

PUBLIC SERVICE DECLINE IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SDG 8 (DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH)

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ABSTRACT

The existence of public service institutions in any society is to enable them serve as a catalyst for national development through the rendering of efficient services to the citizens. When there is efficient delivery of goods and services, the certainty for a nation to experience good governance would be guaranteed. Where public service institutions cannot serve as a catalyst, the need for the government to embark on arrays of administrative reforms becomes very imperative. The responsibility of public service institutions is considered essential to the attainment of the global agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This agenda was established by the United Nations in 2015 to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and secure prosperity for all in every nation. The purpose of this study is to evaluate how the decadence in public service institutions in Nigeria has impacted negatively on good governance and successful implementation of SDGs 8: Decent work and Economic Growth in Nigeria. To achieve the study's objective, qualitative research method was used to evaluate the performance of public service institutions. The bureaucratic model was used as the theoretical framework to explain the non-performance of public service in this discourse. The findings underscore the significance of providing secure job opportunities for citizens to ensure economic growth and development without negotiating workers' rights. The study concluded by laying emphasis on the fundamental role of public service institutions to actively promote decent work and sustainable economic development. This can be done through the motivation of staff and incentives, provision of adequate resources, transparency, accountability, and regular training of public servants.

Key words: Decent work, economic growth, good governance, Nigeria, public service,

1. INTRODUCTION

Public service in Nigeria has served as a significant instrument of development, socio-economic growth, political stability and good governance. However, over some decades, public service value in promoting good governance began to dwindle due to numerous problems such as corruption, lack of accountability, absence of transparency, economic challenges, technological problems, migration of professionals to foreign countries, inadequate resources, limited social infrastructure, political instability and constant violence, inefficient processes and inadequate capacity-building initiative (Civil Service News, 2024; The Guardian Editorial Board, 2024; Asaju, & Yakubu, 2024; Jacob, 2024). Some of these challenges

are not limited to public service institutions in Nigeria, but cut across other sub-Saharan African states. Agolla and Van- Lill, 2014 posit that the inability of the public service to perform effectively in the sub-Saharan Africa is predicated on lack of clear policies of innovation, regulatory constraints, improper coordination of units or departments, inadequate funding.

In view of the above challenges militating against the contribution of public service institutions to economic growth in Nigeria and some sub-Saharan African states, the need to pursue the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the African nations and the global community becomes imperative. The implementation of SDG8 decent work and economic development by the public service in Nigeria have been low indeed in spite of the efforts of the government to achieve the goals through the various reforms established for this purpose. For instance, out of the twelve targets of SGD 8, Nigeria has been able to attain eight targets, but not in an impressive way because the country has declined in performance in four of the targets (ORADI, SDGs (2019). The essence of adopting SDG 8 is to eliminate poverty, reduce unemployment, and guarantee decent work (Melethilet *et al.*, 2025).

How public service in Nigeria has implemented the SDG 8: decent work and economic growth was guided by the National Strategy for Public Service Reform (NSPSR) and the Decent Work Country Programme III (DWCP) 2023-2027. The scheme was jointly developed by Federal Government (FGN), Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC). Trade Union Congress (TUC), Nigeria Employer Consultative Association (NECA), and International Labour Congress (ILO). This DWCP scheme is founded on the four pillars of SDG 8 established by UN. The DWCP is an instrument that focuses on the social and economic problems in Nigeria, and seeks to find solution to it by ensuring decent job that will eliminate poor working conditions, low pay, long hours of work, low rates of unionism, and thus creating sustainable growth in Nigeria. When the Decent Work Country III is well implemented by the government, it will enable public service and private organisations to be more productive, and also ensure fair income, social security and career progression (ORADI SDGs, 2019; Olayinka, 2023). From the study so far, the implementation of decent work and economic growth (SDG 8) by the Nigerian government through the public service initiative has not been adequately progressive as shown in the country's performance assessment carried out by ORADI in 2019.

2. LITERATURE

2. 1 Public service

The word public is closely related to activities within the confines of government, which means that services are public goods by nature and their utilization are for non-commercial interests' society (Abraham, 2020). *Public servants are the foundation of communities large and small around the world — providing health care, teaching young people, building and maintaining vital infrastructure, ensuring safety, and serving and protecting the most vulnerable (UN, 2024).* The modern public service has transited from a regulatory to a social service to a welfare state and to an enabling state in recent times (Horton, 2006). The public service institutions are established to enable the public policy of the government to be attained in all areas of life. Public service represents the realm where the government operates for the benefits of the citizenry. The public service refers to the arm of government whose primary responsibility is the implementation of government policies and programmes under the established rules and procedures (Eneanya, 2025). The public service is the machinery through which the government articulates and implements its policies and programmes (Nigerian Public Service Rules, 2023). The public service usually recruits public servants on the basis of skills, expertise and qualification to carry out bureaucratic roles for the purpose of enabling those in the political class to achieve good governance. The public service personnel comprise persons employed by public authorities at central, regional and local levels. Public service is the class and tasks of officials who act as delegates of elected officials (UN, 1996). Public services are at the centre of the management of public bureaucracy (Oyidi, Hussain, Saleh & Danwanzam, 2021). Public service is about the citizens it fundamentally serves, attending to challenges in the communities, and making a positive difference in the lives of citizens in such a way that the well-being of the communities is affected positively (Kang, Lemmie & Williams, 2025). A major factor in the public service delivery is its professional ethos. These include integrity, impartiality, accountability, transparency, organizational citizenship behaviour, and other public interests that are different from the private. Theses ethos are considered as values intrinsic to the performance of

the public service (Rayner, Williams & Lawton, 2010). Ethics, accountability, transparency, and trust among others are interrelated values that inform the nomenclature for public administration (Lyrio *et al.* 2018).

The Nigerian public service governance, leadership, and public management structures are guided by rules, norms, and code of ethics. State. Different array of rules and regulations were put in place by the governments to regulate the conduct of the public servants to enable them to perform efficiently and effectively. The Nigerian 1999 constitution 5th schedule, part 1, contains the code of conduct for public servants in order to enhance acceptable moral behavior toward government business (Ademeso, 2024). These codes of ethics in government business include: discipline loyalty, honesty, courage, courtesy, co-operation, tact, industry, avoidance of delay, tidiness, helpfulness, and kindness

2.2 Service Delivery

Service delivery refers to the provision of basic quality services and goods that are classified as tangible public goods and intangible services (Shongwe & Meyer, 2023). The effective delivery of basic services means setting up strategies and plans that will be implemented by a government institution like a municipality (Sefala, 2009:31). The public service is a non-profit institution created by the government to provide certain services to the citizens. Its activities are financially supported by the government through the tax payer's money, made available on annual basis in form of subvention. The officials are accountable to the public through a regulatory body. The significance of the public service in policy initiation, formulation and implementation is immeasurable. Public service institutions provide employment, solve community problems, transforms live, and enhance wellbeing of individuals in broader community. In Nigeria, the public service contributes immensely to national development. Between 1960-1970, the Nigerian public service was at its best in terms of quality service delivery. During this period, the commonwealth of nations considered the public service to have performed well (Ogochukwu & Nnamani, 2015). However, the public institutions began to decline in value following their excessive bureaucratic reliance, with complex and time-consuming processes that hinder efficiency and responsiveness (Oyedeji, 2026). The Nigerian public service has undergone series of reforms under different leaders to prevent its consistent dwindling in service delivery. The agency in charge of the instituting reforms, the National Strategy for Public Service Reform (NSPSR) established a comprehensive agenda to enhance the rebuilding of federal government institutions to achieve Nigeria's vision 20:2020 (NSPSR, 2023). The public service ethos and core values are trust, accountability, and legitimacy (Tyler, 2006). The public servants also observe principles such as efficiency and security as significant to service delivery (Feldman, 2015).

2.3 Good Governance

Good governance is the process of decision-making and implementation to achieve the goals of development. According to the World Bank report titled "Governance and Development, 1992", Good Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. The true test of 'good' governance is the degree to which it delivers on the promise of human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. According to Sarumi (2016), to achieve good governance a) priorities of the government should focus on investment in human needs in the area of social safety nets for the poor and the marginalised group; b) strengthening state institutions; c) introduction of reform in the functioning of parliament and increasing its effectiveness; d) enhancing civil service capabilities through appropriate reform instruments that matches and accountability; e) creating new alliances with civil society Organisation; and f) evolving a new partnership framework for government.

Governance has been defined as the structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation. Governance also represents the norms, values, and rules of the game through which public affairs are managed in a manner that is transparent, participatory, inclusive, and responsive (Agnihotri, 2023).

The characteristics of good governance include: Participation and Inclusive decision-making which enables citizen to be a stakeholder in the decision making in a political and administrative systems. As the evidence overwhelmingly shows, over the long term, more open and inclusive states and societies tend to be more prosperous, effective and resilient. Through a citizen-oriented act of government, the opinions of minorities are also taken into account, and the voices of the most disadvantaged, vulnerable or in special situations are heard and included in the decision-making process (Kjaerum, 2021). Sound institutions that guarantee integrity in the management of public affairs are critical on the path toward higher and more inclusive growth. Corruption undermines the quality of institutions, weakens the effectiveness of government programmes, and compromises social trust in government policies. Indeed, countries around the world that improved their governance systems are reaping a “governance dividend,” and governance-enhancing reformist countries in sub-Saharan Africa include Botswana, Rwanda, and Seychelles (IMF, 2022);

3. METHODOLOGY

The central focus of this paper is an attempt to explain the impact of declining public service on good governance and SDG 8. To achieve this, the paper adopted qualitative research design. The instruments used are academic papers, texts, government reports, digital technology such as artificial intelligence. The published documents included the Nigeria SDGs Indicators Baseline Report 2016, National Voluntary Review reports, and other relevant literature. The essence of using this method is to avoid ethical concerns that are connected with participant consent. To accomplish this task, the paper adopts a qualitative research paradigm, Exploratory research is based on an inductive approach towards arriving at a dense description of the phenomena under investigation (Akpanim, 2021).

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The bureaucratic theory was adopted to analyse public service decline in Nigeria: Implications for good governance and SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth). Bureaucracy as a theory was postulated by Max Weber to promote efficiency within the Organisation and enhance proper governance by public administrator. Bureaucracy theory is fundamentally based on the hierarchy of authority, clear divisions of Labour, strict rules and procedures, career orientation, and impersonal relationships, to enhance efficiency and consistency (Dibie 2014:13; Akhakpe 2014:327). However, critics have argued that the rigidity of its rules and too much emphasis on hierarchies hindered individuals from responding quickly to official matters (Merton, 2003; Ajieh, 2018). Public opinion has it that government ministries, department, and agencies (MDAs) in Africa have not performed creditably considering the huge amount of resources committed into this sub-sector (Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2024). The public service institutions are bureaucratic organisations created to saddle the responsibility of implementing public policies that are formulated to enhance economic growth and decent work. Their efficiency or inefficiency affected the performance of governments in every nation.

The introduction of SDGs by UN is to sustain advancement in countries in every area of live. Specifically, SDG 8 centered on four prominent pillars, such as job creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue (Maphiri, Matasane & Mudimu, 2021). The theory of bureaucracy is applied in this study to support the opinions of critics that the declining public service performance in Africa has slowed down the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda of the United Nations in promoting decent work and economic growth due to the challenges associated with the concept.

The role of bureaucracy in the implementation of decent work and economic growth is very significant. The state of inefficiency, inequality, injustice, corruption, and inadequate institutional capacity in the public service tend to jeopardize the efforts of the government to succeed in the attempt of sustaining development and economic growth in the nation. The policies of the government are often frustrated by bureaucratic experiment. In spite of the government effort to make resources available for the implementation of policies, public service institutions still failed to secure desired objectives for sustainable development (Monday, *et al.*, 2025; Asaju & Ayeni, n.d.). There is policy implantation gap in spite of the labour laws and decent work policies formulated by the Nigerian government. These only appeared on paper. Bureaucratic bottlenecks posed inadequate labour monitoring, inconsistent and delayed salaries and wage payments, and insufficient employment safety standards, project delays, cost

overruns, budget padding, budget allocation, loss of public trust and slow economic growth (Erude & Okereka, 2023; Fadumo *et al.*, 2025; Sukare & Usman, 2026). Decent work and economic development need enforcement of rules, predictable regulatory system, and constant efficient public delivery by public service. Nigerian public service institutions through bureaucratic experiment have contributed to slow economic growth.

5. Causes of Declining Public Service in Nigeria

Declining Social Values: One of the major challenges to public sector management reforms is the declining social value of society itself. Values such as integrity, honesty, dependability, helpfulness, impartiality, courteousness, and fairness are gradually disappearing from the public services in Nigeria (Agere & Mendoza, 1999: 26). This absence of social values has affected merit system, discipline and accountability in the public service in Nigeria. The level of discipline in the public service is very low. Employee discipline here implies how public servants are induced to conform to the norms and regulations that are established to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. The major purpose of employee discipline is to promote the atmosphere for the willingness to work according to rules and standards of their organisations (Ukeje *et al.*, 2024)

Weak Institutional Capacity

Institutional weaknesses arise from managerial deficiencies that undermine performance, productivity, policy execution and employee resilience in an Organisation. According to Mthwakazi (2022), a weak institutional environment is characterised by low enforcement of rules, broad discretion in their application, and frequent changes in formal rules. These inconsistencies affect institutional viability, service delivery, and developmental pursuit of the public service institutions. This challenge has really affected Nigerian public institutions.

Low Wages and Salaries

The public servants grapple with severe poverty due to low remuneration of wages and salaries compared with their counterparts in private sector and some public companies. Public service employees perform very low in Nigeria due to poor remuneration. The recent increase in minimum wage of N70,000 by the fourth republic government is insufficient to impress public servants to put their best in the face of current inflation (Africansangle, 2025). Effective public service delivery is anchored on the hard work of a happy workforce (Actionaid, 2023).

Inadequate Monitoring of Government Agencies

The task of the government is to create agencies to monitor the activities of the public service institutions since they are catalyst for development in every nation. The existence of poor service delivery is concomitant to weak or absence of thorough monitoring and evaluation system (Nweke, 2021). This is necessary to enable the public servants adhere to the principle of ethics and service delivery needed for the growth of the public service. According to Ikeme (2016), monitoring involves collecting, analysing and reporting data on inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact as well as external factors in a way that supports effective policy management.

High Level of Corruption:

Corruption and lack of integrity exhibited by government officials have led to inefficiency in the Nigeria's public service (ICPC, 2023). The corruption perception index of transparency international in 2025 in terms of public-sector corruption showed that Nigeria was in 142 position out of 182 nations (Transparency International, 2025). Nigeria as at 2025 was among the highly rated corrupt nations with a score of 26 based on CPI, which measures perceived levels of public sector corruption (Michael, 2025). From this ranking, it shows that public servants abuse their offices for personal gains. This illicit act has impacted on poor service delivery by public institutions in Nigeria.

Under-utilization of resources in an economically efficient way

The resources channeled to improve the performances of public service have a means of improving its service delivery if optimally utilized. This is because efficient and effective utilization of resources in the public service can essentially impact positively on public performance. There is no adequate public resource governance in Nigeria in the area of resources mobilization such as tax administration and natural resources by public sector. Meanwhile, for the economy of Nigeria to grow and be sustained, resources must be well allocated to social sectors (Ehiorobo, 2018). Proper resource utilization on the other hands prevent wastages and ensures high productivity (Jhingan, 2016). Besides, efficient utilization reduces

costs of production (Ehiorobo, 2018). When unnecessary office accessories are purchased by public sector out of government funds, they resulted to waste.

Failure to adopt a development-oriented vision and approach

The Nigerian public service institutions are established on the basis of vision to develop the social, economic and democratic systems of the State. The vision to run the federal public service is provided by the National Public Strategy for Public Service Reform (NSPSR, 2023). The declining performance of the institutions is a fall-out from their failure to maintain the developmental vision originally created by the Nigerian government. This could be due to incessant political interference from political office holder (Asaju & Verza, 2026).

The inability to follow the vision provided by the government has fundamentally impacted the negative performance of public servants and has led to inefficient resource allocation, poor quality service and inadequate citizen engagement. The public servants failed to adopt developmental vision as a result of their poor leadership exposure, rigid administrative structures, bureaucratic bottleneck, lack of innovative and adaptability measures. For instance, the public service needs to be immersed in the development agenda but insulated from undue political interference. For the public service to be more productive, there is need for servant leadership is a comprehensive approach for government agencies (Awasthi & Walumbwa, 2023). According to Dikko (2023), the myriad of problems affecting the public sector in Nigeria have come about largely as a result of lack of effective leadership that will be the role model to fast-track organisational progress and expansion via improved staff performance.

Lack of Technological knowledge:

Technology use has allowed many government agencies to restructure cumbersome processes, becoming more user-friendly and increasing productivity by allowing workers to focus on more complex tasks (Hinkley, 2023). Technological knowledge enables public servants to perform better if it is properly applied. When technology is well applied in the Nigerian public service, it would enhance efficiency, facilitate better service delivery, increase productivity, promote transparency and also streamline operation (Achimugu, 2011; Ewuim *et al*, 2016) The Nigerian public service has declined because the workers have no basic technological knowledge. The public service is hindered by challenges such as lack of ICTs infrastructure, low ICTs literacy and usage, inadequate ICT, insufficient funding by the government, inadequate supply of electricity, poor institutional structure to drive ICTs (Neachukwu & Pepple, 2015). Low productivity in Nigeria has been perpetuated by poor technology (Usman, Agenyi & Matthew. 2015)

Inadequate Training of Public Servants

The inadequate training of public service hinders the growth of public institutions in Nigeria. Training of staff is needed to enhance productivity and better service delivery in the public service. The inability of public servants to leverage on this has impacted negatively on the growth of the institutions. Inadequate training has adverse effects on Nigerian public service because it often results to low productivity, inadequate service delivery, technological set back, and inefficient performance (Adekeye, 2025). This inadequate training usually results from lack of effective implementation of training programmes in the public service which resulted the use of outdated training manuals and poor funding, lack of standardized training policy, use of unskillful trainers, poor organisational culture, lack of staff readiness for training, lack of adequate infrastructure etc (Okereka & Okolie, 2022; Oyelude, 2023; Obeta & Edwin, 2024).

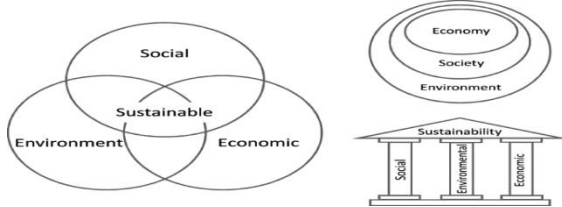
6. The relationship between public service decline, good governance, and the attainment of SDG 8 in Nigeria

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was established by the United Nations in 2015. It involves 17 goals that are meant to address certain issues like poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, clean water, climate action, and peace (United Nations, 2015). These goals are to serve as roadmap till 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations represent a crucial worldwide initiative aimed at advancing development and fostering a more favorable future (Socrooshian, 2024).

The United Nations (UN) sustainable development goals (SDG) are a universal political agenda that seek to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all, solving the social, economic, and environmental issues that hinder global progress towards sustainability intended to be achieved by the year 2030 (United Nations 2015). One of the targets of SDG 8 is to achieve “economic growth” through the concept of “Decent Work” across all member nations of the UN (Küfeoğlu, 2022). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global appeal to protect the environment, combat climate change, eradicate poverty, and ensure access to a high quality of life and prosperity for all (Mishra *et al*, 2023). Scholars argue that SDG 8 encompasses workforce diversity opportunities for all individuals, including people with disabilities, gender equality, and fair wages for everyone involved (Khalique *et al.*, 2021). It emphasises creating a safe working environment that’s equally accessible to both men and women in terms of employment opportunities (United Nations, 2015).

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 remains a major global challenge, as progress continues to vary significantly across countries. While governance is widely recognised as a key enabler of sustainable development, few studies have systematically explored how its various dimensions affect SDG performance at the national level (Ríos, *et al*, 2025). Despite the seemingly straightforward mechanism, measuring the progress of SDGs and their targets present significant challenges. SDG indicators are lacking data, redundant, incomplete, and misaligned with local contexts and priorities (Sato, 2025).

The SDGs have three pillars which involve social, economics, and environmental that are not mutually separated because they are connected. However, the relationship among the various pillars is complex in nature. The complexity of pillar’s relations is one of the factors which causes considerable complicated achievement of sustainability (Huttmanova & Valentiny, 2019).



Left, typical representation of sustainability as three intersecting circles. Right, alternative depictions: literal ‘pillars’ and a concentric circles approach (Purvis, Mao & Robinson, 2019).

Decent work in any country implies securing opportunities for citizens to have access to productive job that will provide secured job in an Organisation, livable income and social protection. This decent work is promoted by economic growth that is inclusive and sustainable, and that wish enables the individuals in the society to participate effectively in economic activities. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 1999), decent work involves productive work opportunities that deliver a fair income, security in the workplace, social protection for families, better prospects for personal development, and social integration. Decent work means that all individuals have access to productive, fulfilling, and socially acceptable employment opportunities. It encompasses several dimensions that contribute to a dignified and satisfactory work experience, including fair wages, job security, social protection and the opportunity for personal and professional development (Mokofe, 2024).

The success or failure of SDG8 in any country is subject to the quality of public service delivery that the various institutions are able to attain from time to time. In Nigeria, just like any other country, the accomplishment of good governance is a determinant to the attainment of SDG8 goals. In Nigeria, the role of the public service has been criticized in recent times, due to the gap existing between its performance and its actual output (Fatile, 2012). Fatile, further posits that the role of public service in securing good governance gleans from its contribution to policy formulation and execution that are designed for social development. Unfortunately, the public service is largely disconnected from the people that it is meant to serve (Igbokwe-Ibeto & Osadeke, 2023). The Nigerian public service has failed in playing the fundamental roles of designing and executing public policy, rendering essential social services, controlling economic activities, generating revenue for the government, securing and enabling sustainable environment for investment and employment for the youth, ensuring management of public resources through transparency and accountability, assisting the government to monitor the performance of other organisations that are created to render certain services on behalf of the government (private organisation inclusive), executing developmental goals and objectives, regulating

economic activities, and creating an enabling environment for investment and employment (IFEX, 2012; Marshall & Murtala, 2015; Akinsanmi, *et al.*, 2022).

The failure of the Nigerian public service institutions to play the above roles have consequential effects on their performance and successful attainment of SDG8. The existence of chronic corruption, bureaucratic bottleneck, insufficient financing, limited technical know-how, and weak institutional structure associated with Nigerian public service have contributed to the progress of SDG8 (Sukare & Usman, 2026).

Results from the research conducted by ORADI SDGs (2019) titled “Introduction: An Appraisal of Nigeria's Implementation of the “Quality Education Goal” shows that the country is not on track with respect to achieving SGD 8, for it did not make a meaningful performance from the individual indicator and aggregate scores. Instances abound that lend credence to this rating of Nigeria in SDG8 performance. For example, the study carried out by Agunyal, Ojakoroto & Afolobi (2025) titled “Analysing Nigeria’s Quest for Sustainable Development Goals through the N-Power Initiative”. This programme is meant to equip the jobless Nigerians with skills so that they will be able to secure productive and decent work. Youth Entrepreneurship Support (YES) is another programme established by Nigerian government to promote the attainment of SGD8. The programme addresses the challenge of youth unemployment through capacity building of the youths for the purpose of ensuring productive and decent employment. The YES framework acknowledges empowerment as a multi-level construct targeting the individual, Organisation, and the community (Cardarelli *et al.*, 2023). YES, is meant for self-employment among graduates. The government also established YOUWIN programme for NYSC members to train them on how they can be self-sustaining and self-reliant through skill development. It is yet another employment generation strategy of the government to ignite the entrepreneurship potentials of the Nigerian youth population to enable them create jobs for themselves (Odiji, Nwoke & Adeseke, 2016). Most of the youth empowerment programmes have not secured the necessary SDG 8 goals and targets due to some factors, such as: inadequate funding, undue and consistent political interruption, corruption, non-involvement of the youth in policy making process, inadequate information dissemination, unpaid stipends and late payment of stipends, weak leadership and insufficient government commitment to the yearning of the unemployed youth (Abin, 2018; Jegede, Irewole & Dada, 2019; Umearoukwu & Ilias. 2022; Nwafor, 2024). In addition, the inability to have sufficient access to comprehensive guidance regarding the criteria and procedures for their application also hinder some youths from having access to youth empowerment programmes (Osimen *et al.*, 2025).

The negative declining of public service as indicated above has affected the realization of SDG8 goals and targets which involve economic growth, productive employment, innovation, entrepreneurship and decent work by contributing to lower economic productivity and development through its discouragement of investment. Meanwhile, Public service efficiency is crucial for Nigeria's economic development (Eke, 2023). High productivity is vital for the success of any organisation, particularly in the public sector (Uchenna & Okolie, 2025). The improper implementation of public policy on empowerment programmes by the public service have limited unemployment. The existence of different bottlenecks such as bureaucratic challenges and corrupt practices in the public service have made some domestic and foreign investors to refrain from investing in the economy and thus limiting economic growth. According to Investment Climate Statement for Nigeria, U.S., (2025), corruption is cited by domestic and foreign investors as a fundamental barrier to doing business in Nigeria. SDG 8 goals have also been affected by the poor performance of public service arising from weak supports for entrepreneurship which involve improper regulatory system. Policies emanating from the government and executed by public service have altered the attainment of business goals in Nigeria (Oputa-Charles & Shilike, 2023).

7. Conclusion

SDG 8 decent works and economic growth is the United Nations’ agenda that should be achieved in different continents by the year 2030. It is meant to promote sustainable development in the global community. However, the possibility of achieving the SDG 8 is very doubtful in Nigeria, due to certain militating factors such as corruption, bad governance, social insecurity, debt distress, labour market distortion, imperfect allocation of resources among communities, de-motivation of workers, public policy irregularities, and weak execution of national plan programmes. The role of the public service institutions in implementing the SDG 8 goals through the various reforms is very significant to the success of the UN’s agenda. The bureaucratic institutions in Nigeria should be a catalyst for the realization of the UN’s agenda, but the reverse is the case. From the studies, we like to conclude that bureaucracy has been

responsible for the delay in the proper execution of SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. If those challenges are addressed through public service reforms, there will be improved governance that will attract investment and decent work. It will also enhance sustainable economic growth.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The government should be more committed to youth empowerment programmes by providing necessary supports such as adequate funds for those agencies like N-Power, BOIYES programme, The Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), Nigeria Youth Investment Fund, NYSC SAED Programme, Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme, SUPA, and others to enable them to perform very well.
2. The government should partner with individuals and companies that engaged in empowerment programmes such as Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship programme, Bet9ja Foundation Young Executive Program, Access Bank Womenpreneur Pitch-a-ton Africa, 3MTT, etc., to enable their activities to have effects on the unemployed so that they can possess skill that will enable to engage in decent work that will spur economic growth in Nigeria.
3. The federal, state and local governments can create rural youth development for the purpose of economic growth. There is need for local entrepreneurship that will boost the economy.
4. The reward system in the public service should improve to enable public servants to be more committed to the implementation of SDG8.
5. The government should make concerted and pragmatic efforts to diversify the economy to enhance growth in non-oil sector and facilitate the productivity and decent employment in non- sector.
6. To achieve success in the implementation of SDG 8 decent work and economic development, the Federal Government of Nigeria and other federating units need to build strong bureaucratic institutions that possess the capacity for development programmes, and also ensure effective implementation of administrative reforms.

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