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## Management of Human Resources in Primary Education in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges

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By

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### Abstract

*This paper examined the management of human resources in primary education in Nigerian. It discussed the concept of human resources management; objectives of primary education as indicated in the National Policy on Education (2004) were highlighted. The qualities and utilizations of human resources in primary education were enumerated. Issues and problems militating against effective management of human resources in primary education were equally discussed such as inadequate funding, uncondusive learning environment, lack of information and technology equipment and lack of human relations skills among the school administrators. Recommendations made include: adequate funding, provision of infrastructure especially ITCs equipments and organizing regular workshops for primary education administrators to update their knowledge in human relation skills for effective management of human resources in primary education among others.*

Education is a tool for national development. Education has been described as the foundation of progress, cornerstone of rapid, economic, social and political development.

It is through education that skills, knowledge and cultural heritages are transferred from generation to generation. Primary level of education is very important because it is the foundation level. To this end, FRN (2004) describes primary education as the key to the success or failure of the whole educational system because all other levels are built upon primary level of education. Oderinde (1989) confirmed this assertion when he wrote that primary school is the foundation education system on top of which other levels rest.

According to Olayinka (2007) primary education is the most popular level of education in Nigeria and other parts of the world. This is, in view of its availability

everywhere in both the developed and developing countries as well as in the Urban and rural areas. The importance of primary education is revealed in its general objectives as stated in the National Policy on Education (1984:14) which include:

- (1) Citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society.
- (2) The inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively.
- (3) Character, moral training and the development of sound attitudes.
- (4) Developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment.
- (5) Giving the child opportunity for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limit of his capacity.
- (6) Provide the child with the basic tools for further educational advancement, preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

For these laudable purposes and objectives to be fully achieved, there must be effective management and utilization of human resources in the administration of the primary education in Nigeria.

Human resources in this paper refer to all the personnel both academic and non-academic staff in the primary education in Nigeria. The quality, utilization and the administration of their personnel in achieving these objectives are what the paper will be addressing. The problems or challenges encountered by the administrators will be highlighted and solutions would be proffered for this paper to be appreciated.

### **The Concept of Human Resources Management**

Human resources in organizations are the most essential resources in an organization and are therefore more important than all other resources put together. In an industrial organization, human resources are the workers managers, engineers, supervisors, artisans, clerical and secretarial staff). In education, especially in primary education, human resources include the Head teachers, second masters, classroom teachers, clerical assistants, store keepers, security men, cooks, labourers etc. These group of people determine the success or not of the achievement of the objective of primary education.

Human resource management (HRM) is both a field of study and practice. It focuses on the process of planning, funding, building, coordinating, utilizing workforce and handling the formal system for the management of people within the organization until and after their retirement (Peretomode and Peretomode, 2007).

Gellerman (1986) considers Human Resource Management as the process of bringing people together, and organizing them so that the goal of one another is met.

Human Resource Management is also known as personnel management, staff management or manpower management.

Human Resources management could be defined as that function of all enterprises which provide for effective utilization of human resources to achieve both the objectives of all enterprises, the satisfaction and development of the employees (George and Boudreau 2004).

However, Human Resource Management in primary school implies the coordination, development, organization and utilization of all the teaching and non teaching staff in the school in order to achieve the objective of primary education.

### **Qualities of Human Resources in Primary Education**

Human Resource Management is the management of people at work. Due to the nature and unique characteristics of primary education, the management of their employees is different from that of other levels of education. Also, the goals and role expectation of the institutions and the staff are different and require that those who perform these roles be appropriately fit for the job as the foundation of all other educational system in the country. The different categories of personnel and their levels of performance make the management of human resources in primary education unique and challenging.

Teacher quality has to do with the professional qualification of a teacher. The teacher must possess the teaching qualifications that will enable him to be an effective teacher. The quality of the teachers in our primary schools determine to a large extent the quality of those they produce and the quality of their research output (Ogbodo, 2006). The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) recognizes that the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession should be the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE). According to Nwiyi and Uriah (2007), teachers in the primary education are inadequate and unqualified in most cases and as such possess problems in effective management of the school.

There are teachers in primary schools that still have TC II as their qualification and the total number of teachers are grossly inadequate, hence there is need for employment of more qualified teachers while retraining the old ones in modern methods and techniques in teaching for effective instructional delivery processes.

Therefore, the administrator with few teachers in the school cannot effectively manage the school, because management of both human and material resources of the school is a joint responsibility of all.

This is because the administrator who is at the head, will be directing, others will be organizing, coordinating, reporting etc. all are geared toward achieving the goals of primary education.

### **Utilization of Human Resources in Primary Education**

In primary schools in Rivers State there is shortage of both academic and non academic staff. The few ones are over utilized, as the ratio stands at 1:45 as against the teacher-pupil ratio of 1:35 as specified by FRN (2004:16). It becomes difficult for personnal attention and individualized instruction. At times the pupils are left in the classroom alone when there is personnel audit where all the teachers are required to appear in person with their credentials to either the zonal schools board or the ministry of education.

This situation over the years necessitated the need for state government embedding on about ten (10) thousand teachers' employment in all the primary and secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Issues and Challenges**

- 1. Inadequate funding:** The primary education sector in Nigeria is under funded. The school administrators are not provided with adequate fund by the government to run some expenses in the day to day administration of the schools. The imprests are not enough for the procurement of some necessary facilities for effective administration of the schools. Adequate funding and monitoring of utilization of fund available will enhance effective administration.
- 2. Education in Nigeria is associated with inadequate funding from federal, state and local governments:** Funds meant for education is diverted and teachers salaries are not paid as at when due, infrastructural facilities are in a state of decay. (Nwiyi, 2009). For survival, teachers abandon their primary assignment (teaching) to look for alternative means of survival to the detriment of the pupils who are the recipient of their services. Ogbuiké, Agunloye and Okebe (2003) as cited by Nwiyi (2009) in their findings revealed that teachers are stagnated and denied promotions; some spend about eight years without promotion. This situation is highly demoralizing and has negative impacts on the administration of the school.
- 3. Lack of proper supervision/inspection:** In primary education, the school administrators do not have time to carry out proper and routine supervision and inspection of the teachers in the classroom. They are supposed to examine subjects taught, the scheme of work, lesson note and classroom management. Again, the school administrators most times do not go for in-service training on the modern teaching pedagogy and techniques; hence "a blind man cannot lead blind people". The school administration should be going for professional

development workshop to update their knowledge in the current principles of administration so that they equip themselves for the challenging task ahead.

4. **The use of information communication technology is lacking in primary schools, as most primary schools are not provided with these facilities.** Information communication technology is a network which offers a steady expanding range of new services that have standardization of information in schools (Nwafor, 2005). In education institutions, ICTs are indispensable in effective teaching-learning and general administration of the education system. According to Akpan and Bassey (2011) information technology is very important in designing research, implementing experimental and descriptive studies, statistical analysis, data production and dissemination of research information. Also, records of students, staff and accounts of our universities including periodic information reports for all units could be made readily possible through the use of electronic management information system. But all these are lacking in our primary education sector which poses challenges for the effective administration of the human resources in primary schools.
  
5. **Learning environment has been identified as an indispensable factor in the effective function of any school system.** A conducive learning environment must be created for the objective of education to be achieved (Ukeje, 1992). Good learning environment promotes quality education which goes beyond good classroom, library, laboratories and teachers attendance to workshop and conferences. It includes adequate policies and practices which prohibit students and teachers harassment, cultism and its associated violence. It connotes good academic culture, (Ogbodo, 2006). It is also within the purview of the schools to engender a peaceful and conducive climate and academic culture so that the school objective would be achieved through effective management and utilization of human resources in schools.

### **Management and Utilization of Human Resources in Schools**

**Human relations skills:** This is the ability of the educational manager to create a harmonious working relationship, that is, the manager's ability to work effectively as a team member and build cooperative effort; such skills involve communication, motivating, interacting and supervising ability. The manager should be able to encourage all subordinates to work in accomplishing the educational goals with confidence and keenness (Bassey, 2011). Ojo (1995) contended that every resource manager in education requires the following skills for job success. intelligence skills, educational skills, discriminating skills, executing skills, knowledge of various discipline and formal training in psychological studies. Based on these assertions, the primary education administration lacks almost all the skills for effective administration

and competence in managing their staff as most of them only create avenue of making money by adopting “divide and rule method” without the interest of the school and the staff.

### **Conclusion**

The paper attempted to examine the challenges and problems of human resource management in primary schools in Nigeria; human resources in every organization including schools as organizations are very difficult to manage due to the uniqueness and nature of every staff or worker. It therefore requires having human relations skills, introducing better ICT policy and management of ICT infrastructure, provision of enabling environment as well as commitment from all stakeholders in primary education for effective and efficient management of human resources in the primary schools.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the discussion so far in this work, the following recommendations are proffered.

- (1) Primary education administrators should be going for human relations skills workshop regularly for them to be acquainted with these skills for effective human resources management.
- (2) Adequate funding is needed for the primary school heads as imprest to run the day-day administration of the schools.
- (3) Government should provide information and communication technologies (ICTs) equipments in primary schools and also train their staff on the usage.
- (4) There should be full supervision carried out by both the administrators and inspectors from the zonal board and the ministry of education to complement the efforts of the human resource management.
- (5) The government should employ and post trained security men to primary schools.

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