

# Effectiveness of Special Education Unit/Desk Officers in the Administration of Special Education in Nigeria

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**Abstract:-** The paper is on effectiveness of special education unit/desk officers in the administration of special education in different governmental level. The paper stated that every schools need to develop a suitable curriculum and determine requirements for admission and graduation. The appropriate roles of special education administration is an issue of concern. The administration of special education in Nigeria is broadly categorize into three levels, as desk officers at the federal, state and at the institutional levels. Challenges confronting special educationits critics and way forwardwas discussed alongside with solutions to the problems of special education administration. It was concluded that Nigeria is making gradual progress but there is however, a lot of lapses that are yet to be covered to attain maximum success.

**Keywords:-** Effectiveness Special Education Unit/Desk Officer's Administration Special Education Different Governmental Critics Way Forward.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a responsibility of individual, private and public organizations of all kinds that establish institutions of learning. Every schools need to develop a suitable curriculum and determine requirements for admission and graduation. The appropriate roles of special education administration is an issue of concern. Okonyibo, (2001) mandates cooperation between state

and federal educational agencies to promote educational standards for persons with special needs. It has to do with issues on how education should be implemented and direct that federal, state and local governments should take proper step to enhance educational programmes that will benefit all students with special needs.

Special education administration is located at the intersection of the disciplines of special education, general education, and educational administration. Historically, special education has provided much of the intellectual, practical, and personal traffic to that intersection. The preparation, licensure, and availability of special education administrators has been dominated by assumptions, practices, and knowledge traditions of the disciplines of special education. This results in preparation that is too narrow for today's needs.

Iheanacho, (1986)explained during the 1990s, accountability for performance results and high standards drove education reform, and effort to educate students with disabilities in the general education classroom became the focus of special educators. These simultaneous initiative require special education administrators to be well versed in the knowledge and skills from the disciplines of general education and educational administration. Becoming an effective special education leader for the 21<sup>st</sup> century collaborating with teachers, parents, other school administrators and policy makers to bring resources,

personnel, programmes, and expertise together to solve problems of practice for all students.

At the same time, our nation has also embraced a far-reaching set of academic school reforms designed to make schools more rigorous learning environments (Thurlow, 2000). Virtually all states have adopted comprehensive academic standards and develop places of referral for persons with special needs. Most are implementing corresponding measures that hold students and professionals accountable for higher performance (Nanjwan, Ikwen and Egaga, 2019). Education start after referral, special education administrators have to make some efforts of helping students with special needs to avoid the risks for academic failure. This can be done by making sure that schools should ensure a presence of resource room teachers and establishing a resource room for effective learning. Selecting and equipping an area to be used as the resource center. Special education administrators should help in utilizing supportive personnel, teachers, assistants. They help in organizing regular education teacher seminars, interviewing and maintenance of educational plans (Rocco, 1977).

## II. SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

The administration of special education in Nigeria can be broadly categorized into three;

- Desk officers at the federal level
- Desk officers at the state level
- Desk officers at the institutional levels.

## III. SPECIAL EDUCATION OFFICER AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

Iheanacho, (1986) pointed out at federal level, the federal government has established special education commission under section 76 of the educational Act. The governing board of the commission consists of the chairperson and the following members,

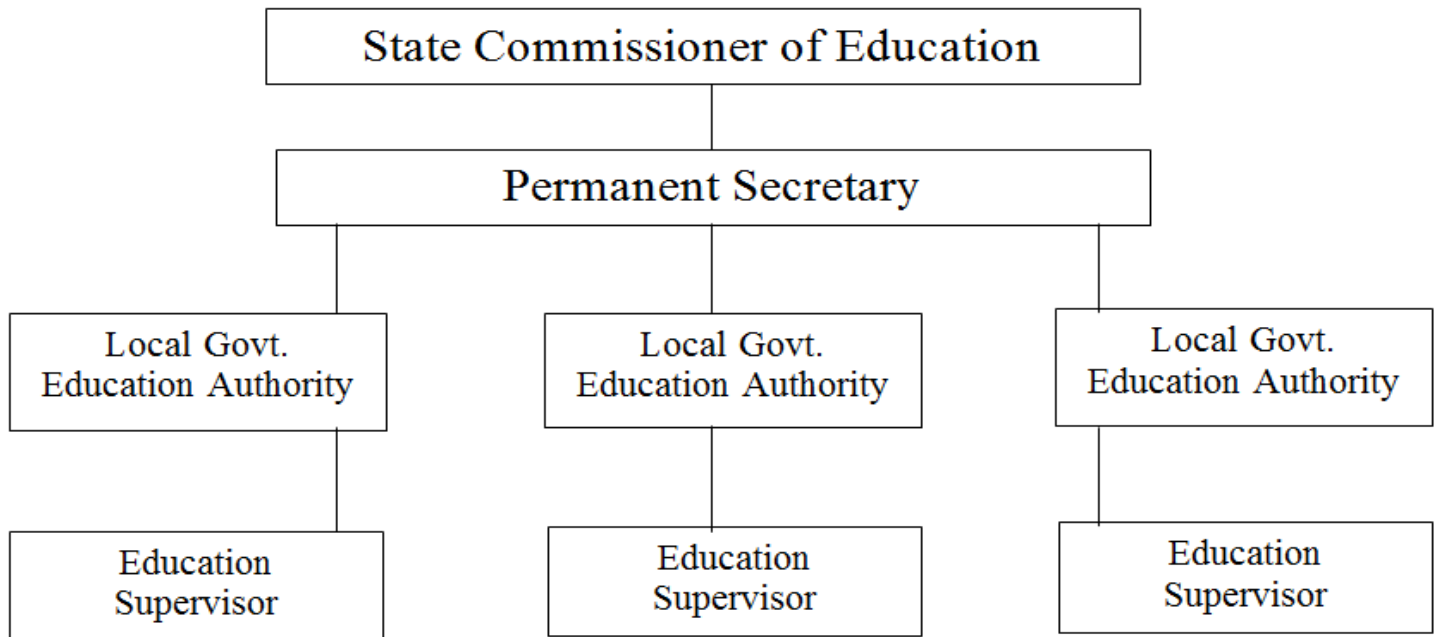
- a) One representative from the Federal Ministry of Education
- b) One representative of the Federal Ministry of Information
- c) One representative of the Federal Ministry of Health
- d) One representative of the National planning commission
- e) All Heads of Language Villages established by the commission.
- f) One representative of National Association of Linguistic Teachers
- g) One representative of the National Educational Research and planning Bureau
- h) One person representing women group
- i) Six person with relevant knowledge and experience selected on the basis of one from each geo-political zone of Nigeria and
- j) The Director-General of the commission.

The Director General is expected to be the Chief Executive Officer of the commission and responsible for the day to day administration of the commission. The commission has also appointed suitable qualified persons as staff of the commission to assist the Director-General in the performance of his function under the Act.

**IV. SPECIAL EDUCATION OFFICERS AT THE STATE LEVEL**

At the different states level, special education is placed under the various ministries of education without

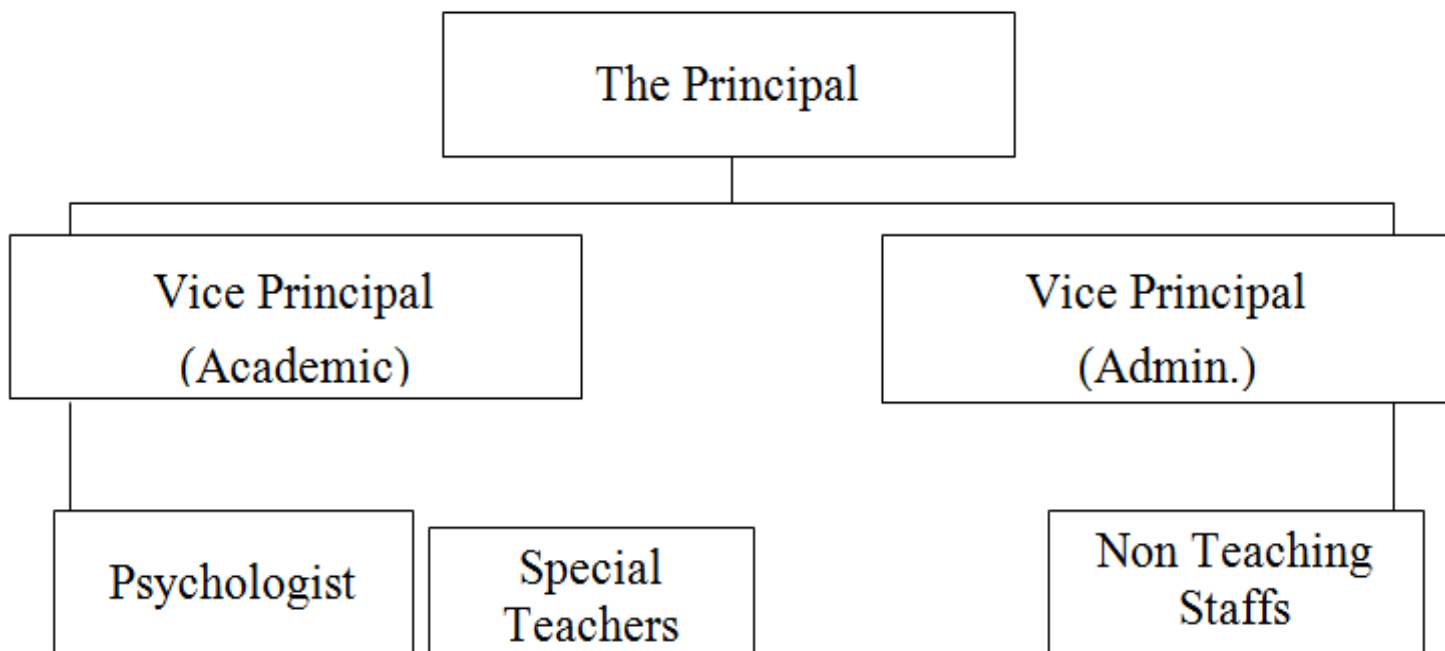
special attentions to it. In some states in Nigeria, Special education is co-administered by the ministry of education and the ministry of women and social welfare. Lere, (2007) presented the organogram below shows these administrations at state levels.



At the state level, the same officer who administers the entire educational system also deals with special education. They supervise special schools at the same rate with other schools. And provides similar aids to both special schools and non-special schools.

**V. SPECIAL EDUCATION OFFICERS AT THE INSTITUTION LEVEL**

The various and special education institutions have their officers ranging from primary schools, secondary schools, colleges of education to the University. For example, in secondary schools Lere, (2007) presented the organogram below shows these administrations at institutional levels.



At higher institutions like the universities and the colleges of education, there are the head of departments of special education, unit coordinator of special education, the secretary of the department, and the lecturers in the departments of special education. Other professionals includes: brailist, sign language interpreters, attendants in clinics health sections.

Obi, (2010) admitted that every officer has his or her roles to play in both reporting and execution of special education duties. The teachers for example had the responsibility of teaching the children with special needs with the aim of binding the gap between disability and learning. The vice principle (academic) has the responsibility of making sure that the right thing is taught at every movement while the principal ensures that the entire curriculum handed over from the university of Education is well executed.

## VI. CRITICISMS AND CHALLENGES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

Iheanacho, (1986) identified challenges confronting special education and administration in Nigeria.

1. Problems of insufficient funding: special education in Nigeria is not properly funded as most of the officers do not get appropriate funds to carry out their duties.
2. Many of paper work than the implementation: In terms of writing and paper work that has even been signed in 2019, special education has gone far as it even has a column in the National Policy on Education but in terms of implementation the reverse is the case. Special education officers are well stated and their functions outlined but the problem is in their ability to carry out their work due internal and external factors.
3. Lack of public support: The public do not really see the need to educate children with disabilities. Many Nigeria's still live in the past and so they believe that persons with disabilities should be left to beg in the streets or die.
4. Lack of parental support: Most parents do not support special education officers as they tend to hide their disabled children at home.

5. Data collection problem: The officers at the Federal and state levels also have problem planning for disabled people because they lack adequate data of the number of disabled people in the country.
6. Unseriousness on the part of some special education administrators. As most of them tend to have I don't care attitude towards work.
7. Lack of Supervision: The University of Education and the special education commission does not adequately supervise administrators and this lead to their mis-behaviours in offices,
8. Lack of enough personnel or administrators. There is also inadequacy in the number of administrators in the country.

## VII. SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

The following are the suggested solutions to the problems of special administration by Michael, (2007):

1. The government should increase their budget allocation to education generally and special education in particular
2. There should be constant and general public enlightenment programmes organized by the administrators on the need to education children with disabilities.
3. Parents of children with disabilities should come together and form associations that will remove stigmatization and shame from them.
4. The National Census Board should give adequate data and information about persons with disabilities during census.
5. The Federal Ministry of Education should adequately supervise special education administrators.
6. Special education administrators. More special education personnel should also be trained and recruited into the system.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the fact that special education administration in Nigeria is making gradual progress cannot be overemphasized, but there is however, a lot of lapses that are yet to be covered. As the success and failure of special education in Nigeria lies in the hands of the administrators. The present administrators should also endeavor to treat their profession with every sense of seriousness and by this way; special education can attain maximum success.

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