



## Political Economy of Manpower Development and Utilization in the Nigerian Local Government System

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### ABSTRACT

*Across the world today, there is a growing recognition of the indispensable role of human capital in the attainment of organizational goals. This is a clear departure from an earlier classical economic notion that tends to equate organizational success with the amount of capital inputs. This work examines the link between human resources development and utilization in the Nigerian Local Government Council. The methodology adopted is descriptive and analytical and relied on the use of documents and the technique of content analysis as major means of data generation. The major findings were that over 90% of the staff have not benefited from Local Government training programmes; that the training programs do not mirror staff training needs, that selection of staff for participation in programs of development is influenced by primordial factors such as party politics and relationships. Based on the research, the following recommendations were made, that concerted efforts should be made to expose more staff to training opportunities and also to ensure that the training programmes are based on staff training needs after an objective staff performance appraisal and job analysis. In utilizing the Marxian instrumentalist theory as an analytical guide, this study demonstrates that the cardinal objective of engaging in human resources development programmes in the Local Government Council is not necessarily to imbue the staff with the requisite skills and finesse to carry out their daily responsibilities but to safeguard and promote the vested interest of the ruling class.*

**KEYWORDS : Human Resource Management and Development, Human Resource Utilization, Political Economy, Local Government and Training Programmes.**

### Introduction

Since her political independence on October 1, 1960, Nigeria has been concerned with the state of life of her rural dwellers since a great majority of her population is rural dwellers (Lele 1975). This is borne out of the fact that this segment of her population must be provided with the basic necessities of life such as portable drinking water, good road network and electricity in addition to the maintenance of law and order. To accomplish this, local government system with its own administrative paraphernalia and personnel strength were evolved and charged with the responsibility of providing and maintaining those amenities that make life meaningful and enjoyable at the grass root level.

The local government system in Nigeria has been subjected to a number of reforms. Aside those post independence reforms to be in tune with rural development. Earlier were regionally propelled such as the Development Administration (DAD) prototype of the western region in 1974, however, the 1976 Local Government reform was the first major attempt at redirecting the operations of the local government system in the country (Egonmwan and Ibodje, 1998). The reform in addition to recommending a number of strategies for a functional local government system designated it as the "third tier" of government (Egonmwan, 1984). Soon after the 1976 reforms the Dasuki Review commission of 1985 was put in place. Its central objective was to evolve the most suitable mode of managing the local government through, of course, the available personnel structure whose skills are to be regularly improved upon through identified manpower development schemes (Egonmwan and Ibodje, 1998).

Despite those measures, there is doubt and uncertainty as to whether the local government system is capable of catalyzing development at the grassroots level since human resources development and utilization scheme at that level appear not to be enjoying utmost concern for instance, it is now being feared that with the recent changes both in expectations and pattern of consumption as occasioned by technological changes, most of the local government staff are likely going to fall into disuse unless they are brought back into the realm of per-

formance through relevant development programs. More so, it is no longer strange to observe that most of the local government personnel in Nigeria still stick to the old ways of doing things at the expense of modern technology. This, therefore, underscores the importance of manpower particularly its development and effective utilization in resuscitating the nation's ailing economy. This is so because human beings are the active agents, who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations and engender national development. As articulated by Harbison (1973), human resources not capital, income or material resources constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations.

One of the known justifications for the creation of local government in Nigeria is to enable appropriate services and development activities get to the rural areas (*Guidelines to Local Government Reforms, 1976*). The realization of this mandate is believed to be feasible through the appropriate development and utilization of the human potentials. Despite the foregoing, it is evident that the level of purposelessness which the local government system in Nigeria has found itself has everything to do with the inability of its operators to give a clear focus to her workforce through prudent utilization. In most cases, the problem has remained that personnel are not duly placed in the right positions where their acquired skills and knowledge can be brought to bear on the assigned duties. More so, given the perceived poor performance of most local government areas in Nigeria today, there is now the growing belief that the system has been hijacked by a few individuals who see it as the surest means of amassing wealth to the utmost neglect of the workforce. We are aware of the fact, that as the "third tier" of government and as a system nearer to the people at the grassroots, the activities of the local governments generally are known by the majority of the citizenry. Over the years, however, the deployment, development and utilization of manpower in Local Government areas in Nigeria are believed to have been adversely affected by leadership problems to the extent that even the developed personnel are no longer placed in the right job. Whose still, successful completion of a program of development is no longer a guarantee for instant advancement either in rank or remuneration. Most painful is

the fact that in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, most local government areas in Nigeria are known to have continued to stick to the crude ways of doing things at the expense of modern technology.

Manpower development and utilization have therefore attracted the attention of scholars. Attempts have variously been made to examine the link between human resources development and effective utilization in Nigeria for instance, Ezeani (2002), Agalamanyi (2002), Taire (1992), Ashieghu (1992), Bur (1992), Udo-Aka (1992), Egungwu (1992), Nzelibe (1991), National Capacity Assessment Report (2000), Harbison (1962), Harbison and Myers (1964), Ukandi and Diejamaoh (1988), Udoji Report (1974), Wolles Report (1968), Morgans Report (1964), Adebo (1971), The Nigeria's Second National Development Plan (1970-1974) and Ubeku (1975) among others. This paper seeks to establish a link between politics, economic and policy of stakeholders on the effective utilization of human resources in the Nigerian local government.

### **Human Resource Development and Utilization in the Local Government Council**

There is no doubt as to whether efforts have been made by scholars to examine the link between human resources development and development programs. For instance, Loken (1969) asserts that human resources development in any sector of the society has one goal which is that of improving the effectiveness of those managing the machinery of the social, cultural and economic development process. His work did not, however, examine how this man asset is being developed in any sector let alone the local government system. In his own submission, Ndiomu (1992) recognizes the fact that human resources of an organization comprises of men and women, young and old who engage in the production of goods and services and who equally are the greatest assets of the organization.

Contributing, French and Stewart (in Ezeani and Nwankwo, (2002) saw the whole idea of human resources as constituting an aspect of the broader field of management. They went on to define management as the process, activities or study of carrying out the task of ensuring that a number of diverse activities are performed in such a way that a defined objective is achieved, especially the task of creating and maintaining conditions in which desired objectives are achieved by the combined effort of a group of people which includes the person carrying out the management. Moreso, Croft (1996) maintains that although human resources management is a responsibility of all those connected with the management of people, it is nevertheless a specialized field of activity. In this regard, he insists that although managers must deal with people, the organization can also provide a number of specialists who can ease the load on managers and provide specialist advisory services. The writer further underscores why the practice of human resources development has become increasingly important.

In line with the foregoing contention, Niven (1967) maintains that personnel or human resources management should be the responsibility of all those who manage people as well as comprising the itemization of the functions of those who are also engaged as specialists. On his part, Diejamaoh (1978) agrees that the term human resources has been accorded myriad of definitions. According to him, human resources of any enterprise can be seen as the managerial, scientific, engineering, technical craftsmen and other skills which are employed in creating designing and developing organizations and in managing and operating procedure and service enterprises and economic institutions.

Following from the above, Harbison (1962) agrees that the development potential of any nation depends primarily on its available human and capital resources and very marginally on her natural resources. Going further, he asserts that the human resources situation in Nigeria is essentially characterized by the co-existence of a shortage of skilled, high-level manpower with a large pool of unskilled labour. Harbison and Myers (1964) agrees that the abundance of these unskilled and largely untrained manpower, has continued to pose serious problems to every of Nigeria development enterprise even to the extent that those mass of unskilled labour has constituted a surplus of under-utilized human capital. Furthermore, Ukandi and Diejamaoh (1978) and Harbison (1973) agree that the term human resources as often in use refer to the totality of the energies, skills

and knowledge available in a country. On his part, Schuster (1970) employed the systems approach in defining the concept of human resources. In this regard, he perceives it as a process that has input and output with the organizations objective clearly stated, as determined by environmental factors such as finance, government policies, technology and labour making up a single input. To this end, Taire (1992) opines that human resources in any enterprise are developed so as to be adequately utilized in achieving organizational objective. She further observed that the development and management of human resources in Nigeria has been both a product and consequences of socio-economic and political development. The writer also admits that the turbulent environmental changes that are known to characterize the Nigeria polity have equally had negative consequences on human resources development policies in terms of its development, management and utilization. She further notes that the issues of human resources development and its optimum utilization have been the main recommendations of a number of reports submitted by various commissions set up in this regard by a member of regimes in the country such as the Udoji report, Wolles, report, Adebo report and so on. Mbat (1992) on his part asserts that human resources development provides the cardinal point, at which any realistic economic development can be based. Looking at problems of human resources development in Nigeria.

In line with Mbat (1992), Smith and Ginzberg (1967) maintain that a commonly observed error in both developing and developed nations is that in most cases attention is often shifted exclusively to matters of manpower supply with very little consideration to its development and utilization. In appreciating the above point, Ajilaye (1992) discloses that in order to foster better developed manpower, there has been the establishment of many universities, colleges of technology as well as advanced teachers colleges with the assumption that they can significantly impact on the country's manpower development. Continuing, Wole (1968) maintains that human resources development especially that involving local government personnel in Nigeria should not be seen just as a mere humanitarian gesture but rather a practical approach to improving efficiency of government at the grassroots which can return many times the cost if it is effectively administered. To this end, Orewa (1991) conceives the entire human resources development process as an attempt aimed at providing scope for the acquisition of knowledge, which enables the trainee gain self-improvement. In line with the foregoing, Allison (1991) asserts that the objective of any development programme must be to help employees develop their potentials. According to him, such needs must be accurately defined so as to bother essentially on staff need as against the needs of selected well-placed staff of the local government. Meanwhile, for manpower development efforts to be properly focused, Morrison (1976) asserts that, it is always pertinent to dichotomize between a training need and a development need. To him, a training need can be seen as necessary at any time when an actual condition differs from the desired condition in the human or "people" aspect of organizations performance or more pointedly, when a change in present human knowledge, skills or attitude brings about the desired performance. On the other hand, he agrees that a development need has to do with the overall growth and effectiveness of the individual, particularly as the person expands the developed abilities towards the potentials that such a person seems capable of achieving.

Aminu (1992) in his broad overview of human resources development remarks that human resources development is a fact of life for the government and any organized society. According to him, not only is it vital for the survival of any society but also to the level of attainment that any society can aspire to. In a similar vein, Gant (1969) notes that the people are the human resources for the supply of physical labour, technical and professional skills which are germane for effective and efficient planning and implementation of development policies, programmes, projects and other daily activities Hillard (1969) on his part stresses that any intelligent national manpower policy cannot fail to take into account the required manpower and the important human skills so involved as a basis for its subsequent development. Thirwall (1979) on his part remarks that in any economy, two important factors affect the quality of labour namely work experience and development training. To him there is no doubt that as a cardinal factor, human resources development through on the job training holds the key to increased labour productivity. Moreover, Jucius (1979) further opines that since training is used to designate

any process by which the skills, aptitudes and attitudes of employees are improved for purposes of performance on the job, its justification is evident since it serves to improve output quality and quantity. Harbinson (1962) on his part further notes that the central objective of manpower planning to begin with is to construct a strategy of human resources development that is in consonance with a country's broader aims of socio-political and economic development.

Making a case for human resources development policy for Nigeria, Bur (1992) takes a historical look at human resources development strides in Nigeria back to the colonial era. He notes that since the primary interest of Nigeria's colonial master was simply that of administration and maintenance of law and order, the colonial regimes human resources development policy was, therefore, aimed at the development of appropriate indigenous personnel for these two main purposes. In the wake of the above lapse as engendered by colonial circumstances, the 21<sup>st</sup> century review Journal (1992) points to the fact that no nation can grow above the competence of her human resources and that the only means through which the manpower of any country can be developed is through education and training.

Udo-Udo-Aka (1992) maintains that the institutional concern of any human resources development enterprise shall be to raise the intellectual knowledge of the population through an improved quality of education at all levels as well as provide skills to meet the country's human resources needs. He also discloses that the problem of human resources in Nigeria is compounded by the fact that while there is a lot of unemployment, there are many vacancies that remain unfilled because the available manpower do not match the requirements of the available job vacancies. Writing on the above observation, Frank and Moffat (1970) notes that related training is not something that is undertaken on behalf of someone else. According to them, it is therefore the deliberate provision of the means through which learning will take place on-the-job or in the classroom, the essence, being to help individual trainee attain his maximum potential as quickly and as easily as possible.

Engungwu (1992) on his part notes that the method of human resources development always varies from organization to organization all depending on organizational needs as well as the employees being developed. He therefore developed a number of choices as being critical and influential in any manpower development enterprise. To this effect, Stewart and Stewart (1978) maintains that as far as human resources development is concerned, an often type of on-the-job development in use is the coaching strategy which he defines as a training technique that utilizes the boss-subordinate relationship as the vehicle for learning. Meanwhile, Appleby (1994) in any attempt to proffer an elaborate definition to the term human resources development considers it from the broader perspective of the human resources management practice, he refers to the human resources management as being inclusive of human resources development, selection, training and even utilization which when expanded includes staff welfare and safety, wage and salary administration, collective bargaining and most aspects of industrial relations. On his part Onyishi (2003) maintains that training and development of personnel has the cardinal goal of creating desirable behavioral changes, which has to be in line with organizational needs. He finally recognizes the various human resources development options available to organizations such as On-the-job, Off-the-job training/study leave (with or without pay), vestibule training and regular refresher courses in form of seminars or workshops as means through which any organization can employ to update the job knowledge of her staff.

In validating the relevance of human resources in the life of an organization, Likert (1974) agrees that its centrality therein is unquestionable since all the activities of any enterprise are initiated and determined by the persons who make up that institution. In the same direction, Drucker (1978) asserts that "good organizational structure does not by itself guarantee good performance" According to him, human resources is a fact of life, the source of existence, survival and its development just as food is to man. Contributing, Mc Cormick and Tiffin (1965) regards manpower training and development as any planned and organized effort intended specifically to help individuals develop increasing capabilities. While Stone (1958) agrees that manpower training and development can be classified as (a) Inspirational (b) Informational and (c) Professional.

Personnel administration refers broadly to the procurement, development and utilization of an organization's human resources. Regardless of what product or service an organization provides and no matter what it's size, age or location, it must procure human resources in order to remain viable. Further, if the organization is to their fullest capacities and to maintain ongoing worker commitment through proper utilization of developed personnel.

### Theoretical Framework

For a long time now, both scholars and practitioners in the field of human resources are known to have been pre-occupied with the search for the best way to ensure efficiency and increased productivity. This search which has given rise to a number of theories seeking to link workers morale with organizational efficiency can be employed to analyze the issue of personnel development and utilization in the Nigerian Local Government System. However, for the purpose of this study, we are going to situate our analysis within the theoretical context of Marxist Instrumentalist Theory derived from the radical models of economic policy formation as popularized by McGowan and Walker (1984). The most distinguishing feature of the Marxist instrumentalist theory is its assumption that the state pursues the interest of the capitalist class simply because the state is controlled by this class. What this implies is that contrary to the general assumption that the state is an unbiased umpire and a neutral power broker in relation to the interest of capital and labour, the state in a capitalist society basically functions to foster, advance and defend capitalist accumulation and profit (Asobie 1990). Meanwhile, two names are most commonly associated with the instrumentalist model. These are British Marxist, Ralph Miliband and a psychologist turned-radical sociologist, G William Domhoff, the latter who deeply examined policy formation from an instrumentalist perspective, distinguished four processes whereby the capitalist class is able to use the state as an instrument of its will to shape policy in its own interest. These are,

- ❖ The candidate-selection process
- ❖ The special-interest process
- ❖ The ideological-legitimization process
- ❖ The policy-planning process

According to McGowan and Walker (1984-353), the candidate selection process involves the incorporation of the pliable middle and upper class persons into the political parties, fat cats, caucus, elections and nominating conventions. Being that these men and women neither possess strong ideological beliefs nor strong policy position of their own, they easily became ideal materials and implementers of ruling class views.

Special interest process entails lobbying the decision makers by interest groups, including the powerful capitalist government to adopt specific policies and general development paradigm that enhance their interest or to avoid policies and development plans that compromise their interest. Ideological-Legitimization process allows the capitalist class that controls both the government and the media to create, disseminate and enforce a set of values and attitudes that safeguard its interest. These values of course include that which upholds that the neo-liberal capitalist ideology with its political correlate, liberal democracy is only the best way to a stable polity. Lastly, the policy planning permits the capitalist class to promote protect and rationalize a particular way of examining reality through the introduction and identification of specific personnel and ideas. In this regard research institutions and the ways in which research are conducted are heavily influenced by major capitalist government.

The focus of analysis is on the production and distribution process in the society. This method of analysis therefore encourages students of politics to focus on the capitalist class that employs the apparatus of the state to advance its collective interest. Hence the central argument of this theory is that the state pursues the interest of the ruling class in a capitalist society and not the general interest of the entire members of such society. This is as a result of the direct involvement of members of the ruling class in the state machineries and economic processes. Thus, the researcher in this context should pay maximum attention to the connections between members of the capitalist class and the key actors in the decision-making institutions of government in order to discover whether the state has an independent or initiatory role since its power derived entirely from economic power. By

focusing on the nature of the capitalist class, the channels of its control over governmental institutions and how it promotes class interest through direct involvement and participation, Marxist instrumentalist theory demonstrates that government policies and actions, including human resources development and its corresponding utilization are fundamentally formulated and influenced directly by members of the ruling class to promote their corporate interest.

In utilizing the Marxian instrumentalist theory as our analytical guide in explaining how human resources development and subsequent utilization not only undermine development programmes, but also staff productivity in the Local Government Council, this study demonstrates that the cardinal objective of engaging in human resources programme in the Local Government is not necessarily to imbue the staff with the requisite skills and finesse to carry out their daily responsibilities but to safeguard and promote the vested interest of the ruling class that determine the content of the training programmes, who should benefit from such programmes and even how the skills so acquired are to be utilized. Therefore, human resources development programmes in the Local Government merely provide a protective cover for only the members of the ruling class who design and implement such programmes to enrich themselves.

In this light, the special interest of the ruling class in a capitalist society like ours would always determine and influence which human resources development programmes are implemented at the Local Government level, how such programmes are implemented and who benefits from the programmes. It is within the context of this contradiction between the interest of the ruling class and that of the entire citizenry that the inability of human resources development and subsequent utilization to catalyze development programmes and staff productivity in the Local Government Council is understood.

### Environmental Circumstances Influencing Manpower Development and Utilization: The Local Government Experience

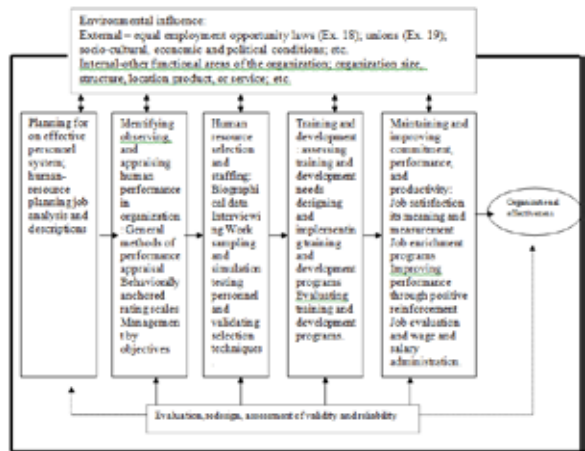
Thus Personnel Administration according to (Beatty and Schneier 1977) faces three general demands. First, it must help the organization cope with a changing environment – with constraints and opportunities developed externally, such as those stemming from government legislation and labour unions. Second, it must cooperate with other lines and staff areas to achieve the organization's goals. It must secure the respect, trust and confidence of the members of those units in order to effectively implement its programs.

Third, it is required to respond to certain serious human resource management problems organization face. All of the many different personnel programs are related in that their ultimate goal is the improvement of organizational effectiveness through the use of human resources. Organizational effectiveness refers to the results or outcomes of activity in an organizational setting. These results can be defined in terms of profit, cost, services provided, sales volume, interest earned, money raised, patients discharged, test score improvements. Each type of organization e.g. educational, industrial, voluntary, military, governmental, professional) would measure its results differently and each may use several measures. (Beatty and Schneier, 1977).

How do Personnel Programs Impact on Organizational effectiveness? Such impacts are many and complex. Personnel programs that are able to select successful performer, increase skills and abilities through training, secure commitment through wage and salary administration, measure human performance and identify desired behaviours obviously will improve system efficacy.

The ultimate link between these programs and organizational effectiveness is of course also determined by such additional factors as organizational policies, individual preferences and desires and general economic conditions. Nevertheless, the personnel department does control a major determinant of organizational effectiveness, organizational human resources.

The personnel system explained here must be discussed in its proper context; as the figure below shows that a personnel system does not operate in isolation.



**Source:** Baetty and Schneier (1977). *Personnel administration; Administration; An Experiential Skill Building Approach*, Reading: Addison Wesley Publishing Company Inc.

It is influenced by and influences its environment significantly. On the one hand, the personnel system of programs to procure, develop and utilize human resources lies within an environment external to the organization and affected by general economic, socio-cultural and political conditions (e.g. a period of high unemployment). Two aspects of this environment are government policies on recruitment and labour unions have had such pervasive effects on what any personnel unit does. On the other hand, the personnel system is actually one of a number of other co-existing internal organizational systems, which determine organizational effectiveness and are served by the personnel department.

The interface between the personnel system and these other organizational systems ultimately determines the effectiveness of the programs, the personnel department implements. At this juncture, we are going to use the framework of analysis above to evaluate the impact of both the External and Internal Environment on manpower development and utilization in the Nigerian Local government system.

### The Environment of the Organization:

The nature of the organization doing the selecting affects the process it uses. Traditionally in the public sector, selection has been made on the basis of either political patronage or merit. The patronage system rewards with jobs, those who have worked to elect public officials. Patronage is still being practiced and has been legalized through quota system and geographical spread in many civil service jobs and the local government system in particular.

### Nature of the Labour Market

The second circumstance affecting the selecting decision is the labour market with which the organization of local government deals. If there are many applicants, the selection can be complicated. But in this instance, the market for local government system is restricted to the state at the level of senior staff from grade level 07 and above and to the local government areas from grade level 06 and below.

This invariably means that the patronage system is encouraged and recruitment is not based on merit. This situation exists to satisfy the political decision to hire on the basis of state of origin and locality.

The situation is made worse by what I call the "glorification of the Executives" of the state and local government levels who by virtue of their positions control three quarters of employment in their respective domains. Internally also, the dominance of the Chief Executives precludes any meaningful effort to select people based on objective criteria for training advancement and effective utilization.

### Labour Unions

If the enterprise is Unionized or partly so union membership prior to hiring or shortly thereafter is a factor in selection decision. Sometimes the union contract requires that seniority (experience at the job with the only criterion, or a major one in selection. In many ways openly

and subtly, a union can affect an enterprises selection (Glueck, 1978). A case in point is NULGE which you all know its operations more than I do.

The first task in personnel is planning. Personnel planning involve forecasting for future human resource needs in light of a changing environment and long and short-run organizational objectives. Planning also consists of analysis of jobs in the organization in order to determine their tasks and convert them into human requirements and characteristics. Such planning enables the personnel staff to gather the data required to make subsequent personnel decisions and forms the foundation for personnel programs. You can agree with me that such elaborate planning set up does not exist at the local government level and consequently, their inability to for cast for future human resources needs in this constantly changing political, social and economic environment is very limited.

The second core personnel program is that of identifying, observing and appraising human performance. In a way, this program like the previous one is a preliminary step before human resources can be procured, developed and utilized effectively. Desired performance must be defined before people are selected in order to establish a standard for appraising their on-the-job effectiveness. While job analyses may identify job tasks (eg operating machine) the performance, identification and appraisal process can identify actual standards or desired behaviour. Both types of information are required but they are not available at the local government level because of the patronage system of recruitment, selection and staffing.

The third core personnel program refers broadly to the process of matching people to jobs. Selection is actually decision making under uncertainty. We are attempting to predict future job performance based on information from past and present performance which do not exist in the current set up in the local government system and consequently leads to irrational decision making since information gathered from applicants cannot be related to a standard or to a set of job and person requirements.

The fourth core personnel process is training and development. Certainly we cannot improve or augment skill, ability or knowledge unless we have selected persons and observed and evaluated their performance, compared to standards and concludes that any deviance is due to lack of ability. Training actually learning in the organizational context is aimed at improving present job performance and preparing persons to assume higher-level positions in the future. Due to the dynamic nature of the job environment it is important for the organization to maintain a pool of potential replacements for key jobs. You can agree with me that there are different types of training going on at the local government levels which more often than not do not bridge the gap for the required needs.

Personnel staffs are given the responsibility, in coordination with managers and supervisors in other functional areas of maintaining and improving commitment, performance and productivity. This fifth core personnel system can really become effective only after commitment or preference has been noted and inadequate training has been eliminated as a cause.

Numerous types of specific motivational incentives or wage and salary programs are in use, often in combination. Although their assumptions may differ, their common objective is to insure that the level of performance and commitment required is maintained and if possible improved. This core personnel program recognizes that individuals require certain inducements, by no means limited to financial to insure their contributions to organizational effectiveness. In the local government system, some of these motivational inducements, by no means limited to financial to insure their contributions to organizational effectiveness. In the local government system, some of these motivational inducements even though on the books such as motorcycle car loans, furniture loans, medical and housing are not paid to staff to motivate them and sometimes step increases and promotions are hard to come by. The framework indicates that the five core personnel programs developed to meet environmental constraints and opportunities need continual evaluation and redesign. Redesign is called for when previously effective programs become outmoded as jobs, people organization objectives and organizational environment

change.

### Recommendations

It is known that poor funding has adversely affected staff training efforts at the Local Government level towards this end, it is hereby recommended that the current one (1%) percent allocation set aside for Local Government training programmes has to be reviewed upwards so that more workers can be sent on training each year. More so, there should be the need to create a viable training and monitoring committee whose objectives amongst others, shall be to verify all claims of staff training and development at the local government levels, again the current practice where staff is sent on training without first of all completing an analysis and appraisal on them should be stopped. As a matter of fact, both Job analysis and appraisal must precede each nomination for a raining program. This shall in no small measure enable training program to be focused on training needs. In addition to this, the state government should grant autonomy to the local government service commission in the area of training and re-training. By this we mean that the issue of manpower development at the local government level should be devoid of political interference, nepotism, religion and some other bad influences.

Furthermore, there is the need for local government service commission to maintain an up-to-date personnel list which shall guide every development and utilization of manpower so that there can always a functional link between staff development and their corresponding utilization for jobs where they are mostly fitted. From concluded investigation, not much opportunity is given to the Heads of Personnel Management to participate fully in matters concerning human resources development. In most case, they are only expected to send in comprehensive staff list from which the commission may or may not make use of in the course of selecting staff for training programs particularly the senior cadre workforce. This is a situation where the position of HPM is treated as a ceremonial one since inputs from him on personnel matters particularly that of training are not binding. There should be the need to empower the HPM who in most cases are closer to the workforce to make categorical and meaningful contributions that would help to enrich personnel training matters. By so doing the journey towards professionalism of personnel training and other matters are as good as having commenced. Furthermore, there is the need to monitor closely the activities of the Local Government by the State and Local Government Affairs office, Abuja as a way of making its leadership become conscious of goal attainment. Due to the fact that productivity is a word that is often toyed with within the government establishments, not much is done to sensitize its workforce on the need to marry output with input. In a more quantitative term, time has come to set up an independent body that can always come up with statistical implication of the personnel cost of each of the Local Governments in the state and what they have been able to accomplish in terms of output. The existence of input output ratio will enable all stakeholders to begin to appreciate the need for quality workforce, which in a corresponding manner will exert pressure and encourage qualitative manpower training options. As has been earlier noted, it is not even enough to increase the direct funding outlay to the local government in Imo State from federation account for training purposes but, what should be uppermost is to ensure direct disbursement of such funds so that the state Government can no longer misappropriate such finances intended for Local Government operations particularly on manpower training. The present situation whereby state governments are in direct custody of the Local Government funds is unacceptable. The pronouncement by the National Assembly to deal decisively with any state government who attempts to tamper with the allocation meant for the Local Government should be taken very seriously and words matched with actions in this regard (MSL, News Bulletin, and April, 26, 2010).

Again, what has remained the greatest frustration for the staff of the Local Government is the issue of improper utilization. There has to be an overhaul in the current manpower fixtures of the Local Governments in Imo State so that every department will be a reflection of the correct placements based on professional background and job training. The existing instances where lawyers are made to function as Administrative officers or graduates of History, finance officers should be urgently reversed. It is only by so doing that a journey into job satisfaction for staff can be engendered, it is also on this that any meaningful claim to increased productivity can be located. It is equally

recommended here that there should be the need for a closer supervision of the activities of some of the training consultants now in use by the Local Government services commission for staff training and development. The need to establish a proper performance standard for them is very necessary. This is in a bid to ensure that training programs are competitive, relevant and in line with staff training needs. Frequent in-house training sessions such as workshops, seminars and conferences should be organized for staff at least twice each month as a way of updating them to meet up with the growing complexities in demands of the citizens to whom they owe their services. This research work equally recommends that all the Development Areas created in Imo State but without the backing of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 constitution should be abrogated.

## Conclusion

One of the known justifications for the creation of local government in Nigeria is to enable appropriate services and development activities get to the rural areas (*Guidelines to Local Government Reforms*, 1976). The realization of this mandate is believed to be feasible through the appropriate development and utilization of the human potentials. Despite the foregoing, it is evident that the level of purposelessness which the local government system in Nigeria has found itself has everything to do with the inability of its operators to give a clear focus to her workforce through prudent utilization. In most cases, the problem has remained that personnel are not duly placed in the right positions where their acquired skills and knowledge can be brought to bear on the assigned duties.

More so, given the perceived poor performance of most local government areas in Nigeria today, there is now the growing belief that the system has been hijacked by a few individuals who see it as the surest means of amassing wealth to the utmost neglect of the workforce. We are aware of the fact, that as the "third tier" of government and as a system nearer to the people at the grassroots, the activities of the local governments generally are known by the majority of the citizenry. Over the years, however, the deployment, development and utilization of manpower in Local Government areas in Nigeria are believed to have been adversely affected by leadership problems to the extent that even the developed personnel are no longer placed in the right job. Whose still, successful completion of a program of development is no longer a guarantee for instant advancement either in rank or remuneration. Most painful is the fact that in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, most local government areas in Nigeria are known to have continued to stick to the crude ways of doing things at the expense of modern technology.

The paper concludes by noting that political, economic and policy effects on Manpower Development and Utilization in the Nigerian Local Government is indeed pervasive, and calls for the personnel system to have greater control over determinants of organizational effectiveness, an organization's human resources since these elements are outside the realms of political and economic constraints which are external to the personnel system.

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