

Has Privatization of Public Owned Enterprises Improved the Quality of Workers in Tanzania: a Case of Swiss Port (T) Limited

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted at Swissport offices located in Arusha and Dar es Salaam cities. The was carried out so as to establish whether privatization resulted into improvement of quality of work life among employees in privatized institutions using Swiss port as a case study. The study used more of qualitative approach was employed during the study. Findings indicate that there was a positive perception towards privatization of the public owned enterprises. The process led to formation of new management which employed new management styles that motivated employee to be efficient at workplace, provision of motivation such as high salaries, overtime payments, annual salary increase, payment of honoraria and payments of transport allowances. Recommendations were drawn to Swissport to extend her services to other areas such as harbours. Other privatized public enterprises had to adopt the Swissport's salary scale, types of motivation provided to employees management styles and the reward system.

Keywords: SWISSPORT, public owned enterprise, privatization, quality of workers, participation

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Privatization of public sectors especially in the developing countries has been explained to be due to pressure from outside their countries specifically from donors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). According to Sen (2006) much of the initial impetus for privatization in Africa as well as in Tanzania came from creditors above all the IMF and WB, as part of their push for structural adjustment. For instance, the World Bank (WB) project or programme financing agreements included privatization and three-quarters of WB loans or credits were additional, in part on privatizing state enterprises.

In April 2000, for instance, the IMF extended a US\$181 million structural adjustment loan through the IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) to the Government of Tanzania (GOT). In June, 2000 the US\$ 290 million structural adjustment loan to the GOT (WB, 2000). To secure these loans the Government of Tanzania (GOT) agreed to exercise a multitude of politics. Some of these are problematic policy prescriptions which may not appear in the poverty reduction initiatives under PRSP, but which do appear in lending and debt relief operations:

- Policies which require privatization of public companies; which can increase unemployment, lower wages, increase the cost of goods and services and decrease access to poor populations,
- Policies which require privatization of agricultural enterprises. Already privatization had harassed the prices of fertilizer and other inputs, and reduced access to credit. While large farmers and private traders have benefited.
from liberalization and privatization, small farmers, who constitute the majority of Tanzanian's population has not enjoyed such benefits and
- Land commercialization.

According to Katunzi (2001), the liberalization policies as the privatization of key state-owned enterprises were not 'on the table' for negotiations. In light of this, only a handful of government officials, and, not the public, negotiated such arrangements with the IMF and the WB. Hence, privatization is widely thought to be a valuable policy instrument that leads to a greater good (new values into public assets are expected) to be injected via privatization of public resources and the privately held capital base of a country can this be interested.

Thus, privatization is a key part of the so-called "Washington Consensus" and both in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank include privatization of some or all state-owned enterprises as an integral part of their structural reform packages. The World Bank is the leader in promoting privatization as an economic reform policy.

One good specific example of donor pressure on privatization in Tanzania is the call for privatization of the Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Authority (DAWASA). Water privatization is a big issue in many African countries, investors say it brings efficiency. Opponents say it hurts the poor. Whatever one believes, the poor have no say in the matter. In Tanzania, privatizing DAWASA was one of the conditions given if the country was to receive the HIPC debt relief. The IMF had for more than five years since 1997 been insisting on privatizing DAWASA as a condition to include Tanzania in the HIPC initiative. According to URT (2006), HIPC inclusions

provided Tanzania with a significant debt service relief.

Unfortunately, conditional structural reforms, such as water supply privatization, were a high price to pay later on, the Government of Tanzania under donor pressure to privatize, raised a credit to fund the US \$145 million upgrade of DAWASA, that was needed to sell off (privatize) the company at a lower price, this effectively increasing the national debt it seeks to reduce (URT, 2005). Later on, however, there were concerns that the privatization would produce higher water bills or even become another corruption trap.

In the same way, some people even view the intention of the African Development Bank's (ADB) loan of USD\$ 47 million partly to finance the "Dar es Salaam water supply and sanitation project" as also merely making it possible to find a buyer for DAWASA so as to ensure that DAWASA is privatized. The IMF has been arguing that most African state-owned water suppliers are ineffective and run down and hence the need to privatize them. However, civil society and others who oppose the IMF's approach of privatizing water supply, argue that such African state-owned water suppliers managed to at least provide many urban poor people with cheap or free water and later and that the IMF's approach excludes the poor from an affordable clean water supply. The fact that the pressure from donors resulted into privatization and the recess which underpinned poor performance of public firms raise much concerns about the effects of privatization.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Privatization aimed at improving performance of organizations and employees' quality of lives. In Tanzania, it particularly aimed at arresting the linear trend of collapse of public organizations which were underpinned by poor performance. For example, before privatization 52% of the public organizations were performing poorly in production and provision of social services. Similarly, between the years 1970 to 2000, 15.4% of the public firms collapsed (Ministry of Finance, 1998).

The working lives of employees in the above industries have been reported to be worse due to failure of employers to pay them effectively. It was a common practice for the most of public organizations not to pay salaries for more than three months consecutively due to financial constraints. It is from that perspective which fueled privatization of public organizations to halt the situation.

However, the argument that privatization of public organizations was due to the pressure from the giant international monetary funds rises a concern about the effectiveness of privatized organizations with regard to the improvement of workers' lives.

This paper aimed establishing whether privatization resulted into improvement of quality of work life among employees in privatized institutions, basing on assessing employees perception on privatization; analysing the motivation provided and motivation system in the privatized institutions; and determining the extent employees benefited from privatization.

Privatization of Public Enterprises in Tanzania

There are various arguments which were put forward to justify privatization in Tanzania and these include:

The Tanzanian government tried the 'father does - it - all' providing all the needed goods and service for her citizens (Katiko, 2004). This went on for decades after independence, but things started to fall apart when production reached the level of diminishing returns, the government had to transfer liabilities to the private sector. After the 1967 Arusha Declaration the giant, medium and small parastatal organizations were nationalized from private hands.

In general, many nationalized firms ran well for a time, but were eventually unable to reinvest and had to close. Problems of shortage of working capital and foreign exchange to import industrial inputs, obsolete technologies, poor management and inadequate and erratic supply of infrastructural services such as electricity and water contributed to parastatal under performance, both large and small parastatals were affected (Katiko, 2004). Tanganyika Packers, Sunguralex and Kiltex or Bora Shoe Company were amongst the larger ones, and Afina Pencils among the smaller. New Parastatal start-ups such as Tanzania Fertilizer Company, Mbeya Ceramics, Morogoro Ceramics, Mbeya Textiles, Kisarawe Brick Company, Morogoro Shoes Company and dozens of others were never profitable and hence were closed.

Instead of contributing to the nation's coffers, the parastatal companies were doing the reverse-asking from the state for more and more subsidies and capital needed to sustain their operations. In 1996, the Minister for Industries of Industries and Commerce stated that parastatals owed the Treasury a total amount of Tshs. 600,146,188,939 (excluding loans from other sources). The total debt by parastatals amounted to Tshs. 1.4 trillion (URT, 1996).

Processes of Privatization in Tanzania

In Tanzania privatization has included many forms, ranging from outright sale of government entire stake to partial sale, to concessions, leases, and management contracts, to the hiring off and sale of non-core business

activities, to the opening of previously restricted sectors to the new private entrants and competitors. In the latest phase, the government has extended the privatization programmes to utilities that play major role in the economy. These include the Tanzania Electrical Supply Company (TANESCO), SWISSPORT, the Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Authority (DAWASA), the Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC) and Air Tanzania Corporation.

Stakeholder Participation

There are many types of privatization. There are also many options other than privatization that can deal with poorly managed or corrupt state-owned companies and revenue shortfalls. The decision to sell state assets to Private Corporation need be subjected to broad public debate. Too often privatization has entailed selling state owned companies to multinational corporations or to the privileged local business class with close links to government elites. In many cases the bidding procedures for state-owned companies lack transparency. Under these conditions privatization decisions exacerbate wealth and income concentration and decrease the accountability of the privatized entities to poor region and poor populations.

Credibility of the Privatization Process

Some of the weaknesses of the privatizing institutions include difficulties to get credible buyers, treatment of retrenches in terms of their benefits, valuation of assets and how to assist the indigenous Tanzanians in the whole exercise. An example of the problems of privatization in Tanzania is the Kilimanjaro Hotel in Dar es Salaam which failed to get a buyer since 1996 when its privatization process began. Another good example of controversial privatization is the sale out of the giant NBC 1997 Limited; the former National Bank of Commerce which was split into two banks before it was sold. Instead of being sold at Tanzanian shillings 21 billion as it was earlier agreed it was only sold at Tanzania shilling 15 billion only. Two senior Tanzania government officials had to go fly to South Africa to re-negotiate again. However the Amalgamated Bank of South Africa management said the valuation was overvalued.

In addition, how the money accrued from the sale of parastatals is being used remain questionable. In 1999, it was announced that over 146 billion had accrued from the sale of parastatals; however, how the money was spent is not known. At least some of the money was supposed to be injected in the Privatization Trust Fund to assist indigenous Tanzanians to buy shares in privatized public enterprises.

Quality of work life

Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a philosophy, a set of principles, which holds that people are the most important resource in the organization as they are trustworthy, responsible and capable of making valuable contribution and they should be treated with dignity and respect. The elements that are relevant to an individual's quality of work life include the task, the physical work environment, social environment within the organization, administrative system and relationship between life on and off the job (Pusat, 2004). QWL consists of opportunities for active involvement in group working arrangements or problem solving that are of mutual benefit to employees or employers, based on labor management cooperation. People also conceive of QWL as a set of methods, such as autonomous work groups, job enrichment, and high-involvement aimed at boosting the satisfaction and productivity of workers.

Several studies have been done on employment which is effected through selection process. World Bank (2000) conducted a study on the employment status in the non privatized enterprises and revealed that poor performance of enterprises resulted into low pay of the employees. The study revealed further that employees are not paid fringe benefits which de-motivated them from performing better. The study also revealed weaknesses of the enterprises management in areas such as finance and human resources.

Scolos (2004) conducted a study on the output of privatization in the developing countries and revealed that much was to be done to enable effective implementation of privatization objectives. He discovered that financial constraints greatly affected the quality of privatization output.

It is evident that extensive studies have been done on the areas related to the study. However, there is no documented study which has been published on the impact of privatization of public owned enterprises on the quality of work life to workers specifically at SWISSPORT (T) LTD. Therefore, this study will bridge this literature gap.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study area

The study was conducted at a privatized company namely SWISSPORT Tanzania limited which was formerly

called DAHACO. The firm has two offices in Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro regions and all offices are located within the premises of the Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro international Airports.

Among reasons which underpinned the researcher to study Swissport included: First is among large public organizations which was privatized and it has positive business performance. For example, the firm's annual interest for the past five years has been increasing at an average rate of 15% (SWISSPORT, 2007). Second, the offices are located at the areas which have very good communication systems and therefore it was easy for the researcher to visit the study areas easily.

Third, the firm has good record keeping system and therefore it was easy for the researcher to easily get secondary data without minimum difficulties. Furthermore, all respondent were easily located a situation which enabled the researcher to interview those needed and hence, she was able to get rich primary data.

Research Design

Research design is the plan showing the approach and strategy of investigation aimed at obtaining relevant data which fulfils the research objectives and answers to the research questions (Kothari, 2002).

Case study design was employed during the study because of the following reasons:

i) The design is frequently used in studying few cases within an organization. In this regard, the effectiveness of Swissport in providing better lives to employees was studied; ii) Case studies are greatly comprehensive and reliable because of their ability to explore instances in-depth and iii) The use of Case study design during the study enables the researcher to get information which is purposive and comprehensive and therefore easy to analyze.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study used SWISSPORT (T) limited employees and stakeholders population unit whereby 80 respondents were sampled (workers (50%), management officials (25%) and TUICO officials from zonal office (12.5%), other respondents included labour officers (6.25%) and also stakeholders (6.25%). The sampled population was selected purposively.

Data Collection Methods and Instrumentation

Interviews, observations and documentary review research methods were used to collect data. Before conducting interviews, interview research schedule was designed based on the availability and convenient times of the respondents. Interview research questions (Open-ended) were designed chronologically starting from simple questions to complex ones. Flexibility was provided to respondents to provide answers using the language they mastered. Each respondent was provided with conducive interview environment including ample time to provide answers to the questions posed to them. In this regard, information from interviews provided primary data for the study.

Non-participatory observation method was used during the study and in this case, the researcher did not indulge into the respondent's activities but was moving around observing communication process among staff, facilities, equipments and customer care practices. Non-participatory observation exercise was affected through the use of the observation schedule which was designed before the exercise.

Documentary review schedule was designated in order to ensure that all important documents are available for the exercise. Documents reviewed included the Swissport reports, business journals, and privatization policies of different countries. Data obtained bridged the information which was obtained from literature review. In this regard, information from documentary review provided secondary data.

Structured questionnaires were used to collect data. In this case, questions asked were precisely decided in advance. Therefore, already formulated questions were asked exactly as they were written, in the same sequence and using the same style for all respondents. Questionnaires were used to supplement responses from interviews. In this case, information not obtained from interviews was collected through the use questionnaires. This is because some of the respondents are always afraid to provide sensitive information regarding their organizations. Therefore, the uses of questionnaires which do not require them to disclose their identities cause them to be free to provide such information. Therefore after interviews, the researcher distributed questionnaires to all respondents.

Data Analysis

The open-coding procedure was used during data analysis. The open-coding procedure is the analysis that pertains specifically to the naming and categorizing of phenomena through case examination of data. Data was put into small groups, closely examined and compared for similarities. The process enabled data to be reduced into small portions which were easy to be analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Employees Perception on Privatization

The perception of employees on privatization of public enterprises in Tanzania, in the first instance, respondents were asked to explain if privatization was good or bad. Table 2 indicates the general response.

Table 2 Perception of Employees on Privatization (n=80)

Category	Privatization Good	%	Privatization Not Good	%
Workers	28	35	12	15
Administrators	5	6.25	15	18.6
TUICO officials	7	8.8	3	3.8
Labour officers	1	1.3	4	5
Stakeholders	5	6.3	2	1.11
Total	46	57.5	34	42.5

Source: Researcher Data, 2010

Table 2 also indicates that 46 respondents from SWISSPORT (57.5%) said that privatization is good since the process has changed (improved) their living standards. Among these workers, 28 respondents (35%) explained that privatization resulted into good performance of the enterprise. One respondent from this group explained that *'..... before privatization, the performance was not good, salaries were low and overtime was not effectively paid contrary to the present situation into which the Swiss port's performance is good, salaries are high and overtime is effectively paid'*.

Analysis of the respondent's argument indicates that the objective of privatization to improve enterprises' performance was achieved because the enterprise was realizing profit and that is why salaries increased and other benefits are effectively paid. This is in line with Douglas (2004) that firm's realization of profit causes the management to achieve firm's objectives. In this case, among SWISSPORT objective is to provide better way to employees in order to improve performance.

Five respondents (6.25%) from a group of administrators explained that privatization resulted into good management of the SWISSPORT. They explained that before privatization, management tasks were very difficult to handle as politics at workplace interfered them. One respondent explained further that *'..... before privatization, the company chairman was a political leader appointed by the president on power and he has final power with regard to the decision of all matters concerning the management issues which were professional but contrary to the interest if the political power on power'*. He continued to elaborate that the situation affected the benefits of employees as favoritism dominated due to the fact some employees enjoyed fringe benefits while others did not.

According to the respondents, the lives of employees were negatively affected and caused them to perform poorly. According to the respondent, after privatization new management was formed and management styles employed enabled them to improve the performance of SWISSPORT to the extent that all employees equally enjoyed the fringe benefits of the company and that motivated them work hard and hence contributed to the improvement of SWISSPORT employees' lives.

Table 2 also indicates that 7 TUICO respondents (8.8%) explained that privatization resulted into improvement of labour laws which forced employers to restructure pay policy of employers in both public and private sectors. In this regard, at SWISSPORT labour laws led to the improvement of pay policy to which apart from increasing salaries, extra pay for the workload was included into the pay policy. One respondent explained his experiences and argued *'..... I am enjoying privatization because pay bureaucracy which existed pre-privatization is have been abolished and were getting what ever we are supposed to get I can now meet costs of education of my children and eat good food'*.

The response is valid because in Tanzania there have been agreements between the government and Trade organizations which resulted into constant increase into salaries and other fringe benefits. Documents indicate that for the past seven years employees' salaries increased by 73% and that contributed to the improvement of employees' lives. One SWISSPORT administrator explained that privatization of DAHACO which gave birth of SWISSPORT has benefits to employees as they can now borrow from the organization and use the money to nourish their lives. He continued to explain that *'..... employees are borrowing in order to meet costs of training in higher training institutions under cost sharing scheme and that have enabled them to acquire higher education credentials'*. Education improves one's life, therefore facilitation of training through SWISSPORT lending money to employees motivated the latter since through training competencies are upgrades or updated

and that improve individual's life.

On the other hand the table reveals that 34 respondents (42.5%) perceived that privatization is not good. This was the perception there were 15 administrators among others, from the company (SWISSPORT) who formed 18.6%. When compared with those who said that the privatization was good, it implies that administrators are not satisfied with the process of privatization; this may be due to the fact that despite the good life they are enjoying, they looked at their fellows who were retrenched and perceived that the exercise caused most of retrenched employees to have difficult lives. One respondent explained that '*..... our fellow lost jobs and are not able to meet living expenses*'. He continued to argue that retrenchment of employees causes them to have big workload and they were always tired.

Analysis of the responses on the increase of workload revealed that although there was an increase in workload incentives were paid according to the extra work as stipulated in the policy. Furthermore, observations indicated that retrenchment also was underpinned by employment of technologies in providing services whereby modern facilities and equipment were used. In this case, a task which was manually done by 5 employees through the use of modern facilities and equipment was done by one or two people.

Motivation Provided

The study also investigated the types of motivation provided as well as motivation system at SWISSPORT. In this case, only respondents from the management (20), TUICO (10) and workers (50) provided their responses. All respondents agreed that SWISSPORT provided incentives to employees and those incentives increased after privatization. Respondents from the management 20 (25%) said that incentives provided to employees were as follows.

First, overtime which was paid for extra hour done after official working hours? In his case, the official working hours are eight hours per day but due to the nature of services provided by Swissport workers are obligated to work after working hours. Workers 50 (62.5%) agreed that they were paid overtime but argued that the amount was low and request an increase. However, documentary analysis indicated that the rate was similar to that paid by other privatized public enterprises but the difference lied on the fact that Swissport was efficient and effective in paying overtime to her employees.

The second incentive provided by Swissport to employees was transport allowance. This type of allowance was found to be of two categories, that is cash money to enable employees to have enough bus fare to and from the workplace and loan for buying vehicles for transport to and from jobs as well as for other activities. One employee (1.25%) explained that '*... I am very happy and very comfortable, Look (showing the car) I don't have transport problem and that is why I am very efficient at workplace*'.

Respondents' argument was valid because through observation and documentary review (attendance), 95% of the total employees reported at work early a situation which indicated that they did not have transport problem which is an obstacle for efficiency of employees in Tanzania cities such as Dar es Salaam and Arusha. It was observed further that provision of transport allowance through loan enabled Swissport employees to spend little money in transport compared to other employees in these cities who are forced to board more than four buses to and from the workplace. In this regard, spending less money in transport means saving and hence that saving was reported to be used for meeting other needy costs for employees; better lives.

The third incentive identified was annually salary increment which was prized by TUICO officers 10 (12.5%) that caused employees to work hard and employees 12 (15%) explained that before privatization there was no salary increase and that situation existed for more than ten years. They therefore, explained that they were happy because salaries increased a situation which enabled them to have big salaries. Respondents' argument was valid because the many the year in service the higher the salary.

The fourth incentive was honoraria. One respondent from the management explained that '*..... at the end of the year, every employee is given extra amount of money*'. According to the respondent, an honorarium is paid from the part of the profit realized through activities undertaken by SWISSPORT.

It was revealed from the study that Swissport established such an incentive in order to motivate employees to work hard and documentary analysis indicated a tremendous increase in profit. For example, for the past five years, profit increase in the year 2001 was 15%, the year 2002 was 20%, the year 2003 was 40%, year 2004 was 46% and the year 2005 was 67.5% (SWISSPORT, 2007).

The analysis on the extent the reward system at SWISSPORT enhanced employees' lives indicates that seventy (70) respondents participated and included workers (50) and management (20). In the first instance, respondents were asked to tell if there was reward system at Swissport. Responses indicated that all respondents agreed that there was a system which ensured that reward to employees is provided correctly. One respondent from the management (1.4%) explained that the reward and what to be provided is guided by the employment and

remuneration policy which has statutory status. He continued to explain that ‘..... *Based on the policy by laws was formulated which empowers the committees to effect reward*’. In this case, another respondent from workers group explained further that criteria was set in order to identify who to rewarded, on what to be rewards and how to reward.

According to 10 respondents from the management (12.5%) employees are motivated because they are awarded according to the competence they demonstrate at workplace. All respondents explained that they were satisfied with the reward system because it was free from bias, favouritism and corruption. All employees

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Privatization in most cases has been perceived by some people as a monopoly of the enterprises contrary to the past when public enterprises were there for the public. But the situation prevailed in many public enterprises in Tanzania before privatization was worse especially to the lives of employees were not able to meets costs of basic needs including education of their children. However, the retrenched personnel were negatively affected by the privatization since they were not prepared for that. Analysis on motivation revealed that SWISSPORT has performed well to her workers in this aspect.

The study therefore recommends that the exercise of retrenchment if is to be implemented it should first of all prepare the target group so as to involve in other activities such as entrepreneurship, keeping livestock, poultry and such activities. Otherwise they can misuse the gratuity and other pension funds. Due to the performance revealed by SWISSPORT the study recommends that the company has to be motivated by the government to extend her services to other areas such like harbours. In this case, the policy, rules and regulations which led to the establishment of SWISSPORT Company to be reviewed in order to incorporate the suggestion. Moreover the study recommends for other privatized public enterprises to adopt the SWISSPORT’s salary scale, types of motivation provided to employees management styles and the reward system. This will enable them to improve production as well as reducing direct and indirect strikes at workplaces. Such strikes may lead to low productivity if not destruction of the enterprise’s infrastructures.

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