

## THE CONFLICTS BETWEEN ADMINISTRATORS AND PROFESSIONAL CADRE OFFICERS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE OF NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The article reviewed the conflicts between the administrators and the professional cadre officers in the Civil Service of Nigeria. literature materials were sourced from Journals, conference papers, government documents , bulletins etc. They were then discussed and reviewed. This problem is not peculiar to Nigeria alone, but Nigeria's colonial antecedent has exacerbated it. Since the Nigerian civil service at the time of independence was modeled after the British civil service The Udoji Public Service Review Commission report of 1974 devoted special attention to the problem, but came up with solutions that were unsatisfactory. The 1988 civil service reforms was able to mitigate this problem to some extent and more so by the vAllison Ayida Review Panel of 1994 to 1998. The article advocated the use of seniority and merit in the appointments of Permanent Secretaries and Heads of the civil services, Heads of Parastatals as well as promotions to the rank of Directors ,newly appointed permanent Secretaries from the Professional Cadre should be posted to technical Ministries or Departments and those from the administrative cadre to the adminstrarive management departments to garner some experiences before they can be posted to other ministries and departments Finally, the article stressed the fact that there will always be conflicts between Administrators and professional experts and that wisdom should be applied so as to have a harmonious working relationship*

**Keywords:** Conflicts, Administrators , Permanent Secretaries, Professional Cadre, Civil Service, Nigeria

### 1.0

### INTRODUCTION

The conflicts between the Administrators/administrative cadre officers and the professional Cadre officers has been a matter of constant debate and controversy not only in Nigeria but in some of the advanced countries as well. Anthony Sampson ( 1965 ) observed that “the conflict between amateurs and professionals runs through many British Institutions more than in Europe or in America but it has its most troubled frontiers in the civil service.” Since Nigeria and most of the former British colonies patterned their civil services on the British model, these erstwhile colonies have inherited the thorny problem of the conflicts /thorny relationships between generalist administrators and professional specialists. In Nigeria, the problem assumed such disturbing proportions that the Udoji Public Service Review Commission (1972 – 1974) appointed by the Federal Military Government to look into the public services observed that “the relationship is one of acrimony and antagonism in a conflict rather than partnership in an enterprise, with resultant

lack of the team-work necessary in modern management.”The 1988 civil Service reforms mitigated this problem to some extent (Ocheja *et al*, 2023: Ejigbo *et al*, 2023)

The history of the problem goes far back to the colonial era. At that time, there were no Ministries under Ministers and Permanent Secretaries as we now know them. Instead the Civil Service was structured along functional lines, with the most senior professional officer occupying the position of Head of Department.(Adebayo,1978) There were Departments of Forestry, Education, Public Works, Commerce, Agriculture, etc, and each was headed by the most senior professional officer, with the title of Director. These Directors were ex-officio members of the Legislative Council from 1914 until 1954 when the country attained the status of responsible government. During the years when the professional officers, as Director Heads of Departments, sat in the Legislature, they were responsible for all policy matters in their departments; they answered questions and defended their departments in the Legislative Council. They were the chief advisers of government on all matters relating to their Departments.( Adebayo, 1978) Then came changes which altered their status and position. First, there was the political development which came with the attainment of responsible government in 1954. This was followed by the civil service re-organization of 1957 which featured the integration of departments into Ministries. Each Ministry was under a responsible Minister with a Permanent Secretary as his chief adviser. The Permanent Secretary was, in most cases, an administrative officer. He was responsible for the co-ordination of all the works in the Ministry and took responsibility for policy and all the affairs of the Department under the general control of the Minister as political head. In this way the most senior professional Officer, once the lord of all that he surveyed, became subordinated to the Permanent Secretary. This was the genesis of the problem. From then on came friction between the generalist administrator and the professional experts. The latter regarded the administrator as a lay-man who knew very little of the contents of the work of the Department and regarded him almost as an impostor.(Adebayo,1978) The 1988 civil service reforms which had specialization and Professionalism as some of its hallmarks / Ocheja *et al*, (2023) was able to mitigate this problem to some extent , because it opened more space for professional officers to be appointed Directors General , Heads of the Civil Service, this was further reinforced by the Allison Ayida review panel report which restored the position of Permanent Secretary and for career civil servants only. (White Paper on the Allison Ayida Review Panel Report,1997) But corruption, nepotism, quota system etc has again heightened this problem.( Ejigbo,*et al*, 2023)

This review examines the problem and solutions proffered in the past and has also offered some suggestions with a view to mitigating this problem

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Mode of Operation of Ministries/ Departments**

The normal method of operation in a Ministry/Department is that the Permanent Secretary asks the professional specialist for his views and advice on proposals being considered in the Ministry/Department. The Permanent Secretary is expected to take these views and advice into consideration while submitting recommendations and final proposals to the Minister/ Commissioner or to the Government. The convention is that where a Permanent Secretary ignores the advice of his professional expert and the expert feels very strongly that the recommendations and advice tendered by his Permanent Secretary to Government are professionally unsound and may lead to disastrous consequences that will not be in the public interest, the professional expert

has the right of direct access to the Minister/ Commissioner to present his views. One obvious consequence of such a course of action, of course, is that the relations between the Permanent Secretary and his expert becomes immediately strained and this in turn will have adverse effects on the work of the Department. For most of the time there is an under-current of feelings on either side that one party hardly ever needs the other and that the presence of the other party in the Department is sheer humbug.( Adebayo, 1978)

## **2.2 Some Views on the Problem**

### **2.2.1 Professor Ridley's views**

Ridley (1975) argued heavily in favour of the professional expert being the chief adviser of government. His argument is that in so far as the functions of the higher civil service lie in the field of policy-making "advice should be given to Ministers/ Commissioners by men who have a personal commitment rather than men who see themselves as only the servants of a Minister or the coordinators of other people's policies". In his view the generalist administrator is by his background, training, career choice and extra mural interests less likely to have this attitude towards the field he administers than a specialist whose life is in some way bound up with the subject of his career choice. Ridley therefore concludes that senior policy-making and managerial posts require specialists with administrative skills rather than men with administrative skills some of whom incidentally have a specialist back- ground. He explains that the reason for his bias is that the world in which government has to move today is so complex that the man of general culture cannot simply 'use' the specialist. Pressing his case further on, Ridley went on to argue that it was not just a question of asking for advice and that one has to know what sort of advice to ask for, what the problems are, and that the specialist was more likely to identify these as part of his work. If the expert can put this advice into language comprehensible to the lay administrator, he could presumably be understood by Ministers and the public without the intervention of the generalist administrator(Permanent Secretary).

### **2.2.2 Augustus Adebayo's Views**

A few comments must however be made in order to place Ridley's views in a more realistic perspective. To start with, Professor Ridley appears to over-stretch the point when he stated that generalist administrators "see themselves as only the servants of a Minister or the coordinators of other people's policies". No true administrator conceives his role in this manner. Presumably basing his comments on the British civil service, it is certainly not the case to say that British administrators regard selves as the servants of their Minister (Adebayo, 1978). Professor Peter Self writing with the British Civil Service in mind in 1972 observed that "as is well known, it is in Britain that the political administrative division is marked most clearly and rigidly and associated with a definite and well understood differentiation of roles... the working of this system turns upon an understanding that neither group will venture on each other's territory... Under government rules (the general administrator) occupies the post of confidential policy adviser to his minister and he should discharge this duty with outspokenness and integrity. After discussing the close intimacy which has to exist between a Minister and his Permanent Secretary, Peter Self concludes that "a more conventional view of the relationship sees the official as basing his advice upon his administrative experience and accepting but not contributing to political direction."

Surely, relationship such as the one described by Peter Self (1972) could hardly be described as master and servant relation. Nor could the traditional role of the generalist administrator be described, as Ridley had done, as the coordinator of other people's policies. A matter does not become policy until it has been approved by the Minister or the Government. What the generalist administrator co-ordinates in his day-to-day work is not policies, views and advice. It is he who mixes up the views and advice from various sources and blends them into acceptable proposals and recommendation which eventually becomes policy.

But while Ridley argues so stoutly in favour of specialists, it is important to note the provision which he attaches to his viewpoint. He does not place the professional expert, *per se*, in position of administrative pre-eminence. He qualifies his standpoint by observing that he would not suggest that the most highly qualified engineer should *ipso facto* be appointed and that administrative and technical expertise are both factors to be taken into account. He emphasized the fact that not any sort of specialists will do and that "professional skills must be combined with administrative and political skills and must be underpinned by a sense of purpose and capped by initiative". Adamolegun (1986) reported a strong link between politics and Administration. This is certainly a valid point and indeed forms the basis for the recommendation of the Fulton Commission on the British Civil Service and of the recommendation of the Public Service Review Commission in Nigeria, on the question of the eligibility of professional officers for top administrative positions.

One other little comment must also be made in connection with Ridley's criticism of the generalist administrator. He appears to underrate the value of the experience accumulated by a general administrator who has risen to the pre- eminent position of chief adviser to the Government. To argue that the general administrator cannot understand what the specialist says and cannot know what sort of advice to ask for or even what the problems are, is to deny the administrator any modicum of intelligence and to discount as worthless the considerable experience accumulated by him over the years

### **2.2.3 Views of Professor Lewis Meriam.**

Another writer on the subject, Professor Lewis Meriam inclines to Ridley's view and argues that administrators should be primarily subject-matter specialists. Meriam (1936) His reason for this view is that the difference between administrative positions are of more practical significance than their similarities.

But appointing specialists as chief executive appears to have its own snags because the specialist administrator must inevitably be a generalised specialist who is directly familiar with only a part (sometimes a very small part) of the disciplines which are relevant to the work of his Department. In day-to-day work, Government has to draw upon many experts who are highly proficient in subjects which are relevant to administrative decisions, or which while being of basic importance to some decision, represent only one of many factors which must be taken into account. Obviously the controlling specialist cannot be expected to know all these fields intimately. Again it is difficult to agree with Ridley that if a specialist is able to make himself intelligible to the Minister and the public, he does not require a generalist administrator to present his views. The fact is that an effective adviser needs the ability to draw conclusions from complex masses of data in terms which seem intelligible and realistic to the ultimate decision-makers, and as Peter Self has remarked "it does not follow that this gift of translation is coupled with high intellectual capacity in the sphere of knowledge which is being translated, for these two kinds of ability are logically and

psychologically separable”. The special attribute of the generalist is this gift of translation which endows him with “the knowledge of how to use men, a faculty of judgment about the practicability of principles.” Such an attribute “consists not in the possession of specialized knowledge but in a power to utilize its results at the right moment and in the right direction.”

Again, it is important not to lose sight of a very important consideration against specialists being appointed as chief adviser administrators. It is the fact that it is very difficult for specialists or experts to keep up with their speciality, particularly in subjects that are growing rapidly. This is because the specialist-turned- administrator will be subjected to severe administrative and political pressures which will occupy much of his time. The result is that the specialist's stock of knowledge may become obsolete.

### **2.3 Friction Among Professionals**

This brings us to a fact which is not often realised. There is tension even among the professionals themselves. During the years when the writer was head of professional departments, members of the professional class came to him on numerous occasions and spoke in strict confidence, complaining about the persecution and victimisation which existed among them. They said that they were persecuted by the senior professionals for daring to disagree with them on professional issues or for raising new angles or suggesting fresh ideas which were not entirely in accord with the views held by the senior. The aggrieved professional officers counted it a blessing to have a lay administrator at the head of the Ministry who was able to examine issues dispassionately and redress the wrong. Altogether they felt safer and more secure having a generalist administrator at the top rather than one of their own professional men. The writer experienced the same situation when later he became the Head of the Civil Service. Professional officers came to me in strict confidence bringing files to support their evidence of persecution at the hands of fellow professional officers.

The problem of friction and tension among senior officials in a Department is therefore not a one way issue between generalist administrators and professionals. It exists among the professionals themselves. The problem at issue, that of removing friction among senior officials in a Department, is not therefore solved merely by replacing a generalist with a professional as chief executive. In searching for a solution to the problem, it is necessary to keep in mind the need to ensure maximum efficiency and productivity as well as promote harmony in a Department. With these objectives in view, one can attempt to offer a few suggestions.

### **2.4 Government aggravates the problems**

So far the tension between the generalist administrator and the specialist has been treated largely as an exclusive two-way affair between the two. But besides these main actors in the departmental drama, there is a third party whose acts contribute to the tension between the administrator and the professional specialist. It is the government. By government here, I refer specifically to the various governments in Nigeria. Permanent Secretaries change postings with such baffling rapidity that it is often difficult to keep pace with who is who in government departments. I have heard many friends remark that the most impermanent official is the Permanent Secretary-ship.

The effect of frequent changes in the posting of permanent secretaries is that they have no time to settle down and master the intricacies of their Departments. A Permanent Secretary is the chief

adviser of his Minister and of the government in matters pertaining to his Department. How can a person profess to advise if he is himself in a state of perpetual tutelage. No matter how brilliant a top official may be, he has to spend the first few months in a Department groping cautiously and trying to familiarise himself with the existing laws, regulations, reports, policy papers and circulars relating to his new Department. If he is ever going to be effective he must learn fast. This is especially true of "professional" or "technical" Departments. A generalist posted to one of these Departments will find himself out of his depth for the first few months. During this period he will lean heavily on his professional experts in the Department. That is their permanent home and kingdom; their academic and back ground discipline is the very life being of the Department. They continually pontificate on what they call the established and practice of the profession as applied to the programme and policy in the Department.

The poor generalist administrator, new to it all, reads all the expert advice with bewilderment mingled with caution. If he is the weak and second-rate stuff, he will succumb in the face of technical complexities to his professional advisers and they will lead him wherever they wish to go. If on the other hand, he is determined to be master in his own house by applying himself very hard to understand and master the tricks of the game, he will enter his office the next morning and among the letters on his table he will open one informing him of his posting to another Department. Nothing can be more frustrating. The life cycle of a Permanent Secretary in Nigeria is spent preparing handing-over notes and digesting taking-over notes. There is no time to settle down and grapple with the work, let alone master it.

The outcome of the situation described above is that the professional officers in the Department observe with amusement the constant appearance and disappearance of their Permanent Secretaries. They observe that few, if any of them, stayed long enough to make any impact on the work of the Department and that for most of the time it is they on whom the Department has relied for advice and continuity. They become bitter and resent a system which subordinates the men with the knowledge and expertise to nomadic rolling-stones of chief executives. In time the bitterness hardens and they develop a superior and un-cooperative attitude to their Permanent Secretaries, This is the genesis of tension and friction. This state of affairs did not escape the attention of the Public Service Review Commission in Nigeria when it wrote:

The Permanent Secretaries have been anything but Permanent in the sense that they do not remain long enough in successive posts for their management capabilities and effectiveness in achieving the objectives of their respective ministries to be proved. Our Task Force on the Civil Service found that the average period an administrative officer in the Federal Service remained in one post approximately twelve months in such a situation it was the professional officers that provided continuity and the repository expert knowledge within the Ministry. This situation contributed to the...conflict between the administrations and professional which have remained unabated...

For erstwhile colonial countries which inherited the British system of civil service, it is instructive to note that the British civil service has never reduced their chief administrators to a band of wandering rolling stones, In Britain, administrative officers do move around and are fairly mobile between Departments during their earlier years. The experience gained is no doubt a very good training in the maturity of an administrator. When, however, he gets beyond the principal grade, mobility becomes less and he is allowed to settle down in a department where he becomes a

repository of knowledge. It has been shown that in Britain during the years 1900-1963, the average service of a chief administrator as permanent secretary of a department was seven years!

### **.3.0 METHODOLOGY**

Literature materials were sourced from Journals, conference papers, government documents , bulletins etc. They were then discussed and reviewed.

## **4.0 Discussion /Solutions to The Problem**

### **4.1 Special Education as a Solution**

From the foregoing, one can see two schools of thought on the issue of whether the chief adviser administrator should be a generalist or a specialist. No doubt there is something to be said in favour of either side. For maximum efficiency and harmonious relations in the public service, however, the best solution to the problem should be a blend of both generalist and specialist. Such a hybrid can only result from a carefully planned education of the administrator to give him both a broad view of public affairs and sufficient technical know-how on the job. France appears to have gone a long way towards accomplishing this happy position. The British tend to look across the channel with something of an envy at the efficient working of the administrative service in France. Some British exponents on public administration urge the adoption of the French system of educating and training administrators which produces an official equally at home in both generalist and expert matters. The British civil service has only succeeded in evolving a compromise solution by the creation of "integrated hierarchies" in some departments.( Adebayo, 1978)

But one must be careful not to give the impression that the importation of a foreign system is being advocated, stock, lock and barrel, into Nigeria or any other country. The mere fact that the French administrative system serves France efficiently does not mean that the same system will be appropriate for the political and administrative setting in another country. An administrative system cannot be considered in isolation from the policy frame-work which it inhabits. The political frame-work must influence and decide the administrative system which will fit into it.

### **4.2 Udoji s Solution**

For Nigeria and other erstwhile colonial countries whose civil service system has been influenced by the British pattern, the problem is to find a means of using administrative talent and experience and also specialist skill and expertise at top management level in such a way as to ensure maximum utilization of available manpower and at the same time promote harmony in the public service. The Public Service Review Commission in Nigeria which submitted its Report to the Federal Military Government in 1974 addressed its mind to this problem of "how to work out an organisation in each ministry whereby the administrative officers serving the minister and the professional men in the department could be grouped together for the most efficient running of the ministry..."!! The solution which the Commission offered was "the abolition of dual hierarchies in ministries and a complete integration of all senior management posts within a ministry into one pyramid."1" In order to make the solution proposed practicable the Commission recommended that "the normal process of discovering the best management talent should be on basis of election and subject to successful completion of appropriate senior management training... the selection

and training should take place before the officer reached the senior management level. { Udoji Public Service Reform Commission Report , 1974)

The solution offered by the Commission appears, however, to gloss over one of the fundamental issues which provoke tension and bitterness between the general administrator and the professional. The issue can be expressed in terms of the relationship of training to forms of specialisation. No doubt, the training at senior levels will be primarily designed to helping trainees to tackle broad policy and organisational issues in terms of policy analysis and planning, organisational problems, financial and economic implications of policy. Such a training will also give prominence to resource control considered, not as a technical exercise but as detailed policy judgments made within a framework of broad political priorities.

There is therefore a clear distinction between preparatory training for a career in the public service and training at senior levels at a later stage of an official's career. (Adebayo, 1978) The former will be mainly formal and academic in character, while the latter will build upon and enlarge an official's experience. This is where the issue of relationship of training to forms of specialisation arises. Unless the system specifically recognises that a promising and up-coming official, be he a generalist or a specialist, will only be eligible for consideration to the top-most position in his field of specialisation, then the sort of solution prescribed by the Public Service Review Commission for the training of top executives will fail to remove the tension and bitterness between administrators and professionals. Not only so, it will lead to unnecessary misuse of high-level manpower.

It is necessary to explain the grounds for the conclusions reached in the last paragraph. Suppose you spot a bright engineer in the Ministry of Works and select him at the right level for senior management training. He continues to show promise and eventually merits elevation to the position of chief executive or permanent secretary. Once he attains that rank, do you leave him to function as permanent secretary in his home Ministry- Ministry of Works or do you, applying the principle of transferability of administrators move him at some time in his later career to the Ministry of Health or Local Government or any of the other Departments? If you leave him in his home ground permanently, then you have only succeeded in producing an administrator who, while proficient in the Department of his specialisation, is a one-way man who will be out of his depth in other Departments. If, on the other hand, you later move him to a Department not altogether related to his field of specialisation, then you would appear to have created two results whose consequences may not be in the interest of the public service. First, immediately the Engineer Permanent Secretary gets to say, Ministry of Health or Trade he is, to all intents and purposes, a generalist. You will be back to square one with the problem of generalists versus specialists. Secondly, you would have wasted a first class engineer by removing him from his field of specialization to a Department where he becomes a generalist. In a country of scarce top-level manpower, this course of action is no doubt a waste of man power resources.

Are we then, in order to obviate the difficulties mentioned above, to accept as a principle that professionals who turn administrators will remain permanently in the Department of their specialisation? Actually there is no administrative rule of law which precludes such an arrangement and it is a perfectly rational arrangement. For one thing, it ensures that the man who has the knowledge of the contents of the work of the Department is placed at the helm of affairs. But even if we accept this principle as reasonable we come immediately against a possible



objection. Taking the same Ministry of Works as an illustration, suppose the head of the Survey division becomes the Chief executive or Permanent Secretary; to what extent can his field of specialisation be regarded as adequate to command a representative knowledge of the contents of the work of a Department consisting of highway engineering, town planning, water engineering etc.? Can the head of the Building or Water Engineering Division, for example, feel assured that a professional expert who understands the language and import of his own specialisation is in the seat of chief executive? Experience has shown that the various professional heads find that they have some reservation about the competence of the Surveyor colleague to interpret their work and speak on their behalf. The same would be true if a Town planner became the top man in the Department.

### **4.3 Augustus Adebayos Solution**

#### **4.3.1 Classification of Departments**

In the first place, the time is long overdue to explode the myth of the self-confident all-rounder administrator who is at home in any Department. Such a creature might have existed in the mid 19th Century, when President Andrew Jackson of the United States of America could assert that in his day the tasks of Government were sufficiently simple so that any person of intelligence could perform them without preparation or training. But in these closing decades of the twentieth century, the world in which a government has to operate is so complex that the men to direct the affairs must be men specially equipped by knowledge to deal with the complex problems of technology in the quest to satisfy the material and social needs of the public. For this reason, certain Departments of government must be clearly recognised as belonging to the sphere of the technical experts and specialists and the chief executives who control them should accordingly be specialists. Such departments include Agriculture, Health, Economic Development, Works and Housing, Survey & Town Planning, Trade and Industry. Only persons with the relevant background discipline of these departments can confidently hope to understand the language and the technicalities which the advancement of modern world technology employ in day to day usage. These 'technical departments must therefore be manned by technical experts and specialists in the relevant field. In appointing specialists to the top-most position however, it must be emphasized that not any specialist will do, no matter how brilliant he may be in his field of specialisation: and also it is not merely a question of the most senior specialist in the Department. As Professor Ridley has rightly emphasized, "professional skills must be combined with administrative and political skills; they must be underpinned by a sense of purpose and capped by initiative."

It follows from the postulation above that the remaining departments which are largely in the nature of administrative management should be the province of generalist administrators. These are men with liberal education who enter administration with degrees in Classics, History, English, Political Science and the like. Such Departments are Local Government, Establishments, Finance, Education, Information, Home and External Affairs. Experts of some sort will be required either on full time or on ad hoc basis in some of these departments but the technicality involved is nothing compared with the complexity of the "technical" departments, and will certainly be within the competence and intellectual grasp of the generalist administrator.

It will be observed from the foregoing that government Departments have been separated into two broad categories. Each type of administrator, specialist or generalist, will within his own field of

competence and be master in his own domain. They will all, of course, have numerous occasions to meet and put their heads together in the common interest of the government and the service as a whole. The service provides ample opportunities for such meetings at departmental level.

In this way, each party will learn to have mutual respect for the aptitude and place of the other in the system.

#### **4.3 2 Rotation of Chief Executives in Technical Ministries**

But this cannot be the end of the matter. If the goal of public policy is the removal of friction within a department and the promotion of maximum productivity, then it is necessary to give further thought to the situation in "technical" departments which I have proposed should be manned by specialists. As pointed out above there is friction within the ranks of the professionals themselves. Such friction takes two forms. There is the friction between officials of the same profession in hierachical relation; then there is the friction between professionals of one discipline and those of another in the same Department. An illustration of the latter type of friction is when the head of the Livestock Division in the Ministry of Agriculture draws an invidious comparison between the work of his division and that of the Fisheries or Forestry Division in the same Department in order to make a case for his division for more money, equipment or personnel. This is one of several sources of friction, and it highlights the main problem in a multi-disciplinary technical department. It is a problem arising from the fact that whoever is appointed to the position of chief executive among the specialists can only be directly familiar with only a part, sometimes only a very small part, of the various disciplines which make up the work of the Department.

This very fact of the chief executive specialist beign directly familiar with only a part of the disciplines of his Department raises another not infrequent source of tension among the specialists. There is often accusation that such an executive is partial to the division concerned with the subject of his own discipline in the Department, especially in the allocation of funds, personnel and the ordering of programme priority, Some divisional heads are of the firm impression that their specialist colleague who is head of Department plays down their divisions whether because he has no sympathy with the programme of their divisions or that he just cannot comprehend the significance of it all. In the light of all these, it seems quite evident that while the placing of a specialist expert to head a technical Department may remove the traditional friction between generalist administrators and specialists, it does not remove the tension among the specialists themselves within the Department.

In order therefore to tackle this aspect of the problems, it is necessary to allay the fears of the various specialist groups in a Department and offer them some re-assuring consolation. This can be achieved by establishing a system whereby the position of chief executive rotates among the specialists who rank equal as heads of division in the Department. Head of divisions rank next to the chief executive and indeed it is from among them that he is selected. It should therefore be possible to establish a system whereby divisional heads assume the responsibility of head of Department in rotation. If differentiation in salary grading presents a problem to the adoption of the system, then all specialists ranking as head of divisions should be placed on the same salary grading such that the difference in their salary and that of whichever specialist was chief executive at a particular period, would be a function of the headship responsibility. The tenure of office as head of Department by each divisional head may be for a period of two years.

The innovation proposed above will induce in a chief executive specialist the duty of care and caution in dealing with his colleagues, knowing fully well that his term of office is limited and he would soon be at the receiving end. This duty of care and caution will arise from an appreciation of the consequences of executive authority. The proposal will go a long way also in making the officials concerned appreciate the problem, some of them intractable, with which a chief executive has to contend and why, as a result, it is not sometimes feasible to meet the demands and wishes of everybody, no matter how sound their programme or just their claim may be. And, of course, an obvious advantage of the proposal is that once an official or head of Division is aware that the tyranny or persecution of a particular chief executive is not until death or retirement do them part, he will bear his lot with calm and look forward with hope to the next incumbent.

#### **4.3.3 Advice to Generalist Administrators in Dealing with Professional Experts**

The administrator should ensure that he carries the professional or technical side with him in the processes of the formulation of policy. When policy is still at the formulative stage and before it has crystallised, the administrator should consult his professional colleagues and seek their views. In cases where there is divergence of views, he should never ride rough-shod over the professional officers' views. Instead he should be fair-minded enough to present such views to the decision making authority. If necessary, he should invite the professional officer to go with him before the deciding authority, where the specialist will have the opportunity of presenting his case fully. With all the full facts before him, the deciding authority will have no difficulty in arriving at a rational decision.

Once such a decision is handed down, it is the duty of the administrator to ensure its effective execution. If the decision goes against his own views, it does not matter in the least. There is no loss of face and no one is scoring a personal victory. His authority is in no way thereby impaired. If anything, both the professional staff and the deciding authority will have tremendous respect for an administrator who is fair-minded and respects other points of view. Indeed the confidence of the whole Department in him will be greatly enhanced. Very soon, he will find that his professional colleagues come to him often of their own volition to proffer advice, to lodge complaints and to give information. This is the happy state that should exist between the administrator and the professional men in any Department.

Should this confidence be lacking as a result of high-handedness and administrative egoism on the part of the administrator, then a gulf is created between him and his professional colleagues and this can only lead to disastrous results. The technical/professional officers will distrust every act of the administrator and will read meanings into it. From then on, they will go on the war path. This can be manifested in very many ways. It may be by refusing to cooperate with the administrator, by taking every available opportunity to expose his mistakes and show him up in poor light, by sending him rude and impertinent minutes in the files, by seeking every opportunity to appeal behind his back and over his head to higher authorities. A tactless administrator will decide to hit back. This also can take various forms. He may send back hard minutes pointing out that the minutes sent to him by his technical/professional colleagues was rude and impertinent; he may overtly encourage the subordinate administrators in the Department to show disregard and disrespect for the professional officers; he may attend important meetings having crucial bearing on the work of the Department and deliberately leave out the professional officers: he may even

decide to render them impotent by reorganizing the work schedules in the Department in such a way as to leave his professional/technical adviser with little or nothing worth-while to do.

An administrator who embarks on retaliatory measures in dealing with his professional advisers is only out to ruin his Department. A state of tension and hostility between an administrator and his professional advisers is an ill-wind that blows no good to anyone. It is the Department which suffers and, in the final analysis, the public and society in general.

This is not to say that there are no difficult or even unreasonable professional colleagues. Indeed if anything, the average professional/ technical adviser is by nature a difficult colleagues to get on with. This may have something to do with the nature of their academic background discipline. Specialisation tends to produce individuals with rather narrow concept of public affairs. They tend to see issues and problems from the lenses of their specialisation only and cannot often appreciate why considerations other than those dictated by their field of specialisation should be brought to bear on human affairs. It is the place of the administrator to make allowance for the inherent limitation of the technical expert and to bend backwards, if necessary, to obtain his support and cooperation. In doing so the administrator should appreciate that it is he and his Minister who take the praise as well as the blame for the outcome of the work of the Department. Any effort or time spent in conciliating refractory elements and improving relations is not only worth the while, but it is in fact part of the responsibility of the chief executive towards ensuring the success of the work of the Department.

Happily professional/technical experts are not all difficult or narrow minded, *sui generis*. Among them are to be found decent and reasonable men and women who are willing at all times to give of their best and who possess breadth of vision and an understanding of human nature, These are the ones who are eminently suitable to become administrators themselves and in cases where they have made such an option they have not failed to adorn the administrative class. In cases where such officers have preferred to stay on in their profession, they have proved of inestimable value and have been a veritable pillar of strength to their establishment.

One cannot over-emphasize the importance and place of courtesy in the administrators' dealing with the specialist professionals. A common cause of complaint among professional experts is that the administrator treats them with scant regard. The writer recalls a particular complaint made to him by a top professional officer against his Permanent Secretary. The professional officer was the Head of the professional division in the Department He had an appointment to see the Permanent Secretary to discuss an important official matter. When he got to his office, the Permanent Secretary told him to wait as he had someone with him. When the professional officer had waited for half an hour, he started to wonder who could be with the Permanent Secretary for so long. Finally he peeped in and saw a Higher Executive Officer, a relatively very junior administrative official. The professional officer thereupon walked in The Permanent Secretary continued calmly discussing with this junior officer without even offering the professional officer a seat. These may be little things, but little acts of courtesy matter very much. The experience was painful and humiliating to that professional officer.

A more disturbing aspect of this issue of courtesy is that professional officers complain generally that the disregard and discourtesy to which they are subjected in their Departments is not only from above, that is from the Permanent Secretary and his deputy, but also from below, from the relatively junior assistant secretaries. Worse still, the professional officers have the strong

impression that the senior administrators encourage the junior ones to show disrespect to them. Otherwise, they argue, how was it that when they reported the junior administrators to the Permanent Secretary for acts of discourtesy or disregard, no action was ever taken by him and the matter was glossed over.

Not altogether unconnected with the question of treating professional officers with courtesy and regard is the matter of attendance at conferences and meetings. It is not unknown for Permanent Secretaries (generalist administrators) to attend official meetings and leave behind the specialist expert, even though the matters to be discussed are essentially of technical or professional nature. Some administrators attend the meetings with their professional adviser, but prevent him from speaking. Either out of spite, conceit or sheer egotism they claim to know all the answers to the technical questions raised at the meetings. All acts of this nature merely portray men with small minds. The expert should be given his due place. If he succeeds in putting the arguments across most convincingly, it is the department and ultimately the whole public that benefit by it. The Permanent Secretary does not suffer any loss of prestige or authority merely because his chief adviser is competently discharging his functions.(Adebayo, 1978)

#### **4.4 Solution from the 1988 Civil Service Reforms**

The News Watch Magazine of April 1988 described the Reform as “sweeping” Before the 1988 reform , the position of Permanent Secretary was seen as almost the exclusive preserve of the administrative class

The 1988 civil service reforms , opened up the space, such that Directors (Heads of Departments /Directorates on Grade Levels 16 and 17) could aspire to the position of Director General, the new designation for the position of Permanent Secretary, which was abolished, we saw may Teachers, Medical Doctors, Engineers etc appointed Directors General. But the snags with the 1988 reforms was that it further politicized the civil service, since the position of the Director General became a political appointment,( Ejigbo *et al* 2023; Bagaji,2002) the civil service lacked leadership with the abolision of the position of Head of the Civil Service. The reform emphasized specialization and professionalism , this further gave professional class officers a better sense of belonging (Ocheja *et al.*, 2023)

#### **4.5 Solution from the Allison Ayida Review of the 1988 Reform ( 1994 – 1998)**

The Allison Ayida Panel was set up in 1994 to review the 1988 reform, the white paper was released in 1997 and implementation commenced in 1997/ 98. Their report was a blend of the old format and the 1988 reform format , key highlights were the restoration of the position of Permanent Secretary and that of the head of civil service, both positions were for career civil servants just like before and were non political appointments also just like before. Directors now jostled for the position of Permanent Secretary which was by appointment, this further consolidated the chances of professional cadre officers to be appointed Permanent Secretaries. Though later on especially as from the return to civilian rule political considerations, Quota system, nepotism , written examinations are now used as criteria for the appointments of Permanent Secretaries and this is getting worse by the day especially in the state civil services, where merit and seniority have been thrown to the dogs in favour of the above listed mundane considerations

#### **4.6 Advise to Administrators and Professional Experts on Harmonious working Relationships**

The various reforms did not address this problem and indeed other problems of the civil/public service ( Ake and Olowojola 2012; Sekwat 2002; Bagaji, 2002).

It would be naive to imagine that the two have thereby become two parallel lines which never meet. Administration of human affairs cannot be operated under water-tight arrangements.( Adebayo, 1978) There must be constant inter-mingling and consultations between the administrator and the specialist. Even for the Departments which have been designated as the domain of the generalist administrator, the advice and assistance of specialists will often be needed either on ad hoc or permanent basis. The same is true of "technical" departments; the specialist administrator must work with generalist administrators within his department either in a hierarchical or a 'staff and line relation. Senior public officers, specialists and administrators, must therefore orientate their thinking to appreciate that the presence and interaction of both is a necessary and indispensable fact of public administration, and must therefore devise ways and means of peaceful co-existence. With this realisation, there is need for a harmonious working of administrators and specialists, particularly in cases where they have to work together in the same Department (.Adebayo, 1978) The relationship calls for wisdom ,morals and the fear of God.

A tranquil and harmonious working relationship will be a win – win situation for the civil servants the civil/public service and the society at large

### **5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

The conflicts between Administrators and Professional experts was really very serious prior the 1988 reforms.

The solutions proffered by the Udoji Public Service Reform Commission of 1972 to 1974 did not help mitigate this problem ,neither did recommendations from other researchers .

The 1988 reforms and latter the Allison Ayida Review Panel helped to mitigate the problem to some extent

#### **5.2 Recommendations**

Merit and seniority in the appointments of Permanent Secretaries and other Chief Executive positions in the civil/public service.

Frequent and indiscriminate postings of permanent Secretaries should be avoided.

Assigning of portfolios to newly appointed Permanent Secretaries should be done with regard to their career back grounds in the service in the first instance

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