

## Comparing Citizens' and Employees' Evaluation of the Roles of Civil Service Reform Program in Building Good Governance in Public Institutions: The Case of Addis Ababa City Government

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### Abstract

This article comparatively assesses citizens' and employees' evaluation of the role of the civil service reform program in building good governance in public institutions of the City Government of Addis Ababa. Both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were followed to generate primary and secondary data through questionnaires, focus group discussion interviews, and document reviews. Primary data were collected through fieldwork from 212 respondents. The result reveals that most public servants believe that civil service reform programs have improved good governance in public sector service delivery. However, the greater majority of surveyed customers believe they have not seen much improvement in public service delivery in the city. The data collected from both categories of respondents indicate that the contribution of the reform in improving accountability, the responsiveness of civil servants, establishing an effective relationship with stakeholders and improving public participation was very limited. Therefore, it is recommended that the city government needs to devise strategies aligned with the existing reforms and follow up on proper implementations of the reforms. In addition, creating proper mechanisms to ensure accountability, transparency, public participation, and effective service delivery could be paramount.

**Key Words:** Reform, Good Governance, Public Sector, Service Delivery and City Government

### 1. Introduction

The role of the civil service as an instrument in a country's socio-economic and political development is undebatable. As part of its general political and economic restructuring programs, Ethiopia undertook comprehensive measures to restructure its civil service starting in 1991 (Paulos, 2001). The Civil Service Reform Program was initiated in 1997 in response to weaknesses in the administrative system, challenges encountered in the public service delivery system, and the ultimate objective of revitalizing the country's overall development (ECA, 2005). It was a large national undertaking regarding human resources and financial commitment. It aimed to introduce new and improved legislations and working systems to simplify administrative processes and ensure effectiveness, efficiency and ethical behaviour in service delivery.

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The reform envisaged transforming the old age public institutions into responsive, efficient and effective institutions so that the organizations could be capable of delivering appropriate public services. Though signs of progress are recorded in terms of building the capacity of public institutions, the reform has faced serious and complex challenges. The challenges were mainly a lack of public institutions' trust from the public, the skill and knowledge gap and resource constraints in discharging the huge work to build the nation on a new foundation is observed (Ministry of Civil Service, 2012). In addition, the challenges were limited participation of citizens, lack of appropriate policies and laws in some areas, and capacity limitations of public sectors (Rahmato, Bantirgu and Endeshaw, 2008).

As a result, most of the objectives of the reform program were not effectively realized; consequently, the status of good governance in the country's public institutions remained poor. For instance, based on the 28 countries' state governance survey conducted by the Economic Commission for Africa in 2004, Ethiopia's performance in all indices of good governance has fallen below the sample average, which is 53%, while the sample index of Ethiopia is 36% (ECA, 2004). The same trend persists in the country's governance profile by subsequent ECA's governance survey of 2005 (ECA, 2005). This clearly shows that Ethiopia's record of good governance is poor compared to even African standards, which is a poorly performing continent. Likewise, based on the 2005 IDA Resource Allocation Index in the area of public sector management and institution, Ethiopia scored 3.1, with 6 points being the highest and 1 being the lowest. Especially in terms of transparency, accountability and corruption in the public sector, the country scored below average, 2.5 points (Court, Fritz, and Boadi, 2007).

The findings of these studies and reports show the country's poor status of good governance. Though these studies can serve as a springboard and provide the general picture of good governance in Ethiopia, they are too broad. The studies do not show the situation of good governance in different regions and cities. In addition, these studies did not focus on the role of the reforms implemented by the city government in improving the situation of good governance in public institutions. Hence, the role of the reform in building good governance in the city government of Addis Ababa's public institutions should be studied to take lessons for other public sectors in the country. Therefore, this study is aimed at comparatively assessing the citizens' and employees' evaluation of the role of the Civil Service Reform Program in building good governance in the public sectors of the city government of Addis Ababa. Data were collected in 2016 through fieldwork in Addis Ababa. Though no active reform is being implemented in the city administration today (2022), taking stock of what went wrong and right helps draw lessons for future reforms. Against this scene, the article addresses the following questions. a) What are the evaluation of citizens and civil servants regarding the extent of public officials' accountability and public institutions' responsiveness? b) How do customers and civil servants rate the civil service reform programs' contribution to improving transparency and public participation? And c) what is the evaluation of customers and civil servants concerning the overall improvements in public service delivery in public sectors of the city government?

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### **2.1 Overview of Civil Service Reform Program**

The modern state is changing and reforming to find innovative, efficient and effective ways to deliver quality services to compete in the global market. This has resulted in several reforms and new models of management. Therefore, governments have implemented reforms to improve performance in response to internal and external pressures over decades. The demands for

efficient and effective delivery of quality services within a global economy require fundamental changes, which cannot be rapidly achieved because it demands institutional and cultural changes. It requires formulating good policies and capable public institutions to implement the policies for countries to develop (The World Bank, 1997).

The modern Civil Service in Ethiopia dates back to 1907, when nine ministries were established to ensure orderly and efficient arrangements for the workings of government (Ministry of Civil Service, 2012). Civil service reforms were used to create a skilled and efficient government workforce. Efficient and motivated civil service is important for governance, production and distribution of public goods and services, formulation and implementation of economic policy and management of public expenditure. The broader aim of civil service reform was the creation of a government workforce with the skills, incentives, ethos, and accountability needed to provide quality public services and carry out functions assigned to the state (Schiavo, 1996). The need for an efficient civil service to implement the various economic and decentralization drives the governments to launch reform programs (Beyene, 2008).

Reforming civil service passed through three phases. The first phase is from 1992 to 1995; the second phase is from 1996-2000 and the third from 2001 onwards. The main objective of reforming and modernizing the civil service institution is to enhance the capacity of the civil servant and improve good governance (Hana, 2014). The three phases mentioned above have specific objectives. The main objective for the first phase of the civil service reform era was the transformation of the socialist and command economy into capitalist and liberal ideology.

The second phase was aimed at building fair, transparent, efficient and ethical civil service primarily by creating enabling legislation, developing operating systems, and training staff in five key focus areas: (i) Expenditure Control and Management, (ii) Human Resource Management, (iii) Service Delivery, (iv) Top Management Systems and (v) Ethics (Paulos, 2001). The most recent reform phase began in September 2001, with the Public Sector Capacity Building Support Program (PSCAP) launch reviving the CSRP. The government has moved quickly to prepare the CSRP for its full implementation across all regions and levels of government. Pilot studies and special programs on performance and service delivery improvements in selected ministries, agencies, and bureaus were initiated. However, recently the perception is that the CSRP generally lost momentum, and an appraisal of PSCAP revealed inefficiencies due to poor financial management, poor incentives and a lack of strategic or performance orientation across all levels of government (Watson, 2005).

## **2.2 Governance Redefined**

Governance is not synonymous with government; however, people use these terms interchangeably. This confusion of terms can have unfortunate consequences. According to United Nations (2007), governance refers to the formal and informal arrangements that determine how public decisions are made and how public actions are carried out from the perspective of maintaining a country's constitutional values. As Graham, Amos and Plumptre (2003) stated, governance is how governments and other social organizations interact, how they relate to citizens, and how decisions are made in a complex world. Hence, governance is a process by which societies and organizations decide and determine who is to take part in decision-making and how the decision is to be made.

Governance comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (Chowdhury and Skarstedt, 2005). According to Graham et al. (2003), the

concept of governance can be applied globally, nationally, and at an institutional and community level. When considering governance at the national level, different entities that occupy the social and economic landscape constitute governance actors. Accordingly, four sectors of society, situated among citizens at large: business, civil society organizations, government and the media together constitute governance (Graham et al., 2003).

Governance includes the government, the private sector and civil society. As one of the governance actors, the government's main role is to create a conducive political and legal environment. While the role of the private sector is mainly to generate jobs and income, civil society facilitates political and social interaction through mobilizing groups to participate in economic, social and political activities (UNDP, 1997). Governance also denotes how power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources, with three distinct aspects: (i) the form of the political regime; (ii) the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development; and (iii) the capacity of governments to design, formulate, and implement policies and discharge functions (World Bank, 1994).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its 1997 policy paper executive summary, defined governance as "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels". Though there are differences in language and focuses of the definition of governance, most of these definitions include three common elements that point toward a minimal understanding of governance (1) the process (or manner) through which (2) power (or authority) is exercised (3) to manage the collective affairs of a community (Gisselquist, 2012). Though there exist many definitions of governance in the literature, the following three main types of governance, as identified by the United Nations (2007), are discussed as follows:

**Political or public governance:** the process of decision-making to formulate policy and whose authority is the state, government or public sector, relates to the process by which a society organizes its affairs and manages itself. The public sector plays an important role in political governance. The public sector could be defined as "activities that are undertaken with public funds, whether within or outside of core government, and whether those funds represent a direct transfer or are provided in the form of an implicit guarantee" (U.N., 2007).

**Economic governance:** includes decision-making processes that affect a country's economic activities and relationships with other economies and whose authority is the private sector. It relates to the policies, processes or organizational mechanisms necessary to produce and distribute services and goods. It has major implications for equity, poverty and quality of life (UNDP, 1997).

**Social governance:** whose authority is the civil society, including citizens and not-for-profit organizations, relates to a system of values and beliefs necessary for social behaviours to happen and for public decisions to be taken (UNDP, 2007).

The forgoing overview of governance reveals that the concept of governance varies in definition and form. According to the U.N. (2007), governance is a broad concept that operates at every level, including household, village, municipality, nation, region or globe. The role of governments should be to provide a stable and conducive political and economic environment.

### 2.3 Good Governance

In the contemporary world, there is a shift from the notion of governance to good governance, which leads to the introduction of another dimension of addressing the quality of governance.

According to Chowdhury and Skarstedt (2005), the use of the term “good governance” was initially articulated in a 1989 World Bank publication. The concept of good governance was identified as a structural necessity for market reform. It demands further requirements on the process of decision-making and public policy formulation. It extends beyond the capacity of the public sector to the rules that create a legitimate, effective and efficient framework for the conduct of public policy (Santiso, 2001).

Among other things, good governance is participatory, transparent, accountable, effective, and equitable and promotes the rule of law. Good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over allocating development resources (UNDP, 1997). According to United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in its 2011 article, good governance assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account, and the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision making. Good governance is participatory, accountable, transparent and responsive (UNESCAP, 2011). As Gisselquist (2012) argued, based on working definitions, there is easily disagreement among donor organizations and authors regarding which countries should be classified as well-governed and which are poorly governed. Hence, there is no clear basis to argue the merits of one classification versus another or evaluate the relative importance of various governance components.

## **2.4 Contextualizing Principles of Good Governance**

Much has been written regarding the principles of good governance. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in its policy document titled “Governance and Sustainable Human Development”, enumerates a set of principles of good governance. These principles appear in most of the literature with slight variations. These include: 1) *Participation*- all men and women should have a voice in decision-making directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions representing their interests. 2) *Transparency*- is built on the free flow of information; processes, institutions and information are directly accessible to those concerned with them, and enough information is provided to understand and monitor them. 3) *Accountability*- this principle demands governments and employees be held responsible for their actions. 4) *The rule of law*- legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially (UNDP, 1997); and a fair, predictable and stable legal framework is essential so that businesses and individuals may assess economic opportunities and act on them without fear of arbitrary interference or expropriation (IFAD, 1999). 5) *Responsiveness*- institutions and processes should serve all stakeholders. 6) *Effectiveness and efficiency*- the processes and institutions need to produce results that meet needs while making the best use of resources (UNDP, 1997).

The Commission of the European Communities has contributed to the discourse on good governance through a publication entitled “*European Governance: A White Paper*”. The Commission identifies five principles: Openness, Participation, Accountability, Effectiveness and Coherence as underpinning good governance. For World Bank, good governance implies an efficient public service, a reliable judicial system, and an administration accountable to the public (World Bank 1989, 1992). The principles and characteristics of good governance advocated by different institutions emphasize the desirability of a government better than the traditional one. It has become common in recent years to hear policy-makers and development experts describe good governance as the ‘missing link’ to successful growth and economic

reform in developing countries. But attention has focused almost exclusively on economic processes and administrative efficiency.

Recently, however, emphasis on the political components of governance became prominent in Africa, where it was explicitly incorporated into the mandates of several major continental organizations founded in the 2000s (Gisselquist, 2012). For instance, respect for democratic principles, human rights and the rule of law is incorporated among the founding principles of regional organizations. According to the author, the interlinked issues of aid, democracy and governance also remain sharply controversial on the continent. Besides, there is a lack of consensus regarding good governance. The vested interest of organizations and agencies in definitions and principles of the notion appears to be the main reason. Nevertheless, participation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness and the rule of law are commonly shared principles of good governance. The primary interest of this paper is not to review the various principles and characteristics of good governance generated in the discourse of the notion. As a common understanding of the principles of good governance is important to understand the results of this study, briefly discussing the core dimensions of good governance is vital.

#### **2.4.1 Participation**

Participation is essential to the community and stakeholders' engagement in government decision-making. Participation reinforces other elements of good governance. To put it more clearly, a participatory government ensures more transparency, accountability and predictability in governance for its people (Rahman, 2005). Even where projects have a secondary impact on a particular community, a consultation should consider their views (IFAD, 1999). Effective people's participation enhances the transparency of the development works (Waheduzzaman, 2008). Government structures should be flexible enough to offer beneficiaries and others the opportunity to improve the design and implementation of public programmes and projects (IFAD, 1999). Participation requires enhanced capacity and skills of stakeholders (UN, 2007). The enhancement of participatory governance requires the participation of beneficiaries (IFAD, 1999).

#### **2.4.2 Transparency**

United Nations defined transparency as “the availability and clarity of information provided to the general public about government activity” its lack creates an opportunity for corruption (U.N., 2007). Governance is transparent means the processes, institutions and information are directly accessible to those concerned with them, and enough information is provided to understand and monitor them (UNDP, 1997). Governments must provide information and ensure that as many citizens as possible access this information easily (Gisselquist, 2012). Likewise, according to IFAD (1999), transparency of decision-making, particularly in the budget, regulatory and procurement processes, is also critical to effective resource use and reducing corruption and waste. Transparency requires governments to allow the free flow of information to the public and ensure that public information can have a feedback effect on governmental performance and service delivery (UNDP, 1997).

### **2.4.3 Accountability**

One of the core elements of good governance, which all proponents of the concept emphasize, is accountability. Accountability means that “decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders” (UNDP, 1997). According to IFAD (1999), public officials should be answerable for government behaviour and responsive to the entity from which they derive authority. Accountability rests on establishing criteria for evaluating public sector performance (U.N., 2007).

### **2.4.4 Effectiveness and Efficiency**

A definition of effectiveness looks at the allocation of public spending and government institutions and their capacity to manage the economy and implement policies stably and predictably. A broader definition adheres to the adage that “it is more important to do the right thing than to do things right” (U.N., 2007). According to the United Nations, efficiency improvements in a narrow sense may be achieved either by increasing outputs while employing the same inputs or maintaining the same output while employing reduced inputs. Still, effectiveness is also very crucial in public sectors.

## **3. The Methods**

This research adopted both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. A mixed approach was preferred to minimize the drawback of sticking to a single approach and substantiate data collected through either approach. This research is dominantly descriptive in its research design but reinforced with an explanatory research design.

### **3.1 Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

The focus of the study was the Addis Ababa city government. Three sub-cities were selected randomly: Nefas Silk- Lafto, Bole and Yeka. Land Development and Management, Revenue and Customs, and Finance and Economic Development Offices were the sample offices selected purposely from each sub-cities. Accordingly, the numbers of offices selected as a sample were 15. These offices were selected based on the consideration that these sectors are the ones that serve a large number of customers daily and the key role they play in the economy and development. In addition, based on the researcher’s experience and different reports, the customers’ complaints are very high against these offices’ services. Sample respondents from the offices were selected purposely as an information source. Expertise, knowledge and experience with the issue were the justifications for judgmentally selecting the sample employees as respondents. The researcher’s judgment was backed up by consultation from the sample offices’ senior employees. Convenience sampling technique was followed to select sample customers as a respondent.

### **3.2 Sample Size**

The respondents of the questionnaire were 120 employees and 67 customers. Additionally, five process owners and two heads were purposely selected for interviews. The researcher, though planned three, conducted only two focus group discussions with senior employees at *Nifas silk*

*Lafto* and *Bole* sub-cities. The total number of employees who participated in the interviews and focus group discussions was 25. Accordingly, 145 employees and 67 customers, a total of 212, were sample respondents of the study.

### **3.3 Instruments of Data Collection**

The study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through questionnaires, focus group discussions and interviews. Questionnaires were distributed to customers and employees of selected public sectors in the sample sub-cities. The customers were included in the sample to enable the researcher to analyze both opinions and avoid being misled by information from one side. Interviews were conducted with process owners, heads in sample offices, and the head of the Mayor's Office of the city government to reinforce and triangulate data collected through questionnaires, focus group discussion and document review. Two focus group discussions were conducted with employees involved in implementing and monitoring the reform programs. Interviews and focus group discussions were aimed to substantiate the information collected through questionnaires. Secondary data were generated from reports and published research through document review.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The data collected through different means were organized thematically. The data collected through questionnaires were encoded into Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). The software was used to generate percentages, tables and frequencies, which enabled the researcher to present the data and interpret the respondents' opinions regarding the issue. The data collected from employees and customers are presented and analyzed comparatively. Data collected through interviews and focus group discussions are analyzed thematically to reinforce and validate quantitative data generated through questionnaires. This analysis approach helps triangulate views, facts and opinions related to the issue and provides detailed descriptions of the perception of employees and citizens regarding the impact of the reform on good governance.

## **4. Results and Findings**

The major indicators used to examine the roles of CSRP in building good governance are accountability, responsiveness, openness and transparency, public participation and service delivery. Five-item Likert scale questionnaires were developed and distributed to employees and customers of the sample offices in the selected sub-cities. This section comparatively presents the opinion of workers on one side and customers on the other. Only the positive responses ('strongly agree' and 'agree') of the two categories of respondents are presented, and the combination of 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses are titled "agree" in the tables. This is done to show the differences between the two categories in their evaluation of the status of good governance in the offices. First, the response regarding accountability is presented, followed by responsiveness, openness and transparency, public participation and finally, service delivery improvement. An attempt is also made to reveal the gap between the evaluation of employees about their service and the expectations of customers.

Regarding whether the reform has made public officials accountable or not, while 58% of the employees believe that the reform did so, only 29.7% of the customers responded 'agree'. The deference is almost double, implying a huge gap. Moreover, only 26.2% of the customers believe that there is a means by which effective remedies are offered against maladministration, whereas

the proportion of employees is 52.6%. Regarding the existence of a mechanism for disclosing corruption and other administrative malpractices, 53.7% of employees believe there is a means. On the other hand, the proportion of customers who think there is a means of disclosing corruption and administrative malpractices is only 32.8%. Concerning the accountability of public officials, the existence of a means to disclose corruption is one of the necessary conditions. But, to be fruitful, there needs to be a mechanism to take measures against unethical and corrupted officials. Accordingly, the proportion of the response of the two groups is 44% (customer) and 54.6% (employees).

**Table 4.1: Accountability**

| Indicators  | Employees | Customers |       |
|---|-----------|-----------|-------|
|   | Agree     | Agree     | Gap   |
| 1. Public officials are accountable for their individual and collective decisions.          | 58%       | 29.7%     | 30.8% |
| 2. There is a means by which effective remedies are offered against maladministration       | 52.6%     | 26.2%     | 26.4% |
| 3. There is a mechanism to disclose malfunction, dupe and corruption in public institutions | 54.6%     | 32.8%     | 26.5% |
| 4. There is a mechanism to take measures against unethical and corrupted officials          | 54.6%     | 44%       | 10.6% |
| 5. There is a formal code of conduct in the office  | 57.6%     | 33.9%     | 23.7% |

**Source:** Survey Data, 2016

In addition, 33.9% of customers believe that public institutions have a formal code of conduct, and about 57.6% of employees agree. The interview and focus group discussion results also generally confirm an accountability issue. The participant in the focus group discussion stated that the lack of accountability mainly emanated from the anti-corruption Commission's weak performance and the lack of political commitment to empowering the Commission.

**Table 4.2: Responsiveness**

| Indicators  | Employees | Customers |       |
|---|-----------|-----------|-------|
|   | Agree     | Agree     | Gap   |
| 1. Civil servants hear and address citizen complaints   | 62.2%     | 40.9%     | 21.3% |
| 2. The offices identify the customer's needs and expectations in advance and respond to that        | 42.9%     | 35.4%     | 7.5%  |
| 3. There is a means of collecting and responding to citizens' requests, complaints and suggestions. | 72.9%     | 43.9%     | 29%   |
| 4. There are skilled, ethical and responsive civil servants in the offices                          | 50%       | 31.1%     | 18.9% |

Source: Survey Data, 2016

As presented above, while 40.9% of the customer's response was positive to the declaration stating "civil servants hear and address citizen complaints", the proportion of the employees who replied positively to the declaration was 62.2%. The existing gap indicates a problem of not listening to and addressing customer complaints in the offices. One of the issues was the difference in views regarding identifying customers' needs in advance and responding to them. In this case, the difference between the evaluations of the two groups is only 7.5%. This implies the existence of some positive achievements in identifying customer demands and responding to

them accordingly, which can be attributed to the implementation of the reforms in the city administration. It also implies that the majority of the respondents did not agree with that.

Concerning the existence of a means of collecting and responding to citizens' requests and complaints, there is a great gap to be filled, about 29%. Though the city government workers feel that they are collecting and responding to the customer's complaints and requests, they are not up to customers' expectations. On the other hand, the absence of responsive civil servants in the offices is one of the areas where a huge gap is revealed, 21%. The employees' response also implies the lack of skill, responsiveness and ethics among the civil servants of the city administration. Hence, it is difficult to expect the effective achievement of the objectives of the CSRP without having skilled, responsive and ethical civil servants. The key informants from the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Bureau (CSHRDB) of the city government stated this problem is the main challenge to the achievements of the reform objectives.

Public entities are run for the public good, so their operation should be open to the public. This can be achieved by establishing clear and trusted communication channels and consultation to engage effectively with individual customers and stakeholders. According to a consultation draft of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC, 2013); to demonstrate that public sectors are acting in the public interest at all times and to maintain public trust and confidence, the entities should be as open as possible about all their decisions, actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs, and outcomes. They should restrict the provision of information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it. The ratings of openness and transparency of public sectors of the city government of Addis Ababa Administration by employees and customers are presented as follows.

**Table 4.3: Openness and Transparency**

| Indicators  | Employees | Customers | Gap   |
|---|-----------|-----------|-------|
|   | Agree     | Agree     |       |
| 1. The institutional framework allows for the community and stakeholders to express their views | 50.9%     | 29%       | 21.9% |
| 2. Public officials facilitate individuals' access to information.                              | 53.4%     | 45.2%     | 8.2%  |
| 3. Public sectors have open budgeting and planning institutional framework                      | 60.2%     | 27.4%     | 32.8% |
| 4. No barrier hinders direct contact between manager and customer                               | 51.4%     | 23.4%     | 28%   |

Source: Survey Data, 2016

The responses of employees and customers regarding the availability of an institutional framework that allows stakeholders to express their views are 50.9% and 29%, respectively. The gap between the two groups of respondents signals a serious limitation in designing mechanisms to allow stakeholders and the community to participate. In contrast, individuals' access to information has shown positive outcomes, suggesting the officials' commitment to facilitating free access to information by citizens. Generally, public institutions' openness and transparency are expected to be observed in all aspects of their activities. Specifically, public institutions are expected to be open and transparent in budgeting and planning. However, the survey result revealed that the budgeting and planning of the institutions are not transparent. Most of the government officials interviewed claimed that they inform the residents about any development programs through their elected representatives and the officials argue that people's representatives should take responsibility for informing their constituency.

“...we share detailed planning and budgeting with public representatives. Now, it is their [representatives] duty to further disseminate the information to the mass of the people” (interviewee, 2016).

However, the key informant mentioned that some local government officials do not understand the value of informing people. They believe a decision by the elected representatives means the people’s decision. The naïve assumption is that government officials represent people at the decision-making table, and their decisions mean the constituencies’ decisions. Thus, informing the public is irrelevant, an assumption which is inaccurate.

The final issues that need appraisal in the analysis of openness and transparency of the offices concerning customers’ access to the managers or decision makers. While almost half of the employees responded positively, only 23.4% of customers believe there is no barrier hindering customers from accessing the manager. The objective of people’s participation in local development programs is various. McRae & Watts (2006) have pointed out that participation in local development programs provides several benefits, such as ensuring better services for people, mobilizing local knowledge and resources for best decisions, and sharing management activities to get the job done. The data obtained through interviews and focus group discussions reveal that the officials do not perceive that they are running the sectors with taxpayers’ money and are responsible for informing how the money is used. A key informant stated that open budget and planning are secondary jobs for most officials.

**Table 4.4: Public Participation**

| Indicator  | Employees | Customers |        |
|--|-----------|-----------|--------|
|  | Agree     | Agree     | Gap    |
| 1. The offices encourage the community to participate actively and follow up on the activity of public institutions. | 51.9%     | 43.3%     | 8.6%   |
| 2. The offices conduct meaningful consultations and discussions with stakeholders.                                   | 50.4%     | 23.8%     | 26.6 % |
| 3. The citizens participate in public service provision and give feedback.   | 49.1%     | 28.6%     | 20.5 % |
| 4. The citizens’ capacity to influence public decision-making has improved   | 42.3%     | 20.3%     | 22%    |

Source: Survey Data, 2016

As presented above, while 43.3% of the customers believe that the offices encourage the community to participate and follow up on the activities of public institutions, the proportion of employees is 51.9%, and the difference is only 8.6%. This is one of the indicators that scored the lowest gap between the perception of customers and employees. This signifies the achievements scored in promoting public participation. However, the bright story does not go beyond this, as the offices do not conduct meaningful consultations with stakeholders. The offices seem to encourage people to participate merely for reporting purposes, allowing genuine discussion. Through participation, people should contribute meaningfully to local government decisions that affect them (Blair 2000). Unless people’s views and concerns are incorporated into the decision-making, it cannot be called meaningful participation.

Research shows that public entities cannot achieve their intended outcomes solely through their efforts. According to the consultation draft of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC, 2013), public sector entities also need to work with institutional stakeholders to improve

services and outcomes or for accountability reasons. Developing formal and informal partnerships with other entities, both in the public sector and other parts of the economy, allows entities to use their resources more efficiently and achieve their outcomes more effectively.

The other indicator of participation is whether the public participates in the public service provision and feedback giving. The positive response of the employees and customers is 49.1% and 28.6%, respectively. This implies that the public's participation in service provision is very limited. Though participation is an important means of minimizing service costs, the offices have not exploited the opportunity of mobilizing the public in service provision. Furthermore, the capacity of the citizens to influence public decision-making is an additional dimension where the gap is significant, i.e. 22%. The public's ability to influence decision-making is greatly related to the government's willingness to conduct meaningful consultation and discussion with the public. So, as the practice of engaging in meaningful discussion and consultation with the public is very low, it is not surprising to find out the low capacity of the public to influence government decisions. What follows is the overall status of service delivery in the sample offices covered by this study.

**Table 4.5: Public Service Delivery**

| Indicators   | Employees | Customers |       |
|--|-----------|-----------|-------|
|  | Agree     | Agree     | Gap   |
| 1. The services are predictable and dependable.                  | 49.5%     | 30.2%     | 19.3% |
| 2. Civil servants are committed and ready to serve the public    | 53.6%     | 30.3%     | 20.3% |
| 3. The offices provide public service equally and fairly to all  | 57.4%     | 39.1%     | 18.3% |
| 4. The quality and effectiveness of public services are improved | 56.5%     | 33.3%     | 23.3% |
| 5. There is efficient service delivery in the offices            | 53.5      | 32.3      | 21.2% |

Source: Survey Data, 2016

As clearly indicated above, while only 30.2% of the customers agree that public services are predictable and dependable, the proportions of the employees are 49.5%. This gap is also observed in the ratings of the two groups of respondents regarding the commitment and readiness of civil servants to serve the public. Overall, the data demonstrate that the service providers rate their services and commitment as good. In contrast, the customers are validating that the services are not dependable and the commitment of the civil servants is very low. Improvement will not occur unless the institutions admit their defects and collect feedback from their customers. This seems missing in the sample institutions as they are found to overrate their service and performance in most of the indicators used.

Equality and fairness in service delivery is an additional case that is included as an indicator for comparative analysis. Equality and fairness ratings of employees and customers are 57.4% vis-a-vis 39.1%, respectively. Studies indicate fairness and equality in service delivery are highly related to predictability. This means when the public is treated equally and fairly in service provision, the service will be predictable and dependable. This is because if people are treated equally and fairly, the customers feel that if they fulfil the conditions, they predict how they will be served and eventually build confidence in the services of the organizations.

The other criteria used to evaluate the role of CSRP in improving service delivery are the quality and effectiveness of the public service. The gap is, like all other indicators, great in this case. In terms of improving service quality and effectiveness, there is still a gap that needs to be addressed by city government institutions. Finally, lack of efficiency is another case where the

research identified a problem in service delivery. The upshot is that customers do not feel much improvement in overall service delivery in the organizations.

## 5. Conclusions

This article comparatively assessed citizens' and employees' evaluation of the role of the civil service reform program in building good governance in public institutions of the City Government of Addis Ababa. Data were collected in 2016, and there is no active reform in the city administration today (2022). Nevertheless, taking stock of what went wrong and right helps draw lessons for future reforms as reform is inevitable in modern government. The article revealed that a slight majority of employees believe that the reform has put in place the mechanisms of insuring the responsibility and accountability of public officials and led institutions to have formal code of conduct and performance standards. The employees also believe that, though insufficient, there is a practice of holding employees accountable for weak or non-performance. The reform enabled the public sector to design mechanisms to provide remedies against maladministration. Further, the reform helped public sectors devise mechanisms for disclosing unethical conduct and corruption in public institutions and retaliating against corrupted officials. This implies that reform has, to some extent, enhanced the officials' responsiveness and accountability.

However, customers' evaluation of the reform sharply contrasted with employees' evaluation regarding stakeholder participation and responsiveness of the offices. The comparative analysis of both customers and employees shows that public sectors in Addis Ababa city government were ineffective in identifying the customer's needs and responding to them. Implementing the reform has not significantly improved public service delivery and responsiveness. Although there is a gap in openness and transparency, the reform enabled the institutions to work with stakeholders. But the improvement in the transparency of the budgeting and planning system was weak. The managers of the institutions were inaccessible to customers, and public participation in institutions' decision-making was low. The reform program developed major tools for the organizations to improve the openness and transparency of public institutions; nevertheless, the tools were not properly obeyed and embedded in the organizations.

Though many studies indicated that the existence of a means by which peoples get remedy for maladministration is one way of boosting accountability in public sectors, this is lacking in all sample offices. There is a means of disclosing administrative misbehaviour and corruption, but the practice of taking measures against corrupted officials and unethical workers was not a norm. There are mechanisms for collecting citizens' requests, complaints and suggestions. However, citizens' feedback and suggestions were not responded to adequately, and there was the problem of commitment, ethics and responsiveness from civil servants in the offices. There were initiatives by government officials to facilitate citizens' access to information, but barriers hindered direct contact between officials and customers. Public sectors carry out budgeting and planning activities behind closed doors; hence the role of the public in budgeting and planning was very insignificant. The budgeting process was done closed door, except final announcement of the allocated budget through posting on the notice board or poster. As the offices do not encourage the community to participate actively and follow up on public institutions' activities, the citizens' capacity to influence government decisions and actions remain very low.

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