

Accountability and Transparency of Public Servants in Tanzania: Reflections on Successes and Challenges towards Socio-economic Development

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Abstract

The presence of any government and its organizations around the globe is just to serve the interest of the public by ensuring that the public wellbeing is well met and people are improving their life style. The elected leaders at all levels of administrations who later form government have got high responsibility to eliminate all deeds which can endanger the interest of public by insisting on high accountability and transparency for public civil servants at their places of working. This paper will explore in details on how accountability and transparency in Tanzania has been done in terms of successes and challenges, and the way forward for eliminating the constraints which hinder accountability and transparency in most of the public servants.

Key words: *Public civil servants, Accountability, Transparency, Sustainable Development Goals*

1.0 Introduction

Accountability and transparency for public civil servants is at the core of good corporate governance, and it is now a global agenda which is also insisted at large by the UN through its 16 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UN on its initiative of ensuring accountability and transparency for public servants is always insisting that the presence of accountability and transparency always ensures civil service efficiency in delivery of the public services to the citizens in any country (Dagneu, 2019). Accountability and transparency is the signs of the presence of good governance where leaders are more accountable and transparent to their citizens (Rana et al, 2019). Accountability and transparency is also act as means of helping governments to eliminate corruption and embezzlement of the public funds as it requires all government officials and leaders to be accountable of their deeds during civil service delivery (Ong and Gabriel, 2018). There is a strong positive correlation between accountable and transparent political and economic institutions and the sustainability of the development outcomes.

Furthermore, Kharel et al, (2019) maintain the view that the presence of accountability and transparency will ensure the rules, regulations and principles agreed in civil services are followed and will also require for monitoring and to get feedback of the operations with reference to agreed targets (ibid)

The presence of any government and its organizations around the global is just to serve the interest of the public by ensuring that public wellbeing is well implemented and fulfilled among the citizens. The elected leaders who later form government are aiming at eliminating all kinds of deeds which can endanger the interest of the public by insisting accountability and transparency in civil services delivery, and therefore, accountability, transparency and civil services delivery are inseparable (Rana et al,2019).

Accountability and transparency in public sector can be traced from the 10th century specifically in Europe during the era of kingdoms such as King Willium I of the Great Britain who wanted his subordinated to be loyal to the use of public resources for the betterment of serving the interests of citizens. His subordinates were required to take oath of faithfulness on the use of public resources for the interests of the majority (Dubnick, 2002). Jantjies (2014) argues that accountability and transparency on public sector started early during monarchy rules in Europe whereby Kings required their subordinates to be accountable on the use of the kingdom properties such as buildings, land and other resources. Subordinates are supposed to use those resources according to the directives from the kings and were supposed to be accountable for their deeds during of using those properties.

The African post-independence countries have been experiencing weak socio-economic political and economic results and poor performance in public service due to lack of accountability whereby in some of countries public funds were miss-used and corruption being leaders' style (Rufus and Catherine, 2019). Taking as an example Angola, Human Right Watch-HRW (2010) reports that due to lack of accountability and transparency in civil services delivery, corruption is enormous to the extent that it jeopardizes the national socially, politically and economically, and

citizens have no right to question as long as leaders are not accountable to the public. The absence of accountability and transparency in civil service in most African countries including Nigeria accelerated the high rate of corruption where government funds were miss-used by political leaders.

Bujiku (2019) asserts that the concepts of accountability and transparency in Africa came up with the introduction of multiparty political ideology being adopted from western countries whereby elected political leaders and government officials are required to adhere to the rules, laws and regulations governing civil service and not otherwise. Under this umbrella, accountability and transparency were viewed as the means which requires both political leaders and non-political officials to be accountable and transparent to the society by utilizing well available resources for the benefits of the entire society, and being able to be answerable of their actions which are against citizens' expectations and legal framework of the public.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Agency Theory. The Agency theory was proposed by the economists in Europe in 1960s to explain the principal-agent relationship of the groups or individuals (Kharel et al, 2019; Eisenhardt, 1999). Kumalasari and Sudarma (2013) argue that agency theory concentrates much on agent-principal relationship where agents are accountable to the principal. Bovine (2006) and Hughes (2003) also argue that in civil service, principals who are supervisor officials, delegate their power and authority to their subordinates who are accountable to them. Senior officials get power and authority from the government and government gets power and authority from citizens to act on their behalf. Officials acting on behalf of their superior have got power and authority to act and either they or their superior can be accountable of their performance deeds and this operates in civil service through the so called hierarchical accountability (Jarvis, 2017). This theory guided the study due to its contribution on principal-agent relationship which is the main concepts of accountability and transparency among the government officials and elected political leaders who are answerable directly to the citizens.

3.0 Presence of Public Civil Servants' Accountability and Transparence in Tanzania

In Tanzania, the presence of Public Civil Servants' accountability and transparency can be traced back from the time of pre-colonial and colonial eras where in pre-colonial era our societies were so accountable to utilize and use their available resources in equality ways (Rodney, 1980). During colonial time, formal administration was introduced and later inherited by the government after independence. In 1967 with the introduction of Arusha declaration, the government aimed at enhancing accountability and transparence in all public offices by fighting all kinds of corruption and misuse of public funds and efficiency and ineffectiveness in public (Katomero, 2017) service delivery

The re-introduction of local government in Tanzania in 1982 after being banned in 1973 aimed at making civil servants more accountable to the services delivery to the citizens, starting at grassroots, that is, from village level. The intention of re-introducing local government and other

government initiatives of enhancing accountability did not bring out positive result due to insufficiency legislation framework; poor communication channel and poor citizen involvement at local authorities like villages and this stimulated the need of public reform (Kabyemela, 2017). These reforms were: introduction of “decentralization by devolution” (D by D) Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA, 2005). Also the government introduced the so called the 2000 Client Service Delivery Charter (CSDC) which aimed at insisting accountability and transparency of civil servants in public services delivery in both central and local government authorities (Mdee and Theoley, 2016).

4.0 Study Methods

Information from this article was collected data from Musoma Municipal in Mara region and Ilemela Municipal in Mwanza region. Questionnaires were distributed to selected officials, workers and residents (normal people) in order to get their views of the real situation of accountability and transparency of public civil servants in those areas. These were workers, officials and residents (normal people) who lived and work in their respective areas on a daily basis and thus were well informed about accountability and transparency. Interviews from these respondents provided an opportunity to listen and learn from them, different issues that were hindering or contributing efficiency of work in public civil servants in Tanzania.

Furthermore, interviews were held in two Municipalities’ Mayors, technical staff and normal residents from the local government authority. The study benefited also from selected retired staff of local government who had time to reflect about their contribution about accountability and transparency of public civil servants in Tanzania. Also information was also collected from government documents, research reports and deliberations of meetings on accountability and transparency of public civil servants in Ilemela and Musoma Municipals. These were read to shade light on the experience of public civil servants’ accountability and transparency.

5.0 The Concepts of Accountability and Transparency in Public Services Delivery

Accountability and transparency (openness) in public services delivery has been viewed as government commitment to serve the interest of its people as per prescribed laws, rules and regulations for the purpose of ensuring betterment of the majority citizens (Hughes, 2003). It originates from the concept of democracy whereby government formed is of the people, granted power and authority exercising and behaviors within public civil service during service delivery to the public. Minja (2013) argues that public civil service accountability is strictly connected with the application of power, authority and the validity of guidelines, rules, regulations and codes of conduct during public service delivery. Exercising of power and authority in public civil service, should aim at ensuring the interests of the public are served and civil service should be accountable of their performance under prescribed chain of command. Hughes (2003) still points out that accountability and Transparency (openness) in civil service operate through a well-established performance reporting whereby reporting system is well and clear stated. In civil service, every civil servant from low to high position is accountable to his senior officer through the so called hierarchy whereby chain of command is well stated. In Westminster which is ministerial type of political accountability and transparency is a good example of hierarchal

accountability, accountability and transparency start from top towards bottom. This implies that superior officials are accountable to the performance to their subordinates

Again, Bovens (2006) maintains that civil service accountability operates through prescribed rules, regulations, core values, instruments, benchmarks and code of conducts. Public civil service accountability and transparency are the sense of answerability between the parties of actors which are guided by the specified and agreed code of conducts and well established legal framework to ensure interest of both parties of actors (Guerin et al, 2018). Relationship between two actors in accountability can be either internal (relationship among seniors and juniors) or external whereby those working in civil service are answerable to the overall public. Accountability and transparency have been viewed as affiliation built on obligations of parties to reveal, evaluate, and take reasonable measures basing on the agreed terms and expectations in performance for betterment of both parties (Guerin et al, 2018). The association of the two parties of those who are responsible to evaluate those expectations according to agreed targets and on line with framed legislation and guidelines. This relationships involves four aspects; these are oversight, inspect and scrutiny the other part according to established regulations and procedures for the purpose of ensuring fairness in those activities.

5.1 Dimensions of Public Civil Servants' Accountability and Transparency

Rufus and Catherine (2019), Hughes (2003) and Jarvis (2017) argue that accountability and transparency involve various dimensions depending on the nature, area and environment concern like:

- *Bureaucratic accountability and transparency*: This practiced in public service, operates through the so called hierarchy whereby reporting starts from low level of administration to highest level where highest political leaders such as presidents and prime ministers are found.
- *Professional accountability and transparency*: Experts of various cadres are checked and controlled according to established laws and regulations. Discipline and conducts of experts are regulated by established expert associations and boards. Laws and regulations outline guidelines and acceptable conduct during service delivery to the society which has to be adhered and complied by all professionals. Under this category of accountability of professionals such as medical officers, journalists, teachers, lawyers etc are controlled.

Accountability and transparency in public civil servants have got two components. One involves blame. When something goes wrong, the public, politicians, leaders and managers want to hold someone accountable by punishing the guilty. In other words, accountability and transparency occur after the fact. The other component of accountability and transparency involve responsibility, leadership and engagement. It is an attitude that people adopt because they believe what they do creates value for others, and therefore they take responsibility for organizational outcomes. They perceive that leaders support their efforts by helping them remove barriers impending the mission. People also perceive that they have reasonable influence over the

evaluation of their work and that the rewards and consequences are fair. In such environment people choose to be accountable.

5.2 Types of Accountability and Transparency

5.2.1 Political Accountability and Transparency

This is the accountability and transparency of the government, civil servants and politicians to be accountable and transparent to the public and to the legislative bodies' such as congress or parliament. In a few cases, recall the elections can be used to revoke the office of an elected official. Generally, however, the voters here do not have any direct way of holding elected representatives to account during the term for which they have been elected. Some officials and legislators may be appointed rather than elected by Constitution, or statute, can empower a legislative body to hold their own members, the government, and government bodies.

5.2.2 Ethical Accountability and Transparency

Ethical accountability and transparency is the practice of improving overall personal and organizational performance by developing and promoting responsible tools and professional expertise, by advocating an effective enabling environment for people and organizations to embrace a culture of sustainable development. This may include the individual, as well as small and large businesses, not-for-profit organizations, research institutions and academics and government.

5.2.3 Administrative Accountability and Transparency

Under this type, the internal rules and norms as well as some independent commission are mechanisms to hold civil servant within the administration of government accountable. Within department or ministry, firstly, behavior is bounded by rules and regulations, secondly, civil servants are subordinates in hierarchy and accountable to superiors.

5.2.4 Market Accountability and Transparency

Under the voice of decentralization and privatization of the government, services provided are nowadays more "customer-driven" and should aim to provide convenience and various choices to citizens, with this perspective, there are comparisons and competition between public and private services and this ideally improves quality of service.

6.0 The Successes of Public Civil servants' Accountability and Transparency in Tanzania

The study revealed that public civil servants' accountability and transparency in Tanzania to some extent had contributed efficiency and effectiveness of work on services delivery, and hence to increase productivity within their organizations. One respondent from normal residents noted that:

"Public civil servants are now accountable and transparent; because of they are well practiced and fulfilling the interests of people, and now we are increasing chances freedom of participation for citizens and we free to criticize and question about the government officials' actions".

It is vividly clear to the above quote that implementation of public accountability and transparency in Tanzania has been growing up because people had right to ask poor social services delivery in their localities. In various civil service organizations in Tanzania, the

government has been introducing the system by so called “*Open Performance Review and Appraisal (OPRAS)*” forms which every civil servant is required to fill them whole the year showing the agreed objectives, agreed performance targets, agreed performance criteria and agreed resources/ support Services and to signed by his/ her supervisor. This to a large extent contributed more the efficiency and effectiveness of work in civil service delivery. When accountability and transparency are clearly implemented in public civil service, the members of the organization are feeling as a part and parcel of their organization and therefore, they are likely to increase organizational productivity. Public sector needs to have clear chain of command and reporting system for the sake of maintaining discipline of work.

Furthermore, the findings from this study revealed that the government efforts of monitoring the public civil servants through resurrecting of the dead rules, laws and regulations had motivated civil servants to be accountable and transparency. One respondent from technical staff went further to point out that:

“Under this regime of President Magufuli nobody is ready to waste out his bans because jobs’ regulations, rules and laws are very tight which make workers to be more accountable and transparent than the previous regime”.

From the above quote, it is supported by Killian (2017) who points out that every government entity should establish a very strong internal control of its employees, and this control should be in line with established civil service laws, regulations and rules. Monitoring and appraising procedures are to be well

Stipulated and adhered. Accountability and transparency cannot exist alone without a well-established legislation framework which introduces regulations, code of conducts which have to guide accountability and transparency in civil service with set of performance benchmarks to guide them (Jumanne, 2017).

In a discussion with two Municipals Mayors on accountability and transparency in public civil servants, it was noted that there is delegation of power among the public civil servants and this has speeded up the decision-making for those issues which seemed to be difficult. He went to note that:

“Accountability and transparency in our Municipals are operating well under hierarch whereby superior delegates their power and authority to their junior officials”.

Under hierarchy accountability and transparency start from the top to the bottom, whereby senior officials are accountable of their juniors’ performance. This kind of accountability and transparency systems operate under prescribed legal framework which is well-known to civil servants. This argument is also supported by Jarvis (2017) who pointed out that under hierarchy system of decision-making, accountability and transparency in decision-making operate through delegation of power and authority and junior officials act on behalf of their superiors and if anything wrong is done, then superior officials are accountable for their subordinates performance. The delegation of power minimizes centralization of power and misuse of authority

and power in the policy making process by agents who act on behalf of principals and who must be accountable to their principals or their deeds during service delivery to the public specifically in public sector. Accountability and transparency regulate the relationships of senior and junior officials at work place, whereby junior officials are accountable to their superiors, while superiors also are accountable to their authority which appointed them.

The findings also revealed that accountability and transparency speeded up the idea of good governance in Tanzania, in a democratic country like Tanzania particularly, under the fifth phase of President John Pombe Magufuli, the study witnessed very much indeed how leaders were accountable and transparency for their deeds during service delivery as three respondents from normal residents had the following views:

*“Today we are enjoying on the provision of civil services delivery in our municipals,
this*

*is a result of strictly supervision and monitoring of President John Pombe Magufuli’s
regime”*

The above quote showed that the public civil servants in Tanzania were accountable and transparent to the provision of social services expected to give them to Tanzanian citizens.

7.0 Challenges Facing Public Civil Servants’ Accountability and Transparency in Tanzania

The public civil servants’ accountability and transparency in Tanzania have always played a pivotal role in ensuring continuity and change in administration. However they are dictated by the rules and procedures which are formulated taking their advice into account. It is the ‘rule of law’ rather than the ‘rule of man’ that is often blamed for widespread abuse of power and corruption among government officials. The issue of civil servants accountability and transparency in service delivery have come forefront in all dialogues regarding civil service reforms. The credibility of civil service lies in the conspicuous improvement of tangible services to the people.

The study revealed several challenges which for one way or another hindered the implementation of accountability and transparency in Tanzania. The study revealed that presence of corruption in our societies to a large extent had broken out the success and achievements of accountability and transparency. Political leaders and government officials are busy with their interests rather than serving the public interests. The essence of corruption has led to poor social services delivery to this sense, poor citizens cannot afford to get quality service. Kasuka (2013) asserts seriously that corruption in local government in Tanzania affects much accountability and transparency in the public civil service servants and this leads to insufficiency in public services delivery. Most the public civil servants serve more their private benefits than public benefits. In addition, Boyle and Munzhedzi (2016) maintains the argument that the essence of corruption in most of the African states has contributed much to the weak socio-economic and political results where some countries misuse the public funds and to deteriorate accountability and transparency.

The study also revealed that in local governments still corrupted civil service, promotions or appointments were not basing on merits but were based on what someone can offer to seniors or “ *God father* “ a word used to show someone who has authority and decision-making in a particular organization. Someone who can offer something to senior he/she can be promoted to high position and he/ she accountability and transparence cannot be questioned by anybody who is below the senior.

Weak legal framework was revealed by this study as another challenge affecting public civil servant’ accountability and transparency in Tanzania. It was revealed that the legal institutions which dealt with human justice were not so effective and therefore to allow corruption to take place. The interviews made to normal residents, technical staff and mayors strictly supported to weak legal frame as a challenge to local government authorities. Kabyemela (2017) points out that poor legislation framework to govern accountability in civil service in Tanzania, has affected the effectiveness of accountability and transparence in Tanzania because they lack directives and instruments to rely on, and this to a large extent has brought confusion to some public institutions on how civil service can be accountable and transparence.

Furthermore, the study revealed that poor leadership qualities of those appointed in the public civil service lacked the spirit of accountability and transparency. Most of them were very busy for their own interests rather than public interests. One of the normal resident had the following views that;

“Most of our public civil servants in our Municipals lack leadership codes of conduct to and thus is why some project programs are falling down because leaders are misbehaving.

Aziz et al, (2015) support that leadership qualities have a significant role in enhancing accountability and transparency in civil services. They (ibid). Civil service leaders have to be selected or appointed basing on their qualities rather than depending on personality traits. They (ibid) insist that leaders with strong characters and who are proved with high rate of ethics endowed with integrity are ones preferable to enhance accountability and transparency. This is well supported by Katz (2005) that the managerial success always depends on leaders’ performance rather than leaders’ personality traits. He (ibid) managers’ ability to perform work well is a result of their managerial skills. The managers with the necessary skills will probably perform well and be relatively successful. One without the necessary skills will probably perform poorly and be relatively unsuccessful.

Involvement of too much politics and interruption of some leaders especially politicians from either central or local government acted as a break for accountable and transparent leaders. The tendency of elected political leaders , political appointees and some of the civil servants of being loyal and accountable to the appointment authorities and their parts instead of prescribed rules, regulations and directives, seems to be major factor that hindered accountability and transparency in local government authorities (Said et al, 2019).Political interference confuses the public servants visions because their intention is fulfill their political needs in order to create

citizens' attraction to win the mass support for their election. Therefore, it was very difficult to believe that the public civil servants have to work on behalf of the government.

The introduction of double standard of rules and regulations within public civil servants contributed to lack of accountability and transparency. The study revealed that lack of clear rule and regulations brought confusion in public civil servants' accountability and transparency. This was double standard because the same rules were functioning differently to the same people who were working together. For example, while certain people were punished or forced to be accountable of their performance, some were not punished and some were transferred to other positions and being promoted for other positions

The findings of the study revealed that the concepts of accountability and transparency result of good governance, the concept which was introduced from western countries. Therefore, it is a "*donor centered approach*" rather than "*citizens' centered approach*". This to some extent decreased the moral support of some public civil servants that developing countries are implementing accountability and transparency for the sake of getting loans and grants.

9.0 What should be done to Improve Public Civil Servants' Accountability and Transparency in Tanzania?

Despite the successes and challenges facing Public Civil Servants' accountability and transparency in Tanzania, the study came up with several ways in order to address those challenges hindered the successes of public civil servants' accountability and transparency in Tanzania. These ways can be summarized as follows:

- The government should introduce a well-established legal framework with rules, regulations and guidelines for accountability and transparency for public civil servants. This framework will stand as direction towards accountability and transparency in civil services and all actions, and decisions regarding accountability and transparency and to comply with established legal framework.
- The government should have proper delegation safeguards against the predisposition towards power centralization and misuse of authority and power in the policy making process by the agents who will act on behalf of principals, and who must be accountable to their principals for their deeds during service delivery to the public, specifically in public sector both developed and developing countries.
- The government entity should establish a very strong internal control of its employees and this control should be in line with established civil service laws, regulations and rules, and monitoring and apprising procedures are to be stipulated and adhered. This to a large extent will control the rate of corruption among public civil servants.

10.0 Conclusions: the future public civil servants' accountability and transparency in Tanzania

Looking at the discussion above, a number of conclusions can be drawn. The paper starts clearly by showing the emergence of accountability and transparency in Africa which was the outcomes of multiparty political ideology being adopted from western countries whereby elected political leaders and government officials were required to adhere to the rules, laws and regulations governing civil services. This global political wind of change affected much in Africa including Tanzania. The paper went further by showing the concepts of accountability and transparency as defined by various scholars and the presence of Public Civil Servants' accountability and transparency in Tanzania and its development starting from the time of pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence era as well as dimensions of public civil servants' accountability and transparency. Furthermore, the paper tried to address critically the successes and challenges which faced public civil servants' accountability and transparency in local government authorities. Finally, it ends up with the ways forward towards solving the challenges of public civil servants' accountability and transparency, and recommendations for further studies to be taken in order to improve public civil servants' accountability and transparency in Tanzania.

11.0 Recommendations

Based on the study findings and ensuing conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

- Politicians should not be allowed to intervene the technocrats' positions to enable them to advise and supervise correctly the established projects. This situation will enable the technocrats to be free and supervise well the project programmes introduced by the government.
- Civic education should be provided to people about wrong perceptions on the idea that accountability and transparency are "*donor centered approach*" and not "*citizens' centered approach*". This will enable the public civil servants to be more countable and transparent to the citizens because they will not have such illusion.
- Political will and commitment of government leaders must be well declared publicly in order to make citizens to believe what they are saying rather than being silently.
- The government must public publishes government financial statements regularly in order to control the rate of corruption.
- The government must reduce tolerance of corruption through big data and analytic
- Developing integrity spirits among the citizens.
- Government must develop leadership practices towards accountability and transparency.

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