

**Designing and Improving Parliamentary Human Resource Policies and Procedures:
Nigeria Experience**

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Abstract. Human resource management (HRM) is the hallmark for other resource management strategies. It takes human initiatives to manipulate other resources to generate the needed outcome. In government bureaucracy, HRM is regarded as a process from hiring to firing or better put, from entry to exit. Parliament or legislature as an arm of government runs its own bureaucracy with peculiarities. This review paper critically examined the roles of human resource management designing and improving policies and procedures in parliamentary administration of a developing country like Nigeria. The paper highlights the functions and responsibilities of HRM and strategic implementation system. It also covers policies and procedures specifically adopted for improved service delivery which form recommendations of the study.

Keywords: Parliamentary, Human Resources, Policy, Procedures, Strategies, Improvement

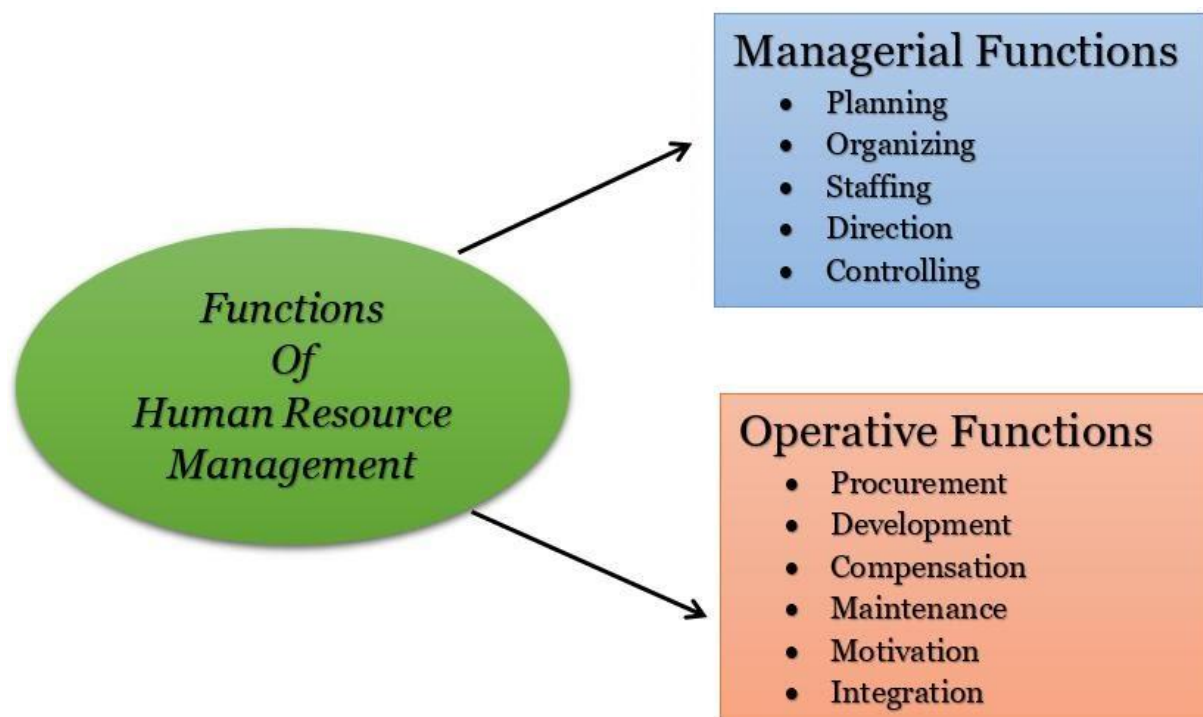
Introduction

A resource is any physical or virtual entity of limited availability that needs to be consumed to obtain a benefit from it (Wikipedia, 2008). Resources are of different kinds: natural resources, physical resources, human resources, financial resources, etc. In the context of the function of National or State Assembly, the last three are especially significant. Financial resources provide access to physical resources and the development of human resources. Infrastructure resources are crucial for efficient and effective implementation of the law-making functions of legislatures. These include facilities such as office space, modern information technology equipment and system, library, vehicles etc. In essence, the effectiveness of parliaments depends on funding for running costs and personnel costs, the quality and number of administrative and expert parliamentary personnel, and the parliament's physical infrastructure and facilities (Africa All Parliamentary Group- AAPG, 2008). Therefore, human resource management (HRM) forms an integral success component of Parliamentary administration globally. What then constituted human resource management?

Human Resources Management

Human resources cannot be define in a strait jacket form however, different scholars propended definitions and viewpoints to the concept, for space and time, here are few definitions from famous management researchers: Armstrong (2001) defined human resources as a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's assets; Storey (2001) views HRM as a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce using an array of culture, structure, and personal techniques; Hendry (1995) considers HRM as an approach that sees people as a valuable resource and focuses on

developing and harnessing their contribution and skills for the organization. Edwin Flippo defines Human Resource Management as “planning, organizing, directing, controlling of procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance and separation of human resources to the end that individual, organizational and social objectives are achieved”. Decenzo and Robbins “Human Resource Management is concerned with the people dimension in management. Since every organization is made up of people, acquiring their services, developing their skills, motivating them to higher levels of performance and ensuring that they continue to maintain their commitment to the organization is essential to achieve organizational objectives. This is true, regardless of the type of organization – government, business, education, health or social action”. The National Institute of Personnel Management (NIPM) of India has defined human resources or personal management as “that part of management which is concerned with people at work and with their relationship within an enterprise. Its aim is to bring together and develop into an effective organization of the men and women who make up enterprise and having regard for the well – being of the individuals and of working groups, to enable them to make their best contribution to its success”.



Strategic Human Resource Management

According to Franklin Roosevelt “there are many ways of going forward, but only one way of standing still”. The dynamism in HR development is strategic human resource management. “Strategy connects the purpose and values of your organization with those of its customer and other external shareholders”. While the immediate focus of HRM is on managing people and work within an agreed framework of employer-employee relationship, strategic HRM to include multiple direct and indirect factors such as stakeholders, State, regulation and institutions (Ashish, 2018). It is by learning the multiple and specific instances from different contexts that we may be able to generate some generic guidelines for understanding how we manage people and work (Armstrong, 2019). If you don’t know where you are going, how will you know when you get there? That is why every organization (including the parliament) needs a strategy for planning its future, and HR is a big part of that planning process.

Parliamentary Human Resources

Parliamentary HRM emerged as a result of democratization and global best practices which demand effective utilization of available resources for optimum productivity in legislative service delivery. In the context of National Assembly in Nigeria, the core or pivotal human resources are the Senators and House of Representatives members (HoR). In line with the provision of Nigeria Constitution, 1999 (as amended) Senators are 109 in number while HoR members are 360 each representing distinct constituency. The same 1999 constitution divided State to various constituencies which form the number of seat at the State Assembly. The establishment of National assembly Service Commission and State House of Assembly Service Commission was part of the amendment made in the 1999 Constitution. Therefore, the Chairman and Members of the Commission form critical human resource asset to the legislatures. Others are the Management and staff of the assembly. Hence, Parliamentary Commission that have strategic goals, a clear vision and objectives that are linked to human resource policies will perform better (Tyson, 1997). It is established that organization with HR policies and employment practices that embrace change, diversity, commitment, openness, employee involvement, communicate effectively, and treat people as a valuable resource outperform organizations that have bureaucratic and rigid structures and systems of work (Pfeffer, 1998; Hendry, 1995; Armstrong, 2001).

Therefore, the management of human resources is as important if not more as the management of finances in democratic governance. The responsibility of recruiting and maintaining this vital resource is within the purview of State Assembly service Commission at the State level and National Assembly Service Commission at the federal level. From recruitment to exiting of staff of the parliament is shifted to State Assembly Service Commission by 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). Thus, the State Assembly Service Commission's pursuit of best Human Resource practices in line with international labour laws, standards, best practices and the operational requirements in the Parliamentary Service necessitated training and retraining of the policy makers. What are these global policies and procedures in Parliamentary service?

The Changing Role of Human Resource Management



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Parliamentary Policies and Procedures

It is difficult to maintain a unified HR policies and procedures for all establishments especially in parliamentary administration; however, the following could be adopted as a typical template:

- (i) Recruitment, Selection and Placement
- (ii) Training and Development/talent Management
- (iii) Internship
- (iv) Leave
- (v) Salary Administration
- (vi) Performance Management
- (vii) Reward and Recognition
- (viii) Discipline and Grievance
- (ix) Sexual Harassment
- (x) Industrial Harmony
- (x) Promotion
- (xi) Staff Exit

Depending on the extant laws governing the establishment of an organization, the various types of human resources policies have been stated as follows (15 Must-Have HR Policies and Forms, 2015):

1. *At-will Employment* – This statement reiterates that either the employer or the employee have the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time. Furthermore, the reasons for termination can also be numerous, but it needs to be ensured that reasons are lawful and valid.
2. *Anti-harassment and Non-Discrimination* – These are the policies that prohibit harassment and discrimination within the working environmental conditions. Within the organization, there are individuals, who are different from each other on the basis of number of factors. These include caste, creed, race, religion, gender, age, ethnicity, educational qualifications, competencies and socio-economic background.
3. *Employment Classifications* – The employment classifications are defined as jobs, which are full-time and part-time. In various types of organizations as well as educational institutions, the individuals seek employment opportunities on full-time as well as part-time basis. When the individuals form the viewpoint that they are engaged in other tasks for which they need to take out time or have other responsibilities, they are engaged in their jobs on part-time basis. Normally, individuals are engaged in jobs on full-time basis to enhance their career prospects and to sustain their living conditions in an appropriate manner.
4. *Leave and Time off Benefits* - When employees are overwhelmed by various issues and problems and are required to take leave, it is necessary to grant them leave in accordance to the policies and procedures. On the other hand, when they need time off, such as, when they are required to leave the workplace within the course of working hours, then too it has to take place in accordance to policies. These policies address the rules and procedures of the organization in terms of holidays, vacations, sick leaves, bereavement leaves, leaves due to personal problems, family issues and other time off benefits. If you required productivity in the work place, there should be a good work-life balance.
5. *Meals and Breaks* – The meal timings and breaks within the organizations also takes place in accordance to laws and policies. When the employees are going for lunch, in some cases, they are allowed one hour and in some half an hour. Normally, employees are allowed to take a ten minute break, after they have worked for three to four hours. The employees need to be communicated in terms of these policies at the time of recruitment.

6. *Timekeeping and Pay* – A timekeeping policy makes provision of information to the employees in terms of the methods for recording of the time worked and the significance of recording their time in an accurate manner. A policy on paydays lets the employees generate information in terms of the frequency of paydays, methods available for receiving pay and any special procedure, particularly when the pay day falls on a holiday or when the employees are absent from work.
7. *Safety and Health* – Safety and health of the employees are regarded to be of utmost significance. It is indispensable for the employees to maintain good health in order to carry out their job duties in an appropriate manner. Safety policies are related to the safety procedures. When employees are engaged in hazardous jobs, it is essential for them to generate awareness in terms of safety and health procedures that are necessary to generate the desired outcomes.
8. *Employee Conduct, Attendance and Punctuality* – Policies related to employee conduct enable them to maintain good terms and relationships with each other, communicate effectively and inculcate the traits of morality and ethics. Whereas, policies related to attendance and punctuality make provision of information to the employees that they need to maintain their attendance and depict punctuality. The employees need to be scheduled to work in their required work timings.
9. *Hiring Forms* – There are a variety of forms that would make provision of help and assistance that can render a significant contribution in identifying well-qualified and competent candidates during the pre-hiring process. These hiring forms include, job application and candidate evaluation form. When recruitment and selection of candidates takes place, it is vital to make sure they possess the essential skills and abilities. Therefore, the hiring forms enable the hiring authorities to determine, whether the employees are well-qualified for the implementation of job duties or not.
10. *Use of Technologies and Materials* – In order to perform job duties in an appropriate manner, it is apparent that employees need to make use of technologies and materials. There are formulation of certain policies as well in terms of usage of technologies and materials. For instance, excessive printing should be avoided.
11. *Handbook Acknowledgements* – When an employee signs the form, he or she acknowledges that they are responsible for reading and complying with all the organizational policies. The employers are required to obtain the signed acknowledgements, when one first issues the handbook.
12. *Performance and Discipline* – Policies regarding performance and discipline are regarded to be of utmost significance. These policies make provision of information to the employees regarding how they need to conduct themselves within the organization. This include various aspects such as, implementation of job duties, communicating and dealing with the other members of the organization, generating awareness in terms of programs and procedures, managing resources, making use of technologies and resources and contributing in the formation of amiable environmental conditions.
13. *Management of Resources (Human and Material)* – Management of resources is regarded as one of the important areas. The members of the organization need to pay adequate attention towards management of resources on a continuous basis. There are three important resources within the organization, financial, human resources and technical. There are formulations of policies in terms of management of these resources.
14. *Conflict Resolution Mechanisms* – Conflict resolution methods need to be put into operation in a peaceful manner. In some cases, there are occurrence of conflicting situations and disagreements among the members of the organization. In such cases, there are formulations of policies that they need to be implemented in a peaceful manner. Peaceful settlement of conflicting situations and disagreements enable the individuals to

form good terms and relationships with each other, carry out their job duties in an efficient manner and incur the feeling of job satisfaction.

15. *Organizational Expenses* – In leading to effective functioning of the organization, there are expenses involved. In other words, financial resources are regarded to be of utmost significance in promoting operative functioning of organization, its departments and human resources. There are organizations, which possess sufficient financial resources, and there are organizations, which possess limited financial resources.

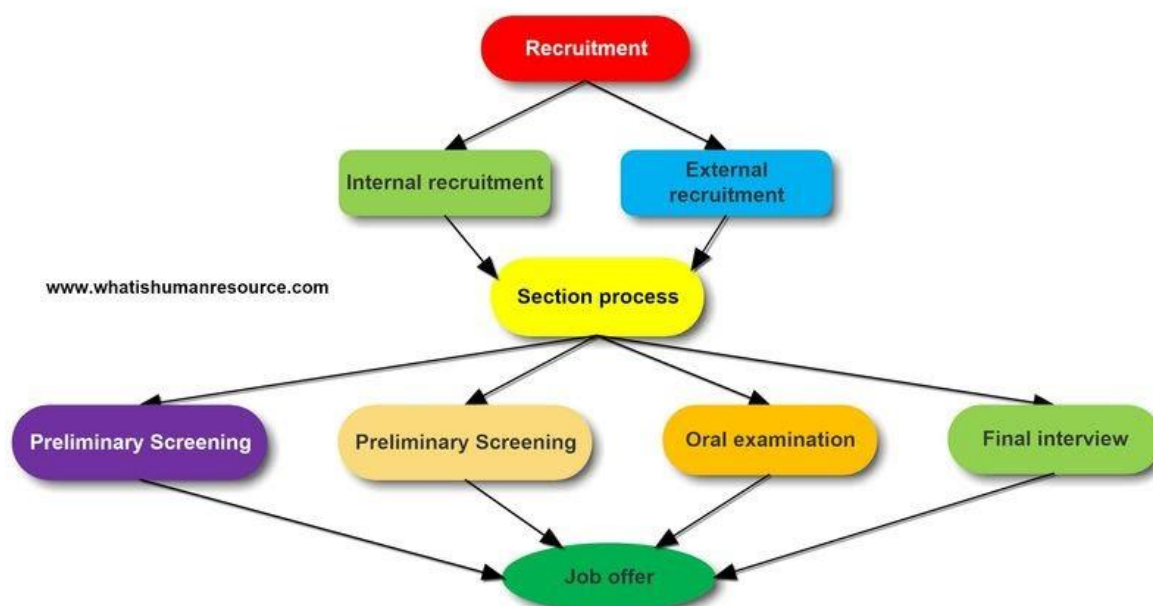
Implementation of Human Resources Policies and Procedures

Within different types of organizations, there are number of areas in which HR policies and procedures are implemented. Some of these have been stated as follows:

- a. *Recruitment and Selection* – When job vacancies take place within the organizations, then the employers and hiring authorities need to implement the policies and procedures for recruitment and selection of individuals. Therefore, it is essential to follow proper procedures and policies, particularly when recruitment and selection of individuals takes place (Avishikta, n.d.).
- b. *Employment* – Within various types of organizations, there are number of policies that are related to employment of individuals. These include, minimum hiring qualifications and experience, sources which would facilitate recruitment and selection, reservation for different groups, maintenance of effective terms and relationships among the members of the organization, reliance on various selection devices such as, tests, reference checks and interviews, placement of new employees and orientation of new employees (Avishikta, n.d.).
- c. *Training and Development* – When the employees get recruited within the organization, they are required to undergo training and development programs. These programs are attended by the employees not only at the time of recruitment, but also within the course of implementation of job duties. The employees are able to generate sufficient awareness in terms of organization as well as in the implementation of job duties. To make available the facilities for promoting efficient training and development of the employees, it is necessary to make use of appropriate teaching-learning methods, teaching-learning materials and instructional strategies.
- d. *Labour Welfare* – In order to bring about improvements in industrial relations, it is necessary to bring about changes in policies and procedures. The main objective of labour welfare policy is to put into operation the areas, which would facilitate up-gradation of employees. In the case of occurrence of problems and challenges, it is necessary to make use of suitable methods.
- e. *Transfer and Promotion* – Transfer and promotion of members are an integral parts of organization. It is apparent that all employees aspire to attain promotional opportunities, but it is not necessary that they would require transfer. In order to put into operation, transfer and promotion in an appropriate manner, it is necessary to formulate policies and procedures. These need to take into account the factors such as, purpose of transfer, period of transfer, causes of transfer, availability of promotional opportunities, factors that need to be taken into consideration to acquire promotional opportunities and period of service within the organization.
- f. *Worker's Compensation* – Worker's compensation is a publicly sponsored system that pays monetary benefits to the workers, who suffer from accidents and injuries within the course of their jobs. Worker's compensation is the type of insurance that makes provision of compensation for the injuries or disabilities sustained within the course of their employment. By agreeing to receive worker's compensation, the workers in some cases are also provided with the right to sue their employers for their negligence (Kagan, 2019).

- g. *Integration and Human Relations* – Within the organizations, individuals cannot carry out their tasks and activities in isolation. Therefore, it is necessary for them to work in integration and form good terms and relationships with each other. Integration and human relations with the organizations are referred to as the processes of bringing about improvements in motivation by encouraging proper working environmental conditions, training programs, timely payment of wages and so forth.
- h. *Work Management* – Work management policies are the policies that are related to job duties, responsibilities and well-being of the employees. The work management policies are referred to as the set of guidelines that structure the plan of the organization for dealing with an issue. Work management policies are the sources of communication between the employers and the employees (Policies and Procedures in the Workplace, 2019). The employers are required to make provision of appropriate information to the workforce in terms of implementation of job duties.
- i. *Performance Appraisal* – Performance appraisal is referred to as the systematic process in which the job performance of the employees is evaluated. The job performance is primarily evaluated in terms of research projects or presentations on which they have worked. In addition, the performance of the employees is also evaluated in terms of contributions to the organization. It is also known as the annual review or performance review. The primary objective of performance appraisal is to identify the employees worth and contribution to the organization. The important factors include, rate of absenteeism, amount of work, efficiency, resourcefulness, conscientiousness and so forth.
- j. *Administration* – Administrative functions are indispensable in various types of organizations. These functions make provision of information and direct the individuals in an appropriate manner that would enable them to carry out administrative functions satisfactorily. The administrative management theory makes an attempt to find a way to design an organization on the whole.

Recruitment and Selection



Nigeria Legislative System

The National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a bicameral legislature established under section 4 of the Nigerian Constitution. It consists of a Senate with 109 members and a 360-member House of Representatives. Nigeria practices Presidential system of government (Oluwagbenga, 2009). One of the major differences between these two systems is that in a presidential system, the president is directly voted into power by the people while in a parliamentary system, the legislature is supreme and elects a prime minister from among members of parliament as head of government. There is also no clear separation of powers in the system between the legislature and the executive as the ministers are also appointed from parliament (Oluwagbenga, 2009).

Conclusion

HR policies and procedures are regarded as formal commitments that are focused upon the ways in which employers deal with the employees. Within the organizational structure, the members are assigned various job duties in accordance to their educational qualifications, competencies and aptitude. It is apparent that they need to generate adequate information in terms of implementation of job performance satisfactorily. Through these HR policies and procedures, the members of the organization obtain proper guidance and direction. Within the course of time, changes take place in HR policies and procedures. The various types of human resources policies are, at-will employment, anti-harassment and non-discrimination, employment classifications, leave and time off benefits, meals and breaks, timekeeping and pay, safety and health, employee conduct, attendance and punctuality, hiring forms, use of technologies and materials, handbook acknowledgements, performance and discipline, management of resources, conflict resolution methods and organizational expenses.

The areas in which HR policies and procedures are implemented within the organization are, recruitment and selection, employment, training and development, labour welfare, transfer and promotion, worker's compensation, integration and human relations, work management, performance appraisal, and administration. All the members of the organization are required to dedicate themselves wholeheartedly towards the achievement of desired goals and objectives. Therefore, in order to carry out their tasks and activities in a satisfactory manner, it is necessary to upgrade their knowledge in terms of modern and innovative methods as well as HR policies and procedures. The members of the organization need to work in collaboration with each other in order to augment their understanding and modifying HR policies and procedures. Finally, it can be stated that the policies and procedures need to be beneficial to the members and organization as a whole.

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