

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE CENTRAL PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM IN NAMIBIA**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Namibian Public Service, as a cardinal public employment agency inherited from and structured in the aftermath of demised apartheid institutions, has adopted the generic approaches to public administration reform but experienced a bulging civil service. The Cabinet has on several occasions ordered the streamlining of Government functions to cut on personnel expenditure largely bloated by personnel appointments from outside the public service, subsequently resulting in the Wages Commission (WASCOM) being created in 1995 to make appropriate recommendations on rationalization.

Post-independent Namibia required a functional structure to successfully install a national government and transform caretaker administration activities into statehood. The Constituent Assembly was created and the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia came into being as its product. It was the Constitution that set guidelines for reform for existing structures to be compatible with the requirements for administering state affairs. Consistently, government institutions were structured and restructured in response to the changing operational environment. The adopted strategies ensured that the performance fit was checked from the outset, and essentially enhanced the major reform programmes as manifested in the formulation and implementation of the Affirmative Action and National Reconciliation policies that accommodate previously disadvantaged segments of the citizens. The reform process within the present political and institutional settings has been able to address the imbalances of the past objectively.

In this chapter, the author presents the legal and policy frameworks fundamental in the rationalization of the Public Service of Namibia. The objective is to enhance the dialogue on the impact of reform on the filling of senior management level posts in the Central Public Service. Thus, the researcher discusses in this chapter specific policy interventions in order to provide important insights for data analysis in Chapter five.

## 4.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND RATIONALIZATION

The *Constitution of Namibia*, being the fundamental law of the country, is given special place in this subsection focusing on systematic control of the bureaucracy in a new, political and institutional setting adopted in the post-independent Namibia. In accordance with the *Constitution of Namibia* Chapter 13, Article 113 (a) the Public Service Commission shall be responsible for the appointment of suitable persons to specified categories of employment with special regard to the [re]structuring in the public service. Therefore, there is a need for the exercise of adequate disciplinary control over such persons in order to assure the fair administration of personnel policy and to perform all functions assigned to it by the *Public Service Act, 1995* (Act 13 of 1995) of Parliament.

In terms of Article 43 of the Constitution of Namibia, there shall be a Secretary to the Cabinet appointed by the President on the recommendations of the Public Service Commission to perform functions as stipulated in the Public Service Act, 1995 (Act 13 of 1995) or any other law. The Secretary to the Cabinet, in accordance with the *Public Service Act, 1995* (Act 13 of 1995) Section 10 (a) and (f), is head of the Public Service responsible to the Prime Minister for efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Service. The post provides supportive services to the Cabinet committees and co-ordinates permanent secretaries [of line ministries] in the performance of their functions. The *Public Service Act, 1995* (Act 13 of 1995) Section 11 (a) and (b) provides for the appointment of Permanent Secretaries to be accountable for the following: the efficient management and administration of ministry or agency; the proper function of all training and utilisation of staff members in his or her office, ministry or agency; the maintenance

of discipline in office, ministry or agency; and, the proper use and care of all property under the control of his or her office, ministry or agency.

Section 12 (1) and (2) deals with the delegation of power and assignment of duties under this Act to any staff member or members as the Permanent Secretary may deem necessary. Section 18 (1) (2) (3) and (6) deals with conditions in regard to filling of posts, subject to powers of the Prime Minister under Section 5 (1), (20) and (22), by contract of employment. For a person to qualify for permanent appointment as may be approved by the Prime Minister on the advice of the Commission, Namibian Citizenship needs to be proved first. Then the qualifications, experience, level of training, relative merit, efficiency and suitability of the person or staff members being considered for appointment should be considered.

### **4.3 CENTRAL FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE**

Namibia is a unitary state politically embracing a multi-party democracy system founded on the principles of democracy, the rule of law and justice for all. Democracy is, therefore, imbedded in the Government institutions and structures (legislative and executive) in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia. The Government consists of hierarchical structures exercising political and executive powers that administer the daily business of the country. The nature of appointments, rather than the office, is the mechanism separating functions of the bureaucracy from the political office bearers. However, the institutional setting allows the political office bearers to exert control over the top executives in the bureaucracy effectively.

#### **4.3.1 The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)**

- *The Prime Minister's Private Office*
- *The Department of the Cabinet Secretariat and Policy Analysis*
- *The Department of the President's Economic Advisory Council Secretariat*

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- *The Department of the Public Service Commission Secretariat*
- *The Department of Public Service Management*
- *The Department of Public Service Information Technology Management*
- *The Deputy Prime Minister’s Private Office*
- *The Efficiency and Charter Unit*
- *The Emergency Management Unit, and*
- *The Public Service Commission (PSC)*

The OPM is the principal institution responsible for public service management. The Prime Minister advises the President on executing Government function and on his/her capacity as the leader of government business in the Parliament, and coordinates the work of the Cabinet that executes national policies (OPM, 2003: 35). The hierarchical structure of Government Institutions gives the Prime Minister executive powers only subject to that of the President, in coordinating Government Offices, agencies and ministries whilst carrying out their line functions for the administration of the country (Public Service of Namibia, 2003: 32). The powers of ministers and director-generals are commensurate with their appointments as political executives, members of the cabinet and parliament, who by virtue of designation supervise the administrative executives in their respective ministries, offices and agencies.

The departments in the OPM have different functions and roles defined according to respective purposes regarded crucial to the effective implementation of Cabinet decisions. With the exception of two specialised units, each of the six defined departments in the OPM is headed by the under-secretary operating under the supervision of the Secretary to the Cabinet. The structure presents the top bureaucracy that is charged with the management of day-to-day functioning of the Government. The under-secretaries coordinate the activities of specialised directorates largely consisting of technocrats in the lower levels, and deputy and director at professional/management cadre levels.

The bureaucracy in Namibia is composed of political office bearers: ministers and directors general appointed by the president to control offices, ministries and agencies, through the top executive levels comprised of permanent secretaries / accounting officers and deputy-permanent secretaries. The executives or top-management cadres level referred to in Balk (1996:22) as *policy elite*, have the responsibility to lead and organise the activities of the management cadre levels (under secretaries, directors and deputy directors) or, as they are called in Balk (1996:22) *intermediary professional[s]* or *machine bureaucracy*. Management cadres have acquired such referral status for their intermediate services of coordinating and planning between the top executive administrators and the supervisory level (chief control officers / clerks) and technocrats (planners and technicians) structures below the hierarchy that deliver the services. This professional relationship is regarded as democratic because in reality objective management is the manifestation of good governance process within the democratically structured institutions. Because the management cadres are appointed in accordance with the *Public Service Act, Act 13 of 1995*, to occupy positions in the Public service, they are civil servant by virtue of occupational status.

In terms of Articles 40 (a) and 41 of the *Constitution*, the power of controlling the bureaucracy is vested in the ministers acting collectively in the Cabinet that is chaired by the President. However, the actual supervision of the ministries lies with the Cabinet Office, headed by the Secretary appointed by the President in Terms of Article 43 (1), in the OPM. Subsection (2) thereof, on political appointee functions, reinforces the power exercised by the Secretary to the Cabinet. The OPM Annual Report (2002/03:1) presented the operational procedures followed in reality. Accordingly, procedures require that policy documents from offices, ministries and agencies are reviewed and analysed by the Cabinet Secretariat that is entrusted with the multitude of functions coordinating inter-ministerial activities such as policy coordination, monitoring and evaluation.

The ministers are democratically elected in accordance with Article 46 (a) on a party list to Parliament and the President appoints people from the list to ministerial positions from

the pool of Party Members of Parliament (MPs). The President is also constitutionally privileged by Article 46 (b) category to appoint on a preference basis up to six additional people on or outside of the Parliament candidates list to the high position of political office bearers. The Public Service Commission, in consultation with the OPM, in line with the provisions of Article 113 (a) ((aa)), recommends individual appointments (but not transfers of the incumbent) of Permanent Secretaries, who are usually accounting officers, for their respective O/M/A's.

On rare occasions the post of permanent secretary (PS) is advertised when it becomes vacant, giving the impression that selection is merit-based and sanctioned by preferences at the high-political level. Similarly, a transfer in the PS position is never associated with the reshuffle of ministers, no matter how long the incumbents have been teaming up together at the helm of the institution. What transpires at various stages is that ministers, being in the top political echelons, are appointed and reshuffled at the discretion of the President not for expertise-based quality, but for their loyal service in various capacities and institutional portfolios. In contrast, PS redeployment intends to build up knowledge of the top-level management cadres and retain their profession, loyalty and respect for the political leadership for the central government.

While the Namibian Civil Service is in principle free of political manipulation, there is a degree of political control vivid in Cabinet Office executive powers over Government institutions (OPM Annual Report 2002/03). Evidently, the separation of political and executive powers is marginal in the unitary state setting adopted in Namibia. Political oversights in the appointment and redeployment of incumbent PS renders the Public Service passive and ineffective relative to appointments of top-management cadres to carry out government business free of political pressure. The adoption of the SWAPO Party Election Manifesto of 2004 as Government's program of action for the next five years is another distinctive aspect of political control. The exercise conforms to the shared view based on Palmer's observation that major policies are in fact determined within the "non-bureaucratic institutions", such as the ruling party, and not by the

agencies of Government (Riggs in La Palombara, 1963: 121). There could be a valid reason to maintain an open policy that allows party guidelines to influence the administration of state affairs. Nevertheless, should there be excesses in their implementation, these must be justified so as to ensure that transparency prevails and party politics does not overlap with the administration of government business.

#### **4.3.2 The Public Service Commission**

The Public Service Commission (PSC), an independent body of autonomous standing, advises the Prime Minister on procedures and suitability of recommended candidates for management-cadre and general positions other than political appointments on government establishments. The PSC is comprised of the Chairperson and four Commissioners appointed on a full-time basis for a five-year term in office to ensure that the provisions of the *Public Service Act, 1995 (Act 13 of 1995)* and the Recruitment Policy, together with *Public Service Regulations and Staff Rules*, are fully complied with, and the appointments are based on sound (merit or competence) criteria of selection. The Commission, whilst retaining the responsibility of policy formulation, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation, is technically assisted by a Secretariat of the PSC to execute the day-to-day functions of personnel administration (OPM/PSC, 2002). The Commission further deals with grievances of an unfair treatment nature that any concerned civil servant may bring to the attention of the Commission, in the process curbing all attempts to abuse power and authority and corrupt practices such as nepotism and favoritism in the public service. Therefore, autonomous standing enables the Commission to act independently in advising the Central Government on perspectives of managing the Public Service.

As the emphasis of this research is on the public service appointments phenomenon, this section considers the previously unexplained origin of categorized appointments as a necessary point of departure. The *Constitution of Namibia Chapter 13, Article 113* under functions, provides for:

The Public Service Commission powers...shall be defined by Act of Parliament...  
(a) to advise the President and the Government on: (aa) the appointment of

suitable persons to specific categories of employment in the public service, with special regard to the balanced structuring thereof.

For the PSC to carry out its duties and defined functions (*Public Service Act, 1995*) within the exercise of powers conferred upon it (in terms of *Article 112 and 113 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia*) and the provisions of the PSC (*Public Service Commission Act, 1990 (Act 2 of 1990)*), a *mission* statement committing this independent and impartial body to providing leadership and advice in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the Public Service, and through empowered and competent personnel corps for good governance, was formulated (PSC Annual Report, 2004/5:2). The mission statement was based on the *vision* that: The Public Service Commission envisions a dynamic Public Service, anchored on outcome-based management principles and practice for good governance (2004/5:3). In practice, besides the statutes, the mission statements are constructs about fast-track reform processes in the public sector. The imperatives here being that cooperation with stakeholders and role players must be guided by new public management principles of customer service.

The present strategic goals are aligned with the principles of personnel auditing and staffing crucial to Human Resources (HR) Management and development in the Public Service. The emphasis is, among other things, to ensure the design and implementation of fair and effective procedures and processes for selection and recruitment of staff members, and play an influential role in the skills training and academic qualifications for the civil servants to build capacity (2004/5: 4).

#### **4.3.2.1 Line-functions of the PSC**

The Secretariat is a technical arm of the PSC consisting of the *Personnel Auditing Division* and the *Staffing Division*. An Under-Secretary heads the Secretariat with the support of staff mostly specialized in personnel auditing and administration matters. Staff services are not only for the Commission and its Secretariat, but also for other O/M/A's. Based on worldwide civil service reform processes, particularly Commonwealth models,



both divisions are entrusted with delegated functions that link the PSC to O/M/A's in varied, specialized ways. The divisions are constituted to perform diligently their structural functions and delegated responsibilities without overlapping.

First, the Personnel Auditing Division, formerly *Inspection, Advise and Training Division*, was transformed to more adequately reflect its new role in a new public management setting (OPM/PSC, 2002). The division monitors the application of and compliance with personnel directives in the O/M/A's to efficiently meet the current needs and demands; ensure that the potential of human resources (HR) are fully utilized, and research and provide adequate HR information and corrective measures for overall effectiveness of HR programmes in meeting organisational strategic objectives. A comprehensive auditing is conducted in all O/M/A's focusing on *compliance audit* and *adequate audit* (OPM/PSC, 2002).

Secondly, the Staffing Division plays an appointing role by providing critical and technical and knowledgeable advice and support to the PSC (OPM/PSC, 2002) to enable the latter to make just and informed decisions to ensure fairness and objectivity, instill confidence in the *merit system* and thus enhance the image of the O/M/A's and the entire public service as the preferred employer that attracts and retains people with talent, commitment and imagination. Therefore, the main (structural and functional) purpose of the division is to obtain PSC recommendation or advice on:

- Appointments or relax on appointment(s);
- Promotions or Discharge;
- Comment and submit draft legislation to PSC;
- Review and submit draft policy on condition of service to PSC;
- Constantly review and advise PSC on its delegations (OPM/PSC, 2002).

In streamlining these services, the division has such powers to refer incomplete requests or submissions back to the Permanent Secretary of the respective O/M/A for appropriate corrections. These functions and actions are necessary tools of enhancing *efficiency* and *effectiveness* within O/M/A's (OPM/PSC, 2002).

#### **4.4 WAGES AND SALARY COMMISSION ON RATIONALIZATION**

In January 1995 the central government set up the Wages and Salary Commission (WASCOM) to work out strategies to improve efficiency by downsizing the Public Service and removing inequities of the past to allow for upward mobility, promote the quality of management, and provide equal opportunities to all Namibians in the Public Service (Geingob, 1997). According to the Terms of Reference, the Commission was required to undertake the review of public service pay, entailing a lengthy study and analysis of relevant Government policies and laws (WASCOM Report, 1995). Field visits were conducted in all Regions of Namibia to determine regional perception of the Public Service and how it was performing. A comparative study of foreign civil services was conducted in Botswana, Zimbabwe and United Kingdom to get new and tangible views about public services. To accomplish the task, the Commission had to review the Tjitendero Commission recommendations on downsizing. As the latter was not effective in an early attempt to realise a comprehensive rationalization of the public service, a relook was necessary as per cabinet directive hatched at Swakopmund in December 1992 and subsequent decision in 1994 to constitute the WASCOM.

Having compiled the information needed, the Commission conducted a System Analysis and recognised that the large size of the Public Service, that already stood at 62 511 by October 1995, was actually the cause of the problem, and over expenditure was the effect thereof. Accordingly, the Commission had identified crosscutting issues contributing to the problem such as: lack of efficiency standards, lack of Performance Management System (PMS) given the observed non-performing public service, lack of codes of

conduct separate for Members of Parliament (MPs) and Public Servants, lack of commitment to State Finance Regulations, lack of reliable economic indicators given a wide range of weak economic effects, and rising public expenditure on personnel salaries and accrued perks, subsistence and transport (S&T) allowances, home loan subsidies, vehicle schemes, seating allowances for MPs and other benefits).

With the mandate to recommend to the Cabinet through the OPM such measures to resolve the problem, the WASCOM in their view ruled out the application of some of the Labour Act provisions to the operations of the Public Service as they impose excessive costs on Government, and called for exemption. Constitutionally guaranteed retention of existing public servants at independence, and the Affirmative Action (AA) Policy on incorporation of people from previously disadvantaged ethnic groups and returnees from exile, thus over-sizing the service, were key issues targeted for stock taking measures. The growing size and escalating expenditures trend had to be reversed to realize the fiscal objectives (WASCOM Report, 1995:1). Therefore, the Commission recommended that: Budget provision for personnel costs in 1996/1997 should be not more than the 1995/1996 provision, which was 55.4% of the total central government expenditure, and a five-year program of reductions in budget provision for personnel costs of 2% per annum should be introduced (WASCOM Report, 1995:3). Appropriate measures were recommended for each problematic cross-cutting issue. Much emphasis was, however, given to the effects – rising expenditure concerns and the mandatory reduction. A new pay structure was proposed to put job categories in six-vertical bands, divided in two or three distinct grades (*see Appendix 11*).

Whilst the Cabinet ordered the freezing of vacant posts in the central government for the time being until WASCOM recommendations were approved and ready for implementation, the Commission recommended that deadwood in the public service should be cut out and those incompetent should be dismissed by the end of the 1995 fiscal year as substantial reduction in staffing (WASCOM Report, 1995:5). Staff auditing should then be introduced to the system, and the annual personal performance appraisal

system, under development at the time, should be firmly linked to the personal pay scale (WASCOM Report, 1995:7). Implementing the recommendations based on comparative scenarios, rather than the reality of the Namibian situation, rendered some of the WASCOM proposals undesirable as they would contradict policies in the process. “Cutting out deadwood” and abrupt dismissals of “incompetent” staff members could not work in tandem with the AA Policy and the provisions of the Labour Act.

#### **4.4.1 Strength of Commission Recommendations**

The recommendations were the outcome of the study based on clear terms of reference from the Cabinet focusing on cutting public expenditures on personnel costs. Cross cutting managerial issues were highlighted and critically analysed to ensure that political, economic, and social dynamics were not excluded from identified factors. The accuracy of information was validated beyond local sources by conducting a comparative study of foreign civil services in the SADC region and Europe.

#### **4.4.2 Weakness of Commission Recommendations**

The comparative study has leaned more on the example of the United Kingdom (UK), which is a developed society that may not fully represent the reality of a developmental state such as Namibia. Again, the UK experience could only be classified as an exemplary lesson and when benchmarking on good practices and possible success. Ignoring this fact is tantamount to demonstrating lack of vision, portraying Namibia as a developmental state in the global competition.

The inclusion in the recommendations of summary dismissals as practiced in Botswana, to the contrary disregards the provisions of the Labor Act. Removing the Labor Act from the spectrum, as causing costs for the Government, was not a legitimate justification, but merely rescinds Namibia’s co-signatory to the International Labor Conventions. Dismissals have tremendous economic effects on individual incomes rather than Government budget performance. By recommending such measures the Commission had

displayed a lack of sensitivity towards the economic disparities that may ensue as a result of dismissals.

Failure of management to develop competency in the Public Service was noted as a concern. Training was referred to, but a substantial reduction in staffing was considered as a viable solution. Clarity on future competency-management was, therefore, lacking in their recommendations.

Recommending speedy decentralization of functions to the regions was a positive gesture in the right direction. Similarly, concurrence on commercialization of non-core public sector services was a scoring point. But, it was privatization that got more favorable consideration in their recommendations. In all three instances, the Commission should have seen prudent in training the redundant workforce with the option to redeploy and retain of some of the competent personnel in the public sector, rather than proposing a substantial reduction in staffing for the sake of convenience. The lack of clear guidance on how future vacancies in the public service should be filled has invited questions about the type of competencies required.

Nevertheless, the Commission had successfully completed the task that set the Public Service reform process in motion. The recommendations were submitted to the Cabinet through the OPM for approval, and subsequently, implementation by line ministries as a policy intervention.

Commissions such as the Wages and Salary Commission (WASCOM) of 1995 are appointed depending on the dimension of the problem identified in the policy implementation process and the need to reformulate a particular issue of *democratic governance*. Taylor and Anderson (2000) regard democratic governance as composed of the bureaucracy that implements decisions of democratic institutions made up of elected officials. Hogwood and Gunn (1987:6) advanced the view that rather than for genuinely

analytical purposes, a particular technique may be used for political purposes to advance a case or protect an organization from outside interference. The shelving of the *WASCOM Report of 1995* and its recommendations was a political decision arguably subject to debate as a method of analysis.

Problems of high unemployment rates among the previously disadvantaged Blacks and the imminent job loss for lower public employees compelled the Cabinet to suspend, except for the new salary structure, the implementation of WASCOM Recommendations. WASCOM was then replaced with the more defined Efficiency and Charter Unit (ECU) established in the OPM in May 1997 to initiate, co-ordinate and monitor all efficiency initiatives [that are compatible with Vision 2030] and report directly to the Cabinet (Geingob, 1997). The WASCOM, as dealt with in this section above, pioneered the restructuring of the Public Service of Namibia to enhance efficiency in the delivery of Public Services. Specifically, downsizing was the strategy the government could take to cut expenditure on personnel. But due to financial constraints and skewed income distribution, WASCOM Recommendations were only partly implemented. The political leadership saw it fit to introduce reform measures notwithstanding favorable economic conditions widely heralded at the time. The reform was to ensure a major shift from *user-pay based* to *client-oriented public services delivery* whereby specific policies were formulated. A gradual reform was not the way to follow, as this would mean slowing down the process. The government rather opted for a comprehensive reform as socio-economic disparities widened. Concomitantly, intended policy initiatives were people-oriented, particularly in the implementation of Affirmative Action (AA) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) that aimed at minimizing disparities.

#### **4.4.3 Early Attempts at Organizational Improvement**

Retrospectively, the Public Service Policy adopted at independence was based on National Reconciliation that was fundamental in the applications of EEO and AA that respectively promoted the spirit of peaceful coexistence for old and new staff considerations. The *Public Service Act of 1990* that replaced the *Government Service Act*

(*Act 2 of 1980*), as amended in 1981 and in force until independence, became a remarkable piece of Parliamentary Legislation on the new Public Service. The WASCOM review of the *Report of the Committee on the Restructuring of the Public Service*, technically known as the *Tjitendero Report of March 1990*, insisted that the unified Public Service required personnel rationalization to keep the public service at a manageable size (WASCOM Report, 1995: 28).

The Cabinet had on several occasions ordered the streamlining of Government functions to cut personnel expenditure, largely bloated by personnel appointments from outside the public service, except where credible competencies – highly skilled and professional groups – were involved (WASCOM Report, 1995:29). But due to ensuing socio-economic disparities, such recommendations, the WASCOM prescriptions eventually included, were suspended and a new dispensation based on the *Public Service Act, 1995 (Act 13 of 1995)* was ushered in. The WASCOM Report recommendations disregarded the plight of the previously disadvantaged groups attracted to the Government as their “preferred-employer” offering security of job tenure. Socio-economic disparities prevailed and those who could only hope for a job by marketing their talents would become destitute. With guarantees restored through new measures based on the *Public Service Act, 1995* provision that “any Namibian in a healthy state of mind can qualify to be appointed to the position of responsibility in the public service”, public service motivations were indeed rekindled.

#### **4.4.4 Restructuring of the Public Service**

Former Prime Minister Honourable Hage Geingob (1997:1) wrote that “Restructuring the Public Service in Namibia was intended to remove the inequities of the past” apartheid – separate development along ethnic lines – Era “and to make it an instrument of change”. The change was necessary to remove racial discrimination from all sectors of the society thereby “creating an environment ... conducive to the new reality of freedom and democracy” (Geingob, 1997:1). The civil service was the starting point to ensure that

good governance addressed the main problem – ethnic segregation – to the benefit of all citizens.

Restructuring entailed the logical transformation of government structures into national institutions as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia. The apartheid regime created eleven quasi-independent homelands with separate self-governments for Black ethnic groups and the White community, under the authority of the Pretoria appointed Administrator General. At independence the new government had inherited from the old dispensation central departments, largely run by South African technocrats, and by the provision of Chapter 20 Article 141 of the Constitution of Namibia retained the indigenous bureaucracy and incorporated them into the new public service. Taking into consideration the sizeable number of low ranking officials that the newly created national government had to absorb, while compromising the required quality and making room for the obligated quantity, the task was cognisably immense.

In Namibia, the development strategies as contained in the medium-term NDP1 and the long-term NDP2 were launched by the Founding father of the Namibian Nation, former President Dr. Sam Nujoma. This was the period during which structuring of Government institutions at central, regional and local levels took place. Otherwise referred to as the *Nujoma Era*, his term of office 1990-2005 was marked by major transformations that included the Public Service Reform. Significantly, the OPM-initiated improvement measures compatible with reform at central level were realised thanks to initial successes in the decentralisation process. At the end of the office tenure, the former President vigorously asserted that the Republic of Namibia had come of age and the nation could now embark on the NDP3 and implement Vision 2030.

The year 2005 ushered in the *Pohamba Era* that at the onset started restructuring the ministries and thus making structural changes at top level of the central government civil service. These changes are evidence of preparations for the implementation of the NDP3 already in its final draft stage. The new Head of State, President Hifikepunye Pohamba,



has outlined the policy of continuity and vowed to implement all existing development programmes.

#### **4.5 POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND RATIONALIZATION**

The core statute that is fundamental to the promulgation of the Public Service Act is the Constitution. Nevertheless, the *Wages and Salary Commission Report of 1995* and the *Recruitment Policy* are prime and basic documents profoundly guiding the rationalization process. Public Service Commission Reports to the Parliament since the Constituent Assembly in 1989 provide indicators of effective application of the *Namibian Public Service Charter* and *Customer Service Charters* for individual public institutions. More programmes found in the Decentralisation Policy and other frameworks are also relevant, but subjectively lack resonance for further exploration in this study. The PMS, NIMPA and *Revision of the Training Programme for the Public Service of Namibia*, among the ten OPM initiatives identified hereinafter, have been critical for this research as they address the competency-based transformation of government institutions. Further discussions on public policy dimensions in this chapter include these initiatives.

##### **4.5.1 The Recruitment Policy**

The implementation of *Recruitment Policy* has dimensional values crucial to meeting government goals. The quest for reform necessitated the formulation of the *Recruitment Policy* for the Public Service of Namibia in implementation since 19<sup>th</sup> September 2002. The Directorate Human Resources Management is responsible for the general adjustments, revision and updating of the Recruitment Policy and the *Public Service Recruitment Charter*, which is its Annexure C, and in terms of the *Public Service Act 1995 (Act 13 of 1995)* exercises delegated powers of the Prime Minister and Public Service Commission (Recruitment Policy, 2002:3). The Recruitment Charter is dedicated to the values, and committed to service delivery standards that are supportive to the recruitment process in the Public Service, and its strategic goals are to:

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- Set and indicate standards of service which the customers and stakeholders will expect from the Public Service Recruitment process;
- Attempt to establish and sustain a Service Delivery improvement programme by specifying [the] main services to be provided to the customers;
- Specify the mechanism to be utilized to remove barriers so that access to service is increased;
- Outline feedback/complaint mechanisms or ways through which customers/users/stake-holders can express their dissatisfaction when things go wrong; and,
- Identify role-players or partners in the Public Service Recruitment process (Recruitment Policy, 2002:1).

The OPM coordinates the implementation of this charter in the O/M/A's to ensure the standards of recruitment are always upheld. Thus, reaching goals should be seen in the light of role-playing and partnership in the recruitment and selection for appointments in the Public Service of Namibia. Recruitment as a process attracting suitable and qualified personnel begins with the advertisement of vacancies in the internal memorandum for the internal staff and national registered newspapers for outsiders. Expected applications should reflect the job requirement and relevant qualifications as described in the advertisement. The applicants are afforded an opportunity to choose between options: to improve performance to qualify for internal promotion, and/or to match their skills with required competencies to be attractive for the post being filled. The short-listing of candidates follows standardized steps to ensure equal opportunities for all vying for the post but not to the detriment of those most closely meeting relevant requirements (*Appendix 12*).

In terms of the *Public Service Recruitment Charter, Annexure C of the Public Service Recruitment Policy* (2002:2), standards include:

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- Ensure that vacant posts in any O/M/A are advertised to reach the entire pool of potential applicants – this should be as efficiently and effectively as possible to include persons who are historically disadvantaged;
- Ensure that an advertisement for a post shall specify inherent requirements of the job – the job title and core functions, involving skill and relevant experience;
- Make sure that advertisement is either internally in the Public Service Management (PSM)-Circular for Vacancy or externally – through the News Media which are accessible to all, especially those in remote areas;
- Ensure that closing dates for advertisements shall take into account the remote areas [with regard to] access to application forms, advertised media – newspapers and circulars.

The Department Public Service Management in the OPM ensures that recruitment considerations in principle conform to *Equal Employment Opportunity* (EEO) and *Affirmative Action* (AA) policy requirements to afford internal staff members of O/M/A's and external applicants equal opportunities to compete for vacancies. It has become a central tendency to advertise all entry-level and senior posts below Management-Cadre level in the PSM-Circular to help streamline competencies in the Public Service structures. But, the conditions have also been cumbersome, as highly qualified personnel outside the Public Service became attractive, and their potential could in no way be ignored without violating the letter and spirit of EEO/AA policies.

For internal movement, elevating qualified staff members is only one level into the next senior position on the structure or the equivalent in the Public Service. Evidence provided shows that internal promotions have not often been possible, as all available posts have to be filled through open competition. Accordingly, filling management-cadre posts must be advertised in the print media – the leading national newspapers in order to maintain the *Recruitment Charter* principles. However, where the advertised post does not attract sufficient response from outside, or a PSM-Circular is used. Those who apply from

within the Public Service are considered for promotion based on the scores and qualifications specified for the job.

Analyzing the recruitment policy initiatives within the political setting has profoundly unearthed cadreship implications in the filling of public service posts. The institutional setting and bureaucratic context of these initiatives have reflected a pragmatic approach, the basis for professional elitism that might encourage conceited managerial behaviour in the top echelons. Policy initiatives based on realistic inclusion and principles of transparency would essentially create obvious conditions for a fair recruitment and selection of the right type of people, in as much as a meritocratic civil service is desired. The *Recruitment Policy* and the *Recruitment Charter* as tools for transforming the public service structures in line with the *Public Service Charter of Namibia* and *Charter for Public Service in Africa* should be seen jointly as a balancing mechanism between pragmatic conception and the culture of meritocracy.

The Merit System principles as adopted in Namibia could be measured in relation to the recruitment policy and its charter to evolve into a standardised recruitment practice. A key merit principle is to recruit qualified individuals from all segments of society and select and advance employees on the basis of merit after fair and open competition, which ensures that all receive equal opportunity. The notion that the Merit System should be efficient, effective, fair and open to all, and free from political interference, actually sets value parameters for distinguishing between the system and the individual quality of a candidate. The generic qualities required of individuals include such basic attributes as honesty, competency, and dedication (USA Merit Protection Board, 1997). Depending on social interaction and interpretation, meanings of values and qualities may carry different connotations for a given civil service system. Second in importance is the merit principle to educate and train employees when it will result in better organisational or individual performance. This prospect should form part of the selection considerations to seek out those who are qualified and have commensurate potential for staff development.

The amended *Recruitment Policy for the Public Service of Namibia*, in defense of the 2002 changes to new methodologies, calls for fresh views opposing the polarization of the Public Service. For instance, there are those “professionalised and seeking a more career based environment, and those feeling that the present measures are excluding them from advancement” (Recruitment Policy, 2002). In terms of Paragraph 3.2 thereof, the new method limits the competition to the “post-probation period, so that staff members may only compete for a promotion post one grade higher than their own”. For example a Deputy Director whose probation period has been confirmed may only compete for an advertised position of Director (Recruitment Policy, 2002). This widens policy options to deal with promotion backlogs compounded from the old recruitment methods.

The old model of recruiting personnel in the Public Service of Namibia did not validate candidates’ qualities in a biased manner. Cadreship was a mystique applied only to the vanguard party. Documental similarities between the principles of the Merit System and the Recruitment Policy can match but may not necessarily provide grounds for interpreting the cadreship appointments phenomenon. Following independence in 1990, early models were designed to balance the Public Service by attracting the maximum number of candidates. Cadreship considerations became systematic causing some barriers in the recruitment process (OPM/Public Service Staff Rules B.II/II 1.2.2). Political appointment exponents easily overlooked the qualifying attributes and traits that are fundamental requirements for selecting individual cadres. However, in order to counterbalance potential deviation from transparency and fairness, new measures based on Affirmative Action (AA) were incorporated into O/M/A’s recruiting plans. The new models involve O/M/A’s conducting their own recruitment, and through a senior selection committee recommending three best suitable candidates to the Public Service Commission, the arbiter of transparency and fairness, for approval for the appointment. Where deviation is detected, the matter is referred back for rectification.

The Namibian political and institutional settings provide grounds for democratic governance. Role-play within these settings gives the OPM and substructures responsibility for policy review and, as appropriate for change on an annual basis, such

powers to adopt merit system principles generic to public services (OPM, 2002). National development Plans (NDP's), reputed forums where government institutions converge on development goals, facilitate national consensus on strategic change and democratic governance. The NDP-1 and NDP-2 fundamentally transformed the public service to ensure improvement and continuity. In the process, indigenous changes form part of strategic planning for continuity.

Introducing the recruitment policy and charter during the 2002 NDP-2 period, for instance, changed the old personnel recruitment models. Notwithstanding these changes, the empirical evidence collected suggests that political considerations for PS and Deputy PS – top public service positions still apply to the supposedly new operational conditions under the pretext of a pragmatic approach or cadreship attribute for professional management levels. Therefore, it would be appropriate that NDP-3 programme evaluation should begin with the analysis of policy initiatives and interventions. Significantly, pragmatism would be practically relegated within the realm of policy implementation with little or no cadreship principles incorporated in managerial decisions.

#### **4.5.2 Selection and Appointment Procedures in the Central Public Service**

The filling of senior public service posts purports merit basis with the ultimate objective of ensuring that competent personalities are retained and a loyal career oriented bureaucracy is maintained and sustained for the central Public Service. The extent to which the *Merit System* was applied in appointments primarily determines the type of top management cadres in the Public Service of Namibia. Secondly, reform should entail institutional capacity building to enhance professional management that would guarantee quality service delivery.

The Public Service Commission (PSC), in principle an independent and autonomous office that recommends appointments to public service posts in consultation with the OPM, is, in terms of Articles 112 and 113 of the Constitution of Namibia, the custodian of non-political appointments. Nevertheless, appointing the Secretary to Cabinet and the

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Secretary to the National Assembly are exceptionally done within the powers of the Prime Minister, and the PSC is only consulted in this regard. In terms of *Section 5 (1) of the Public Service Act, 1995 (Act 13 of 1995)*:

[T]he appointment [and] promotion to the Public Service shall be made by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission in accordance with the [relevant] provisions of the said Act.

The application of this provision is substantiated in the PSC Annual Report, 2004/2005 (2005:14-15) (*Appendix 7-10*).

The Public Service Staff Rules of Namibia that replaced the Public Service Staff Code, the latter in force until the post-independent repeal of most of the apartheid-era laws and regulations, clearly outline the procedures followed in recruiting public office personnel and senior officials. For internal promotions, staff rules provide the basis for consideration for movements between bands recommended in the *Wages and Salary Commission (WASCOM) 1995 Report*. However, political appointments are exempted, as the process is more prescriptive and preferential. In principle, “staff rules” are fundamental to filling posts in the most transparent manner, given the procedures that must be followed to ensure suitable candidates are selected for the post. Suitability is supposedly based on the appropriate education or academic qualifications and experience relevant for the occupation.

In terms of the Public Service Act, 1995 (Act 13 of 1995), the “appointment [and] promotion of any person to the Public Service shall be made by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission”. Table 4.1 below presents figures on most recent appointments and promotions in the Central Government.

**Table 4.1 Public Service: Appointments and Promotions 2004 - 2005**

MANAGEMENT CADRE			NON-MANAGEMENT CADRE		
CATEGORY	Appointments	Promotions	Appointments	Promotions	Total
Male	32	23	1 794	244	<b>2 093</b>

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Female	84	19	2 523	251	<b>2 877</b>
Advantaged	5	4	67	14	<b>90</b>
Disadvantaged	31	39	4 318	480	<b>4 868</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>8 702</b>	<b>989</b>	<b>9 938</b>

*Source: Annual Report of the Public Service Commission of the Republic of Namibia, 1 April, 2004 to 31 March, 2005. Chart 2 and Chart 3, pp.37 and Chart 4 and Chart 5, pp.38*

Nevertheless, the Regional Councils advertise to fill vacant posts based on new structures where no technically structured management systems have existed before. The competition has been high and open to both internal and external applicants since 2003, attracting persons with a rich background in public management, mostly from the Public Service. Appointments in the Regional Councils are recommended from the Councils in accordance with the *Regional Councils Act, 1992 (Act 22 of 1992)* through the Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development (MRLGHRD) to the PSC for approval. The number of staff members under the Regional Councils as per appointments between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2005 has been recorded in the Annual Report of the Public Service Commission of Namibia as reflected in Table 4.1 below. The figures represent a period in which the *Decentralization Policy* was finally implemented, and structured management systems for each of the thirteen regions were created. A small number of staff existed under the Office of Regional Officers practically forming a general technical support secretariat for Regional Councils. The staffing was done through the Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing before restructuring to include Rural Development. The incumbent Regional Officers were offered Director Level positions with optional choices to take the retrenchment package or compete for the high post of Chief Regional Officer in the new structure. These appointments and promotion offers have also affected the junior staff that was mostly considered for similar positions as they occur in the transformed structures.



**Table 4.2 Regional Councils: Appointments and Promotions 2004 – 2005**

MANAGEMENT CADRE			BELOW-MANAGEMENT CADRE		
CATEGORY	Appointments	Promotions	Appointments	Promotions	Total
Male	21	15	62	15	<b>113</b>
Female	8	10	193	13	<b>224</b>
Advantaged	0	2	0	0	<b>2</b>
Disadvantaged	29	23	250	136	<b>438</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>777</b>

Source: Annual Report of the Public Service of the Republic of Namibia, 1 April, 2004 to 31 March, 2005, Chart 8 pp. 40.

#### 4.5.3 Selection Procedures

Selection committees consisting of suitable members from the O/M/A and from outside the Public Service are appointed in terms of the *Public Service Recruitment Charter* (2002:3). The appointments ensure that the selection committee's composition reflects adequate representation of designated groups in order to base their selection process on realistic criteria or instruments for selection, which are not biased or discriminatory (2002:3). The Permanent Secretary is responsible for nominating a selection committee to ensure that the shortlisting of candidates as carried out in his/her O/M/A is fair and the interviews of candidates are transparent and in accordance with the job specifications. Fairness is measured using the common selection criteria and qualities presented as:

- *Work-related*: essential duties of the work to be performed; *specific* criteria to distinguish candidates or provide a clear measure for assessment of candidates;
- *Appropriate*: level of expertise needed;
- *Measurable*: effective and objective way of measuring candidates against all the selection criteria; and,
- *Weighted*: depending on the importance of the duties (Staff Rules, B II/IV: 3 in the *Public Service Recruitment Charter*, 2002:3).

Subjective to the PSC role of arbiter, *transparency* and *fairness* determines the eligibility for appointment. Thus, any recommendation from O/M/A that excludes the above measures will be procedurally challenged by the PSC and effectively referred back to the Permanent Secretary of the respective O/M/A's for appropriate corrections. These functions and actions are necessary tools of enhancing *efficiency* and *effectiveness* within O/M/As (OPM/PSC, 2002).

#### **4.5.4 Selection Criteria**

Democratic principles provide for a broad array of qualifications required for Public Service posts. Prescriptive qualifications basically should be reflected in the general job description, specific key performance area and appropriate expertise required of the candidate meeting most of the job requirements. The objective is to make advertisements attractive to candidates from all sections of the Namibian society at least at the recruitment stage (Recruitment Charter, 2002:3). Criteria for qualification for selection in accordance with the Staff Rules (B II/IV: 6), are: Supervision and Leadership; decision making; verbal communication; problem solving; interpersonal relations; written communications; and, career goals. All these become required qualities and ingredients of sound consideration for the specific job.

Careful consideration is also given to qualifications based on the education levels and the years of job experience. A specimen in *Annexure G-1* provides a clear picture of how educational requirements have declined since the *Wage and Salary Commission* (WASCOM) Report (1995:55) recommendations for a new salary structure for the Public Servants, in an apparent attempt to retain practice-based expertise levels inherited from the colonial era. Qualification requirements for the supervisory level, normally the entry post Band 3 Grade A and B respectively, are post-Grade 12 certificate, diploma or degree as may be appropriately possessed or at the minimum Grade 12 plus experience or completed apprenticeship. By standard, the minimum requirement is very low given the functional level of skilled, technical and professional junior management specification.

The implementation of the WASCOM 1995 Report recommendations have commenced within the NDP 1, 1995-2000, and seen modification with NDP 2, 2000-2005 during which period the PMS was developed and advanced as a new approach to the Public Service Reform. The PSC Annual Report for 2004/ 2005 presents a dimensional change in merit-based appointments as reflected in *Appendix 7-10* on management and below-management appointments and promotions.

A close examination of Tables in *Appendix 7-10* reveals that promotions and appointments in large numbers only occurred in the ministries that have been affected by restructuring over the period. Although the report did not provide levels of qualifications, the tabulation indicates that there has been a greater decrease in appointments than in promotions in management posts, Grade 4A Level 1–6B. Table 3 shows 9 new appointments in the Ministry of Justice during the period preceding the merger of the two institutions into the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General. The increased chances for promotion in the Ministry of Justice, albeit contrary to the declined promotions due to lack of PMS, might be attributed to staff development to meet efficiency requirements and individual self-uplifting in the highly competitive legal profession. The Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing likewise has experienced somewhat skewed upward movement over the period. Fifteen appointments were effected where only two promotions were approved amid implementation of the Decentralization Policy that necessitated appointments to fill management-cadre posts on the Regional Governments' new structures. Precisely, the appointments should be commensurate with appropriate qualifications in accordance with strategic human resources planning and development towards the realization of Vision 2030.

#### **4.6 RATIONALIZATION IMPACT ON PUBLIC SERVICE COMPETENCIES**

The aim of independence was to set free the population from the bondages of colonialism and slavery irrespective of the colour of skin, ethnic origin, or race, and with a liberated

mind, to start anew in all spheres of life. The operational environment, organisational culture, and narrowly conceived functional structures had to change for a better and more equitable dispensation. In realising this aim, the Affirmative Action (AA) Policy and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) were formulated to protect the previously disadvantaged and advantaged likewise within the limelight of their implementation. Consequently, a burgeoned civil service was created out of less contested posts below the management cadre levels threatening unpopular downsizing. Attempts to streamline the competencies through downsizing led to the establishment of the WASCOM in 1995 to recommend a new salary structure based on graded levels for all job categories. Movement between grades was constrained to allow competency development within the professions. Proper hierarchical structures had been created for O/M/A's prompting the professional elite to emerge out of the streamlined competencies at the top.

#### **4.6.1 Formation of Professional Elite**

The emergence of the elite in Namibia has not been a process but a synthetic reproduction of the merit system adopted for the Post-independence Era. Adopting merit system was crucial to address unequal opportunity for employment inherited from apartheid rule. White elites existed in economic terms with little social interaction to form a hierarchy inclusive of oppressed Blacks, but a social milieu was not conceivable before independence. Elitism, as an encompassing social construct, could not co-exist with apartheid – separate development ideology. Constitutionally, emancipation diversity taking shape in conflict with racist policies was never heard of before, and thus for Blacks, social position would rather come through hereditary status in their respective ethnic communities than with some specialized professions. Nevertheless, the political elite had conscientiously emerged at independence and set conditions for the civil service bureaucracy that eventually acclaimed to professionalism.

The professional elite are usually formed in the high management cadre levels where professional qualifications are a standard pre-requisite to ascending to senior positions. Permanent Secretaries, formerly political appointees until the end of NDP1 in 2000/2001, remained least contested occupations, albeit holding the key to structural reform. The

reform crusade that began with the implementation of NDP2 from 2001 to 2005, however, has transcended the early strategies for changing structures in response to the operational environment as conditioned by globalisation. Permanent Secretary candidature by now should demonstrate generic top management competency crucial to the performance of the incumbent and satisfy specific requirements to be measured through the Performance Management System (PMS) initiatives.

The inception of the NDP3 would be the most coherent of the high level strategic initiatives to enhance PMS. Performance Management as a system overarching the organisational performance perspectives and performance appraisal of individual staff members should advance the O/M/A human resources strategic planning in a modest way. If PMS is to inspire the civil servants to perform, it should be transparent and effective enough to stop the backlog that has trapped many potentially talented cadres within job categories below the Deputy Director levels. Overlooking this possibility would proverbially amount to selling new wine in old stained bottles. The current managerial reform initiatives appear to be superficially taking a pragmatic approach with no serious provisions for structural change. That would then endorse the *status quo*, almost condoning it with stagnant consequences for the two previous successive National Development Plans, NDP 1 & 2.

#### **4.6.2 Emerging Professional Autonomy**

As the Public Service of Namibia comes of age, managerial reform also becomes an obvious precondition for professional autonomy. Congruence must be reached for structural changes to the levels compatible with the new public management. PS appointments should be contested and meritocratic promotions commensurate with competency-management. This conception is the subject of discussion in the next item below.

Professional autonomy by Namibian standards is an advocacy of those proponents of “adaptive change” implicitly advancing the principles of the *Charter for the Public*

*Service in Africa* and related initiatives on Public Service improvements. The emphasis here is on options Namibia has to transform these principles into reality – practically considering the availability of professionals and the initiatives being taken to address the issues at the central government level. As adopted from the Charter for this analysis, professionalism resides in how skilful and how well a Public Service employee performs his/her duties. These qualities must be developed conscientiously to instill professional discipline in the civil servants (OPM/InWent, 2002:36). The implication is that well versed-in “professional cadres” have already formed a niche, positioning themselves for the blessing of the political elite for top executive posts. Ironically, professional training is widely misconstrued in favour of politically inspired preferences, nominations, and approval of appointments. Conclusively, and which further elaboration in point 4.6.3, the reform initiatives should include change in the culture of pragmatic practices that put professionalism at stake.

There are so many shortcomings in the implementation of AA especially where prerogatives to select appointees are left to hand-picked committees acting on behalf of the appointing O/M/A’s. Selection in this regard is open to premeditation, limited to the pool of preferred cadres, and readily susceptible to political influence. One key objective of AA in appointments is to afford opportunities to the previously disadvantaged (Blacks, women, and disabled Namibians) to successfully contest and occupy positions of influence in the Public Service. The other objective generally important to this analysis is the principle that qualifications should not be compromised for the sake of AA. Nonetheless, the implication of applying these principles is that no mechanism was put in place at least to moderate against potential AA abuses in the public service spheres. Advertisements include a notice that women and people with disability are encouraged to apply, as a normal AA indication. But male applicants, whilst not usually rejected, may be disadvantaged at the loss of opportunity to advance the competencies they possess. It would be logical to make a rational decision that offers optional considerations for the qualifications that may be put at stake in AA exercises.

### 4.6.3 Transformation and Competency-Management

The top-down characteristic of the Weberian bureaucracy has an ascending structure that is skewed in terms of the size and competency distribution within the hierarchy. The bottom is burgeoning and the top is comparatively lean, giving out a pyramid shaped structure largely believed to be effective in profiling competencies. It is important that O/M/A's maintain competency profiles setting standards and ceilings for specific job categories in accordance with the Generic Competency Framework for all job levels: entry, supervisory, management and top-management, as they exist in the Public Service system. The competency profile currently operational in Namibia provides for *core competencies* derived from: *general* categorization of the job, grade and level within the public service; *specific* categorization of the actual job within the O/M/A's; *differentiating competencies* applicable only where the mandate and strategic direction of the unit and O/M/A's are exclusively operational; and, *generic competencies* for supervisory, management, and top management levels based on the generic competency framework for Public Service structures (OPM/PMS Principles Frameworks, 2001: 33).

**Table 4.3 Areas of Competency Emphasis for the Public Service of Namibia**

<b>A. TOP MANAGEMENT CADRE</b>	
Secretary to Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision and Norm Setting</li> <li>• Public Sector Coordination</li> </ul>
Permanent Secretary [PS]  Accounting Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political Administrative Interface Management</li> <li>• Management of Sector Inter-dependencies</li> <li>• Cutting-edge Leadership</li> </ul>
Deputy Permanent Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisationally Dependent</li> <li>• Management Support to the PS and USs</li> </ul>
<b>B. MANAGEMENT CADRE</b>	
Under Secretary [US]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systems/Process Coordination</li> <li>• Intra-dependency Management</li> <li>• Mandate Management</li> </ul>

Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical Policy Development</li> <li>• Functional Liaison</li> </ul>
Deputy Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team Capacity Building</li> <li>• Operations Coordinator</li> </ul>
<b>C. SUPERVISORY LEVELS</b>	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Supervisory e.g. Chief Control Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior level               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Control</li> <li>- Content (Product/Service/Technical/Work)</li> <li>- Discipline and Conduct</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Supervisory e.g. Control Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-section Level               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Control</li> <li>-Content (Product/Service/Technical/Work)</li> <li>- Discipline and Conduct</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> Supervisory e.g. Chief Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Level               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Control</li> <li>-Content (Product/Service/Technical/Work)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

*Source: OPM/PMS Principles Frameworks, 2001: 39*

Competency-management entails harnessing KSA and behaviours to enhance the organisation's strengths and future chances of survival in the competing markets. If a misfit develops out of AA practices, then it is costly to rectify the dilemma imposed on competency building for a professional autonomy envisaged for the Namibian Public Service. Other contributing factors are associated with the structural deficiency. Whilst O/M/A's have structures in place to carry out their strategic plans, staffing and retaining the right type of people with necessary competencies has been problematic without proper performance management initiatives. Professionals, those with developed KSA and behaviours, tend to move on to greener pastures usually in parastatals or the private sector, thus widening the skills gap already existing in the central government and the rest of public sector bureaucracy.



Competency-management seeks to retain as much competency by guaranteeing professional autonomy at all levels of job categories. The Namibian perspective for competency-management transformation implies that the civil service bureaucracy becomes professional and meritocratic (OPM Mission Statement, 2005:5). The reform should bring about change in the organisational culture that in turn would cause change in the structure to enhance enabling conditions for these values.

Generally regarded as characteristic of cadre management level applications in the Public Service of Namibia, the generic top-management competencies focus on: purpose and direction – create future vision, communicate and achieve buy-in, harnessing ideas and opportunities; impact – delivering sectoral results, achieving efficiency gains, ensuring optimal operations, investing in people/human capital, that is getting the best out of people, and effecting a value-based work culture built on the *Charter for Public Services in Africa* and *Namibian Public Service Charter* inspirations; and, Policy advice and development – managing and optimizing the political-administrative interface, building new critical capacities that are compatible with good governance (OPM/PMS Principles Frameworks, 2001: 38).

The new public management is outcome-oriented, and this principle should guide the desired reform to significant results. Running an administration should not be a tiresome exercise for the best outcomes to show. The top structure of the Public Service bureaucracy ought to change with the culture of appointing the accounting officers of O/M/A's. In this view, a sound approach should cause selection committees to be systematically appointed, not preferentially nominated, to remove chances of back scratching among would-be peer groups. A peer group refers to members of the conceited professional elite identical with the Public Service management cadres.

The anti-peer mechanism is currently limited to the selections for replacement of members of statutory boards such as the Electoral Commission. Once a vacancy occurs, a selection committee is constituted through a systematic recruitment of members to

interview and recommend the best suitable candidate for the job. The process culminates in the best qualified being considered on a generic management competency basis. With the advent of New Public Management, however, prospects are wide to fill the Permanent Secretary (PS) positions by contract, renewable every five years. The mechanism should also serve to build the expertise the country needs for international capacity. Namibia has not been able to fill periodic quotas on the Southern African Development Community (SADC) regional integration schemes, African Union (AU) affairs, and United Nations (UN) multilateral programmes due to the lack of competent candidates.

Contractual appointments have worked very well for public corporate entities including the Regional Councils and Municipalities or Councils of Local Authorities that are second level and third level governments, respectively. As the Board of Directors or senior level selection committees could only be constituted with the approval of the Line Ministry, impartial and diverse representation on the selection committee would be guaranteed. These shining examples are certainly the best practice, but a close analysis could still unearth inconsistencies plaguing this approach. Notwithstanding merits and generic management competencies demonstrated throughout the period of service, the CEO might have to pass the political leaning or loyalty test before further consideration. Ideally, the *Public Service Act (Act 13 of 1992)* needs amendment and success or failure should accordingly determine the incumbent's eligibility as the next head of the institution or abdication.

Contracts must be renewed with the approval of the Boards of Directors, Regional Councils and Municipalities or Town Councils in accordance with the Acts of Parliament. The incumbent Chief Executive Officer (CEO) should be eligible for reappointment at the end of a five-year term. But, in proposing similar applications for the post of PS, one presupposes amending the *Public Service Act (Act 13 of 1992)*, to insert a provision on contractual obligations. Implicitly, pragmatic nominations for PS positions are presently conducted by identifying senior management cadres, particularly at Deputy Permanent Secretary levels, for selection and recommendation by a senior

level committee nominated by the appointing O/M/A. The Public Service Commission (PSC) as the arbiter of fairness and transparency then approves or refers back the recommendation with appropriate advice on further considerations.

Appraisals should follow similar patterns as in boards and councils with minimal differentiations where the incumbent PS must be appraised against generic management competency frameworks for the public service and performance management strategies designed for a particular O/M/A. For reappointment at the end of a five-year term, the incumbent Accounting Officer should be offered an opportunity to reapply or abdicate. The proposed approach will improve management quality and allow competency development for the professional autonomy.

#### **4.7 REFORM PROCESS IN THE CENTRAL PUBLIC SERVICE**

The reform process aims at fostering indigenous changes by strategic planning and for continuity to face challenges in a most organized manner. The NDP1, 2 & 3 are stages of development that are five years apart and interlinked to provide a well-coordinated national development process. Within the NDP cycle, resources are allocated and wisely managed for a multitude of developmental programs, and the programs evaluated to assess their achievements. NDP's are strategic vehicles and Vision 2030, otherwise referred to as High Profile Policy Initiative, is the ultimate goal where Namibia sees itself developed and quality of life promoted at the same level as the industrialized North.

The reform process is not only confined to the OPM, which is, however, coordinating the restructuring to achieve the corresponding criteria for reform in the rest of government structures. The Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development (MRLHRD) is heading the implementation of the *Decentralisation Policy for Namibia* that, in accordance with the Constitution of Namibia Chapter 12, Article

102, enhances and guarantees democratic participation of people at the grass-roots level to make their own decisions and determine their own destinies (MRLGH-3, 1998:1-6). Their relationship with the OPM is in the devolution of staff appointments to the Regional Councils. The Ministry of Education is highly decentralized with more activities delegated to the thirteen administrative regions, thus necessitating the merger of the former Basic Education Ministry and Higher Education Ministry created during the Nujoma Era, into a single Ministry of Education in the Pohamba Era.

The *Decentralization Policy Implementation Committee* of Permanent Secretaries (MRLGH-2, 1998:26) and a *taskforce* consisting of focal point officers appointed in line ministries and regions to coordinate decentralisation implementation in their respective line ministries and regions respectively (MRLGH-3, 1998:2-3), provide a link with other institutions. Therefore, the Principal Legal Basis for the Decentralisation Policy within the reform process in Namibia is: *The Constitution; The Regional Councils Act, 1992; The Local Authorities Act, 1992; The Traditional Authorities Act, 1995; and, The Decentralisation Enabling Legislation* (MRLGH-3, 1998: 4).

#### **4.7.1 Budgetary Role in Reform**

The critical area of reform in the Pohamba Era is the NDP3 programme of development which, after the experimentation with NDP1 and trial tests with NDP2, projects the national long-term strategic plan towards Vision 2030. The national budgets had been the major decisive factor during the previous two five-year development cycles and remain so for the foreseeable future. The budget process plays a key role in the “applied strategic planning (ASP), a process by which the top management of the organisation envisions its future and develops the procedures and operations necessary to achieve that future” (Wiley, 2003: 6). Former President Nujoma, in the Foreword of NDP2, indicated that:

Budgetary resources take the leading role in the implementation of the plan. In order for the plan to realize the objectives and targets set for the next five years, the national budget should comply with the resource needs of NDP2. Mobilisation of budgetary resources must be supported by adequate and effective implementation capacities in line ministries, regions and other public institutions (NDP2, xv-xvi).

Such budgetary provisions are objectively linked to NDP goals so that a clear “budget policy” must be in place and efficiently implemented to avoid a “budget deficit” (Buchanan, 1995:3).

Governance principles are preferably embodied in the operational values of transparency, openness, and fairness that take shape through budgetary provision for financial resources allocation. The Minister of Finance in the 2005/2006 Budget Statement to parliament, has set new dimensions for reform of the budget, the process in which allocations to individual O/M/A’s were changed from input-based to result-based achievements (Budget Statement, 2005:26). Appropriate policy tools in this instance involve the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) – a three year rolling budget for operational and development expenditure (Policy Guidelines for the Mid-Term Review of the NDP2, 2001/2003:6), itself underwriting the Performance and Effectiveness Management Program (PEMP) frameworks. The PEMP Program is intended to reorient resources allocation to outcome-based activities (desired results) (Policy Guidelines for the Mid-Term Review of the NDP2, 2001/2003: 6-7). Thus, PEMP ensures OBO indicators of achievements. Vision 2030 requires that enabling environments for development be created where responsible decision-making is improved. The Efficiency and Charter Unit (ECU) Terms of Reference provides for ongoing “reform to advance efficiency and effectiveness” in the Public Service aimed at good governance practices (OPM, 2003:7). The Performance and Effectiveness Management Programme (PEMP), that provides the methodology for inter-ministerial office’s, and agencie’s (e.g. OPM, Finance, and the National Planning Commission) close cooperation, is the ECU’s “powerful tool for policy analysis [especially] towards the budgetary process” (2003:10). The ECU/PEMP linkage, therefore, involves ministries identifying budgetary requirements for creating and for filling posts with suitably qualified Namibians.

The issue of a skills gap is addressed in the same format, linking the Ministry of Education to the national supervision of high, vocational and tertiary institutions, and

specialized programmes such as the Centre for Public Service Training (CPST) at the University of Namibia (UNAM). The Higher Education Act virtually provides for the National Advisory Council for Higher Education (NACHE), among other things to advise the Ministry of Education on budgetary procedures, and evaluation of staff development and management of policies for higher education institutions (Vision 2030, 2004:92).

#### **4.7.2 Reform Instruments**

Presently, the OPM has embarked on a number of reform initiatives bound to implement the general principles of the Namibian *Public Service Charter* fundamentally based on the *Charter for the Public Service in Africa* adopted by the Ministers of Civil Service in Africa at the [3<sup>rd</sup>] Bi-annual/Pan-African Conference (PAC) held in Windhoek on 05 February 2001. For effectiveness, the Efficiency and Charter Unit (ECU) in the OPM coordinates the implementation of the principles of the two charters.

##### **4.7.2.1 The Public Service Charter**

There are nine principles that civil servants should get acquainted with in their day-to-day carrying out of government business. The principles provide rules whereby civil servants should individually improve quality, efficiency and effectiveness of services delivered to the public users. These principles were given in the pocket guide titled “Being a Public Servant in Namibia” as:

- Setting, monitoring and publishing clear standards of service;
- Providing information about public services; providing courteous and helpful service;
- Ensuring that there is regular consultation and communication and a choice of services;
- Providing details of performance;
- Disclosing how public services are managed;
- Ensuring that services are available and applied equally to all;
- Publishing straightforward complaints and procedures to ensure quality of service; and,

- Providing efficient and economic public services – value for money (Public Service of Namibia, 2003:77-78).

Internalizing these principles, where communication levels and training for civil servants are particularly weak, to enable them to implement the rules poses a challenge. What the Government of Namibia could do is to endorse the implementation of the Charter, and the Efficiency and Charter Unit (ECU) in the OPM is already mandated to compile a detailed implementation plan and provide for appropriate implementing structures (OPM /InWEnt, 2002: 49).

Documentation of principles alone would not satisfy our purposes until the holistic approach is applied in a comprehensive situational analysis constituting this chapter. Limitations of the Public Service Charter of Namibian, however, should be identified and acknowledged for several assumed reasons: principles are entirely an abstract of the Charter for Public Service in Africa; and, although further definition is much desired, in-depth elaboration was left to Customer Service Charters developed by and for various ministries based on their specific specialities. Thus, analysing the Charter without referring to the universally declared principles in the Charter for Public Service in Africa minimises their meaning due to these limitations.

The Charter for Public Service in Africa principles that are important to this research have been identified and integrated into the review of literature for their profound importance to the research statement and the research question.

#### **4.7.2.2 Reform Programs**

Specific areas have been selected under Government's firm measures to enhance Public Service performance as required of the institutions in the information age. The Secretary to Cabinet released the initiatives in progress as of August 2004 to improve service delivery by:

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- Strategic General Training Programme (SGP) comprising the Induction Module and the Customer Care Module for operational, supervisory, and middle level management;
- Human Resources Information Management System (HRIMS) meant to collect, record, store, analyse and retrieve data concerning an Office, Ministry and Agency's human resources;
- Performance Management System Project (PMS) for the Public Service of Namibia;
- Award Scheme, incentive for good services delivery;
- E-Government, to allow citizens to access government information;
- Namibia Institute of Management and Public Administration (NIMPA) to improve professionalism within the Public Service, to develop civil servants to be effective;
- Revision of the Training Policy for the Public Service of Namibia, for qualifying training within the competency-based framework;
- Job Evaluation and Grading to be fully functional by the year 2005;
- HIV/AIDS Programmes in the workplace;
- Performance and Effectiveness Management Programme (PEMP) focusing on the achievement of outcomes (Kapofi, 2004:3).

These programs are principally a reflection of reform conception in Namibia that the OPM intends to undertake to improve delivery of services to the citizens as well as to enhance professionalism for the civil servants. The initiatives are also an indication that the OPM has passed the stage of planning in these specific areas and is currently implementing the programmes. How effective and efficient the programmes are depends entirely on the strategies adopted in the process of implementing them. Nonetheless, the formulation of strategies is subjective to political and economic conditions that may see programmes being suspended, as was the case with the initial attempts to reform the Public Service under the Wages and Salaries Commission (WASCOM) of 1995 (Geingob, 1997:5).



### 4.7.3 Adoption of the Merit System for Public Service

In principle, the merit system protects the professions attracted to and retained for the Public Services. But, the Merit System suffers implications because there is no uniform pattern of principles expected in the application and practice. By the Namibian standards, however, meritocracy in both conception and application appear to be more rhetoric and precipitating sporadic resorts to pragmatic principles of experiential determinants. Pragmatism – that utility politicians may take to be relevant for their purposes and fit shared ideas (Wicks and Freeman, 1998:8) deemed practical to their constituency as against workable policy objectives – deviates from realistic decision making particularly when appointing the “right type of people” to the public service (OPM/PSC Staff Audit). Nevertheless, taking the value-laden pragmatic approach (Wicks and Freeman, 1998:15) in the implementation of programmes pertinently ensures that the merit system is sustained, and the *status quo is* maintained. Thus, causal changes in technological innovations for high performance and increased market competitiveness, as service users are becoming customers, would enhance new ideas of reform.

Politically aspiring citizens could be elected to the legislature mostly on a ticket of the political party of their choice. Relying on *Political Activity* freedoms, as guaranteed by *Article 17 of the Constitution of Namibia*, rather than open victory based on their technical-competency, politicians usually find their way up to lead O/M/A’s through political appointments by the President. The appointments of top executives in the posts of Permanent Secretaries and Deputy Permanent Secretaries by recommendations of the Prime Minister to the President are based on political discretion that equals political patronage. The Public Service Commission at this juncture has little or no advice to offer other than giving favorable recommendations of candidates on predetermined criteria for ascending to the top positions. This bypass could be problematic when measuring competencies essential for quality service delivery at top management-cadre levels.

The filling of the public service posts in Namibia could not be regarded as typically a Merit-System approach as it is dictated by the pursuit of having cadres in key positions to

foster cadreship culture in the organisational structures. Merit principles were hardly met in whole as only a few of the competing candidates could meet most of the qualifying values. The required attributes for standard selection criterion were either simplified to include previously disadvantaged Namibians demonstrating self-interested motives that fit in with the new culture, and/or previously advantaged displaying a commitment to the spirit of reconciliation.

As organizational culture changed, so did the behaviour of staff members. Disadvantaged staff members in certain categories had capitalized on the initial skills gap and moved into prestigious occupations motivated only by better salaries and accrued perks, least competencies – knowledge, skills, attitudes (KSAs) and behaviors needed to perform in top management levels (OPM/PMS Principles Frameworks, 2001: 33). In perspective, motivation was there but with crippling implication to the O/M/A performance strategies.

The Government of Namibia had recognized the competency limitations and the need to adapt to new public management for effectiveness through Public Service Reform. Thus, operational values of transparency, openness and fairness should guide civil servants' performance – efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability – as embodied in the good governance frameworks outlined in the OPM Mission Statement 2005. Accordingly, performance (efficiency, effectiveness, accountability) is determined by a pattern of operational values in the following order: Personal quality – honesty, commitment, teamwork; Values – transparency, openness, fairness; and, public resource management – prudence, value for money, respect for public resources. Every civil servant is expected to display and be guided by these operational values in the daily execution of government business. Therefore, the ultimate wisdom is that public servants' performance should be judged in terms of their adherence to these values (OPM Mission Statement, 2005:11).

It is the conclusion of this researcher that analysis plays a pivotal role in articulating relationships between the theory and practice of public policy and management. Reform

definition in the Namibian context is vague given the “pragmatic” characteristic of structures subordinating the public service to the direct control of the political elite. The alternative is not supposedly anarchy but a new public management system that ensures performance and efficiency in the running of government business. Changes to the structures should not only serve to implement policy in a constituency perspective, as reform implies both sectoral and structural interdependence. Nonetheless, reform should enhance a generic response of structures to changing conditions that ought to transform the public sector bureaucracy to improve performance.

#### **4.8 POST REFORM CENTRAL PUBLIC SERVICE OF NAMIBIA**

Democratic change for good governance is reform-driven as well as policy oriented. Reforms which aim at changing the system to better standards of performance, usually take radical approaches. Comprehensive reforms, on the other hand, would seek a policy change amenable to the reality of political spheres and economic conditions. Policy undertakings in the Public Service of Namibia are in accordance with the provisions of the Public Service Act, 1995, but policy implementation is essentially guided by meritocratic principles. These principles are adopted subjective to the changing organizational culture and changing operational environment. Firstly, organizational culture is influenced by global political and economic trends as external factors and the internal demand for efficiency in service delivery. The political sphere, economic dynamics and social values are, therefore, the conditions determining the environment in which the organization operates.

In the second place, changing organisational structures designed to separate policy from administration and creating executive units with delegated responsibility for service delivery, whether internally to other parts of the organisation or externally to the public, brings about desired change generically central to transforming the system into NPM (Farnham and Horton, 1996: 259-260). The OPM in Namibia was structured responding to the requirement for decentralised control and policy interventions in the coordination

of public sector and related sectoral interdependency (OPM Mission Statement, 2005:6-7). The restructuring process in O/M/A's is fundamentally designed to meet the new public management demands.

Thirdly, changing the structures, which are designed to shorten hierarchies, devolving managerial responsibility for achieving set targets of performance and holding individual managers responsible for achieving them would enhance professional autonomy (Farnham and Horton, 1996: 259-260). The changes in public sector environment cause structure change. In Namibia, professionalism is currently limited to top management cadre and management cadre levels but lacks the rigor for achieving targets due to the narrow design of functional structures. The culture of performance has yet to take root to instill accountability.

The fourth principle in Farnham and Horton (1996: 259-260) emphasizes the following: measuring organizational achievement in terms of the criteria of economy, efficiency and effectiveness (as may be adopted for public sector) and, developing performance indicators enabling comparisons and measures of achievement to be made, and providing information upon which future decisions can be determined. These are areas where Namibia had to develop a Performance & Effective Management Programme (PEMP), which is a “powerful tool for policy analysis contributing increasingly to the budgetary process for the O/M/A's” (OPM Annual Report, 2002/2003:10). The PEMP framework “provides the methodology for a jointly agreed series of Outcome-Based-Objectives (OBO) associated measures (strategic measures, and indicators of achievements), typically the performance data required from each O/M/A as a mandatory part of their Budget Submissions” (OPM Annual Report, 2002/2003: 10-11).

Fifth is the development of active policies for changing the cultures of public organisation from ones dominated by traditional public service values to ones attuned to the market, business and entrepreneurial values of the ‘new’ public service model (Farnham and Horton, 1996: 259-260). In Namibia, the initial step for the new public

service model was the provision of a blueprint for customer driven public service to transform the administration under the theme Service Delivery Improvement Initiative (Kapofi, 2004). The Public Service Charter of Namibia next laid fundamental guidelines for change in the organisation culture and related policy approach. The principles of the Charter for Public Service in Africa provide for a quality approach to management within the Public Service, customer orientation as well as establishing hard commitments and standards all crucial to achieving new public management objectives (OPM/InWent, 2002:2).

The last and sixth of the considered principles is “implementing human resources management (HRM) techniques aimed at weakening collectivist approaches and introducing individualist ones” (Farnham and Horton, 1996: 259-260) to ensure adaptive change. For the Public Service of Namibia, a number of Human Resources (HR) strategic initiatives, which took place during the NDP2 period, were geared to espouse the continuing structural and organisational change. Provisions for PMS have been finalized and will be integrated into Strategic Plans of each O/M/A during NDP3 (OPM Brief, 2005). Nonetheless, realizing the importance of the NPM principles does not mean that Namibia has adopted ‘managerialism state’ practices.

#### **4.8.1 Cadre Principles as Basis for Appointments**

Cadreship requires strong Party Vanguard reproducing committed cadres for the civil service. In a multi-party democracy, it is possible that bureaucratic principles could be flawed and the professionals may politically sympathize with parties of their choice, thus indulging in political patronage peculiar to the *spoils system*. The states in democratic transition usually experience difficulties of reforming their civil services from weak centralized structures to professional bureaucracies. The mechanism generally used to safeguard the interests of the ruling party is to effectively transform its political program into a government *Plan of Action* that entails cadreship principles being applied in the appointments of civil servants.

Similar lines of action have been advocated in Namibia with the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) Party Elections Manifesto 1988 and SWAPO Party Election Manifesto 2004 being adopted as a government program of action. The SWAPO Liberation Movement Political Programme was transformed into the *Preamble and Sections of the Constitution of Namibia* thereby accomplishing the objective of culminating its action plans into national fundamental laws. Therefore, legislation in Namibia, whilst in principle democratic, is synonymous with SWAPO Party Policy, and politically appointed cadres oversee the sanctioned implementation of policies.

#### **4.8.2 Political Appointments of Top Civil Servants**

Bureaucratic loyalty breeds better in a democratic political setting. In a democracy, the bureaucracy is accountable to the political elite by implementing cabinet decisions and policy directives. In fact, whilst the political setting provides for *democratic governance*, whereby public servants are required to demonstrate specific operational values, it is political imperatives of the ruling party that are guiding the Public Service in this regard (OPM Mission Statement, 2005:11). Real life political control of public servants empowers them to own the processes and initiate programmes such as the PMS in Namibia to improve their environment.

Political appointment procedures place less emphasis in the technical-competence of the candidates than in the value of their loyalty to the party and its leadership. A cadre is expected to have demonstrated in the past, mostly during the liberation struggle, an unwavering commitment to the party ideology, and at present, a dedication to the post-independence party lines in order to deserve political consideration for a top job. The nominations first identify the candidates in various categories of senior posts and assess records in the party ranks. Secondly, candidates are appraised for leadership qualities, conspicuously establishing the merit basis for Public Service posts commensurate with values required of top management cadres. A special committee on appointments of Permanent Secretaries and Deputy Permanent Secretaries for O/M/A's is constituted to advise the Prime Minister before recommendation to the President for appointments. The

Cabinet Office does most of the groundwork of coordination and consultation with the PSC on issues of transparency and fairness. This was the process for political appointments of top civil servants in the Public Service of Namibia. The system of appointing senior civil servants as *political appointees* has been nonetheless done away with, at least documentally, at the termination of the Five-Year NDP1 in 1999/2000.

The new procedure empowers the PSC to approve directly recommendations made by the selection committees of senior political executives at Deputy Minister and Director General levels on behalf of the appointing O/M/A's. The involvement of members of the political elite in the selection of PS and Deputy PS does not imply political appointment, as only officials in senior positions should procedurally conduct the interview and selection for the top Public Service posts. The appointing O/M/A is also responsible for communicating the appointment results to the candidates through its personnel office.

#### **4.8.3 Technical-Competency Level of Appointments**

Qualification requirements are the first stop to ascertain that competency and professionalism (developed consciousness about organisational values) are not compromised for basic qualities such as personal traits that might have been acquired through social, political, and or economic status of a candidate. And because higher education, albeit aligned with national manpower needs, could not be expected to deliver courses with specific relevance to senior civil servants (The Namibian, 29 September 2005:6), it has become necessary to establish a training institute especially for civil servants (29 September 2005:6).

The technical-competence model has yet to take deep roots as existing evidence suggests that introduction of the Performance Management System (PMS), anticipated only from November 2005, would set the pace for appropriate initiatives commensurate with required *performance standards*. One such initiative is the planned *Civil Service College* said to be based on the Commonwealth lines to cater for the Namibian Public Service

training needs. The name suggested for the college would reflect the improved Public Service.

#### **4.8.4 Training Interventions**

The programme *Revision of Training Policy for the Public Service of Namibia* presented in the chapter above intends to enhance competency-based knowledge, skills and attitude training interventions crucial to improved performance in respective positions. According to the OPM Special Review of the Public Service Charter (2003:10), such initiatives have benchmarked PMS, a strategic principle in the multitude of integrated reforms being implemented in order to meet the objectives of NDP-2 towards Vision 2030. Training policy will henceforth focus on the qualifying training for ‘civil and public servants’ upgrading, professionalization and leadership development’ (The Namibian, 29 September 2005:6).

The broad range of reform initiatives identified as Government’s firm measures to improve Public Service performance and delivery are to improve professionalism within the Public Service and to develop civil servants to be effective. This ultimately involves establishing the Namibia Institute of Management and Public Administration (NIMPA). The Namibian reported on September 29, 2005 a Cabinet decision taken a week earlier that “mandated a committee of [P]ermanent [S]ecretaries” to implement the programme with the “chief aim to address shortcomings in the public service” in line with the Charter for the Public Service in Africa Guidelines.

Kamoche’s (1989) study of the African civil service systems indicates that it became logically sensible to take stock of accumulated experience and skills as a body of knowledge crucial to competency-management for the public services. The same experience shows that at most PMS are viable instruments for building up such stocks of knowledge precisely as realized in the new evidence from the OPM initiatives. From the WASCOM recommendations to the effective implementation of PMS, a pilot project



underway since 2001, the Public Service of Namibia has not seen such an unprecedented reform initiative, surpassing the early transformation from the “caretaker administration” to a government of national responsibility. The PMS Brief (2005) calls it the development interventions that seek to improve efficiency and effectiveness within the framework for strategic planning and management of O/M/A’s. The PMS project leader described PMS as a “management tool from the onset to ensure that the organisational structures are reviewed to align with government high-level policy initiatives such as Vision 2030 and strategic plans for promoting effective communication between levels of the organisations” (PMS Brief, 2005).

#### **4.8.5 Organizational Improvement for Professionalism**

Staffing of the Public Service of Namibia primarily focuses on enhancing the good image of O/M/As that objectively attracts and retrain people with talent, commitment and imaginations compatible with efficient, effective, and quality delivery of public services (OPM/PSC Staff Audit, 2002). However, standard criteria for appointments predetermine the procedures to be followed. Whilst the recruitment and selection is the function of the line Ministry, the PSC subjectively arbitrates in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Service Act, 1995 (Act 13 of 1995)* on the transparency and fairness before recommending for the actual appointment.

A generalization of description of staffing practices would not be possible unless measures are examined subjectively. The secondary data collected provides evidence of sustained evaluations of programmes with intent to improve organisational performance whilst enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in O/M/A’s, and accountability of the civil servants. The 1995 WASCOM Report Recommendations had pioneered early government efforts to reform the bloated Public Service. As briefly discussed in this chapter, the report suffered a political decision to safeguard new priorities under the Efficiency and Charter Unit (ECU) strategy.

A Performance Management System (PMS) framework has been developed to set off a reform process that would see the Public Service of Namibia adapting to new public management. In preparation for this, “PMS provides for staff development through investing in knowledge, education and training to enhance performance of the staff members thus enabling the civil service to become increasingly efficient and effective in transforming the system” (Gurirab, 2005). Conceptually, the PMS view presents a generic description that would link change in the global environment to individual cases of reform. As change could not take a spontaneous course where management systems would be seen as passive response to external influence, it should be logically construed as proactive initiatives addressing internal needs.

Based on documented evidence and objectives of PMS programme, the Namibian initiative is clearly bound to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in other words “*performance* as element of good governance aligned with the objectives of Vision 2030” (OPM Mission Statement, 2005:11). In terms of inter-ministerial co-ordination, each ministry would establish a Ministerial Implementation Team (MIT) to facilitate the application of the PMS Principles Framework and their integration with respective ministerial Strategic Plans (PMS Brief, 2005). Indigenous needs would thus remain at the core of the desired change.

Professional autonomy is expected to broaden the future role of the professional-elite. For the bureaucracy to become professional and meritocratic (OPM Vision Statement, 2005:5), a transformation of competency-management is necessary to meet these requirements. The OPM, in coordinating the work of O/M/A’s and making the Public Service a professional body, strives to transform the civil service into a *professional autonomy*, meaning: self-supervision, responsibility and accountability, implicitly denoting a new professional and meritocratic public service autonomous from political pressure (OPM Mission Statement, 2005:5-7). The emerging *professional-elite* and *Management-Cadre* principles utterly replace the traditional Weberian notion of *bureaucracy* neutral from political influence and manipulation by successive political

executives. Professional management could benefit public institutions ideally adapted to the *new public management* system as it “complements the private sector in augmenting the national capacity for economic development” (OPM Mission Statement, 2005:8).

Furthermore, the acknowledged reform experience in the Public Service of Namibia points out that after the 1995 WASCOM Report Recommendations excess numbers of workers on government payroll were transferred to the newly commercialized units turned parastatals. Government ownership and the OPM monitoring of State-owned public enterprises entailed molding professional cadre that would thus “boost the State’s capacity to participate in the economy” (OPM, 2005: 8). With the advent of PMS, *professional-manager* and *management-cadre* (literally the professional-elite) have been interchangeably used in public service literature and correspondence regarding human capital development.

Public Service reform themes broadly emphasize the transformation of HR management to motivate the employees of O/M/A’s for “efficiency–delivery on time, effectiveness–impact of delivered goods and services [as] empowers people and accountability–[where] public servants are answerable for their actions” (OPM Mission Statement, 2005:5). In a more detailed version, it implies that PMS should be an instrument for HR Strategic Planning and Human Capital Development with a Performance Appraisal requisite for individual personnel competence assessment. In the absence of PMS however, HR functions remain dormant, and as one participant has observed, could inhibit the appraisal-based measurement of technical-competence levels in structures of the Central Government institutions. General personal quality – honesty, commitment and teamwork required of civil servants – is too pragmatic to sustain absolute technical-competence levels (OPM Mission Statement, 2005:11). Educational qualifications, by virtue of their generic acceptance as measures of competence, would thus remain the most highly regarded criterion for selection.

In perspective, “adopting a rational approach to managing [the public service], which emphasise the role of strategic management in setting objectives and clarifying issues” (Farnham and Horton, 1996: 259-260), is the first core step in the reform process.

Namibia has only embarked on this process with the launch of Vision 2030 and has still to implement key initiatives such as the NDP3.

#### **4.8.6 Policy Initiatives and Interventions**

Policy intervention in this research has more to do with the reform pertaining to the public appointments to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in government business. The basics of policy formulation start with the problem identified and perceived as requiring policy intervention. For any public policy to be constitutional and effective in application, it must be subjective or objective-based, authentic and synonymous with the area of action clearly defined through legislation.

The Efficiency and Charter Unit (ECU) in the OPM has the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating policy interventions to ensure that they are effective and where necessary to propose alternatives (NDP-2, 2001/2002 – 2005/2006: 774-776; OPM, 2002/2003: 7-8). The policy initiatives based on the *Public Service Charter* include programmes created to enhance efficiency and accountability in public service delivery. The most recent activities include the Performance and Effectiveness Management Programme (PEMP) started back in April 1999 and integrated in February 2002, and PEMP background is that (OPM Annual Report, 2002/2003:10):

Internal and external political environments are complex requiring well articulated, coordinated and developed approaches to public service management characterised of contractual agreements linked to service provision and performance requirements, high levels of output focus and ‘best’ models; and, that focusing on outcomes, accountability, performance measurement [and] non-contract.

The Public Service of Namibia acclaims to a multitude of policy interventions, among which are the following: Performance Management System (PMS); Revision of the

Training Policy for qualifying training on the establishment of the Namibian Institute of Public Management and Administration (NIMPA), for professionalisation and leadership training of senior civil servants. The PMS is not merely a policy initiative but a strategic management process ensuring that generic competency-management is developed and retained for the public service. Training Policy Revision becomes an intervention responding to the quest for a meritocratic and professional civil service in the limelight of management reform (OPM Mission, 2005:4). The envisaged NIMPA would provide an institutional base for qualifications and professionalisation of the civil service tailored to the public needs (Staff Reporter/The Namibian, 29 September, 2005).

#### **4.9 SUMMARY**

Summarising the dialogue and discussions around the issues pertaining to Public Service reform in Namibia, draws the assumption that recruitment is instrumentally decisive and selection is objective when guided by the Recruitment Policy. Analysis of policy initiatives for performance improvement and relevant policy interventions to ensure continuity in the public service of Namibia serves to explain how management reform examined in this chapter is related to the empirical evidence gathered on real life experience.

Fundamentally, the recruitment and selection process of filling the Public Service posts in accordance with the Public Service Act, 1995 (Act 13 of 1995) characteristically ‘instills confidence in the *Merit System* and attracts people with talent, commitment and innovative ideas to build a professional civil service’. The principle is inductive but implicit for a logical application. Professionalism, a public administration profession, is on a collision course with reform initiatives liberalizing the traditional bureaucracy into competency-based New Public Management. Thus, professionalism is in limbo. Technical-competency has been widely recognized as the standard criterion for selection to high posts, albeit policy intervention to enhance Competency-Management is long overdue.

Policy change to do away with political appointments to Public Service posts supports assumptions that the employee selection criteria followed in Namibia was *pragmatic*, and it has outlived the era of being a flagship paradigm for any significant reform process. In this view, pragmatism would mean that which works under the circumstances, disregarding the competencies and professional skills as manifested in politically engendered appointments of accounting officers of the O/M/A's.

The impetus of reform in the Public Service of Namibia was recharged through the adoption of the Charter for the Public Service in Africa to Namibia's needs. The *modus operandi* of implementing the Charter and Related Initiatives for Public Service Improvement as might have been adopted has transformed the appointment process for the retention of competencies. The description that befits the new practices is nonetheless "Competency-Management" deemed contrary to old perceptions of the Merit System as the catalyst for effective and professional management of civil services.

The Competency-Management Approach, where widely adopted, has proved to be the most effective approach to contemporary transformation of civil services. Article 15 of the Charter for Public Services in Africa to which Namibia has been co-signatory since 2001, propounds on recruitments, selections, appointments and promotions of Public Service employees on the basis of their competencies and professional skills. Now that Namibia is implementing these principles, as in the words of the Deputy Prime Minister, "The Charter serves as a gauge against which the public service could measure its performance" (New Era, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2005:5).

Public Service Policy Reform finalized under NDP-2 entails institutional capacity building to enhance professional management that would guarantee quality service delivery. The Public Service of Namibia is just emerging from structuring processes and adapting to Performance Management Systems. Reform based policy interventions in line

with the principles of the Charter for Public Service in Africa involve the application of the Performance Management System (PMS) principles to ensure that technical-competencies are measured and retained for the Central Government Public Service.

Institutional capacity building initiatives have taken a narrow dimension whereby skills development is handled within budgetary considerations for O/M/A's. This conception implies that individual employee improvement should be based on Performance Appraisal identified training needs. Nevertheless, a dynamic approach through the strategic planning teams currently experimenting with pilot projects on the Performance Management System (PMS) in the ministries was set to enhance skills training and academic qualifications in the Public Service in November 2005, when the PMS was officially implemented. The implementation of PMS and the Charter for Public Service in Africa principles are major strides which have been made in the reform of the Public Service of Namibia (Amathila, New Era, 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2005:5).

The PSM that has been on the drawing boards for two consecutive five-year terms of development planning, NDP-1 & NDP-2, would take concerted efforts to implement. It was not until the relaxation of political appointments of top civil servants at the end of NDP-1 that the PMS idea started gaining momentum. The evidence available indicates that advanced steps towards improving organisational performance have already been made and are undisputable.

The assumptions that can be drawn here essentially link the reform in the Public Service of Namibia to global trends such as the globalisation of the economy, e-government and the African regional requirements for policy harmonisation as denoted in the Charter for Public Service in Africa. Imperatively, the quest for standardisation of solutions in governance coincidentally necessitated such concerted efforts to even avert the infamous Structural Adjustment, an economic instrument more often than not pursued by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to enforce reform.

The first assumption is that the Public Service Charter for the Republic of Namibia existed only on paper but was then given serious thought and implemented on the basis of recommendations in the Charter for the Public Service in Africa. The second assumption is that the pegging of individual country charters to the new principles, worked out on the proposals of the Second Conference with the technical backing of the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), constitute the external condition setting a conducive environment for reform. The reform process emerging from the charter under review conceptually counts on external and internal environments to mould the political and bureaucratic leadership capable to provide unequivocal guidance for change within the African setting.

In the situational analysis, the recruitment and staffing processes vary from profession to profession. We have already noted that in spoils, patronage based on loyalty to party ideology rather than super-performance could lead to appointments of top public service bureaucracy to enable smooth implementation of policies of the party in power. The American experience referred to in Chapter three indicates that spoils politics were necessary to circumvent congressional veto on bills presented for promulgation into acts. The Namibian setting is pragmatic on the appointment issue, in that no provision of the Public Service Act is meant to stem the use of cadre principles. Cadre principles are reminiscent of one-party states such as fascist–tyranny, religious fanatic–autocracy, socialist and communist–popular democracy, which likewise were firmly entrenched in revolutionary vanguard-party systems.

The matching of the examples above does not mean that the systems referred to necessarily share the same ideology nor equally exercise the rule of law in their respective states. But, now that reforms have taken place world-over and market economies have replaced the “commanding heights” of socialist economies, and the emerging public service managerialism has been adopted by governments in many



countries to survive the globalization trend, it is quite logical to view the management of government business in terms of competencies and rational business style approaches.

#### **4.10 CONCLUSION**

The Namibian approach to reform is based on structuring and capacity building of public institutions rather than incremental Public Service improvement. Much of the reform initiatives are pragmatic-based, driven by indigenous needs rather than a specific ideological pursuit. Namibia required a functional structure to successfully install a national government and transform caretaker administration activities into statehood. The Constituent Assembly was created and the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia came into being as its product. It was the Constitution that set guidelines for reform to existing structures to be compatible with the requirements of state administration. Consistently, government institutions were structured and restructured in response to the changing operational environment – culture and technology. Adopted strategies ensured performance fit has been checked from the outset, and essentially enhanced the major reform programmes as manifested in the formulation and implementation of the NDP 1 and NDP 2 Strategic Plans towards the Vision 2030.

Notwithstanding anti-colonial and anti-racial democratic values that fundamentally conditioned the political, economic and social relations, institutional structures remain weak in their present size and level of accountability.