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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA:  
CURRENT PROBLEMS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES**

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# CHAPTER 10

## PATHOLOGIES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION: MANPOWER PROBLEMS

by

F. O. Onah

### Introduction

When we are talking about manpower we are referring to human resources or human capital in an enterprise. Manpower is most often taken as the most important resource of an enterprise because through it the other resources are harnessed to meet the needs of man. Whether or not one shares this thought, it is an incontrovertible fact that manpower is not only an important resource, it is very costly and valuable (Ebegbunne, 1992).

According to Ogunniyi (1992), no nation in the world can carry out any of its development programmes without adequate and competent manpower. The vital role of manpower comes into focus both in peace time and when the nation is at war. Qualified manpower is not only critical but a measure of a nation's strength, security and well-being. The human resources of a nation hold the key to its survival, prosperity and future economic and social development.

The critical relation between manpower and the nation's or enterprise's development, survival and impact is also true of the local governments in Nigeria. A key ailment of local government administration in Nigeria is related to one of its traditional functions, which is staffing (manpower). In every area of local government development, human resources play an indispensable role. Badly managed, the human resources can limit the progress of the people at the grassroots in many directions. On the other hand, if the manpower is effectively managed and planned, its knowledge, powers, skills and competence can lead to enviable social and economic progress in the local governments.

This chapter addresses some manpower issues in the local governments in Nigeria. Particularly, manpower planning problems will be discussed. In addition, the chapter will touch on problems relating to recruitment, selection and placement; staff training and development; and staff performance appraisal. There are, of course, many more manpower related problem areas but the few to be addressed are those that easily and frequently occurred in our survey, and those that can be accommodated given the limitations of space.

### Manpower Planning

Manpower planning is a concept that involves critical analysis of supply, demand, surplus, shortages and utilization of human resources (Ogunniyi) 1992.

Ebegbuna (1992) sees manpower planning as concerned with having the right persons in the right numbers in the right place at the right time. For Olutola (1986), when manpower

planning is mentioned, it generally refers to the projections of future requirements for a given number of people with specific skills to meet the demand of various sectors of the economy.

The primary goal of manpower planning is the adoption of policy actions and strategies which will not be stressful and or be a negation of endeavours to balance the equation of supply and demand of manpower required for socio-economic and political development. Manpower planning is concerned also with the development of critical human competence, skills and attitudes which will match occupational, professional, administrative and technical demands for national and sectoral development (including the local governments) of all the socially desirable activities.

Manpower planning takes place at two key levels, namely: the national level referred to as macro level and at the corporate or organizational level known as micro level. We are concerned with the micro level in this exercise. But at whichever level, where manpower planning is the issue, it deals with some specific functions. Ogunniyi (1992) outlines some of the functions to include:

- (a) Planning for clear objectives and goals;
- (b) Planning for change in manpower profiles and requirements;
- (c) Planning for manpower development;
- (d) Planning for expansion for operational trends and attendant manpower requirements;
- (e) Planning for creativity and rewards;
- (f) Planning for crisis, turbulence and peace; and
- (g) Planning for aggression, compromise, competition and cooperation.

In all these areas, it is equally important to plan for the adjustment of employees for change. In this respect planners must be aware of the fact that the implementation of plans is more important than drawing one out. Therefore, the human element in planning is of crucial importance because whatever plans are made, individuals affected will always evaluate plans in terms of themselves.

Manpower planning consist mainly of six inter-related activities, viz:

### **(1) Demand Forecasting**

The idea of demand forecasting entails predicting and targeting. It is usually based upon projection and reasonable judgements. In the main, demand forecasting or targeting involves a process of estimating the future, quality and quantity of manpower required for the establishment.

### **(2) Supply Forecasting**

Manpower resources comprise the total effective effort that can be put to work as shown by the number of people and hours of work available, the capacity of employee to do work and their productivity. Supply forecasting also includes manpower that is likely available from within and outside the organization, having allowed for absenteeism, internal movements, promotions, wastage and change in hours and other conditions of work.

#### **(4) Determining Manpower Requirements**

Manpower requirements are determined by relating the supply to the demand forecast and establishing any deficit or surpluses that will exist in the future.

#### **(4) Manpower productivity and Cost**

Productivity represents the output of goods and services which can be obtained from a given input of employees within. Manpower cost represents the overall expenses on manpower which include the following:

- (a) Remuneration cost;
- (b) Recruitment cost;
- (c) Training cost;
- (d) Real location cost;
- (e) Support cost ;
- (f) Personnel administration cost.

#### **(5) Action planning**

The manpower plan should be prepared on the basis of manpower requirements and the implication of the information on productivity and cost. The main element depending on circumstances will consist of recruitment plan; redevelopment plan; redundancy plan; training plan; productivity plan; and retention plan.

#### **(6) Manpower Budgeting and Control**

Manpower includes budget targets and standards. It should also clarify responsibility for implementation and establishment reporting procedure, monitored against the manpower plan. Manpower budgeting and control are concerned with estimating manpower requirements in terms of numbers, skills, grades needed to accomplish a set of tasks within a time frame which is usually a financial year.

The activities described above are not only necessary for the development of staff but also takes care of the ever-increasing functions of the local governments. Yet, it has not been shown that such activities do exist in the local government system. These intricate manpower planning activities are neither observed nor are they contained in the manpower related activities contained in the Handbook on Local Government Administration. The problems created by inadequate manpower planning in the local government system will become more apparent as we consider other areas below.

### **Recruitment, Selection and Placement**

Fatiregun (1992) saw recruitment as that process of assessing a job, announcing the vacancy, arousing interest and stimulating people to apply. Selection, he saw as an exercise of choosing for excellence through the process of rejecting or matching of the applicants, first against the attributes which we expect will make for success on the job and secondly, matching of the candidates one against the other until we have rank-ordered all of them in

order of relative suitability. Placement is the process of appointing or investing an appointee with the authority to perform a role. It has a quasi legal character or nature because it involves the investment with authority or legitimized power to function in a role. Recruitment, selection and placement belong to the manpower activity referred to earlier as action planning.

Since the history of local governments in Nigeria, recruitment, selection and placement of staff have been a great problem. Their inadequacies have been severally indicated (e.g. Orewa & Adewumi (1983); Nkala (1985). Most 'indigenous' staff of the local governments, according to Nkala (1985) are the scion of an unsavoury pedigree. He noted that at the introduction of democratic local government in the eastern region in 1950, early recruits into the local government service were predominantly 'sons of the soil', party stalwarts, or relations of councillors. Even to date, staff of local governments have not completely shed those pristine spots.

The result of this is that local government staff tend to be more at home under the patronage system rather than merit and result-oriented system. Recruitment practices based on patronage, noted Orewa and Adewumi, (1983) have created problems of redundancy in local governments where stern measure like termination of appointment and mass dismissal have not been adopted. There has been an all-pervading air of laxity in the local government service, as can be expected from a body of frustrated staff who are neither dedicated nor committed to the course of their council. Even the most efficient among the staff have soon found themselves being swayed by the mounting problems, many of such persons have been lost by the local authorities Orewa and Adewumi, (1983).

Recruitment processes and guidelines for local government staff are well spelt out in the Handbook on Local Government Administration Chapter II, Section 5.9 (5.9.1 - 5.9.11), part of which states as follows:

- 5.9.1 All recruitments by the local government Junior Staff Management Committee (JSMC) must, as a rule, be in consonance with the manpower needs or the local government as provided in the approved local government estimates. Any violation of the provision of the section will lead to the members of the JSMC and the approving authority being surcharged and the person so irregularly appointed being summarily removed from the service of the local government.
- 5.9.2: All applicants for positions in grade levels 01-06 in a local government shall apply directly to the local governments of their choice.
- 5.9.3: In all cases, all eligible candidates for appointment shall be interviewed by the JSMC.
- 5.9.4: All direct appointments to posts on grade levels 07 and above shall be by open advertisement to the general public, and copies of such advertisements shall be sent to all the local governments within the state.
- 5.9.5: All letters of appointment shall be signed by the head of the department of Personnel Management in the case of posts graded 01-06, and by the secretary of the local government service commission in the case of posts grade levels 07 and above.

The good intention of the above provisions notwithstanding, it is hardly a habit of local governments to adhere to them. The recruitment of junior staff in particular is always over-shot, and rarely in keeping with the manpower requirements. Most chairmen, councillors, caretaker committee members and emergency sole administrators recruit and place their associates in the local government service, whimsically and without regard to rules. Some of the time and in order to satisfy all righteousness, retroactive advertisements are placed. At best these are meant for the files.

Our survey shows that between 1991 and 1993, the number of staff in Igbo-Eze South, Igbo-Eze North, Nsukka, Isi-Uzo, Igbo-Etiti, and Uzo-Uwani Local Governments in Enugu State increased by 40%, 32%, 53%, 40%, 30% and 28% respectively. Yet there was no evidence to show that the provisions of the Handbook were observed. Little wonder, this period coincided with the period that the presidential system was first tried in the local governments. The chairmen of the local governments simply used the appointments to extend unnecessary patronage to their associates.

If the local governments and indeed, organization can have a reliable and eternally valid selection process, training and personnel development efforts would appear superfluous. Recruitments selection and placement are at the heart of any organization and it has to be well done to pave the way for the effectiveness of the organization.

This is why Pigors and Plyers (1981) state that the three closely related hiring procedures of recruitment, selection and placement provide opportunities for doing the far more than merely filling current vacancies. If this were all that needed to be done, the simplest formula would be: vacancy-requisition-fill. But such an over-simplified hiring process would not promote the large aims of developing human potential and building a strong organization with effective teamwork. Nor would it satisfy current demands made by society and by an increasing number of laws and executive orders aimed at achieving equal opportunities in employment.

Recruitment, selection and placement processes in the local government system are not reliable and therefore, less than satisfactory. They are mainly based on patronage principle. The inadequacies create problems associated with discipline, redundancy and staff training, the latter to which we now turn.

### **Staff Training and Development**

The area of staff training and development is another thorny manpower-related problem in the local government in Nigeria. The inadequate staff training and development programmes in the local governments have been variously indicated (e.g. Dharam, (1979); Nwankwo, 1988; Uchendu, (1994). But the inexorable march of time and the ceaseless clamour of social change continue to make adaptability and continuing preparation of the work force as inevitable as the initial acquisition of knowledge and skills. This cannot happen if staff training and development do not occur in an enterprise Onah, (1993). In order to maximize the productivity and efficiency of the organization, every executive, manager and supervisor in a public or private enterprise has the responsibility and bounding duty to ensure the development of men and women who have requisite knowledge and expertise, the aim being to enable them to contribute their full measure to the welfare, health, and development of the enterprise.

Training may be defined as an organised and co-ordinated development of knowledge, skills and attitude needed by an individual to master a given situation or perform a certain task within an organizational setting. Craig (1967) defined training as the development process made possible through the devise of words and signs. However a definition which seems to meet the theoretical requirement of this study is that used by McCahee and Thayer (1961). Their definition is based on the theory that training is a sub-system within the total system of the enterprise's management. They therefore see training as formal procedures which an organization uses to facilitate employees' learning so that their resultant behaviour contributes to the attainment of the organization's as well as the individual's goals and objectives.

Staff development on the other hand, according to Akpan (1982), is the process whereby an employee is enabled to grow in the job, through the acquisition of wide experience, breadth and increasing confidence resulting from the exercise of varied and tested responsibilities, the aim being to enable him to reach the top or achieve his best in his profession of employment. Such a position will be attained through action, observation, study, reflection, experiment and initiative.

There have been differences in opinion on whether staff training and development differ at all. Some conceive of training as dealing primarily with operative personnel and development as relating to managers and executive. Others like Anstey (1961:58), Harbison and Myer (1964) and Novit (1979:111) see a considerable overlap between the two concepts in operational terms. In his book Novit applied the term behaviour change to illuminate the essence of both training and development in an organization. In his view, central to the occurrence of this behaviour change is the learning process aimed at behaviour change to the extent that there is an overlap between them.

But Strayton (1977:2) draws a somewhat subtle distinction between training and development in this way. As we progress from shop floor to the boardroom (management) the importance in intellectual capacity, the object of training becomes essentially the development of sound judgement. Strayton's definition implies that training in the sense of teaching and learning of skills, pertains more to operative personnel while development is associated with those at the management/executive level. Akpan (1982:128) and Nwachukwu (1988:121) share Strayton's view.

Akpan (1982) says that staff training and development can occur simultaneously or complementarily, but the two do not necessarily have to have direct relationship to each other. According to him they would be in fact separately treated in concept.

In this write-up, however, the two concepts would be looked at together because of their relatedness and because their effect on the staff are mutually inclusive. They result to efficiency and effectiveness of staff.

Training is a process that develops and improves skills related to performance. Effective training programmes, according to Blum and Naylor (1976), can result in increased production, reduced labour turnover, and greater employee satisfaction. They should for them, include all employees from factory workers to executives and apply not only to inexperienced workers but also to experienced workers new to the enterprise. Blum and Naylor also noted that a training programme should also include those who are promoted to higher level jobs and the periodic retraining of present employees by means



of 'refresher' course.

In this direction, McCormick and Tiffin (1977) categorized training programmes in organizations into four forms, namely: orientation training, on-the-job training, off-the-job training and outside training. Closely related to the above is the training needs of the staff in organizations. McCormick and Tiffin believe that training needs differ from group to group. According to them, the training needs of people in organizations tend to fall into two groups which more or less blend into each other. In the first place, there is the need to provide specific job training, especially for new employees and sometimes for present employees who are deficient in job performance. In the second place, there is the need in most organizations to provide training of personal development nature that will contribute to the longer range effectiveness of the individuals in question. Although personnel development training programmes generally have been limited to executives and management class, the changing times emphasize the desirability of such training for other groups in order to combat occupational obsolescence of professional and scientific personnel.

Regarding management development, Ubeku (1975) observed that the plan of management development should aim at:

- (a) Systematically transferring general management knowledge, policies and procedures for managing the company to all managers;
- (b) Appraising and maintaining all inventory of all candidates moved as qualified to replacements for managerial positions;
- (c) Improving the present performance of all managers' on-the-job development methods directed at individual needs;
- (d) Broadening managers for higher responsibilities through outside and on-the-job programmes, activities and courses.

In general, Nigro and Nigro (1977) feel that the objective of executive development programme is to improve the executive understanding of such areas as planning, co-ordination, decision-making delegation, headquarters-field relations, legislative relations, and public relations.

Writing on the training and development of top executives in developing countries, Mutahaba (1966) opined that it was now no longer in dispute that training and development of public administrators contribute to improved performance. This increasing acceptance of the importance and significance of training, in public administration is, according to Stone and Stone (1978), Goshin (1979) indicated by the attention given to it in many countries of the world, developed and underdeveloped.

According to Mutshaba (1986), there is recognition that training and development in developed countries should include all categories of public service personnel from the most senior to the most junior, but in developing countries, as Hoyle (1975) demonstrates training and development has tended to be an exclusive concern of junior and middle level public service personnel; senior and top executives have generally been left out. This is particularly true in Africa, as participants to the Tenth Anniversary Conference of the African Association for Public Administration (AAPAM), held in Lagos, Nigeria in 1982 observed. A study focusing on administrative training in Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone by Mutshaba (1983) confirmed the above observation. It shows that although the mandates of

the Institute of Public Administration and Management in the three countries provided for the holding of training programmes for all levels of personnel, including top executives, attendance by top executives appears to be a rare phenomenon. For Nigeria, this is in spite of the fact that the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) has a huge infrastructure intended for training and providing development opportunities for the most top personnel in the services.

Similar observation could be made with respect to situations obtaining in many other African countries as Schaffer (1978) has observed. Available evidence, would therefore, tend to support the observation that top executives in African public services rarely attend executive development courses. Without attributing the poor state of African public administration to that factor alone, there might be some validity in Tyagi's (1975) observation that the poor performance of public administration in Third World countries is in a great measure a function of the neglect of training and development of personnel. In the same vein Carmichael (1986) writing on Civil Service Training in Zambia concluded that improving the performance of civil servants through training is important if public sector is to play an effective role in achieving national development in Africa. According to him, this is not a uniquely African concern but civil service training in African countries has a reputation for poor organization and management. The need for improvement in this area was recognized in the Lagos Plan of Action for creating self-reliant economic and social development in Africa (1980).

Countless writers on the subject on hand as demonstrated above, come out with the conclusion that the need for training and development cannot be overemphasized, yet in the local government system, training and development of staff are placed at the bottom of their priorities. Nwankwo (1988) indicated that before 1979 when the federal government began to sponsor a comprehensive programme for the training of local government manpower for all States of the Federation, local government administrative training in the country was uncoordinated and inadequate. It was undertaken by various State training departments and the Institutes of Public Administration. The federal government's decision to finance a coordinated and comprehensive local government training was a result of the 1979 reform which reconstituted local government throughout Nigeria on a uniform basis, recognized them as a third tier of government and assigned to them certain developmental functions which were later specified in the 1979 Constitution (1979 Constitution of Nigeria).

In order to tackle the problem of local government manpower development, the federal government created three local government training zones and assigned them to three University-based departments of Public Administration. These Universities were also considered to be strategically located. They are: Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Even though these three Universities have (since 1979) produced a sizeable number of trained executive and middle level managerial staff for the local governments in the areas of finance and general administration, the effectiveness of these officials in the management of developmental programmes and projects at the grassroot level is yet adequately evaluated (Nwankwo, 1988). But one shortcoming of these federally-sponsored University-based local government training programmes is their inability to provide management training in areas of operations other than finance and general administration. As the federal govern-

ment report of the Committee on Local government Training (1978) shows, the staff requirement of the local governments have been identified in the following major areas: administration, management, accounting, revenue collection, clerical and secretarial duties, Agriculture, Animal Health and Forestry, Health, Education, Works and Information service. Our survey shows that only the first three above constitute the major areas of training in the local governments. The attention paid to others is less than satisfactory. Besides, considering the population of the local government staff and the limited spaces in the Universities, the inadequacy of the training assumes further dimension. This is because only an insignificant percentage are trained. In a given academic session the local governments in the Universities' catchment areas may send only one or two persons for training. The inadequacy of the training programme therefore, has qualitative and quantitative dimension.

This is probably why Dharam (1979) also observed that most local governments in Nigeria suffer acute shortage of trained manpower. Even though, according to him, most of the administrative staff have gone for one training or the other through some short-term courses or from seminars and conferences, there is however a conspicuous shortage of qualified professionals, such as engineers, architects, nurses, doctors, agricultural extension officers etc. The professional class is largely absent in most local governments, and these are the group that can effectively execute projects, no matter how technical. In his study of manpower problems of the Imo State Local Governments Uchendu (1994) found, among others, that there was inadequate training in the system especially training in the critical and professional areas.

Uchendu's observations are founded and also applies to other States. For instance, in the Model Financial Memoranda for Local Government, installed in 1994, it was stated that each Store in the local governments should have a Store Accountant (Section 34.13) in addition to a Storekeeper. The realization of this is rather elusive because few professional accountants work in the local governments, and having them for the stores is far fetched.

The other problems associated with staff training and development are selection of trainees and integration of the trained staff into the system. One of the most glaring problems associated with selection of trainees in the local government is that of organizational politics, who is to control training fund? Is it the Local Government Service Commission or the Local Government Department of the Governor's Office? As at the time of our survey (October, 1994), this problem was prominent in Imo and Benue States. Who selects the trainees? What criteria are used for selection? These are not streamlined. In consequence, wrong persons are selected for training. Selection is affected by non-merit criteria, probably because recruitment and placement were by the same criteria. This phenomenon as Nwankwo (1988) regretted, runs contrary to the ideal of training for efficient management in the sense that the officers selected for training may not know the job or cope with the demands of the administrative training or academic rigours, should the training be in a tertiary institution.

The other related problem is effective integration of trainees into the system. Some of the trained staff are not offered commensurate posts after training. Some of them are perceived as having only imbibed academic and theoretical knowledge. Although Ordinary Diploma and the Advanced Diploma obtainable by trainees from the University-based

training affect the promotion of the beneficiaries, it was our finding that fresh graduates are preferred to them. The political leadership, for reasons of patronage, recruit fresh graduates and place them over and above the staff who have acquired cognate training. The situation is not only discouraging and debilitating, but robs the trained staff the opportunity of challenging jobs where he or she will put the content of the training to play. If training needs were effectively determined before training is undertaken, such problems will not arise. If the manpower supply forecast is operational then a position ought to be created for a staff in training to facilitate smooth integration, thereafter.

### **Staff Performance Appraisal**

Staff performance appraisal has been defined as all periodic written assessment of job performance measured against responsibilities, goals and / or tasks, specific duties assigned and agreed to as well as identification of strengths and weaknesses demonstrated by employee's potential and training or development needs (US/OPM, 1980). The current thinking on the subject of performance evaluation and the merit system calls for a re-examination of what personnel management is expected to achieve (Gbeja, 1992). Ideally, individual performance evaluation should be linked strongly with institutional objectives. This falls within the managerial responsibility of periodic review.

Within the context of the current public service (including the local governments service) practice in Nigeria, performance appraisal is done essentially for deciding promotion; but modern management practice sees the purpose of appraisal in broader perspective. According to (Gbeja, 1992) there are two major overlapping reasons for appraising performance, viz:

- (a) To improve the management of staff resources by helping employees realize and fully utilize their potential while striving to achieve organizational goals; and
- (b) To provide managers the information necessary for decision-making in several areas of personnel management, including promotion, training and discipline.

The above can only be realized if staff performance appraisal is made an annual affair. The situation where staff in the local government system complete Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER) and keep them until staff are due in time point, is rather wrong and demonstrates the lack of understanding of the value of the exercise. Also the practice of assessing the senior staff(grade level 07 and above) by the Local Government Service Commission is preposterous because members of the Commission or even members of the Committee may appoint are unlikely to be familiar with the candidates being appraised. What exactly is being appraised becomes a question. The present instrument used for appraisal contains criteria that relate mainly to personality and not job performance, and therefore, highly subjective e.g. initiative, loyalty, drive, determination etc. Aspects that relate to the job-targets are few. Where such factors as personality traits and qualities are the basis for assessment, objectivity becomes a significant problem. The nearer the orientation of a performance appraisal scheme is to the-job targets models (e.g. quality and quantity of work, produces minutes at the appropriate time, etc) the more objective it becomes, and the less emotionally loaded the exercise because performance can be determinable, measureable and demonstrable.

In addition, staff performance appraisal in the local government system is not as open as the guidelines advise. At best it is partially open. This becomes an added problem, since staff are not always given the chance to contribute ideas through appraisal interviews.

For an open reporting scheme to be effective, the following are imperative:

- (a) The appraiser and the appraisee must meet to agree on job schedule and performance measurement criteria;
- (b) There must be an appraisal interview during which the appraisee is given full opportunity to make comments regarding his or her job, the organization and perhaps the scores awarded. A good rapport should always be created at such interviews so as to make for meaningful discussion. After all an interview is a conversation with a meaning;
- (c) Appraisals should not be post-mortem. For objectivity, staff appraisal should be done during the appraisal year in question. It is difficult to imagine what amount of objectivity would attend in a situation where an officer tries to cast his mind back on the activities of a subordinate over a period of twelve months which ended six or more months hence. It is obvious that judgements thereto would be guesses, highly influenced by factors other than performance.

Staff performance appraisal, properly utilized could foster closeness between the subordinate and the supervisor/superior, create increased understanding among staff, and through supervisor-subordinate problem solving discussions, assist in setting good physical working conditions. Staff performance appraisal is not for promotions only as is presently the case in the local governments.

## **Manpower Problems Political and Economic Environment**

### **(a) Political environment**

One crucial factor which creates manpower problems in the local government is the politicization of the local government bureaucracy. This has been previously mentioned and discussed in the third part of this chapter. A point was made that recruitment selection and placement are politicized. And this tends to breed indiscipline and indolence. Another germane political factor is the question of autonomy of the local governments. Local governments autonomy is in principle, not in practice. The phenomenon is still mythical. State governments still exercise sufficient control over the local governments in matters of finance, development, personnel etc. This situation does not make for proper and independent manpower development in the local governments. For example, the State governments still second staff to the local government, whether or not there is the need.

Yet another political factor is the 'son of the soil' syndrome. Most of the junior staff (grade level 01-06) hail from the local governments where they work. They are not commonly transferred away from their local governments of origin. But some can be highly indisciplined. They extol some obnoxious ethnic values and possess unique dynamics of their own beneath those induced by the nature of the service. Such obvious dynamics affect rotations and transfers which are basic personnel reassignment measures. The effect of ethnicity in the local governments is rarely acknowledged and even so less confronted in its

totality, but it undermines effective personnel management.

### **(b) Economic and social environment**

The economic state of the nation, according to Hackman and Suttle (1977), affects manpower development both directly and indirectly via the amount of financial resources immediately available to the civil service and indirectly in diverse ways. A healthy economy is prerequisite to a high quality of work life which embraces the satisfaction of higher order needs. This cannot happen when the economy is in a bad shape especially in this era of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The hostile economic environment incidental to SAP has made incentive system incapable of attracting and retaining well-qualified staff and professionals in the local governments. Associated with this is the high rate of indiscipline that attend adverse situations. At times, salaries are not paid as at when due owing to late release of fund. Such situations predispose staff to various acts of indiscipline as absenteeism, lateness, indolence and other indurate attitude to work, all in the name of lack of money. When such situations run into months, management usually finds it difficult to discipline staff as they tend to be uncontrollable.

The social setting also affects the development of manpower in the local government system. The ideal is to have a uniform manpower programme in the local governments in Nigeria, which is the essence of having one Handbook on Local Government Administration and one Scheme of Service for Local Government Employees in Nigeria. But with varying cultures, groups, modes of production, perception of realities, psychological distances, political participation, and educational background, the historical and cultural heterogeneity of Nigeria is obvious. Of particular significance are culture-management linkages (Ozgediz, 1983). Managing people is the essence of personnel management. In this, cultural considerations are important lest managerial techniques and practices should conflict with the general values, attitudes and behaviour pattern of employees. This is important but it becomes a problem where there are no skilled managers sensitive to such situations.

### **Conclusion**

Several problems confront the local government administration in Nigeria which have made the system rather ill-positioned to make the necessary impact and to achieve the set goals as mapped out by the 1976 Guidelines for Local Government Reforms. Part of the problems relate to manpower. In this chapter, we considered manpower as the most important resource of an enterprise which should occupy a pride of place in the enterprise's development priorities.

The quality and quantity of personnel in the local governments are growing, no doubt, but manpower planning strategies are not satisfactory, the unarticulated and inadequate staff training and development scheme in the system. The training that is undertaken is not in keeping with manpower needs that may be dictated by the manpower supply forecasting. Besides, the critical areas are neglected in the training scheme, the consequence of which is the dearth of professionals in the system. Another problem discussed is associated with recruitment, selection, and placement. This all-important process is highly politicized in

addition to its not being procedurally followed. The situation creates a problem of over-staffing and the appointment of ill-equipped staff especially the junior staff. The hiring of the wrong set of staff creates problems of staff training, which efficacy we have had cause to doubt.

The other manpower issue discussed relates to staff performance appraisal. Aside from the lack of timing and lack of necessary information, appraisal of staff in the system is done for the purposes of promotion only. Most importantly, the criteria as is perhaps in the civil service, are subjective as they are mainly personality-related measures. Job-related and job-target measures are more objective as they are quantifiable and determinable. Generally, the open reporting system is not made meaningful as appraisal interviews are not common.

Finally, local governments can do better if adequate attention is paid to manpower issues such as those discussed in this chapter. Personnel management is the management of individuals and not materials. The individual touch is supreme since wants, goals, desires and motivation are as varied as the number of individuals. Once the individual develops and is satisfied, the systems stands to benefit. African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM), proceedings of the tenth anniversary conference, held in Lagos, Nigeria, 1982.

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