individual experiences, opinions and feelings.

3.5.3 Data Collection Instruments

This is a process whereby a researcher gathers empirical data of a historical, documentary or statistical nature. Mouton (1996:110) observes that this process is accomplished through various methods and techniques of observation such as interviewing, content analysis and document analysis. According to Layder (1993:54), there are several instruments that can be used to collect data, among which are interviews, questionnaires, surveys and attendance records.

- Interviews

Interviews were used in this research as an instrument of collecting data. This method was central in this study as it provided an understanding of the opinions, feelings and values conveyed by each respondent concerning the impact of reforms on delivery of service. In data collection from the respondents, the researcher used in-depth structured interviews. In a structured interview, the sequence of questions to be asked and the detailed information to be gathered are all predetermined. An advantage of structured interview is that it provides uniform information which assures the comparability of data Kumar (2005:126), and leads to systematic collection of data with relative accuracy.

The researcher booked appointments with ten (10) very senior management officials in the civil service, where in-depth, face-to-face and well-structured interview schedules were conducted. These officials were targeted due to their positions and the roles they play in the administration of government. They are the policy-makers and are either involved in the
designing and formulating of reform, or facilitating its implementation. The interviews were reliable and valid because participants engaged in open discussion with the researcher, expressed their personal feelings, made suggestions and provided explanations during the course of the interview. Respondents were able to share their experiences as regards factors affecting service delivery as far as reforms are concerned.

- **Questionnaires**

In this study, the researcher used the self-administered questionnaires with open-ended questions which allowed the respondents to express themselves fully and provide detailed information. The researcher appointed a research assistant who distributed questionnaires to the sixty (60) participants. The questionnaires were collected from the participants after one week. However, only 30 questionnaires were collected as some participants reported that the questionnaire could not be located and others were out of their duty stations.

- **Documentation**

The researcher utilised primary and secondary data in this study as the researcher was seeking an understanding of the impact administrative reform has on service delivery. Primary data is the type of data the researcher collects by making first-hand observations Kalof et al (2008:39). Although primary data is very crucial in achieving concrete results in a research, secondary sources are also important as they broaden the understanding of the key concepts, theories and empirical results. The secondary data sources used in this research included several books, research literature, journals, review of official documents on administrative reform, reports of public sector reform, review of related literature and publications on administrative reform and related issues.
3.5.4 Data Presentation and Analysis

According to De Vos et al. (2001:333) data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is one of the critical processes inherent in research. Henning (2004: 101) argues that data analysis “is a process that requires analytical craftsmanship and the ability to capture understanding of the data in writing”. As in quantitative research, the purpose of data analysis is to transform data into findings. In this research, thematic analysis was utilized. This began with preliminary analysis right during data collection. The advantage of this according to De Vos et al. (2001:335) is that it provides an opportunity during field work to capture analytical insights, alternative explanations and patterns emerging in the course of data collection. After completing data collection, the analysis then proceeded with transcriptions of interviews and notes. As De Vos et al. point out; this is the initial step away from the field aimed at organizing and managing data. Apart from typing and organizing the data, the researcher read and wrote memos as a way of getting general impression of the database. According to Creswell (1998:143), memos are short phrases, ideas or key concepts that the reader sifts from the data and they serve to strengthen an understanding of issues emerging during analysis.

Data analysis then made it possible for the researcher to present findings and draw conclusions from the collected data. However names of the participants were not mentioned to protect individual anonymity.
3.6 Ethical Considerations

The researcher gave each respondent a letter outlining the purpose of the study and requesting their assistance in completing the questionnaire. In some instances, respondents were briefed about the topic and aims of the research so that they might gain insight into the whole purpose of the study. The researcher however remained committed to the ethical conduct associated with any academic research. Information gathered orally and through documents was treated with utmost confidentiality and was used for the sole purpose of this research.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The Research design and methodology were scientifically followed in this chapter. Data was collected from participants using in-depth, face-to-face structured interviews and self-administered questionnaires. The choice of questionnaires and interviews was influenced by the need to assist the researcher to acquire all the necessary information from the participants. The questionnaires and interviews were structured to promote uniformity across all the respondents and to provide a guide to participants on how to respond to a question. The next chapter deals with presentation and analysis of data.
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a presentation of the research findings. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods were used to give the readers an in-depth understanding of the results and the opinions of the political office bearers and administrative managers in the civil service.

The purposive sampling technique was used in data collection through questionnaires and interviews which were conducted with top management officials. These officials were deemed relevant to the study due to their wide experience. Government documents on civil service reform were analysed in order to obtain concrete evidence regarding reform programmes and how service delivery had been affected.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

The researcher administered sixty (60) questionnaires to the selected top management officials of the civil service. However the researcher managed to get back thirty (30) questionnaires from the participants. Some participants reported that they misplaced the questionnaires and others were reported out of their duty stations during the collection time. Therefore, thirty questionnaires have been collected for data presentation, analysis and interpretation. The questionnaire used in collecting quantitative data was structured in such a way that it would provide information on the personal profiles of the participants and their views on reforms. In this section, responses are presented in numerical and graphical form.
4.2.1 Academic And Professional Qualifications For Top Management Officials

Figure 4.1 below displays academic qualifications for top management officials.

![Academic qualifications of top management officials](image)

**Figure 4.1   Academic Qualifications of Respondents**

Figure 4.1 shows that out of 10 Principal Secretaries (PS), none possessed a Malawi Secondary Certificate of Education (MSCE) qualification, 2 indicated that they had a University Diploma, representing a percentage of 20, and 5 were in possession of a University Degree, representing 50%, and 30% did not respond. However, out of 10 Deputy Secretaries, none had an MSCE Certificate, none had a University Diploma, representing a percentage of 0, and 6 had a University Degree, representing 60%, 40% did not respond. Out of 10 Under Secretaries, none were in possession of both an MSCE Certificate and University Diploma, and 8 respondents had a University Degree, representing 80%, 20% did not respond.
Figure 4.2 below displays professional qualification for top management officials in civil service.

![Bar chart showing professional qualifications of top management officials]

**Professional qualifications of top management officials**

- **Principal Secretaries**
  - Diplomas: 30%, 3 out of 10
  - Masters: 20%, 2 out of 10
  - Doctorate: 10%, 1 out of 10
  - Non-respondents: 40%

- **Deputy Secretaries**
  - Diplomas: 40%, 4 out of 10
  - Masters: 50%, 5 out of 10
  - Doctorate: 0%
  - Non-respondents: 10%

- **Under Secretaries**
  - Diplomas: 30%, 3 out of 10
  - Masters: 40%, 4 out of 10
  - Doctorate: 0%
  - Non-respondents: 30%

**Figure 4.2  Professional Qualifications of Respondents**

Figure 4.2 reveals that out of 10 Principal Secretaries, 3 had Diploma in various professions other than public administration, representing 30%. 2 participants were in possession of Masters Degree in Administration, representing a percentage of 20, and 1 respondent was in possession of a Medical Doctorate Degree, representing 10%, 40% did not respond. Out of 10 Deputy Secretaries, 4 indicated that they had Diplomas but for various professions other than Administration, thus representing 40%, 5 indicated that they had Masters in Business Administration, thus representing 50%, no one was in possession of a Doctorate Degree, and 10% did not respond. Out of 10 Under Secretaries, 3 had Diplomas, representing 30%, 4 indicated that they had Masters in Public Administration, representing 40%, none had a Doctorate Degree, and 30% did not respond.
Figure 4.3 below depicts experience in years for the top management officials.

**Figure 4.3  Experience in years for top management officials**

Figure 4.3 indicates that 50% of the Principal Secretaries have served for 11-15 years, 10% served for a period longer than 16 years, 20% is in the category of 0-5 years and 20% is also in the category of 6-10 years. Figure 4.3 further illustrates that 40% of the Deputy Secretaries have served for a period between 11-15 years, another 40% have served for a period between 6-10 years, 20% served for 0-5 years and none has served for a period longer than 16 years. However, 50% of the Under Secretaries reported to have served for a period between 6-10 years, 30% served for 11-15 years, 20% served for 0-5 years and none served for a period longer than 16 years.
The researcher’s analysis is that the collected data indicate that most of the high ranking officials in Civil Service Administration are the longest serving members constituting 50%, with years ranging from 11-15 and with professional qualifications in different fields other than Administration. From the data collected, it is evident that Administrative work is manned by personnel who are not qualified public administrators; only 20% possess a qualification in public administration. This information is vital because it confirms the notion that performance is influenced among other things by one’s professional or academic qualifications as well as one’s experience. This suggests that educational and professional qualification play a significant role in contributing towards the achievement of better performance and improved service delivery. Therefore, it can be interpreted that implementation of civil service reforms was hindered partly because those entrusted with oversight functions had little knowledge and experience of public administration. It is quite often wrongly assumed that anyone can handle public administration, with or without relevant qualification or experience. These findings are consistent with international evidence which shows that administrative duties are manned by those that are favoured by politicians. It makes little or no difference whether they have relevant experience or not. It is this tendency that has contributed to declining values of professionalism in the civil service. In Cameroon, the civil service encounters similar problems. Ebai and Forje (2009:74) attest to this and state ‘only those who show allegiance and loyalty towards the ruling government are appointed on senior management positions in the public service’. The researcher strongly encourages government to refrain from appointing unskilled personnel on senior administrative positions and to take one’s area of expertise into consideration when making such appointments so that civil service professionalism is maintained and service delivery is enhanced.
4.2.2 Objectives of Civil Service Reform

Out of the 30 participants, 26 (86%) agreed that contemporary Public Administration recognises that policy making involves both political and administrative components, whereas 4 participants (14%) did not respond. 80% of the participants agreed that government undertook the civil service reform in order to improve delivery of public services, while 20% did not respond. 15 participants (50%) consented that civil servants were consulted when civil service reforms were being introduced but expressed concern that there was no comprehensive civic education while 12 (40%) disagreed arguing that there were no awareness programmes held regarding civil service reform and that there was no participation from the civil servants since consultations were done at a higher level of ministries. Respondents explained that Principal Secretaries were advised to inform their staff members of the reform programmes but there was no evidence to that effect. 3 participants (10%) did not respond. None indicated that they were involved in all the stages of reform process, while 12 (40%) mentioned that they were involved in the implementation stage, whereas 18 participants (60%) did not respond. On whether the civil service reform programme achieved its intended purpose, 5 respondents (17%) agreed that civil service reform achieved its intended purpose even though many of the reform programmes apparently delivered only small parts of what their designers had intended. However, 25 participants (83%) disagreed that civil service reform programme achieved its intended purpose explaining that civil service was, and still is inefficient, service delivery standards are worse than poor and that there is too much corruption and theft in the public service. Respondents explained that the top-bottom approach adopted by government has encouraged the reform programmes to fail because most of the civil servants turned a ‘blind eye’ on the reform programmes.
The researcher’s analysis is that the collected data indicate that participants had adequate knowledge of the primary objective of civil service reform programmes. The researcher has noted that no civic education programmes were conducted for the civil servants in order to create awareness and an understanding of the intended reform programmes. The findings clearly show that the majority of the public servants are not involved or do not participate in policy formulation and/or implementation. This data is important because it shows how sensitive reform implementation process can be. Reforms can hardly be implemented smoothly in circumstances where there is no grass root participation and no popular support.

The researcher believes that public participation is an effective tool which yields satisfactory results if used effectively. When citizens are involved in and are aware of the proposed programmes, they are more likely to pledge their full support. The culture of imposing policies of this nature on public servants and the civil society in the name of ‘improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector’ sometimes impacts negatively on the performance of civil servants because they get so demoralised that they have neither the desire nor the ability to bring about change themselves.

These findings are consistent with international evidence which illustrates that the culture of allowing citizen participation in policy issues is lacking in most public services around the Continent. In their Case Study, Teskey and Hooper (1999:8) found out that the government of Tanzania in its civil service reform programme, there was no participation from the public servants and consequently the reform programme did not succeed. Teskey and Hooper state ‘the CSRP was designed as the first phase of a longer term transformation. It was also clear that the vision for the change programme came from the top; the political and the technical leadership perceived a need for change. In that sense the programme was directed and imposed. It was not participatory.’
The researcher established that there is too much corruption and malpractice in the public service. These findings are consistent with international evidence which shows that there is a general outcry against corruption in public services. In Cameroon, Ebai and Forje (2009:77) explain ‘it is shocking that the acts of corruption have been witnessed among top civil and government leaders.’ The researcher’s interpretation is that it would be difficult for these reform programmes to sail through unless government showed commitment by addressing these drawbacks and begin to translate its policies into real actions.

4.2.3 Impact of Civil Service Reform on Service Delivery

On effectiveness in the facilitation and implementation of civil service reform, out of 30 respondents, only 10 participants (33%) responded. The 33% mentioned that they ensured effectiveness by making sure that there were adequate funds and well skilled human resource. Respondents further said that they trained and developed their staff arguing that it is important to offer relevant training for improvement of skills and knowledge of staff, so that they become motivated in their work. The 33% that responded explained that they ensured effectiveness by directly participating in the public sectors functional reviews, facilitating decentralization of their ministries functions and organisational development focusing on public sectors service delivery centred on the needs of clients. However 20 participants (67%) did not respond. On whether government considers one’s area of specialization and relevant qualification before one is hired on a senior managerial post, 2 participants (7%) said that there is consideration whereas 28 participants (93%) indicated that there is no consideration arguing that focus is just on filling existing vacancies without due consideration of area of specialisation or qualification. Participants further explained that politics interfere with development of a professional civil service. Respondents argued that most of the appointments are politically motivated. Officials are hired because they share similar political
party ideologies and so they will be able to promote the government’s agenda no matter how unethical, unprofessional or incorrect the agenda might be. Respondents also mentioned that most of the appointments are based on favouritism and nepotism, meaning that some officials are hired because they know each other; they come from the same home district and speak the same language.

Elaborating on whether there is more politics involved when designing civil service reforms and that, civil servants rarely show interest in the implementation process, while 7 participants (23%) disagreed with the statement, 23 (74%) agreed stating that reforms are designed to suit political office bearers needs and civil servants lose interest. Respondents pointed out that there was too much top-bottom approach instead of strengthening bottom-up approach and encouraging popular participation. Respondents established that employees lose interest because they think that such reforms basically target them, e.g. when down-sizing civil service, a lot of employees lose their jobs. However, on the fact that a combination of socio-economic and political factors weakened the implementation process of the civil service reform, only 13 participants (43%) responded. 17 participants (57%) did not respond. The 43% that agreed with the statement mentioned the following as factors affecting implementation process of reforms:

- Any reform takes power away from some people. Senior officials tend to dislike any changes when they feel that their interests will be at stake when applying such changes so they use ‘delay tactics’ to frustrate the whole process.

- Lack of proper environment within which the reforms can operate whereby all other complementary components such as trained personnel, budget and facilities are not in order to accept these reforms.
- Civil servants have bad work culture that of late coming, absenteeism, lack of commitment and shirking responsibility.
- Lack of adequate financial resources.

On how the civil service reform programme impact on service delivery, 15 participants (50%) responded and 15 participants (50%) did not respond. The 50% that responded explained that those reforms that are implemented through top-down management may work initially, but it is difficult to enact them at a deep level unless there is compliance and participation of those groups whose well being is affected by reforms. Participants explained that the persistence of bad attitude from public servants, acceptance of bribery and high levels of absenteeism clearly shows that the reforms have a negative impact on service delivery. The respondents pointed out that lack of grass root participation, lack of respect for human rights, lack of women participation in policy-making and gender equality also have a negative impact on service delivery.

The researcher’s analysis is that the collected data indicate that there was a very insignificant improvement in service delivery. This suggests that the reforms practically failed to improve service delivery in Malawi. This data is important because it echoes the researchers’ hypothesis that civil service reforms have not translated into improved service delivery in Malawi. There must be reasons for this outcome. In most cases administrators have been denied the right to administer professionally due to politics-administration interface. In such circumstances it would be difficult to hold them accountable for service delivery if they have not been given sufficient authority to manage as professionals. It is not surprising, however, that reform programmes impacted negatively on service delivery. It is very ironic that much as government desires to yield positive results, it is the same policy makers (political officials) who are on the forefront flouting procedures, rules and regulations by meddling in
administrative issues, for instance the appointment of unqualified personnel on senior management positions. These findings are consistent with international evidence which shows that senior management officials are appointed largely on the basis of political affiliation. In South Africa, Cameron (2009:22) admits that there is the issue of politically based recruitment into the public service as opposed to merit based recruitment. Cameron states ‘the African National Congress (ANC) in its early days as government started bringing in people with similar ideological values to senior positions into the public service’. Adamlolekun (2004:7-8) states that merit based public service helps enhance the efficiency and productivity of an administrative system. He further states that while there is a need in almost every modern state to combine merit with some form of representativeness, ‘in practical terms merit is subordinated to a so-called concern with representativeness that is, in many cases, a cover for patronage or a crude quota system, characterised by opacity.’ A United Nations study (2005: 80-82) concurs and points out that experience has shown that strengthening appointment on merit is one of the most powerful ways in which governments can improve their effectiveness. Merit based appointment can go a long way in eradicating patronage in the public service. The absence of merit based appointment in the public service promotes unprofessionalism and inefficiency, thereby encouraging reform failure.

The researcher has established that Implementation is the most crucial stage of the reform process which requires a highly effective and efficient administrative system to administer it. Most reforms fail at the implementation stage. This problem is not unique to Malawi. A typical example is the World Bank’s Public Sector Management Reform Programme for Ghana, launched in 1999, which aimed at a ‘total redefinition of the roles and functions of the state and its agencies’ across ‘all sectors’. This inherently unrealistic objective was described as satisfactory and ‘in line with best practice’. The failure to properly implement was
ascribed to the lack of capacity, the poor quality of consultants and agency rivalry (World Bank, 2004).

### 4.2.4 Challenges of Civil Service Reform

On major challenges of the civil service reform programme, out of the 30 participants, only 11 participants (37%) responded while 19 (63%) did not respond. Respondents listed the following as major challenges of the civil service reform:

- Lack of strong political will which is necessary to cope with the resistance from internal stakeholders like bureaucracy and employees unions.
- Lack of adequate participation from stakeholders (private sector, academics, and civil society) to ensure the beneficiaries' perspective and maintaining positive pressure on government to carry on the reform process.
- Lack of strong commitment due to inadequate financial resources and absence of ownership of reforms on the part of the civil service.
- Roll out plans of the initiatives are not adequately funded to ensure complete coverage of the reform programmes, there is too much lip-service.
- There is no comprehensive civic education.

On whether there are measures put in place to address such challenges, only 6 participants (20%) indicated that currently there were no measures but that government would look into that. 24 (80%) participants did not respond. 9 (30%) participants disagreed with the statement that implementation of the civil service reform is hampered by a lack of administrative knowledge and techniques by those responsible for its implementation, while 12 (40%) participants were in agreement with the statement, and 9 (30%) participants did not respond. The 30% that disagreed explained that there were several other factors that hamper implementation of the reform process, citing lack of financial resources as an example.
However, various suggestions were provided on what must be done in order to ensure maximum implementation of reforms. 18 (60%) participants responded and 12 (40%) did not respond. The 60% that responded suggested the following:

- There must be a high level of political commitment since reform to a greater extent is a political process, therefore, broad-based and continued political commitment needs to be fostered and nurtured in deciding reform priorities and solutions. This requires the politicians to be made aware of the consequences emerging out of the lack of reform measures and their implementation.

- A practical plan has to be an integral part of any reform measures to deal with resistance from internal stakeholders including the bureaucrats along with the external stake holders like politicians, the private sector, academicians, civil society and others. They must not only be consulted but also give an opportunity for their meaningful participation. This will provide the stakeholders’ perspective to the reform process and help maintain positive pressure on the government for executing the reforms, supported and demanded from both within the bureaucracy and by the people at large.

- Political commitment must be translated into concrete actions, popular participation should be enhanced and strengthened at all levels, there must be sustained civic education and adequate resources must be allocated for reform programmes.

The researcher’s observation is that the collected data indicate that government makes policy issues without engaging the public. This makes reform initiatives futile as they do not usually achieve the intended purpose due to several impediments which are encountered by the
reform programmes. The researcher observed that service delivery is affected and citizens are disadvantaged because public servants offer poor quality of public services due to low morale and frustration. The researcher has established that these challenges are not unique to Malawi. The findings are consistent with what Kiragu (1998:62) observed from the findings of Zambia civil service reform programmes. Kiragu explains that ‘the major challenge in the Zambia civil service reform programmes was the lack of clear understanding among many middle and lower level civil servants of the objectives and benefits of the reform programmes which had given rise to a lot of apprehension and low morale among some civil servants’. The researcher however is in agreement with Crook (2010) who suggests that the greatest challenge for most of civil service reforms in Africa is the lack of political commitment. Political commitment encompasses all these other challenges. If it is properly addressed, most of the hiccups standing in the way of reform programmes would have been removed. Crook suggests ‘lack of political commitment appears as the most plausible underlying reason for all the failures of implementation, lack of ownership and commitment, and failures to resolve conflicting lines of command. The researcher believes that all these other problems would be minimized if the highest political authorities were really committed to the reforms and were prepared to put their authority on the line to implement them.
4.2.5 Academic and Professional Qualifications for Political Officials

Figure 4.4 below displays academic qualifications for political officials.

![Academic Qualification of Political Officials](chart)

**Figure 4.4 Academic Qualification of Political Officials**

Figure 4.4 shows that out of 10 Cabinet Ministers, 2 had a Malawi Secondary Certificate of Education, representing 20%, 4 were in possession of a University Diploma, representing 40%, 3 indicated that they had a University Degree, representing 30% and 10% did not respond. Out of the 10 Deputy Ministers, 5 indicated that they were in possession of an MSCE Certificate, representing 50%, 2 reported that they had a University Diploma, representing 20%, 1 was in possession of a University Degree, representing 10% and 20% did not respond. Out of the 10 Members of parliament, 7 were in possession of an MSCE Certificate, representing 70%, 1 had a University Diploma, representing 10%, none had a University Degree, and 20% did not respond.
Figure 4.5 below displays professional qualifications for political officials.

![Professional Qualifications of Political officials](image)

**Figure 4.5  Professional Qualification of Political officials**

Figure 4.5 shows that out of 10 cabinet Ministers, 3 were in possession of a Diploma, representing 30%, 2 had Masters Degree, representing 20%, none had Doctorate Degree, and 50% did not respond. Out of 10 Deputy Ministers, 4 were in possession of Diploma, representing 40%, 2 indicated that they had Masters Degree, representing 20%, none had Doctorate Degree, and 40% did not respond. Out of 10 Members of Parliament, 3 reported that they had Diplomas, representing 30%, 1 had Masters Degree, representing 10%, none was in possession of Doctorate Degree, and 60% did not respond.
Figure 4.6 below depicts experience in years for the political officials.

![Experience in years for political officials](image)

**Figure 4.6  Experience in years for political officials**

Figure 4.6 reveals that 60% of the Cabinet Ministers have served for 6-10 years, 20% served for 0-5 years, none of them served for 11-15 years and none served for a period longer than 16 years. 80% of the Deputy Ministers have served within the ranges of 0-5 years, 20% served for 6-10 years, none served for 11-15 years and none served for a period longer than 16 years. 50% of the Members of Parliament have served within the ranges of 0-5 years, 40% indicated 6-10 years, 10% indicated 11-15 years and none indicated 16 years or more of service.

The researcher’s analysis is that the collected data indicate that the longest serving political officials in civil service administration constitute 60%, with years ranging from 6-10.
However, the political officials hold professional qualifications in different fields. This information is vital because it helps to identify some of the contributing factors that make reform unsuccessful. Usually political leaders often have a limited understanding of bureaucratic systems and processes. Therefore, it can be deduced that the implementation of Administrative reforms is hindered partly because some of the political office bearers entrusted with designing and formulating reform are not well qualified and therefore lack knowledge to carry out their functions.

4.2.5.1 Objectives of Civil Service Reform

Out of 30 participants, 19 (63%) agreed that the main objective of administrative reform is to improve delivery of public services thereby improving socio-economic growth through good governance. 11 participants (37%) did not respond. On whether civil servants were fully consulted when civil service reforms were being introduced, 15 respondents (50%) were of the opinion that they were fully consulted, while the other 50% did not respond. On level of involvement during reform process, 9 participants (30%) indicated that they were involved in the briefing stage of the reform process, whereas 6 participants (20%) mentioned the designing stage, 5 participants (17%) indicated that they were involved in all the stages of reform process, and 10 participants (33%) did not respond.

The researcher’s analysis is that the collected data indicate that most of the political office bearers are aware of government’s objectives in introducing administrative reforms. This information is necessary because it shows that government has plans in its endeavour to improve delivery of services, and for this to be achieved, it requires sustained commitment from political leaders and also through consultations with stakeholders on reform programmes. The researcher has noted that 50% of the respondents claimed that civil servants were fully involved in the reform programmes. However, evidence suggests that the reform
programmes were ineffectively implemented in spite of the full involvement of the civil servants. This could mean that consultation and consensus-building did not take place adequately; therefore this situation facilitated a sense of exclusion, as if other civil servants were not party to the reform programmes. It could also mean that the reform programmes were imposed top-down with only limited participation from civil servants. The top-bottom approach seems to be counterproductive.

4.2.5.2 Impact of Civil Service Reform on Service Delivery

Out of 30 participants, 16 (53%) agreed that government takes into consideration one’s area of specialization and relevant qualification when hiring them on a senior managerial post, whereas 14 participants (47%) did not respond. 10 participants (33%) disagreed that more politics is involved when designing civil service reforms and that political factors stand in the way of reform initiatives, stating that they intervene wherever possible and offer political guidance and support. 20 participants (67%) did not respond. On how the civil service reform programme impact on service delivery, 8 participants (27%) responded explaining that the civil service reform programme had a slight negative impact on service delivery, stating that the reforms tried to resolve some issues for example the removal of ‘ghost workers’ on the payroll. Respondents mentioned that there was a lot of home work to be done as there is still too much corruption in government ministries and departments, unprofessional and unproductive workforce, and accountability and transparency are basically lacking in the civil service.

The researcher’s observation is that the collected data indicate that civil service reform programme generally had a negative impact on service delivery. This data is crucial because it dispels the notion that civil service reforms improved service delivery in Malawi. As it is evidenced from the data, the reforms actually were to a very large extent unsuccessful since
they encountered some difficulties within the civil service, thus making the implementation process a great deal of a problem. The researcher has noted that corruption has been mentioned by respondents as bearing a negative impact on service delivery. The researcher has also noted that political leaders involve themselves in corrupt practices as indicated by respondents. The researcher’s view is that corruption among the political elite and the bureaucracy undermines the legitimacy of government and its institutions. It weakens trust in the rule of law and can have a detrimental effect on the economy. It is crucial therefore that politicians and bureaucrats act in an ethical manner. However the challenge also lies in devising reform strategies that can lead to better governance and less corruption but more importantly, in devising reform strategies that can feasibly be implemented by the respective state.

4.2.5.3 Challenges of Civil Service Reform

Out of 30 participants, 10 (33%) agreed that the implementation of civil service reform programmes improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service and delivery of public services in Malawi. 20 participants (67%) made no reply. 9 participants (30%) presented the following as major challenges of the civil service reform programme:

- Absence of one central reform agency to be made responsible for providing leadership and creating public constituency for reforms. This situation leads to sectorial ownership of the reform process at the expense of national ownership.
- Faulty planning of implementation
- Inability to command resources,
- Absence of feedback to all the stakeholders
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanism
14 participants (47%) disagreed that implementation of the civil service reform is hampered mainly by lack of political will by political office bearers, while 6 (20%) agreed, and 10 participants (33%) made no reply. On what must be done to ensure that reforms are fully implemented, only 5 participants (17%) responded, 25 participants (83%) made no reply. The 17% that responded said it was necessary to have a change-friendly and change-oriented bureaucracy, reinforced by an increased managerial capacity of the bureaucracy to execute reform measures. Respondents pointed out that it was important to consider the capacity of the administrative mechanism, resource availability; institutional arrangements to manage, coordinate and implement the reform process prior to recommending reform measures.

The researcher’s observation is that the collected data indicate that civil service reform programmes were faced with a lot of challenges most of which would have been avoided if there was strong political will. The researcher has observed that the need to establish a central reform agency which would be made responsible for providing leadership and creating public constituency for reforms is very important. PSMRU (2008) points out that there are various discreet reform initiatives taking place in different Ministries and Departments without any coherent principles that tie them together to a common vision or mission. As a result it is difficult to gauge their contribution and whether they contribute to a better performing Public Service. In the absence of the central reform agency reform activities remain uncoordinated and cannot be said to be effectively addressing the concerns of the public service in Malawi. Therefore government must see to it that this agency is created for better and enhanced service delivery. The researcher noted that respondents mentioned the ‘inability to command resources’ as one of the challenges of CSR. The researcher has noted that one of the functions of Administrative managers is to ensure effective and efficient use of public financial resources. Principal Secretaries and their Deputies who head ministries and
departments must monitor all the financial transactions and re-enforce accountability and transparency in public financial matters in their respective institutions. Good practices of public financial management help to foster good policymaking, effective service delivery, and responsibility in utilizing public resources. The researcher has observed that lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanism is a big challenge that is faced by the CSR in Malawi. The CSR is a major programme intended to support other reform efforts since they all depend on the performance of public servants. Its success and impact will depend on how much the government invests in monitoring and evaluation in terms of budget allocation and capacity of personnel involved in monitoring and evaluation. This is not an issue to be left to technocrats alone. It needs commitment on the part of political leadership, particularly an appreciation of monitoring and evaluation as a decision making tool, rather than a mere activity. The researcher has established that it has not been the practice to evaluate the constraints faced by the past reform efforts, before new initiatives are undertaken and based on this, identify the future measures to be carried on for further reform. The lack of evaluation has resulted in the government’s failure to derive value for money invested in the reform processes. However it takes government’s effort to address all these challenges so that the policies and objectives put in place are achieved.

4.3 PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA

4.3.1 Objectives of Administrative Reform

The interviews conducted with the civil service top management officials were basically used to collect data that would give an understanding of civil service reforms and reasons why government decided to undertake such reform programmes. The objectives of reform were basically to improve quality of public services, making the operations of government more
efficient, implementing public policies effectively and making public expenditure cost effective. These findings are not unique to Malawi. Empirical evidence shows that the objectives of CSR worldwide are similar. Caiden (1969:65) concurs and states ‘the objective of administrative reform is to enhance and increase the quality of public services and deliver such goals and services to citizens more economically, efficiently and effectively’. The interviewees believed that the objectives of these reforms were to build a high performing accountable and modern public service in order to improve delivery of prioritised services. The interviewees added that there were reform areas that government had planned to address. The reform areas mentioned were:-

- Human Resource Management and Development- especially need for human resource development to enhance skills/competencies to increase productivity with strong focus on performance management and ethical behavior.
- Information Communication Technology - lack of accurate, timely and relevant information for internal decision-making and for public information.
- Weak policy capacity - need for support to Cabinet and its Committees to streamline decision making and consider long term and strategic policy issues
- Financial Mobilisation and Management - need for improvement of revenue mobilisation and generation to increase pro-poor allocations; improvement of fiscal discipline; and strengthening of links between policy, planning and budgeting.

However, according to the interviewees, the first initiative that government had undertaken in the civil service reform programme was a census of civil servants which aimed at removing “ghost” employees. Additional information gathered in the interaction with interviewees indicated that the “ghost” employees were removed from the payroll, and payroll and
personnel management information systems were linked, and there were plans to link the personnel management information system and the payroll with the pensions system in order to cut out ‘‘ghost’’ pensioners as well. The interviewees suggested that reform could be an effective tool for improved delivery of public service only if it were properly implemented. They mentioned the following as some of the reform programmes undertaken by government: functional reviews, strategic planning, leadership and management development, performance management, job evaluation and salary restructuring, and review and development of policies.

However, elaborating on what prompted government to undertake civil service reform programmes; interviewees responded that government had to undertake the civil service reform programmes in order to improve efficiency and productivity of the public service. The interviewees also shared information to the effect that there were other major drivers of reform initiatives in Malawi which included fiscal pressures, global economy and market place, technology, citizen expectations, governance and policy issues. Interviewees also reiterated that government had to address perceived corruption and low public respect in order to improve operational inefficiency and poor service delivery.

Elaborating on the question of consideration of one’s area of specialization during recruitment process, most of the respondents explained that to a larger extent, they try to follow recruitment procedures. Interviewees indicated that senior posts were political appointments and that no interviews were necessary to fill such posts. Interviewees expressed concern that filling of such posts was not merit-based as they were politically motivated, therefore anyone could be appointed to head a ministry with or without relevant qualification. The interviewees shared information to this effect and gave an example that in recent years, government has been appointing an increasing number of individuals into Administration at
senior levels from technical or specialist areas elsewhere in the civil service, unfortunately these officials lack knowledge of public service administration.

From the information gathered through interviews and in documentation, the researcher observed that government had good intentions in introducing reforms in the public service. On further analysis, based on the collected data and general comments made by the interviewees, the researcher observed that most of the top ranking officials were politically appointed into their positions. It is not clear whether they hold relevant professional qualifications and experience. The researcher has also observed that both political office bearers and the bureaucrats in most cases do not adhere to rules and regulations of the civil service when discharging their duties. This is evidenced by the information gathered in the interaction with interviewees which suggests that there is lack of professionalism in the civil service and also lack of strong commitment by government to address the constraints and weaknesses in management processes that negatively impact on the implementation process of reforms.

The researcher’s view is that the professionalism and performance of any public service depend not only on the institutions, but also on the people who staff them. Other than a good formal framework, a good public service needs qualified and motivated personnel. The institutional arrangements for hiring, promoting and dismissing civil servants are crucial to the functioning of the public service. Philip (2002:23) affirms the need for having a professional civil service, and he states ‘professionalization is associated with the establishment of a competent civil service that maintains professional integrity in formulation and implementation of public policies’.

The researcher has further observed that though reform initiatives started way back in 1995 (PSRMU Report, 2008) with a census of civil servants, very little achievement has been registered. This suggests that reform initiatives are failing to achieve the intended purpose.
4.3.2 Impact of Civil Service Reform on Service Delivery

The interviews conducted with the civil service top management officials were basically used to collect data that would give an understanding of the impact of civil service reform on service delivery. The civil service is the machinery that governments rely on to design, formulate and implement its policies, strategies and programmes, and to discharge all routine government functions. Kiragu (1998:64) argues that good government is usually synonymous with an efficient and effective civil service. Such a service promotes an enabling environment for the social, political and economic development of the country. However elaborating on whether the civil service reform programmes benefitted government, respondents were of the opinion that the civil service reform programmes had not been of great benefit to the government arguing that the reforms failed to achieve improvements in service delivery. Interviewees were convinced that there was a real problem in sustaining political support for the reform agenda.

Additional information gathered in the interaction with the participants indicates that civil service reform programmes had a wide agenda to address. The interviewees explained that the civil service was still characterised by several problems such as low and inequitable compensation levels for the civil servants; non-transparent and patronising basis for appointments and promotions; ineffective training programmes; emphasis on bureaucratic procedures and practices; excessively centralised decision making; low budgetary allocations to operations and maintenance expenditures and a generally poor work environment. Interviewees believed that these problems were to a significant extent a reflection of the weaknesses in the civil service institutions.

Elaborating on how the civil service reform programmes impacted on service delivery, interviewees expressed concern that these reform programmes had some slight improvements but to a larger extent displayed a negative impact on service delivery. Participants
acknowledged that the sustainability of reform programmes in Malawi depends on many variables including the scope of funding sources and availability of adequate levels of budgets that support their implementation. Respondents admitted that inadequate financing arrangements make it difficult to achieve and sustain intended positive impact out of the reforms. Participants regretted that decisions on reform measures are often taken without due regard to implementation capacity and budget constraints. Participants believed that there is lack of attention to implementation at all levels i.e. cabinet, principal secretaries and ministries, and therefore, there has been a negative impact on service delivery.

From the information gathered through interviews and in documentation, the researcher observed that a critical factor that has affected implementation and success of the reforms in Malawi is lack of committed political leadership to change and transform the public service, among other factors. However, the researcher has established from the interviews that reform efforts are silently being frustrated although there is no open resistance from the employees. These findings are consistent with international evidence as argued by Nunberg and Nellis (1995:43) that absence of open employee resistance is not an indication of support for reform.

According to World Bank (2004) a competent civil service must have the following characteristics: merit-based and politically neutral; well-structured, “right-sized”, and well-paid; accountable, professional, and generally free of corruption; relatively autonomous, responsive, and representative; well-trained, performance-oriented, and relatively open. The fact that the public service in Malawi lacks the above mentioned characteristics cannot be disputed. The government must ensure that service delivery is not compromised due to excessive red tape in the public service.
4.3.3 Challenges of Civil Service Reform Programme

The interviews conducted with the civil service top management officials were basically used to collect data that would give an understanding of the challenges of civil service reform in the public sector. During the interviews, respondents listed the following as major challenges affecting civil service reform programmes in Malawi:

- **Weak public support for implementation.**

  As in many African countries, the reforms being undertaken in Malawi were often considered to be International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank impositions. This resulted in weak public support for implementation of reform programmes. For example, The World Bank conducted two important studies in Malawi, between 1991 and 1993 to assess problems in the civil service and make recommendations for the civil service reform (World Bank, 1994). These studies recommended a reduction in the number of support staff like watchmen, cleaners, workmen, messengers, etc., occupying the lowest grades in the civil service, the Industrial Class and the Subordinate Class. Redundant employees were meant to be laid off after payment of appropriate disengagement compensation (World Bank 1994:84). This development obviously met with resistance as employees were afraid of losing their jobs. This reform initiative received very minimal support and implementation took a number of years (GoM Report).

- **Difficulties in prioritising functions**

  Public sector reforms in Malawi were faced with the problem of prioritising and sequencing the key implementation measures. For example, functional reviews of government ministries should have been succeed by job evaluation. The purpose of carrying out the functional reviews was basically to streamline government’s administrative structures resulting in the
elimination of some functions and attendant jobs. Thus, functional reviews would be a “mopping up exercise” which ensures that only necessary jobs remain in the civil service. However, the situation was that functional reviews and job evaluation were being implemented simultaneously. This gave rise to the potential risk of duplication of effort and dysfunctional outcomes in reform implementation.

- **Inadequate financial resources**

  Government initiates a lot of reform programmes which are not adequately funded. As such there is no complete coverage of reform programmes. For example, the inability by government to fund retrenchment packages meant that those civil servants whose positions were abolished as a result of the new structures and those who were not qualified for new positions in the new structure could not be separated or retrenched.

- **Politicization of bureaucracy**

  In recent years, bureaucracy has been too much politicized. Chances of being appointed to the top position of Principal Secretary or other similar positions are non-existent to those that exercise professionalism and seem politically passive. Politicization of the bureaucracy encourages the patronage practice of distributing state posts in exchange for loyalty, which leads to turnover of administrators and lack of institutional memory Goetz and Wollmann (2001:16). A practical example mentioned by respondents during the interactions is that currently most of the senior management positions in the Malawi civil service are filled by members of staff that are believed to be politically loyal to the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

  However, Interviewees indicated that they were not aware of any measures which government put in place to address these challenges. Most of them acknowledged the fact
that reforms are very important for the development of a professional civil service and enhancement of service delivery. They said that reforms raise the quality of public services and that are essential to the promotion of sustainable economic and social development.

Interviewees pointed out that political will and strong leadership were the most important aspects to be considered in order to ensure successful implementation of reforms. They also mentioned that reforms could be implemented successfully if the persisting high degree of corruption within the public service was dealt with effectively.

From the information gathered through the interaction with the interviewees and in documentation, the researcher observed that there are a lot of challenges for civil service reform programmes, a development which calls for urgent redress. How government responds to these challenges will go a long way in determining whether civil service reform programmes are indeed necessary. The researcher has established through the interaction with respondents that there is too much interference from the political office bearers. It is understood by the researcher that some politicians are not very clear about their role in the administration of civil service. There are some politicians who assume the role of administrators by discharging administrative functions, thereby creating confusion in ministries and departments. In such circumstances, reform implementation cannot be successful. From the research findings, it can be interpreted that there is an urgent need to address this politics-administration dichotomy. Secondly, there is need to depoliticize the civil service if efficiency is to be achieved. Depoliticization aims at curtailing political control over appointment of senior administrators. The depoliticization of bureaucrats contributes to administrative decisions free from political rent-seeking. Autonomous civil servants are more likely to formulate policies and deliver services to the public when their appointment or promotion is not under the pressure of pleasing private interests. The researcher feels that a reform of the civil service directed towards more professionalism and
less political intrusion will result in successful implementation of the reform programmes. In
countries most successful in limiting politicization (Lithuania and Latvia) politicians saw
administrators as collaborators in the reform instead of subjects to it (World Bank, 2006).

4.4 CONCLUSION

The findings were categorised into four sections which made it easier for the researcher to
interpret. In the first section the researcher conceptualised the research problem by finding
out how many respondents possessed professional qualification in public administration and
the implication this had on service delivery. Seemingly only 20% indicated that they were
qualified public administrators.

The second category sought to find out how the respondents understood the government’s
objective in undertaking civil service reform programmes. Seemingly 86% understood the
aim of these reform programmes as they started off on the same note with the researcher.

The third category sought to investigate the impact of civil service reform programmes on
service delivery. The researcher established that civil service reform programmes had a
negative impact on service delivery as no significant improvement on service delivery had
been registered.

The last category sought to investigate the challenges of the civil service reform programmes.
Challenges such as weak public support for reform implementation, lack of political
commitment, lack of ownership of reforms, high degree of corruption in the public sector and
many others were identified by the respondents.

All the findings discussed above made a great contribution in seeking to answer the following
research questions:-
• How does the Government ensure effectiveness in the implementation of civil service reform, and how does the reform programme impact on service delivery?

• What are the major challenges of the civil service reform programme and what measures have been put in place to address them?

Generally the researcher got the information which added value to the research and therefore can draw conclusion. The next chapter discusses the summary of findings and provides recommendations and conclusion of the study.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an exposition of the findings of the study as they were presented in the preceding chapter, and also makes recommendations to attempt to bring a solution towards a problem. The general aim of the research was to examine the impact of civil service reform programmes on service delivery, how the implementation of these reform programmes affected service delivery and how this could be improved. The findings indicated that there were various factors that affected the implementation of reform programmes. The findings also sought to provide a platform from which the researcher had to draw a conclusion and give recommendations.

5.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Reforms are changes in systems and methods of work geared to improve the quality of service rendered to the population and to do so at the best cost effective rates within the society in which the reforms are being carried out. Public service reforms have been ongoing in Malawi since independence in the sixties. However, the past reform initiatives did not help to effectively reform the public service, therefore government had to introduce the current civil service reforms in order to improve efficiency in service delivery in the public sector. However, the study addressed an examination of Malawi’s administrative reform programmes and how they impacted on service delivery. The data presented in this study clearly shows that civil service reform programmes had a negative impact on service delivery. The difficulties in implementing the reform programmes were caused by several factors including lack of political commitment, lack of adequate financial resources, and lack
of proper environment within which the reforms could operate whereby all other complementary components such as trained personnel, budget and facilities were not in order to accept these reforms. According to research findings, other important factors that contributed to reform implementation failure include inability to command resources, absence of feedback to all the stakeholders, lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanism, weak public support for implementation and politicization of bureaucracy. This suggests that the programme did not benefit from three very important factors namely, Leadership, Commitment and Participation. The findings suggest that a considerable amount of political commitment at the highest level was lacking, sufficient leadership was lacking and participation in the programme across government was more problematic. All this culminated into reform implementation failure thereby negatively impacting on service delivery.

Chapter one presented a concise statement of the problem of the research study which was examined. The chapter established how and to what extent the civil service reform programmes affected service delivery. The objectives of the study basically were to assess the factors that slow down and weaken the reform implementation process and also suggest ways and means of improvement to ensure successful implementation of reforms in Malawi. The research produced evidence to support that there is a correlation between professional qualification and one’s performance. Critically, the research proved that about 80% of senior administrative officials in the civil service held professional qualifications in different fields and not in administration and that only 20% were well qualified administrative officials. Similarly, about 60% of the political office bearers held professional qualifications in various fields and not in administration. The picture depicted in the professional qualification of respondents could be interpreted as a reason for the slow pace and weak implementation process of the reform programmes. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the implementation of
Administrative reforms flawed because some of the political office bearers as well as administrators entrusted with designing, formulating and implementing reform programmes were not well qualified and lacked public administration skills to carry out their functions. Therefore the researcher can safely conclude that implementation of reform programmes was to some extent affected by lack of competent personnel.

Chapter two provided the theoretical frame work for understanding the concept of administrative reform. The chapter gave an account of public service reform trends globally. It presented various efforts made by various countries in reforming their public services and the challenges encountered during the implementation process. Literature reviewed overwhelmingly supported the researcher’s hypothesis that social- economic and political factors in the implementation of reforms affect service delivery. It established that such factors were deterrents to successful reform implementation. The review also highlighted several factors which have contributed to the failure of administrative reform worldwide including Organisational problems, lack of reform ownership, lack of political will and resource constraints.

Chapter three presented the various research methods used to conduct the study. The choice of interview, questionnaires and document analysis in the research design and methodology proved to be useful in assisting the researcher to acquire all the necessary information from the participants. The interviews and questionnaires assisted the researcher to interact and get valuable information from the respondents, and the documentation served the purpose of information verification and validation.
Chapter four presented the collected data and provided an analysis of data. It also presented the interpretation of data and findings, taking into account information as gathered from the questionnaires, interviews and documentation. Based on the collected and analysed data, the researcher obtained empirical evidence concerning factors that affect reform implementation which negatively impacted on service delivery. In spite of the efforts made by government in undertaking reforms, the research revealed that the public service was still characterised by high levels of inefficiency, corruption and theft. This means that the improvement in service delivery was insignificant as the standards remained poor.

Research findings revealed that reforms could hardly take shape since political office bearers were in the habit of imposing themselves on administrative duties by giving instructions to administrators on what to do instead of giving them space to perform their functions professionally. The researcher noted that this forced the administrators not to adhere to rules and regulations and therefore violate quite a number of administrative laws in the process. The researcher’s interpretation is that as long as there is interference from the political office bearers, it would be very difficult for government to achieve its reform objectives. The researcher believes that constant political interference compromises the efficiency of the civil service as the managers work in fear and do not do the right things. The researcher therefore can safely conclude that political interference generally contributed to the ineffectiveness of the reform programmes.

Findings of the study revealed that government does not consider one’s area of specialization and relevant qualification before one is hired on a senior managerial post. The researcher noted that most of the officials who held senior management posts did not hold any administration qualification. It is a major concern when administrative duties are being handled by officials who have little or no knowledge at all of public administration. The researcher believes that by ignoring somebody’s field of specialization on their appointment,
the government completely loses out because these officials will not perform to the best of their ability. This is why reform implementation was a big problem. Implementation is the most crucial stage of the reform process which requires highly competent administrative personnel to administer it. In the absence of skilled and competent personnel, the result is obviously a failure.

The research findings indicated that there was a problem with political office bearers involving the bureaucrats in all the stages of the reform process. The researcher found out that administrators were not involved in all the stages i.e. briefing designing, formulation and implementation stages. The researcher’s interpretation is that this lack of involvement contributed to knowledge gap since the officials were conversant with one or two stages only, and facilitating implementation of the programmes proved a big challenge for them. This is why reform programmes never yielded satisfactory results as there were too many obstacles which would have been easily avoided.

The study again revealed that the reform programmes were faced with a lot of challenges including lack of grass root participation, lack of respect for human rights, lack of women participation in policy-making and gender equality, lack of strong political will which is necessary to cope with the resistance from internal stakeholders like bureaucracy and employees unions, lack of adequate participation from stakeholders (private sector, academics, and civil society) to ensure the beneficiaries' perspective and maintaining positive pressure on government to carry on the reform process, lack of strong commitment due to inadequate financial resources and absence of ownership of reforms on the part of the civil service, roll out plans of the initiatives were not adequately funded to ensure complete coverage of the reform programmes, and that there was no comprehensive civic education.
However, the researcher scrutinised government reports on public sector reform programmes (PSRMU, 2008 Report) and discovered that the challenges recorded by the research were similar to the documented ones. The researcher’s interpretation is that all these factors emanate from one big challenge which is the lack of political will. If Political commitment could be translated into real concrete actions, most of these challenges would be overcome. The researcher believes that too much lip-service destroys government’s credibility as citizens’ expectations are high and they lose trust when there are so many empty promises. It is disheartening to note that no concrete measures were put in place to remedy the situation. This apparently suggests that government lacks the capacity to manage reform programmes in order to ensure excellent delivery of public services to the citizens.

5.3 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The aim of the research was to establish how the civil service reform programmes affected service delivery. A lot of research findings were discussed which made a vast contribution to the body of knowledge of civil service reforms in Malawi and some areas that require attention. The research has shown that to a greater extent government had good intentions for introducing the reform programmes. However the major contributing factors that lead to the failure of the reform programmes were lack of political commitment, inappropriate professional qualifications for top management officials as well as political officials, lack of ownership and lack of comprehensive civic education for the citizens. Therefore it can be concluded that the reforms had a negative impact on service delivery since no significant change in the delivery of services was registered.
The researcher has noted that politicization of the bureaucracy by the political office bearers is generally contributing to the inefficiency of the civil service and rendering it ‘unprofessional’ in the process. For the reform programmes to be effectively implemented, it requires well qualified and competent administrators to carry out their functions. A well qualified workforce is a strong foundation on which any organisation should be build. Finally the research was significant because it was expected to provide scientific solutions to the problems that were identified by the researcher. This study has contributed to the body of literature on public administration by improving the understanding of administrative reform and its impact on service delivery in Malawi. The researcher urges scholars to replicate this approach for other settings, exploring the same and other effects of administrative reform and looking for cross-regional patterns and distinctions.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the critical issues raised and the fact that reforms were necessary for improved efficiency and enhancement of delivery of services, recommendations were made by the researcher and the respondents especially on the areas that needed improvement as follows:-

- A practical plan has to be an integral part of any reform measures to deal with resistance from internal stakeholders including the bureaucrats along with the external stake holders like politicians, the private sector, academicians, civil society and others. They must not only be consulted but also give an opportunity for their meaningful participation. This will provide the stakeholders’ perspective to the reform process and help maintain positive pressure on the government for executing the reforms, supported and demanded from both within the bureaucracy and by the people at large.
There must be a high level of political commitment since reform to a greater extent is a political process, therefore, broad-based and continued political commitment needs to be fostered and nurtured in deciding reform priorities and solutions. This requires the politicians to be made aware of the consequences emerging out of the lack of reform measures and their implementation.

Popular participation should be enhanced and strengthened at all levels, there must be sustained civic education and adequate resources must be allocated for reform programmes.

Government must ensure that all the management positions in the public service are held by well qualified administrators who possess relevant administration qualification to ensure successful reform implementation.

Government must ensure that the roles of politicians and administrators, which involve the capacity to set direction and maintain oversight, and asserting professional perspectives in policy formation and adhering to professional standards in implementation respectively, must be clearly defined and adhered to since they both strive for good governance and effective and efficient service delivery. Administration is the implementation arm of government but constant interference from the politicians will result in malfunctioning of the Administration.

One of the main factors that have contributed to the poor performance of public sector reforms in Malawi is the absence of an agreed philosophy about public sector management reforms to which all key participants are committed. Such a philosophy entails adopting guiding principles that bring together the actions of different players in the reform process and programmes. This means that the process of effectively designing and managing reforms needs to be informed by shared principles among the
different stakeholders. These principles should be used to guide institutional and management actions.

- Reform initiatives must be Sustainable, and this entails whether or not their outputs have long lasting impact on the desired changes within the public service. To achieve this there is need to design reform programmes which are clearly defined, informed by a clear vision, set within realistic timeframes, systematically linked to related reform initiatives and supported by a robust monitoring and evaluation system.

- To ensure effectiveness of reform programmes, government must see to it that the reform programmes are comprehensive. A reform programme is considered comprehensive when it covers all relevant sectors and organs of the government that impact on public services and when it embraces all the critical issues in its contents. While it is not possible to address all public sector management problems in a single reform programme, it is important to discern those that can have an impact on improvement of service delivery with short term interventions like process re-engineering (quick-wins), and those that require long term interventions like transforming the mind-sets. At the heart of it all is the need to capture concerns of the broad range of stakeholders and the end-users of reform outputs and outcomes and translate them into reform activities that can achieve results. This entails the issues included in the reform programme represent realistic expectations of the critical sections of the society who contribute to the growth and development of the country.

- The overall central co-ordination, oversight of and operational support to the reforms in Malawi rests with Office of President and Cabinet (OPC). A critical factor that has affected implementation and success of the reforms in Malawi is lack of committed
leadership to change and transformation of the public service. Therefore, this office (OPC) must exercise overall leadership and championing role of all reforms in the public service. The Chief Secretary, as Head of the Civil Service must stamp GoM authority on the public sector reforms as well as improve its management, coordination and strategic linkages. He or she must be the champion and ambassador for public sector management reform (PSMR) leading in advocacy and lobbying campaigns. The rationale here is that OPC is the central nerve of government activities with the responsibility of coordinating all arms of government. It provides links between the Executive and its administrative machinery, the Judiciary and its administrative machinery and the Legislature and its administrative machinery. Implementation and management specifications for PSMR will place OPC in such a way that it will provide programme leadership, management and coordination.

- Cabinet should be involved directly in PSMR in order for it to provide political leadership and facilitate coordination at the highest level and a channel for reaching out to the State President who also happens to be the Minister for the Public Service. Cabinet can also provide a channel for reaching out to the people at the grassroots level through party machinery. Involving Cabinet in PSMRs is important because the public sector provides the machinery that translates policies of government into reality. To facilitate this and given the significance of reforms to national development, there is need to establish a relevant Cabinet Committee. This Cabinet Committee will champion the cause of PSMR politically and feed Cabinet.

- There must be a committee of Principal Secretaries responsible for reforms. This committee would be very important in the management of reforms in Malawi. Its main role should be to provide a broad based ownership of reforms in the public service as well as help OPC in defining and institutionalizing reforms to achieve long
lasting results in their intentions. The committee will also be responsible for considering various recommendations and reports on reforms before they are submitted to forums of all Principal Secretaries and the Cabinet Committee on public sector reform (PSR). Given its strategic management role, this committee should ideally be chaired personally by the Head of the Public Service. In order to emphasize the leadership role of OPC in PSR both the Deputy Chief Secretary and the Principal Secretary responsible for administration will be members of this committee. Ideally all key ministries and departments implementing reforms should be represented in this committee. However, to avoid huge numbers on the committee respective Principal Secretaries may be co-opted depending on the subject matter under consideration.

- More research is needed to investigate how civil service reform programmes can help expedite the delivery of services.
6.0 REFERENCES


Teskey, G. and Hooper, R. (1999): *Tanzania Civil Service Reform Programme: Case Study*


ANNEXURE A

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Private Bag X1314, Alice, 5700

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: Request for Completion of Questionnaire

My name is Annie Chisomo Mabomba, a master’s student at the University of Fort Hare, South Africa, and currently conducting a research on civil service reform and its impact on service delivery in Malawi.

I therefore humbly request your time and cooperation in completing the attached questionnaire. Kindly take note that the information needed is for academic purposes only, and will be treated as such. Please be assured that practices of ethical conduct will be applied during and after completion of this exercise.

Your honest and transparent response to the questions will be greatly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

Annie Chisomo Mabomba (Miss)

Email: anemabomba@yahoo.co.uk

Cell: +277-784360103
PART ONE: PERSONAL PROFILE

In completing each item in this section, you will be asked to indicate your response by ticking in the appropriate box.

1. Sex

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<th>Sex</th>
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2. Age

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3. Current position

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4. Years of service

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<td>More than 16</td>
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5. Highest academic qualification

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<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
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<td>Malawi Secondary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certificate of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>University Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>University Degree</td>
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<td>Other, specify</td>
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5. Professional qualification. Please indicate the field of your specialization, for example: Master in Administration or Diploma in Public Health.

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<td>Diploma</td>
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<td>Masters Degree</td>
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<td>Doctorate Degree</td>
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<td>Other, specify</td>
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</table>
PART TWO: OBJECTIVES OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

In completing each item in this section, you will be asked to indicate your response by ticking in the appropriate box and/or give your comment, opinion, reason, or suggestion by writing in the spaces provided.

1. Worldwide, Bureaucrats are criticized for sitting on files, delaying in decision-making, and adhering to rules and regulations. Therefore the need for continued reforms in the public sector to overcome such malpractices is inevitable.

<table>
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<th>Agree</th>
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2. Government had to undertake the civil service reform in order to improve delivery of public services thereby improving socio-economic growth through good governance.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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3. Civil servants were fully consulted when civil service reforms were being introduced.

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<th>Agree</th>
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If you disagree, please explain why.

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4. At what stage of the reform process were you involved?

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<tr>
<th>Briefing</th>
<th>Designing</th>
<th>Formulation</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>All of the above stages</th>
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5. In your opinion, has the civil service reform programme achieved its intended purpose?

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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Please motivate your answer.
PART THREE: IMPACT OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORM ON SERVICE DELIVERY

1. How did your office ensure effectiveness in the facilitation and implementation of civil service reform?

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2. Normally, all senior managerial posts require that one should possess relevant professional qualification. Does the government take into consideration one’s area of specialization and relevant qualification before one is hired on a senior managerial post?

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<th>Yes</th>
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If your answer is NO, please explain why not.

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3. There is probably more politics involved when designing civil service reforms and that, civil servants rarely show interest in the implementation process.

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Please motivate your answer.

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4. A combination of socio-economic and political factors weakened the implementation process of the civil service reform.

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In your opinion, what are the examples of these factors?

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5. How does the civil service reform programme impact on service delivery?

PART FOUR: CHALLENGES OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

1. The implementation of the civil service reform programmes improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service and delivery of public services in Malawi.

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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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   If you disagree, please explain why.

2. Administrative officials play a very significant role in the reform process. What do you think are the major challenges of the civil service reform programme?
3. Are there any measures put in place to address such challenges?

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<th>Yes</th>
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If your answer is Yes, please list down these measures.

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If your answer is No, please explain why not.

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4. Implementation of the civil service reform is hampered by a lack of administrative knowledge and techniques by those responsible for its implementation.

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<th>Agree</th>
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If you disagree, please give reasons why.

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5. In your opinion, what must be done to ensure that reforms are fully implemented?
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Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.
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PART TWO: OBJECTIVES OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

In completing each item in this section, you will be asked to indicate your response by ticking in the appropriate box and/or give your comment, opinion, reason, or suggestion by writing in the spaces provided.

1. Contemporary Public Administration recognises that policy making involves both political and administrative components.

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2. Government had to undertake the civil service reform in order to improve delivery of public services thereby improving socio-economic growth through good governance.

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5. In your opinion, has the civil service reform achieved its intended purpose.

| Yes | 
| No | 

Please motivate your answer.

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PART THREE: IMPACT OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORM ON SERVICE DELIVERY

1. Normally, all senior managerial posts require that one should possess relevant professional qualification. Does the government take into consideration one’s area of specialization and relevant qualification before one is hired on a senior managerial post?

| Yes | No |

If your answer is NO, please explain why not.

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2. There is probably more politics involved when designing civil service reforms and that, civil servants rarely show interest in the implementation process.

| Agree | Disagree |

Please motivate your answer.

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3. Political factors stand in the way of reform initiatives.

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If you disagree, please explain why.

4. As a political office bearer, explain your role in the reform process.

5. How does the civil service reform programme impact on service delivery?
PART FOUR: CHALLENGES OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

1. The implementation of the civil service reform programmes improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service and delivery of public services in Malawi.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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If you disagree, please explain why.

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2. Political office bearers play a very significant role in the reform process. What do you think are the major challenges of the civil service reform programme?

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3. Are there any measures put in place to address such challenges?

Yes
No

If your answer is Yes, please list down these measures.

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If your answer is No, please explain why not.

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4. Implementation of the civil service reform is hampered mainly by lack of political will by political office bearers.

Agree
Disagree

If you disagree, please give reasons why.
5. In your opinion, what must be done to ensure that reforms are fully implemented?

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.
ANNEXURE D
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TOP MANAGEMENT OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

1. What prompted government to undertake such reform programmes?

2. Can you mention some of the civil service reform programmes undertaken by government?

3. Does the civil service have sufficient and qualified personnel to implement civil service reform programmes? If No, please explain why.

4. To what extent does government take into consideration one’s area of specialization and relevant qualification before one is hired on a senior managerial post?

5. Do you see reform as an effective tool for improved delivery of public service? Please motivate your answer.

6. Are civil service reform programmes effectively implemented? If No, please give reasons why.

6. From a managerial point of view, do you think the civil service reform programmes have been of benefit to the government? Please motivate your answer.

7. How does the civil service reform programme impact on service delivery?

8. What do you think are the major challenges of the civil service reform programme?

9. Are there any measures put in place to address such challenges? If yes, what are these measures?

10. In your opinion, are administrative reform programmes worthwhile? If yes, what must be done to ensure that reforms are fully implemented?

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation