

Somalia: The Challenges of Rebuilding Public Services in a Collapsed State

Ahmed Mohamed Hassan Fidow & Hibo Ilyas Ahmed

USM, School of Social Sciences, MPA

Email of corresponding author: Fidow2014@gmail.com

Abstract

Public service of each country stands out the foremost instrument of government formulation and implementation of public policies. It transforms government programs into concrete goods and services for the use and benefit of the citizens. Public services are vital in human life and are the obligation of each government on the world to provide services in order to protect the wellbeing of its people. Once a state collapses, the fragmentation of the structure, authority, law and order inside the state occurs. Collapsed states are referred to those which can't perform the functions anticipated of a state. But, after the collapse of the Somalia's central government, the country has faced many problems such as social, political, economic, environmental and technological. More than twenty years of civil war, lack of government, violence, poverty, drought cause society more vulnerable to everything. Since the beginning of 2000 until now, Somalia has had its own government, but it failed to restore the delivery of public services. On the other hand, these services remained in the hands of private sector. This paper aims to explain the challenges of rebuilding public services in Somalia and how to restore these public services in a collapsed state.

Keywords: Somalia, Government, Public Services, Collapsed State

1. Introduction

Under a democratic form of governance, the responsibilities of the state are to safeguard and address citizen's needs and demands. As Oliver and Heater (1994: 20) proposes: 'the state owes indisputable services to the citizen as a right in return for the allegiance and services provided by the citizen. Public service is expected to serve all classes and groups of citizens exclusively (Haque, 1999). Public service provision makes the state discernable to its citizens. Public services are citizens' straight route to their government. These services make the state concrete through day-to-day interaction. For instance, public services have played a fundamental role in state and nation-building in Western Europe. Numerous developments in ninetieth century European state and nation-building had provided visible services including post offices, town halls, police posts, hospitals, schools and so forth (Van de Walle and Scott, 2009).

However, public service of each country stands out the leading instrument of government formulation and implementation of public policies. It transforms government programs into concrete goods and services for the use and benefit of the citizens. Public services are vital in human life and are the obligation of each government in the world to provide services in order to protect the wellbeing of its people. In Somalia, as any other country, before Somalia's government collapsed, it used to provide necessary basic public service amenities in which without them human cannot survive. Among the various services in which Somali government used to deliver include health, education, water and sanitation and so on. But in early 1991 the central government of Somalia has collapsed.

Besides, the government is considered for its delivering public goods such as roads, schools, and law and order, which are significant to the development process. But, the social cost of state collapse has been enormous that led to famine in 1992-1993, and also caused extensive displacement and the complete obliteration of public services (Leeson, 2007). Insufficient public revenue and global aid avoided the state from playing more developing role such as communications, transport and banking services, for instance, all these have privately organized (Bradbury et al., 2003). Nevertheless, after the collapse of the Somalia's central government, the country has faced many problems such as social, political economic, environmental and technological. More than twenty years of civil war, lack of government, violence, poverty and drought caused society become more vulnerable to everything. The ineffective government social services result from the long period of unrest in the country (Abdi, 1998).

Since then, the private sector played a contributory role in given social services and determining development because of fragile and the less function of civil service. The private sector is motivated by competition and free enterprise, the lacking of preventive government policies state provision, regulation, and control (Nenova, 2004). Since the beginning of 2000 until now, Somalia has had its own government, but those governments failed to restore the delivery of public services. On the other hand, these services remained in the hands of private sector. Given the above context, this paper aims to explain the challenges of rebuilding public services in Somalia and how to restore these public services in a collapsed state.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Collapsed States

Collapsed states are referred to those which can't perform the functions anticipated of a state. Once a state collapses, the fragmentation of the structure, authority, law and order inside the state occurs (Mathews and Solomon, 2001). Collapsed state can be categorized with two dimensions: loss of legitimacy which means gradual decrease of the authority of the state due to rejection of unhappy citizens to comply with the state on the grounds of their view that the state is incapable or repressive or both; and loss of efficiency that means rising breakdown of state institutions that might become absence of resources or debt burden which makes the government inappropriate to the citizens (Akude, 2007).

The notion of a collapsed state is closely connected to a number of alike concepts. Jackson (1990:21) expresses about quasi-states which he then describes by way of states which are documented internationally as sovereign states, but lack numerous of the institutional topographies of other sovereign states (Mathews and Solomon, 2001). Mostly, the literature on this subject, the idea of 'failure' is appealed to be two major thoughts which is referred to as the failure to control and the failure to further human prosperity (Williams, 2007).

Consequently, failed state is a state that is incapable or willing to perform the essential tasks of a nation-state in the contemporary world. Failed states are also symbolized by worsening and demolished infrastructures, increasing corruption, low GDP, loss of legitimacy and so forth (Akude, 2007). In Africa, failure is normally used to emphasize the methods in which states, either because of incapability of capacity or a lack of political willing, fail to deliver public goods to their entire population rather than preferring one or other particular subdivision of it. State failure on the African continent is a prevalent phenomenon while the failure to advance human prosperity has become larger than the failure to control (Williams, 2007).

Somalia, a nation-state with a unified culture, history, language and religion failed and then collapsed. This is, the first elected proto-democratic, post-independence civilian governments of Somalia became inefficient and corrupt that was unable to form national political culture. Because of that, military junta led by General Mohamed Siad Barre has overthrown the civilian government and took the power in 1969. After twenty years, the military regime has become oppressive and abused the citizens' human rights. Besides 1991 civil war, the Somali state had long been a failed state while the civil war had destroyed everything remaining and Somali-state had then collapsed (Rotberg, 2004).

2.2 Pre and post War Public Services in Somalia

Somalia got its independence in 1960 from United Kingdom and Italy as Northern and Southern Somali regions respectively. July 1, 1960 Somalia got first democratic government and then elected Adan Abdulle Osman as the its first president. After 7 years the second election was held on Jun 10, 1967 which elected Abdi Rashid Ali Shermarke as the second president of Somalia. Unfortunately, On Oct. 15, 1969, President Abdi Rashid Ali Shermarke was assassinated and the army seized power (Leeson, 2007). However, for the period of democratic time Somali people were nomadic and farmers, therefore newly established governmental institutions were unable to provide sufficient service for the people. This causes increased poverty and declined security. In October 1969, the military regime took power, Maj. Gen. Mohamed Siad Barre became the new president of Somalia and he ruled the country 21 years (Elmi and

Barise, 2006).

During the military government, Somali government used to provide necessary basic public service amenities such as the police services, public roads, channels, water supply, sewers, electrical grids, telecommunications, public transit, public education, as well as public health services and etc. in which without them human cannot survive. People have enjoyed free public services like security, education, health care, public transportation, water and sanitation. In addition, the military government constructed several schools, many training programs of thousands of teachers, approving the Latin handwriting for the writing of the Somali language, and as well as effectively carry out nationwide literacy programs (Abdi, 1998).

Although, military regime was socialist, and everything was on the hand of government nearly all industrial, banks and businesses were state-owned, and as well as constructed roads, hospitals and universities and harvested and planted crops were through volunteer labor forces. At that time the role of private companies or business were limited or absent. Yet, many of the people were not satisfied that everything controlled by the government and blamed that resources mismanagement in which some groups get more than others (Powell et al., 2008).

The collapse of the central government of Somalia resulted many problems such as social, political economic, environmental and technological. More than twenty years of civil war, lack of government, violence, poverty and drought caused the society become more vulnerable to everything. The ineffective government social services result from the long period of unrest in the country (Abdi, 1998). The education system of Somalia was destroyed to the effect of the continued of civil war and also public education was closed. In addition, in 1991 the civil war broke out which completely damaged the education in Somalia. indeed, this war entirely eliminated the rest of educational structure (Moyi, 2012).

The breakdown of the central government of Somalia also affected public health services to collapse. But, lack of effective public health services had resulted significantly the increase of private health systems. 20% of people get medical treatment from private hospitals while other people do not have the privilege to do so. Today the major obstacle in Somalia is the absence of public health care. It was estimated that up to 90% of the doctors and health staff in hospitals were not getting sufficient training because of the absence of medical training and the limited number of hospitals and clinics they work in the region (Home Office April 2004). Currently, most water supply and sanitation infrastructure has destroyed and also not well kept during and after the war, which did not work in public. Lack of public finance for water supply and sanitation sector affected the absent of organized governance and ongoing war. However, some regions get financial support for water supply and sanitation by the United Nations and other charitable donors (USAID, 2008).

Nevertheless, after the absence of central government of Somalia, the private sector has occupied and currently playing a contributory role in given social services development. The private sectors are motivated to competition and free enterprise, lacking of preventive government policies, state provision, regulation, and control (Nenova, 2004). Although, private sectors have provided key social services, these services are expensive and also insufficient to everyone in the country. They provide according to their interests, not to the community. For instance, the private sector manipulates the community needs due to ineffective government protection. The services that they offer to society are so expensive and less quality. This leads to large parts of the people cannot afford these services. Since education is expensive, most of the people are not able to educate their children. This has resulted that a large number of children become out of schooling and endanger themselves and the public as a whole.

3. Challenges toward Restoring Public Services in Somalia

The Public sector of Somali faced many challenges since the collapse of the central government. The main challenges faced by the government in order to rebuild or restore public services are as follows:

3.1 Security challenge

In all crisis and post-conflict countries creating safety and security has been a high priority of governments

and international assistance organizations. But without the capacity to provide safety and security, governments can do little to restructure war-ravaged nations. In war-ravaged countries the establishment of safety and security is difficult because it comprises the combination of complex functions that include applying peace agreements, rebuilding security forces below civilian control, safeguarding public order and safety, dismissing and disarming militias, securing national borders, consolidation of police forces, and reintegrating ex-warriors into the society and economy (Haider, 2008). In Somalia, after the state collapsed, the security has been a main challenge because government has not had enough security personnel to guard nation's territory in order to restore public services. Somalia has had one of the biggest security forces in Africa before its central government collapsed. The newly established federal governments were backed by international community, yet the security is deteriorating (Elmi and Barise, 2006). Ultimately, lack of security disheartened foreign investment, slowed down economic development, and also made it difficult to properly manage internal tensions and also provide public services to the citizens.

3.2 Financial challenge

Government is facing internal and external financial challenges to rebuild public services. Each government agencies should provide public services based on the revenue it generates. However, Somali government is lacking public revenue. Nonexistence of public revenue and global aid has prevented the government from taking on a more progressive role for public services (Bradbury et al., 2003). Nevertheless, one of the competing claims is on the budget. For instance, in fragile conflict affected-states, provision of security law and order are more tend to be of superior significance to much society, and also essentially connected with enhancements in service delivery. Thus, it is difficult task for government finding the right balance in the allocation of scarce resources. On the other hand, externally, the task might be more complicated if huge amounts of financing flow outside the budget or if donors are dominating in the process of setting government's priorities. (Baird, 2011). For example, increasing military spending during war normally diminish financial resources intended for social services and prerogatives for the underprivileged people (Haider, 2008). Somali government is lacking enough budgets to run public agencies while the main problem here is government's dependence on international community donations which is not enough to run public agencies to deliver public services. Another financial challenge is lack of tax revenue, this is because Somali government is very weak and it does not control all of its territories.

3.3 Human Resources (Public Personnel)

Public agencies and all documents were looted. All public records were destroyed or removed throughout the conflict and many of the experienced public servants had left from the country. In addition, fragile administrative and financial capacity also damaged the ability of the government to rebuild infrastructure and deliver services. This had result a complete collapse of public agencies that became a serious and long lasting challenge for both Transitional National Government in 2000s and the succeeding Transitional Federal Governments of Somalia. Thus, this has complicated the easy rebuilding of public services in Somalia. (Haider, 2008).

Among the challenges are developing good public sector leadership, and strengthening human resources in public sector. Public servants are not well qualified and not get enough training, not having enough skills and lack of experiences. These are a long time absence of governance and the current problem is that the Somali government is lacking the capacity to give training because of financial problem. There are also insufficient public servants to deliver public services because government does not have enough financial capacity to give salaries for public servants. For example, government cannot hire many teachers in schools, doctors in hospitals and so on. Government ministries and agencies in post-conflict countries face an enormous task in rebuilding public sector in situations where government alone does not have the technical, managerial or financial resources to provide effectively (Haider, 2008).

3.4 Lack of infrastructure

Governments in war-ravaged countries face an emergence requirement to rebuild physical and

technological infrastructure facilities to restore and spread public services in order to support the peace and regain the public trust. In many post-conflict countries, governments face the complex tasks which are difficult to easily restore demolished physical infrastructures such as rebuilding new roads, repairing railways, seaports, waterways, airports, and telecommunication systems, and also of establishing policies and strengthening administrative capacity for the efficient operation of transportation systems. The functions for rebuilding physical infrastructure facilities typically include: delivering emergency shelter and food relief, restarting and extending education and health services, assisting refugees and displaced people to resettle, extending social services to vulnerable populations (Haider, 2008).

Furthermore, frequently energy systems are interrupted during conflicts necessitating the government to reinstate electrical power, energy infrastructure, and even fuel manufacture facilities. Obliteration of public properties such as schools, public health facilities, municipal buildings, police and fire stations are part of nation's collateral damage in which post-conflict countries must be rebuilt in order to restore service provision (Haider, 2008). In Somalia, it is difficult to restore infrastructure facilities because government ministries and public agencies alone do not have enough human, technical, managerial and financial resources to provide infrastructure facilities effectively.

3.5 The role of private institutions

Private organizations in Somalia are one of the challenges toward rebuilding public sector because they have been providing more than 20 years. Since the absence of Somali's central government, these business institutions have been working without rules and regulations and monopolized service provision in major public services including education, health, electricity, telecommunication, transportation and so forth. In Somalia, there have been strong business institutions that fears state will tax it and threaten it with predatory demands, heavy rules and even nationalization. These business institutions prefer to preserve basic law and order informally, relying largely upon their own private security (Menkhaus, 2014). For this reason, if strong government returns, it might reestablish accountability, quality control and so on. Furthermore, the urbanist areas like cities and towns have private hospitals, diagnostic services, and pharmacies. However, these health services are insufficient in quality and also, some of the drugs are sold on streets means outside of the right position and there is less important consideration of drug quality standards i.e. products are often sold past their expiration dates (Nenova, 2004).

4. Ways to Restore Public Services in Somalia

It is important for the Somali government to fulfill three core governance functions: provision of security; effective delivery of basic public goods and services; and managing political participation and accountability in order to get the pathways of stabilization, reconstruction and ultimately the transition of socio-economic recovery and growth. To restore or rebuild public services in a collapsed government is not an easy task. However, it needs to be restored gradually by taking the following steps:

1. Restoring law and order

In order to stabilize the country, it is significant for government to restore law and order. Government should create rules and regulations with the help of legitimately recognized institutions such as houses of parliament and regional state governments. Creating law and order strengthen government to become effective and capable of restoring its public agencies. For instance, creating proper policies are regarding the restoring of public agencies such as clean water, electricity and sanitation. Since the country was lacking such proper policies long, law and order are fundamental for rebuilding public agencies to deliver public goods and services that are essential for the lives of citizens. Hence, restoring law and order is the most important factor to rebuild public services.

2. Public revenue

The main source of revenue in government is tax; unfortunately the government is lacking taxation system. For example, Somali government takes tax only at the Mogadishu airport and seaport. For instance, government does not take income and property taxes. Therefore, government should come up

with proper taxation system to generate revenue in order to serve its citizens. It should collect taxes and make proper procedures and clear strategies in order restore public services that contribute to socioeconomic development. Another method that government can get revenue is to have clear plans, programs and strategies that can attract international donors or investors. This might supply the government revenue to provide public services.

3. Public servants

Public agencies can be restored through accumulation of capital, human, technological and managerial resources. Government requires hiring qualified, experienced and talented personnel that participates the restoration and delivery of public services. Under these experienced and talented personnel, government needs to also hire university graduates in order to have sufficient personnel that can take part restoring public agencies that has been demolished during the era of anarchy. Government should obtain strong public administrators to perform the reconstruction of public agencies and also participate in an effective public service delivery.

4. Community awareness

Government has to make research and identify clear ways that can be addressed in the community, it is important to make the people aware that the public agencies exist to provide the needed services. Thus, communication campaign has to be applied that broadcasts government plans effectively within the margins of the community to be assisted. Community awareness can be done through media like radios, television stations, newspapers, and social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and posters which ultimately can create strong awareness for the people. In addition, community awareness can be done in civic organizations like mosques and universities. Community leaders and elites can be two main groups that can spread the awareness to the people.

5. Citizen participation

Government should encourage citizen participation through promoting democracy and rule of law and allow the participation of youth and scholars toward rebuilding public agencies. Youth and scholars are the most important groups in every country. Youth is the backbone of country's development so that government should empower and give active role to them to participate in rebuilding the public agencies. Citizen participation can lead the government to be trusted and can also increase transparency and openness in every activity government does. On the other hand, scholars are key for the rebuilding public agencies by contributing their knowledge and expertise. Thus, in order to have effective citizen participation voluntary work is very imperative in the community because currently, voluntarism is one of the best ways in which each community can contribute. Voluntary work is important to the socioeconomic development of the country especially for the next generation.

6. National survey

Government should make national survey through media in order to get information and consultancy from the people. It is the most significant sources government can get information through both traditional media such as radios, television, newspapers and social media like Facebook, Twitter and emails that allow citizens to express their attitudes toward rebuilding and restoring public agencies. These days' social media are strong sources of information that could help government to get citizen's views and directions. This kind of national survey will help the government to know the needs and wants of their citizens and then make government services more efficient.

5. Conclusion

Under a democratic form of governance, the responsibilities of the state are to safeguard and address citizens' needs and demands. Public service provision makes the state discernable to its citizens. Public

service stands out as the leading mechanism of government formulation and implementation of public policies. Public service is citizens' straight route to their government. Nevertheless, after the collapse of the Somali's central government, the country had faced many problems such as social, political economic, environmental and technological. The ineffective government social services result from the long period of unrest in the country. Insufficient public revenue and global aid avoided the state from playing more developing role in the areas like communications, transportations and banking services, in which are privately organized. Since then, the private sector played a contributory role in given social services because the fragile and the less functional civil service. The private sector is motivated by competition and free enterprise, thus, lacking of preventive government policies, state provision, regulation, and control. However, these can be solved through, restoring law and order, reestablishment of strong public personnel, encouragement of citizen participation and conducting national surveys.

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