

MANAGEMENT OF BASIC LITERACY PROGRAMME IN BORNO STATE

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ABSTRACT

Effective management of basic literacy programme is a sine-qua-non to achieving success in a basic literacy programme. It is against this background that, this paper explores literacy and its management in Borno state, strategies for effective management and revitalization of literacy programmes, an examination of the basic literacy programme in Borno state and the functions of management in a basic literacy programme. The paper concluded that for education to enrich and individuals knowledge and develop his potentials to prepare for future challenges of the ever changing world, education ought to be effectively and efficiently managed. Finally, implications for management of basic literacy programme in Borno state were discussed among which was that its creation in adult educators and learners, a sound awareness for the promotion of basic literacy programme in their immediate environment.

Keyword: *Management of Basic Literacy Programme in Borno State*

Introduction

Basic literacy which is considered as a fundamental human right in the modern world is an obligation of every illiterate adult to acquire knowledge, Unesco, (2005). While Nzeneri, (2002), views basic literacy as a fundamental right has not only been philosophically accepted by the modern world for the welfare of the individual but also as a community need for its economic, social and cultural development. Nzeneri, (2002) maintained, that generally, education aimed at the acquisition of primary knowledge and skills necessary for life in a society can be termed as “basic literacy”. These skills may include literacy and numeracy, of social and life skills, of understanding community life necessary for responsible participation in the society.

As significant as literacy is termed as fundamental human right, it is unfortunate that, Borno state has not attained 100 percent literacy rate. While the national literacy rate is put at 57 percent, that of Borno state is less than 29.9% percent (Khalid, 2004). The situation might not have changed much in recent time. In view of the importance of literacy to development, the Borno state government joined the fight against illiteracy by establishing Agency for Mass Literacy on the 22nd September, 1987 via Edict No 10 of 1987. The Edict provided legal framework for the agency for mass literacy include:

- (i) Substantially reduction, or eradication of illiteracy in Borno state.
- (ii) Provision of functional education to enable the rural people to use newly acquired literacy skills
- (iii) Enabling of the people to relate newly acquired literacy to their civic, political and cultural activities
- (iv) Development of desirable attitudes to work and inculcation of good social habits, conducive to good living through cooperative, civic, and community health education
- (v) Improvement of the quality of life of rural dwellers.

In line with the vision, the Borno state through the Agency for mass literacy has established many literacy centres across the state. For instance, the established centres are as follows: 2005; 108 literacy centres; 2006, 1,016 centres, 2007, 1,158 literacy centres and year 2008; 1,405 literacy centres. With yearly increase in the number of literacy centres and the expansion in the enrolment from 25,513 to 29,522 in the year 2008, the number of instructors has also increased greatly, from 684 in 2005 to 1,050 in 2008. In spite of the increase in literacy centres and enrolment, the programme witness challenges with sudden decrease of established literacy centres to 1008 in the year 2011, with these decrease the enrolment of learners dropped to 1600 in the same year. The number of instructors has also decrease greatly from 800 to 600 throughout the state. (Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy Manual, 2008).

The expansion and subsequent decrease at the literacy programme seems to call for effective management, if the programme is to succeed. Managers/administrators become important in order to ensure quality control through regular and continual supervision of instructional and other education services. Consequently, the pursuit of educational excellence has been one of the major goals of Borno state Agency for Mass Literacy. This is because adult education has been adjudged the key with which any nation could permanently close the doors of poverty and ignorance and, at the same time, open that of prosperity in terms of economic buoyancy, social advancement and civilization, (Oluborode, 2007). To this end, literacy programmes are considered instrument of change.

Traditionally one could say, the Borno state Agency for Mass Literacy has its priority position in the eradication of illiteracy and manpower development. According to Gluek (1974) “the success of

most organizations is the management group”, manger, executives and administrators are responsible for the most important decisions made within the organizations. It is management team that defines the goals of the organization; essentially reflected in a budget or plan and present it to the public with which it interacts. These kinds of functions put the management in forms of models of management strategies. Gluek, (1974), the difference between strategic and operational management, within an organization was not new. What was new, was the emphasis on strategic management in any organization as a means of ensuring the continuous success in the growth of such an organization.

The Borno state Agency for mass literacy policy handbook (2006), provided strategies for effective management of basic literacy programme with a view of revitalizing the programme. The strategies are;

Judicious resource allocation and utilization: The state government, has already spent a sizeable proportion of funds more funds is still required to make the basic literacy programme as efficient and effective as it should be. The Borno state government is aware of the need to provide more money for basic literacy programme in the state. Thus, the government provides money in good time, disburse and control such funds under the normal financial provision for accountability.

Training and retraining of literacy managers and instructors: The Borno Agency for Mass Literacy has a policy on regular training and retraining of literacy managers in the field of personnel administration, centres management, financial management, supervision to enable them effectively organize and manage the implementation of the basic literacy programme in the state. Furthermore, the Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy focuses on instructor’s in-service training that will address the issue of specialization and staff development in the literacy system.

Effective organization and management of curriculum and instruction: Curriculum is the reconstruction of knowledge and experience, systematically developed under the auspices of the school to allow the learner to increase his/her control of knowledge and experience (FME 1993). Therefore, the most important area in this direction is that, the instruction programmes of the basic literacy scheme is well, and this is being done by the managers and Agency. This is done devoid of compromising standard. To manage the scheme in terms of instructional and curricular, all instructional programmes are very well supervised by the departments or units to ensure total supervision of curriculum programme of the basic literacy programme and instructors are monitored to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum.

Proper management of staff personnel: The teaching and non-teaching staff of the Agency are being monitored. The instructors need to be assigned their responsibilities based on qualification, attitude and experience. The agency ensures that instructors of basic literacy must teach subjects for which they are qualified. Besides, the issue of staff motivation and productivity are very essential. Appropriate stimulation and encouragement compensation of staff members as they work is desirable. Their performance should be appraised.

These strategies or efforts are geared towards better result in making basic literacy relevant to the needs of the society.

BASIC LITERACY PROGRAMME IN BORNO STATE

To ensure that growing share of national and community resources for literacy and improvement of the management of existing resources for literacy in the state, would be possible by involving the society in the organization and management of basic literacy in order to achieve education for all by 2015.

The concept basic literacy has been defined by various authors and scholars depending on their contemporary periods and environmental context. In the early 2000, Khalid defined basic literacy as programme continued to enable an adult/individual to write his/her name and be able to fight ignorance “Yaki da Jahilci”, this definition was later expanded to mean programmes meant to enable an adult to decode text.

Similarly, Nzeneri, (2005), is of the opinion that basic literacy denotes the skills of reading, writing and calculation (i.e numeracy). A person is literate, if he uses these skills to solve his daily life problems. While Federal Ministry of Education, (1990), defined basic literacy as an educational programme primarily designed to equip the recipients with the basic skills of reading, writing and calculation. The training at this level will be designed and carried out in the mother tongue of the specific participants, the idea here is to equip the recipients to have a grasp of the basic skills of communication, with which to expand their knowledge and understand their environment FME (1990).

Consequently, the pursuit of educational excellence has been one of the major goals of Borno state Agency for Mass Literacy. This is because adult education has been adjudged the key with which any nation could permanently close the doors of poverty and ignorance and, at the same time, open that of prosperity in terms of economic, buoyancy, social advancement and civilization, (Oluborode, 2007). To this end, literacy programmes are considered instrument of change.

Traditionally one could say, the Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy has its priority position in the eradication of illiteracy and manpower development. According to Glueck (1974), “the success of most organization is the management group”. “Managers, executives and administrators are responsible for the most important decisions made within the organizations”. It is this management team that defines the goals of the organization; essentially reflected in a budget or plan and present it to the public with which it interacts. These kinds of functions put the management in forms of models of management strategies. The difference between strategic and operational management, within an organization was not new. What was new, was the emphasis on strategic management in any organization as a means of ensuring the continuous success in the growth of such an organization.

The Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy Policy handbook (2006), stressed that management policies of basic literacy programmes have impacted positively on all structures involved in the Education For All (EFA) process; the state, local governments, civil society, community organizations and town unions all of which now contribute towards the development of facilities for basic literacy and literacy programme in the state. Both the state and local governments share the responsibilities of sourcing and managing funds for payment of instructors’ salaries and renovations of the literacy centres.

The Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy through its department of social mobilization and community development orientate the stakeholders, on their duties, obligations and responsibilities as wards, custodians, implementers and facilitators of basic literacy programme in their locality.

A special programme was designed for empowering local communities through supervised ‘self help project’. This aspect of contributions of achieving Education for All (EFA) goals enjoys

donor interventions, in terms of support to community participation consequent upon the new perspectives; communities now regard provision of land facilities such as classroom blocks and furniture as part of their responsibilities towards the education of their people. In the rural areas, chiefs and traditional rulers now join in the effort to identify and secure accommodation for instructors, especially those deployed to their areas, (MLH, 2006). The commitment of opinion leaders in the state to basic literacy programme has also led to recruitment of instructors, as a reaction to shortfall in availability of instructors. The instructors are appointed and paid by the leaders in their respective locality.

FUNCTIONS OF MANAGEMENT IN A BASIC LITERACY PROGRAMME

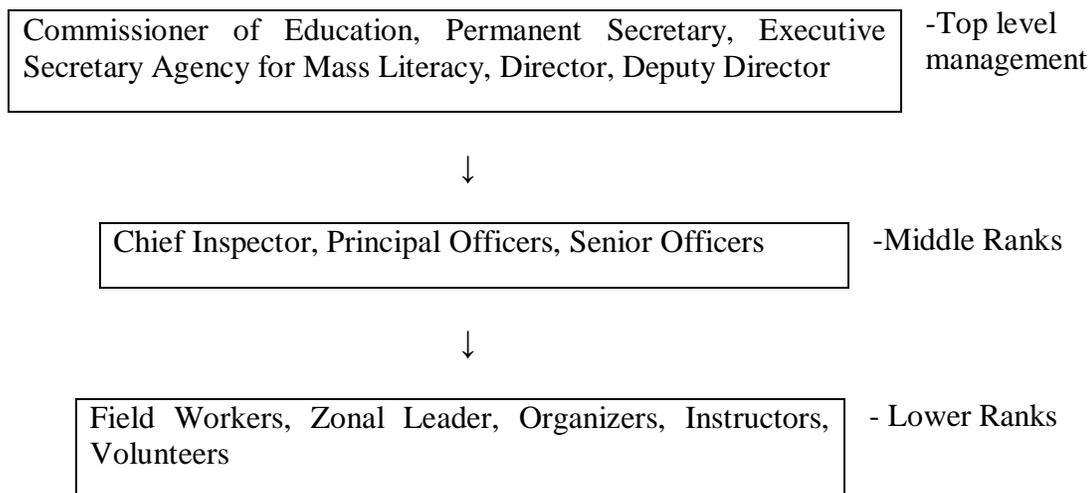
The functions of management are the adoption of the use of management principles, and techniques to arrange both human and material resources in the organization. These include decision-making, planning, staffing, coordinating, controlling, stimulating and approval, (Egunyomi, 2001). These functions are examined with its implications on effective management.

Decision making: is a conscious choice from among a well defined set of other competing alternatives. Decision-making therefore, implies availability of other suitable alternatives for the solution of any form of ties of a manager. It is however, a non-routine job, but preponderantly a function of creative thinking, initiatives and rational choices. The stages of decision-making are as follows:

- (i) Recognizing and defining an observed problem;
- (ii) Analyzing the problem;
- (iii) Establishing the criteria for solving the problem;
- (iv) Developing a plan or strategy for problem solving and initiating a plan for action

The management current thinking about the nature of managing basic literacy both within and outside education, takes decision-making as a core or central process of management to which other activities can be subordinated. It can be said that decision-making is a key function or activity of managers. This involves a cycle of activities which include (a) decision-making (b) Programming (c) communicating (d) controlling and reappraising.

The Agency's general policy making is concentrated at the top of the hierarchy. Policy specification is usually carried out at the middle ranks and actual work performance is done at the lower ranks. In the specific area of managing basic literacy in the state, this decision-making structure may be represented as follows:



Source: A/E Handbook Manual (2006)

When this principle is adhered to, the management, be it education or business, because an effective tool for the implementation of decisions.

Planning: is the activity concerned with providing directions that will optimally use the best mix of resources to achieve organizational goals. Cole, (1986), considers planning as a process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future directed at achieving goals by optimal means. Organizational planning following Cole's definition could be said to be a process of preparing a set of decision about an organizational enterprise for the purpose of achieving organizational goals with the available resources.

Effective planning is predicated on the attitude of the managers at all levels of the organization, especially those at the level of top management. Planning just like decision-making should not be seen as a routine job but something that involves initiatives, rational thinking and imaginative manipulation of various variables. To a large extent, it is future oriented.

In order to help the Borno state Agency for Mass Literacy, the Agency identified the real up-to-date issues in literacy planning and policy-making in different parts of the zones. In January 2001, Editorial/Planning Board has been appointed which comprises of one member in each zone of the State Agency. The members identified key issues in planning basic literacy programme. This include:

1. Literacy and development
2. Equity considerations
3. Quality of literacy
4. Structure, administration and management of literacy programme
5. Curriculum
6. Cost of financing of literacy
7. Planning techniques and approaches
8. Information systems, monitoring and evaluation

Indeed, one of the purposes of these issues is to reflect a diversity of experiences and opinions by giving different members a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines the opportunity of expressing their views on changing theories and practices in adult education planning.

Staffing: is identifying, assessing, placing, evaluating and developing individuals at work through such actions as recruiting, selecting, appraising and promoting individuals. The purpose of staffing is to obtain the best available people for the organization and to foster the development of their skills and abilities, which in turn, helps the organization accomplish its stated objectives. The success of an organization depends on the quality and strength of its staff. High quality workers are organization's best resources and asset. The workers are normally compensated.

Consequently, Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy gives priority to its staff welfare in terms of staff development. This area receives priority in an attempt to boost staff morale by introducing workers' training and education programme designed for lower cadre workers to become more productive as well as enjoy the benefits of in-service training offered to staff. The essence of this is to train the untrained and retrain the trained; it is therefore, aimed at improving and updating the skills of staff.

Coordination: Is the linking together for common action of the different units and sub-units. In work organization, it is the linking together of the different units by types of levels for the purpose of common action. Coordinating is necessary to unify the various efforts of members of staff in order to ensure that they are not working at cross purposes, that is; working together unifying the actions of group of people in order to achieve group objectives, it promotes teamwork. The Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy utilizes two types of coordination – vertical and horizontal coordinations. Vertical coordination is the linking together of superiors and subordinates of units and subunits at different level of the organization. There is hierarchy of objectives and hierarchy of authority and responsibilities. Higher levels of objectives are broad, lower level objectives are specific. Horizontal coordination is the linking together of managers, units and subunits across the organization for the purpose of common action.

Controlling: is the task of ensuring that activities are producing the desired results. Plan is effective, depending on the management ability to carry it out. Controlling is universal management function, which aims at regulating the implementation of the planning policies and programmes.

The management of the agency ensures that actual direction and performance of the members of the organization are in conformity with their planning direction and performance. The manager/administrator inspects by going round to control, by monitoring every aspect of the Agency and ensuring that duties are conducted according to standard of expectations.

Stimulating: This is the way and means by which an administrator or manager could enhance the level of commitment of the members of staff. It is concerned with the authority issuing directives and consulting with the members of staff in order to keep the institution moving. The Borno State Agency for mass Literacy stimulates the members of staff through various forms of motivational strategies. These include involvement in decision-making process, staff development programme, adequate communication, provision of facilities praises and assigning responsibilities. The totality of stimulating is to create urge for the attainment of organizational goals of the part of the workers.

Appraisal: In an organization, it is necessary for an administrator to conform to what extent and how well the objectives of the organization have been achieved. Appropriate appraisal of the system may result into the development of better programmes. It assists in bringing changes and innovations into the system. Any form of deviation observed within the organizational system are corrected while compliance are commended. Appraisal is the same with evaluation of the

implementation process with reference to the organizational objectives in formation or summative forms.

For the successful implementation of basic literacy in the state, the Agency introduced monitoring and evaluation divisions in the organization in order to provide feedback to programme management. Useful reporting allows each level of programme management to make reasoned decisions and act upon it promptly.

CONCLUSION/IMPLICATIONS

Education is important and useful to man, because it is fundamental to the construction of a knowledge, economy, and society of a nation it is a way of economic wealth and social upliftment.

It is further universally accepted that education enriches individual's knowledge and develop his potential and prepare one to face the challenges of the ever changing world. These can only be meaningful when the education system, is an efficient and effectively managed. The manager/administrator is seen as an initiator or changes that is urgently needed in the development process, and is expected to demonstrate dynamic leadership skills that will carry his subordinates along the path of development.

By implication, there is no human endeavour that does not require proper management for its proper functioning. Management has played a very significant role in basic literacy programme in Borno state. The effect of management of basic literacy programme on Borno state people are;

Management, over the years, has created an awareness of the environment and the indigenization of educational programmes in the field of adult education.

Management creates in adult educators and adult learners, sound awareness for the promotion of basic literacy programme in their immediate community/environments.

Management has helped to upgrade the standard of living of adult because it equips them with managerial ability over their lives as well as aid the promotion of managerial activities and increase the efficiency of managers of basic literacy programme.

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