

## **SCHOOL RECORD KEEPING: A TOOL FOR 21ST CENTURY MANAGEMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the issue of school record keeping. It specifically analyses the importance of record keeping as a management tool for the attainment of the objectives of basic education in Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It uses the method of historical and philosophical analysis in the examination of the various issues of record keeping, and in considering the implications for quality delivery of basic education in Nigeria. This implies the use of primary and secondary sources of data such as diaries, interviews, log book, minutes of meetings, policy documents, journals and other related materials. It was found that school records are basically of two types: statutory and non-statutory and could be kept at both individual and school levels. In both cases, school records should be carefully kept to enhance managerial efficiency. It is recommended that head teachers, assistant head teachers, teachers and non-teachers are equipped with the required skills and provide them with modern storage facilities for record keeping in basic schools. This would enhance managerial efficiency in Nigerian basic schools and consequently, the attainment of robust national development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

**Keywords:** Records, Record keeping, Management, Basic education, National development

### **Introduction**

Educational institutions are established for the purpose of learning that brings about civilization, growth and development of individuals and the society at large. Hence, education remains a potent instrument for effecting national development (FRN, 2013). However, for the aforementioned goals to be achieved, there is the obvious need for proper record keeping in schools, particularly at the basic level of education. In Nigeria, basic education refers to the education given to children from 0-15 years of age. Thus, it covers early childhood education of children 0-5 years and 9 years of formal schooling, comprising 6 years of free primary education and 3 years of junior secondary school (JSS) education.

The American Heritage Dictionary (1980), cited by Onifade (2004:60) defined records as information or data on a particular subject, collected and preserved. By implication, any processed or unprocessed datum that is collected and kept for future use constitutes a record. On a regular basis, information on school personnel (i.e., pupils, teachers and non-teachers), facilities, funds, curricular and co-curricular activities, are collected and preserved. This collection becomes school records.

School records therefore, refer to the various education-related documents such as official record of a pupil's grades, conduct, disciplinary history or a more general reference to a pupil's academic performance as well as co-curricular participation while in school (UBE/NIEPA, 2019). The various records kept in schools are categorized into two namely; statutory and non-statutory.

School records are, therefore, information or data which are collected on various aspects of a school and preserved for future use. The information or data which are written manually or electronically are preserved in books, files, diskettes and other electronic materials (Fasasi, 2005:82). Mbiti (1974) stated that school records include all books and files containing information on what goes on in school, who is in the school and the type of property owned by the school.

School record keeping means the act of keeping safely, educational related documents as described above. Thus, proper keeping of school records is bound to enhance the planning process, serve as historical record of events, provide knowledge on academic performance and facilitates schools' management of human and material resources for realistic attainment of educational objectives.

In view of the prevalence of poverty, hunger, insecurity and other social malaise in Nigeria, inimical to the development of a nation, the management and success of basic education depend on proper record keeping in schools. This is because when school records are carefully kept, they serve as a databank in which school information is deposited and kept with a view to retrieving and utilizing them in the future. Moreover, when properly kept, on retrieval basis, they shape the history not only of the school, but that of the pupils that pass through the system.

### **Research Method**

This study is historical and analytic in nature for it examines the issue of school record keeping in Nigeria covering certain period of time. Specifically, it analyses the imperativeness of record keeping in schools and its implications for efficient management of basic education in Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It uses the method of historical analysis in the examination of the various issues of record keeping and in considering the implications for effective management of basic education in Nigeria. This implies the use of primary and secondary sources of data such as diaries, interviews, log book, minutes of meetings, policy documents, journals and other related materials. The data were subjected to periodic and thematic analyses in the fashion of historical research. The analyses helped in arriving at historical conclusions from which sound recommendations were made.

### **Concept of School Records**

School records are vital to the very essence of education and the development of individuals. They provide a tangible link between past, present, and future, enabling us to learn from experience, assess progress, and plan for the future. This discussion explores the philosophical significance of school records, examining their role in knowledge, memory, identity, and the pursuit of a more just and equitable society. According to Opadokun (2004) described school records as comprising all the book and files or other documents containing information relating to what goes on in the school, who is in the school and what type of property the school owns. Emerson (1999), states further that records are documents in whatever medium, either received or created by an organization in the course of business enterprise because of the information it contained while, Opadokun (2004) asserts that any documents that is in the form of letters, forms, minutes, pictures, reports, maps, film,

ICT gadgets kept in a designated place to serve as the memory of an organization. School records are documented statement of facts about persons, events, facilities, proposal and activities in and about the school such as enrolment of new students, newly employed teachers, time-table, and organisation of school programme among others. The keeping of school records is the responsibility of teachers and school administrators which are important tools for effective and efficient organization and administration of the school. School records are a source of institutional information that facilitate education planning and administration of schools, and communication with all stakeholders (Tümer & Külçü, 2010). Records provide evidence of communication between the Basic Education and stakeholders such as parents, governments and other organisations.

### **Concept of Educational Management**

As the global demand for substantial improvements in education systems continues to rise, the existing structures within these systems consistently fall short of making significant progress. A crucial aspect of this issue is the management of education systems, which has become so standardised and entrenched in society that it rarely faces scrutiny. This status quo fosters a misleading belief that educational failures are solely the fault of teachers, while the responsibilities of managers go unexamined. Opadokun (2004), view educational management as the process of planning and formulation of education policies and programme with a view to achieving educational goals. Hence, it is the responsibility of educational managers to plan and formulate educational programmes policies so formulated by the managers.

### **Types of Records in Nigeria Basic Educational Institutions**

Records that are kept in basic educational institutions are broadly categorized into two namely, statutory and non- statutory.

- iii. **Statutory records:** These are records that are mandatory under the education law to be kept by a school according to Fasasi (2005:84). These records include:
  1. *Admission register:* is where the incoming learners are formerly registered in the admission register to become bonafide members of the school.
  2. *Attendance register:* is use to record when a child is present or absent from school.
  3. *Syllabus:* is drawn from the curriculum and it covers the curriculum and extra-curriculum activities of yearly programme for each stream/class.
  4. *Time table:* is use to direct and energize the classroom activities of the teachers and it shows when lessons start and ends.
  5. *Logbook:* is filled by important visitors to the school and contains history of the school community development.
  6. *Visitors book:* are given to important visitors that come to school either on invitation or personal interest to sign.

7. *Staff Movement Book*: is use to control the movement of teachers.
8. *School diary*: is a functional document for curriculum implementation because the teachers record all the subjects that will be taught to the pupils in it.
9. *Lesson plan/note*: contains the arrangement of ideas, methods and types of teaching aids used by the teacher to transmit information to students in a given period of lesson.
10. *Examination record book*: is a document used to keep records related to examinations within an educational institution.
11. *Staff/ personnel files*: is a collection of several documents that an organization keep for each of its staff members.
12. *Report sheets/cards*: is prepared and kept by the classroom teacher for onward distribution to students at the end of the term. It indicates progressive students.
13. *Corporal punishment book*: is a record disciplinary measures taken on pupils for misbehavior in schools.
14. *Cumulative record folder*: contains the continuous assessment of each learner to determine objectively what he gained from classroom activities in terms of knowledge and character development.
15. *Scheme of work*: is drawn from the syllabus and the subjects in it are broken into weekly lessons for a term or session.
16. *Weekly diary*: is made up of two parts, the scheme of work and the record of work in each subject on weekly basis.
17. *Staff movement book*. is kept by the head teachers/principals or heads of department to monitor movement of the staff in school.
18. *The school cash register*: It's a tool used to keep record of financial transactions in educational institution.
19. *Transfer certificate*: is an official document given by educational institution when a learner decides to leave his/her institution to another.
20. *Leaving certificate (UBE/NIEPA,2019)*: is an educational qualification awarded to signifies the completion of basic Education programme.

iv. **Non-Statutory records:** These are records that are important, but not mandated by education law. They are kept to facilitate the operation of the schools by the administrators. Such records, according to the Universal Basic Education (UBE) and National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA,2019) include the following:

1. Cash book.
2. Stock book.
3. Punishment book.
4. Inventory book.
5. Staff minutes book.
6. School calendar.
7. School magazine.
8. Marks book.
9. Requisition book.
10. Report files.
11. Confidential record forms.
12. Health record.
13. Inspection/ supervision report file.
14. Handing over/taking over file.
15. Subject curricula.
16. Anecdotal record
17. Report on Guidance and Counselling.
18. Head teacher Announcement Book and Staff Information Book.
19. National Policy on Education.
20. School Based Management Committee (SBMC) Minutes' Book and others – PTA, Old Students Association.

It is pertinent to note that the broad categories of school records (i.e., statutory and non-statutory) as highlighted above are expected to possess certain qualities. Thus, a good school record, according to the Universal Basic Education (UBE) should be:

1. Correct and accurate.
2. Properly classified.
3. Easy to store and retrieve.
4. Easy to understand and interpret.
5. Easy to locate and readily available for reference at any given time.
6. Detailed in information about events.
7. Able to generate further information.
8. Valid and reliable.
9. Available in hard and soft copies for easy access (UBE,2012:45).

#### **Roles of Basic Education Head teachers in Record Keeping.**

In basic educational institutions (i.e., primary and junior secondary schools), the head teachers are saddled with the responsibility of providing accurate and appropriate data on each pupil in their schools. This is with a view to facilitating effective communication and providing adequate

information about activities in the school as well as property owned by the school (UBE/NIEPA, 2019:44). Consequently, the head teacher or his assigned representative (such as the assistant head teacher) performs some of the following roles:

3. Providing files into which letters and circulars from various sources are kept so that they are available for reference at any time.
4. Providing file cabinets where files are stored to avoid damage by pests and rodents.
5. Ensuring that the need or purpose for creating any record is established. This involves identification of such needs and clearly stated purposes.
6. Ensuring that records contain relevant information needed by the teacher to improve teaching-learning process.
7. Providing uniform and acceptable form of record at all levels to avoid future complications.
8. Ensuring that all school records are simple enough, capable of serving intended purposes.
9. Avoiding repetition of information on students' records with a view to keeping such records straight.
10. Ensuring that records are made available when needed.

It follows, from the above that a good way of school record keeping is to centralize the storage of records intended for general use in the Assistant head teacher's office. Consequently, for easy documentation and retrieval of documents, the Head teachers and the Assistant head teachers could work hand-in-hand as the case may be to achieve the objectives of basic education (UBE/NIEPA, 2019).

### **School Record Keeping: Implications for Management of Basic Education in Nigeria**

The major purpose a school record serves is to assist in effective management of the school concerned. To this end, education managers are required to keep and maintain records not only as a statutory duty, but because of its value in enhancing efficient management practices at the basic level of education in Nigeria. Hence, proper record keeping improves managerial performance of duties in several areas, which include:

1. **Planning for Educational Resources:** Educational resources are broadly categorized into two. These include human and material. Human resources in an educational setting include teachers, non-teachers and learners, who constitute the personnel in a school. Material resources refer to all facilities that are needed in the school. Both human and material resources are expected to be available in appreciable quantity and quality as determined by the administration (Abolade and Oyelade, 2018).  
School records such as pupils' admission/ withdrawal and attendance registers, teachers register, school book of inventories, among others could be consulted to plan for the acquisition and utilization of resources.  
Moreover, time, which is a very scarce and precious resource is managed, using records such as school calendar, school time-table, class time-table all of which are used to allocate time to curricular and co-curricular activities of the school (Fasasi, 2005). Therefore, planning, co-ordination, organization and control of school activities are enhanced using school records.
2. **Personnel (Staff and Pupils) Services:** Office accommodation particularly for management staff and classroom accommodation for pupils and class teachers must be provided in basic

schools. These are made available through the use of school records. Making reference to school records, Fasasi (2005:84) stated that a laudable aspect of personnel services includes the control and modification of staff and pupils' behaviour. He maintained that records such as staff time-book, staff movement book, pupils' attendance register, teachers class record book, pupils class record book, corporal punishment book, staff and pupils' personal files are administratively relevant. This position was affirmed by Akubue (2017) who opined that when people are aware that records are being kept about them and their activities, they tend to be more careful in their general behaviour. Furthermore, official regulations as to what to do (course content, curriculum), who to do it (personnel), when to do it (time), where to do it (educational institutions) and how to do it (methodology, funding, and facilities required), are vital to school management (Adeleke, 2016; Olagboye, 2004). These are contained in the education law and the National Policy on Education which are records kept in the school.

3. **Financial Management:** The financial status of a school could be determined through school records. This is because when financial transactions are carefully documented and kept for reference purposes, they guard against incidence of fraud and financial recklessness. In this connection, records such as bank account book, cash book, cheque book, account ledger and payment receipts are useful records for prudent financial management on the part of school administration.
4. **Improvement of Instructional Strategy:** This could be achieved when school records such as the scheme of work, lesson plan and records of work are properly kept and maintained. This is because teachers' activities could be controlled and monitored easily with reference to records of what has been done and what ought to be done within a specified period. Consequently, a teacher could be praised, reprimanded, advised, encouraged or directed as appropriate by the school manager for efficiency.
5. **Maintenance of Good Inter-personal Relationship with External Bodies:** School records such as Visitors book, Board of Governors book, School Based Management Committee (SBMC) minutes book, Parent- Teachers Association (PTA) minutes book constitutes veritable points of reference for school development, thereby fostering cordial relationship between school and external bodies or agencies (Olagboye, 2004; Onifade, 2004).
6. **Advisory and Counselling Services:** School records provide the basis for advisory and counselling services for pupils. Thus, education managers, including teachers, head teachers and school counsellors could make use of school records to give advice to pupils on academic activities. School managers are able to determine pupils' academic progress and take precautionary measures towards improving their academic performance.
7. **Good Source of History:** Through records, particularly the log-book, the history of a school could be known. Important events in the school are recorded in the log book, thereby serving as a good reference point for whoever intends to be acquainted with happenings in the school. Edem (1982) stated that school records serve as historical sources of useful information to a principal's or headmaster's successor and to outside researchers. This serves to facilitate continuity in the administration of a school for realistic attainment of educational objectives.

## Conclusion

It has been observed from the fore-going that the success of a meaningful education enterprise depends on careful record keeping. It follows therefore, that school records do not only need to be well kept, but also need to be adequately maintained. Records are kept at both individual and school levels, reflecting the cognitive, affective and psychomotor behaviour of pupils and teachers. School records are meant to enhance the performance of basic education managers and administrators. When records kept are utilized appropriately, execution of management functions is likely to be less cumbersome, but easy and effective towards the attainment of educational goals.

### **Suggestions**

In view of the fact that proper record keeping is a veritable tool for rapid growth and development of basic education in Nigeria, the following Suggestions are made:

- i. There should be adequate awareness of the role and importance of record keeping on the part of school and classroom administrators. This would enable them develop positive attitude towards record keeping. At the school level, regular seminars could be held to enable teachers have deeper understanding of the school record keeping process.
- ii. Good maintenance culture should be maintained. Records should be kept safely, accurately, honestly and confidentially, devoid of complacency or carelessness. This is with a view to guarding against planning on falsified or defective records that would not augur well for the nation's educational development.
- iii. Government and education authorities should provide the required modern storage facilities in schools in order to protect school records from theft, destruction and mutilation. By so doing, managerial efficiency would be enhanced at the basic level of education in Nigeria and consequently, robust national development.

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